



SOUTH CAROLINA WIOA UNIFIED STATE PLAN



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I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE





I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

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

South Carolina is submitting a Unified State Plan covering the six WIOA core programs: the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, the Wagner-Peyser program, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation program.



II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS





II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the state's current economic environment and identifies the state's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the state to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

- (a) **Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis.** The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the state's workforce system and programs will operate.

(1) Economic and Workforce Analysis

(A) ***Economic Analysis.*** The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the state, including sub-state regions and any specific economic areas identified by the state. This must include—

- (i) **Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations.** Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.
- (ii) **Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations.** Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.
- (iii) **Employers' Employment Needs.** With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

South Carolina has made notable progress in recovering from the Great Recession of the 2007-2010 period (the officially-recognized definition from the National Bureau of Economic Research, NBER, is December 2007 to June 2009.) Most economic indicators now point to increasing employment and economic activity. Mark Vitner, Senior Economist with Wells Fargo Securities wrote in his economic roundup in early 2015, "South Carolina's recovery is accelerating and is now firmly outpacing the nation. The state has bounced back as a formidable manufacturing hub, with a high concentration in transportation-related production, thanks to BMW and Boeing."¹

The report went on to praise the state for its economic development efforts in the export markets, including tire manufacturing. The S.C. Department of Commerce reported that in 2014 the state closed deals worth over \$5 billion in capital investments, adding more than 19,000 new jobs to the state.² Recently, Volvo Car Corporation selected the Charleston, S.C. area for the location of its first North American plant. Certainly, these projects will add to the momentum the state is currently experiencing.

¹ Vitner, M. (2015). *Southern States: 2015 Economic Outlook* (February 12, Rep.). Wells Fargo.

² *2014 Activity Report* (Rep.). (2014). S.C. Department of Commerce.



South Carolina's Gross Domestic Product was \$190.3 billion in 2014 or 27th in the nation. The growth of the GDP in real dollars since 2010 has been \$10.5 billion or 6.4 percent with Manufacturing, Real Estate and Rental and Leasing, and Health Care and Social Assistance leading the way. Most of the state's metropolitan areas have seen moderate growth over the past several years.

The state's personal growth of 4.3 percent outpaced the nation's growth of 3.9 in 2014 and reached \$178.5 million dollars. South Carolina's per capita income in 2014 was \$36,934 or 80 percent of the U.S. average. The Hilton Head Island-Bluffton-Beaufort metropolitan area had the highest figure at \$41,663.

Over the period of 2009-2013, the percent of the population graduating high school and those obtaining at least a Bachelor's degree increased to 85.6 percent and 26.1 percent, respectively. The veterans' share of the population decreased over the period, while the disabled population increased. The population has also become more mobile. The state is projected to have a population of 5.5 million by 2030.

South Carolina's labor force and employment rate have been increasing since the end of the Great Recession. The unemployment rate dropped considerably until the past year when improving economic conditions attracted more people into the labor force searching for work. Many of the state's jobless face significant barriers to employment that workforce partners at the state and local level are working to overcome.

Professional and Business Services; Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; and Leisure and Hospitality led the state in private sector industry employment growth from 2009 to 2014. South Carolina had over 1.876 million wage and salary employees in 2014 with an average hourly wage of \$19.03. The state's industry and occupational employment are projected to grow by 11.54 percent over the period of 2012-2022.

The purpose of the following Economic and Workforce Analysis is to present an overview of key metrics used to examine the strengths and weaknesses of South Carolina's economy and workforce. The analysis is based on the [2015 South Carolina Economic Analysis Report](#) published by the Business Intelligence Division (BID) of the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce. The information and analyses provided in the report are based on the latest data available from sources throughout South Carolina and the United States.

Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

South Carolina has staged a remarkable comeback since the Great Recession. As shown in Table 1, non-farm employment grew by 133,500 jobs, or 7.4 percent, between 2009 and 2014. The sector leading the growth is Professional and Business Services with a gain of over 54,000 jobs; followed by Trade, Transportation, and Utilities gaining almost 25,000 new jobs; Leisure and Hospitality adding 20,000 positions; and Government, which gained 8,700 or 2.5 percent.

Several sectors declined over the period, led by Construction down nearly 6 percent³; Natural Resources and Mining down by almost 5 percent; Financial Activities down by 4.3 percent; and Information, dropping by 2.6 percent.

³ This analysis is based on 2014 data; however, the Construction industry experienced significant growth in 2015.



Table 1
South Carolina Nonfarm Industry Employment - Annual Averages 2009, 2014

Series Code	Title	2009	2014	2014-2009	Percent Growth
00000000	Total nonfarm	1,815,100	1,948,600	133,500	7.4%
05000000	Total private	1,467,500	1,592,300	124,800	8.5%
06000000	Goods-producing	305,400	316,300	10,900	3.6%
07000000	Service-providing	1,509,700	1,632,300	122,600	8.1%
08000000	Private service-providing	1,162,100	1,276,000	113,900	9.8%
10000000	Natural resources and mining	4,100	3,900	-200	-4.9%
20000000	Construction	87,500	82,300	-5,200	-5.9%
30000000	Manufacturing	213,800	230,100	16,300	7.6%
40000000	Trade, transportation, and utilities	348,200	373,100	24,900	7.2%
50000000	Information	27,200	26,500	-700	-2.6%
55000000	Financial activities	100,800	96,500	-4,300	-4.3%
60000000	Professional and business services	199,700	254,100	54,400	27.2%
65000000	Education and health services	208,400	225,800	17,400	8.3%
70000000	Leisure and hospitality	208,500	228,500	20,000	9.6%
80000000	Other services	69,400	71,700	2,300	3.3%
90000000	Government	347,600	356,300	8,700	2.5%

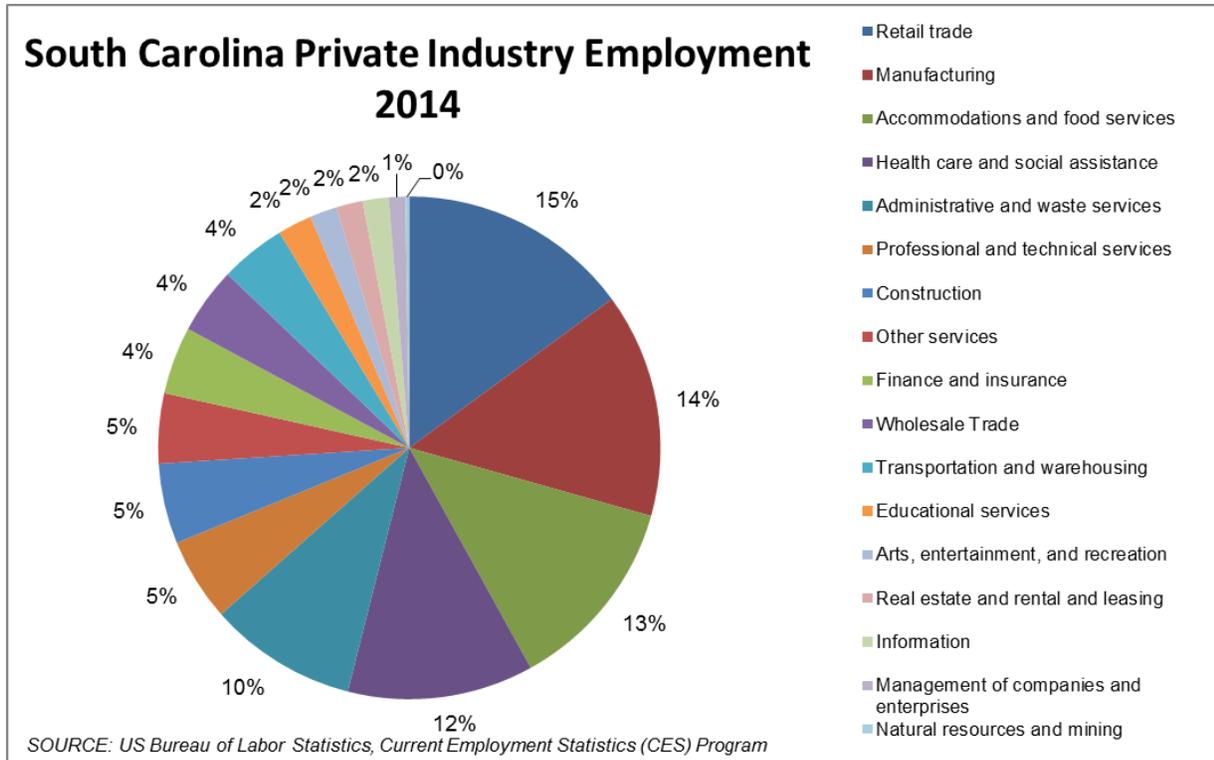
SOURCE: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics (CES) Program

Current Nonfarm Industry Employment

In terms of the private sector economy, Retail Trade was the largest sector in 2014 with 15 percent of the employment, followed by Manufacturing with 14 percent, and Accommodations and Food Services with 13 percent. Figure 1 illustrates the percentage breakdown of private industry employment.



Figure 1



Another measure of the strength of an economy is industry specialization or answering the question “How does an industry’s portion of the employment mix in the state compare to its portion in the nation?” This question defines the location quotient (LQ). An LQ above 1.0 indicates that the industry has a higher concentration of employment in the state than it does in the nation. Six industry sectors led the state in 2013 in terms of employment specialization with LQs greater than 1.0 as measured by the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) — Utilities, Construction, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Administrative and Waste Services, and Accommodation and Food Services. These industries highlight the state’s strong economic base of tourism and manufacturing.

Current Occupations

South Carolina had 1.876 million wage and salary employees in 2014 with an average hourly wage of \$19.03. Table 2 combines more than 800 detailed occupations into major occupational groups and presents employment and average wage information for each.



Table 2
South Carolina Occupational Employment, May 2014

Occupation Code	Occupation Title	Employment	Average Hourly Wage
0	Total, All Occupations	1,876,480	\$19.03
110000	Management Occupations	80,380	\$45.29
130000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	68,800	\$28.68
150000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	34,270	\$31.94
170000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	35,720	\$35.56
190000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	8,600	\$27.57
210000	Community and Social Service Occupations	21,630	\$18.96
230000	Legal Occupations	12,530	\$36.03
250000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	111,640	\$21.84
270000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	17,390	\$20.56
290000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	115,470	\$32.19
310000	Healthcare Support Occupations	52,700	\$12.49
330000	Protective Service Occupations	46,240	\$16.61
350000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	184,220	\$9.61
370000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	67,150	\$10.85
390000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	45,530	\$10.77
410000	Sales and Related Occupations	208,750	\$14.96
430000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	294,060	\$15.41
450000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	4,300	\$15.41
470000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	67,390	\$18.00
490000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	83,530	\$19.91
510000	Production Occupations	185,950	\$16.93
530000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	130,220	\$14.92

SOURCE: SC Department of Employment and Workforce, Occupational Employment Survey (OES)

The Office and Administrative Support category had the highest employment with 294,000 employees, followed by Sales and Related Occupations with 209,000, and then Production Occupations with 186,000 employees. The highest average hourly wages were found in Management Occupations at \$45.29, Legal Occupations at \$36.03, and Architecture and Engineering Occupations at \$35.56. Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations had the lowest average wage at \$9.61 per hour.

Table 3 presents the top 20 occupations in the state in terms of size of employment. Retail Salespersons, Cashiers, and Team Assemblers are among the state's top occupations.



Table 3
South Carolina Top Occupations, May 2014

Occupation Title
Retail Salespersons
Cashiers
Team Assemblers
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers
Customer Service Representatives
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers
Registered Nurses
Waiters and Waitresses
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants
Office Clerks, General
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeepers
General and Operations Managers
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Workers
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing
Nursing Assistants

SOURCE: SC Department of Employment and Workforce, Occupational Employment Survey (OES)

Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Industry Projections to 2022

Table 4 presents the latest available statewide industry employment projections over the 10-year period 2012-2022. In total, all industries are projected to grow by 11.5 percent or by 228,800 jobs. Construction; Health Care and Social Assistance; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Administrative and Support and Waste Management are each expected to experience an increase in employment by more than 20 percent. State and Federal Public Administration is projected to decline.



Table 4
South Carolina Industry Employment Projections to 2022

Industry	2012 Estimated Employment	2022 Projected Employment	Total 2012-2022 Employment Change	Total Percent Change
Total, All Industries	1,983,585	2,212,392	228,807	11.54%
Construction	77,510	99,892	22,382	28.88%
Health Care and Social Assistance	225,765	284,803	59,038	26.15%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	79,490	97,807	18,317	23.04%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management	139,778	168,228	28,450	20.35%
Transportation and Warehousing	50,860	59,728	8,868	17.44%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	25,420	28,727	3,307	13.01%
Finance and Insurance	65,868	73,640	7,772	11.80%
Educational Services	164,216	182,632	18,416	11.21%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	26,543	29,495	2,952	11.12%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	81,310	90,317	9,007	11.08%
Wholesale Trade	65,769	72,188	6,419	9.76%
Accommodation and Food Services	190,193	207,650	17,457	9.18%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1,148	1,246	98	8.54%
Utilities	12,125	13,108	983	8.11%
Retail Trade	226,368	243,921	17,553	7.75%
Information	25,715	27,332	1,617	6.29%
Public Administration-Local	68,729	72,819	4,090	5.95%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	16,435	17,332	897	5.46%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	28,935	29,792	857	2.96%
Manufacturing	220,007	220,893	886	0.40%
Public Administration-State	41,162	41,003	-159	-0.39%
Public Administration-Federal	27,940	24,499	-3,441	-12.32%

SOURCE: SC Dept of Employment and Workforce, Industry Employment Projections Program

By 2022 the Health Care and Social Assistance industry will have the state’s largest share of employment overtaking the current leader, Retail Trade, due to its rapid expansion. Manufacturing and Accommodation and Food Services will remain the third and fourth largest sectors, respectively.

Occupational Projections to 2022

The latest available statewide occupational projections largely align with the statewide industry projections for the period 2012-2022. Table 5 highlights the projections by major occupation group. Health-related and construction occupation groups lead in anticipated occupational employment growth. In numeric terms, Office and Administrative Support Occupations are projected to increase the most with more than 28,000 new positions, while Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations are projected to add 24,500 jobs.



Table 5
South Carolina Occupational Employment Projections to 2022

Occupations	2012 Estimated Employment	2022 Projected Employment	Total 2012-2022 Employment Change	Total Percent Change
Total, All Occupations	1,983,585	2,212,392	228,807	11.54%
Healthcare Support Occupations	53,417	68,239	14,822	27.75%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	74,150	91,139	16,989	22.91%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	119,607	144,110	24,503	20.49%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	31,541	37,573	6,032	19.12%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	62,600	74,245	11,645	18.60%
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	71,290	81,673	10,383	14.56%
Community and Social Service Occupations	24,599	27,968	3,369	13.70%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	82,237	93,207	10,970	13.34%
Legal Occupations	13,602	15,411	1,809	13.30%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	127,680	143,922	16,242	12.72%
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	106,103	119,221	13,118	12.36%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	84,248	94,093	9,845	11.69%
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	38,391	42,551	4,160	10.84%
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	9,873	10,861	988	10.01%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	23,002	25,240	2,238	9.73%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	179,201	196,157	16,956	9.46%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	301,345	329,351	28,006	9.29%
Sales and Related Occupations	223,782	240,484	16,702	7.46%
Protective Service Occupations	46,729	50,170	3,441	7.36%
Management Occupations	109,774	117,193	7,419	6.76%
Production Occupations	180,767	189,656	8,889	4.92%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	19,647	19,928	281	1.43%

Source: SC Dept of Employment and Workforce, Occupational Employment Projections Program

Fastest Growing and Declining Occupations

Table 6 highlights the fastest growing and declining occupations statewide in percentage terms over the projection period 2012-2022. The majority of expanding occupations are in the healthcare industry, while many of the declining occupations are being displaced by technological innovation.



Table 6
Top 20 Projected Fastest Growing or Declining Occupations, 2012-2022

Rank	Growing Occupations	Declining Occupations
1	Insulation Workers, Mechanical	Fallers
2	Home Health Aides	Textile Winding, Twisting, and Drawing Out Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders
3	Interpreters and Translators	Textile Bleaching and Dyeing Machine Operators and Tenders
4	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	Textile Knitting and Weaving Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders
5	Helpers--Brickmasons, Blockmasons, Stonemasons, and Tile and Marble Setters	Data Entry Keyers
6	Personal Care Aides	Postal Service Clerks
7	Information Security Analysts	Postal Service Mail Sorters, Processors, and Processing Machine Operators
8	Skincare Specialists	Drilling and Boring Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic
9	Physician Assistants	Textile Cutting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders
10	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	Computer Operators
11	Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary	Word Processors and Typists
12	Physical Therapist Assistants	Postal Service Mail Carriers
13	Occupational Therapy Assistants	Information and Record Clerks, All Other
14	Medical Secretaries	Travel Agents
15	Helpers--Electricians	Sewing Machine Operators
16	Personal Financial Advisors	Lathe and Turning Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic
17	Ambulance Drivers and Attendants, Except Emergency Medical Technicians	Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service
18	Physical Therapist Aides	Extruding and Drawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic
19	Dental Hygienists	Meter Readers, Utilities
20	Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	Extruding and Forming Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Synthetic and Glass Fibers

SOURCE: SC Dept of Employment and Workforce, Occupational Employment Projections Program

Note: Fastest growing by percent increase with at least 100 new positions; fastest declining by percent decrease with at least 50 fewer positions.



Employers' Employment Needs

Education Level of the Workforce

Table 7 highlights projected demand for labor by education level. The information is summarized in four general categories: Less than high school, High school diploma or equivalent, Some college or associate's degree, and Bachelor's degree or higher.

Table 7
South Carolina Measures of Labor Demand by Education Level

Education Level	Proj 2020 OEP Employment	% of Total	OEP Avg Ann Openings, 2010-20	% of Total	Proj 2022 OEP Employment	% of Total	OEP Avg Ann Openings, 2012-22	% of Total	HWOL 2013 Job Postings	% of Total	QWI 2013 Total Hires 25+	% of Total
Less than high school	554,284	28%	21,469	32%	620,118	29%	23,480	34%	8,600	15%	37,891	18%
High school diploma or equivalent	863,471	44%	27,113	41%	871,676	40%	25,273	36%	20,902	36%	68,694	33%
Some college or associate's	221,273	11%	6,911	10%	261,125	12%	8,354	12%	12,012	21%	65,507	31%
Bachelor's or higher	329,690	17%	11,065	17%	415,804	19%	12,850	18%	16,851	29%	37,292	18%
Total	1,968,718	100%	66,558	100%	2,168,723	100%	69,957	100%	58,365	100%	209,384	100%

SOURCES: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) & SCDEW, Occupational Employment Projections (OEP) Program; U.S. Census Bureau 2013 Quarterly Workforce Indicators Data (QWI) Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program; The Conference Board, Help Wanted Online Data Series ©(HWOL).

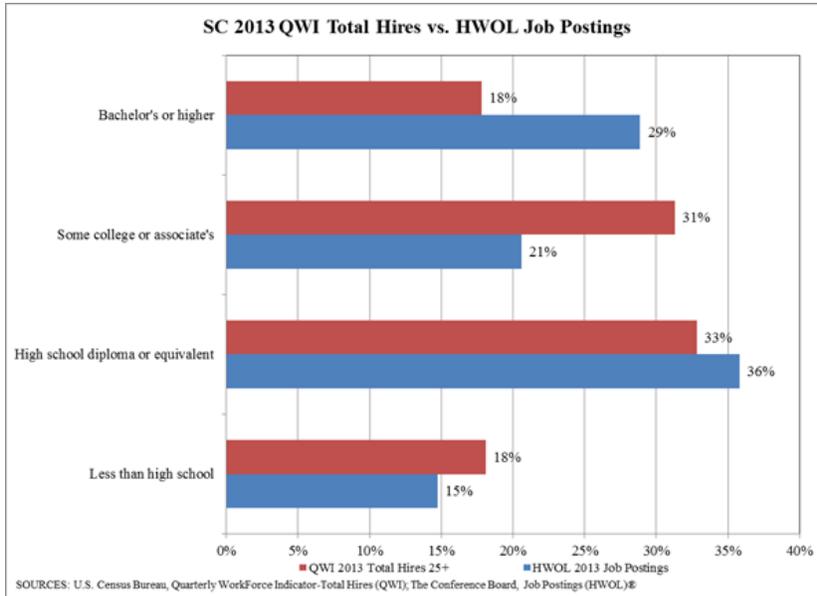
The future year employment and the annual job openings data are from the most recent two employment projections. Over time, the share of employment anticipated to be available for those with less than some post-secondary education is expected to decline marginally.

Current Online Job Advertisements

The Help Wanted Online® (HWOL) data shown in Table 7 is the annual average for 2013 and includes an occupational code that is matched to worker characteristics of required education for entry into an occupation. The findings are compiled from over 16,000 internet job boards monthly. The HWOL percentage for the two upper levels of education is significantly higher compared to the projections data for those same levels of education. There is an approximate 10 percentage point difference in each of the two levels currently expressed demand versus the projected demand. The gap is even wider at the lowest education level possibly reflecting the fact that many job seekers with less than some college find work through non-online sources.



Figure 2



The U.S. Census Bureau's Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) Total Hires actual demand data compares much more closely for the lower two categories to the HWOL desired employer demand in percentage terms as shown in Figure 2. There is much variation in the upper two categories. This presents a comparison of unfilled jobs (HWOL) to filled jobs (QWI). There appears to be unmet demand at the Bachelor's degree level.

Figure 3

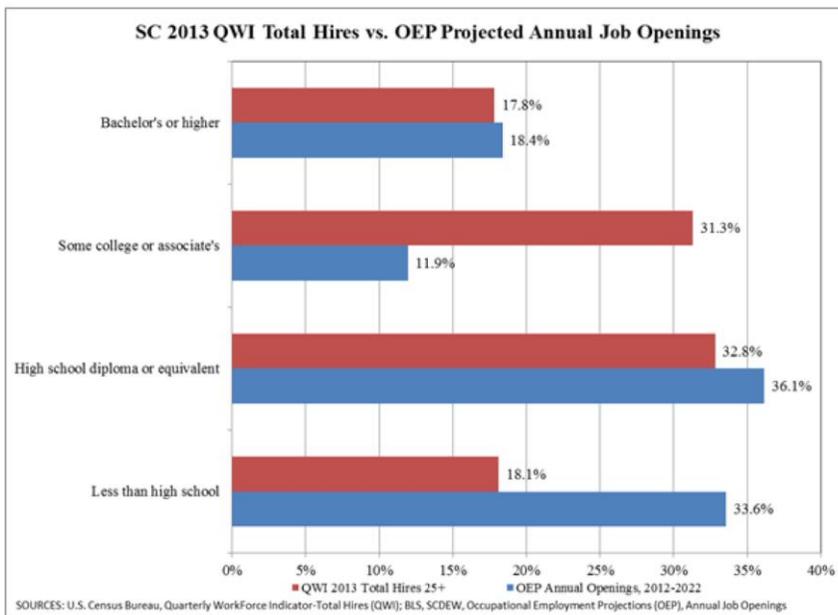


Figure 3 compares the average annual projected job openings to the QWI Total Hires by percent. This chart illustrates projected demand vs. actual demand. For the Bachelor's degree or higher level, the actual and projected demand are fairly close matches. The High School level also appears balanced. However, 31 percent of the actual hirings occurred at the Some College category, while only 12 percent of total openings were projected to be available at that level. About one-third of opening were projected to be available at the

lowest education level, while only 18 percent of jobs filled took place there. This may indicate that employers are hiring workers with higher education levels than are typically associated with the job.

Employer-Requested Certifications in Job Advertisements

Recommended, required, or suggested certifications were mentioned in 305,725 job advertisements from November 2014 to October 2015. As illustrated in Table 8, four of the top ten were in healthcare-related fields.



Table 8
Top 10 Employer-Requested Certifications in SC

Driver's License
Commercial Driver's License
Certified Registered Nurse
Basic Life Support
HAZMAT
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
Occupational Safety & Health Administration Certification
Food safety programs
Licensed Practical Nurse
Continuing Education

South Carolina Business and Industry Survey⁴

Proviso 117.127 calls for the S.C. Technical College System, in collaboration with the S.C. Department of Commerce, the S.C. Department of Education, and the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, to develop a plan that addresses the state's skills gap. As part of the statewide planning process, the Technical College System conducted an electronic survey and in-depth telephone interviews with business and industry leaders across the state. The goal of the survey and interviews was to ensure that existing and future training programs provide the necessary skills and training to prepare students for careers in high-demand fields and critical needs positions. (Appendix 1 – South Carolina's Workforce Study).

Electronic Survey. The Technical College System sent 760 surveys via email to business and industry leaders. This effort garnered 202 responses – a 27 percent response rate. This response rate is above the national average response rate for an email survey of 20-25 percent.

The top five industries represented in the electronic survey response were 1) advanced manufacturing, 2) other, 3) construction, 4) healthcare, and 5) hospitality and tourism. "Other" includes such fields as manufacturing, distribution, agriculture, childcare, and pharmacy. Additionally, the size of companies who responded varied: 33 percent were companies with 300 or more employees; 33 percent had 100-300 employees; 15 percent had 50-100 employees; and 19 had less than 50.

When asked about expected growth over the next two to five years, 71 percent expect to grow by at least 10 people over the next two years; 74 percent expect to grow by at least 10 people over the next five years; and 83 percent expect attrition due to retirement.

The top three recruiting sources for respondents were:

- 1) online recruiting websites like Monster and CareerBuilder (68.66 percent),
- 2) technical college career centers (53.73 percent), and
- 3) SC Works Centers (52.74 percent).

⁴ *South Carolina's Workforce Study* (February 1, Rep.). (2015). S.C. State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.



The top three training providers used by respondents included:

- 1) company-provided or in-house training (73.74 percent),
- 2) local technical colleges (53.54 percent), and
- 3) vendors (29.29 percent).

When asked about existing career pathway tools such as internships, co-ops, apprenticeships, and training, the top four tools included:

- 1) internship and/or co-op (70.56 percent),
- 2) training that leads to a recognized credential or certification (65.99 percent),
- 3) adult apprenticeship (55.33 percent), and
- 4) customized short-term training (54.82 percent).

In-depth Phone Interviews. The System also conducted in-depth phone interviews with 23 business leaders to assess in more detail their specific needs as they relate to workforce challenges.

When asked about anticipated growth, 95 percent were hopeful about job openings over the next two years and anticipate those numbers to increase over the next five to seven years. Seventy-five percent expect [that] a fair percentage of these job openings will be due to retirements and anticipate that number increasing as they look out longer term (five to seven years).

The top three recruiting sources for respondents were:

- 1) online recruiting websites like Monster and CareerBuilder,
- 2) social media, and
- 3) employment agencies.

The top five training providers used by respondents included:

- 1) company-provided or in-house training,
- 2) local technical college,
- 3) four-year colleges and universities,
- 4) Apprenticeship Carolina™, and
- 5) Career and Technology Education (CATE) Centers.

When asked about existing career pathway tools, the top three tools included:

- 1) internship and/or co-op,
- 2) training that leads to a recognized credential or certification, and
- 3) customized short-term training.

Interviewees were asked what challenges keep them up at night. The top responses included:

- Finding qualified, skilled workers.
- Finding workers with a good work ethic.
- Finding workers with soft skills and communication skills.
- Finding workers with problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.
- Retaining good workers.

Respondent were also asked to provide a one-minute message to state leaders, including the Governor and General Assembly. Responses were as follows:

- Educate and prepare our workforce at [a] young age – as early as elementary school for manufacturing and STEM-related fields.



- Educate parents, teachers, and students about how manufacturing and other STEM-related fields have evolved.
- Continuously focus on STEM education and workforce readiness focusing on both present and long-term needs.
- Build collaboration among schools, business and the state.
- More funding for education is critical.

Interviewees were asked to provide their top suggestion for K-12 educators, responses included:

- Educate students on today's reality of manufacturing and other STEM-related employment.
- Develop students' math skills and encourage STEM curriculum.
- Identify and build upon each child's strengths at an early age.
- Align education with the needs of the community.

Lastly, participants were asked to provide any additional suggestions or observations they would like included in the report:

- Too much pressure on kids to pursue four-year degrees – not all good jobs require a four-year degree.
- Collaboration is key – education provided needs to reflect the workforce needs of the state.
- Focusing on manufacturing, STEM and healthcare is essential.
- Soft skills and good work ethic are important.

Workforce Challenges Identified through Pipeline Study⁵ and Business & Industry Survey

- Job openings and workforce demand will increase over the next two to five years.
- A great deal of this increase will be due to an aging workforce.
- This will lead to unprecedented demand in manufacturing and other STEM-related fields, including healthcare.
- Finding qualified, skilled workers in these fields is a top priority.
- Current perception issues exist around careers in these fields and must be addressed.
- Perception issues also exist around the educational pathways to these careers.
- Soft skills, critical-thinking skills, and good work ethic are challenges faced by employers with the existing workforce.
- Competition for good workers compounds these problems.
- Collaboration among educators and the business community is essential to successfully address challenges.

⁵ In addition to the Business & Industry Survey conducted by the S.C. Technical College System, workforce data and intelligence was gathered during the first phase of the Talent Pipeline Project in an effort to understand the regional economy and industry staffing structure, develop insights into the current workforce, and achieve consensus across disciplines on the industries to target. The intelligence gathered during this process informed these workforce challenges.



Soft Skills

Soft skills are those attributes not defined by technical accomplishments or certifications attained. They are interpersonal skills or character traits that define an individual. Job advertisements from the HWOL database identify hard and soft skills that employers seek. Analysis of data over the past three years indicates that many soft skills are listed as a part of the job postings, such as communication skills, integrity, team-orientation, detail-orientation, problem solving skills and self-motivation. For example, oral and written communication skills appeared in 46,800 job postings in the state, or 27 percent of the total ads, over a four-month period from late 2014 to early 2015. Over 20,500 ads for the same time frame listed the soft skill “integrity.”

- (B) Workforce Analysis.** The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA⁶. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups⁷ in the state and across regions identified by the state. This includes—
- (i) Employment and Unemployment.** Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the state.
 - (ii) Labor Market Trends.** Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.
 - (iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce.** Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.
 - (iv) Skill Gaps.** Describe apparent ‘skill gaps’.

Groups with Barriers to Employment

South Carolina’s workforce is diverse. Different population groups often face varying challenges and barriers and may need more specific or dedicated services to meet their employment and training needs. There are many programs and services described in the Workforce, Education and Training Analysis in section (II)(a)(1) that address the needs of individuals with barriers to employment. Additionally measures are being taken at the state and local levels to further improve programmatic and physical accessibility for LEP individuals and individuals with disabilities, and to improve overall education and employment outcomes for all individuals, but especially individuals with significant barriers to employment.

⁶ Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

⁷ Veterans, unemployed workers, youth, and others that the state may identify.



Hispanics

Hispanics have accounted for a significant portion of the state's population growth. This population more than doubled from 2000 to 2010 and has continued to grow, reaching 254,780 in 2013. Hispanics were responsible for almost one quarter of the state's 2000-2010 population growth and now represent slightly more than five percent of the state's population. Though the growth has slowed to 13 percent of population change since 2010, there is still a growing need for programs that serve the Hispanic community⁸.

Homeless

In January 2013, there were an estimated 6,544 homeless people in the state, including 636 veterans⁹. South Carolina's homeless rate per 10,000 people is 13.7, while the national rate is 19.3. The state's rate of veteran homelessness is 16.1, and for the nation the figure is 27.3. The state's number of homeless increased by 33 percent from 2012 to 2013.

Veterans

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Populations Survey, Annual Average 2014, there were 402,000 civilian veterans aged 18 or older in South Carolina and 185,000 of those are in the labor force. The unemployment rate for this group was 3.5 percent.

Ex-Offenders

As of June 2013, the state had an inmate population of 22,168 with 9,623 inmates being released in 2013¹⁰. The average age of an inmate was 37 years old. The average sentence length is almost 14 years, with the average time actually served being approximately five years. More than half—55 percent—of inmates do not have a high school diploma or GED. Inmates age 17-21 without a high school diploma or GED are mandated to attend school and are assigned to one of the S.C. Department of Corrections' 10 high schools.

Inmates older than 21 who are not high school or GED graduates are served in Corrections' Adult Education programs. For Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, more than 5,700 inmates received credentials in education programs including GED/high school academics (1,209), vocational courses (2,769), and WorkKeys® training (1,756)¹¹.

Juvenile Offenders

In 2013, the S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) handled 16,754 cases, a 27.5 percent decrease from 2008-2009¹². Of these cases, 3,495 were paroled or on probation, and the average offender population at a facility was 369. There is a 15 percent recidivism rate among young offenders in community programs under DJJ supervision. The top five offenses putting a person into DJJ custody are

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau; Census 2000, Annual Estimates of Population, Summary File 1, Table DP-1, U.S. Census Bureau; Census 2010, Demographic Profile, Tables PEPASR6H and Table DP-1).

⁹ National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2014). *The State of Homelessness in America 2014*.

¹⁰ S.C. Department of Corrections. (2013). *Profile of Inmates in Institutional Count*.

¹¹ Palmetto Unified School District. (2012). *Annual Report to the Public*.

¹² S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice. (2012-2013). *Annual Accountability Report*, S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice. (2012-2013). *A Report Card to Our Citizens*.



assault and battery, shoplifting, disturbing school, public disorderly conduct and simple marijuana possession.

Limited English Proficiency

The 2012 American Community Survey lists 98,188 people of foreign-born status in S.C. who were identified as having Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Noncitizens were more likely to have LEP than citizens (foreign-born but naturalized)¹³.

Migrant/Seasonal Workers

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's National Agricultural Workers Survey for the 2009-2010 survey period, 74 percent of all farm workers in the U.S. were born in Mexico, 82 percent were Hispanic, and 72 percent spoke English less than "well." Sixty-three percent had less than a high school education.

In its Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) Report for Program Year 2012, the U.S. Department of Labor highlighted that South Carolina's One Stop Centers had taken 1,931 job applications for MSFWs and placed 1,271 (66 percent) into a job. South Carolina Legal Services, a nonprofit organization providing legal services to low income state residents, notes that there are 28 registered migrant worker labor camps in 12 counties in the state.

Foster Care

The average time a child spent in foster care was 15.9 months in FY 2013, the lowest average during the past four years. In FY 2013, there were 1,220 children waiting for adoption. As of June 2013, there were 3,734 children receiving in-home foster care services.¹⁴

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

For FY 2012-2013, the number of TANF households served decreased to 415,475, a 6.5 percent decline from the previous fiscal year. The average wage of a TANF recipient employed through a S.C. Department of Social Services program was \$8.27 per hour¹⁵.

Individuals with Disabilities

Although many innovative programs and collaborative efforts are in place in South Carolina to expand competitive, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, data shows that a continued focus on increasing rates of employment and labor force participation is necessary.

South Carolina Data At A Glance:

- 74.0% of persons without disabilities aged 18 to 64 are employed¹⁶.
- 29.0% of persons with disabilities aged 18 to 64 are employed¹⁷.
- There remains a 45 point gap in the labor force participation rate (LFPR) between people with and without disabilities¹⁸.

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2012 1-Year Estimates, Table B16005).

¹⁴ S.C. Department of Social Services. (2013). *Annual Accountability Report FY 2012-2013*.

¹⁵ S.C. Department of Social Services. (2013). *Annual Accountability Report FY 2012-2013*.

¹⁶ [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#)

¹⁷ [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#)



- 701,093 people in SC have a disability¹⁹.
- 20,800 persons aged 16 to 20 have a disability²⁰.
- 352,200 persons aged 21 to 64 have a disability²¹
- 55,700 persons with disabilities aged 18 to 64 receive benefits²².
- In 2012, SC's total expenditure on SSDI benefits was \$733,120,000²³.
- 14,490 individuals were eligible for SCVRD services at the end of FFY 2014²⁴.
- Of the total number of individuals who received SCVRD services in FFY 2014, 33.70% were age 14 to 24 at application²⁵.
- 297 individuals were eligible for SCCB services at end of FFY 2014²⁶.
- Of the total number of individuals who received SCCB services in FFY 2014, 16.10% were age 14 to 24 at application²⁷.

Additional data and analysis on employment for individuals with disabilities can be found in the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Portion of the Unified State Plan beginning on page 162.

Employment and Unemployment

Labor Force

An important component of the economy is the labor force in S.C.

By definition, the labor force measures people at their resident location and equals the sum of the employed and the unemployed. Figure 4 illustrates the trends in the labor force (left scale), the number of people employed (left scale), and the number of people unemployed (right scale) from 2005 forward.

Employment in South Carolina declined sharply during the “Great Recession” but surpassed its pre-recession highs after years of slow, steady growth. The steady increases in employment encouraged more individuals to join the labor force and since early 2014, the state’s labor force has experienced solid growth.

¹⁸ [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#)

¹⁹ [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#)

²⁰ [2013 Disability Status Report: South Carolina, disabilitystatistics.org](#)

²¹ [2013 Disability Status Report: South Carolina, disabilitystatistics.org](#)

²² [2013 Disability Status Report: South Carolina, disabilitystatistics.org](#)

²³ [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#)

²⁴ [Fiscal Year 2014 State Vocational Rehabilitation Performance, Rehabilitation Services Administration](#)

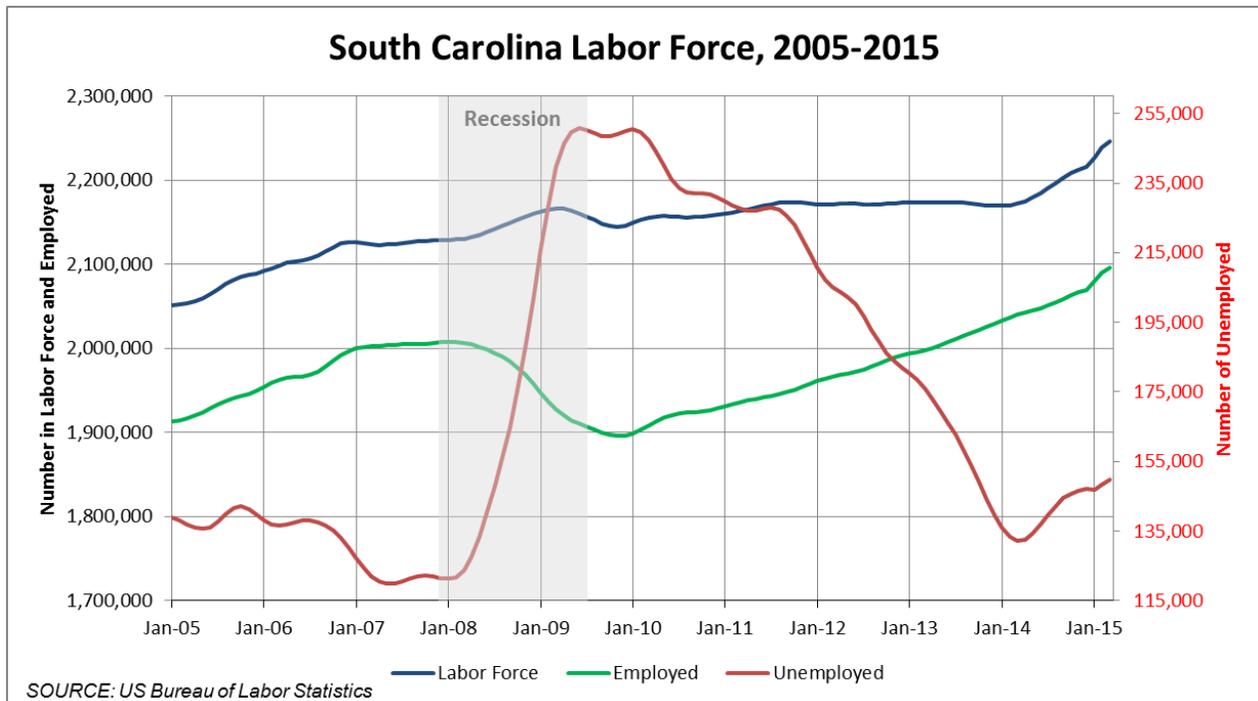
²⁵ [Fiscal Year 2014 State Vocational Rehabilitation Performance, Rehabilitation Services Administration](#)

²⁶ [Fiscal Year 2014 State Vocational Rehabilitation Performance, Rehabilitation Services Administration](#)

²⁷ [Fiscal Year 2014 State Vocational Rehabilitation Performance, Rehabilitation Services Administration](#)



Figure 4



The labor force rose from 2005 to 2007 when it dipped slightly. It ascended to a high of 2,166,582 in March 2009 before it fell again. The labor force remained fairly stable at about 2,172,000 from mid-2011 until the first quarter of 2014 when it began rising again to reach an all-time high of 2,245,987 in March 2015.

Unemployment

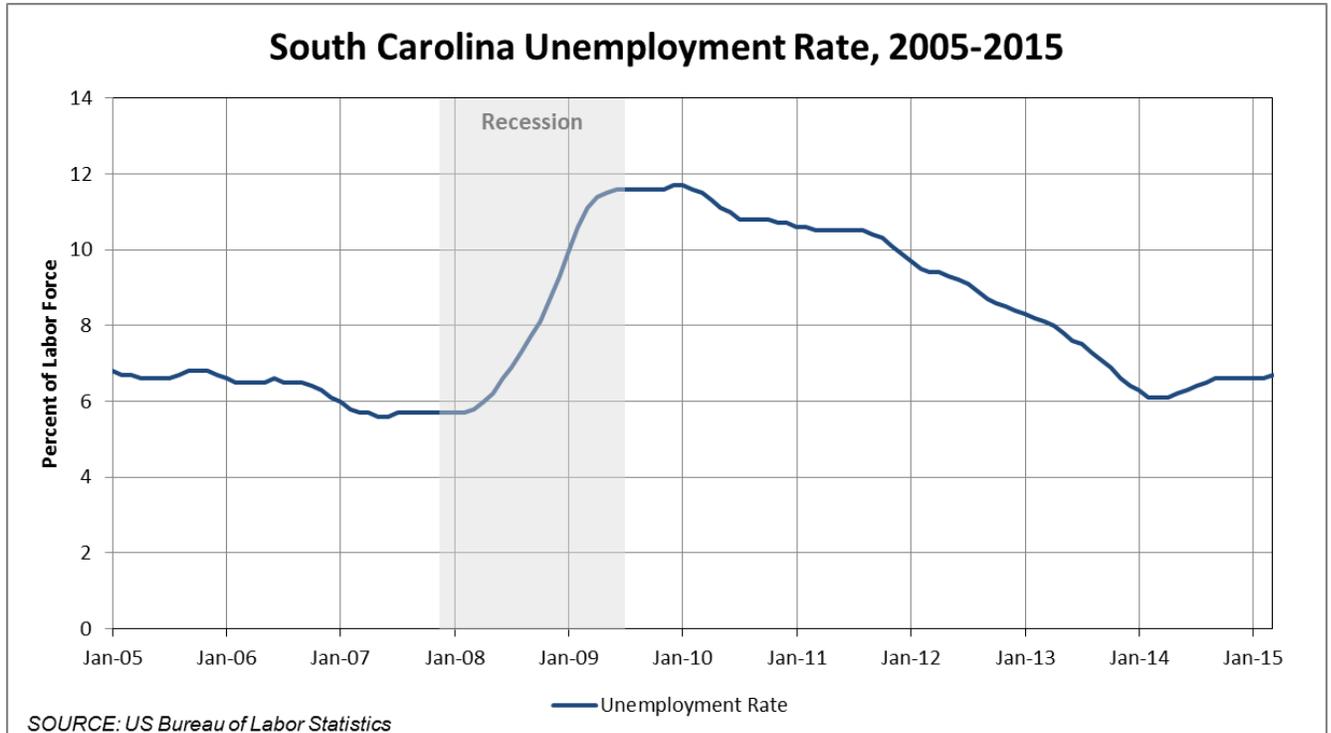
The dramatic changes in the number of unemployed people in S.C. highlights the tremendous impact of the Great Recession on the state. Unemployment hovered around 138,000 people monthly to the middle of 2006 before falling to a low of 119,800 in May of 2007. By early 2008, conditions began to deteriorate, and unemployment skyrocketed to a high of 250,700 people in June 2009. It then began a slow decline to March 2014. As the recovery accelerated, unemployment began to rise again as many people became encouraged over job prospects and returned to the labor force.

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate is the percent of the labor force that is unemployed. In S.C., the unemployment rate remained relatively steady at approximately 6.7 percent from 2005 through the third quarter of 2006 when it fell to a pre-recession low of 5.6 percent in May and June of 2007. In early 2008, the rate began to climb and accelerated in the fall of that year to reach a high of 11.7 percent by December 2009 and January 2010. The unemployment rate then began to fall, reaching 6.1 percent in early 2014. At that point, the rate rose modestly to 6.7 percent in March 2015 as the job recovery enticed people to join the workforce. Figure 5 highlights the movement of the unemployment rate over the period.



Figure 5



Employment

Employment steadily rose over the period 2005 to 2008 where it reached its early recession high of 2,007,667 in January 2008. Employment declined by almost 112,000 people from January 2008 to November 2009 as the recession intensified. Since that low, employment has steadily risen by more than 200,000 to reach a record high of 2,096,110 in March 2015.

Education and Skill Levels

Labor Supply

Table 9 highlights the current educational distribution of labor supply using a variety of sources. The information is presented with four levels of educational attainment — Less than high school, High school diploma or equivalent, Some college or associate’s degree, and Bachelor’s degree or higher.



Table 9

South Carolina Measures of Labor Supply by Education Level								
Education Level	OES 2013	% of Total	Estim 2010 OEP Employment	% of Total	Estim 2012 OEP Employment	% of Total	QWI 2013 Beg Qtr Employ 25+	% of Total
Less than high school	531,300	29%	485,840	28%	559,324	29%	208,446	13%
High school diploma or equivalent	781,960	43%	766,313	45%	792,736	41%	486,671	31%
Some college or associate's	197,110	11%	187,200	11%	222,246	11%	507,458	33%
Bachelor's or higher	302,080	17%	282,491	16%	364,675	19%	354,044	23%
Total	1,812,450	100%	1,721,844	100%	1,938,981	100%	1,556,620	100%
Education Level	CPS 2013 Labor Force*	% of Total	CPS 2013 Employed*	% of Total	CPS 2013 Unemployed*	% of Total	ACS 2013 Employed Ages 25-64	% of Total
Less than high school	146,000	8%	128,200	7%	17,900	15%	142,921	8%
High school diploma or equivalent	557,700	30%	514,800	29%	42,900	37%	442,642	26%
Some college or associate's	522,500	28%	487,900	28%	34,900	30%	571,198	34%
Bachelor's or higher	648,500	35%	628,500	36%	20,000	17%	537,601	32%
Total	1,874,700	100%	1,759,400	100%	115,700	100%	1,694,362	100%
Education Level	CPS 2013 Labor Force**	% of Total	CPS 2013 Employed**	% of Total	CPS 2013 Unemployed**	% of Total		
Less than high school	207,750	10%	173,153	9%	34,597	21%		
High school diploma or equivalent	644,249	30%	582,187	29%	62,062	37%		
Some college or associate's	649,328	30%	602,449	30%	46,879	28%		
Bachelor's or higher	679,471	31%	657,004	33%	22,467	14%		
Total	2,180,797	100%	2,014,792	100%	166,005	100%		

SOURCES: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) & SCDEW, Occupational Employment Projections (OEP) Program, Occupational Employment Statistics Program (OES); U.S. Census Bureau 2013 Quarterly Workforce Indicators Data (QWI) Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program, Current Population Survey (CPS), American Community Survey (ACS).

Notes: Percentages may not add due to rounding.
 * Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Average for Persons aged 25 years and older
 ** Current Population Survey, 2013 Annual Average for Persons aged 16 years and older

The figure includes 11 separate measures of labor supply. The analysis includes base year employment (2010 and 2012) from the past two occupational employment projections, the Occupational Employment Survey (OES) for 2013, the 2013 average annual beginning-of-quarter employment from the QWI, two sets of 2013 annual averages from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey (CPS), and the 2013 one-year estimate of employment from the American Community Survey (ACS).

The employment projections and occupation employment data include an occupation code that is matched to worker characteristics defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and include the typical educational requirements for entry into the occupations. The ACS and CPS data are the result of interviews of respondents as to their level of education. The differences in what is being measured and the method by which the data is collected and disseminated produce numeric and percentage differences in the educational breakdown of the labor supply.

The CPS and ACS data show higher percentages of the total labor supply in the upper two levels of education and lower percentages in the lower two levels as compared to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data (except for the unemployed, which measures a much smaller segment of the population).



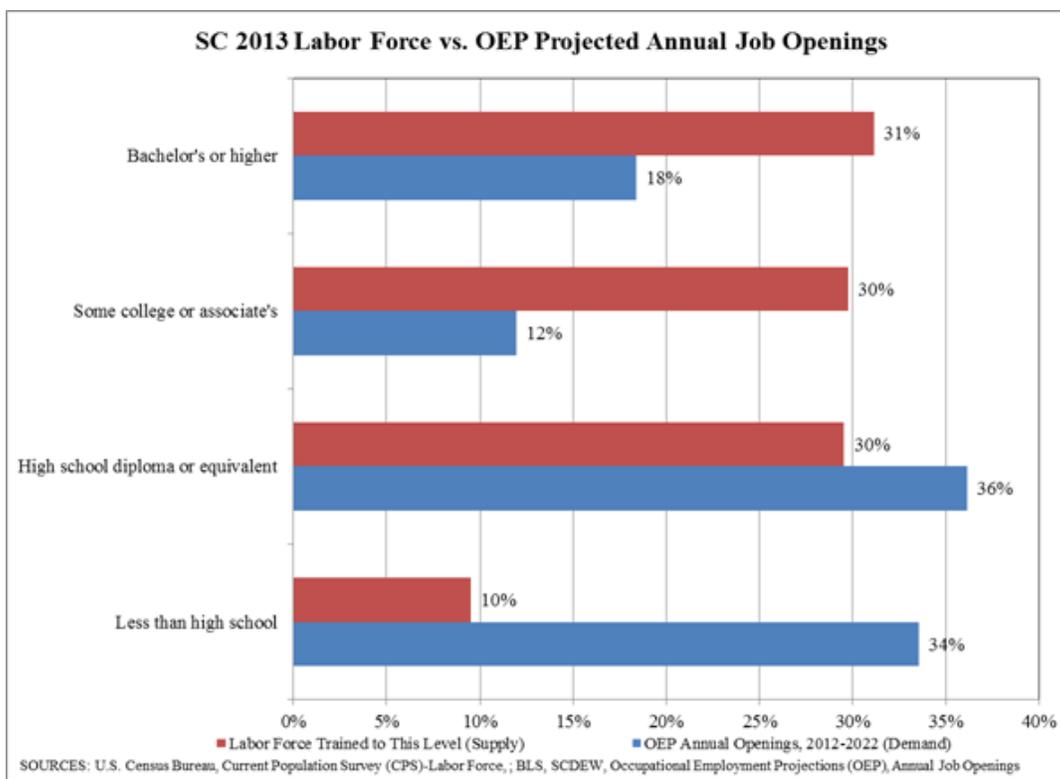
Skill Gaps

Comparison of Supply and Demand

Comparing various measures of labor supply and demand yields an understanding of whether or not supply can or will meet projected demand. Figure 6 provides one such comparison of the available labor force and the projected job openings. For the top two educational categories, the graphic shows that 61 percent of the labor force is trained with at least some college education, while only 30 percent of the job openings are available at those same levels.

Generally, the opposite situation is true for the lower two levels. That is, more job openings are available (70 percent) for a smaller share of the labor force (40 percent). This means that persons not able to find positions at their higher level of training may be required to search for jobs requiring less education.

Figure 6





Another useful comparison is the labor force and the HWOL job postings information. Figure 7 shows a close agreement between the data sets for the Bachelor's degree or higher category with just a two percentage point difference. In fact, the greatest difference for any category is nine percentage points in the Some college or associate's category. Overall, Figure 7 illustrates a good match between labor supply and demand. Taking the top three categories together shows that supply outpaces demand by 91 percent to 86 percent.

Figure 7

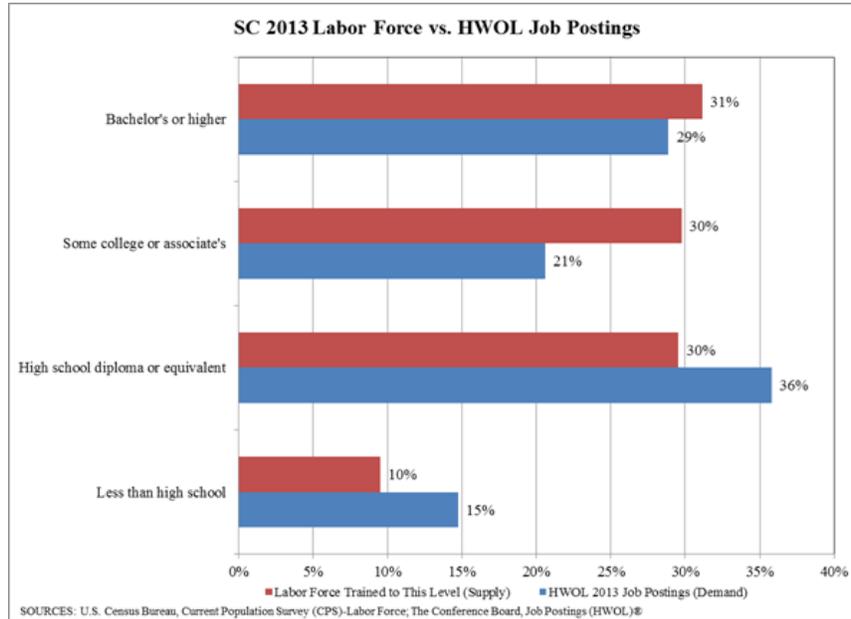
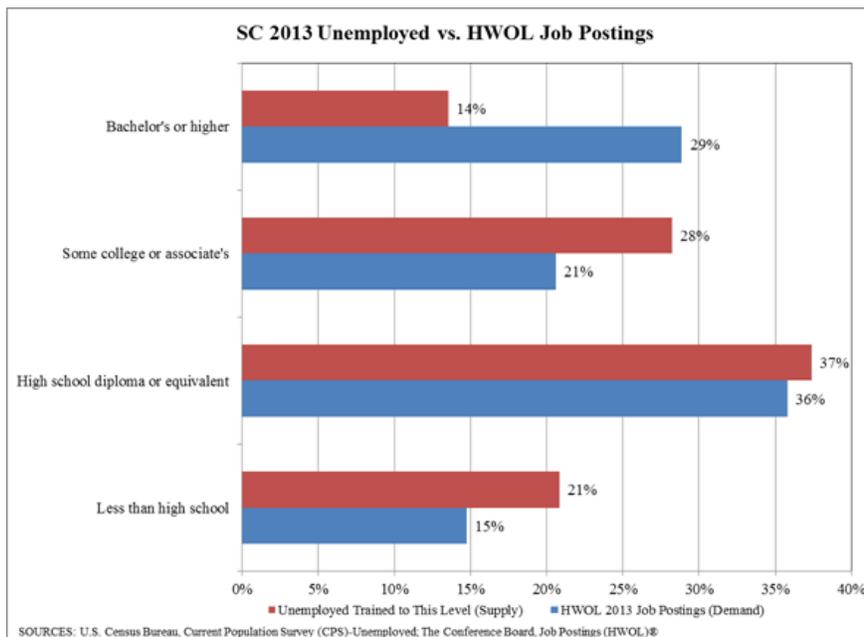


Figure 8 shows a severe supply gap at the upper level with a moderate demand gap for the remaining categories taken together. It compares those unemployed persons who are currently searching for work to advertised open positions. This comparison may understate the supply since more than just those searching are available to accept a posted job. Those currently working at a lower level than desired, those working part-time seeking full-time work, or those not actively searching for work would all be part of a potentially larger labor pool.

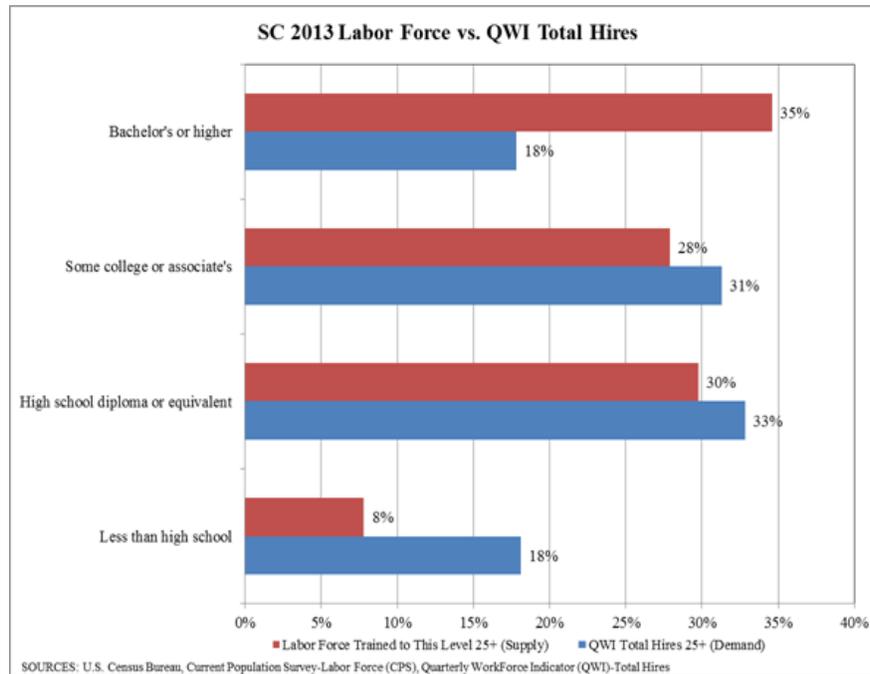
Figure 8





Another labor supply versus demand analysis is shown in Figure 9, which illustrates the labor force compared to the actual hires for persons aged 25 and older. For the Bachelor’s degree or higher category, nearly twice the labor force was available for the actual hires that were made (35 percent to 18 percent). For the two middle categories, there is a close match with the Total Hires exceeding the supply by six percentage points overall. This comparison supports the speculation made earlier that labor oversupply on the upper end of the educational spectrum leads to many in the workforce taking positions for which they are over trained.

Figure 9



A more detailed analysis of the supply and demand gap statewide is shown by comparing the number of completions from public and independent post-secondary schools with projected annual job openings. This analysis uses data from the S.C. Commission of Higher Education (CHE) for the state and compares it to the latest available statewide analysis on the average annual job openings from DEW’s OEP Program, 2012-2022, which shows the projected job openings for an average year over the 10-year period. The listed openings are projected to be available for each of the ten years. The CHE completer database covers the most recently available school year 2012-2013 (July 1 to June 30) and includes the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) code, the institution name, and number of graduates in each of 10 degree classifications. Each CIP code is matched to one of 16 career clusters for comparison to the OEP data. The OEP data details the expected job openings for an average year over the period 2012 to 2022 and includes the occupational code, which is matched to a career cluster, to the educational job requirements to enter the occupation, to the typical work experience needed for the job, and to the on-the-job training needed for the position.

The CHE databases were summarized by career cluster and by degree awarded. The employment projections were summarized by career cluster and by education level required for the job for those categories matching the CHE degree program summaries. A comparison was made for the two primary data sets in terms of the number of graduates to the number of projected job openings for each of the two variables. Tables 10, 11, and 12 present the results of this analysis.



Table 10

South Carolina Postsecondary Completers by Career Cluster, 2012-2013

Career Clusters	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	Total
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	50	95	357	68	12	582
Architecture & Construction	598	189	140	53	5	985
Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications	150	95	2,139	194	25	2,603
Business Management & Administration	525	1,003	3,246	997	15	5,786
Education & Training	271	3,056	4,409	2,092	158	9,986
Finance	235	236	950	154	-	1,575
Government & Public Administration	-	-	739	67	13	819
Health Science	3,147	2,127	1,703	655	756	8,388
Hospitality & Tourism	268	167	474	31	7	947
Human Services	648	610	1,927	802	41	4,028
Information Technology	359	464	473	111	16	1,423
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	153	667	600	42	218	1,680
Manufacturing	1,185	479	31	-	-	1,695
Marketing	31	77	858	40	-	1,006
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	95	591	5,535	840	251	7,312
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	689	144	3	7	-	843
Grand Total	8,404	10,000	23,584	6,153	1,517	49,658

SOURCE: SC Commission on Higher Education (CHE)

NOTE: For CHE, all awards above Bachelor's degree and below Doctorate level were included in Master's.

Table 11

South Carolina Projected Average Annual Job Openings by Career Cluster, 2012-2022

Career Cluster	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	Total
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources		45	86		-	131
Architecture & Construction	211	34	463			708
Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications	126	16	274			416
Business, Management and Administration			2,008	7		2,015
Education & Training	94	178	2,373	574	370	3,589
Finance			1,179			1,179
Government & Public Administration			158	24		182
Health Science	2,395	2,438	494	305	905	6,537
Hospitality & Tourism			120			120
Human Service	270	21	334	161		786
Information Technology		86	886			972
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	214	159	15		214	602
Manufacturing	224	293				517
Marketing			629			629
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics			1,160	19	10	1,189
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	857	18	82			957
Grand Total	4,391	3,288	10,261	1,090	1,499	20,529

SOURCE: BLS, SCDEW, Occupational Employment Projections (OEP), 2012-2022 Projections



Table 12
 South Carolina Postsecondary Education Gap by Career Cluster, 2012-2013

Career Cluster	Postsecondary Non-Degree Award	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctorate	Total
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	50	50	271	68	12	451
Architecture & Construction	387	155	-323	53	5	277
Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications	24	79	1,865	194	25	2,187
Business, Management and Administration	525	1,003	1,238	990	15	3,771
Education & Training	177	2,878	2,036	1,518	-212	6,397
Finance	235	236	-229	154	0	396
Government & Public Administration	0	0	581	43	13	637
Health Science	752	-311	1,209	350	-149	1,851
Hospitality & Tourism	268	167	354	31	7	827
Human Service	378	589	1,593	641	41	3,242
Information Technology	359	378	-413	111	16	451
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	-61	508	585	42	4	1,078
Manufacturing	961	186	31	0	0	1,178
Marketing	31	77	229	40	0	377
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	95	591	4,375	821	241	6,123
Transportation, Distribution & Logistics	-168	126	-79	7	0	-114
Grand Total	4,013	6,712	13,323	5,063	18	29,129

SOURCE: BLS, SCDEW, Occupational Employment Projections (OEP); SC Commission on Higher Education (CHE)

In the overwhelming number of cases, the number of graduates is greater than the number of openings for each of the cluster/degree combinations. A few notable exceptions are:

- More graduates with Bachelor’s degrees are required in Architecture and Construction;
- More graduates with Doctorate degrees are required in Education and Training;
- More graduates with Bachelor’s degrees are required in Finance;
- Health Science is short of graduates at the Associate’s and Doctorate levels;
- Information Technology is short of Bachelor’s degree-holders by more than 400 graduates;
- More graduates with post-secondary certificates are required in Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security; and
- More graduates with Bachelor’s degrees and non-degree awards are required in Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics.

Other studies utilizing data sources and methodologies have come to different conclusions regarding the need for additional graduates at the post-secondary level. The Georgetown Center on Education and Workforce (“Recovery: Job Growth Requirements through 2020”) has projected that 62 percent of all jobs in the state will require some post-secondary education by 2020. Depending on the data source used, this is significantly higher than the educational attainment of the state’s current labor force. Additional in-depth research may be necessary to sufficiently explore the current labor supply and its projected ability to meet future demand.

**Occupations Requiring High School but Filled by More Educated Employees**

It is possible for more than just recent graduates to be able to fill the projected job openings. The oversupply of graduates overall may partially explain why many occupations are filled with overqualified candidates as highlighted in Table 13. Analysis of the two previous school-year completers, not shown, revealed similar numbers of graduates as well as distributions across degrees and career clusters.

Table 13

**SC Selected Top Occupations Requiring High School Education or Less
Filled by Higher-Educated Employees, 2013**

Occupation	Percent Holding Bachelor's Degree or Higher	Percent Having Some College or Associate's Degree
Retail salespersons	28%	41%
Cashiers	3%	31%
Secretaries and administrative assistants	26%	52%
Driver/sales workers and truck drivers	13%	24%
Customer service representatives	21%	44%
Production workers	7%	21%
Janitors and building cleaners	7%	11%
Grounds maintenance workers	7%	18%
Waiters and waitresses	5%	37%
Miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators	15%	32%
Child care workers	14%	29%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey (CPS), 2013 Annual Average

Conclusion

An extensive analysis of educational attainment, current job openings, and projected demand in critical industries illustrates that many students and graduates have awards in professions that have an oversupply of recent potential workers or low employer demand, while projected job openings in several career clusters are bereft of potential graduates. Other findings generally show an oversupply of labor force compared to job demand on the upper half of the education spectrum. Additionally, employers require improved soft skills of their potential employees but find these skills to be lacking

As outlined in the State Strategic Vision and Goals section of this plan, the state's goal is to strengthen the workforce pipeline through middle-skill, middle-wage attainment, the development and implementation of sector strategies and career pathways, including targeted education and training that prepares individuals for high-wage occupations in critical industries, and the implementation of a universal soft skills curriculum that addresses the immediate and future needs of employers. Additionally, measures are being taken at the state and local level to address the needs of individuals with significant barriers to employment. The state will also work toward aligning current workforce development resources through coordinated business engagement activities, integrated information systems, data and reporting, and expanded partnerships and collaborations.



These strategic actions will close the skills gap illustrated in the preceding economic and workforce analysis, and increase the financial stability and economic prosperity of employers, individuals, and communities.

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

- (A) *The State's Workforce Development Activities.* Provide an analysis of the state's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required²⁸ and optional one-stop delivery system partners.²⁹**

The following analysis demonstrates that there are numerous workforce, education, and training activities available to South Carolina's job seekers and employers. These programs and activities prepare job seekers for employment in high-demand industries and occupations, and ensure that new and existing employers have a skilled talent pipeline from which to recruit.

Overview of Core Programs

Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs

Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, is administered by the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) and operated locally in 12 workforce development areas. These areas provide a variety of education and training activities that are tailored to the needs of job seekers and employers in each local area.

Title II – Adult and Family Literacy Act Program

South Carolina supports and encourages adult education and family literacy through fifty-one school-district programs and five community-based organizations. The primary function of the S.C. Department of Education (SCDE) Office of Adult Education (OAE) is to provide technical assistance and consultative services to local adult education programs to enhance the quality of services and ensure that these programs meet their goals and objectives. The OAE has the responsibility to monitor and assess local programs for compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.

Adult Education offers a range of program accessibility, certified instructors, current curriculum materials, especially computer-based materials, instructional resources, and career transition

²⁸ Required one-stop partners: Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

²⁹ Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.



services/resources. Programs provide individual learning plans supported by individual instruction. Instruction is delivered in small groups, whole groups, and in contextualized classroom learning. Program staff consistently monitors attendance and readiness for assessment to move students toward a high school diploma (HSD), high school equivalency degree (HSED) and/or National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), as well as transition them to post-secondary education and/or employment as expediently as possible.

Title III – Wagner-Peyser Employment Services Program

DEW administers the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program, which provides all job seekers access to job search preparation and placement assistance, including: individualized skill assessments, career counselling, job-matching assistance, and skill development workshops aimed at improving employability.

Employers may also benefit from recruitment services including, but not limited to, listing a job, screening applicants against job listings, hosting job fairs, and administration of specialized testing or assessments. Services are available through SC Works Centers across the state and online through [SC Works Online System \(SCWOS\)](#).

Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Act Programs

The S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) and the S.C. Commission for the Blind (SCCB) are the state administrators of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act program (Title IV WIOA services).

S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department

SCVRD provides individualized services across the state through a network of area offices, job readiness training centers, comprehensive evaluation centers, substance abuse treatment centers and staff that serve clients at various itinerant sites such as SC Works, local high schools, and community mental health centers. SCVRD transitioned 6,747 individuals with disabilities into employment in 2014 - 2015, a 5.7% percent increase from the previous year. The department served a total of more than 36,500 people (including all applicants and clients whose services may have carried over from previous years.)

People with disabilities who exit the SCVRD program with a successful employment outcome enhance the quality of their lives and their families' lives by earning paychecks, lessening their reliance on government assistance, and stimulating the state's economy by paying taxes, making purchases, and ultimately contributing to the state's return on its investment in their services. Based on a cost-benefit analysis, it is estimated that these rehabilitated clients will pay back \$4.54 for every dollar spent on their services by becoming taxpayers

S.C. Commission for the Blind

SCCB is the state administrator of the Rehabilitation Act program for the blind and visually impaired providing individualized services across the state through a network of district offices. SCCB also operates the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center in Columbia, S.C. where eligible individuals receive comprehensive vocational evaluation services, adjustment to blindness services, low-vision services, assistive technology evaluation and training services, and pre-vocational training.

SCCB offers services to businesses through the business relations program. These services include: helping businesses assess their human resource needs which in turn helps the agency prepare consumers to meet those needs, and matching qualified job-ready consumers with businesses seeking to hire. Staff educates employers on the benefits and incentives of hiring people who have a disability such as blindness.



Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities

Unemployment Insurance Benefits and Employment Services

DEW is the provider of Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Wagner-Peyser (WP), and is therefore uniquely positioned to help job seekers become reemployed. WP staff provides career services, as defined in WIOA, Sec. 134(c)(2), at all 12 comprehensive SC Works Centers and other affiliate sites. Job seekers can also access labor exchange services remotely through SCWOS. Additionally, staff helps UI claimants file and manage their benefits. When appropriate, referrals are made to partner programs based on individual job seeker needs and individual characteristics.

Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

South Carolina recently started a Sector Strategies and Talent Pipeline Development Project that aims to align strategies, resources and service delivery on a regional economic basis across workforce development, economic development, education and other partners to maximize value for employer-customers and improve career opportunities for students, job seekers and workers. Sector strategies are regional, multi-partner models that align public partners and their strategies and investments to regional talent development needs, as defined by employers in critical industries. The result of productive industry partnerships is the creation of an ongoing talent pipeline that meets employer needs and creates family-sustaining careers for South Carolinians.

A State Leadership Team was formed in 2015 comprised of key executives and staff of the agencies involved in the state workforce development system; other public and education stakeholder representatives from the state, regional and local levels; and business and industry representatives. Their role is to contribute social, political and intellectual power as leaders and stakeholders in the state's broader talent development system. A collaborative data subcommittee was also formed to collect and evaluate data pertinent to the identification of planning regions and state-level target industries.

Regional Workforce Planning and Implementation Teams have been organized in each planning region. These teams will participate in a self-assessment exercise designed to help determine the region's readiness to implement sector strategies, will attend the regional institute in March, and generally advocate for and lead the development of sector strategies and integrated services in each region. At the conclusion of the sector strategies project, each regional team will receive a targeted report summarizing strategic recommendations that can be used to begin implementing sector initiatives regionally.

The success of this project will be measured by developing accountability measures and key performance indicators in terms of ongoing processes that ensure alignment of resources to common talent development goals.

EvolveSC

The South Carolina Workforce Development Board (SWDB) approved \$741,235 to fund an EvolveSC pilot for Program Year 2015. Through EvolveSC, businesses, either individually or as a consortium, can apply for training grants to upskill their existing workforce. Additionally, EvolveSC provides nationally recognized certificate training for new hires in order to meet the requirements for entry level positions. Twenty-five Evolve SC grants have been awarded to fund training in the areas of manufacturing, healthcare, construction, transportation, logistics, and distribution.



Certified Work Ready Communities

South Carolina implemented Work Ready Communities (SCWRC) in 2013, a multi-agency, public-private collaborative initiative. A state leadership team was formed to lead the effort. The team consisted of representatives from the S.C. Departments of Employment and Workforce, Commerce, and Education, the S.C. Technical College System, the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department, the S.C. Manufacturers Alliance, and the Governor's Office,

Through this initiative, South Carolina is utilizing ACT's entire Work Readiness System to measure and close the skills gap. The components of the system include:

1. WorkKeys® Assessments.
2. Career Ready 101, a comprehensive program that prepares and/or remediates users for WorkKeys® testing and NCRC™.
3. NCRC™ work readiness credential to measure and close the skills gap.
4. Job Profiling, a job analysis tool used to match individual skill sets with the skill requirements of available job opportunities.

To become a South Carolina Work Ready Community, counties must meet or exceed goals in earning the National Career Readiness Credential (NCRC™), achieved through WorkKeys® testing, meet or exceed the three-year graduation rate average or improvement percentage, and engage business support. Forty-one counties are currently certified as Work Ready Communities. The remaining counties are in the last phases of qualifying.

South Carolina's focus moving forward will be on maintenance, and leveraging the program for future economic and workforce development. After a county becomes a Certified Work Ready Community, it can build on that status and strengthen its position as a desirable location for new and expanding businesses. To achieve "maintaining" status, counties must continue issuing the NCRC™ to the current, emerging, and transitioning workforce. In addition to their residents earning NCRC™s, counties are also required to select one of three new criteria: improving certificate levels, completing job profiles, or providing college credit for the NCRC™. Counties will continue to engage new employers but will also ask employers who supported this initiative during the certification phase to reaffirm their support during the maintaining phase.

This attention to a robust workforce pipeline and commitment to economic growth continues to attract international business development.

Learn2Earn/Statewide Soft Skills Training Curriculum

South Carolina recently received a \$1.1 million dollar grant through the Workforce Investment Act Incentive grant program. Through this grant, DEW partnered with the S.C. Department of Education and the S.C. Technical College System to help adults and youth earn a credential, such as a high school equivalency diploma or the NCRC, improving their marketability to employers. Service areas were selected based on statistical data, anticipated job opportunities, and potential impact.

Remaining grant funds will be used to implement a statewide soft skills training curriculum. A collaborative task force was formed in 2015 with representatives from DEW, the S.C. Technical College System, the S.C. Department of Commerce, the S.C. Department of Education, the S.C. Department of Social Services, SCVRD, the Council on Competiveness, and a local workforce development area. This task force will identify the framework for a common soft skills curriculum that can be used by all stakeholders.



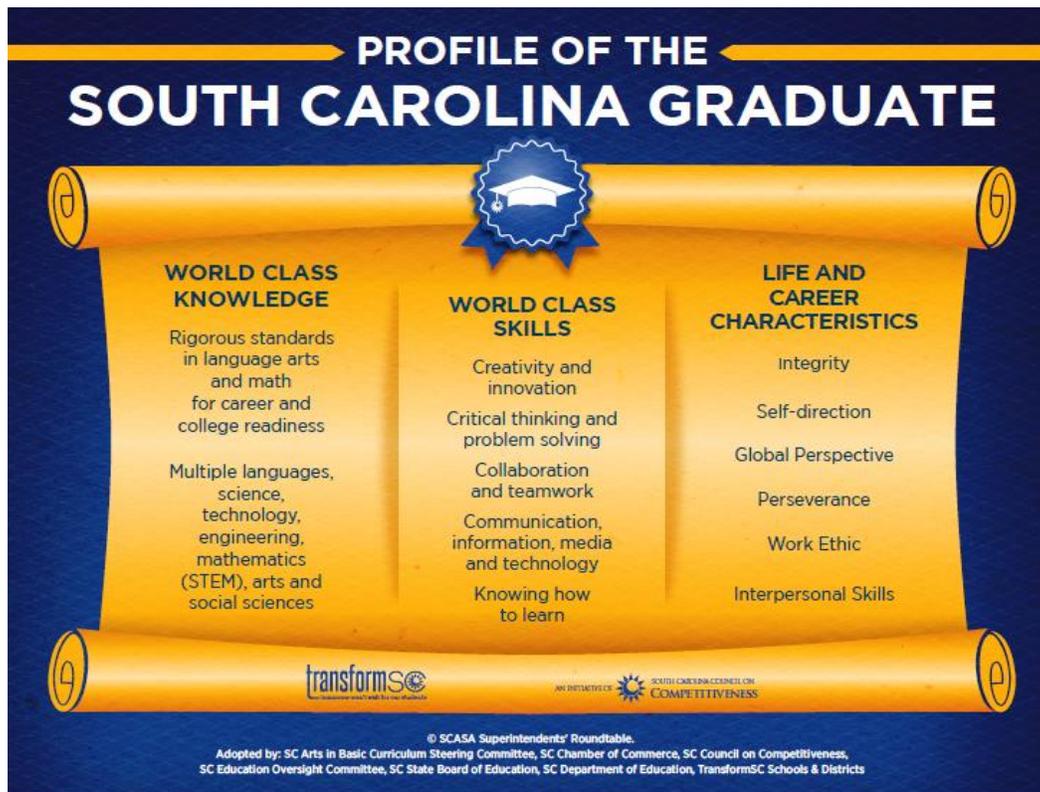
K-12 Education and Workforce Preparation Activities

The S.C. Department of Education is a key workforce development partner and plays a vital role in the creation of a robust talent pipeline. Several recent initiatives demonstrate the department’s commitment to preparing students to compete in the 21st century global economy.

SC Profile of a Graduate

In 2015, the S.C. Department of Education adopted the Profile of the S.C. Graduate. The profile was developed by a coalition of education and business leaders organized as TransformSC, and represents a shared vision of the knowledge, skills, and characteristics needed for students to be successful in higher learning and careers. It also provides a common goal to which all efforts to transform South Carolina’s public education system can be aligned.

Figure 10



TransformSC has identified four innovative practices that help students achieve the knowledge, skills, and characteristics outlined in the profile. Schools and districts that participate in TransformSC implement some or all of these practices in a new model of learning designed to meet the needs of the students in their communities. TransformSC was officially launched in May 2013 and continues to gain momentum and national recognition with promising results. There are currently 37 schools from 19 districts in the TransformSC network.

College and Career Ready Standards

More recently, the S.C. Department of Education implemented new College and Career Ready Standards



for [Mathematics](#) and [English Language Arts \(ELA\)](#). The development and implementation of these standards was in direct response to Act 200, ratified on June 6, 2014, which required the Department to facilitate the process of developing new high-quality, college- and career-ready standards for implementation during the 2015-2016 school year. The new math and ELA standards are closely aligned with the knowledge, skills and characteristics outlined in the Profile of the S.C. Graduate.

WorkKeys® Testing

Through the passage of Act 155 in 2014, the S.C. General Assembly approved the removal of the exit exam as a requirement for graduation beginning with the class of 2015. The Act further provided that all students entering the 11th grade must be administered the WorkKeys® assessment for evaluation of career readiness and to measure a range of essential work skills in applied mathematics, locating information, and reading for information. The assessment results will be used to (1) assist students, parents, teachers, and guidance counselors in developing individual graduation plans and in selecting courses aligned with each student's future ambitions; (2) promote South Carolina's Work Ready Communities initiative; and (3) meet Federal and state accountability requirements.

WorkKeys® was administered to all 11th graders for the first time in spring 2015. Of the 48,613 students with valid scores on all three tests, 87.9 percent earned a NCRC™, which measures and certifies essential work skills needed for success in jobs across industries and occupations³⁰.

Career and Technical Education

There are 42 career and technical education centers in South Carolina offering a variety of programs that correspond with S.C. Department of Education career clusters and provide a pathway for students to continue their education and/or transition to post-secondary employment. A list of career clusters and programs can be found on the Department of Education's website³¹.

Dual Enrollment

S.C. high school juniors and seniors have the opportunity to earn college credit toward an associate or baccalaureate degree while simultaneously completing their high school graduation requirements. College courses are provided by an accredited institution of higher education either at the high school or on the college/university campus. The courses offered through dual enrollment vary by institution, but often include general education and career and technology courses. Dual enrollment helps put students on a college and/or career track before graduating from high school, and as result, helps build the talent pipeline South Carolina needs to support new and expanding businesses.

The S.C. Technical College System provides 95 percent of the state's dual enrollment courses. Overall, the system had 15,283 dual enrollments during the 2012-13 academic year. This number represents a 7 percent increase from 2011-12. At the end of AY2012-13, the Technical College System offered 1,066 course selections – 61 more than the previous year³².

³⁰ [S.C. Department of Education, Sept. 2015.](#)

³¹ [Career Clusters and CATE Programs.](#)

³² S.C. Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education. (2016). *Proviso 117.127 South Carolina Workforce Study.*



Regional Workforce Advisors (RWA)

The S.C. Department of Commerce employs 12 Regional Workforce Advisors (RWA) who bridge the gap between the business and education communities and facilitate collaboration on how best to prepare a workforce that meets industry demands. One RWA is assigned to each local workforce development area (LWDA) and is a resource for business and industry, teachers, administrators, school counselors, and career specialists, and for students and parents³³. RWAs play an integral role in South Carolina's goal to develop and maintain a skilled pipeline of the job seekers who are prepared to fill high-growth, high-demand positions.

STEM Premier. The S.C. Department of Commerce is partnering with STEM Premier – the first cradle-to-career online system that assists students in designing a career pathway, educators in recruiting top talent to their schools, and employers in developing a stable, continuous talent pipeline. This online platform allows students ages 13 and up to build personal profiles showcasing their skills and talents. Colleges and companies can view profiles and connect directly with students to share opportunities such as internships, scholarships and job openings in STEM fields and beyond. In addition to the S.C. Department of Commerce, a number of S.C. businesses and educational institutions are utilizing STEM Premier as a tool to promote economic growth and access for students and businesses to match skills to job opportunities.

Two- and Four-Year Education

South Carolina has a robust network of two- and four-year colleges and universities offering a wide range of training and academic programs. The S.C. Technical College System, consisting of 16 colleges, is the state's largest higher education provider, educating more undergraduates than all other public colleges and universities combined. The Colleges offer credit and non-credit certificates, diplomas and degree programs, and short-term training programs that allow individuals the opportunity to efficiently train for a specific occupation or industry. Additionally, technical colleges deliver high-quality, cost effective continuing education training either on-site or on-campus. This training can be customized to meet the specific needs of business and industry.

Strategically located across the state, nearly every South Carolinian lives within a 30-minute drive to a main or satellite campus. With the majority of future jobs requiring more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree, the technical college system is well-positioned to prepare a work-ready, high-skilled workforce by providing learning opportunities that promote the economic and workforce development of the state.

In addition to the technical college system, South Carolina has three research institutions, 10 comprehensive four-year colleges/universities, and four two-year regional USC campuses. There are also 25 private senior and two-year institutions, and two professional schools.³⁴ There are approximately 1,300 transfer and articulation agreements between the S.C. Technical College System and South Carolina's four-year senior institutions, allowing students to continue their education and ultimately earn a baccalaureate degree.

³³ [RWA Regional Map](#).

³⁴ S.C. Commission on Higher Education. (2015). *About CHE and S.C. Higher Education Quick Facts*. Retrieved from http://www.che.sc.gov/CHE_Docs/ExecutiveDirector/SCHigherEdSummary.pdf.



Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities

A number of unfulfilled jobs in South Carolina require more than a high school diploma, but less than a four-year college degree. With an average salary of \$20.58 an hour, these jobs are projected to grow 17 percent over the 10 year period, 2012-2022³⁵. Developing a skilled talent pipeline that meets the needs of business and industry throughout the state will require the state to increase the number individuals with high school diplomas and high school equivalency diplomas.

Adult Education serves South Carolinians who need a HSD, HSED, NCRC™, basic literacy skills, English language improvement, family literacy, and college preparatory skills. Many of these services are also available to those who are incarcerated. Candidates for Adult Education services are referred by multiple agencies including workforce providers and other community and civic organizations. HSED preparation and testing are frequently funded by WIOA programs, for both adult and youth participants. Adult Education students with identified physical and learning disabilities are provided services based on their needs. SCVRD, SCCB and other organizations, provide supportive services that help individuals with disabilities successfully earn their HSED.

Adult Education also assists adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency; assists adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children, and that will lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family; and assists immigrants and other individuals who are English-language learners in improving their reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English, improving their mathematics skills, and acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

In the 2014-2015 program year, local adult education programs served 35,640 students (including 5,800 English as a Second Language (ESL) students). Of the 35,640 adult education students served, over 13,000 were between the ages of 16 and 24. Programs awarded 11,057 (NCRC™s), 1,505 High School Equivalency Diplomas (HSEDs) and 879 High School Diplomas (HSDs). Prior to 2014, when the GED test was revised, approximately 18 percent of all state HSDs were earned through adult education.

Programs and Activities that Enhance Services to Priority Populations

Youth

The state youth unemployment rate was 18.2 percent in 2014,³⁶ higher than the state's general unemployment rate of 6.4 percent, and many of the state's youth face multiple significant barriers to employment. These statistics affirm the importance of "providing high-quality services for all youth and young adults beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, and culminating with a good job along a career pathway, enrollment in post-secondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship." The WIOA legislation places a greater focus on serving out-of-school or disconnected youth and preparing youth for employment through education and training. It also emphasizes and

³⁵ S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, Occupational Employment Projections (OEP) Program.

³⁶ U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2014 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, *Youth Unemployment Rate in South Carolina for 2014 for ages 16-24*.



increases the requirement that the workforce system meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, including students and youth with disabilities, by increasing work opportunities to improve workplace skills.

As described in the following sections, a number of successful initiatives are underway that will improve education and employment outcomes for youth and young adults, especially youth with significant barriers to employment.

Statewide Youth Coordinator. Recognizing the need to develop and implement coordinated strategies that more effectively serve the youth population, DEW hired a State Youth Coordinator who will primarily focus on developing a strategic vision for serving youth; working with the SWDB and SC Works partners to develop state operating policies that support the state's vision; and providing technical assistance to LWDBs, youth committees, staff and providers that will carry out the vision for serving the youth population.

Youth Standing Committees. DEW also issued [State Instruction 14-03](#), which requires each LWDB to have a youth standing committee. This standing committee is required to include community-based organizations with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth. The State Youth Coordinator is working with each LWDB to ensure that youth committees are in place, meet the requirements of WIOA, and are developing strategies that align with the state's vision for preparing individuals for employment in high-wage, high-demand occupations

Similarly, the SWDB recently added a priority populations standing committee that will strengthen the workforce system through the development of strategies and policies to ensure that individuals with barriers to employment are served.

Youth Apprenticeship. Apprenticeship Carolina™ has a robust youth apprenticeship program that combines relevant education with critical on-the-job experiences, giving South Carolina's youth an opportunity to earn while they learn and ensuring a well-educated, well-trained workforce for South Carolina's continued competitiveness in attracting and retaining business and industry. Youth apprenticeship programs exist in 24 of South Carolina's 46 counties.

To further expand apprenticeships, the SWDB approved \$200,000 in funding for the development and implementation of innovative apprenticeships for youth, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, and veterans. Apprenticeship grants will be awarded through a competitive application process. Applications must address the strategies that will be used to serve the populations identified above and explain how the lead grant applicant will partner with a community based organization, a local workforce development board, and a business to implement the apprenticeship grant. The grant period will be 18 months. Awards will be issued spring 2016.

Jobs for America's Graduates-SC. Jobs for America's Graduates-S.C. (JAG-SC) is a dropout prevention program dedicated to high school and post-secondary academic success. Coupled with the development of career readiness skills in young people, JAG-SC strives to aid youth in securing quality jobs and pursuing a career. JAG-SC serves an in-school, at-risk youth population of approximately 1,100 participants per year, while concurrently providing follow-up counseling and placement services to the previous year's seniors in 25 high schools across the state.

A committed Career Specialist in each affiliated school functions as a teacher, coach, counselor, and advocate for students with documented barriers to success. Over the course of their enrollment, students master 81 competencies identified by business as essential to successful employment, while developing skills in the areas of academics, career development, leadership, civic-mindedness, social



awareness, and community service. This is accomplished through competency instruction and the hands-on involvement of school and community partners.

Since its inception in 2005, JAG-SC has served over 9,000 youth in 19 school districts across the state, launching 1,765 seniors on a path to productive citizenry. The program has consistently maintained an average 95 percent graduation rate and a return to school rate greater than 97 percent since 2006. For five consecutive years, the program has been awarded the National JAG “5-of-5” Award for exceeding all five of the national standards for graduation rate, school placement rates, total positive outcomes rates, job placement rates, and full-time jobs rates.

In PY 2016, JAG-SC will continue to explore expansion opportunities with new and existing partners through the implementation of additional Multi-Year JAG Model programs and additional JAG models, as appropriate.

Education 2 Employment (E2E). South Carolina was awarded a \$1.6 million dollar youth demonstration grant in June 2015 to improve access to high-quality job training and employment services for youth and young adults in North Charleston, an area that has experienced high youth unemployment rates, high crime rates and low graduation rates. The Trident Workforce Development Area collaborated with the City of North Charleston, Adult Education and other stakeholders to develop two satellite youth specific one-stop centers. These centers, which are located in impoverished communities, offer six-week pre-employment programs that combine both classroom instruction and work-based training opportunities.

The grant serves individuals between the ages of 16 and 29 who have been disconnected from the labor force, meaning they are neither enrolled in school nor currently working. The program is preparing participants for careers through short-term occupational skills training and paid work experience in high-growth industries including manufacturing, information technology, transportation/logistics, health care, specialty trades and hospitality. Additionally, the unique program model provides holistic supports such as parenting classes, drug and alcohol counseling, and transportation and childcare assistance to address the many barriers to employment that the participants possess. Through strong community partnerships and the leadership of the Trident Board Youth Committee this project is testing new strategies built on best practices for preparing disadvantaged youth to successfully achieve sustaining employment.

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

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

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



South Carolina is one of three states in the country to receive a grant from USDOL to implement a Job ChalleNGe program meant to enhance and expand the SCNGYC job-skills component. By expanding the services available to cadets who complete the SCNGYC program, USDOL is seeking to improve employment outcomes for at-risk youth.

After graduation or completion of the residential phase of the SCNGYC program, eligible cadets can enroll in the five-month residential Job ChalleNGe in which they will participate in one of the following programs at Aiken Technical College (ATC): Basic Production Operator, Basic Welding, Computer Networking, Electronic Health Records, Patient Care Assistance or Tower Technician. Cadets who successfully complete one of these programs can earn 16-24 credit hours toward an industry recognized certificate. The first Job ChalleNGe session started in January of 2016 with 50 SCYC graduates.

Students with Disabilities. Based on FY 2014 school district report card data, the statewide total for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) has reached 28,738 (SC Dept. of Education). Comparatively, SCVRD opened 2,253 new cases for students referred through the school system, which represents 15% of the agency's total new referrals. Successful employment outcomes for clients referred by the school system increased to 1,041, representing 15% of all agency closures. Although SCVRD has made significant inroads in transition services in recent years by ramping up partnerships in schools and dedicating more staffing to school-to-work transition, to meet the new WIOA requirements and the need indicated by the total number of students receiving IDEA services, additional resources and continued focus on this population will be required.

SCVRD

The SCVRD provides a robust set of student and youth services to enhance the transition from school-to-work or other post-secondary training opportunities. As indicated in WIOA, transition counselors provide pre-employment transition services for students prior to their exit from high school, and SCVRD staff continue to provide services to support placement into competitive employment, or completion of post-secondary training and/or credential-based programs. The number of SCVRD successful employment outcomes for transition-aged youth has grown by 48 percent over the past two years.

SCVRD has agreements with each of South Carolina's public school districts and the S.C. Department of Education for collaborative delivery of school-to-work transition services. SCVRD has a counselor assigned to each public high school in the state, and in some instances an SCVRD counselor is physically located at a school. This entails providing pre-employment transition services to students, including:

- job exploration counseling;
- work-based learning experiences;
- counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring

An example of the enhancement of transition services in the past two years was SCVRD's partnership with Spartanburg School District 6, the local Workforce Investment Board, and Spartanburg Regional Health System for the first Project SEARCH program in the state. This program provides education and job training to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities through three 10-week internships in 12 different departments at Spartanburg Medical Center. As a result, six participating students moved into competitive employment — five of them with Spartanburg Regional Health System. A second Project SEARCH site has been established in the Midlands, with Lexington-Richland School District 5 and Palmetto Health Parkridge. The details of Project SEARCH are reported later in this section.



SCCB

Similarly, the SCCB provides student and youth services, including the pre-employment transition services listed above, to enhance the transition from school-to-work or to other post-secondary training opportunities. It recently increased the transition team to better serve students with visual impairments and/or legal blindness. Although SCCB is working to establish formal written agreements with school districts throughout the state, a counselor is currently assigned to each public high school, including the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind (SCSDB). Transition counselors serve a specific territory and collaborate with teachers for the visually impaired and other specialized staff to improve outcomes for students and youth with disabilities.

The following programs have recently been implemented or expanded to enhance transition services:

- Junior Student Internship Program (JSIP) – The SCCB provides eligible high school students who an opportunity to gain valuable work experience during a summer internship with business partners throughout the state. Participants receive a stipend upon successful completion of the program. This program is also available to college students.
- Career Readiness Workshop – The SCCB provides a four week workshop onsite at JL Mann High School designed to enhance students’ readiness for post-secondary opportunities. Other school districts have expressed interest in this program and the plan is to implement it throughout other school districts in the state.
- Summer Teen Program – The SCCB provides an individualized program for in-school youth who are 14-19 years old. This program reinforces and expands teens’ adjustment to blindness while providing independent living, career readiness and leisure skills. For our older youth, career exploration and meaningful work experience are a component of the program.

Additional examples of programs and services that focus on youth and students with disabilities are provided in the following section.

Individuals with Disabilities

The employment rate for working age people with disabilities (18 to 64) in South Carolina is 29.0%, compared to 74.0% for persons without disabilities (Annual Disability Statistics Compendium). This reflects a 45 point gap in the (Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) between people with and without disabilities. In further detail, only 36.3% of the 24,900 South Carolinians who are blind or have vision loss are employed. Also, 46.8% of the 42,800 individuals with hearing differences are employed and only 21.9% of South Carolinians with intellectual or developmental disabilities are employed. This further illustrates the need for effective utilization of assistive technology solutions and expanding school to work transition programs.

One example of effective leadership in creating an inclusive workforce is the Walgreens Distribution Center in Anderson, SC. SCVRD has partnered with this center since its inception to identify and train



employment candidates. As cited by RespectAbility:³⁷ “A study of Walgreens Distribution Centers” conducted in 2012 showed that “workers with disabilities had a turnover rate 48% lower than that of the nondisabled population, with medical expenses 67% lower and time-off expenses 73% lower.”. SCVRD concurs with the input received that this is critically important given the sectors of SC’s economy that have traditionally high rates of turnover: Hospitality, Food Service, and Retail Trade. Meaningful and strategic outreach to employers and business owners that assists in reducing stigmas and misconceptions regarding disabilities and accommodations can serve to expand workplace diversity.

Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, provides yet another avenue for enhancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Through these regulations, federal contractors and subcontractors have a utilization goal to make sure that 7% of their employees across all job groups are qualified people with disabilities.

Although SCVRD and other organizations that represent individuals with disabilities are actively conducting outreach and providing supports for achievement of this goal, the opportunity to link recent graduates as part of efforts to enhance employment outcomes for students with disabilities is evident.

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

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

Able South Carolina (SC). Able SC is a center for independent living (CIL) that is designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provides an array of independent living and transition services. There are three components to transition services: (1) facilitating the transition of eligible youth with significant disabilities to post-secondary life; (2) assisting individuals with significant disabilities who are at risk of entering institutions, called diversion assistance; and (3) facilitating the transition of individuals with significant disabilities from nursing homes and other institutions.

Able SC is approved by the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) to serve ticket beneficiaries as an Employment Network (EN) under SSA’s Ticket to Work program (discussed in more detail below), and also serves as the host and facilitator for the S.C. Disability Employment Coalition, an organization that addresses employment barriers for individuals with disabilities.

³⁷ Cann, S. (2012). *Disability Assurance*. Retrieved March, 21, 2016 from HR.BLR.com®, Compliance Tools for HR Managers, <http://hr.blr.com/HR-news/Discrimination/Workplace-Diversity/Diversity-inclusion-your-bottom-line/#>, RespectAbility USA.



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

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

Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council). The DD Council is federally funded by the Developmental Disabilities Act (DD Act) and consists of consumers and family members, DD Act partners, and non-governmental organizations. The DD Council provides leadership in planning, funding, and implementing initiatives that lead to improved quality of life for people with developmental disabilities and their families. The council recently funded several pilot projects across the state, including Ready, Set to Go to Work, Project Inclusion, and STEP for SC. In addition to providing employment-training experiences for students with disabilities, these pilot projects also fund the training of job coaches and other support professionals who work directly with students. A brief description of each project is provided below.

Ready, Set to Go to Work

Ready, Set to Go to Work is a pilot project based in the Clover, S.C. School District providing evidence-based training and job experiences for students with disabilities. Students receive classroom instruction on topics such as resume writing, interviewing, socializing in the workplace, and job accommodations. An employment specialist works with local businesses to connect students to community-based employment. Thus far, 1,100 students have participated in the program. This number is expected to grow as the program continues to serve special education students in the Clover High School.

Project Inclusion

Executed by Able SC, Project Inclusion is a pilot project that connects independent living specialists with students with disabilities to promote transition to adulthood with an emphasis on community-based employment in Abbeville, Laurens, and Fairfield counties. Activities include classroom instruction on topics related to employment skills development, self-advocacy during IEP meetings, and rights and responsibilities of individuals with disabilities in the workplace. Several school districts have integrated these activities into their curricula, including Laurens and Fairfield School Districts.

STEP for SC

STEP for SC is a pilot project executed by Community Options, Inc. in the Midlands region that connects high school students with disabilities with community-based career experiences. A job coach assesses students’ job skills and provides training so students are able to participate in community-based



internships at local businesses. Job coaches work with students to transition internship experiences and supports into job accommodations and employment.

SCCB Summer Teen Program. As previously mentioned, SCCB also operates the Summer Teen Program which provides five weeks of vocational exploration, job shadowing and internship opportunities, as well as adjustment to blindness training, work readiness and self-advocacy skills training. The Student Internship Program (SIP) provides paid summer internships to college seniors and juniors in their field of study.

High School / High Tech (HS/HT). SCVRD's HS/HT program exposes high school students with disabilities who are on a diploma track to careers in science, technology, engineering and math. Students tour businesses and technical colleges and engage in internships. The program also promotes post-secondary education.

Rallying for Inclusive, Successful Employment (RISE). RISE is a comprehensive, systematic approach to increasing employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Projects and services include: supporting and participating in the S.C. Disability Employment Coalition, hosting community workshops for families, partnering with the University of South Carolina (USC) to improve data collection on barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities, and providing individualized employment and empowerment services to consumers.

Ticket to Work. Ticket to Work is a voluntary program for people receiving disability benefits from Social Security and whose primary goal is to find good careers and have a better self-supporting future. Consumers may receive employment services through an employment network provider, including career counseling, socialization to the workplace, and job support advice, among others.

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

Project SEARCH. Project SEARCH is an international program first developed in 1996 at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital. There are 300 programs across 46 states and five other countries. South Carolina currently has two Project Search locations – Spartanburg and Columbia – based at regional hospitals.

Project SEARCH is a unique, business-led transition program designed to provide education and job training to young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Students participate in the program for a full school year. They receive classroom instruction, including training in employability and independent living skills, and master core job skills through three 9 to 10-week internship rotations. The Spartanburg Regional Hospital site graduated eight students in 2015 and expanded their class to 12 students for 2016. The Midlands site at Palmetto Health Baptist currently has a class of eight students.

Upon successful completion of the program, students are employed in nontraditional, complex and rewarding jobs in the host-company and community. Along with job skills, the Project SEARCH program gives students self-confidence, opportunities and hope for a thriving future.



Recipients of SNAP and TANF Benefits

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

DSS also employs workforce consultants who work with employers, technical colleges, and community-based organizations across the state to develop training and employment opportunities for SNAP and TANF recipients to assist in achieving their highest level of self-sufficiency. Workforce consultants promote the DSS Work Experience program, the On-the-Job Training program, and the Family Independence Tax Credit which benefits employers for hiring TANF recipients.

Both Adult Education and DEW have on-going partnership with the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program. The Adult Education partnership helps SNAP E&T recipients gain skills, training, and work experience that increase self-sufficiency. Emphasis has been placed on obtaining a high school diploma (HSD) or high school equivalency diploma (HSED), and NCRC™.

Similarly, DEW and DSS are piloting a co-enrollment partnership in the Pee Dee LWDA where DEW provides case management and works with DSS clients to develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP). DEW also provides workshops and helps DSS clients obtain employment. More recently, the Governor announced that the SNAP E&T program will be transferred to DEW resulting in better alignment and coordination of programs that help individuals prepare for competitive employment.

Project HOPE. Project HOPE is a collaborative initiative funded by the Administration for Children and Families, a US Department of Health and Human Services' Health Professions Opportunity Grant (HPOG) which provides funding for training and employment in the allied health field for low-income individuals, veterans, and youth aging out of foster care. Low-income is defined as an annual income less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Participants attend a five-week intensive academic and hands-on training session at a technical college in Florence, Greenwood, Charleston, Rock Hill or Columbia. Upon successful completion of this training, health care career preparation is provided through continuing education and academic degree programs at any of the 16 colleges in the S.C. Technical College System. Participants receive employment-readiness and placement services during the course of the program and again upon completion of the training. Participants also receive case management and supportive services. Transportation, childcare and other needs are addressed and provided through funding, as needed.

Offenders

The S.C. Department of Corrections (SCDC) has an inmate population of 21,000. On average, 850 inmates are released each month. 60-percent of offenders enter prison without a high school diploma and many have never maintained full-time employment. SCDC prioritizes education and vocational skills training and educates inmates on the importance of being prepared to enter the workforce upon release. SCDC has enhanced their training programs by offering a greater variety of vocational skills training, on-the-job training, and creating apprenticeship opportunities. Inmates are encouraged to earn their HSD/HSED and WorkKeys® credential and to enroll in a vocational skills training program. Certificates are awarded after completion of a training program and can be used to demonstrate skills learned while incarcerated.



Additionally, approximately 30 SCVRD counselors statewide provide vocational services on an as-needed basis for 23 SCDC facilities. SCVRD also works closely with the Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon.

Manning One-Stop Pilot. DEW and SCDC are partnering to help offenders find jobs through a work ready initiative that launched in November 2014. With onsite support from SC Works at the Manning Correctional Institution, this venture allows inmates to apply to participate in a series of workshops that develop important capabilities including computer skills, interview techniques, resume writing and work assessments testing. After completing the required workshops and intensive services, job-ready participants are referred to a recruiter or career development specialists for additional training and services. DEW also assists in getting each inmate that successfully completes the program bonded through the Federal Bonding Program.

One hundred-fifty employers across the state have been identified as willing to hire ex-offenders making it easier for staff to place newly released individuals or ex-offenders. As an additional incentive, DEW assists in guiding participating employers through the process of utilizing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) which can reduce an employer's federal tax liability up to \$2,400 for each qualifying ex-offender hired.

In June of 2015, DEW and SCDC co-hosted a job fair at the Manning Pre-Release Center to introduce inmates who have successfully completed the program to second-chance employers from multiple industries, including automotive, retail, manufacturing, construction and more. Out of the 31 inmates who were interviewed, 13 were hired to start work after their release on July 1st, and out of those who have gone through the program to date, 30 have found employment.

Self-Paced In-Classroom Education Program (SPICE). The SPICE program is a voluntary inmate education and employment initiative that provides meaningful educational opportunities, such as vocational skills training, career readiness training, life skills training, and spiritual awareness. This initiative is a faith-based community partnership between S.C. Department of Corrections (SCDC), S.C. Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services (SCDPPPS), SCVRD, and the S.C. Technical College System. The SPICE program consists of two components: an institutional component and a community-based supervision component.

The Institutional Component is operated by SCDC at designated facilities throughout the state where inmates participate in a SPICE program curriculum consisting of educational, spiritual, social/life skills, vocational, health education and wellness training.

SCDPPPS operates the community-based supervision component during which individuals on probation participate in vocational skills training or HSED preparation, attend spiritual events (e.g. Church), and are assigned community/church sponsors and mentors to assist in their transition. Offenders who choose not to participate in spiritual events may opt to participate in approved public works programs or community events with assistance from their sponsor or mentor.

Upon completion of the vocational/educational training element, SCDPPPS agents coordinate with community sponsors and mentors and other service agencies to facilitate offender employment.

Youthful Offender Parole and Reentry Services (YOPRS). SCDC's Division of YOPRS provides both institutional and community-based services for male and female offenders sentenced under the Youthful Offender Act (YOA). Eligible individuals must be between 17 and 25 years of age at the time of conviction and have no previous YOA convictions. The mission of this division is to reduce the recidivism



of youthful offenders by utilizing evidence-based principles and practices that teach accountability, promote public safety, and enhance skill development with a focus on employability.

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

Juvenile Offenders

The S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is a state-level cabinet agency whose mission is "to protect the public and reclaim juveniles through prevention, community programs, education, and rehabilitative services in the least restrictive environment possible." DJJ provides a full array of juvenile justice services to all 46 counties in the state. These services include prevention, detention services, community and residential court-ordered evaluations, probation, short and long-term confinement, educational and rehabilitation services for committed juveniles, and probation/parole aftercare services. DJJ operates five juvenile justice facilities, including the highly secure, long-term Broad River Road Complex (BRRC), DJJ's Juvenile Detention Center, and its three Regional Evaluation Centers, along with 43 county offices serving all 46 counties in the state.

In Fiscal Year 2014-2015 (FY14-15), DJJ served 15,697 juvenile offenders across the state. Of this number, 1,312 juveniles were committed to DJJ (placed in a DJJ secure facility or alternative residential placement) and 3,781 juveniles were placed on probation under DJJ supervision in the community. Combined together, in FY 14-15 DJJ was responsible for the safety, supervision, and rehabilitation of approximately 5,093 juvenile offenders statewide.

Recognizing the importance of effectively preparing juvenile offenders for employment, DJJ developed a platform to equip juvenile offenders with the requisite skills and competencies in an effort to prepare them for a future that is job-ready and crime free. This broad-based initiative has multiple components to include the Career and Technology Education (CATE) courses offered within the DJJ School District, the Job Readiness Training Center (JRTC), and the Job Readiness for Teens (JRT) program. DJJ operates a special school district overseeing the educational program for youth in custody at the agency's five secure facilities, as well as the educational programs operated by nine private vendors that serve DJJ youth. The following are the main components of DJJ's employability platform:

Birchwood High School. Located at DJJ's BRRC in Columbia, S.C., this is a comprehensive high school offering male and female students in grades 9 through 12 a variety of Career and Technical Education (CATE) and academic courses. Students at Birchwood may also earn dual credit through the S.C. Technical College System. In addition to academic subjects such as English, math, science and social studies, Birchwood School offers the following vocational training classes: automotive collision repair technology, automotive technology, carpentry, graphic communications, digital desktop publishing, horticulture for the workplace, integrated business applications, culinary arts, and welding. Work related transitional courses, such as woodworking and upholstery, are also available to BRRC youth. A SCVRD counselor is located at the Broad River Complex (BRRC) to assist eligible students with school-to-work transition and the full range of SCVRD services, including connecting them with local SCVRD staff as they approach release.



Job Readiness Training Center (JRTC). In October of 2013, DJJ opened its innovative Job Readiness Training Center (JRTC) in Columbia, S.C. Developed in collaboration with community partners, the JRTC provides life and job skills classes³⁸ to DJJ youth on probation, parole, or in committed status ranging primarily from ages 12 to 18, and other youth as part of the agency's prevention and intervention efforts. This facility is equipped with video conferencing and projection capabilities and, while centrally located on BRRC in Columbia, the JRTC is accessible to remote sites across the state in county offices and wilderness programs. Instruction is provided by DJJ staff as well as community partners from different disciplines. The class sessions are taught in complete one-to-two hour blocks, with certificates provided to participants upon completion. During FY 14-15, the JRTC expanded its mission to include a job development component. Four regional job developers are now working across the state to connect DJJ involved youth with employment, vocational training and post-secondary education. Almost 2,000 youth were served through the JRTC in FY 14-15.

Job Readiness Training (JRT) Program for At-Risk Youth. DJJ's JRT Program is an employability training program designed for at-risk high school students ages 14-17. The program provides job skills training, career exposure, and community internship/work experience for participants at eight sites across the state. Each site is designed to serve 60 students per year through a 10-week program during after school hours in spring, fall, and summer cycles, with up to 20 students attending each cycle. JRT students receive 15 hours of job readiness skills training using the Tackling the Tough Skills curriculum, earning a stipend of \$7.25 for each hour of successful participation. After successfully completing the first four weeks, students begin working their 40 hour community internships where they also earn \$7.25 for each hour worked. In FY 14-15, DJJ's eight JRT sites served 474 at-risk students that successfully completed job skills training and paid internships/work experiences. DJJ plans to add eight additional JRT sites in 2016, bringing the total to 16 JRT sites across the state that will provide job training and employment services to 960 at-risk high school students each year.

SCVRD has agreements in place with DJJ that include a full-time VR counselor located at the BRRC for provision of services for students and youth while at the facility and at Camp Aspen, as well as a part-time counselor that works with the JRT program.

Veterans

SC Works representatives are available in centers throughout the state to help veterans transition into the workforce. Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists are trained to provide intensive, *priority* employment services to all veterans, including group and individual career coaching, job referrals, resume preparation assistance, career fairs and job search workshops, job training programs, and referrals to training services.

SCVRD has an ongoing partnership with DEW's LVERs and DVOPs to coordinate outreach efforts with federal contractors. Federal contractors are required to establish an annual hiring benchmark for

³⁸ In addition to job readiness training, the JRTC also offers a range of "soft" skills courses designed to enhance a youth's chance of being successful in finding and keeping a job. Course curriculum includes: Tackling the Tough Skills – Attitude, Responsibility, Communication, Problem Solving, and Preparing for the Workplace; Resume and Cover Letter Writing, Interviewing Skills, Social Networking...Face-to-Face; Dressing for Success, Personal Grooming for Young Men & Women; Planning for a Future of Financial Success; Setting Priorities for Life; Time Management & Organization; Business Entrepreneurship; Kids Law; ServSafe™ and Healthy Eating; Becoming Job Smart; and Trades Exposure – Carpentry, Plumbing, Electrical, Welding, and Office and Industrial Environments.



protected veterans and individuals with disabilities, or adopt the national benchmark provided by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). Through this informal partnership, SCVRD and DEW LVERs and DVOPs identify work ready individuals and coordinate employment opportunities with federal contractors.

DEW is a proud supporter and partner of Operation Palmetto Employment (OPE), an initiative launched by Gov. Nikki Haley in February 2014 and supported by the National Guard. The purpose of OPE is to help our service members, family members, and veterans find meaningful civilian careers, and to reduce unemployment for South Carolina's military community. OPE serves all military branches including active duty, retired, spouses and immediate family members.

In October of 2014, the certified Palmetto Military Employers (PME) program was introduced to recognize companies who actively hire and retain veterans and active duty service members. As of September of 2015, 32 PME certifications have been awarded to a wide variety of large and small employers. Outreach efforts with state businesses will continue.

Aging Workers and Workers that Acquire Disabilities

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

As highlighted in the 34th Institute on Rehabilitation Issues titled "The Aging Workforce," services and interventions must be adapted to meet the diverse needs of mature workers. This includes, but is not limited to, timely provision of supports, identification of training needs and process/procedure barriers, and planning for effective strategies to enhance outcomes and work options later in life.³⁹

Local Initiatives that Demonstrate Partnership and Collaboration

These collaborative efforts demonstrate measures taken to provide supports and opportunities for a wide range of individuals. In addition to the activities described in the preceding section, the following initiatives further efforts to address the needs of all populations with barriers to employment as identified in WIOA.

SCVRD Outreach and Referral Development. SCVRD has multiple partnerships in place with agencies, organizations, and business partners for referral development, coordination of services, training opportunities, and employment. These outreach efforts are designed to inform individuals with barriers to employment of the availability of vocational rehabilitation services to assist with achieving and maintaining competitive employment.

Worklink Partnership with ClemsonLIFE. The ClemsonLIFE Program offers a two-year basic program that incorporates functional academics, independent living, employment, social/leisure skills, and health/wellness skills in a public university setting with the goal of producing self-sufficient young adults. An advanced program is available for students who have demonstrated the ability to live safely and

³⁹ The Aging Workforce Primary Study Group, 34th IRI, University of Arkansas CURRENTS, 2009.



independently, sustain employment, and integrate socially during the basic program. The advanced program emphasizes workplace experience, community integration and independent living with transitionally reduced supports. Students who complete the basic or advanced programs receive corresponding certificates of post-secondary education.

The Worklink Workforce Development Area partners with the ClemsonLIFE program to arrange and host visits to the Clemson SC Works Comprehensive Center. Local restaurants provide food and refreshments, and students learn about services provided by SC Works partners, including Vocational Rehabilitation, Wagner-Peyser, and WIOA.

In addition to ClemsonLIFE, there are similar post-secondary programs at the University of South Carolina, the College of Charleston, Coastal Carolina University, and Winthrop University. SCVRD has had a liaison assigned to each since its inception to assist with vocational skills incorporated into the program.

IMPACT Marion County. IMPACT is a partnership of workforce, economic development, elected officials, education, faith-based community and business partners aimed at promoting and supporting economic growth in Marion County. In 2014, IMPACT hosted a Career Fair and Small Business Expo designed to expose job seekers to career and educational opportunities and information about how to prepare for jobs based on the demands and requirements of local employers. Resources for small business success were also available. Approximately 1,000 job seekers and small business owners attended the event. In PY 2016, IMPACT plans to be formally organized and positioned to seek grants from public and private funding sources.

Upstate Fatherhood Coalition. In partnership with the Upstate Fatherhood Coalition, the Greenville Workforce Development Area provides employment and training services including, career services and job-development assistance, to non-custodial parents whose child support is in arrears. The project is aligned with local and state strategies, such as the NCRC initiative. Although post-program successes have not been quantified, it is clear that the partnership between Greenville LWDA and the Upstate Fatherhood Coalition has and will continue to create new opportunities to mutually serve job seekers, including those who may have non-violent criminal records.

Within Reach Initiative. Within Reach is a partnership between Aiken Technical College and Aiken County Public School District that is designed to ensure that students know the importance of college before high school graduation and that they make plans to attend college immediately before life's challenges intervene. As part of the initiative, Aiken Technical College provides financial aid workshops, offers dual enrollment courses, and places a representative at area high schools that is available to assist students with their transition from high school to college. The partnership is expected to be expanded to local middle schools for earlier intervention.

Partnership to Overcome Hunger. Palmetto Youth Connections (PYC) is a WIOA youth program provider in the Trident Workforce Development Area. Noticing a decline in participation levels, staff surveyed the participants to determine if there were barriers preventing youth from attending GED classes and workshops on a regular basis. Staff found that hunger was a trend across the surveys.

Through an on-going partnership with Midland Park Community Ministries, PYC is now able to provide participants with breakfast and snacks on a daily basis, and attendance and test scores have improved. PYC and Midland Park Community Ministries will continue partnering to provide meals for WIOA youth participants, leverage resources, and implement new and effective ways to provide continuous community support.



Operation Educate. A voluntary program, Operation Educate is a training and workforce development program serving the offender population housed at the Spartanburg Detention Center. Spartanburg Community College provides job and soft skills training, and vocational skills training in office assistance, small engine repair, landscaping, floral design, cake decorating, and manufacturing.

Eight inmates were chosen to participate in the office assistant pilot program that started in April 2015. The training consisted of basic computer skills, Microsoft Office Suite, QuickBooks, grammar and writing, office and telephone etiquette, analyzing and solving problems, communication skills, working under pressure, ethics, and work readiness. All eight participants successfully completed the program and were formally recognized at a graduation ceremony in May 2015.

A second class of inmates recently completed the manufacturing helper pilot program. All of the students scored above local, state, and national averages. A small graduation ceremony was held in December, 2015.

In partnership with the Upstate Workforce Board, SC Works Upstate, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Department, Spartanburg Community College will continue to provide job skills and vocational skills training to inmates. This effort is proving to have a significant impact on the inmates who participate in training, their families and the local community.

Back to Work Program. The Back to Work Program was launched by the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) in collaboration with Transitions Homeless Recovery Center and the Main Street United Methodist Church, Columbia, S.C. This program was created to provide individuals living in transitional housing, a homeless shelter in this instance, with the practical skills they need to find gainful employment and to help them reintegrate into the workforce.

The five-week program begins with workshops designed to identify individuals' barriers to employment and provide them with tools to overcome personal obstacles. The program's training includes career exploration, conflict resolution, transferable job skills, building self-esteem and maintaining financial stability. Each component of the program is designed to effect immediate positive change. The program's goals are not only assisting participants with practical skills and obtaining employment but also teaching them how to sustain long-term employment.

The key to success for a Back to Work participant is the assignment of a job coach who mentors and holds the participant accountable throughout the program. Job coaches provide intense case management, assist with job placement, and guide participants as they transition into the workforce. This process may continue for up to 90 days upon the individual's graduation from the program.

After graduation, participants attend a special hiring event with employers who have committed to interviewing Back to Work Program participants for their current job openings. Partnerships with Dress for Success Columbia and the Columbia Suit Project provide professional work attire for the graduates for interviews and once they are employed.

The first class of the Back to Work Program graduated 19 participants on Dec. 11, 2015. As of February 2016, the program has successfully placed 16 of the 19 participants in gainful employment.

Programs and Activities that Impact Business/Employer Services

SC Works, in collaboration with economic development partners, can assist businesses throughout the entire economic lifecycle, from expansion, to down-sizing, to stabilization, to growth.



readySC™

readySC™ is a division of the S.C. Technical College system and is a key contributor to the state's economic development efforts. Recognized nationally as a premier program of its kind, readySC™ works with the state's 16 technical colleges and focuses on the recruiting and initial training needs of new and expanding organizations for little or no cost. This continues to be a top incentive for our state with more than 85 percent of relocating companies ranking ready SC™'s services as playing a significant role in their ultimate decision to move to South Carolina.

E-Zone

The E-Zone program incentivizes education and training by allowing S.C. manufacturing companies to utilize the Job Retraining Tax Credit (E-Zone) program, which reimburses training and education related expenses. Subsequent to approval by the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, companies may claim a credit of \$1,000 per employee against withholding taxes.

Business Services Teams

Each LWDA has a business services team with representatives from multiple partner agencies that work together to deliver coordinated and efficient services to employers. These teams meet regularly to organize employer contacts, job fairs, and hiring events. Business services staff focus on building relationships with employers, trade associations, community, civic and non-profit organizations, and use these relationships to better understand the needs of employers and to provide awareness of the available employer services and resources.

SCVRD Business Partnership Networks (BPN)

SCVRD has a Business Partnership Network (BPN) in each local office to gain input from local businesses regarding employment trends and needs. These networks are led by the local business development specialists, who work closely with local businesses to identify needs, improve service delivery, identify training options and provide skilled candidates with disabilities for employment, and coordinate VR rehabilitation engineering consultation for worksite accommodations for employees with disabilities. Business partners provide guidance regarding SCVRD resources and activities.

Apprenticeship Carolina™

The S.C. Technical College System established Apprenticeship Carolina™ in 2007. This program works to increase awareness and use of Registered Apprenticeships. The growth of Registered Apprenticeship programs has been phenomenal. Since 2007, the number of programs has increased eightfold from 90 to 763 and the number of apprentices is nearly 13,700 from a mere 777 in 2007. Because of its innovative approach and fast growth, Apprenticeship Carolina™ is held as a model for the nation.

Apprenticeship Carolina™ has a youth apprenticeship program that is growing in popularity. Designed to create crucial recruitment pipelines of young, skilled workers, this program works to decrease costly turnover and allows companies to influence, mold and shape potential future employees.

The S.C. Technical College System recently received a substantial grant that will allow the Apprenticeship Carolina™ program to increase the number of manufacturing apprenticeships and lay the foundation for future development and growth of new programs in professional and informative services. The initiative will expand current innovations used to inform companies about apprenticeship programs, expand technical services in design and administration and fund post-secondary education and training for apprentices. Companies across the state will be able to apply for grants to offset training costs associated with their respective apprenticeship program and the System's 16 technical colleges



across the state will serve as the providers of job-related education for the programs connected with the grant.

On-The-Job and Incumbent Worker Training Programs

LWDAs use work-based training models, such as on-the-job training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), to provide opportunities for participants and employers in both finding high-quality work and in developing a high-quality workforce. OJT is primarily designed to provide a participant with the knowledge and skills necessary for full performance of the job, whereas IWT is designed to ensure that current employees are able to gain the skills necessary to retain employment and advance within the company. For Program Years 2013 and 2014, approximately 890 individuals received OJT and another 1,200 participated in IWT through the WIOA program.

Layoff Aversion Strategies

State level business services staff partner with LWDAs to provide effective rapid response services focused primarily on promptly delivering comprehensive solutions to businesses and workers in transition. Rapid Response IWT is routinely used as a layoff aversion strategy to provide current employees with the skills needed to avert a layoff.

In situations where a layoff or closure cannot be averted, basic career services are delivered to dislocated workers enabling them to transition quickly into new employment. Eligible dislocated workers may also receive training and/or education through WIOA or TAA.

Defense Diversification Grant

South Carolina received a defense diversification grant through the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA), Department of Defense (DoD). Through this grant opportunity, the state was able to develop a community adjustment and economic diversification plan in response to workforce reductions in the defense sector.

Defense firms play an important role in South Carolina's economy, providing high-paying jobs that require a trained and dedicated workforce. Average wages for direct employees are around \$60,816, higher than the state average income of \$38,427. Even those indirectly employed in the industry earn an average wage of \$42,417.

The DoD budget cuts already imposed and those looming in the future pose a significant risk to the short-term and long-term sustainability of the defense firms. In the last several months, there has been a spike in layoff activity as federal contracts are not being renewed or are being reduced.

The goal of South Carolina's response strategy is to assist defense firms in reducing their dependency on (DoD) procurement activity by encouraging them to diversify into other growing industries, primarily the aerospace industry. Defense firms will be provided planning and market exploration assistance. Simultaneously, a thorough supply chain analysis will be conducted on South Carolina's defense industry to identify the Tier I, II, III and IV suppliers and the potential economic impact the state and regions are facing with pending defense budget cuts. The ultimate goal of this analysis is to identify which businesses are most able to diversify into new markets and allow the state and regions to identify at-risk communities, creating the opportunity to develop community diversification strategies.



(B) *The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities.* Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

In an effort to develop a unified plan that is inclusive of all partners, programs and initiatives, the Unified Plan work group created a planning survey that was sent to core, mandatory, and optional partners. The survey questions address issues related to program strengths and weaknesses, alignment and coordination, accessibility, and assessment and evaluation. The following analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development programs is based on those survey results.

Strengths of the South Carolina Workforce Delivery System

Priority for State Leadership. Workforce development is a top priority for Gov. Haley and the General Assembly. Gov. Haley supports the work being done by multiple partner agencies and programs across the state that train and educate job seekers and connect them with employers who are seeking skilled individuals for high-demand, high-wage jobs.

During the 2015 session, the S.C. General Assembly issued Proviso 117.127, which requires the S.C. Department of Education, S.C. Department of Commerce, S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, and S.C. Technical College System to survey the workforce needs of businesses and to use the survey results to develop a pathways program to facilitate seamless transition from education to workforce industries with crucial shortages.

In January of this year, the House passed the South Carolina Workforce Development Act (H. 4145). As proposed, this Act will create a Coordinating Council for Workforce Development that will develop a five-year comprehensive workforce plan. The Act also requires the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, the S.C. Department of Education, the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, and the S.C. Department of Commerce to implement a Pathways Initiative that aligns with the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) to improve outcomes and address critical workforce development needs statewide. Through this Act, the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education shall establish a Workforce Scholarships and Grants fund to be used for tuition and education related to expenses for career training and certification programs. These recent legislative actions represent the Assembly's commitment to ensuring that South Carolinians are prepared for occupations in high-growth, high-demand industries, and that new and existing employers have a skilled pipeline from which to recruit.

Additionally, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) continues to be engaged and passionate about the needs of South Carolina's job seekers and employers alike, and to develop strategies and supporting policies that align with Gov. Haley's vision for workforce development.

Partnership and collaboration. At both the state and local levels partners are being identified and are working in collaboration to develop a customer-focused, outcome-driven workforce delivery system. In several comprehensive centers across the state, partners are co-located to provide streamlined services to job seekers and employers. In instances where partners are not physically co-located, staff have developed and implemented strong referral processes that ensure that job seekers receive appropriate services. However, referral processes often vary by local area and there is an opportunity to establish consistency through a statewide referral policy and process.

Perhaps, the strongest evidence of partnership is the ongoing development of a state partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Phase I of the MOU covered 12 agencies and was signed by 14 entities, including the SWDB and Gov. Haley, in 2015. The emphasis of Phase I is coordination of services



among partners to foster cooperation, better education, and specify the responsibilities of state agencies and mandatory partner programs under WIA/WIOA. Phase II, which will be executed in 2016, will incorporate and include Phase I and establish shared accountability of and resources for SC Works center services.

Service Delivery to Priority Populations. South Carolina recognizes the opportunity to enhance and better coordinate the services provided to at-risk populations, including Veterans, disconnected youth, individuals with disabilities, offenders, and recipients of public assistance. As part of the WIOA planning process, a collaborative work group has been formed to examine ways to better serve these individuals through the workforce development system, such as:

- developing and implementing a universal intake process that reduces duplication and streamlines the service delivery process;
- creating an effective statewide referral and follow-up system to ensure that job seekers receive the appropriate services from partner programs;
- making the delivery system accessible to all job seekers, especially those with disabilities and language barriers; and
- reaching outside of the traditional delivery system to serve the hard to serve.

Additionally, each LWDB is required to have a standing committee that addresses issues related to serving youth and one that addresses issues related to serving individuals with disabilities. The SWDB will also form a standing committee that will address the needs of all priority populations.

Weaknesses of the South Carolina Workforce Delivery System

Although there are many positive activities that are strengthening the state workforce development system, the following areas of opportunity have been identified:

Limited System Integration. WIOA, TAA, and Wagner-Peyser share a case management and data and reporting system that is separate from the systems used by Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Commission for the Blind. The use of individual information management systems creates a significant barrier to both program alignment and common performance reporting. A Systems Alignment and Performance Accountability work group has been formed that will continue to examine and vet options for data sharing and coordination.

Limited Program Alignment and Coordination. Workforce, economic development, and education partners are engaged at the state and local level. In many LWDBAs these partners are co-located in the comprehensive centers. However, there is an opportunity to better align and coordinate programs and services to enhance collaborative efforts and resources. A work group has been formed to develop strategies for making the workforce development system more efficient for job seekers and employers.

Limited Resource Sharing. Funding for WIOA and many other workforce and education programs continues to decrease; more than ever it is important for partners to share and leverage resources, and to explore other funding options (i.e. competitive grants) where appropriate. Phase II of South Carolina's state partner MOU will focus on the responsibility of each partner to contribute resources to the SC Works delivery system.

Inconsistent Service Delivery. Most workforce, economic development, and education programs are managed locally, and the quality of service delivery may vary by area. A number of measures are underway to improve the consistency of service delivery, including: the implementation of SC Works



Center Standards and WIOA Eligible Training Provider provisions. The SC Works Center Standards address service delivery to job seekers and employers and center management, and will be used by LWDBs to evaluate effectiveness, programmatic and physical accessibility, and continuous improvement of the SC Works delivery system. Along the same lines, training providers are now required to submit program data and meet certain requirements to be eligible to receive WIOA training funds. This will help ensure that participants receive high-quality training in high-demand, high-wage occupations.

Job Seeker Interest Inconsistent with In-Demand Occupations and Industries. Local WIOA programs use Labor Market Information (LMI) to determine high-demand occupations and industries for which they will fund training programs. While demand is up, the perception of manufacturing and other STEM related occupations as viable careers still needs improvement. As such, there is an opportunity to better educate job seekers about the high-demand, high-wage occupations in South Carolina.

(C) *State Workforce Development Capacity. Provide an analysis of the capacity of state entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.*

South Carolina is positioned to continue providing high-quality workforce development programs and activities that prepare job seekers for high-demand, high-wage careers. The state's focus on partnership and collaboration will lead to better alignment of programs and resources creating a more customer-centered workforce delivery system. The State will also continue to use the work groups identified in Section IV to build upon strengths and address the opportunities for improvement identified above.

Job Seeker Services. There is at least one comprehensive SC Works Center in each LWDA and one or more satellite center or access point. Through these centers, job seekers can access WIOA programs and Wagner-Peyser Employment Services. Individuals can also get assistance filing for UI benefits and reemployment assistance, including but not limited to: looking for a job, resume preparation, and interviewing skills workshops. Job seekers can also access employment services and manage UI benefits remotely using SC Works Online Services (SCWOS) and the MyBenefits portal, respectively. In many local areas, partner programs are co-located or staff is cross-trained to provide information or make appropriate referrals to other programs and services.

Adult Education providers delivers adult education and literacy activities, including GED preparation and testing, through 51 school-district programs, one of which is the Palmetto Unified School District of S.C., and five community-based organizations. Adult Education teachers are trained educators who are required to hold and maintain valid S.C. teacher licenses. Additionally, programs are flexible in meeting the demands of individuals seeking services.

SCVRD has 23 area offices and 24 work training centers across the state. Through a team approach, SCVRD staff work to prepare clients for employment opportunities within their local labor market, as well as develop relationships with business and industry to individually match clients with employment opportunities that fit their strengths, abilities, capabilities, and skill sets. Comprehensive programs, including occupational therapy and physical therapy services, rehabilitation engineering, IT training centers, and two residential alcohol and drug treatment centers further expand the capacity of SCVRD to meet the individualized needs of eligible individuals with disabilities.

There are a number of education and training opportunities available to job seekers through the technical college system and private providers. The S.C. Technical College System has a network of 16 technical colleges serving the 49 counties. Many of these colleges have satellite campuses making them accessible to job seekers in rural counties, and offer online and non-traditional formats to reach those



who cannot participate in the traditional classroom experience. IWT, OJT, and apprenticeships are also commonly used benefitting both the job seeker and the employer.

Business/Employer Services. Employers can use the SC Works delivery system for employee recruitment and other services. Additionally, integrated business services teams have been organized in all local workforce development areas. The makeup of these teams varies by area but the idea is to develop strategic partnerships with other agencies and to align the resources and services provided by each. This structure reduces duplication, ensures that employers have a single, coordinated point of contact, and ensures services are delivered efficiently. Serving more employers is a key focus of the SWDB as demonstrated by the development and implementation of business engagement metrics that require the state to serve 10,000 new employers in PY 2015. Each LWDA will contribute to this goal.

Partnership and Collaboration. Reduced funding is a very real concern for many programs. The SWDB, through its efforts to develop and strengthen partnerships with workforce partners, has positioned the state to work toward aligning programs and funding so that programs can continue to provide the same level of high-quality service with less funding. The SWDB Collaboration and Partnership Committee spearheaded the development of Phase I of South Carolina's state partner MOU and Phase II, which will focus significantly on partner resource sharing, will be executed in 2016. Additionally, the continued use of collaborative work groups allows partners to gain a better understanding of the resources available and to identify opportunities for braiding and leveraging resources.

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

- (1) Vision. Describe the state's strategic vision for its workforce development system.**
- (2) Goals. Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the state's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—**
 - (A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment⁴⁰ and other populations.⁴¹**
 - (B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.**

The Vision and Goals for South Carolina's Workforce Development System: *South Carolina will transform its workforce development system through innovative and collaborative practices into an effective, customer-driven workforce system that facilitates financial stability and economic prosperity for employers, individuals and communities.*

⁴⁰ Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

⁴¹ Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.



To achieve this vision, workforce and economic development leaders must work together to develop a comprehensive strategic workforce plan focused on regional strategies that will:

- 1) Strengthen the state's workforce pipeline through: middle skill/wage attainment; creation of education and career pathways; and development of one, consistently delivered soft skills curriculum that addresses defined competencies.
- 2) Align the state's current public workforce development resources to ensure a customer-centered delivery system for South Carolina's businesses and job seekers by: coordinating business engagement activity; building and using data driven decision making and evaluation methods; and expanding specific partnerships and collaborations to include outreach to populations experiencing barriers to employment.

In her 2014 *State of the State Address*, Gov. Nikki Haley stated that South Carolina has the fastest growing economy on the east coast. In the prior year, the state announced over 43,000 new jobs; saw almost \$10 billion invested in the state; experienced 186 expansions of existing companies; and witnessed the revival of the manufacturing industry, with the announcement of more than 26,000 new manufacturing jobs. The state continues to recruit new businesses and see expansions in existing industries at a high rate.

In the 2015 *State of the State Address*, Gov. Haley highlighted the importance of building a strong, skilled workforce to meet the needs of all the new and existing businesses, and declared workforce development the priority of her second term in office. She challenged her entire Cabinet to get creative on how to put people back to work. Engaging the entire cabinet was the impetus of the widespread collaboration for workforce development to follow.

As the core programs work together to implement WIOA, there has been and continues to be enhanced progress in building a unified workforce system. Throughout this plan there is significant evidence of new and expanding workforce development partnerships, collaboration, and coordination in the state.

Strategic Goals and Corresponding Actions

1. Strengthen the Workforce Pipeline

The beginning of 2015 found South Carolina businesses with 70,000 job openings, and approximately 143,000 unemployed South Carolinians looking for work. (SCDEW, 2015) This gap is believed to be caused by two factors: (1) Labor market data shows "critical needs" jobs account for 54 percent of the workforce openings while only 28 percent of people have the necessary skills to fill these jobs (BLS, 2013); and (2) A 2010 survey (Nagle, 2010) of business leaders across the state, and subsequent discussions with business leaders, finds that most of the failures among individuals in their job placement are because of deficiencies in soft skill development, not technical expertise.

In addition, information on SSI/SSDI beneficiaries indicates that there are 218,588 Title II disability beneficiaries and 109,569 Title XVI disability recipients in the state as of Fiscal Year 2014. This reflects a substantial talent pool of individuals with barriers to employment. These individuals may not be reflected in the totals for unemployed as many of these individuals may not be actively seeking work, or have never worked.

The Strategic Actions needed to effectuate this goal include:

- A. Facilitation of middle skills and middle wage attainment;



- B. Creation of education and career pathways; and
- C. Development of one, consistently delivered soft skills competency-based curricula; and
- D. Enhancement of school-to-work transition and youth-focused programs

A. Facilitation of Middle Skills and Middle Wage Attainment

Gov. Haley introduced her vision for South Carolina's workforce at her 2015 *State of the State* Address. Currently, there is pending legislation that was borne from her vision and that of many other stakeholders in workforce development. If passed, the law will provide state funding to create a framework for coordinating workforce activities in the state. The bill creates a unified approach for workforce development to prepare job seekers, through targeted training programs, for high-demand, high-growth jobs with a focus on career pathways. The vision complements existing and successful programs, such as readySC™, SC Manufacturing Certificate (SCMC), WIOA, and Apprenticeship Carolina™.

There are several components of the vision and the pending legislation which allow `qualified individuals to obtain a nationally recognized training certificate for high-demand, high-growth jobs.

One component that directly connects businesses with technical colleges is called EvolveSC. Evolve SC permits businesses, either individually or as a consortium, to apply for grants to train new or incumbent workers for high-demand jobs and earn an industry recognized certificate. The purpose of EvolveSC is to address the middle skills gap by aligning training with the skills needs of businesses. The SWDB has already funded pilot Evolve SC grants and will continue to monitor the progress of this new initiative.

The continuation of the SC Work Ready Communities initiative will assist economic developers and new businesses in finding the right location with the workforce that has the skills they need. The utilization of WorkKeys® assessments creates a skills-based credential for job seekers and associated job profiles assist employers in finding skilled candidates for vacancies. This is aligned with the readySC™, Evolve SC and other state initiatives as well as in assessing all public secondary school students in South Carolina

The collaboration of core programs under WIOA is solidifying partnerships at the state, regional and local levels to coordinate workforce initiatives and programs. The passing of state workforce legislation will provide an opportunity to further strengthen existing workforce development strategies to meet the growing needs of employers in the state.

B. Creation of Education and Career Pathways

The career pathways approach offers a sequence of education and/or training credentials aligned with work readiness standards. Sector-based education and career pathways require that education and training systems be seamless in order to meet employers' needs for skilled workers. This will be accomplished by transforming and aligning the disconnected components of educational processes to optimize student/job seeker success.

DEW, Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Education are working closely together to refine the messages to K-12 students and parents about middle skills jobs, high-demand and high-growth jobs, and different paths to post-secondary education options. Additionally, the Technical Colleges and businesses are working with colleges to align their non-credit programs with nationally recognized credentials and certifications that make their graduates marketable for the existing jobs.

**C. Development of One, Consistently Delivered, Competency-Based Soft Skills Curriculum**

Successful placement in the workforce requires both the technical skills for job performance and a broad spectrum of social and interpersonal skills often referred to as “soft skills.” Both trade and soft skills are important in hiring and retention decisions across all industry sectors.

Recognizing the need for a common, consistent soft skills training curriculum that all agencies can use to train prospective job seekers, the State Workforce Development Board, the WIOA Core Programs, and the State Technical Colleges have partnered to identify and recommend a soft skills curriculum that could be adopted across agencies. This includes use of universal design principles and consideration of accessibility for all potential customers. The curriculum would be based on core competencies, with the ability for agencies to tailor the classes based on the unique needs of their client populations.

D. Enhancement of school-to-work transition and youth-focused programs

A significant focus of WIOA includes strategies to strengthen school-to-work transition programs and youth programs. This includes specific activities conducted within the secondary school system for students to better prepare them for employment, post-secondary education or post-secondary training. There are also provisions within WIOA to address the needs of out-of-school youth to ensure that they are connected with the services needed to achieve competitive, integrated employment. Strong partnerships with local education agencies, VR service delivery capacity for school-to-work transition services, workforce development programs for youth, and connection with stakeholders involved in student, youth and parent engagement are being deployed in South Carolina. The work of these partnerships will help to prepare the next generation of job seekers for the emerging employment opportunities before exiting school settings, in keeping with the education and career pathways development.

2. Align the State’s Current Public Workforce Development Resources to Ensure a Customer-Centered Delivery System

In alignment with WIOA, core partners envision that South Carolina’s public workforce system will bring numerous programs into an integrated, customer-focused network in each local community. In January 2014, state agencies that impact workforce development – beyond those required to work together by WIOA– met to discuss the issues facing them and their clients, as well as to learn more about the various programs available to serve job seekers and business. These agencies included: S.C. Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW), State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, Department of Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Department, Lieutenant Governor’s Office on Aging, Department of Education, Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity, Job Corps, SC Indian Development Council, Inc., Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Corrections, and Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon.

As a result, strong relationships have been forged to allow the implementation of a State Partner MOU (signed into effect on February 11, 2015 with Gov. Haley) that will assist South Carolina’s state and local workforce development partners with effective coordination and collaboration of programs, services, and governance structures.

The strategic actions needed to effectuate this goal and to build upon the first step of partnership and cooperation including:

- A. Coordinate Agency Business Engagement Activity;
- B. Build and Use Data Driven Decision Making and Evaluation Methods; and
- C. Expand Specific Partnerships and Collaboration



A. Coordinate business engagement activity

All workforce partners must continue to coordinate their existing business engagement services. By aligning business services representatives across every program, South Carolina's limited resources can be used more efficiently and effectively, and can translate the technicalities of various programs into understandable solutions for business and industry.

A recent statewide meeting of public agency business service representatives provided attendees with information about every agency's programs. The event set the tone for how to call on clients, customize solutions for businesses rather than hand them off to another business representative, and coordinate outreach to prevent service duplication while still meeting the needs of all customers. Partners now need to continually coordinate current business services so that each representative employs the efforts discussed above. As an example, the business services teams that are established in each workforce development area are groups that work to coordinate business development efforts in their respective communities. This platform has been proven to be a highly effective method for strategically reaching out to business and industry while maintaining each program's ability to best meet the individual needs of their customers, both business and consumers.

Another key issue will be actively engaging businesses to not only use the services offered through workforce service agencies, but to also provide support to and participate in SC Work Ready Communities and other state initiatives.

Finally, the recruitment and search process can be streamlined through active encouragement of the use of SC Works Online Services (the state jobs database) to provide a virtual workforce meeting place for job seekers and employers. This, in coordination with additional program-specific career matching tools that are based on established relationships with employers, can be a highly effective strategy for managing both the existing employment opportunities as well as sectors that are in need of further development and outreach.

B. Build and Use Data-Driven Decision Making and Evaluation Methods

DEW's Business Intelligence Department can provide accurate data to understand where South Carolina's limited resources can have the greatest impact with regard to training and services offered and needed. This data shows what and where the unfilled jobs are in SC, as well as the skills required to obtain the jobs, which helps identify industries and occupations most in need of our Federal and state resources.

South Carolina state agencies are working to align databases to streamline availability of information, while protecting vital personal information at the same time. Agencies are partnering to share data to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the state workforce system and to obtain performance measures across multiple programs.

SC partners will also be working closely to re-design the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to go above and beyond the requirements of WIOA to provide meaningful information to job seekers, business and industries, and to provide relevant performance metrics on all educational and training providers. This activity will involve all training providers, but specifically the Department of Education and the State Technical College System.

C. Expand Partnerships and Collaborations

As a precursor to the state-wide agency MOU, several individual agencies have been working together on a variety of pilot programs across the state. Current successes with DEW, Department of Corrections,



Department of Social Services, Local Workforce Investment Boards, and the State Technical College System will be expanded and/or replicated over the next few years.

Enhanced collaborations with many other agencies, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, Able SC, and Commission for the Blind will not only improve workforce services, but minimize duplication of services, and work toward greater collaboration to serve and find relevant employment for all our citizens.

(3) Performance Goals. Using the table provided in Appendix 2, include the state's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

The Departments of Labor and Education have designated certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators for the first plan submission. Indicators designated as “baseline” vary by program. A “baseline” indicator is one for which the state will not propose an expected level of performance in the state plan. For all other measures, the state’s proposed levels of performance are outlined in Appendix 2. A summary of the methodology used by each program to determine projected levels of performance for PY 16 and 17 is provided below:

DEW: The 2nd and 4th quarter Employment after Exit and Median Earnings, and Credential Attainment proposed levels of performance for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth and Wagner-Peyser reflect an eight-quarter average of exited participant data from 3rd Q 2013 through 2nd Q 2015 for the exit cohorts in the time periods for WIOA performance measures. The primary indicators of performance Measurable Skills Gain and Effectiveness in Serving Employers are designated as “baseline” indicators for Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth and Wagner-Peyser.

Adult Education: The proposed level of performance for the primary indicator Measurable Skills Gain was determined by using a 3-year aggregate average for Advancing an Educational Functioning Level. Advancing an Educational Functioning Level is determined by pre and post assessing students by administering the TABE, Best PLUS, and Best Literacy Assessments. All other measures are designated as “baseline” indicators.

SCVRD and SCCB: All six WIOA primary indicators of performance as described in WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A) are designated as “baseline” measures for Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

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

South Carolina has a vast workforce development system consisting of multiple public and private partners, the goal of which is to facilitate financial stability and economic prosperity for employers, individuals, and communities. We will evaluate the overall effectiveness of our system using the following tools: (1) WIOA common performance measures that assess employment, earnings, credential attainment, skills gain, and employer engagement; (2) SC Works Certification Standards that assess system management, job seeker services, and employer services; and (3) business engagement metrics adopted by the State Workforce Development Board in PY 14.



A collaborative work group consisting of representation from the Department of Employment and Workforce, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the State Technical College System has been formed to examine issues related to data alignment, performance accountability, and assessment. This group will further examine how South Carolina currently assesses system effectiveness and will develop recommendations for a more comprehensive assessment that aligns with the Governor's strategic vision and goals.

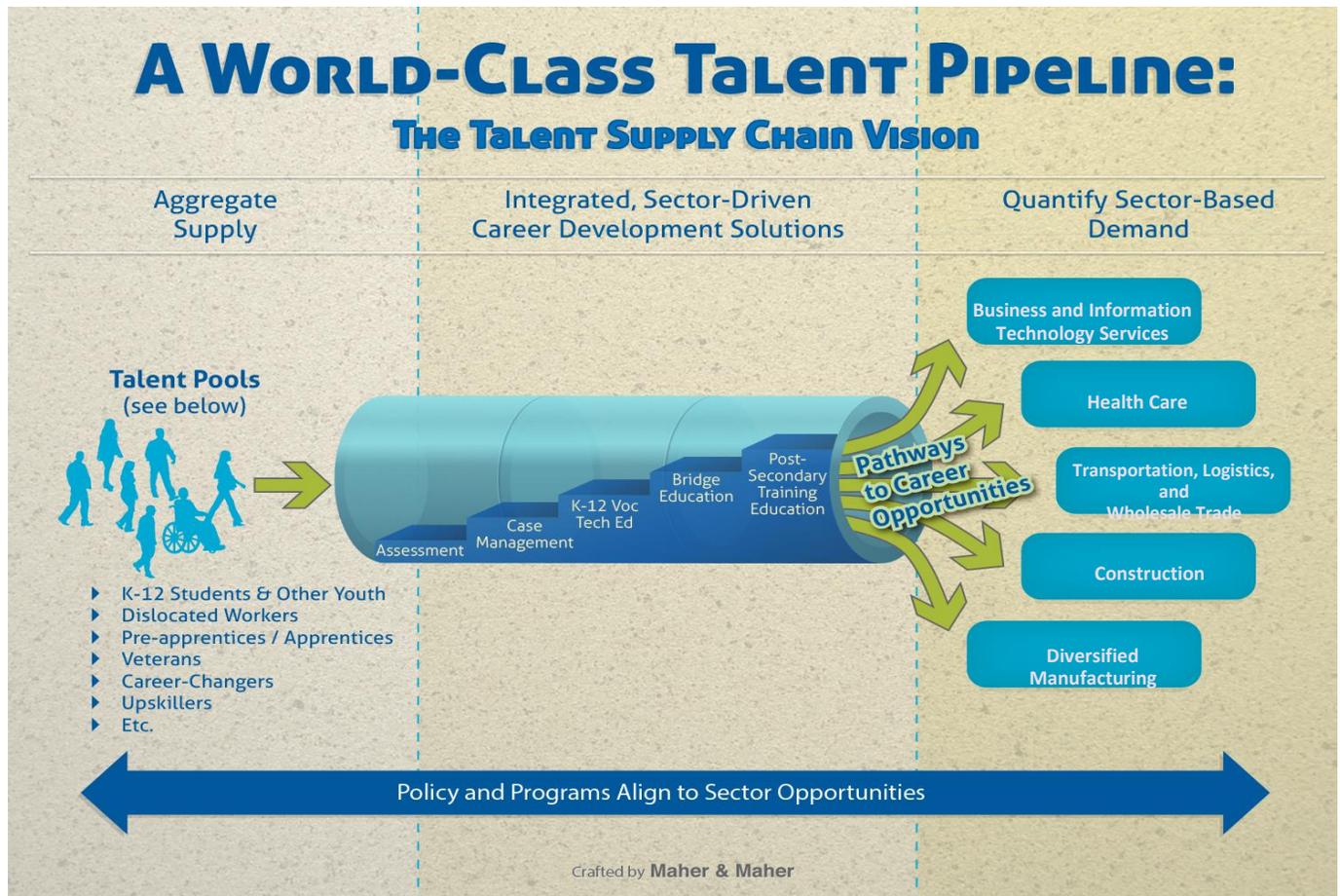
(c) State Strategy. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the state's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the state's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section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

(1) Describe the strategies the state will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). "Career pathway" is defined at WIOA section 3(7). "In-demand industry sector or occupation" is defined at WIOA section 3(23).

South Carolina is in the beginning stages of implementing regional sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations, and career pathways. The objective of Sector Strategies is to align all partners, including economic development, education and workforce around the same goal of creating talent pipelines for critical growing industries. The result of productive industry partnerships is the creation of an ongoing talent pipeline that meets business needs and creates family-sustaining careers that can be undertaken by South Carolinians.



Figure 11



A number of factors led South Carolina to adopt an integrated approach to talent pipeline development:

- Gov. Haley has declared workforce a “top priority”.
- Proviso 117.127 requires that a plan be developed to address the workforce skill shortage in high-growth industries through the collaborative efforts of S.C. Department of Education, S.C. Department of Commerce, the S.C. Technical College System and the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce.
- South Carolina continues to recruit new businesses and see expansions in existing industries at a high rate, and clear state goals include addressing 70,000 unfilled jobs in the short term, and providing a highly skilled workforce to new and existing employers in the longer term.
- In these contexts, many areas in the state have experienced and/or recognized the potential for significantly enhanced outcomes when employing sector strategies. It is time to provide the supports and incentives that will enable and empower workforce areas and regions to bring those activities to scale and deal with new economic realities.
- Passage of the WIOA Federal legislation, which incentivizes and otherwise encourages adoption of an integrated approach to sector strategies, and also requires regional workforce planning, the data-based foundation for a “sectors” approach.



South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Leadership Team structure is organized through a series of roles and responsibilities designed to foster consensus, collaboration, and implementation.

Figure 12



The **Leadership Team** is co-chaired by the S.C. Departments of Commerce, Education, Employment & Workforce, and the S.C. State Technical College System and comprised of key executives from the S.C. Department of Social Services, S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation, S.C. Commission for the Blind and other agencies involved in the South Carolina workforce development system; other public and educational stakeholder representatives from the state, regional, and local levels; and business and industry representatives, including and especially those from likely targeted industry sectors. Their role is to provide social, political and intellectual power as leaders and stockholders in the state's broader Talent Development system. The Executive Director of DEW is the Project Convener.

Regional Workforce Planning and Implementation Teams will participate in a self-assessment exercise designed to help determine each region's readiness to undertake a sector strategy approach and generally advocate for and lead the development of sector strategies and integrated services in each region.

Sector Strategies will provide at the state and regional level, a framework for implementing strategies for meeting businesses' needs for skilled workers and workers' needs for good jobs.

- Create the sectors mentality and approach
- Marry sectors to career pathways development
- Begin unification of business service delivery



A six-step process will lead the development of sector strategies.

- **STEP 1: Gather workforce data and intelligence.**
The objective is to understand the regional economy and industry staffing structure, and to achieve consensus across disciplines on the industries to target. There is collaboration in collecting and analyzing data; anecdotal information on industries' futures is collected systematically from stakeholders, especially economic development entities; and collaborative decisions are made on identifying target industries and occupations.
- **STEP 2: Form a sector partnership team and develop a future vision.**
Initially, workforce, economic development and education partners are convened regionally to develop a sector partnership. This group/team is then responsible for the development of sector strategies and career pathways.
- **STEP 3: Assess Talent Needs.**
Occupational skill gaps, training, and credential needs are identified along with an inventory of education and training programs. An Education and Training Gap Analysis is developed in relation to industry and workforce needs
- **STEP 4: Develop strategies and align resources.**
The partners work collaboratively to identify and develop education, training and related resources to convert into investments that actualize Career Pathways.
- **STEP 5: Operationalize.**
Sector strategies are transformed into actual customer - centered service delivery, and business services target sectors on a regional basis. This will involve reengineering SC Works customer flow. Having created a shared understanding of the region's workforce investment needs, a shared vision of how the regional workforce system can be designed to meet those needs, and agreement on the key strategies to realize this vision, regional partners will determine the most efficient and effective arrangement for organizing and delivering services.
- **STEP 6: Assess, Adjust, Improve, and Sustain.**
The full partnership team will continue to assess the value received by industry employers as well as customer flow and job seeker/student outcomes. During this phase, recommendations for adjustments and improvements are formulated and "Can-Be" changes are implemented.

The state leadership team adopted the following clusters as the statewide industry sectors:

- Diversified Manufacturing
 - Metal and Metal Fabricating (including Vehicles)
 - Textiles
 - Lumber and Wood Products
 - Chemicals, Rubber, and Plastics
- Business and Information Technology Services
- Health Care
- Transportation, Logistics, and Wholesale Trade
- Construction



Table 14

Statewide Industry Sectors				
Cluster	2015 Jobs	2025 Jobs	Change	% Change
Health Care	243,004	303,465	60,461	25%
Business and IT	229,038	280,320	51,283	22%
Construction	145,352	157,266	11,914	8%
Logistics	122,452	138,003	15,551	13%
Metals	101,931	111,336	9,406	9%
Chemicals	44,646	46,643	1,996	4%
Lumber	29,325	30,299	974	3%
Textiles	21,450	16,172	-5,279	-25%

State and regional frameworks will be developed where a collaborative, data-based focus will lead the effort to sustain a talent pipeline in each of the target industries and promote a new method of delivering services to business and job seekers.

- (2) Describe the strategies the state will use to align the core programs, any Combined state Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the state to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).**

South Carolina envisions an effective, customer-driven workforce system that facilitates financial stability and economic prosperity for employers, individuals, and communities. To achieve this vision, workforce, economic development, education, and other community-based partners will work together to align workforce development resources and strengthen the state's workforce pipeline. The strategies discussed below will align partners to achieve a more integrated system and will also strengthen the workforce, education, and training activities discussed in section (II)(2)(A).



Strategies to Align Partner Programs

One of the state's strategic goals is to align workforce development resources to ensure that employers and job seekers receive high-quality services. To achieve this goal, the state will coordinate agency business engagement activity, build and use data driven decision making and evaluation methods, and expand specific partnerships and collaborations.

Coordinate Agency Business Engagement Activity

Business Services Teams (BST) are established in all 12 LWDAs. The agencies represented on each BST vary depending on local area but generally include SC Works partners. The alignment of business services improves service delivery, reduces duplication of efforts, and uses limited resources more efficiently. Workforce partners will continue to coordinate their existing business engagement services and will expand to include partners not currently represented. Business services representatives will be trained to provide accurate information on all programs and services.

Build and Use Data Driven Decision Making and Evaluation Methods

Timely and accurate data is critical to making informed decisions and improving service delivery. The core program partners are working to align information systems and data and reporting to streamline and ultimately improve service delivery and outcomes for individuals. The Business Intelligence Division (BID) of DEW can provide data to public and private entities. Several partners are working with this division to develop data sharing agreements and to begin using Labor Market Information (LMI) to drive service delivery. State partners are also working together to re-design the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) which will provide meaningful information to job seekers and businesses and result in a more thorough decision-making process.

Expand Specific Partnerships and Collaborations

One of South Carolina's strengths is the number of workforce, economic development, education, and other partners working together to support the state's vision for workforce development. Existing partnerships have been strengthened and new partnerships have been forged through the state planning process. Moving forward, state-level partner work groups will continue to hone and refine the strategies discussed in this section, and will begin to implement the activities described in section (III)(a)(2). Additionally, state partners will develop and execute an MOU that addresses resource sharing in the SC Works delivery system.

Strategies to Strengthen the Workforce Pipeline

As demonstrated by the Economic and Workforce Analysis in section (II)(a)(1), the state's current labor supply is generally lacking the preparation needed to compete for in-demand occupations that pay a self-sustaining wage and offer the opportunity for advancement along a career pathway. Many of the state's educated job seekers have degrees or credentials in fields where there is little or no demand; too few are trained for jobs in STEM fields, including Manufacturing and Healthcare, and many lack the soft skills required by hiring employers. To close the skills gap, workforce, economic development, and education partners have focused on strengthening the workforce pipeline through middle skill, middle wage attainment, creating education and career pathways, developing a universal soft skills curriculum, and enhancing school-to-work transition and youth focused programs.

Increase Middle Skill, Middle Wage Attainment.

South Carolina has already began the process of increasing middle skill, middle wage attainment by identifying state and regional high-growth, high-demand industries and occupations, and surveying the immediate and future needs of businesses across the state. Through sector strategies, education,



training, and supportive services will be aligned to the needs of employers in these key industries. The result will be more individuals with the required trade and soft skills to fill current and projected unfilled jobs; who will also earn a family-sustaining wage and be able to continue along a career pathway should they desire additional education or advancement

Education and Career Pathways.

As a part of sector strategies and the S.C. Talent Pipeline Project, education and career pathways will be developed and implemented to prepare individuals for current and projected job growth. Efforts are already underway to identify state and regional critical industries, assess skill needs, and to engage K-12, adult education, and post-secondary partners in the process of developing regional sector partnerships and strategies, including career pathways. There is also an opportunity to refine the message and better educate students, parents, and administrators about Manufacturing or other STEM related occupations; to prepare students for careers and post-secondary education through CATE and dual enrollment opportunities; and to better align post-secondary programs with national credentials and certifications.

Competency-Based Soft Skills Curriculum.

It is clear that employers are looking for individuals that exhibit certain social and interpersonal skills, often referred to as soft skills. Not only is this evident from job advertisements that list one or more soft skills as requirements for the job, but employers have also expressed that soft skills, critical-thinking skills, and a good work ethic are workforce challenges that they currently face. To address this issue, several agencies and state-level partners have worked together to identify a competency-based soft-skills curriculum that can be adopted across agencies with implementation occurring in 2016.

School-to-Work Transition and Youth Focused Programs.

As provided in the WIOA legislation, the state will place a greater focus on strengthening school-to-work programs to better prepare students for employment, post-secondary education or post-secondary training. Additionally, South Carolina is well-positioned to continue serving a large number of out-of-school youth and sees an opportunity to align work-based learning opportunities with education and career pathways.



III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS





III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

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

(a) **State Strategy Implementation.** The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

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

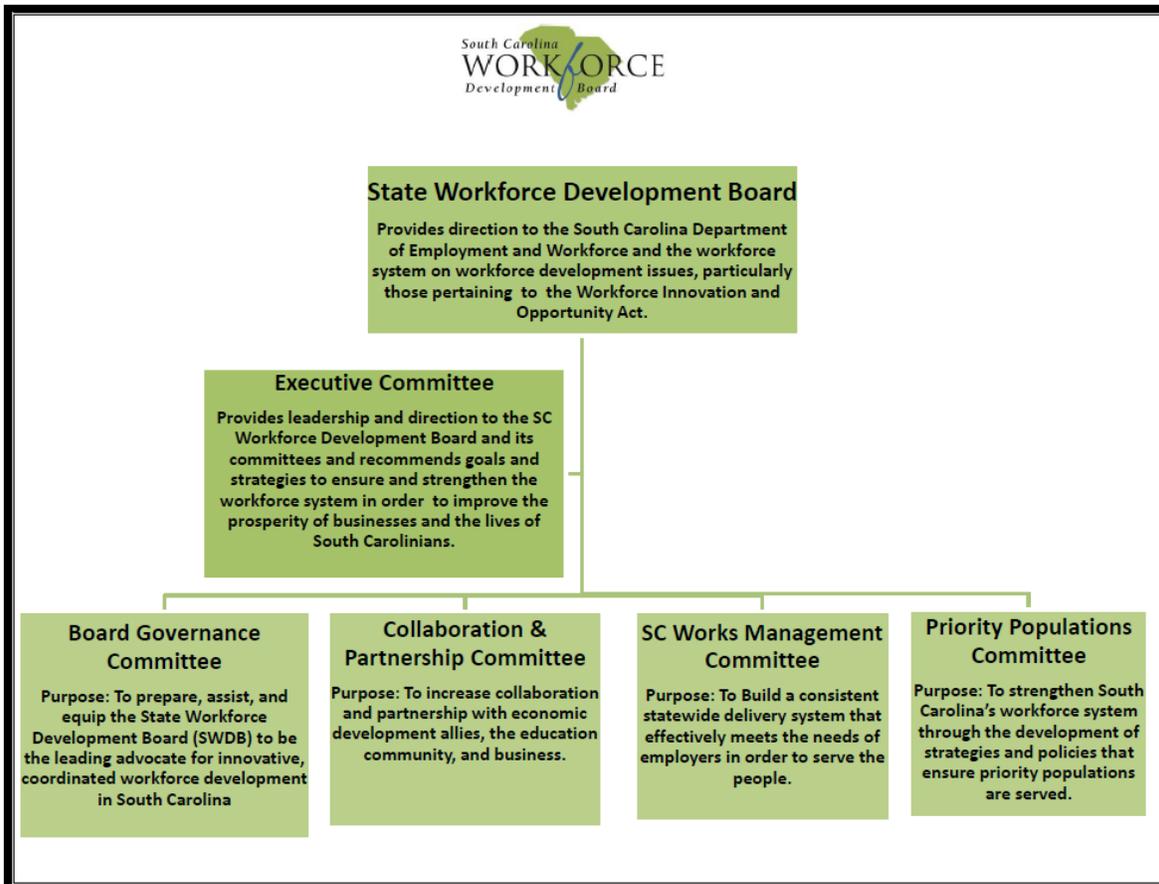
On behalf of the Governor, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) provides direction to the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) and the workforce development system as a whole consistent with the functions of the SWDB outlined in WIOA sec. 101(d).

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

- **The Executive Committee:** the “management” arm, ensuring that deliverables are in line with the Governor’s vision for workforce development.
- **The Board Governance Committee:** the “administrative” arm, ensuring that the Board is prepared to lead and that outputs align with the Board’s strategic plan.
- **The Collaboration and Partnership Committee:** the “convening” arm, bringing partners together to identify new opportunities to enhance the workforce system.
- **The SC Works Management Committee:** the “operations” arm, ensuring effective and consistent service delivery.
- **The Priority Populations Committee:** a new committee that will strengthen the workforce development system through the development of strategies and policies that ensure priority populations are served.



Figure 13



Ad hoc work groups are often formed within standing committees to address specific functions, such as the development and implementation of SC Works Center Certification Standards, or the ETPL. The DEW staff member assigned to each SWDB committee provides support and educates the committee on relevant sections of Federal and state legislation.

At a minimum, each committee meets quarterly face-to-face or electronically. Additional meetings are scheduled as needed. The full Board meets quarterly with one of the meetings held at the annual workforce symposium. Workforce partners and other stakeholders are encouraged to attend all SWDB meetings.

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

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



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

South Carolina's strategic goals for workforce development are to strengthen the workforce pipeline through education and training tailored to the specific needs of new and expanding businesses, and to align workforce development resources into a seamless, integrated network in each local community. The following are activities and initiatives that state and local partners will fund or participate in to carry out the workforce strategies outlined above.

Aligning the State's Current Public Workforce Development Resources

Information System and Data Integration

One of the key WIOA reforms is shared accountability across programs as demonstrated by the requirements for aligning performance reporting, evaluation, and data systems that measure effectiveness, improve transparency, and support informed customer-choice within a unified, integrated workforce development system. This will streamline the availability of information across partner agencies, and make the delivery of services to job seekers and employers more efficient. An integrated system will allow for the implementation of common intake, co-enrollment, referral, and other strategic processes that improve service delivery and program outcomes.

There are obvious barriers to the implementation of such a system. The Systems Alignment and Performance Accountability work group, formed to examine this and other similar issues, is researching several options and will develop a plan for meeting the requirements for alignment of information systems and data integration.

Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)

As required by WIOA sec. 122, state and local partners are working together to develop PATH (Palmetto Academic and Training Hub), a more robust ETPL that will align with critical industries identified at the state and local levels, enable job seekers to make a more informed choice about education and training programs, and help to improve the consistency of service delivery. PATH will be implemented in 2016.

SC Works Certification Standards

The state has established SC Works Certification Standards consistent with the requirements at WIOA sec. 121(g) that will be used by LWDA's to assess the effectiveness and continuous improvement of service delivery. The standards will also help to ensure consistent service delivery across the state. LWDBs will evaluate comprehensive centers in in 2016

Business Services Teams

Business Services Teams (BSTs) in each LWDA coordinate business engagement activities, including employer outreach. BSTs inform and educate employers about resources and services available through each of the partner programs. Core, mandatory and optional program partners generally participate on BSTs; however, there is an opportunity to better integrate business services across programs through the identification of agencies and organizations that are not currently represented. There is also an opportunity for staff cross-training so that representatives can provide information about services available through all of the partner programs.



Continuation of Partner Work Groups

Several work groups were formed in 2015 to inform Phase II of SC's one-stop MOU and the WIOA state plan. These work groups are examining issues related to operational and program alignment, resource sharing, data integration and information systems alignment, and serving priority populations. They are chaired by state and local core program partners, and consist of core, mandatory and optional partner programs, and other stakeholders. The benefits of these work groups are profound – they have increased partner engagement in the WIOA implementation process and provided a forum for information sharing, collaborative problem solving, and the opportunity to build trusted partnerships.

These work groups will remain in-tact after submission of the plan and execution of Phase II in effort to enhance and strengthen strategic partnerships and collaborations, and to continue examining strategies for better alignment and coordination among programs, activities, and resources.

Phase II State Partner MOU

MOUs are used at the state and local levels to align resources and outline service delivery strategies. Perhaps the most important is South Carolina's statewide MOU. Phase I was executed in 2015 and focused largely on the responsibilities of each partner. It also memorialized each partners' agreement to partner and collaborate in the delivery of service to job seekers and businesses. Phase II of the MOU will concentrate on resource sharing and infrastructure funding. Two new partners will be added to the MOU.

WIOA State and Local Boards

The reconstitution of the SWDB and LWDBs has also given the state and local areas the opportunity to strategically develop and enhance partnerships with core programs, mandatory and optional one-stop program partners, business and industry, non-profit and community partners, and labor. And now that LWDB committees can include non-board members, there is great flexibility to engage partners that play an important role in workforce development.

SWDB and LWDB Committees

The SWDB recently formed a Priority Populations Committee that will provide strategic direction and oversight and set policy for the state with regard to serving youth, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and other populations that face barriers to employment. Similarly, each LWDB is required to form a Youth and Disability Committee that will develop local service strategies to improve outcomes, including education and employment, for youth and individuals with disabilities.

Youth Coordinator

In an effort to provide leadership to the state in facilitating WIOA youth program changes and to address the need to coordinate with core programs and partners, DEW created the WIOA-funded position of Youth Coordinator. The incumbent will work alongside the SWDB and LWDBs, and core, mandatory and optional partners to create a statewide strategy for serving the youth population.

SNAP E&T – SCDSS and DEW Partnership

More recently, a partnership was forged between DEW and S.C. DSS that will transfer the SNAP Employment and Training program from DSS to DEW. The program provides SNAP recipients with the help needed to find a new career path. It is designed to assist SNAP recipients in gaining skills, finding work, or getting the experience needed to become qualified for available jobs within their community or region, increasing their self-sufficiency. This partnership is a natural alignment in the delivery of employment and training services to enhance program coordination, and more importantly, workforce opportunities for SNAP participants.



Strengthening the Workforce Pipeline

Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

The state recently adopted an integrated approach to talent pipeline development aimed at aligning strategies, resources, and service delivery on a regional economic basis across workforce development, economic development, education, and other partners to maximize value for employer customers and improved career opportunities for students, job seekers, and workers. Targeted industries have been identified at the state level and a similar data-driven sector identification process will occur in each of the four WIOA planning regions.

This approach will result in better alignment and coordination of resources among regional partners, enhanced career entry and advancement opportunities for workers along career pathways, and deeper, sustained, and trusted relationships with groups of regional employers in targeted industries. As a corollary, individuals will be better educated about in-demand industries and occupations, and limited resources for education and training will be aligned with these industries.

Soft Skills Training

As mentioned previously, a 2010 survey and subsequent conversation with South Carolina business leaders found that most job seekers fail at finding employment as a result of deficiencies in soft skill development⁴². Although most programs provide soft skills training, there is a lack of consistency between curricula.

Recognizing the opportunity for a common soft skills curriculum that meets the needs of employers and better prepares job seekers for employment, a task force was formed to develop one, consistently delivered soft skills training. The task force consists of SWDB members, core program representatives, and S.C. Technical College System representatives. A common soft skills curriculum will be implemented by all programs in PY 2016.

Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina (JAG-SC)

(JAG-SC) is a dropout prevention program focused on academic success and career readiness skills with a proven track record of helping at-risk young people graduate from high school and make successful transitions to post-secondary education or meaningful employment. Given the mutual goals of both programs, there is a perfect opportunity to align the WIOA Title I-B youth program and JAG.

Work Based Learning for Youth

WIOA places a strong emphasis on work-based learning opportunities for youth. Accordingly, DEW and local youth programs will place a greater focus on developing high-quality opportunities that enable youth to gain exposure to the working world and acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment.

With the implementation of sector strategies and in an effort to further strengthen the state's talent pipeline, there is a great opportunity to align work-based learning opportunities with the critical industries and occupations identified regionally.

⁴² Nagle, 2010.



SCVRD Pre-Employment Transition Services

The SCVRD provides a robust set of student and youth services to enhance the transition from school to work or post-secondary training opportunities. As indicated in WIOA, SCVRD transition counselors provide pre-employment transition services for students prior to their exit from high school, and SCVRD staff continue to provide services to support placement into competitive employment, or completion of post-secondary training and/or credential-based programs. The number of successful employment outcomes for transition-aged youth has grown by 48 percent over the past two years.

In collaboration with DEW and the Department of Education, SCVRD's school-based transition counselors will work together with local education agencies, community partners, and business partners to advise students with disabilities, and their families, regarding available career pathways and educational/training opportunities. The administration of WorkKeys® testing for high school juniors provides another assessment of skills needed for competitive employment. This can assist in identifying career opportunities whether the individual receives a diploma, or completes an occupational course of study or a certificate of completion. Currently in South Carolina, the diploma is the only secondary credential recognized as documentation of high school graduation.

WorkKeys® and National Career Readiness Certificate

As part of the Certified Work Ready Communities initiative, South Carolina workforce partners have strongly supported WorkKeys® testing and the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC™). The NCRC™ is a nationally recognized, evidence-based credential that certifies essential skills needed for workplace success. It is used across all industries and verifies cognitive skills like problem solving, critical thinking, and reading/using work-related text. Individuals earn a NCRC™ by successfully completing three ACT WorkKeys® tests: Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information. Based on performance, certification is provided in platinum, gold, silver, and bronze levels.

Forty-one South Carolina counties have received the Certified Work Ready Community. The next phase of the CWRC initiative is maintenance. During this phase, counties will continue issuing the NCRC™ to the current, emerging, and transitioning workforce. Additionally, counties are required to select one of three new criteria: improving certificate levels, completing job profiles, or providing college credit for the NCRC™.

Improving Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities

Adult Education plays a vital role in the state's goal to strengthen the workforce pipeline, and the inclusion as a core partner is a natural transition. To align the adult education curriculum with the state's vision and goals for workforce development, providers will incorporate workforce preparation activities in all adult education classes, and provide appropriate career and labor market information services to their students. These activities will be defined by the needs of business and industry with a focus on preparing students to earn their diploma and have a successful transition into employment.

Additionally, all adult education and family literacy programs will be modified to include occupational skills training to increase the educational and career advancement of participants. One approach to Integrated Education and Training (IET) is concurrent or dual enrollment with post-secondary institutions. Local providers are engaging technical colleges to develop dual enrollment programs where students will attend adult education classes and simultaneously work toward the completion of a certificate or industry-recognized credential.

Adult Education will continue to administer and prepare individuals for WorkKeys® testing, and advance its partnership with the SNAP Employment and Training program, which helps SNAP recipients gain



skills, training, and work experience that increase self-sufficiency. Emphasis has been placed on diploma/high school equivalency diploma and NCRC attainment.

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

Several strategies have been identified by the collaborative work groups formed to implement WIOA, including: (1) the development and consistent implementation of a universal intake and referral process, (2) consistent use of LMI to make data driven decisions about the delivery of services, and (3) the integration of information, case management, data and reporting systems.

A state-level work group has been formed to further examine the most appropriate system that can be used by the core partners to share information as needed and capture common performance measures. All options will require a lengthy process but it remains a top priority for the state.

Additionally, the consistent use of current and accurate LMI will allow partners to better align limited resources for education, training, and supportive services to the skill needs of in-demand industries and occupations. As a result, job seekers will be prepared to fill high-demand, high-growth jobs. The use of LMI to make such data driven decisions to develop a talent pipeline for new and expanding businesses is consistent with the sector strategies framework that is being implemented through partnership and collaboration with all core partners and many one-stop partners.

Finally, Phase II of the state partner MOU addressing resource sharing will be executed in 2016. Through the development of this MOU, partners will continue to identify strategies for aligning programs and resources to better serve job seekers and employers.

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

Similarly, coordinating business engagement activity is one of South Carolina's strategies for bringing together numerous programs into an integrated customer-focused network. Ideally, business engagement activities and employer services will be delivered in a manner that reduces duplication, is consistent throughout the state, and integrates all partners.

The delivery of employer services and business engagement activities is coordinated through Business Services Teams in all twelve LWDAs. In most areas, all of the core partner programs are represented on the BST as well as many other partners. This approach ensures that employers receive a consistent message about the services and resources available through SC Works and other partner programs, that



employer contacts are coordinated to reduce the number of agencies contacting the same employers, and that job fairs and other hiring events are organized to include all workforce partners as opposed to each partner hosting individual events.

Additionally, regional teams are being organized in each of the WIOA planning regions to implement sector strategies – regional, multi-partner models that align public partners and their strategies and investments to regional talent development needs, as defined by employers in critical industries. This effort is about aligning strategies, resources, and service delivery on a regional economic basis across workforce development, economic development, education, and other partners to maximize value for employer customers and improve career opportunities for students, job seekers, and workers. One outcome of implementing sector strategies is deeper, sustained, and more trusted relationships with groups of regional employers. Business and industry is represented on the State Leadership Team and will be invited to participate on regional workforce teams.

DEW's Rapid Response staff will continue partnering with the S.C. Department of Commerce to identify businesses in distress that may benefit from layoff aversion strategies (e.g. rapid response IWT), or businesses experiencing a layoff or closure. This partnership ensures early intervention potentially reducing the impact to businesses and employees.

Another example is the partnership between DEW and the S.C. Department of Commerce aimed at helping defense-related businesses expand into new markets and position the business for future success. This initiative, funded by a defense industry assistance grant from the Office of Economic Adjustment within the Department of Defense (DOD), offers business consulting services on an application basis to firms that could be adversely affected by U.S. Department of Defense budget cuts. This partnership with the Department of Commerce ensures that defense-focused employers are able to diversify their products and markets so they continue to thrive in the Palmetto State.

The annual Workforce Development Symposium hosted by the S.C. Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with DEW and the SWDB, is an example of alignment and coordination to better serve employer customers. The Symposium unites the business community with economic development and workforce professionals, and is an opportunity for business leaders to learn about relevant workforce and economic issues affecting the state. The 2016 Symposium agenda featured topics such as sector strategies, aging workforce concerns, and education initiatives aimed at preparing a job-ready workforce.

- (E) ***Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions. Describe how the state's Strategies will engage the state's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).***

The state is facing staggering workforce demand stemming from an ever-increasing call for high-skilled workers, an aging workforce fast approaching retirement, and an increasing number of new and expanding businesses in South Carolina. STEM-related fields are among the industries projected to grow and experience vacancies due to retirement calling for an increase in the number of South Carolinians who are trained in STEM-related or high demand fields.



A considerable factor in South Carolina's workforce challenge is the unfavorable perception of manufacturing and other STEM-related fields, including information technology and healthcare⁴³. The more South Carolinians understand about the wide variety of opportunities available to them the more likely we are as a state to close the workforce skills gap. Education and building awareness among the general public are key to overcoming these perception challenges⁴⁴.

South Carolina's educational institutions are vital partners in the workforce development system providing education and training programs that are aligned with employer needs and preparing individuals for family-sustaining careers.

Through Career and Technology Education (CATE) students are exposed to a variety of viable career options and are prepared for fast-growing, high-paid jobs in high-growth occupations – including healthcare, the skilled trades, STEM, information technology, and marketing⁴⁵. Classroom instruction and student experiences are linked to career clusters.⁴⁶ Career clusters connect what students learn in school with the knowledge and skills they need for success in college and careers. Each career cluster identifies different pathways from secondary school to two- and four-year colleges, graduate school, and the workplace. Exposure to career pathways in these fields is one way to change the outdated perception of manufacturing and other STEM-related fields that contributes to the SC workforce skills gap.

Over 300 CTE courses were offered in secondary schools in 2012-13 and approximately 186,000 students were enrolled in at least one CTE course in the same academic year. The Graduation Rate for CTE students who complete at least four courses in a state-approved CTE program was 95% (as compared to the state average of 77.5%) and the Placement Rate into post-secondary education, employment, or military service was 96.5%⁴⁷.

High school students also have the opportunity to participate in dual enrollment, which allows students to be enrolled in high school while earning credits toward a college degree, diploma, or certificate. The Community College Research Center's recent study found that dual enrollment participation is positively related to a range of college outcomes, including college enrollment and persistence, greater credit accumulation, and a higher college GPA⁴⁸.

⁴³ Proviso 117.127, South Carolina's Workforce Study, pg. 10-11, State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, 2015.

⁴⁴ Proviso 117.127, pg. 11.

⁴⁵ Proviso 117.127, pg. 19.

⁴⁶ The idea of career clusters was introduced as part of the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) enacted in 2005 to give South Carolina students the educational tools needed to build prosperous, successful futures. The EEDA created a system called Personal Pathways to help students understand and become better prepared to meet employer skill needs. Personal Pathways requires all students to declare a career major and to develop an individual graduation plans (IGPs) that outlines their personal education and career strategies. Students and their parents revisit these plans at least once a year to make appropriate adjustments.

⁴⁷ Proviso 117.127, pg. 19.

⁴⁸ Proviso 117.127, p. 19.



The S.C. Technical College System provides 95% of the state's dual enrollment programs⁴⁹; serves more than a quarter million South Carolinians each year and educates more undergraduates than all other public higher education institutions combined⁵⁰. The System has three main components – the technical colleges, readySC™, and Apprenticeship Carolina™. The 16 colleges combined offer 77 degrees, 28 diplomas, and 1,078 certificates.

The colleges also provide education and training for WIOA participants and SCVRD/SCCB clients. Adult Education has MOAs with all 16 local technical colleges to provide reciprocal referrals where appropriate and many Adult Education programs are partnering with technical colleges to establish dual enrollment programs.

The S.C. Technical College System and the S.C. Department of Education are co-chairs and key partners serving on the Talent Pipeline State Leadership Team. Regionally, local technical colleges, guidance counselors, superintendents, and other education partners will collaborate with workforce, economic development, and other significant stakeholders to develop regional sector initiatives that help close the workforce skills gap.

The colleges also partner with business and industry to provide training for new and incumbent workers. A current example of this relationship is EvolveSC, which allows businesses to apply for training grants that will be used to train new employees or to upskill current employees. The businesses will partner with a local technical college to develop a training program that meets employer needs and leads to an industry recognized credential for the employee.

The other components of the System - readySC™ and Apprenticeship Carolina™ - focus on the recruiting and initial training needs of new and expanding organizations, and building awareness and increasing the use of Registered Apprenticeships. readySC™ and Apprenticeship Carolina™ representatives serve on the BSTs, which include core partner programs and several mandatory and optional one-stop partners as well, and work closely with workforce and economic development to identify and meet the needs of business and industry. Additionally, an apprenticeship liaison in each LWDA serves as the link between businesses and Apprenticeship Carolina™.

Proposed state legislation creates a Coordinating Council for Workforce Development and requires that the Executive Director for the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education and the State Superintendent of the Department of Education participate as members of the council. It also requires these two entities to partner with DEW and the S.C. Department of Commerce to implement a Pathways Initiative to improve employment outcomes and address critical workforce development needs statewide. Through this legislation, the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education will also establish a Workforce Scholarships and Grants fund for eligible individuals to be used for tuition and education related expenses. Finally, the legislation creates a Career Pathways Tax Credit.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Proviso 117.127, p. 19.

⁵⁰ S.C. Technical College System.

⁵¹ H. 4145, South Carolina Workforce Development Act, South Carolina General Assembly, 121st Session, 2015-2016.



(F) *Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers.* Describe how the state’s strategies will engage the state’s other education and training providers, including providers on the state’s eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

The state’s vision for workforce development cannot be accomplished without the engagement and partnership of *all* education and training providers. Education partners prepare South Carolina’s workforce for competitive employment in in-demand industries and occupations, and their perspective is vital. Workforce development, economic development, and education partners are committed to strengthening these existing partnerships through the Talent Pipeline Project and other initiatives that aim to close the workforce skills gap.

The breadth and variety of providers in the state ensures that individuals have the opportunity to choose a provider and program that closely aligns with their education/training and employment goals. To ensure access to high-quality training programs in both rural and metro areas, the state will continue to identify and engage non-traditional education and training providers.

(G) *Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access.* Describe how the state’s strategies will enable the state to leverage other Federal, state, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

The state’s vision is to create a workforce system that results in financial stability and economic prosperity for employers, job seekers, and communities. To do this, the state will focus on strengthening the workforce pipeline and aligning workforce development resources. As discussed in section (E), South Carolina has a robust technical college system that offers 77 degree, 28 diploma, and 1,078 certificate programs, and a wide variety of short-term training options that are aligned with the needs of business and industry.

Generally speaking, state and federal scholarship and grant funds can be used in conjunction with WIOA funds increasing access to education and training and supportive services. For example, nearly 30% of the students who attend a South Carolina technical college rely on Lottery Tuition Assistance (LTA) to achieve their academic and prepare for a self-sustaining career. Since its inception, the technical college system has made nearly 400,000 LTA awards⁵². LTA is funded annually by the South Carolina General Assembly.

Recently, the Central Carolina Technical College announced that freshmen students from Clarendon, Lee, Kershaw, and Sumter counties will receive two years of free tuition to complete an academic program. The college worked with local governments, workforce development boards, and various corporate sponsors to raise \$250,000, which will cover the cost of the free tuition program. This program is an excellent example of collaboration and leveraging of resources for educational access.

Similarly, H. 4145 will create a Workforce Scholarships and Grants fund to be used for tuition and education related expenses for eligible career training and certification programs. DEW will collaborate

⁵² [S.C. Technical College System, Lottery Tuition Assistance.](#)



with the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education to identify and refer eligible individuals to training programs and scholarship opportunities. Upon completion of an eligible training program, DEW will coordinate with the S.C. Department of Commerce and the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education to develop and implement a plan to ensure that qualified individuals are matched with available employment opportunities in high-demand jobs throughout the state⁵³. The South Carolina Workforce Development Act as proposed will encourage collaboration and alignment of workforce activities, and resource sharing across programs to increase access to education, including Registered Apprenticeship programs.

As mentioned previously, the SWDB approved funding for EvolveSC, a grant program that allows businesses to develop a training program in partnership with technical colleges that meet employer skill needs and improves educational access for incumbent workers and newly hired employees. EvolveSC is another example of braiding and leveraging resources to increase educational access.

Co-enrollment strategies also facilitate resource sharing across workforce development programs. One of the state's strategies for alignment and coordination is co-enrollment across core, mandatory, and optional programs, replicating the co-enrollment practice that already exists between TAA and WIOA and increasing access to education and training, case management, and supportive services.

In addition to the examples provided above, the state will continue to seek grant funding opportunities that align with the state's vision and strategic goals for workforce development.

(H) *Improving Access to Post-secondary Credentials.* Describe how the state's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized post-secondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

Through the state's implementation of sector strategies, resources will be aligned across workforce, economic development, education, and other community-based entities with the ultimate goal of preparing individuals for employment in high-demand, high-wage occupations. Sector-based education and career pathways will increase awareness of these industries and occupations, and improve access to education and training leading to recognized post-secondary credentials. As discussed in section (E) above, CTE and dual enrollment are important components of the workforce system exposing high school students to in-demand career options and allowing them to earn college credit while completing their high school diploma.

As mentioned above, the South Carolina Workforce Development Act as proposed creates a Workforce Scholarship and Grants fund to financially assist eligible individuals with tuition and education related expenses for career training and certification programs thereby improving access to post-secondary credentials.

Additionally, the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) will be closely aligned with the industry sectors and occupations identified at the state and regional levels ensuring that job seekers are being trained for in-

⁵³ H. 4145, South Carolina Workforce Development Act, 2015-2016.



demand occupations that pay a self-sustaining wage. DEW is partnering with Apprenticeship Carolina™ to add Registered Apprenticeship programs to the ETPL further increasing access to industry-recognized credentials and apprenticeship certificates.

Business Services Teams also partner with Apprenticeship Carolina™ to help increase awareness and use of Registered Apprenticeships. Businesses are encouraged to use Registered Apprenticeships as a workforce development tool designed to build their talent pipeline. Since 2007, the number of programs has increased from 90 to 773.

Apprenticeship Carolina™ has a Youth Apprenticeship component designed to create recruitment pipelines of young, skilled workers, decrease turnover, and allow employers to influence, mold, and shape potential future employees. Over the last two years, the number of companies that have youth apprenticeship programs has grown to 91. Youth apprenticeship programs now exist in 24 of South Carolina's 46 counties. In some instances, the students graduate with a high school diploma, a nationally-recognized DOL credential, and credit hours toward education at a local technical college and/or certificate of study. Youth apprenticeship programs are a valuable tool that will be leveraged across the state.

(I) *Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies.* Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the state.

There are several economic development entities in South Carolina, to include, but not limited to the S.C. Department of Commerce, readySC™, and county and regional economic alliances. Workforce development programs and activities are well coordinated with economic development entities across the State. Several recent projects are examples of the partnership and collaboration that exist in South Carolina.

Sector Strategies/South Carolina Talent Pipeline Project

The S.C. Department of Commerce is a co-chair of the Talent Pipeline State Leadership Team partnering with DEW, the S.C. Technical College System, and the S.C. Department of Education to adopt a sector strategies approach to developing a skilled talent pipeline for South Carolina's business community. S.C. Department of Commerce Regional Workforce Advisors (RWA) and economic alliances are partnering with workforce and education entities to develop and implement sector strategies on a regional basis.

S.C. Certified Work Ready Communities

The S.C. Department of Commerce was a member of the CWRC state leadership team formed to implement this initiative, and continues to be a strong supporter. Likewise, at the county-level, economic developers have played a vital role in recruiting business support and helping counties earn the Certified Work Ready Community designation as a strategy for meeting the talent needs of employers.

Business Services Teams

Each LWDA has a Business Services Team (BST) consisting of members who represent a variety of workforce and economic development entities. In nearly all of the areas, economic development entities are represented on the BST.

**Rapid Response/Business Services Collaboration**

DEW Rapid Response staff partner with the S.C. Department of Commerce in a number of capacities, including identifying businesses in distress and/or experiencing a layoff or closure event to ensure early intervention which may avert the layoff or mitigate the impact to the business and employees.

(b) State Operating Systems and Policies. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the state operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the state strategy described in section II Strategic Elements. This includes—

(1) The state operating systems that will support the implementation of the state’s strategies. This must include a description of—

(A) State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of state strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.).

***DEW: WIOA Adult, Dislocated, and Youth Programs, TAA, and Wagner-Peyser
South Carolina Works Online Services (SCWOS)***

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

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

SCWOS is also aligned with Unemployment Insurance, which enables automatic registration of UI claimants into the system if accounts do not already exist. These interfaces produce files that provide information about UI claimants, including whether they are registered for work, whether they have reported for mandatory profiling workshops, and what kinds of occupations they are looking for. South Carolina requires that all UI claimants conduct at least one of their work searches through SCWOS every week. To facilitate this verification, an electronic file is provided to UI each week. Electronic files are also provided that allow UI to verify whether a claimant should be waived from the mandatory work search requirements due to participation in training. SCWOS’s many integrations and interfaces all help support coordinated implementation of state strategies and training and employment activities.

In addition to the DEW-administered programs above, the agency will also be the administrative and operating agency for the SNAP Employment and Training program. An additional module for SCWOS was purchased for this program, and participant and reporting data will be entered in this same system.

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

SCWOS desktop and on-site monitoring is conducted at both the state and local levels. During the



monitoring process DEW staff reviews local area policies and processes for compliance with WIOA law and regulations. Performance monitoring coupled with the ability to view and track user service data enhances and improves both the state's and local areas' ability to make effective WIOA program policies.

To further utilize SCWOS to coordinate services, several workforce partners, such as staff of the Vocational Rehabilitation Department, Department of Social Services, and others, have viewing access to SCWOS.

Labor Market Information (LMI)

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

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

Community Profile Report: A comprehensive report with economic, demographic, industry, occupation and education statistics for counties, metropolitan and workforce areas.

Insights: A monthly report from the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce with employment and unemployment analyses and review of unemployment insurance claims data for the state, counties and workforce areas.

Help Wanted Online (HWOL): The Labor Supply versus Demand by Local Workforce Region Report is real time labor market information consisting of job ads advertised on the internet and various job boards. HWOL data are indicators of labor market demand and are regularly updated. The methodology uses internet scraping and the data series is Help Wanted OnLine (HWOL) developed by The Conference Board.

Online Job Bank

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

OAE: Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs

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

The Office of Adult Education (OAE) has access to each local program's database as well as a combined database for state reporting. While Adult Education produces aggregate reports for a number of partners and other entities, the Office of Adult Education and local providers are the only entities that have access rights to this web-based application. South Carolina School Boards Insurance Trust (SCSBIT) requests information annually concerning instructional hours for each school district. Adult



Education conducts data matches with S.C. Dept. of Social Services, DEW, and the S.C. Technical College System, and anticipates broadening accessibility to this information by data matching with the S.C. Commission on Higher Education.

SCVRD: Rehabilitation Act Programs

The Case Management System (CMS) for SCVRD is an internally developed set of programs that provide agency staff with real time access to client information to support integrated service delivery and data reporting based on the agency's unique needs. Client information is collected and reported to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and includes the Case Service Report RSA-911, Quarterly Cumulative Caseload Report RSA-113, and Annual Vocational Rehabilitation Program/Cost Report RSA-2. Within CMS are time management tools that facilitate casework and ensure compliance to policy. These tools include automatic tasks, appointments, and compliance notifications that are recorded in the client record. CMS also provides data for customized reports available in real-time. An accuracy rate identifies trends and needed areas for improvement at the caseload, area, region, and state level. Additionally, the system allows for quality assurance to take place online locally and at the SCVRD state office.

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

SCCB: Rehabilitation Act Programs

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

Regarding data sharing, SCCB does not currently share data from AWARE with any agency or organization; however, data sharing with DEW is currently pending. The purposes of data sharing will be to obtain wage data for social security reimbursement and the WIOA primary performance indicators.

The Systems Alignment and Performance Accountability Work Group is and will continue to evaluate the feasibility of adopting an integrated case management, performance, and reporting system that will increase efficiency, reduce duplication of efforts, and improve the level of service to job seekers and employers.



(B) Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers.

DEW: WIOA Adult, Dislocated, and Youth Programs, TAA, and Wagner-Peyser

The SC Works Online Services (SCWOS) System integrates the required performance measures and has the capability to generate on-demand reports.

System generated reports, as well as our state developed ad hoc reports, are used to evaluate the efficiency, performance, and effectiveness of the workforce system. Reports also help staff identify data issues within the system so that the data may be corrected in a timely fashion. Examples of available reports include caseload, youth training activities and/or test scores, and aggregate reports that advise on WIOA participation levels in each of the LWDAs and SC Works Centers.

The state follows Federal performance and reporting processes. SCWOS supports Federal quarterly and annual reporting, WIASRD (Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data)⁵⁴, and data validation. Specifically, the Document Imaging Management and Scanning module in SCWOS allows staff to more efficiently access source documentation and complete the data element validation process.

Additionally, the state requests wage records each quarter from the Unemployment Insurance Division of the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce. The state is also a member of the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and the Federal Employment Data Exchange project (FEDES). Wage data is used to measure the entered employment rate and quarterly earnings.

OAE: Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs

Local providers eligible for adult education use a state standardized registration/intake form to collect student information upon entry into the local program. All data entry occurs at the local provider level. Instructional hours are added on a monthly basis to document student attendance. Goals and Cohorts are entered and marked “met” as required by federal guidance. OAE has access to all local program information through LACES, and each local program has the capability to run the federally required reports on only their program. At the state level, Adult Education can run these reports on all eligible providers.

SCVRD: Rehabilitation Act Programs

The Case Management System (CMS) for SCVRD is an internally developed set of programs that allows for the flexibility of interfacing with partners as necessary. For example, SCVRD’s system works with the South Carolina Enterprise Information System (SCEIS) to process client procurements, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) for Social Security verification and beneficiary status through the State Verification and Exchange System (SVES), and the South Carolina Workers’ Compensation Commission. An exchange of data from DEW will be available in the near future. CMS also allows the agency to make changes and improvements quickly, deliver consistent services to clients statewide, react to data changes enacted by RSA as mandated, and provide real-time reporting.

⁵⁴ WIASRD is a collection of individual participant records, each of which contains information about a participant's characteristics, activities, and outcomes. These standardized records are maintained by state workforce investment agencies for all individuals who receive services or benefits from programs funded by WIA Title IB, including services financially assisted by National Emergency Grants.



SCVRD faces the following challenges with regard to implementing WIOA performance measures:

- identifying and collecting data which has not been required in the past and is not yet in the CMS;
- identifying the appropriate data sources consistent with other VR programs;
- concern about the potential for disparity among agencies' interpretations/definitions of data reporting requirements pending final regulations;
- adequacy of resources to work on WIOA-mandated data collection and reporting requirements; and
- identifying and accessing data that is not available from UI wages, such as self-employment, military, etc.

SCCB: Rehabilitation Act Programs

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

As the SCCB works toward adopting a fully integrated case management, data collection, and reporting system that is shared by all core programs, it will need to reexamine its data collection and reporting processes so that they are consistent and aligned across partner agencies.

- (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 sec. 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.**

Phase I State Partner Memorandum of Understanding

In South Carolina, the one-stop delivery system is SC Works. SC Works is a system that offers personalized assistance to those looking for work, education, and training opportunities, and connects employers to a skilled workforce. The vision of SC Works is service integration by aligning numerous programs into a unified, customer-focused network within each community.

As a step toward achieving this vision, Phase I of a state partner MOU (Appendix 3) was executed in 2015. The following partners joined in the MOU:

- S.C. Workforce Investment Board (SWIB)
- S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce
- State Board of Technical and Comprehensive Education
- Department of Social Services
- S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department
- Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging
- State Department of Education
- Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (now under S.C. Department of Administration)
- Indian Development Council, Inc.
- Bamberg Job Corps Center
- Department of Juvenile Justice



- Department of Corrections
- Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services

The focus of Phase I is coordination of services among partners that will foster cooperation, better education, and specify the responsibilities of state agencies and mandatory partner programs under WIOA.

Phase II Memorandum of Understanding

Phase I MOU partners, with input from the Resource Sharing and Infrastructure Funding Work group and other key stakeholders, are currently in the process of developing Phase II of the state partner MOU, which will incorporate and include Phase I and will establish shared accountability of resources for SC Works center services.

In September 2015, the SWDB convened state partners for an initial planning meeting. As a result, several work groups were formed with the purpose of examining issues related to operational and system alignment, collaboration and partnership, and resource sharing in the SC Works delivery system. These work groups will develop recommendations for Phase II. The ideas and strategic recommendations of each work group have also been included in this Unified State Plan.

Co-enrollment Policies

Even in the absence of specific policies, co-enrollment is commonplace throughout the SC Works system. This strategy provides the customer with the ideal service plan while allowing the system to utilize its resources in an efficient manner. The state encourages local workforce areas to co-enroll participants into other programs that are appropriate in meeting their needs. Co-enrollment can offer the opportunity to access additional program services and funds to help address a participant's specific barriers to employment and/or education.

Adult Ed – Given the changes in WIOA core program performance measures, co-enrollment is strongly encouraged as a way to ensure the continued success of multiple partner programs. Credit for attainment of a high school equivalency will be dependent upon participants also obtaining employment or entering an education or training program leading to a recognized post-secondary credential. Labor exchange services through Wagner-Peyser and training services through Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs will be critical in meeting performance goals for our high school equivalency population served through Adult Education.

TAA – All dislocated workers are currently co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser for labor exchange services. As most workers separated from employment due to increased imports or a shift in production also meet dislocated worker eligibility criteria, co-enrollment in the Title I Dislocated Worker Program is encouraged as an early intervention. Co-enrollment allows the process of needs and skills assessment to begin immediately, even before workers may become eligible for TAA, giving individuals more time to consider the options available to them. OJT opportunities for TAA participants are also enhanced through co-enrollment and leveraging of resources, as WIOA allows up to 75 percent reimbursement to employers versus the 50 percent allowed under the TAA Program.

The Systems Alignment and Performance Accountability work group will continue to examine the need for state policies and guidance that address (1) common intake; (2) co-enrollment; and (3) referrals.

Process for Developing Guidelines for Resource Sharing and Infrastructure Funding

A work group of state partners was established to discuss and better understand the complexities of resource sharing and infrastructure funding of the one-stop delivery system. Guidance was developed,



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

State partners are in agreement that further guidance is needed to develop the state infrastructure funding mechanism and state criteria that will be used when consensus agreement cannot be reached at the local level.

(3) State Program and State Board Overview.

(A) State Agency Organization. Describe the organization and delivery systems at the state and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

DEW: The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) is one of 16 cabinet agencies and is the state administrative entity for Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs and Title III Wagner-Peyser Program. The Executive Director and members of the SWDB are appointed by the Governor. The SWDB assists the Governor and executes her vision for the state's workforce development system by setting policy and providing strategic direction.

South Carolina has twelve LWDA's and four WIOA planning regions. Each LWDA also has at least one comprehensive SC Works Center where the WIOA Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker programs, Wagner-Peyser programs, and a variety of other partner programs and services are made available to job seekers and employers. Some LWDA's also have satellite centers and access points making programs and services more accessible to individuals. DEW provides oversight, technical assistance and support to LWDA's to ensure compliance and enhance the delivery of services.



Figure 14

SC Department of Employment and Workforce

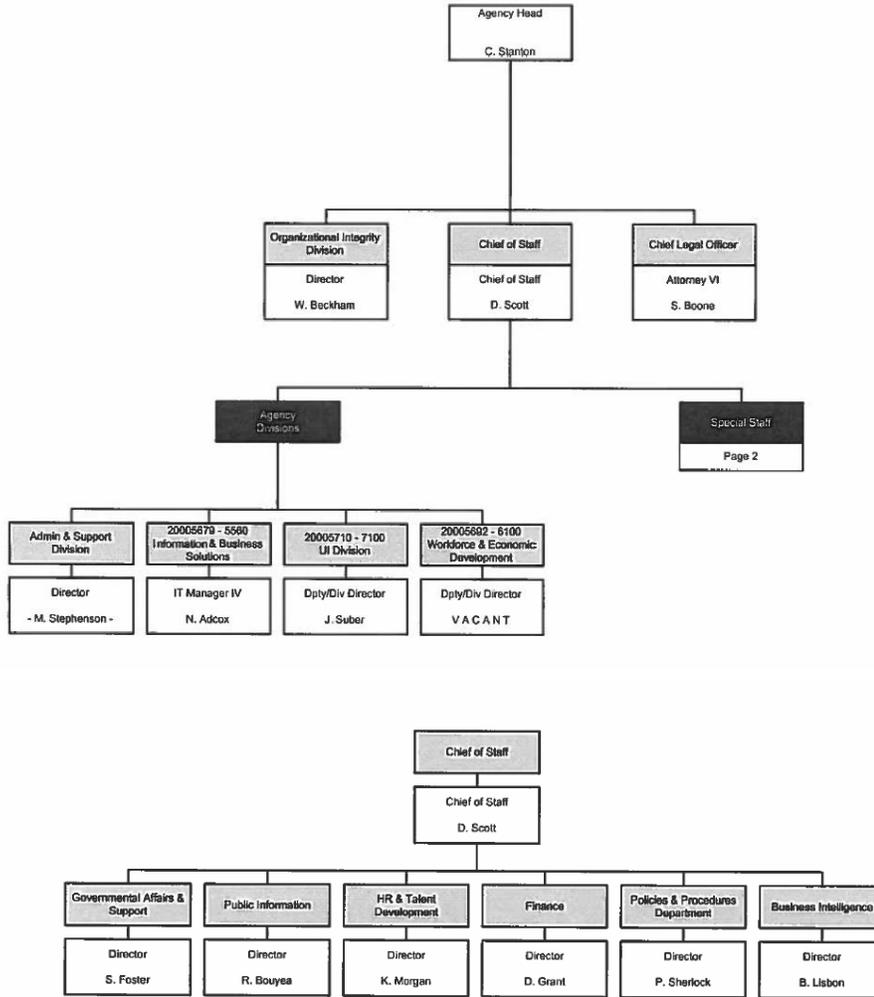
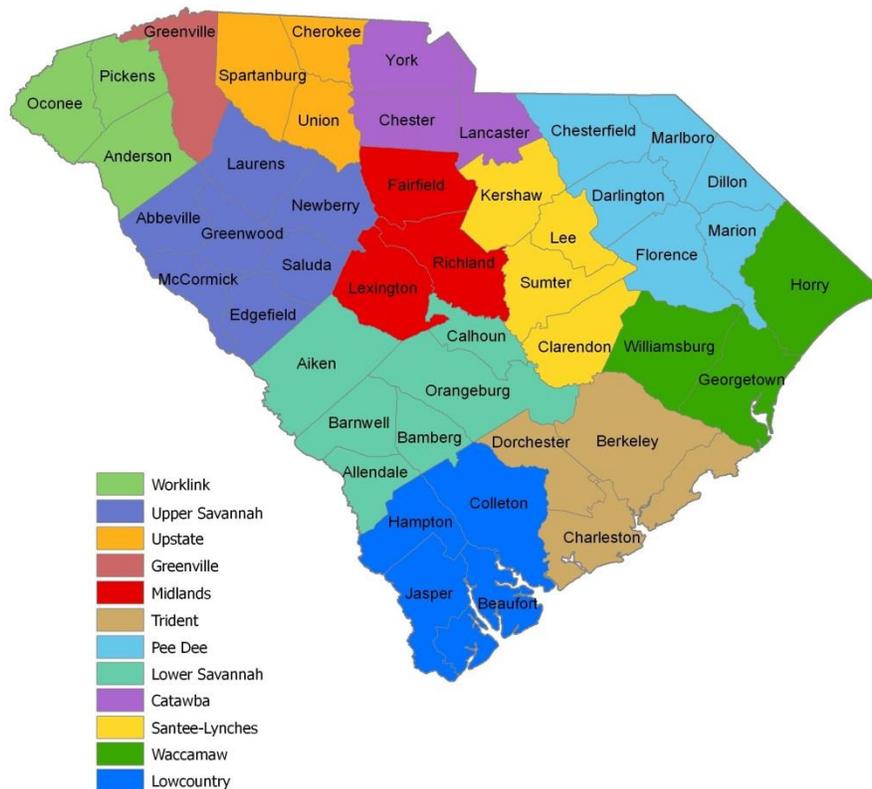




Figure 15

South Carolina Local Workforce Investment Areas



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

The agency operates in 23 area offices and 24 work training centers across the state, through which services are provided to all eligible individuals who desire to enter or maintain competitive, integrated employment. Through a team approach, SCVRD counselors, assessment and career exploration specialists, job readiness training staff, job preparedness instructors, and business development specialists work to prepare clients for employment opportunities within their local labor market, as well as develop relationships with business and industry to match clients individually with employment opportunities that fit their strengths, abilities, capabilities, and skill sets. Comprehensive programs, including occupational therapy and physical therapy services, rehabilitation engineering, IT training centers, as well as two residential alcohol and drug treatment facilities further expand the capacity of SCVRD to meet the needs of eligible individuals with disabilities.



Figure 16

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department
2016

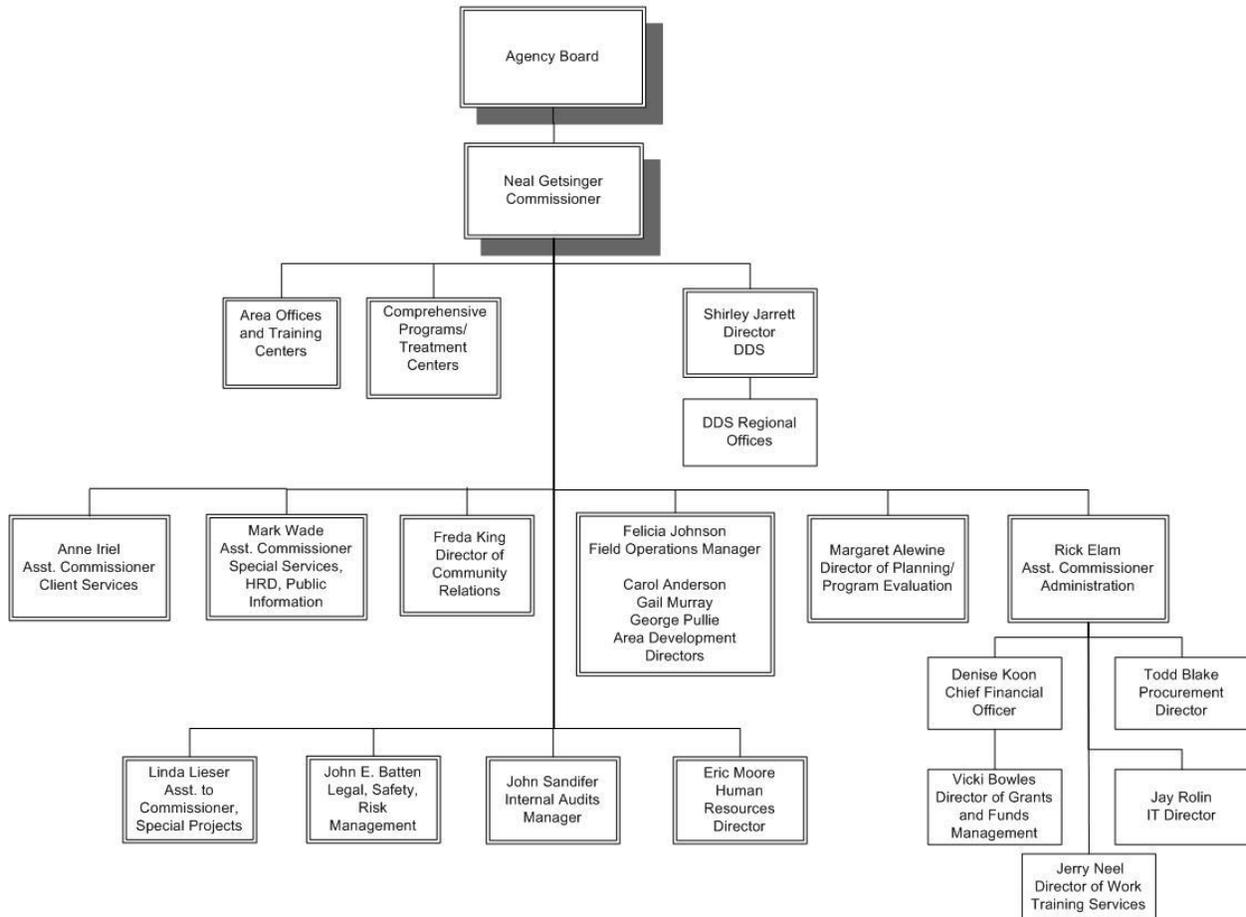
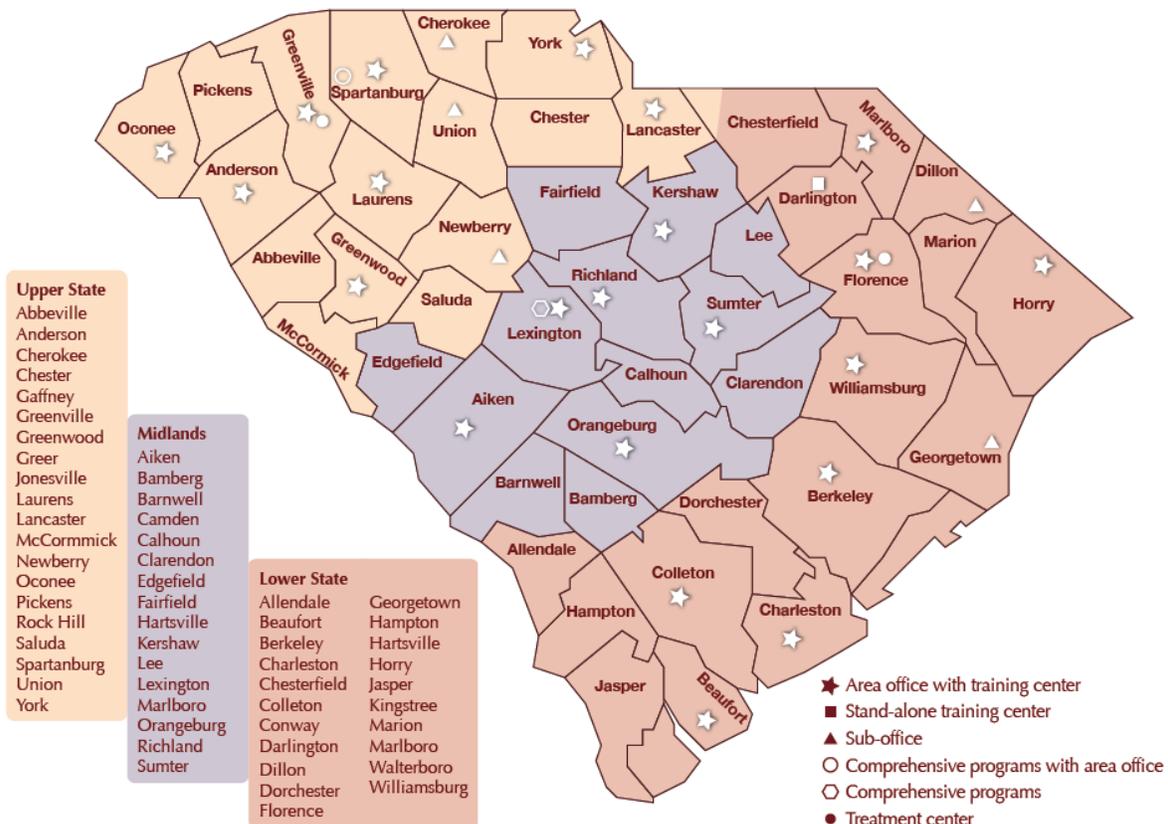




Figure 17

SCVRD Regions



2016-02

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

The Commission operates 10 local area offices through which services are provided to all eligible individuals who desire to enter or maintain competitive integrated employment. The Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center in Columbia provides comprehensive adjustment to blindness services including personal adjustment to blindness, orientation and mobility skills, daily living skills, Braille literacy skills, and pre-vocational training on the use of Assistive Technology devices. SCCB counselors, Adjustment to Blindness Instructors, Vocational Evaluators, and Employment Consultants work to prepare consumers for employment opportunities within their local labor market. Employment Consultants build relationships with business in order to provide talent acquisition and talent retention services. In addition, the Commission manages a state funded Blindness Prevention Program, Independent Living Program, the Older-Blind Program, Low Vision Clinics, and the Business Enterprise Program.



Figure 18

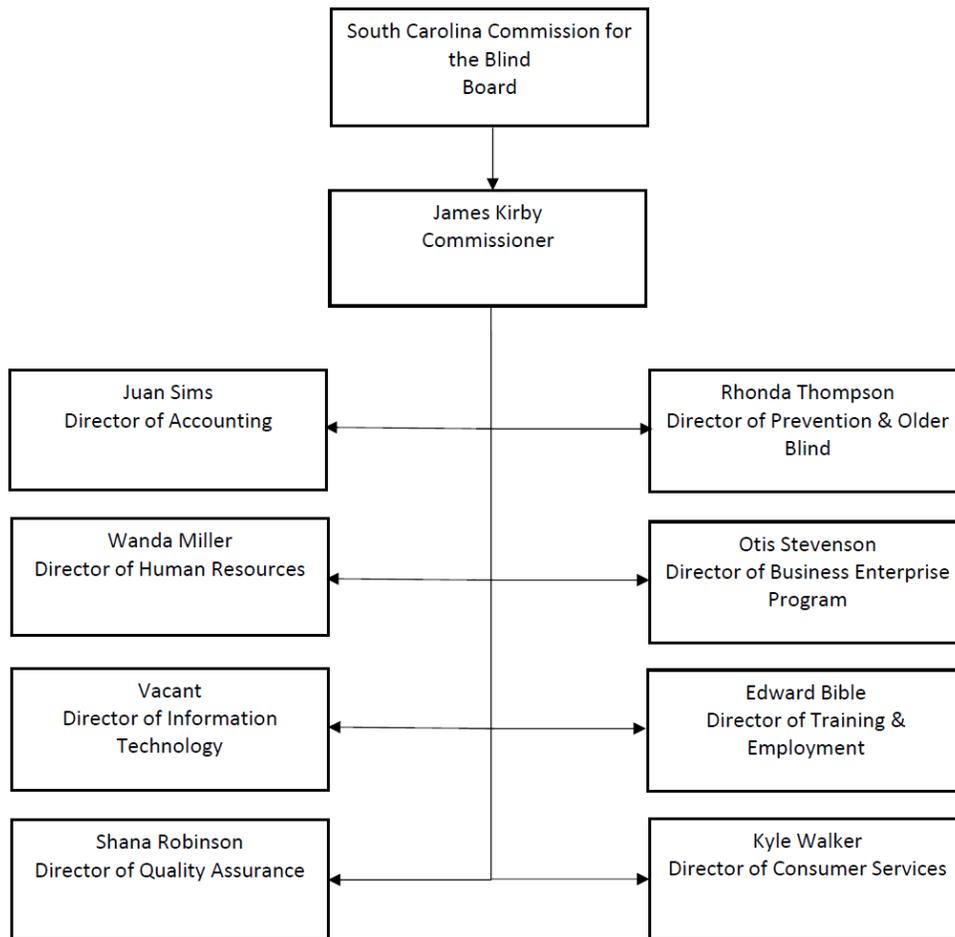
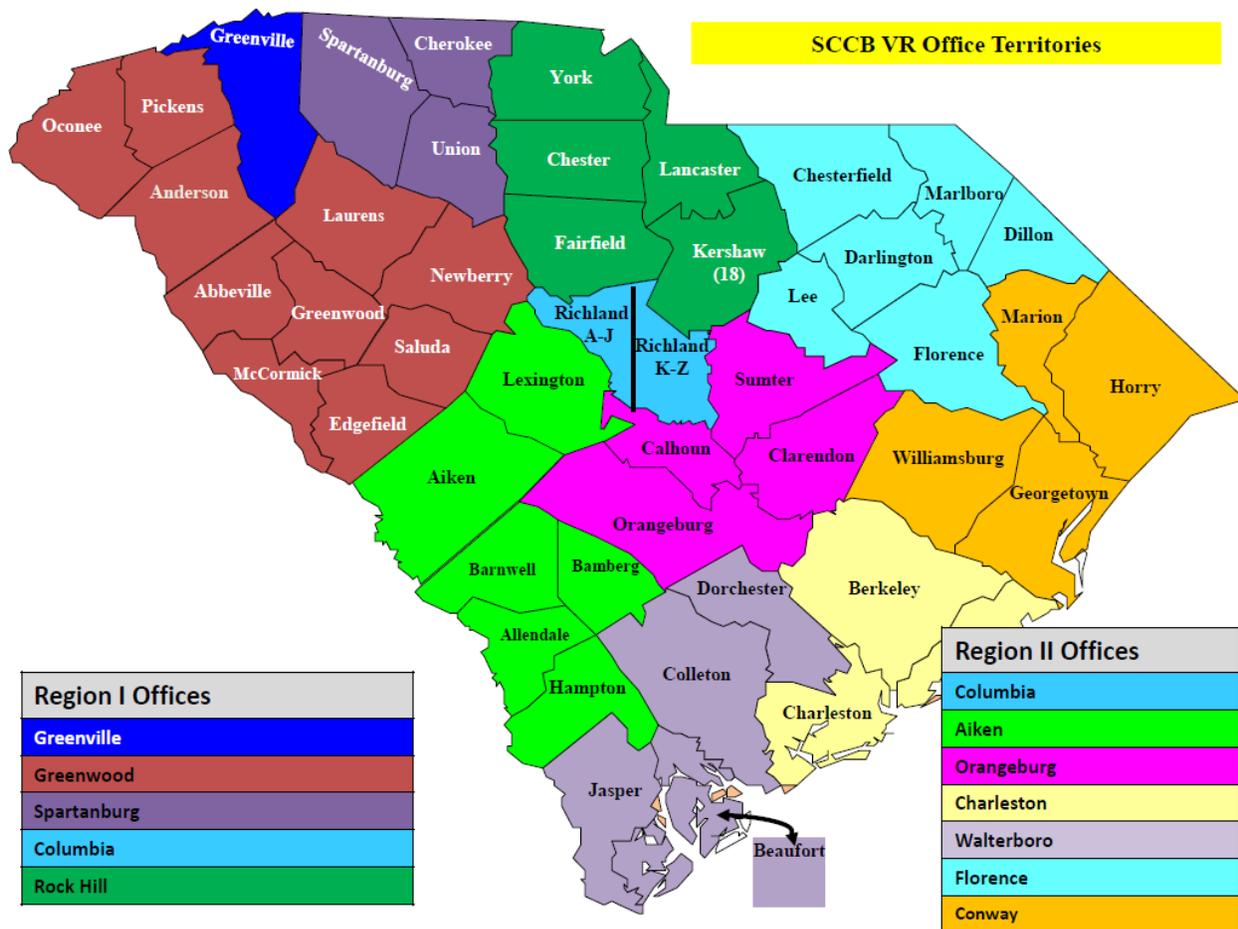




Figure 19



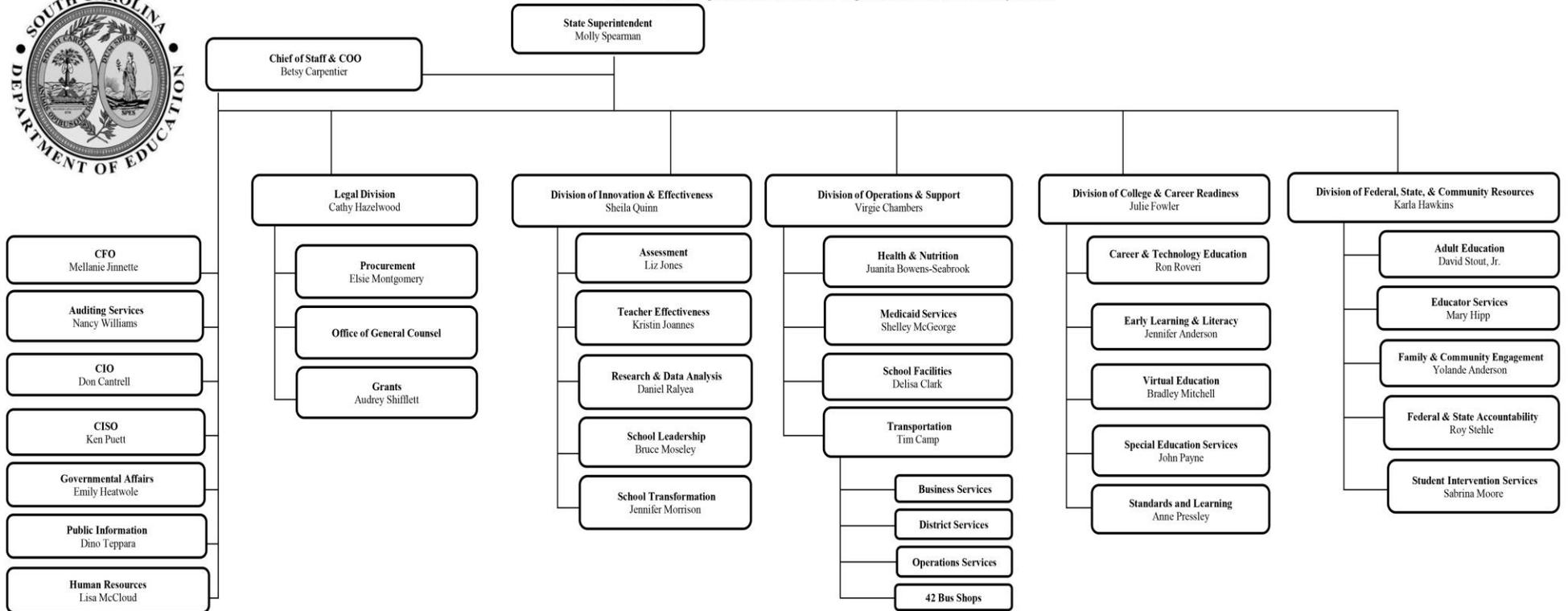
Adult Education: The South Carolina education system includes K-12, Adult Education and Career and Technology Education, under the direction of State Superintendent of Education, Molly Spearman, working with the State Board of Education. Adult Education is delivered through fifty-one school-district programs, one of which is the Department of Corrections (Palmetto Unified School District), and five community-based organizations.

The vision of the South Carolina Department of Education is that students graduate prepared for success in college, careers, and citizenship. By 2018, at least one school in every district will have implemented personalized learning that supports students' meeting the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.



Figure 20

South Carolina Department of Education • Organizational Chart • February 5, 2016





- (B) **State Board. Provide a description of the State Board, including-**
- (i) **Membership Roster. Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.**

The Governor is working toward the re-constitution of a fully compliant SWDB. (Appendix 4 – SWDB Roster).

- (ii) **Board Activities. Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out state Board functions effectively.**

New Member Orientation: As members are appointed to the SWDB, they receive an orientation that includes: a summary of the role and functions of the SWDB, the organization of the Board, relevant Federal and state laws, and current SWDB initiatives. DEW staff continues educating new and returning members on issues related to the workforce regularly through committee participation and Board meetings. SWDB members are also encouraged to attend the annual Workforce Symposium hosted by the S.C. Chamber of Commerce (in partnership with DEW and the S.C. Department of Commerce) and other appropriate conferences, such as the Southeastern Training Associate (SETA) spring and fall conferences.

Board Member Mentoring: The Board Governance Committee will spearhead a mentoring initiative where tenured SWDB members will be identified and partnered with new members. Through this initiative, new members will have a better understanding of their role in advancing the South Carolina workforce development system.

Board Training: New and returning SWDB and LWDB members were invited to participate in a full-day state and local board training last fall. The presenter provided an introduction to the role of state and local boards under WIOA, and specifically addressed the role of boards in state, regional, and local planning, strengthening partnerships across programs, and increasing employer engagement. As with New Member Orientation, board members will continue to be educated on relevant issues and informed of their role with regard to specific workforce initiatives.

SWDB Strategic Planning: The SWDB will develop a strategic plan to focus its efforts in growing the capacity and performance of the workforce system. The project will be facilitated by an external consultant who will:

- facilitate brainstorming sessions with SWDB members on the Board's inputs, value added processes, future goals, and strategies;
- develop goals and objectives to be addressed through the Board and each standing Committee; and
- transfer the Board Strategic Plan into a professional publication.

The Strategic Plan is expected to be complete in 2016.

**(4) Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners.**

- (A) Assessment of Core Programs.** Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on state performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This state assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance

The WIOA Core Programs will provide data for federal reporting on the common indicators of performance required by section 116(b) of WIOA:

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

At this time, the state does not intend to create any additional performance indicators for PY 2016.

During the WIOA planning process, the Systems and Performance Accountability Work Group has examined a number of options for the integration of data and reporting processes. This work group will continue to examine other options that will allow all core programs to align data and performance reporting.

- (B) Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs.** Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

SC Works Certification Standards

By providing access to programs, activities, and services, SC Works partners contribute to the overall effectiveness of the workforce delivery system. The SC Works Certification Standards, which measure the effectiveness of system management and services to job seekers and employers, are one of the ways that core, mandatory, and optional partner programs will be assessed each year. The SWDB adopted a set of standards that establish and communicate clear expectations and minimum requirements for comprehensive SC Works Centers in an effort to provide consistent, excellent services to job seekers and employers.

The standards have been reviewed for consistency with WIOA sec. 121(g) and are being revised as appropriate. Full implementation of the Standards by local workforce development boards is expected in 2016.



Other Assessment Methods

As part of the planning process, the State Unified Plan Work Group developed a survey that was distributed to core, mandatory, and optional partners to collect information about partner programs, activities, and services and their alignment and coordination with other partner programs and entities. Question thirteen asks respondents to describe how their programs, services, and/or activities are assessed each year. Based on their responses, programs use a combination of internal and external tools to assess the effectiveness of their programs and activities.

Most federally funded programs are assessed at least annually by their authorizing agencies and have a set of performance indicators against which program effectiveness is measured.

Other agencies/organizations use internal processes to assess their programs and activities. The S.C. Technical College System, for example, evaluates associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs offered by local community and technical colleges on an annual basis. There are several indicators against which local programs perform in order to be considered productive, such as: enrollment, graduation rates, and job placement. Regular evaluations are conducted with organizations that use the System's statewide programs and the System also conducts internal audits of programs and processes.⁵⁵

- (C) **Previous Assessment Results. Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the state is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.**

The state will provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and plan modifications.

- (D) **Evaluations and Research Projects. Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, state and local boards and with state agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.**

The South Carolina workforce system continuously seeks ways to improve processes, policies, services and outcomes for job seekers and employers. As such, the core program partners will work alongside the SWDB and LWDBs to identify areas of opportunity that would benefit from further evaluation and research. For example, the new legislation highlights the need for system and data integration among core programs. In 2015, a partner agency work group began to research existing unified data collection

⁵⁵ Local community and technical colleges also undergo evaluations in compliance with a variety of accrediting bodies including the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).



and reporting systems in addition to other methods of data sharing. Although the group's work is still in its infancy, several systems have been demonstrated and options for portals or overlays to existing systems have been explored. As the federal oversight agencies provide more guidance on performance measures and reporting requirements, the work group can further hone the study to determine precise system needs.

The state will also coordinate evaluation and research projects with those provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education.

(5) Distribution of Funds for Core Programs. Describe the methods and factors the state will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

(A) For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the state's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

- (i) Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),**
- (ii) Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),**
- (iii) Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.**

Title I program funds are distributed to LWDA's according to the following fund allocation formulas:

Youth Funds

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

Adult Funds

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



Dislocated Worker Funds

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

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

Hold Harmless

- Applies to each funding stream. Ensures that funds are distributed without significant shifts in funding levels.
- A local area will not receive an allocation percentage that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the 2 preceding years.

Title I Financial Reporting Requirements

While the frequency of federal reporting to USDOL-ETA is quarterly, the state requires local workforce development areas to report obligations and accrued expenditures on a monthly basis. Monthly reporting allows the state to assist local areas with more timely technical assistance on financial issues identified in the monthly reports. More frequent reporting also ensures accuracy in the quarterly reporting to USDOL-ETA and facilitates overall fiscal management of grant funds. The state also requires more detailed expenditure reporting, to include staff salaries and fringe benefits, operating expenses, types of training expenditures, supportive services, etc. This level of detail allows for tracking and analysis of program cost in three major categories:

- Training and related expenses (participant cost)
- Staff working directly with participants
- Other staff and operating expenses.

(B) For Title II:

- (i) Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the state, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.**

South Carolina Department of Education - OAE will utilize a competitive grant application process to identify, assess, and award multi-year Adult Education grants to eligible providers. The state's Request for Proposals (RFP) instructions will identify eligible providers as:

- Local education agencies
- Community-based or faith-based organizations
- Voluntary literacy organizations
- Institutions of higher learning
- Public or private nonprofit agencies
- Libraries
- Public housing authorities



- Other nonprofits that have the ability to provide literacy services
- Consortiums of organizations listed above
- Partnership between an employer and an entity listed above

Considerations for Funding

Applicants must demonstrate effectiveness and experience in providing the adult education and literacy services proposed in the application. Applicants must be in compliance with all state laws regarding the awarding of contracts and the expenditure of public funds. In addition, the funding agency shall consider:

- The degree to which the eligible provider would be responsive to regional needs and serving individuals in the community who were identified in the plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills or who are English language learners.
- The ability of the eligible provider to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities.
- Past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals to meet state-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy.
- The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan, as well as the activities and services of the One-Stop partners.
- Whether the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains and whether the program uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction.
- Whether the eligible provider's activities, including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction delivered by the eligible provider, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice.
- Whether the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education, in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance.
- Whether the eligible provider's activities provide learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete post-secondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Whether the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high-quality professional development, including through electronic means.
- Whether the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with



elementary schools and secondary schools, post-secondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce investment boards, One-Stop Centers, job training programs, social service agencies, businesses, industries, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways.

- Whether the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with federal, state, and local support services (such as childcare, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs.
- Whether the eligible provider maintains a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes and to monitor program performance.
- Whether the local areas in which the eligible provider is located have a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

(ii) Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

South Carolina Department of Education - OAE will hold a full and open competition consistent with the standards of CFR 200.319. All eligible agencies will be granted direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants or contracts. The OAE will be in compliance with all state and federal laws regarding the award of contracts and the expenditure of public funds. The following steps will be initiated to ensure direct and equitable access:

- An announcement of the availability of federal funds, under the auspices of Title II of the Workforce Innovation Act of 2014, will be circulated in various professional print and web-based publications, newsletters, and newspapers in order to provide the widest possible state coverage.
- An announcement of the availability of funds will be sent to all existing adult education providers.
- The same grant and application process will be used for all eligible providers in the state.
- Standard criteria for evaluation of local proposals will be used for all eligible providers.
- Technical assistance workshops will be held to review the entire process and provide information to all eligible providers interested in applying. Dates, times, and places of these workshops will be included in the announcements and the Request for Proposal.

The announcement will contain information such as:

- Type of grants available
- Contact person to obtain RFP guidelines
- Timeline with grant application due date
- Other pertinent items



- Any information required by state law in regard to the awarding of contracts and the expenditure of public funds

(C) Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

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

SCVRD and SCCB maintain an agreement on distribution of funds that is proportionally consistent with the client service and operational needs of the two agencies.

(6) Program Data

(A) Data Alignment and Integration. Describe the plans of the lead state agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the state board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through post-secondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the state's plan for integrating data systems should include the state's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

(i) Describe the state's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

South Carolina core partners currently use a variety of agency-specific data systems to manage service delivery (e.g., intake, application for services, case management, referrals, etc.) and to collect and report data. With the exception of DEW-administered programs, these systems do not exchange data in real time with other state partners, and each entity separately requests, receives, and reports education, employment, and other performance data.

The Systems Alignment and Performance Accountability work group is assessing the current operability of each core partner's information system. Each partner has provided an overview of its information system and current reporting practices. All partners agree that a coordinated system that will enable the use of common intake procedures, timely and appropriate referrals, and the exchange of common data elements would be more efficient and would support assessment and evaluation. However, each partner has significant financial and human resources invested in its system, and the factors involved in systems alignments are complex. The work group is in the early stages of defining the needs and capabilities of a solution that will enable coordination and integration; and although a functionally integrated "fiscal and management accountability information system" that meets the requirements as defined in WIOA is the long term goal, there are still many unknowns at this time pending the final regulations and anticipated guidance from our respective federal partners.



- (ii) Describe the state’s plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.**

As mentioned above, the Systems Alignment and Performance Accountability work group is exploring options for the integration of information systems, case management, and data and reporting that will allow for common intake and the tracking of participants and clients across all core programs. The priority for this work group is developing a strategic plan for the alignment of data systems so that the state is positioned to submit a common WIOA performance report.

- (iii) Explain how the state board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.**

The functions of the SWDB are delegated to five standing committees: the Executive Committee, the Board Governance Committee, the Collaboration and Partnership Committee, SC Works Management Committee, and the Priority Populations Committee. The SC Works Management Committee is considered the “operations” arm of the Board, ensuring effective and consistent service delivery, often initiating policies and standard practices that enhance service delivery, such as the SC Works Center Certification Standards.

Similarly, the SC Works Management Committee will assist the Governor in aligning technology and data systems across programs by developing strategies and operating policies that support system-wide adoption and implementation.

- (iv) Describe the state’s plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).**

Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. Separately, the Departments of Labor and Education anticipate working with states to inform future guidance and possible information collection(s) on these accountability systems. States should begin laying the groundwork for these fiscal and management accountability requirements, recognizing that adjustments to meet the elements above may provide opportunity or have impact on such a fiscal and management accountability system.

Until all core programs are aligned in a fully integrated information system and are able to exchange real-time data, it will be difficult to submit a joint state performance report. The Systems Alignment and Performance Accountability work group will examine this issue in greater detail and work toward the goal of unified data collection and reporting. For at least PY 2016, however, the core program partners anticipate developing and producing the WIOA sec. 116 reports according to current agency specific reporting practices.



- (B) Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success. Describe how lead state agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing post-secondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.**

Primarily, we will use the WIOA sec. 116(b) indicators of performance to assess participant success post-program. The applicable measures are: employment during 2nd and 4th quarter after exit (adult/DW), education, training, or employment 2nd and 4th quarter after exit (youth), median earnings 2nd quarter after exit, and credential attainment (during or) 1 year after program exit.

Additionally, the ultimate goal of South Carolina's Eligible Training Provider (ETP) project is to be able to track participants' post-program success more efficiently. After project completion and full implementation, the state anticipates being able to track whether participants continued their education, earned higher wages, or entered training related employment.

The Systems Alignment and Performance Accountability Work Group will continue to investigate efficient methods (e.g. participant post-program survey, employer survey, etc.) for assessing post-program success and will determine whether additional indicators are appropriate.

- (C) Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data. Explain how the state will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and state law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)**

The Business Intelligence Division of DEW requests wage records on a quarterly basis for all new WIOA registrants and all WIOA exiters from the Unemployment Insurance Division of the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce. DEW is also a member of the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and the Federal Employment Data Exchange project (FEDES), allowing the state to collect wage records for WIOA participants in federal employment and those employed out-of-state. Wage records are used to verify if a participant gained or kept employment after exiting the WIOA program, and to determine the Entered Employment Rate and Median Earnings for performance reporting. To comply with the joint reporting requirements of WIOA, DEW is in the process of executing MOAs with all core program partners.

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

The South Carolina workforce system complies with all federal and state laws and guidelines for the handling and protection of Personally Identifiable Information (PII), including but not limited to 2 CFR 200.79 and TEGL 39-11, and ensures compliance through the following means: data sharing agreements with workforce partners, state and local memorandums of understanding (MOU), local area agreements, and resource sharing agreements. Additionally, PII is maintained and disposed of in a secure and confidential manner, and policies and procedures for the handling of PII are in place and reviewed regularly.



- (7) **Priority of Service for Veterans.** Describe how the state will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

In accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act, veterans and eligible spouses are given priority of service in employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the USDOL. Priority of service means that veterans and eligible spouses are given priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement service, and that a veteran or an eligible spouse either receives access to a service earlier in time than a non-covered person, or, if the resource is limited, the veteran or eligible spouse receives access to the services instead of or before the non-covered person. The state has provided guidance to local workforce boards on how to implement the priority of service provisions.

The state monitors priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses by ensuring that local workforce areas have implemented appropriate priority of service policies. Local policies are assessed to determine the following:

- whether the policy explains the differences between Veterans' Services and priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses;
- whether the policy describes the roles and responsibilities of SC Works Center staff and management as they pertain to Veterans' Priority of Service; and,
- whether the policy demonstrates appropriate actions for showing priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses for Department of Labor funded programs in SC Works Centers.

DEW conducts on-site evaluations of local SC Works Centers to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of internal processes. DEW monitors assess SC Works Center staff practices to determine whether the entitlement to priority of service is entirely explained and what actions are taken at points of entry to show preference.

Additionally, veterans receive a 24-hour period of priority for jobs listed with the SC Works system. This means that all qualified veterans and eligible persons will have the opportunity to view and receive referrals prior to non-covered persons.

The state has issued guidance regarding services under the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP). DVOP staff must limit their activities to providing services to eligible veterans and eligible spouses who:

- meet the definition of an individual with a significant barrier to employment (SBE), as defined and updated by DOL, or
- are members of a veteran population identified by the Secretary of Labor as eligible for DVOP services, currently defined as veterans aged 18 to 24.

Per state guidance, an eligible veteran or eligible spouse who is identified as having a SBE must be immediately referred to a DVOP specialist. Veterans ages 18 to 24 must also be referred to DVOP specialists. In instances where a DVOP specialist is not available, referrals to a DEW career development



specialist will be made. Also, veterans with a SBE and those aged 18 to 24 must have access to all appropriate SC Works services and are not limited to receiving services only from DVOP specialists.

Veterans and eligible spouses who do not meet the SBE definition, or are not within a specified category identified by the Secretary of Labor, are to be referred to appropriate non-JVSG SC Works staff member(s) to receive services, on a priority basis.

- (8) Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities. Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the state’s one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.**

South Carolina’s one-stop delivery system is designed to be fully accessible so that *all* job seekers and employers can participate in the services offered. The Methods of Administration (MOA) – a state document required by the Civil Rights Center – is a “living” document that ensures current federal regulations and directives are implemented at the state and local level expeditiously, and details how compliance with WIOA Section 188 will be accomplished.

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

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

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

Through participation in the S.C. Disability Employment Coalition, DEW is coordinating efforts with Able SC, SCVRD, and other disability advocacy groups to increase outreach and employment opportunities for



citizens with disabilities. These partnerships assist in providing resources, developing materials to benefit individuals with disabilities, and encouraging self-disclosure.

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

OAE has a special education task force that will create and deliver training for adult education practitioners serving students with special needs. The OAE also meets regularly with the Office of Special Education Services to ensure compliance with all special education regulations. Additionally, any program funded by the OAE must also comply with the General Education Provisions Act which requires each applicant to describe the steps they propose to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its federally assisted programs.

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

As part of the SC Works center certification process, LWDBs are required to evaluate accessibility of the SC Works delivery system. SC Works centers will be evaluated in 2016 and every three (3) years thereafter as required by WIOA. In order to be certified according to the SC Works certification standards, each center must meet the following accessibility baseline measures

- The Center is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Every workforce area will work with Vocational Rehabilitation partners and DEW Office of Equal Opportunity, as needed, to ensure ADA compliance.
- The Center provides assistive technology for customers to use when accessing computers and other services. This includes customers with visual impairments, physical disabilities, and hearing impairments.
- Staff should be identified to assist people with disabilities in case of emergency.
- There are linkages to services for people with special needs, including veterans and others, related to disability.

SC Works centers may be evaluated by SCVRD, and in some instances SCCB, to ensure ADA compliance. LWDBs have also partnered with SCVRD to assist with the procurement of accessible equipment. SCVRD is represented on all of the LWDBs and will participate on the disability standing committees discussed above.

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



- (9) **Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency.** Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of limited English proficient individuals, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

Languages other than English are identified through Census language identification flash cards. To ensure accessibility, individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are provided services via a qualified interpreter service, when qualified bilingual staff is not available. Each LWDA has submitted an LEP Plan of Action outlining procedures on identifying customer language needs, provision of services in the language identified, and the right to free language assistance. The LEP Plan of Action is an ongoing process identifying procedures to meet the needs of LEP customers. A Request for Interpreter Service form has been made available to expedite the interpreter request process. Training on the provision of services to LEP individuals, as well as current interpretation resources and other materials, are provided on an ongoing basis. LEP individuals are notified of their rights under law via posters in Spanish and any other significant language groups identified.

As part of the SC Works center certification process, LWDBs are required to evaluate LEP accessibility.



IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PARTNERS





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

Four (4) subject matter work groups were formed to examine operational and program alignment, resource sharing, data integration and information systems alignment, and serving priority populations. These work groups were intended to engage a variety of workforce partners in the WIOA planning and implementation process. The ideas and strategic recommendations of each work group were incorporated into the Unified State Plan and will also inform development of Phase II of the state partner MOU. A description of each work group is provided below.

Operational and Program Alignment: The key tenants of WIOA include collaboration and the streamlined delivery of job seeker and employer services. The Operational and Program Alignment work group is charged with examining coordination and alignment of workforce programs and resources to create a more streamlined and efficient delivery system for job seekers and employers.

Performance and Systems Alignment: Another major theme of WIOA is accountability through performance measures shared by all core program partners, and the alignment and integration of partner intake, case management, data and reporting systems. The Performance and Systems Alignment work group is empowered with offering strategic recommendations for the adoption and implementation of common performance measures, and is challenged to identify options for the coordination of program information systems.

Resource Sharing and Infrastructure Funding: Resource sharing is an important aspect of collaboration and partnership, and helps create a strong workforce system despite limited resources. The Resource Sharing and Infrastructure Funding work group is developing guidance to assist local workforce development areas in the negotiation and execution of local resource sharing agreements. This work group will also develop guidance for the state infrastructure mechanism and spearhead the development and execution of Phase II our state partner MOU.

Priority Populations: WIOA improves access to workforce programs for individuals with disabilities and prepares disconnected youth and other vulnerable populations for employment. The Priority Populations work group has identified several populations that face significant barriers to employment, including but not limited to: youth, veterans, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, and low-income and TANF/SNAP recipients. This work group will develop strategies that will improve services to these populations.

These work groups will continue their work after submission of the plan to implement the strategies and recommendations discussed herein and to work toward a more unified workforce delivery system.

Public Comment

The Unified State Plan was published on March 4th for public comment. Comments were submitted from the following entities:

- the Lowcountry Workforce Development Area
- the Pee Dee Workforce Development Area
- the Upper Savannah Workforce Development Area
- Palmetto Goodwill
- Charleston Adult Education
- Developmental Disabilities Council



- RespectAbility USA
- the S.C. Department of Education
- Able SC

The core program partners convened to review and discuss the comments. As a result, appropriate revisions were made to the state plan. Additionally, each entity listed above received a written response to their comment(s) via email. The SWDB approved the state plan in March of 2016.



V. COMMON ASSURANCES



**V. COMMON ASSURANCES**

The Unified State Plan partners, the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, the S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department, the S.C. Commission for the Blind, and the S.C. Department of Education, Division of Adult Education, make the following assurances:

1.	The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;
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;
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;
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 and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;
5.	The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;
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);
7.	The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;
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;
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;
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);



COMMON ASSURANCES CONTINUED	
11.	Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and
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.



VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS



**VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS**

Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B—

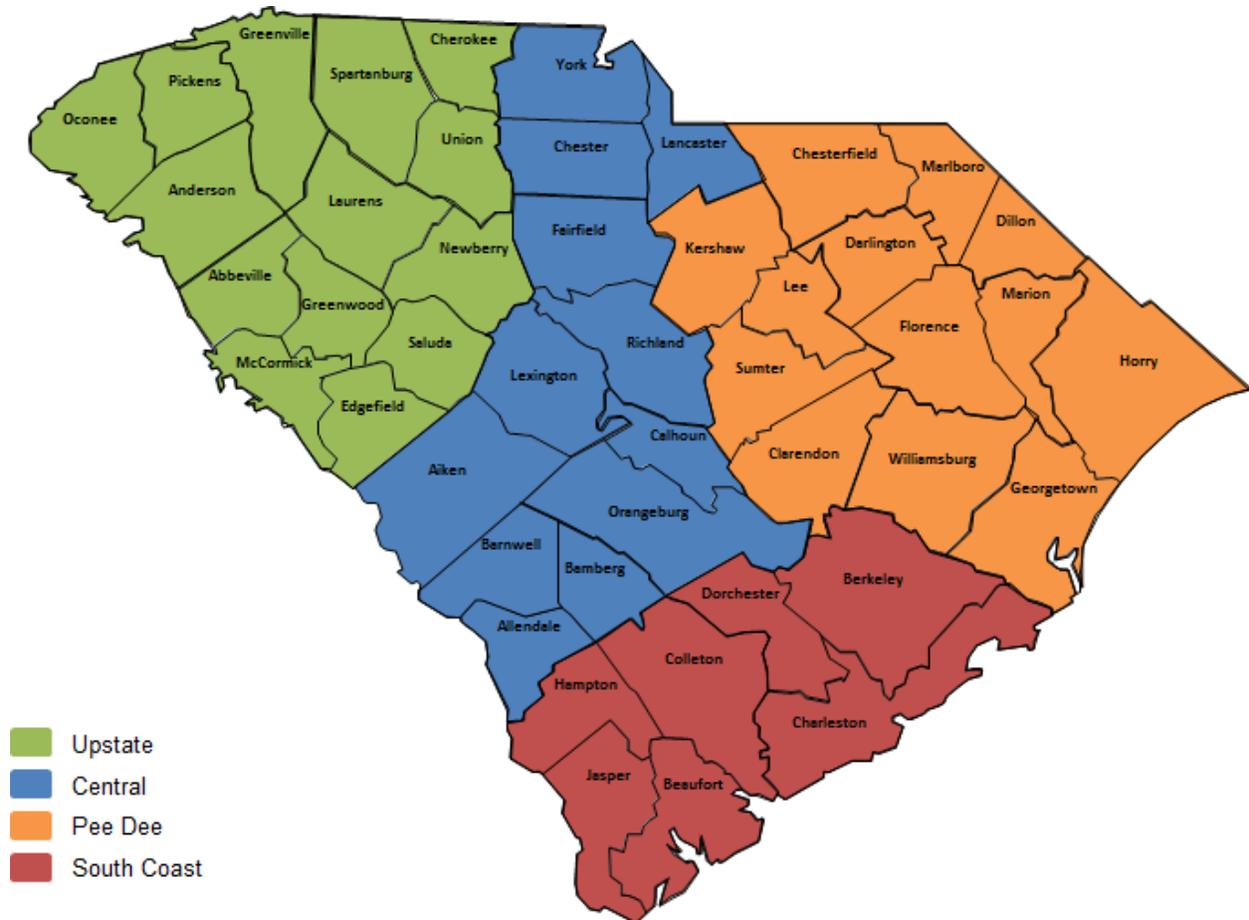
(a) General Requirements**(1) *Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas.*****(A) Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the state.**

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

- **Upstate** – Greenville, Upper Savannah, Upstate, and Worklink
- **Central** – Catawba, Lower Savannah, and Midlands
- **Pee Dee** – Pee Dee, Santee Lynches, and Wacammaw
- **South Coast** – Lowcountry and Trident



Figure 21

South Carolina WIOA Planning Regions

- (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 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.

[State Instruction 14-05](#), Local Workforce Development Area Designation and Local Workforce Development Board Certification, outlines the process used for designating local areas. The policy defines “performed successfully” as meeting or exceeding the performance goals for the WIA common measures for each of the last two consecutive years for which data is available. It further provides that “sustained fiscal integrity” means that the Secretary has not made a formal determination, during either of the last two consecutive years, that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area misexpended funds provided under WIA due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration. Each local



workforce area submitted a formal designation petition, including documentation of successful performance and fiscal integrity.

[State Instruction 15-08](#), Regional Identification, provides an overview of the process used to identify planning regions. In making this determination, the state considered the factors listed in Sec. 106(b)(1)(B): the extent to which the local areas in a proposed region are consistent with labor market areas in the state, are consistent with regional economic development areas in the state, and have available the federal and non-federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under subtitle B and other applicable provisions of WIOA, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and area career and technical education schools. South Carolina also considered population centers, labor force conditions, commuting patterns, industrial composition, location quotients, geographic boundaries, income, poverty, educational attainment, and in-demand occupation groups.

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

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

[State Instruction 14-05](#) outlines the local area designation appeals process and provides that if an existing workforce area requests but is not granted designation as a local workforce development area, the unit of general local government or grant recipient may submit a written appeal to the State Workforce Development Board within 20 days of receiving written denial notification. Appeals submitted after this time will not be considered. The appealing entity must explain why it believes the denial is contrary to the provisions of Section 106(b)(2) of WIOA. No other cause for appeal will be considered under this section. The State Workforce Development Board must consider and respond in writing to such an appeal within 20 days of its receipt.

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

The state infrastructure funding mechanism is under development and will be used when consensus agreement cannot be reached between the local board, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners. The state criteria will include the process by which a one-stop partner may appeal a determination regarding the portion of funds to be provided.

(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.**
- (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 following are South Carolina's general practices for determining the use of state funds for workforce activities:

WIOA statewide activities funding proposals are developed when there is a general idea of the level of funds that will be received. Using the state plan and the SWDB Strategic Plan to identify areas of opportunity, several initiatives are proposed to the SWDB. Each appropriate SWDB Committee reviews, discusses, and votes on final proposals of fund use to go before the full SWDB. Typically, the full Board votes on the use of statewide activities funding in their June meeting.

Previous and current activities have included, funds for statewide initiatives such as the South Carolina Certified Work Ready Communities Initiative (CWRC), and grants for at-risk youth programs, local area incentives, apprenticeship opportunities for priority populations, pilot innovative GED attainment programs, and incumbent worker training to name just a few. PY 2016 funded activities are currently being discussed and vetted by the SWDB Committees and work groups. Items that coincide with the implementation of WIOA and innovative initiatives will likely be brought to the full SWDB for approval.

Utilization of Rapid Response Funds

The state retained 15 percent of Dislocated Worker funds for Rapid Response activities. Funds at the state-level are used to manage Rapid Response services, which include planning for and responding to layoffs and closures.

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

DEW's proactive and comprehensive approach is organized in a five-step process:

- **Step 1: Research & Discovery.** The DEW Rapid Response team is proactive, using resources to identify businesses that are at risk of layoff or closure. Often, the business is contacted and provided information and resources that may minimize the risk of layoff or closure.
- **Step 2: Activation.** Upon receipt of a layoff announcement, WARN (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification) or early warning notification, the Rapid Response team gathers information about the business, layoff or closure, and affected workers and develops a layoff aversion strategy specific to the employer's needs. The Rapid Response team also contacts business management to schedule a Management Meeting.
- **Step 3: The Management Meeting.** The ultimate goal of the Management Meeting is to avert or lessen the impact of the announced layoff or closure while at the same time, scheduling pre-layoff meetings with the affected workers.
- **Step 4: Group Orientation.** Group Orientations are scheduled with affected workers on-site and during normal business hours. Typically, affected workers receive information about WIOA, TAA (when appropriate), filing a UI benefits claim, partner services and any other information that may alleviate long-term unemployment.
- **Step 5: On-site Reemployment Services.** Reemployment Services are provided by a Global Career Development Facilitator on-site to assist workers with rapid reentry into the workforce. Services include, but are not limited to the following: SCWOS registration, resume preparation, job search assistance, and interview preparation.



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

DEW also uses Rapid Response funds for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). This layoff aversion strategy provides employers that are in danger of a layoff or closure with training opportunities for their workers leading to a credential/certificate. In the event an employer is unable to avoid a layoff or closure, separated workers are more marketable as a result of participating in IWT, and may even have an industry recognized credential or certificate.

Rapid Response funds are also used to supplement local funds in serving dislocated workers. This additional assistance provides training, supportive services, and increased front-line staff when needed to meet local needs. Given the size and location of a layoff, Rapid Response funds will assist with establishing transition centers specifically designed to increase the capacity and accessibility of services needed quickly for large numbers of laid off workers.

(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.

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

During the recent flooding event in South Carolina, the Rapid Response Team participated in regional and local area meetings to provide information on filing disaster unemployment claims and workforce services available to both businesses and workers affected by the flood. Additional outreach was conducted at local area shelters, providing the following information and services to flood victims:

- DUA/UI claims filing
- referrals to FEMA to file claims
- job matching
- referrals to partner agencies.

(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.

TAA/Rapid Response Early Intervention

The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) administers the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program in South Carolina, providing early intervention to worker groups on whose behalf a TAA petition has been filed.

DEW leads Rapid Response efforts across the state. When working with a business to provide Rapid Response services, DEW staff activates team efforts locally. The team includes a rapid response coordinator from the Local Workforce Development Area, a representative from the SC Works Center representing Wagner-Peyser services, and a staff representative from the Trade Adjustment Assistance program. Whenever possible, the team conducts on-site presentations at the business location. Every effort is made to provide information sessions prior to the commencement of the lay-off and/or plant closure. The presentation consists of an overview of the benefits and services that can be expected from each of the partner groups. During these sessions, the Rapid Response team emphasizes how the partner agency staff representatives will be working together as a team to offer the customer individualized and comprehensive reemployment benefits and services.

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

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

Utilization of Rapid Response Funds for TAA Eligible Individuals

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

(b) Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements

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

A number of S.C.'s workforce training initiatives utilize work-based training models, including OJT and IWT. EvolveSC is an example of using IWT to upskill current employees and to train new hires. Another example of IWT is the Defense Diversification Grant which allows eligible defense firms to select one or more training programs up to a maximum of \$75,000.00. Additionally, LWDA's are encouraged to partner with employers to develop OJTs and work-based learning opportunities for WIOA participants.



(2) Registered Apprenticeship. Describe how the state will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy and services.

There are approximately 700 Registered Apprenticeships and 13,000 apprentices in South Carolina. Since 2007, the S.C. Technical College System's Apprenticeship Carolina™ program has increased the awareness and use of Registered Apprenticeships as a training model and as a result the number of Registered Apprenticeships has grown exponentially in less than 10 years.

In an effort to maintain the momentum and growth of Registered Apprenticeships, each LWDA has identified an apprenticeship liaison who is responsible for promoting Apprenticeship Carolina™ and referring interested employers to their local Apprenticeship Carolina™ representative. As a result of this partnership, over 87 referrals have been made to Apprenticeship Carolina™ since the beginning of PY 2015.

Finally, the SWDB and all 12 LWDBs have at least one (1) representative of an apprenticeship program whose presence will help further increase the awareness of and promote apprenticeships as a viable training option.

(3) Training Provider Eligibility Procedure. Provide the procedure for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

As outlined in the [ETPL Procedures Document](#), training providers not currently on the South Carolina Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and who choose to apply for the ETPL will need to complete items 1(a) through 1(e) below, as well as 2 through 6. Current providers of training who wish to add a new program of study to the ETPL must complete items 1(d) and 1(e) below, as well as 2 through 6.

1. Submit a completed Providers of Training Services Initial Application for processing to the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW). This application will require the following information:
 - a. Provider name, contact information, Federal Employer Identification (FEIN) number, and other information as specified in Appendix B of the ETPL procedures.
 - b. Evidence of Provider accreditation and/or licensure with appropriate state or other governing entity.
 - c. Student grievance and refund policy and procedure.
 - d. Information pertaining to program performance, cost, partnership with business, and alignment of training with in-demand occupations. Template for program data submission is found in Appendix C of the ETPL procedures.
 - e. Evidence of Program accreditation and/or licensure with appropriate state or other governing entity.
 - f. The provider agrees they will begin to gather student data based on Appendix D of the ETPL procedures document and will submit student data by September 30th of each year after the first full year for performance calculation. Initial submission of data is not a requirement for eligibility.



2. Complete required Memorandum of Understanding covering use of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in Student Data and various wage records which will be mailed to the signatory official by DEW.
3. Upon receipt of completed application and program data, DEW will make an initial determination of statewide eligibility within 14 calendar days based on completeness of submission.
4. The Local Workforce Development Board will then review each provider and program and then make a determination of local eligibility within 30 calendar days.
5. Upon successful initial eligibility determination by both DEW and the Local Workforce Development Board, the training program will be added to the ETPL within 14 calendar days. Additionally, new provider information will be added to the SC Works Online system by DEW personnel.
6. New providers will be continually added to the ETPL as they become eligible. Initial eligibility remains in effect at least one full year.

South Carolina is in the process of developing and producing a public-facing ETPL portal that will provide potential providers with ease of access and participants with an array of information. Completion of this project is anticipated for June 2016; however, temporary procedures are in place to remain compliant with WIOA until completion of the portal.

A resource has been identified at the state level to work with Apprenticeship Carolina™, the state apprenticeship agency, in order to facilitate contact with Registered Apprenticeships within the state. Initially, RAs will be contacted via email or phone and will indicate interest in being included on the ETPL. If there is interest, a brief survey will be sent to them to complete and return to DEW with information required by Training and Employment Guidance Letter WIOA No. 41-14. These entities will then be added to the ETPL with no expectation of performance submissions in the future unless the entities volunteer. The list Registered Apprenticeships will be revisited every two years to determine if any have voluntarily or involuntarily deregistered. The list will be amended accordingly.

(4) Describe how the state will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or 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 funded by the Adult Formula program.

The state is developing policy guidance regarding priority of service under the adult program to ensure consistent application of the priority of service requirement, and to provide a more quantifiable definition for basic skills deficient. For those Title I Adult participants receiving individualized career services and training, the policy guidance will set a benchmark percentage of priority participants receiving these services. Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) will be responsible for establishing local procedures to comply with this policy and for conducting outreach to these priority populations. The final policy will be effective July 1, 2016.



(5) Describe the state’s criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

Local workforce areas may request approval from DEW to transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker fund streams. Transfer requests must be made in writing to the state via a “Fund Transfer Request Form” any time after receipt of the corresponding fiscal year funds authorization, typically in October of each year. Each transfer request must provide sufficient justification regarding the percentage of formula allocation being requested. The issuance of an adjusted Notice of Funds Authorization (NFA) reflecting funds earmarked for another program, e.g., Dislocated Worker funds for Adult, serves as the local workforce area’s official notification that the transfer is approved.

(c) Youth Program Requirements. With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA—

(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.⁵⁶

Entering Program Year 2015, South Carolina took steps to strengthen its Title I Youth Programs across the state, utilizing the transition to WIOA as an opportunity to transform and reinvigorate youth workforce development activities. South Carolina has placed a higher emphasis on providing quality education, training and employment opportunities for disconnected youth. [State instruction 14-03](#) requires local boards to have a standing committee which provides information and assists with planning, operational and other issues related to the provision of services to youth. These committees will play a critical role in the selection and evaluation of youth service providers.

To ensure all WIOA Youth Service Providers meet basic programmatic standards, the state has developed the following criteria for Local Workforce Development Areas to consider during their provider selection process:

- Providers must demonstrate experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, specifically out-of-school or disconnected youth.
- Providers must demonstrate experience and/or strategies in connecting youth to education, training and employment opportunities with emphasis on career readiness activities and promoting career pathways for participants.
- Providers must exhibit strong community and business linkages to ensure the ability to develop work-based learning opportunities and meet the skill and training needs for the state’s talent pipeline.
- Providers must demonstrate ability to meet performance accountability measures through program design and strategies.

As the WIOA statute mandates, 75 percent of youth funds are to be expended on the out-of-school population. This shift in program design stems from the significant number of individuals who are disconnected from education and training across the country. Although South Carolina is positioned to

⁵⁶ Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)



achieve this requirement, local areas will further support this change by requiring prospective youth providers to have direct experience in serving priority populations and be able to illustrate strategies that motivate and engage youth with barriers.

In recent years, the business community has stressed the importance of soft skills and career readiness characteristics in youth and young adults. Recognizing the need, workforce development in South Carolina has integrated a stronger career ready component in program designs. Youth providers are expected to offer an intensive soft skills curriculum to ensure individuals are prepared for the behavioral aspects of entering the workforce. Providers that incorporate career academy models in conjunction with work-based learning to expose participants to the expectations of employers and workforce needs will increase placements and job retention for the area.

Understanding that youth providers may not be able to directly offer each of the 14 elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2), youth providers will be responsible for connecting with other workforce and community partners to achieve a holistic service delivery model. It is imperative that providers communicate closely with agencies and organizations that serve similar populations to allow for co-enrollment where appropriate and leveraging of resources. As formula funding has seen a decrease, local areas are faced with the challenge of providing quality services to individuals in need with less staff and financial resources. Providers must be imbedded in their respective areas to build mutually beneficial partnerships that generate referral processes, space sharing, and alternative funding.

With the increased focus on work-based learning opportunities for youth, providers are charged with working closely with the business community. In the past, local area youth providers collectively have seen limited success in work experience and OJT for youth beyond summer youth employment initiatives. However, with the onset of the 20 percent expenditure requirement in WIOA Sec. 129(c)(4), workforce development in South Carolina is strategizing to engage employers and offer solutions to employers that need to bring in younger generations to fill entry level positions and voids left by retiring individuals. Providers should present strategies that will create work-based learning and employment opportunities for the program participants but also serve business and industry.

Performance measures are an indicator of consistent, effective and sustainable program models. Prospective providers must be able to present data to support their service delivery. For past WIOA youth provider, the proposal must report performance outcomes for at least the previous two program years, if applicable. Additionally, providers must speak to their ability and strategies to meet the new performance measures for WIOA.

(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, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available.

Historically, South Carolina has served a predominately out-of-school youth population with successful outcomes. The state is well-positioned to continue this trend. There are several strategies in development that will help improve outcomes for out-of-school youth:

LWDB Youth Committees. Each LWDB is required to form a Youth Committee that will provide information and assist with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth. The Youth Committee is charged with developing local service strategies that will increase the number of out-of-school youth served and improve outcomes for this population. The State Youth Coordinator is



working with each LWDA to ensure that a Youth Committee is formed and operational before the beginning of PY 16.

SWDB Priority Populations Committee. Recently, the SWDB voted to form a Priority Populations Committee that will provide strategic direction and oversight, and set policy for the state with regard to services to youth, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and other populations that face barriers to employment. The direction and oversight of this committee will lead to improved outcomes for out-of-school youth.

Aligning Programs and Services. Aligning programs and services through co-enrollment and referral processes has historically increased the number of individuals served and generally improved outcomes. These strategies will be enhanced and scaled to improve outcomes for out-of-school youth.

Work-Based Learning. The state is committed to increasing the use of work-based learning opportunities to expose youth to employment and career opportunities. Increasing the use of work-based learning will help youth acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment.

Career Pathways. One of the state's goals is to increase middle-skill, middle-wage attainment through education and training pathways that are aligned with the needs of critical industries. This goal is consistent with WIOA's emphasis on the importance of career pathways, especially for youth participants. The next phase of South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project is to develop career pathways that lead to high-demand, high-wage jobs in critical industry sectors. Identifying a career pathway as part of the initial objective assessment will increase the likelihood that an out-of-school youth participant will earn the skills required for competitive employment.

The strategies outlined above will be refined as the state continues working toward full implementation of WIOA. LWDB Youth Committees and the SWDB Priority Populations Committee will be instrumental in refining these and developing additional strategies that will improve outcomes for out-of-school youth.

(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.⁵⁷

South Carolina's 12 LWDA's are responsible for providing or connecting youth to the 14 required elements: (1) Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction and Evidence based Drop-out Prevention and Recovery Strategies; (2) Alternative Secondary School Services or Drop-out Recovery Services; (3) Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences; (4) Occupational Skills Training; (5) Education Offered Concurrently with and in the same context as Workforce Preparation; (6) Leadership Development; (7) Supportive Services; (8) Adult Mentoring; (9) Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling; (10) Financial Literacy Education; (11) Entrepreneurial Skills Training; (12) Labor Market and Employment Information Services; (13) Activities that Prepare for Transition to Post-secondary Education and Training; and (14) Follow-up Services. To ensure program participants have access to the 14 elements, the State Youth Coordinator in conjunction with programmatic monitors will conduct annual reviews to evaluate each local area. Additionally, each

⁵⁷ Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)



local area will be responsible for describing how the elements are integrated within their program design in their local plan.

- (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).**

The state does not have a policy for “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program.” As allowed in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) § 681.300, South Carolina permits each of the 12 LWDAAs to determine their own policy. The areas are responsible for creating and submitting a policy to the state each program year. The state is currently reviewing local area policies to identify best practices and areas of opportunity. A newly formed committee of the SWDB, which focuses on the workforce needs of priority populations, will determine state policy needs and assist in the development of such policies.

- (5) Include the state definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If state law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school,” indicate that is the case.**

State law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school.” However, South Carolina compulsory education laws require children to attend regularly a public or private school or kindergarten which has been approved by the State Board of Education, a member school of the South Carolina Independent Schools' Association, a member school of the South Carolina Association of Christian Schools, or some similar organization, or a parochial, denominational, or church-related school, or other programs which have been approved by the State Board of Education from the school year in which the child is five years of age before September first until the child attains his seventeenth birthday or graduates from high school⁵⁸.

For purposes of WIOA, as directed in NPRM at § 681.230, providers of Adult Education under Title II of WIOA, YouthBuild programs, and Job Corps programs are not considered to be schools. WIOA youth programs may consider a youth to be “not attending school” for youth program eligibility if he/she is attending Adult Education provided under Title II of WIOA, YouthBuild, or Job Corps. Students attending a post-secondary institution are considered to be “attending school” for WIOA eligibility purposes.

- (6) If not using the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the state definition.**

South Carolina’s definition for “Basic Skills Deficient” corresponds with the definition provided in WIOA Sec. 3(5)(A). Youth ages 14-24 are considered basic skills deficient if the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test.

⁵⁸ [S.C. Code, § 59-65-10.](#)



(d) Waiver Requests (optional). States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

- (1) Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the state or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;**
- (2) Describes the actions that the state or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove state or local statutory or regulatory barriers;**
- (3) Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;**
- (4) Describes how the waiver will align with the Department’s policy priorities, such as:**
 - (A) supporting employer engagement;**
 - (B) connecting education and training strategies;**
 - (C) supporting work-based learning;**
 - (D) improving job and career results, and**
 - (E) other guidance issued by the Department.**
- (5) Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and**
- (6) Describes the processes used to:**
 - (A) Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;**
 - (B) Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;**
 - (C) Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;**
 - (D) Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.**
 - (E) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State’s WIOA Annual Report.**

(7) The Secretary may require that states provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the state seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

The Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) federal requirements are creating a hardship for many training providers, including the technical colleges, resulting in a decreased number of providers adding their programs to the ETPL. Many training providers do not have existing staff to perform the data gathering processes required to submit program information and performance data and cannot justify hiring additional staff. The proposed regulations and related performance measures requiring providers to include an “all students” cohort also interfere with FERPA laws, and providers do not currently have students complete a waiver for data gathering purposes. These issues are leading to South Carolina having a less than robust list of training providers.

DEW has a workforce support team that is providing individualized technical assistance to training providers in an effort to reduce hardships related to collecting provider and program data. At this time, a waiver does not appear to be required; however, South Carolina would like to reserve the right to make a future waiver request should the need be identified.

**TITLE I-B ASSURANCES**

As the state administrative entity for WIOA Title I programs, the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce assures that:

1.	The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients or basic skills deficient;
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;
3.	The State has 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;
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);
5.	Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;
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;
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);
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;
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;
10.	The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its 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 section WIOA 184(a)(3);



WAGNER-PEYSER ACT 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 job seekers and employers.**

Staff development is an important component of South Carolina's commitment to deliver high quality and effective workforce services. Employment services staff are trained in job search techniques, accessing labor market information, workshop facilitation, interviewing skills, resume writing certification, and addressing barriers to employment.

The staff also receives training to work with target populations, including "Building Bridges". Administered by the Bureau of Federal Prisons, this program helps individuals understand and develop skills to work with the ex-offender population. In-depth, on-going customer service training is mandatory for all DEW employees. Additionally, sales training is provided to Employment Service staff to help develop strategies for increasing business penetration.

Onsite training and assessment are also provided in person to local staff and management. Regional Managers participate on Local Workforce Development Boards to provide information and are involved in workforce issues on the state and local level.

- (2) Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.**

DEW shares information and provides technical assistance to staff who serve job seekers and employers. Technical assistance on UI issues, questions regarding eligibility, and on the work search test are also provided to SC Works Center core program staff. Additionally, DEW's website supplies answers to frequently asked questions regarding Unemployment Insurance. UI claimants receive information and assistance on the full range of one-stop services offered both online and in person. Rapid Response teams provide services to employers and workers in mass layoff situations and conduct claim filing activities when needed.

UI programs play a vital role in the integrated workforce system by providing income support benefits to eligible individuals who continue to be important customers of the workforce system. These benefits allow unemployed workers to engage in work search activities for suitable employment, and the workforce system is a key source of services to support the reemployment of UI claimants.

To ensure efficiency, a Workforce Information Portal (WIP) was developed to provide a secure method for partner staff to obtain the necessary UI data that is used to determine an individual's potential eligibility for services and training under WIOA. The WIP also allows staff to communicate potential UI fraud and availability issues in an efficient and streamlined manner. Sharing such information with UI staff helps to accelerate the claimants' return to suitable employment and ensure their continued eligibility to receive UI benefits.



- (b) Explain how the state will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.**

Access to the online claim filing system is available at every SC Works location across the state. Resource rooms are staffed with individuals who can assist with filing a claim. A toll free number is also available for individuals with questions specific to their claims. A network of access points has been established statewide for individuals to apply for benefits and perform their work search. Registration in the South Carolina Online System (SCWOS) is required for all UI Claimants and one of the four required weekly work searches must be conducted within the system. Access to SCWOS is available at all comprehensive centers and access points. Claim filing guides are available in resource rooms at SC Works locations and employment service staff is available to assist and answer question about the filing process. An Unemployment Insurance “Frequently Asked Questions” guide is in development and will be distributed to Employment Service and partner staff.

- (c) Describe the state’s strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals.**

Universal Access

Individuals seeking employment and eligible to work in the United States are eligible for Wagner-Peyser services. These services can be provided in person or remotely. Job search assistance, access to labor market information, résumé assistance, workshops, and hiring events are offered in all comprehensive centers.

To identify individuals who are at risk of exhausting benefits, South Carolina requires all UI claimants to register for Employment Services in SCWOS. Individuals attending Worker Profiling and RESEA are first given information on services provided by the workforce system, and after an initial assessment they are provided with more customized services for their situation. These services could include referrals to employment, referral to partners, participation in workshops, and information on the local labor market, training options, and other services that are available.

RESEA

The Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program (RESEA) provides a bridge between Employment Services (ES) and Unemployment Insurance in the provision of services to Unemployment Compensation for ex-Military members (UCX) and lack of work claimants with the goal of reducing duration and improving the integrity of the UI program. Numerous services are provided through the program to include but not limited to reemployment services, provision of labor market information, one stop orientations, development of employability plans, referrals to training and unemployment compensation eligibility reviews. The RESEA program is operated from all comprehensive SC Works Centers.

- (d) Describe how the state will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate including the following:**

- (1) Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;**

All individuals applying for UI benefits are required to register with the state Employment Service by creating an account in SCWOS. This allows individuals to search for jobs, job referrals, create a resume, set up job matching criteria, develop employment plan, take self-assessments and search labor market



information. SC Works Centers have resource rooms that support these services, and staff is available to assist. As a result of aligning these agencies and services, individuals with barriers to employment are provided staff assisted services. Additionally, referrals to partner and community service providers are available along with information on Federal Bonding.

(2) Registration of UI claimants with the state’s employment service if required by state law;

As stated previously, South Carolina law requires UI claimants to register in SCWOS and perform one job search per week using the system. Wagner-Peyser staff is available to assist individuals with the registration process and the weekly work search if assistance is needed. Workshops on various reemployment topics are also offered at SC Works centers, and anyone interested is able to attend.

(3) Administration of the work test for the state unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

In order to receive and maintain benefits in South Carolina, individuals must register in the SC Works Online System (SCWOS). Individuals must also be able, available, and actively seeking work. Claimants are required to perform four work searches per week, with at least one taking place in SCWOS. If an individual fails to perform a search or declines a request for an interview with a prospective employer, an issue can be placed on the claim for further clarification.

Job finding and placement services are offered both remotely and in person. To facilitate these services, each comprehensive SC Works location has staff available to assist individuals looking for employment. ES staff post available positions for employers and help individuals match their skills with available positions for which they qualify, including UI claimants. SCWOS also spiders in jobs posted on many other job boards and individual company websites.

(4) Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

Staff in SC Works centers across the state use an initial assessment to determine customers’ needs. Based on information received during this process, coupled with an individual’s stated goals, a path forward is identified for each customer. This path could include information or workshops offered in centers or at partner locations, or referrals to training programs and other partner or community based services. In addition, staff may assist customers with training or financial aid applications as needed. Coordination and communication among partners is critical to the success of each individual in order to provide an array of options that will benefit the customer most.

(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*. Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the state. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

(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.

- (B) An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing MSFW characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the state during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and state and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.

Agriculture has long been an important part of South Carolina's economy. The industry has a tremendous direct and indirect economic impact on the state. As shown in Table 15, South Carolina's top 10 commodities are: broilers, turkeys, greenhouse/nursery, cotton lint, corn, cattle and calves, soybeans, peanuts, chicken eggs, and wheat.

Table 15

South Carolina Top 10 Commodities				
Items	Value of Receipts	Percent of Total Receipts	Percent of U.S. Value	Value of U.S. Receipts
Broilers	1,051,560	39.3	3.2	32,724,667
Cattle and calves	203,709	7.6	0.3	81,251,415
Corn	171,848	6.4	0.3	54,638,324
Cotton lint, Upland	170,638	6.4	3	5,662,079
Miscellaneous crops	170,492	6.4	0.9	18,253,149
Soybeans	140,441	5.3	0.3	40,898,200
Chicken eggs	130,060	4.9	1.3	10,166,321
Dairy products, Milk	70,707	2.6	0.1	49,349,226
Peaches	68,337	2.6	10.9	629,134
Wheat	66,682	2.5	0.5	12,573,724

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service. Information updated February 2016.

The top labor intensive crops/activities are peaches, vegetables (onions, collards, long greens, squash), tomatoes, berries, tobacco, and nursery/landscape. Heavy activity months are late March into April through late September.

South Carolina remains the largest fresh market peach producer in the United States. It trails California in total peach production, with the bulk of California's crop being processing of peaches. During typical



years this industry employs approximately 3,594 individuals in South Carolina, of which about three-fourths are H-2A workers.

Tobacco acreage has decreased in recent years in South Carolina; however, approximately 2,000 plus people continue to work in this industry. About 1,300 individuals worked in the cucumber harvest (pickles) in program year 2014 with cucumber acreage holding steady. Tomato acreage remains about the same. Approximately 3,000 acres are farmed and around 1,900 workers are employed.

South Carolina ranks second nationally in the production of collards and other table greens. Approximately 1,200 people work in these crops annually. Watermelon production continues to increase and revenues grew over 10% in program year 2014. The cultivation of cantaloupe and peppers also showed some increases in acreage. In South Carolina, 700-1,000 people work annually in the production of melons, cantaloupes and peppers. The growth in the 'pickle' cucumbers industry and some additional tobacco planting will put pressure on the existing local and seasonal farm labor supply. The Pee Dee Region will perhaps have the greatest need for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs) in the coming season. Labor demand will remain about the same in the Lowcountry.

In PY 2014, the number of H-2A workers is expected to continue to increase. The peach and strawberry industries continue to increase the size of the H-2A worker program. Other specialty crops, as well as nursery and greenhouse work, have also contributed to the increase. These activities are primarily in the Savannah Ridge and Piedmont areas.

Overall, the projected agricultural workforce need for South Carolina in program year 2014 is approximately 11,750 workers. This is a small increase in the number of workers that was needed in program year 2013. April through September are the peak harvest months in South Carolina. It is anticipated that the number of agricultural job openings received by our Agency will remain steady at about 9,000. As shown in table 16, this total includes 3,615 H-2A and approximately 4,850 migrant and seasonal farm workers. The number of domestic MSFWs in South Carolina is difficult to estimate and could be understated as some of these workers cannot be located.

Table 16

Estimated Number of MSFW and H-2A Workers PY 2015		
Area	Estimated MSFWs	Estimated H-2As
Beaufort	750	761
Charleston	850	274
Greenwood	650	2,165
Spartanburg	1,000	370
Sumter	1,600	232
TOTAL	4,850	3,802

- (2) **Outreach Activities.** The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the state and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the state agency's proposed strategies for:



(A) Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) will conduct outreach services to the agricultural workers with Agency outreach staff stationed in five designated significant offices. Other public and private community service agencies and migrant and seasonal farm worker groups will also provide outreach services. The five significant offices - Beaufort, Charleston, Greenwood, Spartanburg, and Sumter - are located in SC Works Centers. These offices serve as hub offices for outreach to surrounding areas.

(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.

Training will be provided to all outreach workers. DEW will work with partner organizations to inform them of MSFWs in the area and programs and services provided.

(C) Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.

Outreach Workers will be trained on core programs along with specialty trainings designed to help them in their specific jobs. Training will be provided in the areas of resume development, customer service, sales and career development facilitator.

(D) Providing state merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both job seekers and employers.

Professional development opportunities are available for state merit outreach staff such as resume writing certification, career development facilitator certification and other training options.

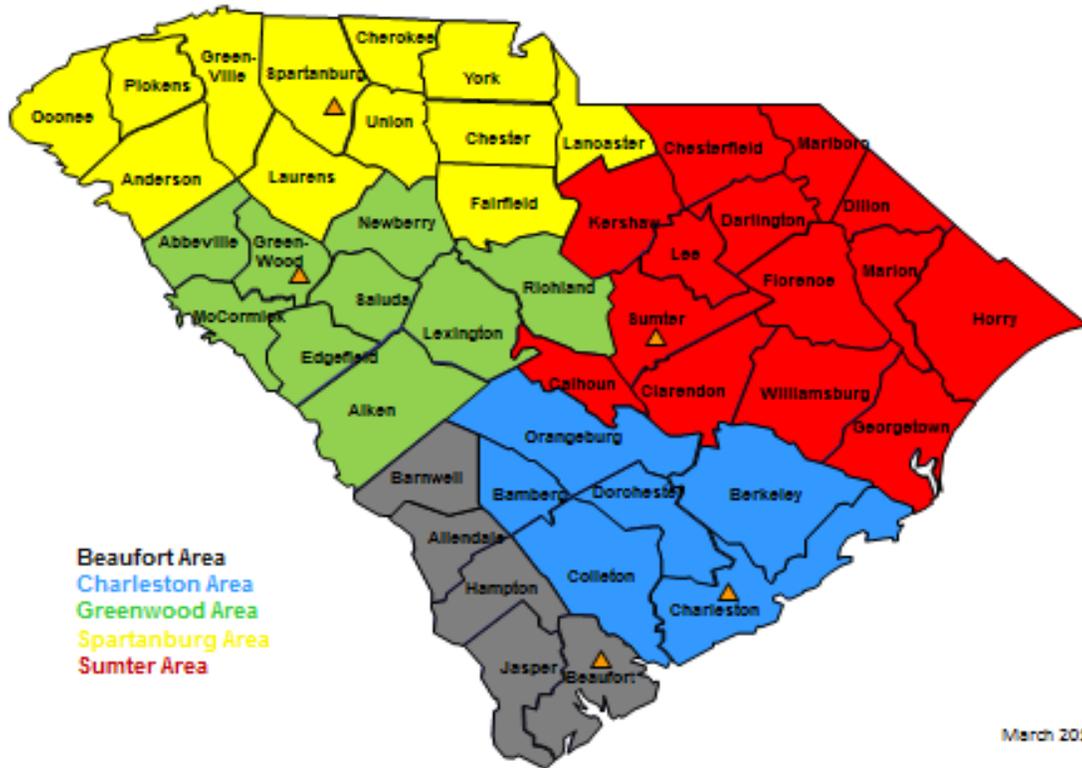
(E) Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

Coordination with NFJP grantees will take place with outreach workers across the state to provide services. DEW outreach staff will coordinate visits with Telamon to locations across the state. The coordination of outreach efforts with the NFJP grantees includes agency field staff working in conjunction with the NFJP regional field representatives in the designated regions.



Figure 22

MSFW SC Works Five Significant Offices and Coverage Areas



Vigorous outreach activities will be conducted to ensure that migrant and seasonal farmworkers are aware of the full range of employment services. DEW outreach workers and Rural Manpower staff will work together to coordinate outreach activities, thus maximizing program effectiveness and efficiency. Statewide, there will be five, full-time outreach worker positions dedicated to outreach activities. MSFW outreach staff, as well as Rural Manpower staff, will be primarily supported through Wagner-Peyser funding. The estimated number of MSFWs to be contacted by each outreach worker per area is provided in Table 17. Due to the varying concentrations of MSFWs in the different areas, some movement of outreach workers between areas will be necessary.



Table 17

Estimated MSFW Outreach			
SC Works Center Office	Needed Outreach Staff*	Outreach Staff Days	Estimated MSFWs to be Contacted
Beaufort	.75	150	750
Charleston	1.0	170	850
Greenwood	.65	130	650
Spartanburg	1.0	200	1,000
Sumter	1.6	620	1,600
TOTAL	5.00	970	4,850
<i>*Movement of outreach workers between areas will be required.</i>			

DEW partners with other agencies across the state of South Carolina that also target the MSFW population, including the WIA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) Grantee - Telamon Corporation, S.C. Legal Services, S.C. Department of Education Migrant Education Program, SCPHCA-Migrant Health Program, East Coast Migrant Head Start Program, and faith-based migrant community organizations and associations.

In addition, staff will continue to foster cooperation with other governmental and community-based organizations in providing information and promoting the MSFW program at appropriate meetings and through other avenues. For example, DEW conducts annual farmer meetings regionally to allow organizations that work with the MSFW population an opportunity to inform farmers of the many services and benefits available to farm workers. Both the State Monitor Advocate and the Rural Manpower supervisor serve on the USDOL Wage & Hour Farm Labor Coordinating Task Force which provides a forum for farm worker and labor partners and stakeholders to share information. The State Monitor Advocate is also a member of the South Carolina Primary Health Care Association Advisory Council.

DEW will comply with CFR 20 653.107, Sub-part B, in delivering services to MSFWs. The roles and responsibilities of the outreach worker include:

- Contact and locate the MSFWs where they work, live or gather
- Observe the work and living conditions
- Explain the services available
- Provide information about the job service complaint system and assist in the preparation of a worker complaint
- Explain basic farm worker rights when the outreach worker refers an MSFW to a job (20 CFR 653 and 658)
- Refer to job openings and assist in the preparation of a work application
- Refer to supportive services, if needed
- Assist in making appointments

The farm workers will be contacted at their living, gathering or other assembly areas by outreach workers. An explanation of workforce services available to MSFWs, including the availability of referrals to agricultural and nonagricultural employment, training, and supportive services, and other job development services will be provided in a language readily understood by them. MSFW outreach workers are required



to be bilingual and provide language appropriate services as needed. MSFWs will also be provided with information about other area organizations available to serve them.

Each outreach worker will maintain a log of daily contacts which will include the number of MSFWs contacted and details of assistance provided. The name of the individual contacted will be recorded in all cases where an application for work is taken, a referral to a job is made, and/or a complaint is filed. Detailed reports relative to the number of MSFWs, their office of registration, and services provided can be retrieved through the reporting module in SC Works Online Services (SCWOS), the data management, service delivery system for WIA, Wagner-Peyser, and Trade Adjustment Assistance. The "Notice to Job Seekers" which lists the services available through the SC Works Centers and the toll-free farmworker helpline flyers will be distributed to all MSFWs contacted.

Outreach workers will be familiar with working and living conditions of the migrant and seasonal farm workers. If they observe, have reason to believe, or are in receipt of information regarding a suspected violation of employment related laws or employment service regulations by an employer, the outreach worker shall document the suspected violation and provide the information to the SC Works Center Employment Services Management staff. They will provide assistance in the preparation of job service and non-job service complaints. Complaints will be recorded using the Employment Services (ES) Complaint Log, and resolved using the ES Complaint System.

(3) Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system. Describe the state agency's proposed strategies for:

- (A) **Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:**
- i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;**
 - ii. How the state serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.**

DEW's outreach program will focus on increasing MSFWs' ability to access core, intensive and training services through SC Works Centers. Outreach workers will inform MSFWs of and refer them to verified employment opportunities and the Employment Services Complaint System. Outreach workers will encourage the MSFWs to utilize the SC Works Centers to obtain the full range of employment services; however, on-site assistance will also be offered in the preparation of applications, on a limited basis.

Outreach workers will refer individual MSFWs, or family members, who may be eligible, to WIA and supportive services and, as needed, will provide assistance in making appointments and arranging transportation to and from SC Works Centers or other appropriate agencies. Further, the outreach workers will make follow-up contacts as necessary and appropriate to provide, to the maximum extent possible, the foregoing described services. MSFWs also will be shown how to use SC Works Online Services (SCWOS), an Internet-based workforce data management and service delivery system. Through SCWOS, MSFWs can establish a Wagner-Peyser application and apply for jobs.

In the SC Works Centers throughout the state, bilingual staff members work with MSFWs of limited English proficiency to provide core and intensive services. When no qualified and trained bilingual employee is available, DEW will offer and secure, at no cost to the client, a qualified interpreter or translator service. If there is a need for remedial and/or occupational training, the limited English proficiency MSFW is generally referred to a local Adult Education office, first, for an "English as a Second



Language” course, then is referred to a training provider. Telamon is also a partner of the SC Works Centers and provides additional services to migrants and seasonal farm workers. In the coming program year, efforts will be initiated to establish closer cooperation and service collaboration with partners, such as the state’s WIA Section 167 NFJP grantee, to ensure greater alignment of intensive and training services to MSFWs.

Table 18

South Carolina MSFW Employer Outreach	
PY'14	
Total Number of Ag Orders	260
Total Number of Ag Openings (<i>Note: 51% of openings were filled</i>)	10,459
Total Number of Orders Filled	67
Total % of Orders Filled (<i>Note: 26% of orders were 100% filled</i>)	26%
Total Number of Interstate Clearance Orders Received	235
Total Number of Interstate Clearance Orders Initiated	48
PY'15	
Number of Ag Orders Expected to be Received	265
Number of Ag Orders Projected to be Filled	79
% of Orders to be Filled	30%
Estimated Number of Interstate Clearance Orders the State Will Receive	240
Estimated Number of Interstate Clearance Orders the State Will Initiate	53

Extensive outreach to agricultural employers is an on-going process. This is critical to maintaining interpersonal contact with the employers. Employers are contacted by Rural Manpower coordinators operating out of two SC Works Centers strategically located throughout the state. The map below reflects the statewide coverage provided by Rural Manpower staff through a lead coordinator and support staff.



Figure 23

Rural Manpower Staff Coverage



Examples of services provided to agricultural employers by DEW staff include:

- Local, regional and national recruitment assistance
- Screening job applicants
- Provision of information such as crop conditions, labor supply, and labor market information
- Connection and coordination of services with government and community agencies
- Technical assistance with foreign labor certification
- Soliciting and filling job orders
- Disseminating information on farm-related rules and regulations
- Registering of farm labor contractors
- Conducting prevailing wage and prevailing practice surveys
- Providing consultant inspections of migrant housing
- Offering assistance to farmers in obtaining supplies for migrants
- Referring complaints to proper enforcement agencies
- Assisting employers in obtaining work-related posters and notices
- Participating in agricultural related meetings and notifying farmers of these meetings

Many contacts with agricultural employers are made as a result of referrals from other agencies such as the S.C. Department of Agriculture and Clemson University as well as by word-of-mouth from other workers or farmers.



DEW periodically hosts grower meetings to inform agricultural employers of services available through the state workforce system. Intensive efforts will be made in the upcoming year to increase the market penetration of agricultural employers.

The most basic service provided to agricultural employers is the filling of job openings. Job orders from agricultural employers are entered in SCWOS and qualified candidates are referred. All H-2A order users are mandated to take all qualified United States referrals through the workforce system. Rural Manpower, in particular, strives to refer local applicants to all H-2A orders through community contacts and referrals. In addition, training has been provided to SC Works Center staff throughout the state to encourage local domestic U.S. workers to apply for H-2A jobs.

Other services include the certification and renewals of certification for farm labor contractors and housing inspections of both H-2A and MSFW camps. The Rural Manpower coordinators also perform field checks and communicate with the Chicago National Processing Center in addressing matters relative to any H-2A deficiencies. They also provide critical coordination services by moving MSFW crews to the growers at the appropriate times.

The Employment Services staff will strive to meet and exceed federal program requirements with respect to equity and minimum service level indicators of compliance.

(B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

DEW will market the complaint system to farmers utilizing field staff along with a poster for posting onsite.

(C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

Services available to farmers and farmworkers are available online at www.dew.sc.gov that shows phone numbers and services provided to agricultural employers.

(3) Other Requirements.

(A) Collaboration. Describe any collaborative agreements the SWA has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

DEW does not have any formal agreements with providers. However, we have collaboration efforts with migrant health, migrant education, migrant legal services and Telamon, as a few examples.

(B) Review and Public Comment. In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and



comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

- i. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.**

NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organization, and other interested employer organizations were given 30 days to review and comment on the AOP. Comments were solicited from the following organizations:

Telamon Corporation

S.C. Primary Health Care Association/S.C. Migrant Health Program

S.C. Farm Bureau

S.C. Department of Agriculture

No comments were received on the Agricultural Outreach Plan.

- (C) Data Assessment. Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the state has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the state believes such goals were not met and how the state intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.**

Statewide assessments have shown an opportunity to increase services directly provided to migrants. The state has had some success in referrals to employment, referrals to supportive services, job development, referral to staff assisted services, and MSFW placed in jobs. The opportunity for improvement in referrals for career guidance and placement in non-agricultural jobs definitely exist.

- (D) Assessment of progress. The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the state believes the goals were not achieved, and how the state intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.**

The state has gone from 6 significant offices to 5. Staff has continued to build working relationships in their region with entities to help serve migrant workers. All outreach staff are now bilingual and have more access to the farm community. The state plans to continue to look for effective ways to serve the migrant and farm communities.



- (E) State Monitor Advocate. The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.**

In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107, the State Monitor Advocate participated in the preparation of the agricultural plan and has been afforded the opportunity to approve and comment on the plan. Recommendations from the Annual MSFW Summary have been included in this plan.



WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

As the state administrative entity for the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program, the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce assures that:

1.	The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3));
2.	The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers;
3.	If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and
4.	State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.



ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

- (a) **Aligning of Content Standards.** Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with state-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The state of South Carolina adopted the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards (SCCCR) after the Office of Adult Education had adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCR) for Adult Education. Local programs have been aligning their instruction to the CCR standards through statewide ‘Standards in Action’ training.

The CCR Standards provide benchmarks aligned with the SCCCR Standards, and a crosswalk between the two sets of standards is in the process of being developed for Adult Education programs. Any SCCCR standards that are not otherwise represented to the CCR Standards will be added as an addendum to the CCR standards currently in place.

- (b) **Local Activities.** Describe how the state will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

Adult education;

Literacy;

Workplace adult education and literacy activities;

Family literacy activities;

English language acquisition activities;

Integrated English literacy and civics education;

Workforce preparation activities; or

Integrated education and training that—

1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Special Rule. Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.



South Carolina Department of Education serves as the administrative/fiscal agent for Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). As administrative/fiscal agent, SCDE will solicit service providers to provide services to eligible individuals who:

- (a) have attained 16 years of age;
- (b) are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under the S.C. Compulsory School law; and
- (c) are basic skills deficient;
- (d) do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
- (e) are English language learners.

All activities funded under WIOA are authorized, approved and overseen by the South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Adult Education.

The following organizations are eligible to apply to the South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Adult Education for federal funds provided they have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services:

- Local education agencies
- Community-based or faith-based organizations
- Voluntary literacy organizations
- Institution of Higher Learning
- Public or private nonprofit agencies
- Libraries
- Public housing authorities
- Other nonprofits that have the ability to provide literacy services.
- Consortiums of organizations listed above
- Partnership between an employer and an organization listed above

By federal law, providers are prohibited from using federal funds to supplant state or local dollars. All federal funding will be used to enhance learner services, as outlined in this Plan.

South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Adult Education, will conduct competitions under WIOA upon receiving guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education.

Awards to eligible providers will be made through the Request for Proposal (RFP) applications process. To help ensure direct and equitable access to funds for adult literacy and basic skills activities, RFPs will be announced directly to providers and through multiple media outlets. In addition, all providers will be considered for grants based on the same criteria. These criteria are aligned with the directions contained in this Plan and the thirteen considerations required by federal legislation. Grants will be awarded on a four year basis. Future efforts will be made to assess what support eligible providers might need in order to implement this Plan and broaden the discussion of how these needs can be met.



South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Adult Education will use the following process to distribute funds to approved applicants:

1. not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contacts under section 231 and to carry out section 225, Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carry out section 225;
2. shall not use more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds to carry out state leadership activities under section 223; and
3. shall use not more than 5 percent of the grant funds, or \$85,000, whichever is greater, for administrative expenses of the eligible agency.

Local assistance grants will be distributed based on the ability to meet the requirements of AEFLA Purposes outlined in WIOA: (1) Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency; (2) Assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that (a) are necessary to becoming full partner in the education development of their children and (b) Lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family; (3) Assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to post-secondary education and training including through career pathways; (4) Assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in (a) improving their reading, writing, math, speaking, and comprehension skills in English and mathematics skills, and (b) acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Allowable Costs

All allowable costs for the federally funded Adult Basic Education program are defined in the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards subpart E (2 CFR Part 200). This will be the document of determination for reasonableness, allowability, and allocability of costs. All costs must be supported by source documentation including cancelled checks, paid bills, payrolls, time and attendance records, purchase orders and signed copies of sub-grant award documents. South Carolina purchasing and procurement laws must be followed by South Carolina School Districts or other state agencies in the acquisition of all goods associated with the sub-grant.

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

Adult education;

Literacy;

Workplace adult education and literacy activities;

Family literacy activities;

English language acquisition activities;

Integrated English literacy and civics education;

Workforce preparation activities; or

Integrated education and training that—

1. **Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and**
2. **Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.**



Adult Education means academic instruction and education services below the post-secondary level that increase an individual's ability to:

- a) read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- b) transition to post-secondary education and training; and
- c) obtain employment

As the eligible agency to receive AEFLA funds, we will require that each eligible provider use the grant to establish or operate one or more programs that provide services or instruction in one or more of the following categories:

1. Adult education (basic and secondary)
2. Literacy
3. Workplace adult education and literacy activities, including work-based project learners
4. Family literacy activities
5. English language acquisition activities
6. Integrated English literacy and civics education
7. Workforce preparation activities
8. Integrated education and training

WIOA activities will be implemented along with incorporating employability skills by providing leadership and technical assistance to local programs. Accountability will be observed through monitoring these local programs. Technical assistance will focus on individual program needs including but not limited to the following: integrated education and training, contextualized education, workforce preparation, career pathways, family literacy, and integrated English literacy and civics education.

Local adult education programs will offer the following services:

- Adult Education
 - Adult Basic Education Program

Adult Basic Education instruction is designed for an adult who lacks competence in reading, writing, speaking, problem solving or computation at a level necessary to function in society, on a job or in a family. Education functioning levels are as follows:

 - a) Beginning ABE Literacy (Grade Levels 0-1.9)
 - b) Beginning Basic Education (Grade Levels 2.0-3.9)
 - c) Low Intermediate Basic Education (Grade Levels 4.0-5.9)
 - d) High Intermediate Basic Education (Grade Levels 6.0-8.9)
 - Adult Secondary Education

Adult Secondary instruction is designed for adults who have some literacy skills and can function in everyday life but do not have an equivalent to a secondary school diploma. The educational functioning levels are:

 - a) Low Adult Secondary Education (Grade Levels 9.0-10.9)
 - b) High Adult Secondary Education (Grade Levels 11.0-12.9)



- Literacy

This is a program designed to teach an individual to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

- Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activity

Local eligible providers will offer these services for the purpose of improving the productivity of the workforce in their area through raising the basic skills level. Employers work with our programs and some sponsor classes at their worksites while others send them to regular adult education classes. This will further allow us to provide adult education activities concurrently and contextually with any workforce preparation activities and workforce training for either a specific occupation or cluster.

This includes Work-based Project Learner programs where a learner is identified as a work-based project learner at intake. Instruction is designed to teach work-based skills and will specify educational outcomes and standards. These students are not assessed for an educational functioning level and are not included in data for the first four tables of the National Reporting System (NRS).

- Family Literacy Activities

Family Literacy programs address the literacy strengths and needs of the family while promoting adults' involvement in children's education and their own education. Programs provide both parent-initiated and child-initiated activities to support development of those relationships and to increase the motivation to learn for both parent and child.

Family literacy programs provide services that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family and that integrate all of the following activities:

- Interactive Literacy Activities between parents and their children (Interactive Literacy)
- Education for Parents (Parent Education) in facilitating children's learning and becoming full partners in their education
- Parent literacy training (Adult Education) that leads to economic self-sufficiency and meets adults' stated goals
- Age-appropriate education (Early Care and Education) to prepare children for success in school and life experiences

- English Language Acquisition

English Language Acquisition programs assist English language learners in:

- a) improving their
 - i. reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English and
 - ii. mathematics skills; and
- b) acquiring an understanding of the American system of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

An English language learner means an eligible individual who has limited ability in reading, writing, speaking, or comprehending the English language. Their native language is a language other than



English and they usually live in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.

- Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE)

IEL/CE instruction is a program or class which focuses on enabling English language learners to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. This shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, which may include workforce training.

- Integrated Education and Training

The South Carolina Department of Education - OAE The term 'integrated education and training' means a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

- (c) Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals. Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:**

Adult education and literacy activities;

Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;

Secondary school credit;

Integrated education and training;

Career pathways;

Concurrent enrollment;

Peer tutoring; and

Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Section 225(a) of the Act states "from funds made available under Section 222(a)(1) for a fiscal year, each eligible agency shall carry out corrections education or education for other institutionalized individuals. The funds described in subsection (a) shall be used for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and for other institutionalized individuals, including programs for (1) adult education and literacy services, (2) special education, as determined by the eligible agency; (3) secondary school credit; and (4)integrated education and training; (5) career pathways; (6) concurrent enrollment; (7) peer tutoring; and (8) transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

The S.C. Department of Education - OAE will reserve no more than 20 percent of its federal grant received under the Act to provide programs for corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals as described in Section 225 of the Act. The correctional programs of instruction include adult basic education, adult secondary education, and workforce preparation training.



The following types of programs are provided in South Carolina's correctional education program:

- a) Adult education and literacy activities,
- b) Special education, as determined by the eligible agency,
- c) Secondary school credit,
- d) Integrated education and training,
- e) Career pathways,
- f) Concurrent enrollment,
- g) Peer tutoring; and
- h) Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The South Carolina Department of Education - OAE and each eligible agency that is using assistance provided under Section 225 of the Act to carry out a program for criminal offenders in a correctional institution, shall give priority to serving individuals who will be released within a period of five (5) years.

(d) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program. Describe how the 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.

The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program will engage students in purposeful use of the language. The skills to be obtained will assist students in obtaining citizenship, achieve basic life skills needed, enhance employment, functioning in English at a higher cognitive level, and transition into a vocational or academic program.

Describe how the state will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

The funds will be distributed through a modified competition and allocated based on a combination of formula and performance factors.

Funds will be used to provide services to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, which enable such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

(e) State Leadership. Describe how the state will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.

Describe how the state will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.



- a) The establishment or operation of high quality professional development programs:
 - a. The OAE will establish and provide high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under Section 231 (b) including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, dissemination of information about best practices (models) related to these programs, and teaching strategies to assist volunteers.
- b) The OAE will provide technical assistance to local programs that will include:
 - a. The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous scientifically valid research.
 - b. The role of eligible providers as a one-stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services.
 - c. Assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies.

Examples of professional development activities are:

- Statewide or regional professional development conferences are conducted and held quarterly, semi-annually or annually.
 - Virtual training.
 - Graduate credit courses.
 - Example Topics: Assessment Policy Training; Assessment Policy Monitoring; National Reporting System training.
- c) The OAE will disseminate information about proven models, evidence based instruction, and best practices to eligible providers.

(f) Assessing Quality. Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

Local eligible programs are accountable to the Office of Adult Education (OAE) to meet the standards of quality for administration and instruction as outlined by OAE. Effectiveness of programs, services and activities of local recipients of funds will be assessed through systematic evaluation of local programs.

In addition, the performance outcomes of each local program will meet or exceed the established performance level for each core measure each fiscal year to ensure the highest quality service to adult learners who participate in programs. Program monitoring could include the following: self-assessments, formal on-site program reviews, and desktop monitoring.

Performance Accountability

Performance Accountability assesses the effectiveness of grantees in achieving continuous improvement of adult education and literacy activities. The performance outcome measures shall consist of the following core indicators:

- (a) The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- (b) The percentage of program participants who are 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;
- (d) The percentage of program participants who obtain either a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year of exit from the program;
- (e) The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains towards such a credential or employment; and
- (f) The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers established pursuant to clause (iv).

Setting of Targets

Each fiscal year, OAE negotiates proposed target percentages for each of the core indicators of performance with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE). Each local eligible program is responsible for meeting or exceeding the negotiated performance targets. Each program shall analyze progress towards meeting the targets on an ongoing basis. Each program must utilize the approved standardized assessments which provide the framework needed to measure program effectiveness.

Data Collection and Analysis

Local programs are required to collect data on the program's performance and are required to analyze it to determine progress towards meeting the targets and areas of improvement. Analysis should include a review of academic, employment, secondary credential, and post-secondary measures. Local programs must assure that National Reporting System of Adult Education data quality standards are met.

Quarterly Desktop Monitoring Report

On a quarterly basis, local programs produce a data report that compares each program's outcomes to the negotiated performance targets and to the prior year's performance. Annually, deficient areas must be addressed through an action plan.

Self-Assessment

Each year local program administrators complete a self-assessment of program functions and performance. They rate their program against standards of performance in a variety of categories. Self-assessment data is analyzed for commonalities across regions and the state. Deficiencies are remedied through technical assistance and/or staff development. The Self-Assessment corresponds to the areas that are reviewed by the On-Site Program Review.

On-Site Program Review/Monitoring

The OAE staff will conduct formal monitoring visits of funded programs on a prescribed schedule each year. Visits will focus on program administration, instructional quality, program records, or financial checks. Upon completion of the review, findings are shared with the program administrator, who is responsible for correcting any issues. The local program is required to respond to a formal written report.

Program Improvement

Local programs who fail to meet or exceed negotiated performance targets are subject to an Intensive Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) with clearly defined goals and corrective actions.



ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

The Department of Education, Office of Adult Education and Family Literacy, makes the following certifications:

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;
2.	The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;
3.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;
4.	All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;
5.	A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;
6.	The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;
7.	The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and
8.	The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program.



The Department of Education, Office of Adult Education and Family Literacy, makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must include assurances that:	
1.	The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions);
2.	The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;
3.	The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;
4.	The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities;
5.	The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and
6.	Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION - SCVRD**

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan⁵⁹ must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

- (a) Input of State Rehabilitation Council.** All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:
- (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;**
 - (2) the designated state unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and**
 - (3) the designated state unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.**

SCVRD is an independent commission.

- (b) Request for Waiver of Statewideness.** When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated state unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:
- (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;**
 - (2) the designated state unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and**
 - (3) requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.**

SCVRD has not requested a waiver of statewideness. See SCVRD Assurances starting on pg. 198.

- (c) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.** Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:
- (1) Federal, state, and local agencies and programs;**
 - (2) State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;**
 - (3) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;**
 - (4) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and**
 - (5) State use contracting programs.**

In carrying out its mission to prepare and assist eligible individuals to achieve and maintain competitive employment, the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) actively seeks referrals and comparable services and benefits. In doing so, the department has established formal and informal

⁵⁹ Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(iii) of WIOA



partnerships with other providers of facilities and services. For the purpose of referral, service collaboration, facility allocation, and staff designation, cooperative agreements have been established with the following agencies in South Carolina: Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Corrections, the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). Detailed agreements between SCVRD and the SCDE describe the coordination of school-to-work transition services and also Adult Education services. With regard to the S.C. Independent Living Council, the department acts in an advisory and technical support capacity. The SCVRD portion of the Unified State Plan assures that an interagency agreement or similar document for interagency coordination between any appropriate public entities becomes operative. The department has entered into collaborative arrangements with institutions of higher education as well. This is to ensure the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, described in Title I of WIOA, are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual. This includes the provision of vocational rehabilitation services during pending disputes as described in the interagency agreement or similar document. SCVRD works closely with the S.C. Assistive Technology Program (SCATP) through ongoing communication, cross-participation in staff trainings, and participation in the annual AT Expo. Staff with the SCATP also participates in TASC, the Transition Alliance of South Carolina, and the annual Youth Leadership Forum. In addition, SCVRD partners with multiple agencies and entities serving out-of-school youth to include DJJ (job readiness training and teen centers), Centers for Independent Living, Center for Disability Resources, Developmental Disabilities Council, PRO-Parents of S.C., and Family Connection of S.C. SCVRD will provide input to the US Department of Agriculture-Office of Rural Development as it endeavors to support the development activities that empower and build capacity of local communities. SCVRD will seek to assure the participation of individuals with physical and mental impairments in training and employment opportunities, as appropriate. With the exception of services specified in paragraph (E) and in paragraphs (1) through (4) and (14) of section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) enacted on July 22, 2014, information shall specify policies and procedures for public entities to identify and determine interagency coordination responsibilities of each public entity in order to promote coordination and timely delivery of vocational rehabilitation services.

(d) Coordination with Education Officials. Describe:

- (1) The designated state unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.**
- (2) Information on the formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency with respect 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;**
 - (B) transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;**
 - (C) roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;**
 - (D) procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.**



SCVRD considers service provision to high school students with disabilities a significant priority and collaborates with local and state education agencies to serve them. SCVRD serves students with disabilities who have various pre-employment transition needs in their efforts to prepare for, find and maintain competitive employment. From students who pursue high school diplomas and occupational credentials to those who will receive certificates of attendance, SCVRD provides individualized services that will help students successfully enter competitive, integrated employment.

The State Board of Education statute, 43-243, requires the mandatory participation of representatives of state agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities in the state's Advisory Council on the Education of Students with Disabilities. The Advisory Council's purpose is to provide recommendations and input on special education and related services for students with disabilities to the Office of Special Education Services.

SCVRD and the SCDE are signatories and partners in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). This agreement expresses a basic commitment on behalf of both agencies to provide comprehensive vocational and educational services to individuals with disabilities. The agreement details each entity's roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, in identifying and serving students with disabilities. Items covered in the agreement include: student identification and exchange of information, procedures for outreach to students with disabilities who need transition services, methods for dispute resolution, consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for school-to-work transition activities, and the requirements for regular monitoring of the agreement. Timing of student referrals is individualized based on need but should generally occur no later than the second semester of the year prior to the student's exit from school.

Using the SCVRD-SCDE MOA as a model, SCVRD has developed agreements with all local education agencies in the state. These MOAs clarify roles and responsibilities at the local level. There is an SCVRD counselor assigned to each of the high schools in the state whose purpose is to be a resource for career development, participate in school-based meetings as appropriate, and to seek referrals of students who can benefit from SCVRD services. SCVRD also maintains an agreement with the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind.

Provision of pre-employment transition services is a cornerstone of the agreements with local education agencies/school districts in terms of SCVRD's role. SCVRD provides a robust set of student and youth services to enhance the transition from school to work or post-secondary training opportunities. As indicated in WIOA, SCVRD transition counselors provide pre-employment transition services for students prior to their exit from high school, and SCVRD staff continue to provide services to support placement into competitive employment, or completion of post-secondary training and/or credential-based programs. The number of successful employment outcomes for transition-aged youth has grown by 48 percent from SFY 2013 to SFY 2015.

SCVRD utilizes the "Guideposts for Success" (based on the work of the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth – NCWD/Y) as a framework for school-to-work transition services. This includes regular activities that focus on each of the required pre-employment transition service activities: job exploration counseling, work-based learning, counseling on opportunities for comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs, workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living skills, and instruction in self-advocacy. Group activities provide opportunities to not only facilitate peer mentoring, but also allow transition staff to observe and cultivate students' leadership skills, as well as communication and social skills. Mentoring is a key component of the High School High Tech (HS/HT) program, and SCVRD collaborates with organizations



that have youth-led mentoring programs in place. Through the agency's VR Partners program, former clients that have successfully transitioned into employment or post-secondary activities are available to assist with mentoring and participation in transition activities such as Disability Mentoring Day, and summer transition institutes.

SCVRD maintains a priority on providing work-based learning experiences for students. Following a 5-year transition demonstration grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and in keeping with evidence-based practices that support work experience to be one of the most influential factors in successful post-secondary employment outcomes, transition staff actively pursue job tryout, job shadowing, internship and apprenticeship opportunities for students. This impacts not only the ultimate outcome of competitive, integrated employment but has shown to be an integral support for school completion and drop-out prevention.

In collaboration with the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) and the SCDE, SCVRD's school-based transition counselors work together with local education agencies, community partners, and business partners to advise students with disabilities, and their families, regarding available career pathways and educational/training opportunities.

SCVRD maintains a Transition Services Coordinator position and additional regional Transition Specialist positions whose duties include:

- Coordinate all transition-related activities and projects including those that involve other agencies, community organizations and local SCVRD field offices;
- Develop, monitor and update all transition documents and cooperative agreements;
- Provide technical assistance, professional development and training on transition-related issues to field office staff, education personnel, community organizations, families, and students;
- Review and update client service policy to ensure policies and procedures are reflective of SCVRD mission and focus on quality in serving youth in transition;
- Serve on the planning committee for the interagency South Carolina Youth Leadership Forum, a summer youth development and leadership program
- Participate in TASC, an interagency initiative to create systems change and support development of local interagency transition teams.

SCVRD continues to facilitate the development of innovative transition services to improve the successful outcomes of transition-aged youth. In this effort, SCVRD has integrated evidence-based practices for successful transition into the service delivery system. SCVRD also offers several additional programs to enhance transition services:

- HS/HT – an initiative of the Office of Disability Employment Policy, US Department of Labor whose mission is to reduce the dropout rate of youth with disabilities, increase their enrollment in post-secondary education and training, and improve their participation in employment-related activities. HS/HT expanded to an additional location this year, bringing the total HS/HT program locations to 12 across the state.
- Transition Services Specialist (TSS) – a cooperative funding initiative that enhances the general transition services offered to a school by engaging a school employee designated as the Transition Services Specialist. The TSS coordinates with the assigned SCVRD counselor, to provide career assessments, occupational exploration, and participation in meaningful work experience for students with disabilities. The intent of this program is to support



- higher rates of successful secondary school completion, enrollment in post-secondary training, and subsequent entry and maintenance of competitive employment.
- Transition Services Counselor (TSC) – a cooperative funding initiative in which a designated SCVRD counselor provides the transition activities and work-based experiences. These efforts have resulted in an increase in transition referrals in the areas in which the programs are operating and have increased our collaborative efforts with the local school districts. The Youth Employment Services (YES) programs that operated through an RSA demonstration grant and were completed in December 2012 have been incorporated into either a TSC cooperative agreement or are receiving ongoing transition services through the efforts of the local transition staff assigned to the schools in those locations.
 - Project SEARCH – this nationally recognized program is a one-year high school transition internship program providing training and education leading to employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. SCVRD is partnering with two Project SEARCH programs in South Carolina, serving on the steering committee as well as providing job coaching services.
 - Post-Secondary Programs for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities – SCVRD collaborates with the five post-secondary programs in South Carolina for young adults with intellectual disabilities:
 - Carolina LIFE,
 - Clemson LIFE,
 - Coastal Carolina LIFE,
 - [College of Charleston] REACH, and
 - Winthrop Think College.

Each program has an SCVRD counselor liaison who provides services for eligible students. SCVRD counselors monitor progress and assist with transition planning as the student approaches program completion. These efforts support continuity and coordination of services with the SCVRD office located in the student's home town. These programs provide students with critical competitive employment and independent living skills. SCVRD counselors work closely with staff and students to explore careers, determine a suitable vocational goal, and assist with job placement.

- Transition Coaches – SCVRD has successfully implemented a demonstration project to provide transition coach positions for local area offices. The transition coach works with transition counselors to identify students with the most significant disabilities (as defined in WIOA) who need job coaching, work experiences and job placement assistance to ensure a successful competitive, integrated employment outcome. The transition coach provides these services to students in their final year of high school.
- SCVRD continues to explore and develop new initiatives that promote successful post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. These outcomes include competitive, integrated employment, independent living, community participation and post-secondary education.

(e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations. Describe the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The designated state unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under Section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA, and the independent living centers described in Part C of Chapter I of Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities. In addition, TASC is an interagency group whose mission is to increase



successful student post-secondary transition outcomes through active, interagency collaboration. With 16 partner agencies currently, TASC works to support transition services through training, professional development and technical assistance provided to local interagency teams that provide direct transition services, both at the pre-employment stage and following post-secondary activities. SCVRD has partnered with a non-profit organization, Project HOPE foundation, to provide workplace readiness training for individuals with autism. This program utilizes individualized plans for Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy conducted in a vocational preparation setting. Development of social skills and independent living skills as well as job coaching and placement into competitive employment are expected outcomes of this partnership. SCVRD has cooperative agreements and works collaboratively with other non-profit organizations such as the Developmental Disabilities Council, Spinal Cord Injury Association, Traumatic Brain Injury Association, Family Connection of S.C., College Transition Connection and multiple other community organizations.

- (f) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services. Describe the designated state agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.**

Sections (n) and (p) describe the agency's efforts for coordination and provision of supported employment services, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

- (g) Coordination with Employers. Describe how the designated state unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:**
- (1) VR services; and**
 - (2) transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.**

SCVRD utilizes multiple methods of working with employers to identify competitive, integrated employment and career exploration opportunities to facilitate the provision of VR services for adults and transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities. On a statewide and local basis, the Business Partnership Network, or BPN, provides an opportunity for regular engagement with business partners to gain input on hiring needs, training curricula, and opportunities for outreach with business and industry. Business Advisory Councils (BACs) are established to provide input on specific programs, such as the I.T. Training Centers, in Columbia and at the Bryant Center in Lyman. Members of the BAC assist in evaluating courses of study and curricula to ensure SCVRD stays current with what is needed in the workplace for I.T. professionals. Also, SCVRD utilizes Business Development Specialists (BDSs) across the state whose role is to identify opportunities for training, work-based learning, job development and placement, and emerging career pathways. BDS staff participate on local business services teams, along with partners from SC Works and local workforce development boards, to provide a coordinated approach to business development activities. BDS staff also work with transition counselors and coaches to identify opportunities for work-based learning experiences, internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training for students in conjunction with the pre-employment transition services that are provided in high school settings.



(h) Interagency Cooperation. Describe how the designated state unit will collaborate with the state agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

(1) the state Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

SCVRD is establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DHHS, the agency responsible for administering the state Medicaid plan. This MOU outlines roles, responsibilities, and collaborative efforts of both agencies. The purpose and objectives of this MOU include strengthening the partnership between the two agencies, with the ultimate outcome of developing opportunities for competitive, integrated employment for Medicaid beneficiaries who have disabilities.

(2) the state agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

SCVRD has an MOU with DDSN. Staff works collaboratively with local Disabilities and Special Needs (DSN) boards and providers in serving individuals in need of supported employment services and long-term follow along supports to maintain competitive, integrated employment. DDSN has representatives on TASC to assist in school-to-work transition efforts as well as ensuring youth with the most significant disabilities have access to the supports needed to gain and maintain competitive employment. Through these efforts, clients/consumers are served in a complementary fashion based on the expertise and distinct roles of each agency.

In addition, SCVRD works closely with the Developmental Disabilities Council, an Executive Program designated to the Department of Administration. Collaborative efforts include partnering on many projects and grant-funded initiatives, as well as being signatories to an MOU for the Transition Alliance of South Carolina.

(3) the state agency responsible for providing mental health services.

SCVRD works collaboratively with DMH. Several cooperative agreements are in place across the state for IPS (Individualized Placement and Support) caseloads to provide rapid placement and job coaching for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. Transition counselors working within the schools to provide pre-employment transition services coordinate with school-based mental health counselors to identify students in need of services, whether that is VR or mental health services. Through this “no wrong door” approach, students in need of services are connected to the appropriate resources in a timely manner.

(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development. Describe the designated state agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified state rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated state unit, including the following:

(1) Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

(A) Qualified Personnel Needs. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

(i) 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;



- (ii) **the number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and**
- (iii) **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.**

Staffing patterns are set through a joint effort of SCVRD commissioner, director of human resources, executive staff, and local supervisors. Employee turnover data are reviewed in an effort to determine trends and to identify staffing concerns. In addition, succession planning for critical need positions is being managed via the department's Professional Development and Leadership Program (PDLP). Below is a chart which provides details, by personnel category, on the number of personnel needed and currently employed in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services at SCVRD.

SCVRD utilizes a caseload management system that allows for monitoring and planning for service delivery capacity based on referral sources and the projected number of individuals expected to receive services.



Table 19

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Counselors	242	17	125
2	Area client services managers	26	4	13
3	Vocational evaluators and job prep. instructors	49	7	25
4	Job-readiness trainers	81	6	42
5	Area supervisors	23	2	12
6	Training center managers	26	1	13
7	Employment/job coaches	41	4	21



Table 19 Continued

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
8	Administrative & team support specialists	78	6	40
9	Addictions counselors	8	0	4
10	Transition coaches	11	2	6

(B) **Personnel Development.** Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

- (i) a list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;
- (ii) the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- (iii) 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.

SCVRD maintains close relationships with the University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University, both of which produce graduates who have Master of Rehabilitation Counseling degrees. SCVRD has opted to use a state Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) standard and can recruit not only from candidates with a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, but also with a Master's degree in related fields. These strategies satisfy staffing needs. The following chart shows statistics for the in-state university vocational rehabilitation counseling degree programs. All graduates are eligible for Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification and the South Carolina Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) designation. As of this date, 5 have obtained their CRC certification. Data are collected annually by program directors at each university and shared with executive staff to assist in current and future staffing.



Table 20

Row	Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
1	SC State University Rehab. Counseling Program	55	2	7	12
2	USC Rehab. Counseling Program	60	2	8	16

(2) Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel. Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Progress toward meeting the required CSPD standard began in January 2001. The department has a working relationship with the University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University (a historically black university), both of which offer all of the courses required by the Council On Rehabilitation Education (CORE). A recruitment plan is in place to recruit graduates from all schools in South Carolina as well as out-of-state schools which have counseling and rehabilitation counseling degree programs. When this is not possible due to high demand, the department will continue to hire counselors with closely related Master's degrees. In accordance with South Carolina state law, each transcript is assessed and the counselor is placed in a plan that allows up to 30 months to complete the current state educational requirements.

The University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University prepare individuals for graduate degrees in rehabilitation counseling. SCVRD conducts outreach programs to these universities and other universities to include: publications and distribution of targeted recruiting material, attendance at career days and job fairs, and recruitment events. In addition, practicum placements and internships are offered to students who are in CSPD qualifying programs. These efforts are designed to recruit qualified personnel, including minority graduates and those with disabilities. SCVRD Human Resources and Human Resources Development offices coordinate recruitment efforts with active support from local supervisors.



Employees of the department are assigned to work with school officials to assist in curriculum development for the graduate school programs. The Human Resources Development (HRD) director is an active member of the Rehabilitation Counseling Degree Advisory Boards for the University of South Carolina, South Carolina State University and East Carolina University. SCVRD has been especially successful in recruiting personnel from the S.C. universities, particularly those from minority backgrounds. Students from these programs and out-of-state programs are encouraged to accept student internships and practicum placements with the department. The HRD staff coordinates the placement of non-paid practicum and internships, and the human resources department coordinates placements for students who qualify for paid internships. In addition, regular classes and tours are conducted in department facilities, and staff is available to present in university programs.

A substantial New Employee Orientation program is vital to the recruitment and retention of SCVRD staff. All new staff members are required to complete New Employee Orientation Parts I, II, and III. New Employee Orientation is intensive and comprehensive. The orientation program incorporates training in the following topics:

- * A history of vocational rehabilitation
- * Philosophical overview
- * SCVRD agency mission, policies, procedures, and benefits
- * An overview of training requirements and an intro to online training
- * Campus tour
- * Ethics in the workplace
- * Client Relations and CAP (Client Assistance Program)
- * Disability awareness and disability etiquette
- * Customer service
- * True Colors (personality assessment for team building)
- * Medical and psychosocial aspects of specific disabilities
- * Safety in the workplace
- * Nonviolent crisis intervention
- * Security: Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
- * Panic alarm system
- * Human Resources Development



- * Public information
- * Time management
- * Job specific training
- * SCVRD Grievance Procedures for Handling Client Discrimination Complaints

New employees are assigned mentors, participate in job shadowing, and receive performance coaching from their supervisors.

New counselors and selected direct service delivery staff are required to take the following training sessions:

- * Motivational Interviewing
- * Medical terminology (for those who did not have this as a graduate course)
- * Client Services training
- * Counseling Skills training
- * Rehabilitation technology online trainings

In addition to the New Employee Orientation program and to retain qualified staff, SCVRD uses a system for staff evaluation that is a modification of a system that is available to all state employees. The system focuses on the individual employee's job duties compared to stated goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are identified and discussed with the employee at the beginning of the rating period. Ongoing communication between the employee and supervisor clarifies the employee's understanding of how to meet the performance standards and enhances service delivery to the client.

At the conclusion of the rating period, an evaluation is performed to rate the employee on each duty in relation to performance objectives. The system provides for employee input into the development of the goals and objectives in order to support successful performance.

Another feature of the system allows objectives to be amended throughout the review period. This system also provides a mechanism for helping a substandard performer improve and a means of removing an employee from a position should performance not improve to an acceptable level. It is as follows:

A covered employee is entitled to adequate notice of substandard performance and the opportunity to improve the substandard performance before receiving a "below performance requirements" rating and being removed from the position. If during the performance period an employee is considered "below performance requirements" in any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance, the employee may be provided with a written "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance." The warning notice shall provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 days and no more than 120 days. The warning notice may be issued at any time during the review period. An employee who receives more than two warning notices within a 365-day period shall be removed from the position. A warning notice is not required on the third occurrence.



The department has developed career path matrices for staff to encourage retention of qualified staff and promotion to higher level positions. These career paths are keyed to requirements in the areas of education, experience, productivity, quality, and training. The matrices include elements related to the department's Program Integrity model which emphasizes a balance among customer service, compliance assurance, and productivity. Counselors are required to meet the state's CSPD standard within the required time frame in order to maintain status as a counselor and to advance to a higher level. A counselor who does not achieve the state CSPD standard within the required timeframes will be removed from his/her position. The career path matrices are published on SCVRD intranet site.

The department takes an active role in employee/employer relations. Through strong leadership and the assistance of all staff, the department provides a healthy and safe work environment. Employee behavior and performance problems are dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner, with an emphasis on assisting the employee to improve. The department promotes internal and external customer service and has made teamwork an integral part of day-to-day operations. The department's Celebration of Success program (a reward and recognition system) allows employees to recognize coworkers for customer service, productivity, program excellence, as well as individual accomplishments.

(3) *Personnel Standards.* Describe the state agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

- (A) standards that are consistent with any national or state-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**
- (B) the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

Section 101(a)(7)(B) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.18 indicates that the state VR agency is to establish and maintain standards to ensure that all professional personnel are prepared and trained and that the standards are consistent with national or state approved requirements. Given this option of selecting federal or state standards in order to achieve stability regarding standards and to develop a diverse staff, SCVRD has opted to use state standards to manage its CSPD which are consistent with the initial guidelines. In 2006, the South Carolina General Assembly passed a bill which established a state standard for the minimum educational and training requirements for counselors of the public vocational rehabilitation agency. This bill was signed by the governor on March 15, 2006. Under this state law, the department can continue its practice of hiring individuals with rehabilitation-related Master's degrees while mandating that they complete Master's level rehabilitation courses commensurate with their degree. The law reads as follows:

A State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor must meet the following standards: a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, a master's degree in the field of counseling with a graduate course in theories and techniques of counseling, or a Master's degree in any discipline. In addition to the Master's degree, the individual shall be



required to document at least 18 credit hours of coursework at the Master's level or above, within thirty months of date of hire, in the core areas that follow: one graduate course with a primary focus on the theories and techniques of counseling and three graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas: occupational information, job development and placement, medical aspects of disabilities, foundations of rehabilitation, psychological aspects of disabilities, and personal and vocational adjustment; and two graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas: assessment, research methodology, vocational and career development, community resources, case management, and delivery of rehabilitation services, or a current Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification, regardless of degree.

As stated in detail in the previous section of this document, qualified candidates are recruited from universities who meet the minimum requirements of the state's CSPD standard. Paid internships and practicum opportunities are also offered to qualified candidates. Each candidate's transcript is reviewed and evaluated. New hires who do not meet the standard are immediately placed in a program to meet the standard within the 30 month time frame.

Of the 242 general counselors and 8 addictions counselors who are currently employed by SCVRD, 227 meet the state's CSPD standard for a rehabilitation counselor. Twenty-three (23) counselors have Master's degrees in a related field and are currently under a plan to complete requirements.

Funding support for the implementation of a retraining plan to assist VR counselors to meet the state educational requirement of CSPD has traditionally been provided by the department's In-Service Training Grant. Due to discontinuation of the RSA in-service training grant this cost has been absorbed into the agency's overall budget effective 10/1/2015. Other funding options may be provided by RSA grants, if available. Evaluation of the plan to ensure that VR counselors meet the CSPD requirements is conducted through an analysis of transcripts and the department's electronic training records.

As part of the agency's initiative to expand skills-based, demand driven training, staff are currently trained on accessing and utilizing labor market information for their local communities. In coordination with local BDSs, staff identifies in-demand industries and occupations and develops localized training or connects with the technical college system and other institutions of higher education to provide clients access to training commensurate with the evolving labor force. In addition, SCVRD is a partner in a statewide Talent Pipeline/Sector Strategies project aimed at closing skills gaps and meeting the workforce needs of the current and emerging labor market through collaborative development of career pathways and identification of training and certifications required by employers to meet their hiring needs.

Paraprofessional staff must meet minimum hiring requirements according to position descriptions.

(4) Staff Development. Describe the state agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

(A) a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational



- counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out state programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and**
- (B) procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals.**

SCVRD conducts needs assessments in order to plan for a balanced HRD program for all staff. The assessments take into account skill development, as well as long-range career opportunities directed toward developing and strengthening the role of qualified rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals. Needs assessments are conducted and evaluated by supervisors and HRD. The information is collected from multiple sources and formulated into a comprehensive HRD program. Institutions of higher education and appropriate professional associations are used to facilitate the recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel.

In addition to these efforts, the department provides, when appropriate and subject to the availability of funds, tuition assistance to employees who are taking work-related courses.

The systematic needs assessment conducted by HRD includes input from multiple sources. Public hearings, findings of internally conducted program reviews, and responses to staff and customer surveys are several approaches that are utilized. In addition, identified skills deficits from individual staff performance reviews, individual requests from staff for specific skills development, focus groups, and meetings with management and service delivery staff are used to identify and prioritize training needs.

The department has developed a retention and succession plan that includes its Professional Development and Leadership Program (PDLP). The plan provides career development opportunities for staff via career paths, and targeted training opportunities. The Human Resources Development and Training Plan includes training provided by various technical assistance centers and other training professionals, management/supervision courses offered by the South Carolina Office of Human Resources and in-house training. In May of 2015, 63 participants graduated from the two-year PDLP program. Each year, the agency offers entry into Level I, Professional Development, and Level II, Leadership. The PDLP program continues to be cited as an innovative program by training and technical assistance organizations and other agencies. A separate Supervision and Management track continues that focuses on meeting the training needs of new and existing supervisors. During this year supervisors received training on various leadership topics to include communication, conflict management, coaching, managing priorities and projects, managing emotions under pressure, supervisory practices, and teambuilding.

SCVRD has an extensive HRD department that facilitates training for all employees, with programmatic training being provided by internal and external subject matter experts. The department provides/sponsors trainings that focus on medical, psychosocial, and vocational aspects of specific disabilities, and feature the application of assistive technology as appropriate. Recent topics include: disability etiquette, brain injury, alcohol/drug addictions, multiple sclerosis, mental illness, autism, deafness and hearing impairments, epilepsy, learning disabilities, musculoskeletal, spinal cord injury, diabetes as well as other disability-specific trainings. Workshops on transition from school to work, HS/HT, supported employment, vocational assessment, serving ex-offenders, serving the Hispanic/Latino population, leadership development, and maintaining a culture of quality were also provided.



Counseling skills training is provided on an ongoing basis with a focus on motivational interviewing techniques. A series of statewide trainings focusing on providing specific counseling skills and the application of those skills within the VR setting to counselors and other staff who provide direct services to clients also began in 2013 and will continue for all designated new staff.

All direct client service delivery staff receive training on job placement and developing employer relationships. In addition, trainings focusing on living with spinal cord injury, coaching for engagement, and vocational assessment in school-to-work transition were provided.

In addition to the focus on technology in specific trainings, SCVRD has two in-house rehabilitation technology centers. Rehabilitation technology engineers provide training and support to staff, businesses and clients as well as tours and presentations for the community. Rehabilitation technology engineers offer onsite services as well as services from the two regional locations. The agency also has a series of 8 online training modules that focus on the identification of the need for rehabilitation technology services and application of those services.

Role-specific training is provided for all direct service delivery staff. Customer service, true colors training, ethics, disability awareness/etiquette, safety training, nonviolent intervention, panic alarm training, and a course on securing personally identifiable information are requirements for all employees.

Progress continues in building an online library of disability-specific modules which are available upon demand. These modules are interactive and competency based. As always, the impact of these training efforts on staff performance will be assessed and the recommendations considered for the improvement of future training programs. As prior training plans included training on the 1998 Rehabilitation Act, the current training plan will include objectives that focus on WIOA, informed choice, disability-specific trainings and transition.

SCVRD staff participate in relevant disability related conferences. These conferences offer current information on disabilities and initiatives in vocational rehabilitation. Numerous local trainings take place and extensive research is conducted when planning these sessions in order to provide the most up-to-date information that will assist staff in providing quality services to clients. When conducting disability-related trainings, SCVRD uses physicians, individuals that experience the specific disabilities and other experts who are current with the latest research in their field. For designated staff, the department sponsors attendance at graduate courses that provide information on cutting-edge initiatives in the field.

Executive staff are actively involved with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation and the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Association. Staff also subscribe to numerous professional and research journals.

(5) *Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs.* Describe how the designated state unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

SCVRD has current personnel recruitment and training policies that are reflective of the findings of the US Census Bureau, including the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS). This estimates that 27.8% of South Carolina's population identified themselves as African American (a 4.5% growth rate since the



2010 Census). 5.3% of South Carolina's population identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic, per the 2014 ACS, and the department sponsors Spanish classes for staff to facilitate communication with this minority group. Hiring incentives are also utilized for staff who are bilingual in English and Spanish, which has resulted in an increased number of staff who are bilingual. The remaining minority populations are distributed among Native Americans, Asian or dual race.

In addition, the department continues to place emphasis on services for individuals who are deaf to ensure that a counselor in each area can communicate effectively. The department takes advantage of web-based trainings. In addition, weekly American Sign Language (ASL) classes are provided for Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf (RCD). The department has a certified interpreter on staff that provides video remote and on-site interpretation, as well as a Coordinator for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. In addition, qualified interpreters are used if accessing a certified interpreter would delay service provision.

(6) *Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.*

TASC is a robust state-level interagency collaborative that works in support of increasing positive post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities. It has multiple stakeholder agencies and organizations, and supports local level interagency teams through training, technical assistance, and strategic planning.

The department continues to coordinate the development of designated staff with emerging initiatives by the SCDE and the 81 local school districts (LEAs) under IDEA and state school-to-work transition efforts. Transition training efforts this year included the following: a two-day transition summer series was conducted for transition staff that included presentations and training on vocational assessment, use of ACT and Work Keys assessments, referral development, best practices, documentation and use of school records, work experiences, using O*Net, and post-secondary training. Selected transition staff participated in a session on active training techniques and self-determination. Over 40 transition staff participated in an annual interagency transition conference, focused on local interagency planning and content sessions focused on effective service delivery for students with disabilities. Youth leaders also participated in the conference. Disability-specific modules on learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorders are available for all staff via LOTIS, the agency's online training site. In addition to the disability-specific training modules, a module on transition basics, with a focus on evidence-based practices and quality service delivery, has been developed and is delivered in person to all SCVRD transition personnel. This has become the standard training for all new staff working with transition students. The agency continues to work collaboratively with the SCDE to provide training as a component of their State Personnel Development Grant – Project Gateway. In addition, selected transition staff will participate in training on transition assessment and facilitating work experiences offered through the SCDE's annual research to practice training.

The TSS/TSC collaborative approach to the provision of transition services was continued this year in six schools. This approach designates a transition services specialist – who is a school district employee – or a designated VR counselor, to act as a liaison to refer students to the department and assist these students in participating in transition activities and work-based experiences in the community. This outreach effort has improved access to VR services for students with disabilities in the areas in which the program is operating and has increased our collaborative efforts with the local school district.



The department continues to designate a liaison counselor who provides pre-employment transition services to each public secondary school throughout the state. During this past year state office and local staff have provided in-service training to school staff, parents, and students regarding service availability. Also, cooperative agreements with DJJ and the Will Lou Gray Opportunity School afford the ability to work collaboratively to serve at-risk youth prior to their exit from high school.

(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;**
 - (B) who are minorities;**
 - (C) who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;**
 - (D) who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and**
 - (E) who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.**
- (2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state; and**
- (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.**

Needs Assessment Introduction:

SCVRD designs new initiatives, enhances existing programs and refines policies and procedures based on many factors, including continuous program assessment and evaluation, by analyzing statistical trends and utilizing input from constituency groups. In keeping with SCVRD's strategic plan and, as specified by the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, this feedback loop begins with the statewide needs assessment.

A variety of source information is used including information from the United States Census Bureau's ACS, RSA, Cornell University Employment and Disability Institute (EDI, 2013), Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS), US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Social Security Administration (SSA). SCVRD conducts quarterly internal and external customer satisfaction surveys and uses this information to strengthen service delivery.

SCVRD participated in the fall 2015 South Carolina State Survey, conducted by the University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research. This is a cost-shared random probability survey of citizens age eighteen and older living in South Carolina. Specific questions were designed to measure experience and familiarity with SCVRD services. Results of this survey reveal that 13.7% of respondents indicated that they or someone they know has been served by SCVRD. This response varied significantly by race and income levels. 33.7% of respondents reported that they were aware of the services provided by SCVRD. Of the respondents that indicated they were aware of SCVRD services, the most common response was that the purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation program is to help people with injury, illness, or disability to enter or re-enter the workforce. These findings reinforce the need to continuously evaluate outreach efforts in the community. However, it should be noted that the



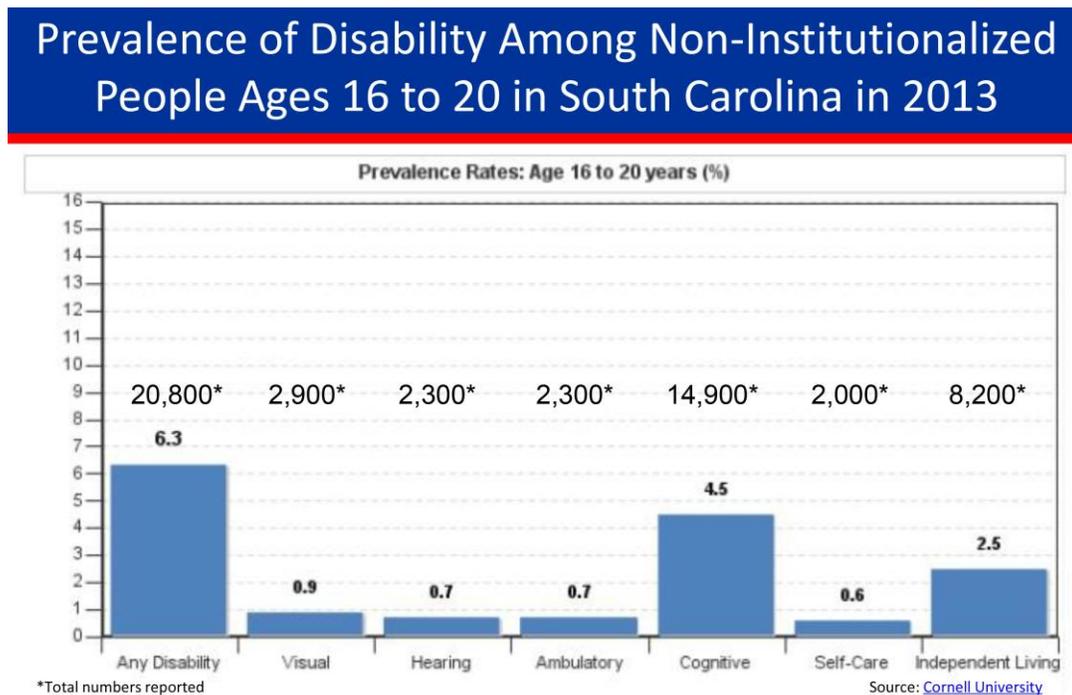
consistency of message regarding the purpose of the program among individuals familiar with it appears to be high.

South Carolina’s unemployment rate has changed from 5.6% in 2014 to 6.6% for the first half of 2015⁶⁰. These rates accentuate the difficult realities of employment for persons with disabilities. As of 2014, a total of 373,000 individuals aged 16-64 reported having a disability.⁶¹ Of those included in this group per the 2013 data, 64 percent are white, 27 percent are African American, 1 percent as Asian, 6 percent are Hispanic and the remainder are two or more races.⁶² In comparison, those served through SCVRD reflected the following: 48% white and 48% African American, .5% Native American, .4% Asian and 2.2% Hispanic.

Youth with Disabilities

Given the emphasis on services for students and youth in WIOA, the figure 24 highlights the number of youth with disabilities in transition.

Figure 24



⁶⁰ Bureau of Labor and Statistics states 5.6% for 2014; National Conference for State Legislators shows average of 6.6% for first half of 2015.

⁶¹ Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, both 2014 and 2013.

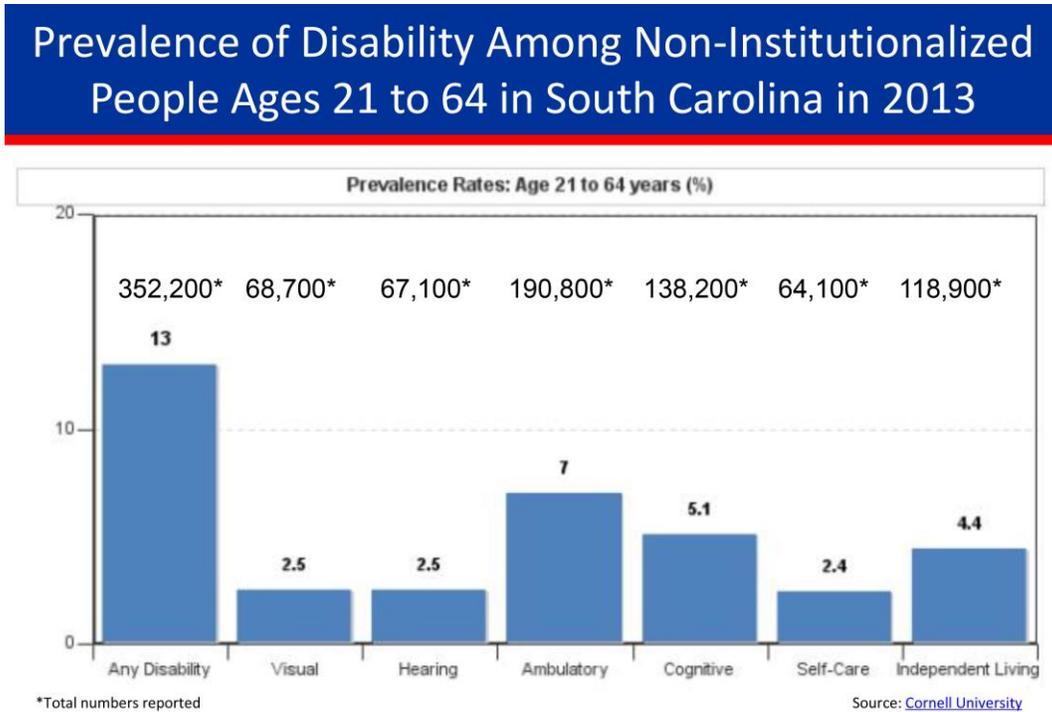
⁶² Kaiser Family Foundation (2015) Population Distribution by Race & Ethnicity. Retrieved 25 Nov 2015 from <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/distribution-by-raceethnicity/>.



Individuals Aged 21 – 64

Figure 25 reflects the range of disabilities among working age people.

Figure 25



Types of Disability Experienced by Students Served Under IDEA

As indicated above, data (such as that provided in Figure 26) on the types of disabilities for youth that are currently receiving services under IDEA and that can be expected to transition into post-secondary activities in the coming years are important to supporting pre-employment transition services as well as supports to assist with success in training, education and employment after high school.

Figure 26

SC Ages 6 to 21 Served Under IDEA

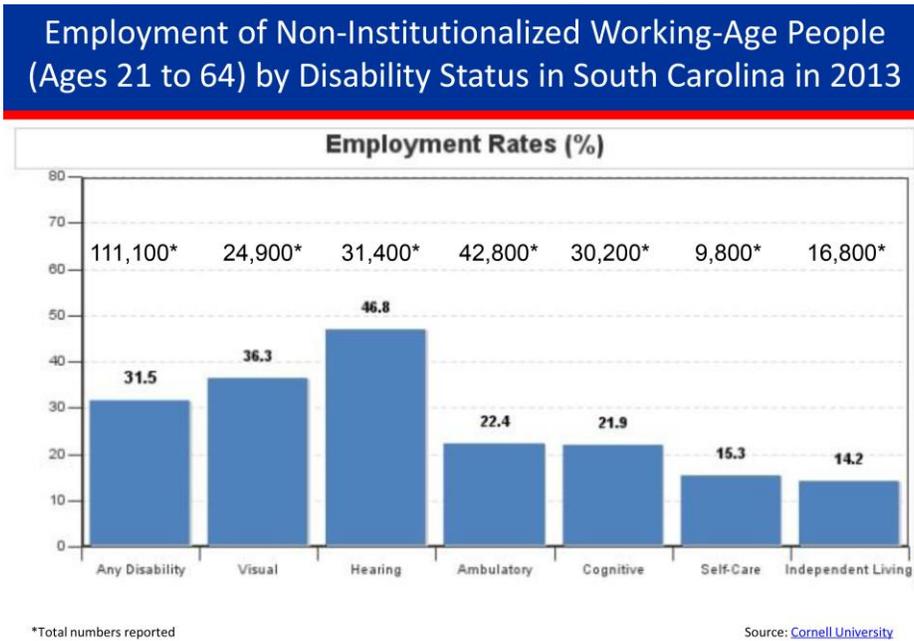
	2012	2013
All Disabilities	88,904	89,202
Specific Learning Disability	41,491	41,100
Speech or Language Impairment	14,799	14,555
Intellectual Disability	7,192	6,847
Emotional Disturbance	2,946	2,754
Multiple Disability	830	954
Hearing Impairment	1,046	1,011
Orthopedic Impairment	571	532
Other Health Impairment	11,081	11,635
Visual Impairment	414	421
Autism	4,481	5,082
Deaf Blindness	5	8
Traumatic Brain Injury	188	179
Developmental Delay	3,860	4,124

Source: [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#)



Labor Force Participation Rates By Disability Type

Figure 27



SSI/SSDI Recipients:

According to the Social Security Administration 259,261 South Carolinians received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) in 2010. By 2013, the number of recipients had grown to 352,200 (Cornell EDI, 2013). This represents a 26% increase in just three years. The 352,200 South Carolinians who received SSI/SSDI in 2013 represented 11.6% of South Carolinians over the age of 18. In addition, updated information on SSI/SSDI beneficiaries in South Carolina indicates that there are 218,588 Title II disability beneficiaries and 109,569 Title XVI disability recipients as of FFY 2014. This reflects a substantial talent pool of individuals with barriers to employment. These individuals may not be reflected in the totals for unemployed as many of these individuals may not be actively seeking work, or have never worked (SSA).

The provision of early intervention services is a major issue given the long application process associated with making eligibility determinations for both the SSI and SSDI programs. There will be a need for increased supported employment services to improve the employment outcomes of many SSI/SSDI recipients. As a total count, the number of SSI/SSDI recipients, who applied for services, increased to 2,256 by 2013. The trend reflects an increase of 7.3% from the previous three years.

Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

During SFY 2015, SCVRD served 591 persons with a hearing disability. South Carolina has an incidence of hearing impairments of 4.6% of the population aged 18-64. The South Carolina Association of the Deaf (SCAD) has identified numerous resources for SCVRD counselor use since collaboration began in May of 2012. SCVRD has continued outreach and increased services to individuals that are deaf or hard of hearing.

**Emerging Disabilities:**

The increased need for services for individuals from identified emerging disabilities was identified in this needs assessment.

Based on the latest data available from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, the prevalence of ASD continued to increase with one out of 88 children in South Carolina being diagnosed with autism. Based on census data, this rate of autism prevalence suggests that 7,000 to 7,500 transition-aged children (ages 16 to 25) in South Carolina experience autism.

Persons who are diagnosed with ASD often benefit from a stable and predictable work environment which can be accomplished with strong supported employment services.

Additionally, transition-aged youth with the most significant intellectual and multiple disabilities continue to need specific services from SCVRD. Persons with multiple disabilities face several challenges to employment including overall poorer health, less access to adequate health care and inactivity. Of the total individuals with disabilities age 24 or under actively receiving services during SFY 2015, 3239 had a second disability. Providing vocational rehabilitation services to transition-aged youth with the most significant or multiple disabilities, including supported employment services, will improve their chance of productive, meaningful employment and will improve poverty and health outcomes (CDC, 2015).

Another area of identified need is response to the increase of traumatic brain injuries (TBI) through outreach and a focus on serving more individuals with brain injuries. This includes the general population as well as veterans from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The number of TBIs in the general population has increased slowly over the last decade according to the CDC; however, deaths from TBI have decreased. This decrease means an increase in the number of persons who might be returning to work and requiring vocational rehabilitation services.

The prevalence of traumatic brain injuries in the veteran population created a shift in the mission of the Defense and Veteran Brain Injury Center (DVBIC). DVBIC's efforts are focused on prevention, evaluation, and treatment. In South Carolina, SCVRD has been an active member of the Veterans Policy Academy since the summer of 2008 and continues to partner with the other agencies/entities to address the service needs of veterans with disabilities to ensure their return to the workforce.

According to the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Statistical Center (2015), approximately 160 new cases of SCI will occur in South Carolina each year. Most of these will be males with an average age of 42 years old. Many of these injuries will be from falls or vehicle accidents. SCVRD is actively pursuing strategies to increase outreach to this group through collaboration with the Spinal Cord Injury Association of South Carolina and other interested groups.⁶³

⁶³ National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center (2015).

**Individuals with disabilities who are minorities:**

According to 2014 US Census Bureau estimates, South Carolina remains a state with a large minority population. The 2014 estimates reveal that among South Carolina residents, 63.9% are white, 27.8% are African American and 5.2% are Latino or Hispanic. Individuals who are Native American (Catawba Tribe), Asian or dual race comprise the remainder of South Carolina's population. South Carolinians have a 14.2% rate of disability, and Hispanics have the lowest rate at 5.4%.

A review of the RSA Minority Service Rate data shows that SCVRD exceeds the performance level for service to minorities. The ratio for minorities to non-minorities was .952 in 2014 and .967 through December 2015. These ratios indicate that minority populations are well represented among the individuals who use SCVRD services.

African American Population:

In the 2014 estimates from the US Census Bureau, 27.8% of South Carolina's population identified themselves as African American. This number represents a 4.5% growth rate since the 2010 US Census. Of the 1.3 million African Americans living in South Carolina, 15.3% of persons aged 18 – 64 have a disability. This is a higher percentage than in the population at large where 14.2% of persons have a disability (ACS, 2014).

Native American Population:

According to the 2014 ACS, 14,697 South Carolinians identified themselves as being "American Indian and Alaska Native." This number represents 15.7% growth since the 2010 US Census, but still less than 1% of the state's total population.

This population (American Indian and Alaska Native) has the highest incidence of disability among demographic groups in South Carolina with 24.4% identified with one disability. This is high even when compared with the higher national average of 16.7% of Native Americans age 18 to 64 with disabilities. In SFY 2014, 2015, and the first half of 2016, 1% of SCVRD applicants identified themselves as Native Americans.

Since The American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AVIRS) grant is not awarded in South Carolina, awareness of public VR services may be low for Native Americans in the state. Efforts to increase the number of Native Americans who seek and participate in SCVRD services will continue through outreach in communities where significant numbers of Native Americans live.

Latino/Hispanic Population:

Individuals who identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic comprised 2.21% of SCVRD clients. An increase in the number of individuals with disabilities in Latino communities seeking vocational rehabilitation services is anticipated. This represents an opportunity to continue strategies to ensure this population is well served.

Older Adults:

There are 640,000 persons aged 65 years and older, which account for 15.8% of South Carolina's population. This is slightly higher than the 14.5% of the population in the US as a whole. A study by the



US Census Bureau (2014) estimated that approximately 40% of persons in this age group have at least one disability. In SFY 2015, SCVRD provided services to 365 persons aged 65 to 90 (<1%). Of these, 220 were white, 134 were African American and the remainder American Indian (3) Asian (6), and Pacific Islander (2). Of these, 26% had sensory or communications impairments, 54% had physical impairments and 20% mental impairments.⁶⁴

Veterans:

According to the ACS (2013) and BLS (2014), there are 391,660 veterans in South Carolina. The ACS estimates that 30.5% of Gulf War veterans have a service connected disability. As of 2014, the ACS estimated that 77.9% of these veterans were employed. The percentage of veterans with disabilities is consistent with the general population; however, the percentage of employed veterans is much higher. In 2013, the national employment rate for all veterans was 83%.

SCVRD provides services to veterans with disabilities; and, efforts to increase outreach to this population are ongoing. SCVRD has established relationships with local employers in all areas of the state, and collaboration with the Veterans Administration is essential to providing the greatest outreach for veterans with disabilities.

Transition-Aged Youth:

In South Carolina, the graduation rate for school year 2012 - 2013 was 74% (NCES, 2015; Diplomas Count, 2015). Whites have the highest graduation rate at 80%, with African Americans at 70%, Hispanic/Latino 69% and Native Americans 67%. For transition-aged students with disabilities, the graduation rate was 39% (Ibid, 2015). South Carolina ranks 50th of 57 states and territories in the graduation rates of students with disabilities, according to a report prepared by the National Center for Special Education Accountability and Monitoring (2009).

During SFY 2015, SCVRD received 4451 transition-aged referrals (age 14 to 24). During the year, 8988 transition-aged youth were active clients with many of them still in high school or college. 1966 transition-aged youth had successful employment outcomes during SFY 2015, which continues the upward trend that has occurred since SFY 2013 (48% increase). The majority of transition-aged youth with disabilities served are minorities. Demographically, 42% were white, 55% were African American, .5% Native American, .5% Asian and .5% Pacific Islander. The remainder were two races or identified as Hispanic/Latino only.

Since only 39% of students with disabilities graduated high school with a standard diploma, and another 33% completed high school with a certificate of completion, it is essential that SCVRD continues to aggressively seek innovative methods to build strong partnerships with education providers and other community stakeholders. The provision of pre-employment transition services and services to youth with most significant disabilities (as defined in WIOA) is a significant area of focus for the agency.

⁶⁴ He, W. & Larsen, L. (2014). *Older Americans with a Disability: 2008-2012 US Census Bureaus*. Retrieved online at <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2014/acs/acs-29.pdf>

**Rural Population:**

SCVRD has long established the maximum distance a client should have to travel to obtain SCVRD services is 50 miles. The department has expanded services to create full area offices in an additional 4 counties since the last needs assessment. This provides ample coverage statewide to all individuals with disabilities who wish to apply for services. However, according to a publication of the South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics, "Urban and Rural Population in South Carolina," 39.5% of the population lives in rural areas, which ranks South Carolina 13th in the nation for the highest percentage of population living in rural areas. The rural nature of the state lends itself to minimal transit services. Seven out of the 46 counties do not have any type of public transportation. The lack of transportation creates an additional barrier for individuals to participate in vocational rehabilitation services and enter the work force. Therefore, SCVRD continues to develop partnerships and methods to ameliorate this barrier.

Disability Types:

SCVRD analyzed service provision to clients by disability categories to assess whether SCVRD successfully served all groups and to establish disability categories which call for more emphasis. The analysis compared three years (2009-2011) of SCVRD and national VR data which focused upon employment outcomes by disabilities.⁶⁵

Consistent with previous findings, SCVRD increased outreach to those persons with physical and mental impairments. The data indicate that SCVRD employment outcome rates for persons with physical and mental impairments exceeded the national average while rates for persons with communicative and cognitive impairments show an opportunity for improvement. For this reason, SCVRD will continue to pursue improved outreach and service provision for these individuals with communicative and cognitive impairments.

In addition, SCVRD has identified populations that, in particular, require a strategic focus for enhancing services. These groups include individuals with diabetes, spinal cord injury, brain injury, multiple sclerosis, and cerebral palsy.

SCVRD actively participates in the Workforce Development system throughout the state. The Statewide Workforce Development Board, the SC Works system, and numerous cooperative arrangements with other state entities and programs enhance vocational rehabilitation efforts and improve employment outcomes throughout the state. With implementation of WIOA, the existing partnerships with core programs continue to be strengthened through unified planning, collaborative initiatives to meet both client/consumer/job seeker's needs as well as the needs of business and industry.

DEW is the central point of contact responsible for workforce development and coordinates the State Workforce Development Board. The board oversees the state's efforts to develop a skilled, highly qualified work force to assist citizens to succeed in today's global economy. The board includes representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Corrections, Department of Social Services, Department of Commerce, legislators of the South Carolina Senate and House of

⁶⁵ 2011 is the last year RSA published agency report cards. The most recent comparative data available from RSA is from FFY 2013.



Representatives, local elected officials, WIOA core program partners and representatives of community-based organizations. It acts as a forum for collaboration, ensuring that vocational rehabilitation requirements are articulated as part of the statewide plan.

(k) Annual Estimates. Describe:

(1) The number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services.

Number of individuals in the state eligible for SCVRD services = 30,666

Source: RSA 113 and internal count of supported employment services

(2) The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

(A) The VR Program;

Title I, Part B (RSA 113 A15+C1+C2 round to nearest 1000) = 30,000 (SCVRD)

(B) The Supported Employment Program; and

Title VI, Part B = 250 (SCVRD)

(C) each priority category, if under an order of selection.

SCVRD is not under an order of selection.

(3) The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

SCVRD is not under an order of selection.

(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.

\$30,315,209 (SCVRD)

(l) State Goals and Priorities. The designated state unit must:

(1) Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the state Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

(2) Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

(3) Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

(A) the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;

(B) the state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

(C) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the state Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.



Please see attached SCVRD Strategic Planning Template in section (o). These goals were established based on the findings of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, and are updated annually in conjunction with the agency's strategic planning efforts as well as state-specific reporting requirements. Each goal is tied to a defined strategy and set of objectives, designed to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic and timely. These are long-term planning goals, strategies and objectives that include, at minimum, annual assessment of results as well as adjustment and revision based on needs of the state and further implementation of WIOA.

(m) Order of Selection. Describe:

(1) Whether the designated state unit will implement an order of selection. If so, describe:

- (A) The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.**
 - (B) The justification for the order.**
 - (C) The service and outcome goals.**
 - (D) The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.**
 - (E) How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and**
 - (F) 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.**
- (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.**

SCVRD is not implementing an order of selection.

(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.

SCVRD's supported employment goals and plans regarding the Title VI program are based on an analysis of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment and the department's performance on the common performance measures as well as agency key performance indicators. The priorities are as follows:

- Strengthening service delivery afforded to individuals whose disabilities and vocational needs are so significant that SCVRD's 110 traditional program services would not be sufficient to meet their employment needs;
- Providing services to people with the most significant disabilities, especially SSI and/or SSDI recipients, in order to successfully achieve and maintain competitive employment in integrated work settings.
- Providing supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

In SFY 2015, SCVRD used designated funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services for the following goals and priorities:

- Job coaches serving the Aiken, Orangeburg, Laurens, and Lexington areas.
- SCVRD further expanded its partnership with DDSN in an ongoing demonstration project designed as an intensive placement and support program in the Lexington, Greenwood, and Conway areas. DDSN makes referrals to a specified VR counselor and job coach who are



designated to exclusively serve these clients. This demonstration project incorporates many of the IPS evidence-based practices in providing services to individuals with most significant disabilities including those with intellectual disabilities. The key practices focus on individualized, client-centered services to assist persons with cognitive impairments and emphasize rapid job placement as appropriate into competitive, integrated jobs. Follow up supports are provided in integrated work settings. In SFY 2015, the Lexington site achieved a 67% rehabilitation rate.

- (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**
 - (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.**

Activities with funds reserved for services for youth with the most significant disabilities (section 603(d)) included the following:

- Transition job coaches serving youth with most significant disabilities in the Sumter, Greenville, Richland and Rock Hill areas. Transition job coaches provide work-based learning experiences, job preparedness instruction, job development and placement with follow along supports.
- Project SEARCH is a national model based on intensive internship experience and job coaching. It pairs students in their final year of school with a host business/employer site that includes a series of internships to build job skills as well as to explore career opportunities. This program model is business-led, with partner support provided through the school district, VR, Development Disabilities agencies and other community partners. It focuses on serving young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as other students that may not otherwise have access to the immersion-based approach of this program. Interns in Project SEARCH train in real work settings, which allow the program staff to teach competitive, marketable, and transferable skills. The outcome goal of the program is competitive, integrated employment. The first site in South Carolina was established in Spartanburg during SFY 2014. This has now expanded to a second site in the Midlands/Lexington area with additional sites under consideration. In this program, students participate in a series of internships at a host business site, receive intensive instruction and job coaching, and are placed into competitive employment, often at the host business site and often prior to completion of their final year of high school. For the Spartanburg location, following their first year program participants achieved an 86% success rate (participants achieving competitive, integrated employment).
- SCVRD leverages other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services. Extended services providers are identified in each area to provide follow along and extended services following successful exit from the VR program. Partnerships at the state and local level with DDSN and the local DSN boards continue to grow and provide key linkages to extended services providers.

- (o) State's Strategies. Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):**



- (1) The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.**
- (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.**
- (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.**
- (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 post-secondary life (including the receipt of VR services, post-secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).**
- (5) If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the state.**
- (6) Strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.**
- (7) Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.**
- (8) How the agency's strategies will be used to:**
 - (A) achieve goals and priorities by the state, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;**
 - (B) support innovation and expansion activities; and**
 - (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.**

See Appendix 5/Table 21 for SCVRD's 2014-15 Strategic Planning Template.

*(2) Please note that rehabilitation engineers provide evaluation and implementation of assistive technology devices throughout the rehabilitation process based on individualized client needs.

*(5) Current plans for improving community based provision of services in the Richland area are being implemented through an office consolidation project.

(p) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals. Describe:

- (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.**
 - (B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**

Performance measures are in place for evaluation of the extent to which the goals, strategies and objectives identified in the Strategic Planning Template were achieved. These include both federally required Standards and Indicators (to be updated based on WIOA common performance measures) as well as internal measures of goal attainment. Associated objectives that are tied to specific results are indicated in the far right column.

- (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.
- (B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.
- (3) The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

Strategies that contributed to the achievement of overall goals and specific objectives included:

- Review and measurement of key performance indicators on a quarterly basis.
- Monthly monitoring and specialized reporting on the results of outreach efforts to underserved and emerging disability populations.
- Monthly monitoring and specialized reporting on services to youth and pre-employment transition services.
- Dedicated staff for specific populations and specialized services: school-to-work transition; deaf and hard of hearing; supported employment.
- Demonstration programs to enhance supported employment services and services for youth with the most significant disabilities, individuals diagnosed with ASD, and demand-driven training based on community labor market information.

See Appendix 6/Table 22 for SCVRD FY 2014-15 Performance Measurements.

(4) How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

Innovation and expansion activities have been identified within these strategies and include:

- Continued expansion of work-based learning activities for students
- Expansion of Project SEARCH sites
- Cooperative agreement with Project HOPE Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides a lifespan of services and activities for individuals with autism
- Expansion of transition job coaches focused on providing supported employment services to students and youth with the most significant disabilities
- Maintaining a full-time counselor to provide vocational rehabilitation services to incarcerated youth, which has expanded to include additional programs operated by DJJ (e.g., Camp Aspen)
- Maintaining a part-time program manager providing job readiness training and serving as liaison with DJJ job readiness training program as well as local areas involved in ongoing service provision for youth involved in the juvenile justice program
- Maintaining a staff interpreter for clients who are deaf to provide video remote interpreting, on-site services to mutual clients of SCVRD and DHHS, extend consistent access to interpreter services in rural areas, and enhance the accessibility of VR productions and client and staff training materials
- Creation of apprenticeships tailored to increase the participation levels of clients who are deaf in SCVRD's Skill Workforce Apprenticeship Training (SWAT) services
- Maintaining a statewide business employment specialist who provides support to local business development specialists across the state as well as providing support to local and regional business services teams that are interagency groups that coordinate business services under WIOA
- Upgrades and continued development of job readiness training services, including an electronic MAP (My Action Plan) document, which is an individualized plan for job readiness training, and development of demand-driven skills training opportunities
- Continued development of career matching and business database systems (Career Connect and Universal Business Database) to enhance client service delivery, career placement activities, and benchmarking services to employers



(q) Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services. Include the following:

- (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.**
- (2) The timing of transition to extended services.**

SCVRD employs 41 full-time job coaches having a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree in a related field. This includes the job coaches who provide IPS services to DMH consumers through an MOA. In addition, SCVRD employs 11 transition job coaches that provide supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

Job coaches work as part of a team along with other SCVRD staff and extended support representatives. Through the efforts of these job coaches, supported employment services are available statewide to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Initial diagnostic evaluation services are conducted while in the traditional 110 program. If needed, a supplemental evaluation may be performed with the use of a job coach. At the time of acceptance for supported employment services, an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed outlining the job coach services to be provided. Such services include job development, job placement, on-the-job training, observation or supervision at or away from the job site, and support services with the employer, client, or family. SCVRD policy allows for any activity performed by a supported client at the employer's location to be a paid work experience.

SCVRD's ongoing support services are limited to 24 months unless extended by an amendment to the IPE. Transition to extended services starts after an individual is stabilized in his/her job setting and has met the individualized work goal. The client's employment stability is determined by the achievement of adequate job performance without a need for ongoing, intensive shadowing/mentoring from the job coach. The client, employer, job coach, and SCVRD counselor agree that this has occurred before transition to the extended service provider takes place. SCVRD continues to leverage resources for identifying extended service providers to meet long-term support needs.

Contingent upon the significance of the client's supported employment needs; there could be an initial training period of two to six weeks, which would be followed by ongoing job coach involvement of least 90 or more days prior to determining whether the client is ready for extended services. In addition, SCVRD may provide post-employment services following transition if needed to maintain the placement.

The overall objective for each individual receiving supported employment services is successful competitive employment in an integrated work setting. For this to occur, the supported employment team works to assure client and employer satisfaction in terms of both production and fulfillment of the individual's needs.

The individual placement model for competitive employment remains the primary supported employment model being used by SCVRD. Emphasis is placed upon providing services to people with most significant disabilities, especially SSI and/or SSDI recipients, whose employment needs are so significant that traditional 110 program services would not be sufficient to meet them. SCVRD coordinator of supported employment services also assists area office staff to identify and serve all eligible clients with the most significant disabilities.



VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

CERTIFICATIONS

See Appendix 7/VR Attachment 1 for SCVRD Vocational Rehabilitation Certifications.

ASSURANCES

See Appendix 8/VR Attachment 2 for SCVRD Assurances.

**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION - SCCB**

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ⁶⁶ must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

- (a) **Input of State Rehabilitation Council.** All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:
- (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;
 - (2) the Designated state unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and
 - (3) the designated state unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind (SCCB) is an independent consumer controlled commission with a Governor appointed State Board that provides governance and program guidance, and as such is not required to submit this section. The results of the 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs and this subsequent State Plan submission has been reviewed and approved by the SCCB Board of Commissioners.

- (b) **Request for Waiver of Statewideness.** When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated state unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:
- (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;
 - (2) the designated state unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
 - (3) requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

SCCB strives to make all services available on a statewide basis and is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

- (c) **Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.** Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:
- (1) Federal, state, and local agencies and programs;

A Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) was conducted in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016 (Appendix 10). The findings indicate that SCCB has a need relative to reestablishing Cooperative Agreements and meaningful reciprocal community partnerships. SCCB is focusing efforts during this State Plan Period to realign all Cooperative Agreements to comply with WIOA mandates and build

⁶⁶ Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(iii) of WIOA



meaningful reciprocal partnerships. SCCB will develop appropriate Cooperative Agreements with various federal, state, and local agencies and programs. In addition to updated Cooperative Agreements with agencies carrying out activities under the Statewide Workforce Development System as part of the Unified State Plan process, SCCB will coordinate with other agencies and programs that do not carry out activities under the Statewide Workforce Development System to ensure people with disabilities receive appropriate services.

These non-Statewide Workforce Development System agencies include:

- South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to create administrative efficiencies and improve services to consumers statewide;
- South Carolina Worker's Compensation Commission (WCC) to facilitate the referral process of injured workers to SCCB to enhance return-to-work efforts;
- Social Security Administration (SSA) to collaborate on employment incentives and supports and maximize Social Security Administration/Vocational Rehabilitation (SSA/VR) reimbursement activity through the Ticket to Work Program;
- South Carolina Office of Veterans' Affairs (OVA) to help identify veterans who need additional supports in securing benefits, gaining employment, and accessing advocacy services;
- South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN) to eliminate potential duplication of services and increase coordination of employment services provided to the shared consumer populations;
- South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) to eliminate duplication of services and increase coordination of employment services provided to the shared consumer populations;
- SCCB will develop a Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Mental Health to collaborate, coordinate, eliminate potential duplication of services, and enhance the employment outcomes of shared consumer populations.

(2) State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

SCCB has a cooperative agreement with the South Carolina Assistive Technology Program at the University Of South Carolina School Of Medicine to access comparable benefits, eliminate duplication of services, and increase coordination of employment services provided to the shared consumer populations. SCCB will work to enhance and improve this partnership.

(3) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

SCCB is working to develop partnerships with the local office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to develop cooperative efforts to provide services to South Carolinians who are blind or visually impaired.

(4) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

Non-educational agencies serving out of school youth participate in South Carolina's statewide workforce development system and are partnered with through the provisions of the Unified State Plan and the Workforce Development System.

(5) State use contracting programs.

South Carolina does not have a state use contracting program.



(d) **Coordination with Education Officials. Describe:**

- (1) The designated state unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.
- (2) Information on the formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency with respect 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;
 - (B) transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;
 - (C) roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
 - (D) procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

SCCB is in the process of developing new Cooperative Agreements with education officials and agencies to enhance, improve, and innovate programs and services provided to ensure a seamless and effective transition from school to post-secondary education, careers, and adult life for students with disabilities. This collaborative partnership will include relationships with all 81 Local Education Authorities (LEA's) otherwise known as Independent School Districts. Coordination with education officials will be accomplished on two (2) distinct levels of the SCCB service delivery process.

These two levels will include:

SCCB Children's Services Program: This program serves children between the ages of 3 and 14 years of age. The Children's Services Counselors coordinate care with educational entities such as the local school districts and the S.C. School for the Deaf and Blind (SCSDB). Service delivery includes evaluations for low vision aids and assistive technology, consultation and advocacy and information and referral services.

SCCB Vocational Rehabilitation Program: This program serves students from age 15 until exit from high school at which time they are served by the SCCB adult VR program. SCCB has four (4) dedicated Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors statewide building program infrastructure and education relationships to improve services to Transition Students. The Transition Counselors primarily collaborate with education officials such as the South Carolina Department of Education (local school districts), the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind (SCSDB) and the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (SCDDSN).

Transition Counselors develop the initial Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE) while the consumer is attending high school. The IPE includes services pertaining to the adjustment, prevention or stabilization of vision, and Pre-Employment Transition Services as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA).

In an effort to avoid the duplication of services, low vision and assistive technology needs will be coordinated with local school districts in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Plan



(IEP) and IPE. In such instances, the alternative service providers and funding sources will be identified on the IPE and coordinated accordingly.

SCCB will conduct semiannual meetings with the statewide vision teachers in an effort to facilitate the coordination of services to the most significantly disabled students and their need for supported employment services. Discussions will include, but not be limited to, collaboration with SCDDSN, SCDOE and the SCSDB to coordinate transition services. The main source of referrals to the Transition Counselors is the school district.

Procedures for outreach to, and identification of blind and visually impaired students include, but are not limited to, the utilization of SCCB program data, statistical data from the Data Analysis System of the US Department of Education (Office of Special Education) and the American Community Survey data. An annual analysis of the data from these sources identifies the location of transition aged unserved and underserved individuals.

In an effort to address the assistive technology needs of college bound transition consumers, SCCB sponsors an annual Technology Day. The need for this initiative arose due to an increase in the number of blind and visually impaired students who were failing college courses due to an inability to take notes and complete assignments. During technology day, consumers are assessed and trained on the latest assistive technology software and equipment. Assistive technology recommendations for each student are contingent upon the level of blindness, skill level and school requirements. Technology Day is conducted by the SCCB Training and Employment Department.

SCCB is currently working to become an actively engaged partner in the Transition Alliance of South Carolina (TASC) a multi- agency partnership between the South Carolina Department of Education, South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, South Carolina Department of Disability and Special Needs, and Local Education Agencies to facilitate the coordination of services to transition students leading to employment and independent adult living.

SCCB is currently seeking proposals for a demonstration project called “CareerBOOST” (Building Occupational Opportunities for Students in Transition) through which Pre-Employment Transition Services will be provided to students in their communities. These services will include:

1. Self-Advocacy Training
2. Work Readiness Workshops
3. Work Based Learning Experiences
4. College and Higher Education Exploration
5. Career Exploration Experiences

SCCB is currently negotiating a formal written Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Education that includes provisions for:

- (A) mutual consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies and SCCB in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;
- (B) transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs;



- (C) roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
- (D) Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

(e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations. Describe the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

Findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment indicate that SCCB needs to reestablish Cooperative Agreements and community partnerships. SCCB is committed to becoming a cooperative and collaborative partner with community entities wherever such reciprocal relationships can benefit consumers and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the VR program. SCCB will vigilantly seek out community partnerships that enhance our ability to provide comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services that lead to competitive integrated employment outcomes and career pathways. SCCB will develop and maintain new Cooperative Agreements with the following entities not carrying out activities under the Statewide Workforce Development System:

- The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of South Carolina for the purposes of ensuring statewide availability of adjustment to blindness training, job readiness and computer skills training, and independent living skills training.
- The Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI) for the purposes of ensuring statewide availability of adjustment to blindness training, job readiness and computer skills training, and independent living skills training.
- South Carolina Association of the Deaf, Inc.
- Goodwill Industries for the purposes of providing statewide access to job readiness and computer skills training.
- The Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) for the purpose of expanding training options for consumers who are Deaf/Blind and need training beyond the scope of programs provided at the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center (EBMRC).
- And informal partnerships with community based partners such as faith based organizations, charitable organizations, and non-governmental community based organizations.

(f) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services. Describe the designated state agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

SCCB has not historically had the program infrastructure or resources to provide Supported Employment services. SCCB has been actively engaged in several initiatives to develop options and partnerships to provide Supported Employment (SE) services. SCCB has explored potential Fee-For-Service Outcome Milestone Payment arrangements with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP's). SCCB has also explored possible partnerships with the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD). SCCB has discovered that the greatest barrier to such Cooperative Agreements and or Fee-For-Service arrangements is the limited fiscal resources available to SCCB to pay for such services due to South



Carolina being a minimum SE allotment state. The fiscal resources available are not sufficient to entice or enable CRP's to hire, train, and retain qualified job coaches. SCCB is currently working on internal options to provide Supported Employment services with existing positions, and is in the preliminary process of program design and implementation. SCCB will continue to explore options for Cooperative Agreement and/or Fee-For-Service arrangements with other entities while pursuing internal options previously mentioned.

(g) Coordination with Employers. Describe how the designated state unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

- (1) VR services; and**
- (2) transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.**

Findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment indicate that SCCB has an existing gap relative to the scope, depth, and effectiveness of coordination with employers. SCCB will refocus efforts to actively engage with the South Carolina business community through services provided by the Training & Employment Division (T&E) Employment Consultants. SCCB T&E Employment Consultants will enhance partnerships and re-engage with businesses to:

- Assess and better understand the unique human resource needs of South Carolina businesses;
- To help align SCCB programs to better meet the unique and specific human resource needs of South Carolina businesses;
- To create, establish, and foster relationships with South Carolina businesses that help them meet their unique and specific human resource needs, including talent acquisition and talent retention;
- Develop opportunities for Work Based Experiences, Internships, Job Shadowing, and other work based learning experiences that provide South Carolina Businesses with opportunities to gain experience with a diverse and qualified workforce;
- Create mutually beneficial relationships and facilitate linkages of job openings to a highly skilled and diverse talent pool of candidates. Referrals of consumers who are seeking employment and who have been judged to be Job Ready are received from SCCB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. The Employment Consultant's role is job development and placement that meets the needs of the business and the consumer. The Consultant also provides businesses and consumers with access to services that can be provided by SCCB or other governmental agencies. Incentives that may be applicable are also presented. These include:
 - The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). This program allows a maximum available credit of \$2,400 per eligible worker.
 - Sensitivity and awareness training for employers and organizations. This training includes American Disability Act (ADA), sighted guide techniques and attitudes regarding blindness. The presentation is designed to remove myths and apprehensions about blindness.
 - Technical assistance for the implementation and support of assistive technology.

SCCB T&E Division also employs Assistive Technology Consultants (AT Consultants) who work directly with businesses and consumers to:



- Provide assessment and technical assistance in the provision of work place modifications and/or assistive technology solutions considered reasonable accommodations that enable a consumer who is blind to become an asset to the business partner;
- Make recommendations for software and/or other equipment which would enable the consumer to successfully engage in employment;
- Creates customized software solutions which may be necessary to allow the consumer to access computer systems effectively;
- Recommends the purchase of required equipment and/or software to the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor; and,
- Oversees the delivery and installation of this equipment on the work site and provides the consumer training on any specialized applications.

(h) Interagency Cooperation. Describe how the designated state unit will collaborate with the state agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

(1) the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

Findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment indicate that SCCB has an existing gap relative to Cooperative Agreements and community partnerships. SCCB to develop a new Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the state agency responsible for administering the state Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.). This Cooperative Agreement will outline the roles and responsibilities of all parties regarding the delivery of VR services, including extended services, for individuals with the most significant disabilities who have been determined to be eligible for home and community-based services under a Medicaid waiver, Medicaid state plan amendment, or other authority related to a state Medicaid program as applicable to South Carolina.

(2) the state agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

SCCB will develop a new Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN) to avoid duplication of services, increase coordination of employment services provided to the shared consumer populations, and to enhance Supported Employment programs.

(3) the state agency responsible for providing mental health services.

SCCB will develop a new Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Mental Health to collaborate, coordinate, avoid duplication of services, and enhance the employment outcomes of shared consumer populations.

(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development. Describe the designated state agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified state rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated state unit, including the following:

(1) Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development



- (A) Qualified Personnel Needs. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:**
- (i) 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;**
 - (ii) the number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and**
 - (iii) 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.**

Staffing patterns are set through a joint effort of the SCCB Commissioner, Director of Consumer Services, Senior Management staff as appropriate, and Regional Directors. In an effort to assess current staffing and hiring needs, SCCB analyzes the following data on an annual basis:

1. Rate of consumer referrals to the VR Program
2. Ratio of VR Counselors to consumers certified eligible for VR services
3. Ratio of VR Counselors to consumers served
4. State Demographic Trends (Incidence of Blindness, Population estimates)
5. Employment/Unemployment data trends
6. Current and projected monetary resources

In FFY 2015, the SCCB VR Program received 674 referrals and served a total of 1,225 consumers. This represented a consumer to VR Counselor ratio of 87 to 1. Based on the incidence of visual disability data, the ratio of VR Counselors to the number of individuals in South Carolina with a visual impairment is 1 to 3,829. Staffing patterns will continue to be evaluated by staff in an effort to make projections for future capacity to provide vocational rehabilitation services.

**Table 23**

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	VR Counselors	13	2	2
2	Transition Counselors	4	0	0
3	VR Counselor Assistants	10	1	3
4	Rehabilitation Instructors	16	1	6
5	Nurse	1	0	1
6	Other Staff (Support staff, drivers and BEP)	33	4	8
7	Job Placement Specialist	3	0	1
8	Jobs Oriented Blind Service Specialist (Supported Employment)	3	2	0
9	Quality Assurance Reviewer	1	0	0
	TOTALS	111	10	21

(B) Personnel Development. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

- (i) a list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;
- (ii) the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- (iii) 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.

The agency developed close relationships with the University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University, both of which produce graduates who have Master of Rehabilitation Counseling degrees. In addition SCCB has recently developed an agreement to provide internship opportunities to Alabama State University Master of Rehabilitation Counseling students.

SCCB has set a standard for our Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) standard and can recruit not only from candidates with a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, but also with a Master's degree in related fields. These strategies satisfy staffing needs. The following chart shows statistics for the in-state university vocational rehabilitation counseling degree programs. Data is



collected annually by program directors at each institution and shared with executive staff to assist in current and future staffing.

Table 24

Row	Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
1	SC State University Rehab. Counseling Program	55	2	7	12
2	University of South Carolina Rehab. Counseling Program	60	2	8	16

(2) Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel. Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

The agency has established relationships with graduate training programs that are Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited located at the University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University. SCCB's recruitment plan ensures recruitment activities are conducted at all South Carolina schools that have graduates in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling. In addition SCCB has written agreements with Alabama State University to provide internships to Master's degree students as part of our recruitment efforts. In accordance with South Carolina state law, each transcript is assessed, and if positions are under-filled below the agencies CSPD standard, the VR Counselor is placed in a plan that allows up to 30 months to complete the current state educational requirements.

The University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University prepare individuals for graduate degrees in rehabilitation counseling. SCCB is improving and increasing outreach efforts to these universities and other universities to include: publications and distribution of targeted recruiting material, attendance at career days and job fairs, and recruitment events. In addition, practicum placements and internships are offered to students who are in CSPD qualifying programs. These efforts are designed to recruit qualified personnel, including minority graduates and those with disabilities.

SCCB has been especially successful in recruiting personnel from the S.C. institutions, particularly those from minority backgrounds. Students from these programs and out-of-state programs are encouraged to accept internships and practicum placements with the Commission.

In addition to the New Employee Orientation program and to retain qualified staff, SCCB uses a system for staff evaluation that is available to all state employees. The system focuses on the individual employee's job duties compared to stated goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are identified and discussed with the employee at the beginning of the rating period. Ongoing communication between the employee and supervisor clarifies the employee's understanding of how to meet the performance standards and enhances service delivery to the client.



At the conclusion of the rating period, an evaluation is performed to rate the employee on each duty in relation to performance objectives. The system provides for employee input into the development of the goals and objectives in order to support successful performance.

Another feature of the system allows objectives to be amended throughout the review period. This system also provides a mechanism for helping a substandard performer improve and a means of removing an employee from a position should performance not improve to an acceptable level. SCCB takes an active role in employee/employer relations. Through strong leadership and the assistance of all staff, the Commission provides a healthy and safe work environment. Employee behavior and performance problems are addressed appropriately and in a timely manner, with an emphasis on assisting the employee to improve. SCCB promotes internal and external customer service and has made teamwork an integral part of day-to-day operations.

(3) *Personnel Standards.* Describe the state agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

- (A) standards that are consistent with any national or state-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**
- (B) the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

SCCB utilizes state standards to administer the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) as it relates to hiring practices. According to state law, VR Counselors must have a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, or a Master's degree in the field of counseling with a graduate course in Theories and Techniques of Counseling, or a Master's degree in any discipline and at least 18 credit hours of coursework at the Master's level or above within thirty months of the date of hire. The 18 credit hours of coursework must include the following: One graduate course with a primary focus on the Theories and Techniques of Counseling three graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas: Occupational Information, Job Development and Placement, Medical Aspects of Disabilities, Foundations of Rehabilitation, Psychological Aspects of Disabilities, and Personal and Vocational Adjustment Two graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas: Assessment, Research Methodology, Vocational and Career Development, Community Resources, Case Management, and Delivery of Rehabilitation Services; or a current Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification, regardless of degree.

SCCB currently has 3 vacant VR Counselor positions that are in various stages of the recruitment process. Of the counselors currently employed by SCCB all meet the state minimum standard.

(4) *Staff Development.* Describe the state agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

- (A) a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational**



- counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out state programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and**
- (B) procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals.**

SCCB will work to develop a comprehensive staff development training program designed to expand and strengthen the knowledge and skill level of service delivery staff. The four objectives outlined in the training program are based on the need to increase staff competency so that the quality and quantity of competitive employment placements can be improved. SCCB has partnered with the University of South Carolina and private and public consultants specializing in the field of vocational rehabilitation and/or blindness in order to provide quality staff development training. The most critical training needs of SCCB staff were determined from the results of a Staff Development Training Needs Assessment, comments from Training Evaluations, and the VR Staff Survey results from Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. Staff development training needs have been identified in the areas of Leadership Skills, Administrative Skills and Technical Skills.

Four (4) training objectives were identified as follows:

- **Objective 1 (Leadership Training Objective)** Organization assessment, problem solving skills, basic supervisory skills and best personnel practices are the primary focus areas of Objective 1. To accomplish the leadership training objective, SCCB will utilize Certified Public Management (CPM) training, State sponsored supervisory training, National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute (NRLI) and other targeted trainings and conference to keep our business practices up to date with current paradigms. SCCB recognizes that staff development needs may change.
- **Objective 2 (Technical Skills Training)** The development of technical skills to achieve the SCCB mission and vision is the primary focus of Objective 2. Private contractors who specialize in the field of blindness and vocational rehabilitation will also be utilized to accomplish Objective 2. Continued professional development and retention CRC credentials is encouraged and supported by SCCB.
- **Objective 3 (Communication of Policies and Procedures)** Orienting staff to the SCCB organizational structure and service delivery policies and procedures is the primary focus of Objective 3. In order to accomplish this, new staff will participate in an agency wide two day Employee Orientation provided by HR. They will also receive field specific training in AWARE, VR training modules on policy and procedures, and shadow adjustment and VR staff for a two week period.
- **Objective 4 (Specialty Training)** For FY 2015, each region is scheduled for quarterly meetings in which case staffing and regional specific trainings will be included. Departmental training schedules are currently being developed with the intention of holding one annual in-service when feasible. Bi-annual surveys of staff are done to stay abreast of trends in staff training needs. In an effort to provide equal access to staff development training for all staff, accessible formats (i.e. Braille, large print, electronic format, etc.) will be provided to those who require alternative formats.



- (5) *Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs.* Describe how the designated state unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.**

SCCB strives to have qualified staff proficient in Braille production, in communication with the Deaf/Blind, and a bilingual counselor to communicate with the rapidly growing Hispanic population. SCCB engages in ongoing efforts to study demographic trends and changes to the population to identify areas of needed expertise. Braille services are provided to SCCB staff and upon request to other public and/or private entities statewide. SCCB has a Deaf/Blind Consultant who is proficient in the use of sign language for the deaf, hard of hearing and dual sensory impaired. In FFY 2015, SCCB sponsored sign language training for the VR Counseling staff to facilitate communication with the dual sensory impaired consumers. SCCB contracts interpreter services as needed in order to serve all other individuals who have limited English speaking ability or limited modes of communication. SCCB has expanded one counselor position to aid in the coordination of interpreter services so that services are not delayed when the Deaf/Blind Coordinator is not available.

- (6) *Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

SCCB will improve collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDOE) to coordinate procedures and activities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The focus of the collaboration will be the development of strategies for improving service delivery systems for blind and visually impaired individuals who are receiving services from the SCCB Children's Services program and VR Transition Counselors. SCCB is currently working on becoming fully engaged and active partners in the Transition Alliance of South Carolina (TASC) that includes regional coordinating councils where the partner agencies receive training, develop collaborative plans, and develop professional relationships. TASC is a partnership of the Department of Education, Department of Disability and Special Needs, Vocational Rehabilitation Department, and SCCB.

(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;**
 - (B) who are minorities;**
 - (C) who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;**
 - (D) who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and**
 - (E) who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.**
- (2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state; and**
- (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 .

SCCB contracted with the National Center for Innovation, Training and Excellence (NCITE), a part of San Diego State University Research Foundation's Interwork Institute (SDSURF-II) during FFY 2016 to conduct a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment to determine the vocational rehabilitation needs of South Carolinians who are blind or visually impaired, identify the areas of VR program operations where service gaps exist, and identify areas of program innovation and improvement to become fully compliant with requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. This assessment was designed to specifically assess the areas noted under section (j) above.

(k) Annual Estimates. Describe:

(1) The number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services.

Based on data obtained from the American Community Survey (ACS) and Cornell University's Annual Disability Status Report for South Carolina, SCCB estimates that 2.7% of the South Carolinians experience a visual impairment or blindness. (ACS criteria for visual impairments is broader than VR program eligibility) The most recent American Community Survey data indicates that there are an estimated 6,800 South Carolinians who have some level of visual impairment who are working age (21 to 64) and who are not currently working but are actively seeking employment. In addition to the ACS estimates there are 2,900 youth (age 16-20) who have visual impairments in the state. This is a total estimate of 9,700 individuals who have visual impairments between the ages of 16 and 64.

The visual impairment categorization in the ACS is very broad, all-inclusive, and self-reported. In estimating the number of individuals who would meet the more narrow VR program eligibility criteria, SCCB estimates that in any given federal fiscal year there are approximately **3,500 potentially eligible individuals** within the state.

Of those SCCB is currently serving **1,173 eligible individuals**. SCCB is working on outreach efforts and strategies that strive to increase accessibility and awareness of the VR program so that potentially eligible individuals are aware of, and can access VR services. In addition SCCB is working with WIOA core partners to ensure that blind and visually impaired individuals seeking employment can access services through the one-stop centers as part of the Statewide Workforce Development System.

(2) The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

(A) The VR Program;

SCCB estimates that the VR program will serve **1,173** eligible individuals during FFY 2016, **1,257** during FFY 2017, **1,350** during FFY 2018, and **1,400** during FFY 2019.

(B) The Supported Employment Program; and

SCCB is currently building program capacity and resources to provide Supported Employment services. It will take some time for SCCB to get this program developed and producing outcomes. SCCB has established goals to provide Supported Employment services to **1** eligible individual during FFY 2016, **3** individuals during FFY 2017, **4** individuals during FFY 2018, and **6** individuals during FFY 2019.



(C) each priority category, if under an order of selection.

SCCB is does not anticipate the need for an order of selection.

(3) The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

SCCB does not anticipate the need for an order of selection.

(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.

(I) State Goals and Priorities. The designated state unit must:

(1) Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the state Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

(2) Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

(3) Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

(A) the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;

(B) the state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

(C) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the state Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

Based on the findings of the FFY 2016 SCCB Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, and a thorough review of SCCB's performance under accountability measures of WIOA, SCCB has identified several programmatic gaps that need to be addressed in accordance with new requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. The gaps include the following themes:

Gap: SCCB will develop stronger, formalized and more effective collaborative partnerships with community partners, other state agencies, the One-Stop Workforce Development System, consumer communities, minority groups, rural populations, and the business/employer community.

Gap: SCCB will develop the capacity, resources, and staff expertise to provide Job Driven vocational counseling and guidance that utilizes Labor Market Information and aligns with South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project and Sector Strategies initiatives to assist eligible consumers in accessing career pathways that lead to high and middle skill/income jobs.

Gap: SCCB will develop the capacity to assist eligible consumers in the development of occupational knowledge, skills, and abilities that culminate in obtaining industry recognized credentials to include GED attainment, certifications, degrees, apprenticeships, occupational licensure, among others.

Gap: SCCB will build VR program capacities, expertise, and partnerships to provide improved transition services including Pre-Employment Transition Services to students who are blind or visually impaired.



Based on these identified gaps, SCCB establishes the following Goals and Priorities to address these VR program gaps. These Goals and Priorities have been jointly developed and agreed to by the South Carolina Commission for the Blind Board.

Goal 1: Increase Program Capacity by Leveraging Partnerships & Community Engagement

- Priority 1.1: Improve WIOA Partnerships & One-Stop System Engagement
- Priority 1.2: Improve Partnerships & Strategic Alliances to Increase Program Capacity
- Priority 1.3: Increase Public Awareness & Community Engagement
- Priority 1.4: Align Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center (EBMRC) to WIOA & VR

Goal 2: Increase Quantity & Quality of Employment Outcomes

- Priority 2.1: Align VR Program with South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project, Emphasizing Career Pathways, Attainment of Industry Recognized Credentials, Job Driven/Sector Strategies & Labor Market Information
- Priority 2.2: Increase Employment for those with **Most Significant Disabilities**
- Priority 2.3: Increase Vocational Exploration & Opportunities for **Transition Students**
- Priority 2.4: Increase Employment for **all eligible consumers**

Goal 3: Increase & Improve Innovative Coordinated Services to Business.

- Priority 3.1: Engage with Business Community & Business Organizations
- Priority 3.2: Improve Talent Acquisition & Retention Services to Business
- Priority 3.3: Increase Coordination with WIOA Partner's Business Services
- Priority 3.4: Seek Opportunities for Customized Training Partnerships

(m) Order of Selection. Describe:

- (1) The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.
- (2) The justification for the order.
- (3) The service and outcome goals.
- (4) The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- (5) How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and
- (6) 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.

SCCB tracks resources on a continual ongoing basis and has determined that the agency currently has the staff and financial resources to provide required and effective VR services to all eligible individuals in the state and does not anticipate implementing an Order of Selection.

(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.
- (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



- (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.**

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind has established the following goals and priorities, (as detailed in section I. above) in response to the FFY 2016 CSNA findings for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for Supported Employment:

Goal 2: Increase Quantity & Quality of Employment Outcomes

Priority 2.2: Increase Employment for those with **Most Significant Disabilities**

Strategy 2.2.1: JOBS Specialists (Job Oriented Blind Services)

SCCB will establish three (3) Job Oriented Blind Services (JOBS) Specialist positions that will provide Supported Employment (SE), Customized Employment (CE), and on-going supports for consumers who have Most Significant Disabilities. These positions will function in a one-on-one consumer centered approach as Job Placement Specialists, On-The-Job Coaches, and in other employment related supportive roles allowed under Title VI.

Strategy 2.2.2: CRP Establishment & Development

SCCB will continue to seek opportunities and partnerships to aid in the development and establishment of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) to provide community based adjustment to blindness services, supported employment (SE) services, customized employment (CE) services and life skills training.

Strategy 2.2.3: Build SSA Benefits Counseling Capacity

SCCB will work to build the capacity and specialized expertise necessary to provide effective and accurate benefit planning to help improve consumer knowledge of how employment affects SSA benefits and incentives for engaging in employment. The perceived risks of losing benefits are a significant barrier to employment for this population.

- (o) State's Strategies. Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):**

- (1) The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.**
- (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.**
- (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.**
- (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 post-secondary life (including the receipt of VR services, post-secondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).
- (5) If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the state.
 - (6) Strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.
 - (7) Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.
 - (8) How the agency's strategies will be used to:
 - (A) achieve goals and priorities by the state, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;
 - (B) support innovation and expansion activities; and
 - (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.

The findings of the FFY 2016 SCCB Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) identified several programmatic gaps that need to be addressed in accordance with new requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act and to improve services to meet the needs of South Carolinians with blindness or visual impairments. The gaps include the following:

Gap: SCCB will develop stronger, formalized and more effective collaborative partnerships with community partners, other state agencies, the One-Stop Workforce Development System, consumer communities, minority groups, rural populations, and the business/employer community.

Gap: SCCB will develop the capacity, resources, and staff expertise to provide Job Driven vocational counseling and guidance that utilizes Labor Market Information and aligns with South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project and Sector Strategies initiatives to assist eligible consumers in accessing career pathways that lead to high and middle skill/income jobs.

Gap: SCCB will develop the capacity to assist eligible consumers in the development of occupational knowledge, skills, and abilities that culminate in obtaining industry recognized credentials to include GED attainment, certifications, degrees, apprenticeships, occupational licensure, among others.

Gap: SCCB will build VR program capacities, expertise, and partnerships to provide improved transition services including Pre-Employment Transition Services to students who are blind or visually impaired.

Goal 1: Increase Program Capacity Leveraging Partnerships & Community Engagement

Priority 1.1: Improve WIOA Partnerships & One-Stop System Engagement

Strategy 1.1.1: One Stop Center Engagement

SCCB will engage in partnership development that better aligns agency activities with those of the other core WIOA partners by developing new Cooperative Agreements, increasing involvement and program presence in the One-Stop Centers, developing referral pathways, leveraging resources to ensure consumer success, and developing formal cost sharing



agreements. In addition each VR Counselor is required to be located in local one-stop centers for 4.5 hours per month.

Strategy 1.1.2: Public Education Engagement

SCCB has hired four (4) statewide Transition Specialist VR Counselors to engage with Local Education Authorities, build meaningful partnerships with special educators, be present and engaged in IEP meetings, develop innovative collaborative programs for transition students, and develop and maintain actionable and effective Cooperative Agreements to leverage resources for consumer success.

Strategy 1.1.3: Adult Education Engagement

SCCB will work to develop a partnership with Adult Education where GED Preparation Courses and GED Testing can be accessed at the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center and in local communities to prepare consumers for middle skill high demand jobs.

Priority 1.2: Improve Partnerships & Strategic Alliances to Increase Program Capacity

Strategy 1.2.1: Centers for Independent Living Engagement

SCCB will engage with South Carolina's Centers for Independent Living in order to explore potential opportunities, collaborative partnerships, and fee-for-service arrangements where appropriate.

Strategy 1.2.2: Engagement with Department of Disability & Special Needs

SCCB will engage with DDSN to develop a new Cooperative Agreement designed to improve collaboration and leverage long term supported employment funding to meet the needs of persons with Most Significant Disabilities.

Priority 1.3: Increase Public Awareness & Community Engagement

Strategy 1.3.1: Public Awareness Campaign

SCCB will improve public awareness of available services through the production of Public Service Announcements, website resource expansion and enhancement, preparation and dissemination of agency newsletters and other publications, and by re-engaging in community service events to increase public awareness and referrals.

Strategy 1.3.2: Unserved, Underserved, Minority, Rural Outreach

SCCB will engage with the community by having staff attend community resource fairs and other community events to disseminate information, build referral pathways, and enhance community awareness in areas where unserved or underserved populations reside including minorities, transition students,



youth, veterans, seniors seeking employment, with an emphasis on rural communities.

Strategy 1.3.3: Standardized Welcome Sessions (Shaping Expectations)

SCCB will develop and standardize a program orientation/welcome session to ensure that potential consumers are fully informed about VR services, have realistic expectations about program services, timelines, processes, and vocational outcomes.

Strategy 1.3.4: Blind Organizations Engagement to Improve Perceptions

SCCB VR leadership will engage with blind community organizations to improve agency reputation and perceptions regarding service quality and effectiveness. In addition SCCB will seek opportunities for partnerships, collaboration, and coordination of vocationally related programming.

Priority 1.4: Align Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center (EBMRC) Programing

Strategy 1.4.1: Soft Skills Training to Support Employment Curriculum

In partnership with the core WIOA partners SCCB will participate in the purchase and implementation of a state wide standardized curriculum on the “soft skills” that South Carolina Businesses have been requesting from the statewide Workforce Investment Board. SCCB will implement this curriculum as a course offered at the EBMRC.

Strategy 1.4.2: EBMRC Curriculum Review & Realignment to WIOA

As part of the Comprehensive Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs, SCCB is analyzing the operations and curriculum of the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center. This review will inform an EBMRC curriculum review, standardization, and realignment effort scheduled to be completed and implemented during FFY 2017. This effort is intended to refocus EBMRC services on the goals and broader vision of WIOA, and bring the EBMRC into alignment with the VR program and our WIOA partner’s initiatives for workforce development. In addition this project will find ways to include consumer attainment of industry recognized credentials such as the GED, possible use of Work Keys, and other credentialing efforts.

Goal 2: Increase Quantity & Quality of Employment Outcomes

Priority 2.1: Align VR Counseling with South Carolina’s Talent Pipeline Project, Emphasizing Career Pathways, Attainment of Industry Recognized Credentials, Job Driven/Sector Strategies & Labor Market Information

Strategy 2.1.1: Staff Training

SCCB in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) Business Intelligence Unit staff will conduct



extensive SCCB staff training during FFY 2016 in order to expand VR staff knowledge, skills, and abilities to access current Local Labor Market Information, conduct Job Driven research, utilize Job Driven and Sector Strategies to provide informed choice and guidance to consumers in selecting vocational goals, assessing skills, locating vocational training to close skill gaps, and connect skilled consumers with existing or emerging vacant positions.

Strategy 2.1.2: Talent Pipeline Project Engagement

SCCB has been an engaged partner in South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project with the WIOA core partners. SCCB will continue to be engaged in this workforce development effort, and will work to align SCCB VR program efforts with the broader state goals, strategies, and objectives. These include focus on developing a strategy for Career Pathways, Customized Training, and services to business including talent acquisition and talent retention services.

Priority 2.2: Increase Employment for those with **Most Significant Disabilities**

Strategy 2.2.1: JOBS Specialists (Job Oriented Blind Services)

SCCB will establish three (3) Job Oriented Blind Services (JOBS) Specialist positions that will provide Supported Employment (SE), Customized Employment (CE), and Individual Placement and Support (IPS) models employment services to consumers who have Most Significant Disabilities. These positions will function in a one-on-one consumer centered approach as Job Placement Specialists, On-The-Job Coaches, and in other employment related supportive roles allowed under Title VI.

Strategy 2.2.2: CRP Establishment & Development

SCCB will continue to seek opportunities and partnerships to aid in the development and establishment of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) to provide community based adjustment to blindness services, supported employment (SE) services, customized employment (CE) services and life skills training.

Strategy 2.2.3: Build SSA Benefits Counseling Capacity

SCCB will work to build the capacity and specialized expertise necessary to provide effective and accurate benefit planning to help improve consumer knowledge of how employment affects SSA benefits and incentives for engaging in employment. The perceived risks of losing benefits are a significant barrier to employment for this population.

Priority 2.3: Increase Vocational Exploration & Opportunities for Transition Students

Strategy 2.3.1: CareerBOOST Pre-Employment Transition Services



SCCB will pilot a demonstration project called CareerBOOST (Building Occupational Opportunities for Students in Transition). This program will augment SCCB's transition services program by providing the five (5) required Pre Employment Transition Services (PETS) to eligible or potentially eligible students statewide. These PETS services will include:

1. Self-Advocacy Training
2. Work Readiness Workshops
3. Work-based Learning Experiences
4. Post-Secondary Education Enrollment and Careers Exploration
5. Information & Referral to SCCB's Transition VR Program

Strategy 2.3.2: Student Business Enterprise Program Career Exploration

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) trains eligible consumers to operate vending businesses located on government properties, and then assists trained vendors in obtaining contracts to operate as independent business operators. Traditionally BEP has been a program available to adult consumers. SCCB is working to partner with the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind to create innovative career counseling and guidance to transition students including exposure to the Business Enterprise Program and opportunities to complete BEP curriculum at the school. The intent is to identify students who may be interested in running their own business, provide counseling and guidance to inform them of their options under the BEP program, and enable students to complete half of the BEP training curriculum prior to exiting school. This will fast-track their ability to complete the second half of the required training and enter an on-the-job internship thereby accelerating their ability to become vendors.

Strategy 2.3.3: Student Internship Program Jr.

SCCB will work to expand our highly successful Student Internship Program (SIP) that provides paid summer internships for college seniors and juniors, by developing a SIP Jr. Program that will provide paid summer internship opportunities in a variety of career fields to transition students in their senior and junior year of High School.

Strategy 2.3.4: Inventor Lab

SCCB will use authority under "innovation and expansion" utilizing Pre-Employment Transition Services set aside funds to establish "Inventor Lab" where transition students will be exposed to career exploration in functional 3-D fabrication, manufacturing using 3-D printer technology, product development, business development, microenterprise development, entrepreneurship, marketing and other science, technology, engineering, and math careers.

**Strategy 2.3.5: Summer Teens Program**

SCCB will continue the very successful Summer Teens Program that brings students from across the state to the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center for 5 weeks each summer. This program introduces students to career exploration & counseling, assistive technology, social skills and work readiness skills training, adjustment to blindness skills training, and other activities designed to increase confidence, improve knowledge, skills, and abilities, and create peer mentor networks & self-advocacy.

Priority 2.4: Increase Employment for all eligible consumers**Strategy 2.4.1: Talent Pipeline Project**

SCCB will align vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance activities with South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project, Sector Strategies, and Local Labor Market Information in order to effectively and efficiently provide consumers with data driven informed choices in selecting vocational goals that reflect existing, job driven, middle skill, high demand, high vacancy, career pathways consistent with their individualized primary employment factors. SCCB will focus efforts on assisting consumers in obtaining industry recognized credentials, certifications, and academic degrees. SCCB will also develop the capacity to provide services to business including talent acquisition and talent retention services.

Strategy 2.4.2: Staff Training & Development in Blind Services

Due to staff turnover SCCB has lost institutional knowledge and expertise. SCCB will launch an aggressive staff training and development program that will emphasize best practices in providing vocational rehabilitation services to persons who are blind.

Strategy 2.4.3: Staff Training & Development in Evidence Based Practice

SCCB will invest in staff training and development in VR evidence based practices such as: Motivational Interviewing; Customized Employment; Discovery Assessment; Supported Employment; Individual Placement and Supports; Integrating Labor Market Information into Vocational Goal Setting, IPE Development and Informed Choice.

Strategy 2.4.4: Summer Internship Program (SIP)

SCCB will continue to offer the successful Summer Internship Program (SIP) where college students engage in a paid summer internship program in their chosen field of study. Students complete a set number of working internship hours and receive a stipend upon successful completion. SIP has a proven track



record of influencing the obtainment of permanent employment.

Goal 3: Increase & Improve Innovative Coordinated Services to Business.

Priority 3.1: Engage with Business Community & Business Organizations

Strategy 3.1.1: Business Services Engagement

SCCB will engage with the business community to create alliances, relationships, partnerships, and strategic alignments by having a presence and being visible where business leaders are. This will include staff engagement in Chambers of Commerce, trade organizations where appropriate and effective, and Society of Human Resource Management meetings.

Strategy 3.1.2: Establish an SCCB Business Advisory Council

SCCB Business Relations will work to establish an eight (8) member Business Advisory Council consisting of specific membership representing the sectors of: Health Care, Manufacturing, Technology, Service Industries, Hospitality & Tourism, Agriculture, Public Service, and Federal Contractors. This advisory council will meet quarterly to advise SCCB Business Relations and the Vocational Rehabilitation program on high demand jobs, credentialing and minimum qualifications, customized training development, job placement and supports, and other business partner needs.

Priority 3.2: Improve Talent Acquisition & Retention Services to Business

Strategy 3.2.1: Business Services & Talent Acquisition & Retention

SCCB will develop presentations to business leaders helping them understand the array of services that the agency can offer them such as:

1. Talent Acquisition
2. Talent Retention
3. Customized Training
4. Assistive Technology Services
5. ADA Consultation

Strategy 3.2.2: Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP)

SCCB will develop resources to enable the agency to fully utilize the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) to connect qualified quality applicants to South Carolina businesses who are engaged in the TAP program.

Priority 3.3: Increase Coordination with WIOA Partner's Business Services

Strategy 3.3.1: Coordination of Business Services with WIOA Partners

SCCB will coordinate and collaborate with the core WIOA partner's efforts to build a customer centered delivery system



to South Carolina's businesses by linking the Talent Pipeline Project, Job Driven, Sector Strategies, and Talent Pool Development. This will be accomplished by scheduling regular coordination meetings, sharing information and contacts, and collaborating on meeting business needs.

Priority 3.4: Seek Opportunities for Customized Training Partnerships

Strategy 3.4.1: Technical & Community College Relationship Building

During FFY 2016 SCCB VR and Training & Adjustment leadership staff in collaboration with WIOA core partners will conduct outreach and relationship building with South Carolina's technical and community colleges to explore potential partnerships for industry responsive customized training initiatives that are accessible to individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

(p) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals. Describe:

- (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.**
 - (B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**
- (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.**
 - (B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**
- (3) The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.**
- (4) How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.**

Based on the 2013 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment the South Carolina Commission for the Blind established the following Federal Fiscal Year 2015 State Goals.

GOAL 1: SCCB will increase the quantity and quality of employment outcomes. Employment outcomes will increase by (3%) per year, and the rate of competitive employment outcomes will represent 80% of all employment outcomes.

Report of Progress: SCCB has not achieved the targeted 3% increase in quantity and quality employment outcomes during FFY 2015. Many complex factors contributed to continued declining numbers of consumers closed in successful competitive and integrated employment. First, the agency has experienced significant turnover during FFY 14 and 15. Half of all VR Counselor positions in the agency have had significant periods of vacancy. In addition, the agency has had turnover at the VR leadership level. SCCB experienced turnover at the Director of Consumer Services position, a Regional Director Position, and the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center position. Second, the agency has aggressively ended a long term practice allowed under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 of having significant "Homemaker", (unpaid family worker) closures. This has contributed in declining successful closures as the



agency refocuses and realigns to our mission of helping consumers obtain quality competitive employment in integrated settings. In addition the elimination of “Homemaker” closures has required agency staff to reshape community expectations of the services and intended outcome of VR services. Lastly, the agency has experienced significant decline in community partnerships due to declining engagement with partners due to our significant staff turnover, inability to meet partner needs, and disengagement due to staff limitations. Please note that this area is a continuing goal area for FFY 2016.

GOAL 2 SCCB will develop the capacity to provide Supported Employment services for consumers with the most significant disabilities.

Report of Progress: SCCB put great effort into exploring opportunities to develop partnerships with community based vendors or to develop Community Rehabilitation Programs to meet this need. However these efforts were largely unsuccessful because SCCB financial resources are not sufficient in and of themselves to entice or attract vendors into the market. Many potential partners felt that the funding levels would make such efforts unstable, unsustainable, and not scalable to a level that would be viable. It should be noted that this continues to be a goal for SCCB in FFY 2016, and that the agency has found creative and innovative internal capabilities to meet these needs. We are currently in the program development, staff recruitment, hiring, and training stage, and it is anticipated that this capacity will take some time to develop.

GOAL 3 SCCB will develop the capacity to identify and provide VR services to minority groups that are presently underrepresented on the caseload.

Report of Progress: SCCB made several efforts to conduct outreach to these populations during FFY 2015. However full engagement was hampered by extensive staff turnover and extended position vacancies. Please note that this area is a continuing goal area for FFY 2016.

GOAL 4 SCCB will identify and provide VR services for visually impaired persons that reside in counties where there are presently ten or fewer consumers.

Report of Progress: SCCB has worked to decentralize service delivery and has assigned outreach staff across the state to provide one-on-one orientation and mobility training and daily living skills training in local communities. While some progress has been made, findings of the FFY 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs indicated that gaps still exist in this area and more work needs to be done.

GOAL 5 SCCB will expand the availability of community rehabilitation services in two areas, Spartanburg and Charleston, South Carolina.

Report of Progress: SCCB has very recently signed fee for service agreements with three (3) new Community Rehabilitation Programs that provide Orientation & Mobility and Daily Living Skills/Home Management instruction in consumers’ homes and/or communities. In addition SCCB has signed contracts with another CRP that provides basic computer training in consumer’s communities. This is also a continuing goal for the FFY 2016 plan.



(q) Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services. Include the following:

- (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.**
- (2) The timing of transition to extended services.**

Report of Progress: SCCB did not expend any Supported Employment revenue during FFY 2015. The reason for this lack of a Supported Employment Program appears to be two fold. First, currently a network of Community Rehabilitation Programs providing SE services does not exist in South Carolina due to a historical practice by both VR agencies to provide all services using in-house employees. Second, due to this lack of capacity and resources it appears that SE appropriate consumers have not engaged with the Commission. Building a quality Supported Employment program is a continued goal of SCCB for FFY 2016. However the agency has specific strategies that are being implemented that will build our capacity to serve this population.



SCCB VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

See Appendix 9 for SCCB Vocational Rehabilitation Certifications and Assurances.



APPENDICES

