



Northwest Georgia

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

**October 2018**

*An Equal Opportunity Employer/Program*

*Auxiliary Aids and Services Available Upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities*

*TTY/TDD 1-800-255-0056*

*[Page left blank intentionally]*

## **Table of Contents**

### **STRATEGIC ELEMENTS, GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE:**

1. Identification of the Fiscal Agent
2. Description of Strategic Planning Elements
3. Description of Strategies and Services
4. Regional Service Delivery
5. Sector Strategy Development
6. Description of the One-Stop Delivery System
7. Awarding Sub-grants and Contracts
8. EEO and Grievance Procedures

### **LOCAL BOARDS AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT:**

1. Local Boards
2. Local Board Committees
3. Plan Development

### **SERVICE DELIVERY AND TRAINING:**

1. Expanding Service to Eligible Individuals
2. Description of Service to Adults and Dislocated Workers
3. Description of Rapid Response Services
4. Description of Youth Services
5. Implementation of Work-Based Learning Initiatives
6. Provision of ITAs
7. Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprise Services
8. Coordination with Education Programs
9. Description of Supportive Services

### **COORDINATION WITH CORE PARTNERS:**

1. Description of the Workforce System
2. Coordination with Wagner-Peyser
3. Coordination with Adult Education

4. Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation

**PERFORMANCE, ETPL AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY:**

1. Description of Performance Measures
2. One-Stop System Performance and Assessment
3. ETPL System
4. Implementation of Technology

**STATE INITIATIVES AND VISION:**

1. State Branding
2. State Initiatives
3. Special Populations
4. Priority of Service

**ATTACHMENTS:**

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

**Attachment 2:** Local Negotiated Performance

**Attachment 3:** Complaint/Grievance Policy

**Attachment 4:** Priority of Service

**Attachment 5:** Comments that Express Disagreement

**Attachment 6:** Signature Page

**Attachment 7:** Procurement

## **STRATEGIC ELEMENTS, GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE:**

- 1. Identification of the Fiscal Agent – Provide an identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) as determined by the chief elected official.**

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

- 2. Description of Strategic Planning Elements - Provide a description of the strategic planning elements listed below. A complete answer will rely on a variety of data sources and employer input. Also, describe how the information was gathered and what partners and employers were consulted.**
  - a. Provide an analysis of the regional economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. Include the listing of occupations in demand within the region and describe how the list was developed citing source data.**

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

Northwest Georgia has long been known as the “Carpet Capital of the World” and at one time produced 75 percent of the country’s flooring. However, with the collapse of the housing market in the mid to late 2000’s the region’s carpet manufacturers took a hit. Demand for flooring plummeted causing unemployment rates to nearly double. Dalton and the surrounding area lost 17,000 jobs over the decade. Announcements of new plants and expansions are now making headlines. The industry has steadily been recovering.

### Manufacturing Employment

Since 2002, the loss of jobs was not equal across all major employment sectors. Manufacturing, which accounts for nearly 25 percent of total employment in 2016, was one of the hardest hit. The table below depicts how manufacturing employment in the Northwest Georgia region has changed over time. From 2002 to 2016, the region experienced a 19 percent decline in manufacturing sector. However, this has improved from the 27 percent decline between 2002 and 2012.

## Northwest Georgia Region's Employment in Manufacturing Subsectors

	2002	2007	2012	2016	Projected 2021	NET CHANGE 2002- 2016	% CHANGE 2002- 2016	2016 Share of Manufacturing
Apparel	619	198	84	74	73	-545	-88.1%	0%
Beverage and Tobacco Product	872	752	607	797	816	-75	-8.6%	1%
Chemical	2753	2867	2888	3173	3304	420	15.3%	5%
Computer and Electronic Products	266	399	520	365	372	99	37.2%	1%
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component	2884	-	-	1778	1776	-1106	-38.4%	3%
Fabricated Metal product	2070	2522	1851	2368	2835	298	14.4%	4%
Food	5136	5051	3456	3591	3361	-1545	-30.1%	6%
Furniture and Related Product	2208	2508	1693	2005	2051	-203	-9.2%	3%
Leather and Allied Products	15	<10	<10	<10	<10			
Machinery	1735	1788	1559	1444	1527	-291	-16.8%	2%
Miscellaneous	361	625	664	566	605	205	56.8%	1%
Nonmetallic Mineral Product	1223	1482	754	944	927	-279	-22.8%	1%
Paper	1940	777	1202	1487	1548	-453	-23.4%	2%
Petroleum and Coal	19	35	40	52	61	33	173.7%	0%
Plastics and Rubber Products	2950	3124	4152	4980	5375	2030	68.8%	8%
Primary Metal	1370	1702	1284	1253	1353	-117	-8.5%	2%
Printing and Related Support Activities	2476	2422	1907	1934	2019	-542	-21.9%	3%
Textile Mills	14575	11299	8914	10706	10612	-3869	-26.6%	16%
Textile Product Mills	33599	29897	21029	21860	18309	-11739	-34.9%	34%
Transportation Equipment`	2496	4954	3835	4747	5555	2251	90.2%	7%
Wood Product	1299	1369	1010	1098	1188	-201	-15.5%	2%
<b>TOTAL MANUFACTURING</b>	<b>80859</b>	<b>75748</b>	<b>58855</b>	<b>65226</b>	<b>63670</b>	<b>-15633</b>	<b>-19.3%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Data not available*

Source: EMSI 2017.3

The 2016 data shows that the largest occupations in manufacturing industry for Northwest Georgia were:

- Textile Winding, Twisting, and Drawing Out—11.56% of industry jobs
- Team Assemblers—7.07% of industry jobs
- Textile Knitting and Weaving Machine Setter, Operator, and Tenders—4.52%
- First-Line Supervisor of Production and Operating Workers—4.21%

### Advanced Manufacturing and Transportation

Since 2014, several companies have relocated or expanded into Georgia. Specific to Northwest Georgia are: Toyo Tire, Shaw Industries, Lowes Distribution Center, Engineered Floors, LLC, and Surya Rug. Due to the recovery of the flooring industry, employment at Shaw Industries and Mohawk has increased. A byproduct of this surge in manufacturing growth is an increased need for CDL truck drivers.

Data on the Transportation and Warehousing sector in Northwest Georgia indicates that Truck Transportation in 2012 had the highest number of jobs; however, in comparison to the other transportation statistics it had the lowest wage. Pipeline Transportation had the highest weekly wage. The chart below was developed for and reported in the Northwest Georgia Regional Advance Manufacturing Strategy Report in 2014.

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

As a result of this robust growth, the Northwest Georgia area was designated as an “Advanced Manufacturing” community in June, 2014. Northwest Georgia is among 12 other communities across the nation to receive a manufacturing community designation, which could mean more federal money invested in supporting workforce development. Out of a pool of 70 applicants across the U.S., Northwest Georgia received the designation as part of the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership initiative. The program is led by the United States Commerce Department and designed to stimulate the resurgence of manufacturing in communities nationwide. Through solicitations from the local Chamber of Commerce and Northwest Georgia Regional Commission partners, 12 communities in the United States were selected based on the strength of their economic development plans, the potential for impact in their communities, and the depths of their partnerships across the public and private sector to carry out their plans. Northwest Georgia demonstrated the significance of manufacturing

already present in the area and had developed strategies to make investments in multiple areas that would benefit the industry. It was shown that Northwest Georgia represented a diverse group of communities with the most comprehensive economic development plans to attract business investment to increase the area's competitiveness. The Advanced Manufacturing designation will strengthen the American manufacturing sector and attract more investments to the United States. It will also support job creation and accelerate manufacturing growth. Innovative programs such as these encourage American communities to work together to craft strong, clear, strategic plans to attract manufacturing investment and jobs to transform themselves into globally competitive commercial hubs. A designation as an Advanced Manufacturing community shows diverseness which has also put in place best practice economic development strategies that can be replicated by other American communities.

(Mann, Aaron. "Designation Could Stimulate Manufacturing." Calhoun Times June 7, 2014. )

Retrieved from:

[http://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/calhoun\\_times/news/local/designation-could-stimulate-manufacturing/article\\_666d6b8e-eda5-11e3-b6a2-001a4bcf6878.html](http://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/calhoun_times/news/local/designation-could-stimulate-manufacturing/article_666d6b8e-eda5-11e3-b6a2-001a4bcf6878.html)

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

### Manufacturing Wages

Average annual pay for manufacturing jobs has changed over time in the Northwest Georgia region, the Southeast U.S., and the U.S. Manufacturing pay in the region is growing, but at a slower pace compared to the Southeast and U.S. From 2002 to 2012, wages for manufacturing jobs in the region grew by 31 percent (not adjusted for inflation), while the Southeast grew by 39 percent and the U.S. grew by 37 percent.

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

### Manufacturing Outlook

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



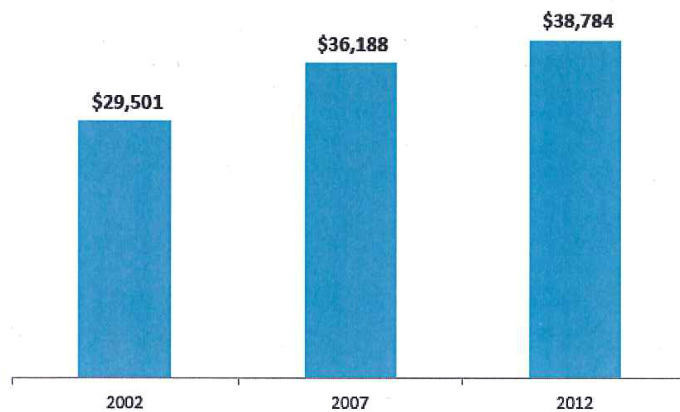
Average Annual Pay for Manufacturing Jobs



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, BLS, and GDOL

### Floor Covering Wages

Average Annual Pay for Northwest Georgia Floor Covering Jobs



Source: GDOL

### Healthcare Industry

Northwest Georgia has also seen significant growth in health care and social assistance. Employers like Floyd Medical Center continue to show increased need for healthcare employees such as Registered Nurses (RNs) and will continually show need for certified employees in the medical field. The medical field within our region continues to expand with

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

### Selected Plan Sector Focus

The chart below shows the online job advertisements. It reflects the need for the three industry sectors that have been chosen for Northwest Georgia's plan focus. The chosen sectors are: Transportation, Healthcare, and Manufacturing (Advanced only).

### Online Jobs Ads by Industry, 2017

Industry (2 Digit NAICS)	Total Job Postings	Unique Job Postings	Intensity (Postings per Unique Job Posting)
Transportation and Warehousing	79,827	32,682	2:1
Administrative and Support and Waste Manag.	34,168	9,629	4:1
Retail Trade	35,497	8,690	4:1
Health Care and Social Assistance	34,558	7,867	4:1
Manufacturing	29,446	5,625	5:1
Accommodation and Food Services	10,387	4,506	2:1
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	14,327	4,159	3:1
Finance and Insurance	6,564	1,975	3:1
Wholesale Trade	9,710	1,925	5:1
Information	7,242	1,755	4:1
Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,565	1,194	2:1
Educational Services	2,090	1,152	2:1
Construction	3,434	1,072	3:1
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,620	876	3:1
Public Administration	2,436	862	3:1
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1,786	433	4:1
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	638	378	2:1
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,495	244	6:1
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	111	53	2:1
Utilities	140	47	3:1

Source: EMSI, inc.; Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia

### Employment Needs for the Region

In April of 2014, Governor Nathan Deal announced the High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI) as a way to determine the employment needs of employers in existing and in-demand

industries. The industry clusters cited for the State growth occupations - aerospace, agribusiness, energy, bio-life science, logistics and transportation, manufacturing, telecommunications and construction are of varying significance to the region with logistics and transportation, manufacturing and energy being the most predominant currently of those listed. The WDB will seek to address ongoing changes as training opportunities arise in these fields.

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

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

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

The Demand Occupations list for Northwest Georgia (see below) was developed over many years based on market conditions, determining what jobs were in demand and input from the WDB. In conjunction to developing this list, Northwest Georgia uses economic data provided by The Conference Board, statistical information gleaned from the Georgia Labor Market website and other LMI (Labor Market Information) portals. The information following the NWGRC Demand Occupations list is from EMSI (a labor market information portal). This list is reviewed as economic conditions warrant and is modified accordingly.

<b>2017 NWGRC Demand Occupations</b>	
<p>The NWGRC WDB provides occupational specific skills training for industries that are stable or have projected growth. Skills training will not be provided in declining industries or jobs that offer minimum wage pay.</p> <p>This listing serves as a guide. There may be additional occupations in which demand occurs based on the job market or specific opportunities within the broad spectrum of occupations. The NWGRC WDB may provide training for a job where demand is limited, but current openings exist.</p> <p>Approved by WDB September 20, 2017</p>	
2017 Projections Northwest Georgia Most Projected Job Growth Occupations	Career Curriculum
11-0000 Management and Supervisory	11-1011 General Manager, Top Executive 11-1021 Team Manager 11-2021 Marketing/Sales Supervisor 11-3021 Computer Information Systems (CIS) Manager 11-9021 Construction Technology (Manager) 11-9013 Horticulture (Manager)
13-0000 Business and Financial Operations	13-1031 Insurance Claims Adjuster, Property and Casualty Agent 13-1071 Personnel Recruiter 13-1151 Industrial Trainer 13-2011 Accountant 13-2082 Tax Specialist
15-0000 Computer and Mathematical	15-1121 Systems Analyst 15-1131 Computer Programmer/Aide 15-1133 Certified Novell Engineer 15-1133 MS Certified Systems Engineer 15-1134 Certified Internet Webmaster/Web Designer 15-1143 Networking NT/Telecommunications 15-1151 Computer Support Specialist 15-1152 Computer Network Support Specialist 15-1199 Information/Office Technology; Project Mgmt PMP Test Prep/Technology Mgmt
17-0000 Architecture and Engineering	17-2061 Computer Engineer 17-2111 Fire Science Technology 17-3011 CAD Operator and Technician 17-3019 Drafter 17-3029 Nondestructive Testing Technician 17-3029 Certified Manufacturing Specialist 17-3029 Six Sigma Certification, Mfg. Prod. Technician
19-0000 Life, Physical and Social Science	19-1032 Forestry 19-4091 Environmental Safety Specialist

21-0000 Community and Social Services	21-1093 Public Worker Civil Tech/Human Service Worker
23-2011 Legal	23-2011 Paralegal
25-0000 Education, Training and Library	25-1081 Education 25-1194 Vocational Education Teacher/Instructor 25-2011 Preschool Teacher 25-2031 Teacher 25-2054 Special Education Teacher 25-9041 Parapro Teacher's Aide/Assistant
27-0000 Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media	27-0000 Film Industry (added 9/20/17) 27-1024 Computer Graphics Tech 27-2022 Instructor and Coach Sports 27-3022 Journalist 27-3091 Interpreter
29-0000 Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	29-1122 Occupational Therapist 29-1123 Physical Therapist 29-1126 Respiratory Therapist 29-1141 Registered Nurse (RN) 29-1071 Physician Assistant 29-2012 Medical and Clinical Lab Tech 29-2031 Cardiovascular Tech 29-2032 Echocardiography 29-2034 Radiological Tech 29-2041 Emergency Medical Tech 29-2052 Pharmacy Tech 29-2055 Surgical Tech 29-2061 Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) 29-2071 Health Records Management 29-2071 Medical Records Tech 29-2099 X-ray Tech 29-9011 Occupational Safety Specialist
31-0000 Healthcare Support	31-1011 Home Health Aide 31-1014 Patient Care Technician 31-1015 Nursing Aide/Orderly 31-2021 Physical Therapy Assistant 31-9011 Neuromuscular Therapy/Massage Tech 31-9091 Dental Assistant/Dental Hygienist 31-9092 Medical Assistant/Medical Office Worker 31-9094 Transcriptionist 31-9097 Phlebotomy Tech
33-0000 Protective Service	33-2011 Forestry and Fire Tech 33-3012 Correction Officer 33-3051 Law Enforcement Officer
35-0000 Food Preparation and Serving Related	35-1011 Culinary Arts 35-2021 Food Prep Worker 35-3021 Combination Food Prep/Service Worker
37-0000 Building /Grounds Cleaning/Maintenance	37-3011 Laborer, Landscaper/Groundskeeper
39-0000 Personal Care and Service	39-9011 Childcare Worker 39-9021 Health Care Assistant
41-0000 Sales and Related	41-2031 Retail Salesperson 41-3021 Insurance: Life, Accident, Sickness Agent 41-4011 Sales Rep, Executive Retail

43-0000 Office and Admin Support	43-1011 Clerical Supervisor 43-3011 Bill/Account Collectors 43-3021 Accounting Clerk/Assistant/Medical Billing/Insurance Specialist/Medical Coding 43-3031 AR Clerk/Bookkeeper 43-4051 Customer Service Rep 43-4171 Reception/Information Clerk 43-6012 Legal Secretary 43-6013 Medical Secretary 43-6014 Adm Asst/Business Office Technology
47-0000 Construction and Extraction	47-2021 Brick mason 47-2031 Carpenter 47-2041 Carpet Installer 47-2044 Hard Tile Setter 47-2073 Heavy Equipment Operator 47-2081 Drywall Installer 47-2121 Glazier 47-2142 Painter and Paperhanger 47-2152 Plumber, Pipefitter, Steamfitter 47-2161 Plasterer, Stucco Mason 47-2181 Roofer
49-0000 Installation, Maintenance, Repair	49-2011 Computer Repair Tech, Data Processing Equip Repair 49-2022 Telecommunications 49-2093 Electronic Technician 49-2094 Industrial Electronics 49-3011 Aviation Tech 49-3021 Automotive Structural Repairer 49-3023 Automotive Mechanic 49-3053 Small Engine Repair 49-9021 Heating/AC Tech 49-9041 Industrial Machinery Mechanic/Industrial Maintenance Tech 49-9052 Fiber Optics Line Installer/Repairer, Lineman 49-9062 Biomedical Instrumentation Specialist 49-9071 Maintenance Repairer General Utility 49-9098 Mechanic/Repairer Helper
51-0000 Production	51-1011 Production Tech 51-3022 Meat, Poultry, Fish Cutter 51-4041 Machine Tool Tech/Machinist 51-4121 Welder and Cutter 51-5112 Print Graphics Tech 51-6031 Sewing Machine Operator* (Approved by WIB. Added 1/21/15) 51-6064 Machinery Mech/Textile Mach Oper/Tender Textile Carpet Industry 51-9081 Dental Laboratory Technician 51-9199 Production Workers All Others

53-0000 Transportation, Equipment Mfg	53-3032 Truck Driver, Heavy 53-3033 Delivery/Route Truck Driver 53-4031 Freight Conductor 53-6051 Automotive Automatic Transmission/Transaxle Tech 53-7051 Industrial, Large Truck and Tractor Driver/Operator 53-7064 Hand Packers/Packager
---------------------------------------	---

\*51-6031 Sewing Machine Operator - Limited to carpet industry only, \$10.50 minimum base wage, maximum 8 weeks training.

**b. Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.**

A wide variety of training is needed to meet the diverse 15-county area's training needs. Although every attempt is made to meet the State's training requirements, individual choice and the resources of the area both in training availability and job placement require that the training options remain more extensive for this region.

For a region to attract and retain businesses, workforce development must provide a consistent pipeline of educated, trained, and "work ready" employees. For the demand and supply sides of an economy to balance, employers' needs must be communicated to partners in both education and local government, and potential employees must have access to the appropriate training and education. This section details the state of the Northwest Georgia region's workforce, including job openings; top knowledge requirements; and most desired attributes.

Activities in the region include:

- The most in-demand occupations in the region are: recycling and reclamation workers; textile winding, twisting, and drawing out machinists; extruding and forming machinist; industrial truck and tractor operators; and first-line supervisors of production and operations.
- A job opening snapshot revealed that top knowledge requirements across openings include: production and processing; English language; mechanical, customer and personal service; and administration and management.
- Occupational projections forecast that interior designers, computer-controlled machine tool operators, computer system analysts and vehicle and equipment cleaners will either remain stable or experience job growth in both the floor covering industry and across all occupations.
- Industry announcements from 2013 to 2014 estimate the job creation of more than 4,000 jobs with an estimated investment of more than one billion dollars in the region. Over half of these job projections are focused on the floor covering industry.

- Research suggests that there is high demand for workers in the floor covering industry with a relatively high level of analytical competence. While a highly skilled workforce and the industry's concentration in the region provide fertile ground for innovation activity, both workforce skill level and patent activity could benefit from a talent and innovation pipeline with a research university.

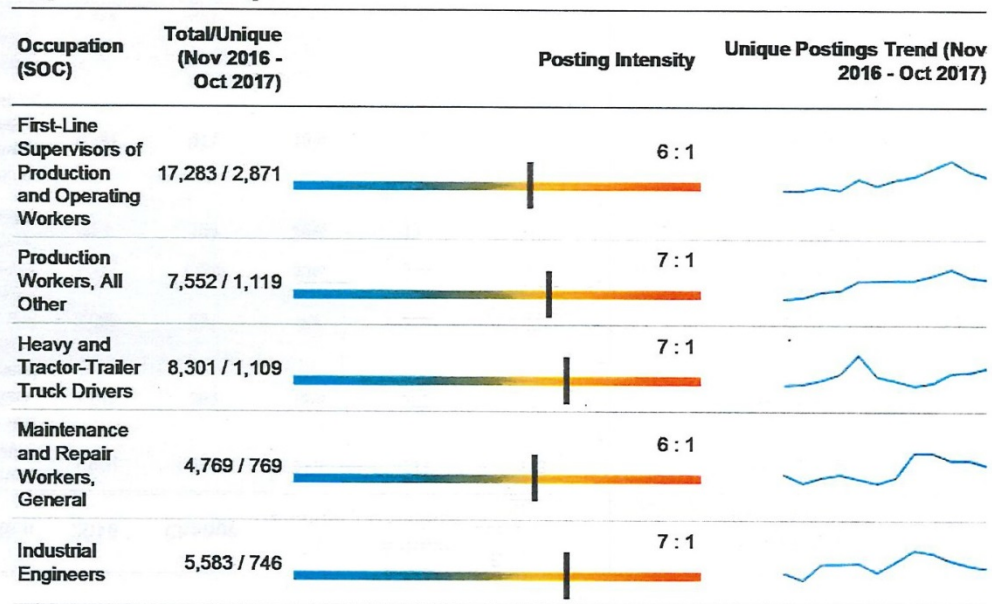
### Job Openings Snapshot

A snapshot of the current occupational opportunities in manufacturing was from November, 2016—October 2017 was developed by Georgia Tech and revealed that the top posted occupations were:

- First Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
- Production Workers, All Other
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
- Industrial Engineers

The table below lists the top manufacturing occupations and intensity of job postings.

### Top Posted Occupations

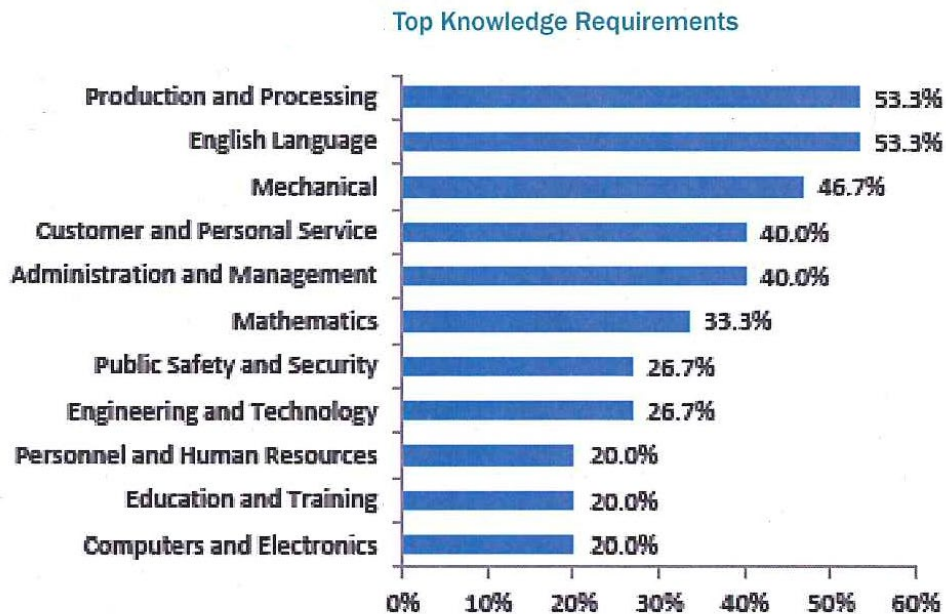


Source: EMSI 2017.3

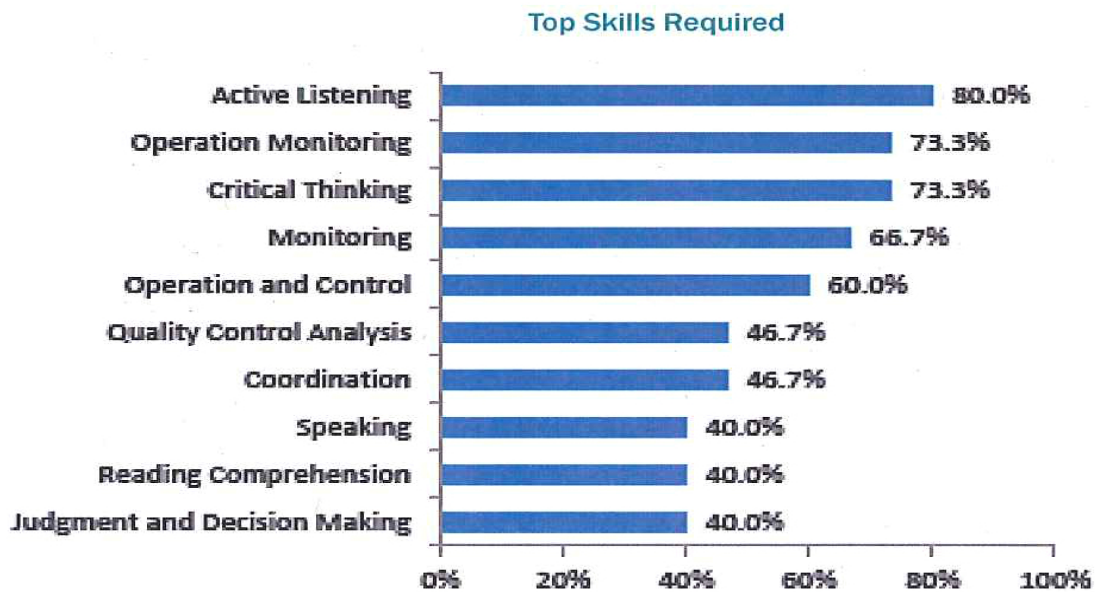


## Knowledge

The table below lists the top knowledge requirements that were listed across the selected occupations. Of the occupations analyzed, 53.3 percent required production and processing, and English language knowledge, while another 46.7 percent required mechanical knowledge. Over a third of the occupations analyzed required customer and personal services (40 percent); administration and management (40 percent); and mathematics (33.3 percent).



The table below lists the most common skills requirements that were listed across the top occupations. Of the occupations analyzed, 80 percent required active listening skills, while another 73.3 percent required operation monitoring and critical thinking skills. Two-thirds of the occupations analyzed required monitoring skills, while 60 percent required operation and control skills.



These labor market listings provide additional information regarding the real jobs available in the local area. The problem is that many of these jobs require more education than what is covered under the ITA restriction. Others, such as cashiers, retail salespersons, may require little to no training and represent low wage jobs.

*Regional Occupational Analysis*

(Source: The Conference Board LMI portal CEB TalentNeuron)  
January 1, 2018 - September 28, 2018

**Top 10 Occupations Advertised**

[Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers](#)

[First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers](#)

[Registered Nurses](#)

[Retail Salespersons](#)

[First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers](#)

[Services Offered](#)

[First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers](#)

[Cashiers](#)

[Customer Service Representatives](#)

[Maintenance and Repair Workers, General](#)

Source: @ 2018 The Conference Board. All Rights Reserved

The State of Georgia's Workforce and Innovation Plan worked with participating companies to identify high demand skills and attributes. Following are those skills and attributes cited that are needed in Manufacturing, Healthcare and Transportation.

## MANUFACTURING SKILLS/ATTRIBUTES CITED:

Blue Print Reading	Lean Principles
Business Skills	Machine Tooling
Math Skills	OSHA Regulations
Commitment to Success	Communication
Print Reading and Gaging	Computer Skills
Reading	Continuous Improvement
Robotics	Controls
Safety	Drafting
Soft Skills	Engineering
Teamwork	Environmental Health and Safety Experts
Tool and Die	Fluid Power
Troubleshooting	Knowledge of Supply chain
Welding	Leadership
Work Ethic	CNC Programming

## HEALTHCARE AND LIFE SCIENCES SKILLS/ATTRIBUTES CITED:

Analytical Skills	Leadership
Attention to Detail	Mobile Workforce
Experience in Clean Room Environment	Project Management
Experience in FDA Regulated Environments	Soft Skills
Healthcare Certifications	Specialists in Blood Banking Designation

## LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION SECTOR SKILLS/ATTRIBUTES CITED:

Ability to Multitask	Presentation Skills
Business Writing	Soft Skills
Communication	Critical Thinking
Decision Making	Teamwork
Ethics	Time Management
Troubleshooting	Maturity
Work Ethics	Math Skills

The Pathway from Basic Skill to Advanced Training

In order to provide employers with a workforce that has the ability to learn these advanced skill requirements, steps must be taken to address the region's population lacking in basic math, English and computer literacy skills. In addition, employers continue to cite soft skills as

a primary need. Northwest Georgia has a large number of individuals that do not have high school diplomas or GEDs. These workers face increased difficulties learning the advanced skills and are at risk of being affected by layoff and company closures. Area technical colleges offer GED training through the Adult Education program. Our Youth providers work with younger youth that are at risk of dropping out as well as older youth that need GED<sup>®</sup> training. We also continue to work closely with the local literacy programs to provide training for dropouts and encourage them to continue on to higher education. Basic services are also offered through counseling and group workshops at the career centers and with Youth providers that can address soft skill issues.

Northwest Georgia has been making progress in reducing the percentage of high school dropouts (see next page). Fourteen of twenty-one (14 of 21) school systems had an increase in the graduation rate or stayed the same. The United States Department of Education's goal is to achieve a 90 percent graduation rate by 2020.

SCHOOL SYSTEM	2015-2016 GRADUATION RATE	2016-2017 GRADUATION RATE
Bartow County	80.9	83.4
Catoosa County	85.5	85.3
Chattooga County	80.1	83.8
Dade County	94.9	86.8
Fannin County	91.2	90.1
Floyd County	77.1	94.3
Gilmer County	92.2	91.7
Gordon County	85.1	91.7
Haralson County	80.8	93.2
Murray County	85.5	85.5
Paulding County	79.0	84.8
Pickens County	94.2	91.9
Polk County	81.4	82.3
Walker County	81.9	85.4
Whitfield County	74.2	82.5
Bremen City	91.4	96.0
Calhoun City	96.8	97.7
Cartersville City	84.8	89.2
Dalton City	81.6	83.3
Trion City	98.3	92.6
Rome City	92.8	88.5

Source: The Governor’s Office of Student Achievement

Area employers currently participating in the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program have expressed an interest in Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). The OJT contract provider has begun working with qualified employers. From those qualified, appropriate employees of approved employers can be enrolled in Incumbent Worker Training to help upgrade existing skill levels and to avert potential layoffs.

- c. Provide an analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment, unemployment data, information on labor market trends and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. List all data sources used to gather this information.

**Commuting Patterns**

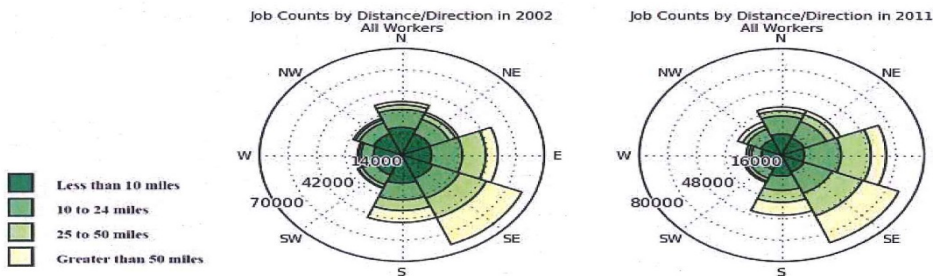
In 2011, the majority of the working population was able to work within 25 miles of their home. Over one-third of the working population in the region worked within 10 miles of their home. From 2002 to 2011, the percentage of the working population who traveled 10 miles or less from home to work declined, while those who traveled further distances increased, with the largest increase occurring among those who had to drive 25 to 50 miles for work. These workers primarily worked east/southeast of the community,

Table 7: Home to Work Distance for Northwest Georgia WIA

	2002		2011		Change 2002-2011
	Count	Share	Count	Share	
Total All Jobs	292,810	100%	316,308	100%	
Less than 10 miles	126,590	43.2%	107,699	34.0%	-9.2%
10 to 24 miles	83,303	28.4%	97,337	30.8%	2.4%
25 to 50 miles	44,325	15.1%	59,911	18.9%	3.8%
Greater than 50 miles	38,592	13.2%	51,361	16.2%	3.0%

Source: U.S. Census OnTheMap

Job Counts for All Workers by Distance/Direction, 2002, 2011



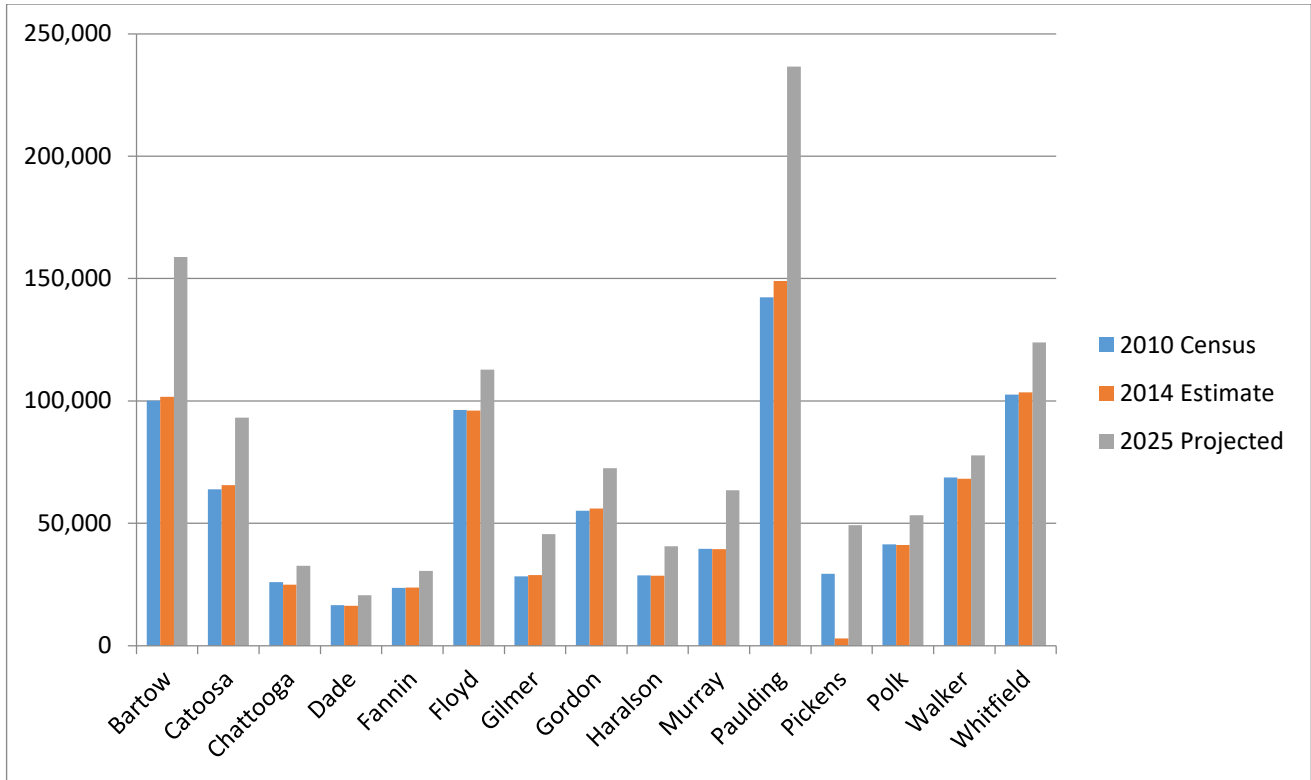
**Population Growth**

Area Census projections indicate the region will top 1.2 million in population by 2025. Counties with the highest projected growth are Paulding and Pickens and fall into the category of what is considered a “commuter” county, meaning residents live, eat, and sleep there but typically travel to a metropolitan area such as Atlanta to work. Other areas of growth are and will continue to be those counties on the I-75 corridor or located near the larger MSAs of Atlanta and Chattanooga.

Counties that are not located close to the major interstates have lower growth.

<b>County</b>	<b>Population 2010 Census</b>	<b>2014 Estimate</b>	<b>2025 Projected</b>	<b>Percent Change 2010- 2025</b>
Bartow	100,157	101,736	158,780	58.5%
Catoosa	63,942	65,621	93,176	45.7%
Chattooga	26,015	24,939	32,657	25.5%
Dade	16,633	16,389	20,632	24.0%
Fannin	23,682	23,753	30,612	29.3%
Floyd	96,317	96,063	112,799	17.1%
Gilmer	28,292	28,829	45,592	61.1%
Gordon	55,186	56,047	72,509	31.4%
Haralson	28,780	28,615	40,666	41.3%
Murray	39,628	39,410	63,527	60.3%
Paulding	142,324	148,987	236,668	66.3%
Pickens	29,431	29,997	49,334	67.6%
Polk	41,475	41,133	53,360	28.7%
Walker	68,756	68,218	77,810	13.2%
Whitfield	102,599	103,542	123,979	20.8%
Total Region 1 Population	863,217	1,083,305	1,212,101	40.4%

(Source U.S. Census Bureau)



(Source U.S. Census Bureau)

Employment Trends

Since the “Great Recession,” staff and training providers have been responding to large/small layoffs and closures. As of August 1, 2016, there have been seventeen layoffs/closures affecting over 1,520 employees. Northwest Georgia is working with various contractors at local community and technical colleges and the Georgia Department of Labor On-the-Job Training Programs to assist this population by providing training and/or OJT opportunities.

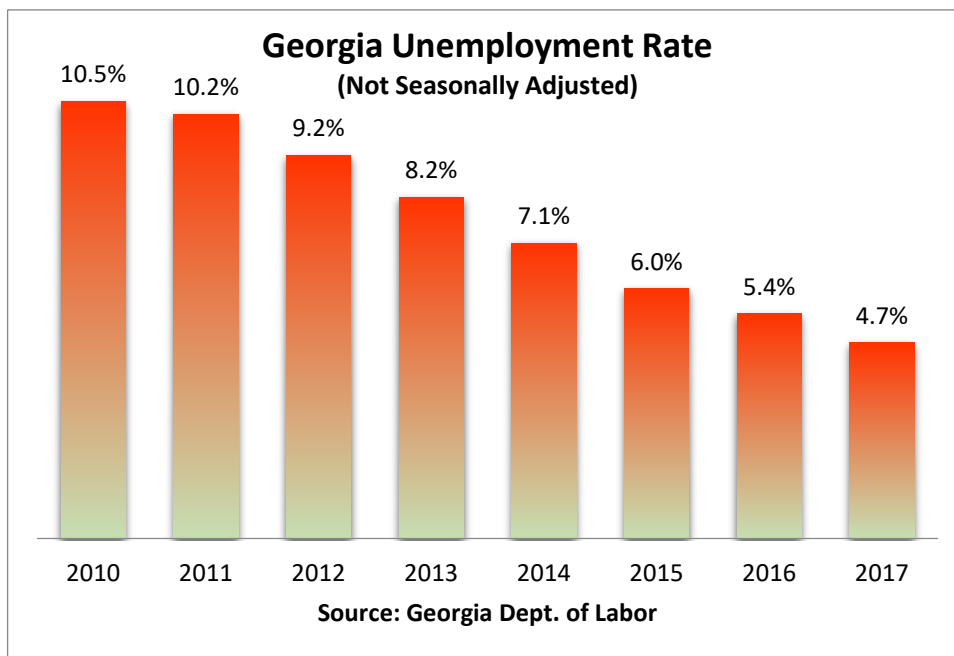
The chart below shows the unemployment rate variance since 2008. During the collapse of the housing market, unemployment rates soared to over 11 percent as carpet and flooring manufacturers were laying off due to reduction in sales. Beginning in 2012 the economy gradually began to recuperate.

By 2017 the unemployment rate had rebounded to 4.7 percent. Northwest Georgia and the state rate for the previous two years has remained even.

Time Period	NWGA Unemployment Rate	State of GA Unemployment Rate
2008	6.6%	6.2%
2009	11.1%	9.9%
2010	11.2%	10.5%
2011	10.8%	10.2%
2012	9.6%	9.2%
2013	8.5%	8.2%
2014	7.2%	7.1%
2015	6.0%	6.2%
2016	5.4%	5.4%
2017	4.7%	4.7%

*Source: GA Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Unit 09/25/2018*

The chart below details the layoff trends and the tremendous jump in unemployment during the time span of 2010 through 2017.





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

<b>AVERAGE U.S. ECONOMIC GROWTH</b>	
The economy is expected to grow at a stronger pace over the next 5 years, compared to the last 15, partly because of the surge of millennials into the labor force	
1990-2000	3.3%
2001-2010	1.7%
2011-2014	2.1%
2015-2020 projection	3.0%
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Organization of Economical Developed Countries	

In 2012, there were 15,393 business establishments in the Northwest Georgia region that accounted for a total of 240,513 jobs. From 2002 to 2012, the number of jobs in the region fell by more than 5 percent. During that same time span, the number of establishments in the region grew by more than 8 percent. This suggests that businesses in the region have had to do more with less. Further, private sector jobs, which dropped by 7.1 percent, were more adversely affected by the economic downturn than the public sector, which experienced a small bump up in jobs (3.6 percent).

**Total Employment and Establishments in the Northwest Georgia Region**

Sector	Total Employment				Total Establishments			
	2002	2007	2012	Change 2002 - 2012	2002	2007	2012	Change 2000 - 2012
Private Sector	215,321	231,480	200,131	-7.1%	13,466	14,997	14,591	8.5%
Public Sector	38,980	42,895	40,382	3.6%	782	827	802	2.6%
Unclassified - industry not assigned	456	184	668	46.5%	162	198	721	345.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>254,302</b>	<b>274,371</b>	<b>240,513</b>	<b>-5.4%</b>	<b>14,228</b>	<b>15,824</b>	<b>15,393</b>	<b>8.2%</b>

Source: Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL)

### Workforce

The table below shows preliminary estimated labor force, employment and unemployment information in Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Area, Georgia, and the United States for July, 2018. These figures are not seasonally adjusted.

<b>Area Name</b>	<b>Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>Number Employed</b>	<b>Number Unemployed</b>	<b>Unemployment Rate</b>
Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Area	427,891	410,572	17,319	4.0%
Georgia	5,196,412	4,987,114	209,298	4.0%
United States	163,734,500	157,004,000	6,730,000	4.1%

Source: GA Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Unit

The following list reflects the educational requirements for projected employment growth and annual openings from 2012 to 2022 for Northwest Georgia. Most of the projected employment growth can be seen in the Bachelor's Degree category. There is lower growth associated with the Doctoral or Master degrees. To reiterate the GDOL's information noted previously, there are projections that indicate there will still be a need for individuals with lower levels of education as indicated in the high school/equivalent and less than high school category.

**LONG-TERM OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS**  
**Region 1 Northwest Georgia**  
**2012 to 2022**

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

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

**Barriers to Employment**

**Low Income** – 18.5 percent of the population of Northwest Georgia is at or below the poverty level. Low Income individuals have barriers to employment because they cannot afford childcare, transportation, permanent resident, and they may lack training and skills because of the lack of education. The WIOA program is able to provide supportive services to help reduce some of these expenses. More details follow within this Plan.

**Non-U.S. Citizenships** – From 2010-2014 approximately 9.7 percent of residents living in Northwest Georgia were foreign born. The foreign-born population includes anyone who was not a U.S. citizen or a U.S. national at birth. This includes respondents who indicated they were a U.S. citizen by naturalization or not a U.S. citizen. (Source: U.S. Census) Many of these residents may have barriers to employment based difficulties with English language.

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

SCHOOL SYSTEM	2015-2016 GRADUATION RATE	2016-2017 GRADUATION RATE
Bartow County	80.9	83.4
Catoosa County	85.5	85.3
Chattooga County	80.1	83.8
Dade County	94.9	86.8
Fannin County	91.2	90.1
Floyd County	77.1	94.3
Gilmer County	92.2	91.7
Gordon County	85.1	91.7
Haralson County	80.8	93.2
Murray County	85.5	85.5
Paulding County	79.0	84.8
Pickens County	94.2	91.9
Polk County	81.4	82.3
Walker County	81.9	85.4
Whitfield County	74.2	82.5
Bremen City	91.4	96.0
Calhoun City	96.8	97.7
Cartersville City	84.8	89.2
Dalton City	81.6	83.3
Trion City	98.3	92.6
Rome City	92.8	88.5

### Persons with Disabilities

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

### Ex Offender

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

Georgia Prison Re-entry Pilot Program. This project will provide advocacy and education for individuals re-entering society.

The following chart shows the number of inmates released during Georgia Department of Corrections' CY2017. This is data for the 15 counties in Northwest Georgia:

### **Inmate Statistical Profile for Inmates Released**

<b>Home County</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Bartow County	195	43	238
Catoosa County	68	20	88
Chattooga County	85	17	10
Dade County	30	6	36
Fannin County	24	6	30
Floyd County	230	34	264
Gilmer County	31	4	35
Gordon County	115	26	141
Haralson County	47	6	53
Murray County	74	23	97
Paulding County	87	20	107
Pickens County	36	15	51
Polk County	79	12	91
Walker County	144	31	175
Whitfield County	210	45	255
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,455</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>1,763</b>

### Older Worker

Other issues facing the Northwest Georgia region is the problem of an aging workforce. Employers are expecting a large percentage of employees to retire in the upcoming years. Along with this huge exodus goes the industrial knowledge of employees who have worked 30+ years. Entrants do not possess this knowledge, nor do they possess the soft skills (communication, teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, work ethic, attendance, timeliness) needed to continue the production of the product or service. Another, even more critical is that entrants do not possess the mathematical skills necessary to compete in the market.

- d. **Provide an analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, including an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and capacity of such services to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce, and the employment needs of employers in the region.**

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

A few of the obstacles identified for Region 1 are as follows:

- The region stretches from the central part of the state in Haralson County up to the Tennessee border. Many counties such as Dade are mountainous in terrain and difficult to travel through. Many participants in these areas are unable to travel to a full service one-stop center. Although support is provided in the form of mileage reimbursement it may not cover enough to pay for the costs associated with owning or borrowing a vehicle. There is no access to public transportation in most of the region.
- The region has a high drop-out rate and area partners have the task of identifying and encouraging this population to seek assistance through GED<sup>®</sup> preparation. Many do not want to go back to the classroom because of age or difficult past experiences with school. It is difficult to assist them with getting a job because most employers require a GED<sup>®</sup> and most training classes also require a GED<sup>®</sup> to continue to the next educational level.
- Many applicants do not have the financial support to sustain them while in the program. College tuition, books, and fees increase yearly. The cost of transportation, childcare, and living expenses have caused many students to either go into debt or dropout of college.

These are just a few of the problems that are faced by the applicants and staff under the program. The activities below are ways that many of the program obstacles are addressed.

#### Workforce Activities

Previously, the workforce system in Northwest Georgia was comprised of a One-Stop System that was developed under WIA and during that time contained (at one time) seven full service One-Stop Centers. The centers had complete participations from all required partners under WIA. The purpose of having seven was so that customers would not have to drive more than 30 minutes for services. With regulations for WIOA, a competitive procurement process was undertaken and the Georgia Department of Labor was awarded the contract for One-Stop Services. More details of the One-Stop system can be found in *Strategic Elements, Governance and Structure: Number 6* of this Plan.

A vital partner in the Northwest Georgia Workforce system is the Technical College System. The area contracts out the Individual Training Account (ITA) program services to area colleges. Current contract providers include three Technical Colleges and one University System College: Georgia Northwestern Technical College, Chattahoochee Technical College, West

Georgia Technical College and Georgia Highlands College. These contractors provide all basic and individualized career services available to applicants seeking to continue their education. They may also make referrals to other training providers on our approved Eligible Provider List or other One-stop Partner service providers. All training program selections are subject to WDB approval. Research goes into the selection of programs to determine the need and appropriateness prior to presentation to the WDB. The Board takes into account the need for the training in the region and the cost.

The list of demand and growth occupations (previously cited) adopted by the WDB indicates the occupational areas in which skills will be needed in the future. The demand occupations and other information contained above were developed from the Labor Market Information provided by the Georgia Department of Labor, local Career Centers, Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Department of Economic Development, and Census reports. In addition, WDB members, Labor Department, Technical Institutes and Colleges, and Rehabilitation Services were consulted and provided input in compiling demand and growth occupations and areas of critical shortage. We train individuals for short- and long-term careers that lead to self-sufficiency and an improved standard of living unless specifically approved by the NWGRC staff for an individual because of their circumstances.

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

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

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

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

Area in-school and out-of-school Youth receive WIOA services through our Youth contract providers. These providers are Endless Opportunities, Georgia Northwestern Technical College, Eckerd Connects-Paxen, Chattooga BOE, Fannin BOE, Gilmer BOE, and Rome City BOE. The contract providers offer the vital mentoring and program activities needed to encourage individuals 14-24 years of age to stay in school or study for the GED<sup>®</sup> test and to seek

opportunities for Work Experience, OJT, and short- and long-term training. More information is provided in *Service Delivery and Training: Number 4* of this Plan.

#### Other Area Initiatives

Several libraries in our region also provide various services to improve the quality and quantity of employment and training services for job seekers. Collaboration with public libraries can offer another access point for individuals to receive needed career information and assistance.

Northwest Georgia invested in a Mobile Lab that can be taken to area events such as intake, education workshops, and career and job fairs. The goal is to provide applicants region wide with access to services.

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

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

#### Goals for Workforce Development

1. To identify the workforce needs of businesses through the utilization of local labor market and educational data and technology and to meet those needs by emphasizing business services.
2. To provide customer-focused services (both for the employers and individuals) through the development and implementation of sector strategies and career pathways.
3. To create a unified, seamless and vital workforce delivery system by connecting core partners, economic development stakeholders, and others; formalizing agreements between the parties as appropriate; and assuring that investments are job-driven and non-duplicative.
4. To initiate an integrated approach to the system’s overall performance management through training and continuous improvement to provide an approach that (a) manage a performance-based workforce system with federally-mandated performance outcomes; and (b) identifies the processes that meet current and future system organizational needs. The Technical College System of Georgia has and will continue to provide technical assistance through the Georgia Workforce Academy.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia currently tracks WIOA measures that show increases in employment and attainment of recognized post-secondary credentials by participants. With the addition of Georgia Performs, the state performance database, local performance measures can be identified to assure that goals are met. These goals will also



provide direction for the system's development and management supporting regional growth and individuals' economic self-sufficiency.

**f. Taking into account the analyses described in sections "2. a-e" (above), provide a strategy to coordinate core programs to align resources available to the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals.**

WorkSource Northwest Georgia, with the adaptation of a vision statement and goals, provides the basic framework whereby an alignment between core partners can occur. This will be accomplished through a number of ways:

1. The development of a committee structure for the WDB that will have core partners represented on the appropriate committee to provide direction and input to the WDB into the ongoing alignment of services between the partners. These committees are addressed in the *Local Boards and Plan Development* section of the Plan.
2. The One-Stop Partner MOU was updated in 2016-2017 and functionalizes the goals of WorkSource Northwest Georgia in defining the career services that are best performed by each partner and (during subsequent years) refine numerical indicators of alignment. Georgia Department of Labor was selected as the Operator through a competitive procurement process and will provide ongoing coordination of One-Stop partners and service providers.
3. The "Required Partners" will continue to meet on an ongoing basis until such time as the roles, responsibilities, and alignment opportunities/obstacles are defined and complete implementation of WIOA has occurred.
4. Through the coordination of the One-Stop Operator, the One-Stop Advisory Council, (formerly the Adult/Dislocated Worker & One-Stop Committee) and the NWGRC, continuous improvement can occur as the system reflects actual progress year-by-year in the development of the unified workforce system.
5. Cross training of Core Partner staff will occur in order to assure the "no wrong door" approach for job seekers entering into the system through Core Partner sites that are not in implemented Comprehensive Centers. WIOA staff has already provided numerous presentations to Core Partners regarding WIOA services. But all partners must be more versed in each of the core partner services. This is a key goal of the One-Stop Advisory Council.

Directories have been developed for both youth and individuals with disabilities to provide baseline training and employment information. Both directories are on the [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org) web site. Other directories will either be developed or a link provided for targeted service groups.

6. The Sector Strategy Core Groups for Advanced Manufacturing represents many of the Core Partners. As additional sectors are identified, a representative of the sector will

join this group to assure that business services align with the sector strategy for all Core Partners. This will maximize the services that can be identified that are beneficial for the sector and duplication of resources and effort minimized.

**3. Description of Strategies and Services – Provide a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area in order to accomplish the items listed below.**

**a. How will the area engage employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations?**

Employers will be engaged in area workforce development programs in a variety of ways. For example, the various types of employer-based work site training programs will be marketed by the WDB and its work-based training contractors. This marketing effort will inform the employers of the training available to their workers, whether on-the-job training, customized training, apprenticeship or incumbent worker training. Marketing materials will consist of fliers, brochures, emails, The Business Informer (email blast) and Facebook and other appropriate web-based postings. Face to face contact with employers will be accomplished through local Chamber of Commerce meetings, Employer Committee meetings and other business organizations such as Rotary Clubs. Economic development units at area Technical Colleges and State Colleges will be utilized, as appropriate, to make marketing presentations to employers taking part in seminars or other employer activities sponsored by the colleges. Additionally, work-based training contractors may make "cold calls" to employers identified as having jobs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Not limited to large and medium employers, these visits will also target small businesses who may not attend business meetings such as the Chambers of Commerce. Policies (such as reimbursing eligible employers for up to 75 percent of the wages in the OJT program) have been adopted to benefit small businesses and encourage their participation in WorkSource Northwest Georgia. Local customized recruiting events and job fairs will also be used to inform employers of training opportunities available.

Employers who exhibit an interest in participating in work-based training will be instrumental in developing the training to be accomplished. In concert with the work-based training contractors, employers will assist in designing training plans to meet their specific needs and the skill gaps of their employees or future employees.

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

- b. How will the area support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area? Discuss the areas workforce services to businesses and how business and organized labor representatives on the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) contributed to the development of these strategies. Provide a listing of business services available through the area(s) such as employer workshops and assessment and screening of potential employees.**

Development of the local workforce development system is an on-going process. Building on the foundation of WIA, the LWDB will continue to refine its function in enhancing the workforce system in Northwest Georgia so that the goal of supplying a workforce trained to meet employer needs is realized.

A key workforce training model promoted by Georgia WorkSmart is Registered Apprenticeship. Through a partnership with the Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship, the Technical College System of Georgia, and other education and state agency partners, Georgia WorkSmart helps organizations create apprenticeship programs that include curriculum and classroom instruction development. Assistance with national apprenticeship registration is also provided through this partnership. The WIOA regulations provide for non-registered apprenticeships to be added to the EPL through local review and approval. This will be considered as guidance is received and apprenticeships are developed in non-traditional skill areas.

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

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

Business representatives were actively involved in developing the sector strategy in advanced manufacturing and will be involved as new sector strategies are developed. Detailed information regarding their involvement is provided in the *Sector Strategy* section of this Plan. These representatives, together with organized labor representatives participated in providing input into the Plan. Employer surveys in the initial sector strategy development identified key targeted occupations. The Proposal Review Committee, consisting entirely of private business

sector and organized labor representation, will select the service providers for the implementation of the plan.

All of the region's work-based training programs are designed to be steps in a career pathway. Depending upon the skills and experience of the participant, they may enter the career pathway at any of these points of training and progress as far as needed to become proficient in their chosen career.

Northwest Georgia is known for having a rich history of floor covering manufacturing plants. Over time, the facilities that have continued to thrive were those that moved towards more advanced technologies and training. The OJT program has developed continuing relationships with employers in this industry sector and has provided services that assess and screen applicants so that quality workers can be trained in these new technologies.

A supporting industry for the manufacturing sector is transportation. The industry requires a large supply of trucking companies to move product both locally and long haul shipments. Our ITA program continues to train and refer CDL drivers for the industry.

- c. How will the area better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development? Additionally, identify economic development partners and describe the involvement of the economic development community in developing strategies.**

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission is the federally-designated Economic Development District for all of the counties in Region 1 through the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration and is also designated as the administrative entity and grantee for WIOA activities in the Region. Thus, staff are able to coordinate on a day-to-day basis the economic and workforce priorities for the Region. The Economic Development Department for NWGRC works closely with the industrial authorities and the chambers in the area to alert Workforce staff of workforce needs, initiatives, and areas for coordination as new companies are recruited and/or there are expansions. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Planning group which is currently being convened for the development of a new Plan in 2017 has several members of the Workforce Development Board of Northwest Georgia, Inc. who will participate in the planning process and assure coordination between the workforce and economic strategies with workforce strongly addressed in the Plan.

Conversely, the Workforce Development staff at NWGRC in its WIOA planning document compile workforce strategies from the existing CEDS Plan. Strong representation from the local chambers on the WDB are able to blend the economic needs of the region (and specifically those related to workforce) with progress and initiatives planned and implemented by the Board. Staff attend chamber meetings, DOL Employer meetings, and other economic development meetings to develop and maintain ongoing collaboration between economic development and workforce development.

Workforce development efforts continue to support recruiting, retention, and expansion efforts. Specifically, the regional representation from the technical and Regent colleges, the Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Georgia

Department of Community Affairs, and the NWGRC are well-versed in the resources of those agencies and coordinate as necessary. Utility companies and financial institutions are also involved as needed.

The Sector Strategy developed for advanced manufacturing has greatly expanded collaboration for economic development and workforce initiatives. Even at the staff level, the economic development staff and the workforce development staff have assisted each other in planning efforts, grant applications, and development of workforce training programs. Successes learned from this collaboration will be used as the Region moves to a more formal sector planning in logistics/transportation and (later) healthcare.

The workforce program has attempted to be responsive to workforce development needs and to allow more collaboration efforts by developing policies that are responsive to needs identified in both the economic development community and workforce development. For example, to be responsive to the needs of a thriving, diverse small business community, OJT was adapted to provide larger percentages of wages for the small business employer. The Small Business Center receives referrals from the workforce development staff as appropriate.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia has implemented an action-based plan using the strategy results from the Northwest Georgia Advanced Manufacturing Strategy Plan developed by Georgia Tech. This will combine regional planning, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and Workforce Investment plan action items to address the identified needs of industry in the region (NW GA Regional Development Strategy Plan, p. 15).

Partners that have been involved in this process include: Community & Economic Development Staff of NWGRC; Local Chambers; Georgia Power Economic Development; Georgia Northwestern Technical College Economic Development; TCSG; and other partners that have been involved with the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (described in Sector Strategy Development, page 40).

The development of future coordination efforts around sector development in logistics/transportation and healthcare will use the process used in the advanced manufacturing initiative including the staff of Northwest Georgia Regional Commission being responsible for convening core partners (local technical colleges, University System of Georgia institutions, GDOL, GVRA, Department of Economic Development, Existing Industries Representatives, local chambers of commerce, K-12, and school systems) with key industry and company representatives. Additional partners may be involved as appropriate. A facilitator will be identified to help develop sector strategies and a plan to close the skills and training gaps in the respective industry. An industry champion for the group will be identified to “shepherd” the process and provide sound leadership from the sector’s perspective.

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

As the provider of Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Wagner-Peyser (WP) services, GDOL is uniquely poised to welcome customers into the workforce system and provide comprehensive

and targeted referrals to the other core partners. The staff may identify customers' needs, assist them with UI, employment and reemployment assistance, Trade services, automated resources, workshops and referrals to more intensive services, such as training provided by WIOA through LWDBs, and other partners. The coordination of service delivery is a primary principle of WIOA, which brings together the core programs.

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

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

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

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

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

**Rapid Response Team** - The Rapid Response program is a proactive tool that now offers workforce services to employers throughout the business lifecycle, in addition to during layoffs and other large events. Rapid Response leverages the relationships and knowledge of LWDBAs to help provide services to employers and workers. This integrated approach is used to

assist LWDA's and local employers as they seek to identify key next steps. Throughout this process, key stakeholders communicate regularly with UI and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) to help ensure the full range of services is available to both employers and employees.

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

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

- GDOL's **BSU** routinely partners with **WFD** to work with employers seeking to quickly fill demand positions.
- **GDOL** may provide Customized Recruitment to identify the unique skills and experience required for an employer's positions.
- Working with **the Rapid Response Team and LWDA** participant enrollments, GDOL can leverage **UI** claimants to quickly create a pool of qualified candidates. In order to receive UI, all applicants must register with **Employ Georgia (EG)** Career Explorer.
- If the employer is looking to train these new hires in place, **WFD** can also coordinate with **BSU** to funnel selected applicants through work-based learning

### **Meaningful Assistance Offered Via the One-Stop System**

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

- UI orientation provided to every new claimant, explaining the full range of workforce services available to help them return to work;
- Online access via [www.dol.georgia.gov](http://www.dol.georgia.gov) where customers can file electronically from career centers, home, libraries or any other Internet portal;
- Dedicated, experienced staff at every one-stop;
- Fully-staffed resource centers at all career centers, including Internet access, copiers, phones, fax and resource libraries;
- A dedicated toll-free number for customers filing for UI at one-stops;
- Access points at over five one-stops and career centers across the region and the state;
- An opportunity for each claimant to access in-person reemployment services as they come to career centers and one-stops to complete the UI filing process;

- The use of state-of-the-art Employ Georgia résumé and job matching service as a requirement for ES registration for claimants;
- The availability of staff, technology, and written materials in a variety of languages to meet the needs of all customers;
- Fully accessible services, online and in person, to serve any customer with a disability;
- Joint participation of UI staff with other workforce partners in large layoff events;
- Daily referrals of customers from workforce partners to UI specialists to ensure that customers have access to all benefits to which they are entitled.

### **Strategy for providing reemployment assistance**

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

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

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

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

For workload management purposes, career center managers monitor the number of profiled claimants served each week, and, if necessary, adjust their career center's threshold (minimum score) to ensure that workshops are neither over- nor under-utilized, and that services can be delivered. All claimants who are identified by the system as meeting or



exceeding the career center's threshold and are mandated to participate in required services must complete either a Service Needs Evaluation/Assessment or a Quick Initial Assessment.

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

- Information on community resources, labor market information, GED<sup>®</sup>, occupational training, OJT, and support services that make training possible to enhance an individual's ability to return to work
- Integrated workforce services for citizens released from correctional facilities through the Governor's GA-PRI
- An Events tool on the Department's website to allow customers to access hundreds of career fairs, hiring events, and other activities to connect with hiring businesses
- A strong network of faith-based organizations that support reemployment efforts
- Collaborative services for claimant trainees and TAA-eligible customers
- Collaboration with HomeSafe Georgia for citizens needing mortgage assistance
- Job clubs sponsored by GDOL, faith-based organizations, and others
- Older worker workshop – the SCSEP
- Veteran work study program sponsored by the Veterans Administration that allows veterans in training to work part-time in career centers

### **RESEA Program**

1. Recently, GDOL operated a Reemployment Assistance (REA) pilot program targeting UI claimants in five GDOL career centers. As Georgia worked with the REA customer population, it became apparent that there were thousands of customers in other areas of the State in need of intensive reemployment services. Many of the customers are in areas of the State where there are military bases, resulting in a high number of UCX claimants. As a result of these direct customer needs, Georgia redesigned its REA program to target UI claimants who are profiled and are most likely to exhaust their weekly benefits. This redesign will increase the number of GDOL career centers delivering RESEA services across the state to nine, including four new offices with the highest UCX claimant population in the State.
2. Georgia's REA program will provide RESEA intensive services to a large percentage of traditionally underserved UI claimants with low education levels, language barriers, limited skill sets, and/or who are homeless veterans, justice-involved individuals, and seniors. This population includes a large percentage of food service workers and other workers in low-paying service jobs who cycle through the UI system regularly. They experience multiple layoffs and move laterally from one low-paying job to another, never developing the skills or solid work history needed to advance to a more stable position in the workforce. The expansion of the RESEA program over its REA predecessor allows it to serve more customers across a larger area of the State, and

allows the State to evaluate the impact of delivering the intensive reemployment services to a significant number of veterans with workforce challenges.

3. The RESEA service delivery strategy focuses on UI claimants who are profiled and identified as most likely to exhaust all UI benefits. Customers are identified upon being determined eligible for UI benefits, and are advised of RESEA's mandatory participation requirements immediately upon being notified of their selection to participate. RESEA intensive customer services begin with an orientation to services, individual review and discussion of O\*Net My Next Move assessment results, and development of a reemployment plan. Staff provides referrals to in-house workshops (e.g., résumé development, job search, and financial management), training, and other community workforce and supportive services as needed. Customers receive relevant labor market information and learn about helpful web sites which could enrich their job search. Work history evaluation is conducted and job matches are identified in the EG system.
4. Georgia's robust and intensive approaches to facilitating the reemployment of UI recipients, including initiatives such as the former REA and emerging RESEA programs, has directly contributed to the lowest average.
5. Georgia law requires that UI claimants register with the State's ES. This process is fully integrated into the claims application process. Claimants are given up to ten (10) days after the issuance of their first benefit payment to complete the ES registration process. A letter is mailed to the claimant and a payment stop is placed on the claim if the claimant fails to register by the deadline. The claimant is then given seven (7) additional days to register before being disqualified for benefits.
6. Once Georgia UI claimants are approved for their first UI payment, they are required to create an account and at least one searchable resume in the EG system described previously. WP and UI staff members, in addition to the job seeker, are able to manage and track job match alerts and job search activities.
7. Georgia maintains an active eligibility review program (ERP) through which UI customers are evaluated, typically at the 5th, 9th, and 14th weeks of their claim. At each of these dates, they receive additional guidance and resources for effective reemployment. Centers also offer workshops during these visits, on topics including interviewing techniques, networking, and dressing for success. These strategies contribute to the State's unmatched low average UI duration.

#### **State UI system, eligibility assessments, and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants**

8. Individuals receiving unemployment benefits in Georgia must be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking full-time work. Individuals who earned the majority of wages in the base period used to establish the claim doing part-time work are allowed to

restrict their work search to part-time. The only exceptions to the work search requirements are:

- Individuals with a job attachment - This includes individuals for whom their employer filed a “partial” unemployment claim or individuals with a definite recall to work within six (6) weeks of their last day worked;
  - Union members in good standing; and,
  - Individuals who are approved and enrolled in a Commissioner-approved training program.
9. In Georgia’s automated workforce system, customers enter work search information weekly. Staff have access to that information 24/7 and can contact a customer should questions arise or concerns be raised. In addition, EG captures a customer’s résumé, job referrals and information regarding a customer’s response to an employer’s request. Should an employer contact GDOL that a job candidate did not respond to a request for an interview, that claimant can be contacted to determine if compliance with the required work test occurred. To ensure accessibility to the automated system, staff are always on hand to assist claimants with the use of the labor market exchange. In addition, if the customer does not have a résumé EG will build one for them. All claimants are subject to a work search audit and can be called into the office should questions arise.
  10. During the initial claims filing application, individuals are asked questions regarding their availability. Negative responses require adjudication of the potential availability issue by GDOL claims examiners or services specialists.
  11. Individuals referred to the UI RESEA program must report to their initial RESEA appointment, and must participate in all subsequent in-person and telephone appointments. During the in-person appointments, UI ERPs are performed, and staff question the individual about availability for work and any barriers to work they may be facing during all contacts. During all eligibility reviews (i.e., UI, RESEA, and REU) staff review the individual’s work search, discuss the individual’s availability, and any barriers to work.
  12. Weekly UI benefit certification includes a question about whether the individual is able, available, and actively seeking employment. A negative response places an issue on the certification which cannot be removed until a statement is obtained regarding availability. If an issue is determined, a benefits eligibility review is performed by the GDOL services specialist or claims examiner and a determination released, if in order.
  13. Employers and anonymous individuals can report suspected UI fraud on the GDOL web site. This can include employers reporting individuals who do not report for interviews, individuals who are incarcerated, or are otherwise not able, available, and/or actively seeking work.

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

**4. Regional Service Delivery – Describe how the region will address the items listed below.**

- a. Describe the plans for the establishment of regional service delivery strategies, including the use of cooperative service delivery agreements (if applicable).**

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

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

All planning is carried out on a regional basis. Since this region is consolidated under the leadership of the Council of Chief Elected Officials and the NWGRC, administrative costs are addressed and there is an administrative cost pool.

**5. Sector Strategy Development – Provide a description of the current regional sector strategy development for in-demand industry sectors.**

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

Northwest Georgia is home to the largest concentration of floor covering manufacturers in the world, producing more than 70 percent of the world’s total floor covering output, valued at over 9 billion dollars. It was this industry concentration in one of the southeast region’s key technology sectors that led the Georgia Tech’s Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI<sup>2</sup>) and the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) to receive a grant through the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration’s (EDA) for the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) initiative to develop a comprehensive advanced manufacturing strategy focused on advanced manufacturing in the floor covering industry in the 15-county northwest Georgia region in September 2013. Prior to IMCP, the region had never before come together in an organized capacity with the specific charge of elevating one of the largest manufacturing clusters in the country. IMCP brought a number of ad-hoc efforts and scattered players together around a common goal. Its vision was:

***The Northwest Georgia Regional Advanced Manufacturing Strategy will create “A world class manufacturing workforce cultivating a culture of talent and innovation in a vibrant and diverse region.”***

The region was one of twelve communities designated as a first-round Manufacturing Community in 2014. Since the designation, the partnership created the “Northwest Georgia

Floor360 IMCP Consortium”. Floor360 Consortium includes 20 committed industry and workforce partners, and serves as the IMCP program’s oversight body, and meets bi-monthly with the floor covering industry’s top employers to review projects that request the IMCP designation. The list below includes the primary leaders/partners in the Northwest Georgia IMCP project who have been engaged since the Manufacturing Communities designation in 2014.

**Research:**

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

**Education:**

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

**Government:**

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

**Manufacturers:**

13. Mohawk Industries
14. Shaw Industries, Inc.
15. J&J Industries

**Suppliers:**

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

**Associations & Utilities:**

18. Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI)
19. Georgia Association of Manufacturers (GAM)
20. University of Georgia Archway Partnership

21. The Alliance for Innovation and Sustainability (AIS, a 501c3 nonprofit)

In addition to the Consortium and participating partners, other industries, firms and organizations have participated in IMCP working groups, including Dalton Utilities, Gordon County Chamber of Commerce, Bartow County Development Authority, Northwest Georgia Joint Development Authority, Polk County Schools/College and Career Academy, Calhoun City Schools, Gordon County Schools/College and Career Academy, Engineered Floors, Alrol Industries, Evco Plastics, F & P Automotive, Southern Company/Georgia Power, and others. State agency partners include Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Georgia Department of Education, Governor's Office of Student Achievement, Georgia Department of Transportation, Governor's Office, and the 15 counties and 49 cities of Northwest Georgia.

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

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

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

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

In selecting regions to receive the Investing in Manufacturing Community Partnerships designation, the Economic Development Administration reviewed the strength of a region's manufacturing cluster using KTS and Location Quotients to compare industry ecosystems; only communities that showed a top third ranking in the nation for that industry cluster were considered. The purpose for the top-third ranking requirement for a community's KTS was to ensure that regions are building on existing strengths (rather than starting from scratch). Thus, EDA encouraged IMCP applicants to provide as much evidence as possible that points to the importance and growth of their KTS compared to other similar regions and the nation.

This enabled reviewers to better understand the strength and growth of a community's KTS and assess whether it is a national leader. Communities measured their top third status either by using the absolute scale of activity (such as employment or sales) in their KTS, or by using location quotients (LQs).

Location quotients (LQ) compare an area's business composition to that of a larger area (i.e., nation or a state). Economic development opportunities may exist for additional growth of the exporting or related industries because of the presence of an existing skilled labor pool or other resources such as suppliers, facilities or transportation hubs in the region.

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

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

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

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

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

Since 2002, employment within the manufacturing sector in Northwest Georgia experienced a 27 percent decline, greater than that of the southeast U.S. and the nation as a whole, but in 2012 manufacturing still formed 25 percent of total employment for the region. Manufacturing subsectors of textile mills and textile product mills formed 15 percent and 36

percent respectively of manufacturing employment in 2012, having sustained an employment loss of 38.8 percent for textile mills and 37.4 percent for textile product mills respectively from 2002-2012 (Source: Georgia DOL, 2014 NWGA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy).

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

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

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

For a region to attract and retain businesses, workforce development must provide a consistent pipeline of educated, trained, and "work ready" employees. For the demand and supply sides of an economy to balance, employers' needs must be communicated to partners in both education and local government, and potential employees must have access to appropriate training and education. This section details the state of the Northwest Georgia region's workforce, including job openings; top knowledge requirements; most desired hard and soft skills; occupational projections; recent industry announcements; forecasted direct and indirect job creation; educational enrollment; workforce training programs; workforce gaps; and innovation indicators (2014 NWGA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).

- The most in-demand occupations in the region are: recycling and reclamation workers; textile winding, twisting, and drawing out machinists; extruding and forming machinist; industrial truck and tractor operators; and first-line supervisors of production and operations (2014 NWGA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).
- A job opening snapshot revealed that top knowledge requirements across openings include: Production and processing; English language; mechanical, customer and personal service; and administration and management (2014 NWGA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).



- Occupational projections forecast that interior designers, computer-controlled machine tool operators, computer system analysts and vehicle and equipment cleaners will either remain stable or experience job growth in both the floor covering industry and across all occupations (2014 NWGA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).
- Occupations projected to increase employment in both the floor covering industry and across all occupations include interior designers, computer-controlled machine tool operators, computer system analysts, and vehicle and equipment cleaners (2014 NWGA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).
- Industry announcements from 2013 to 2014 estimate the job creation of more than 4,000 jobs with an estimated investment of more than one billion dollars in the region. Over half of these job projections are focused on the floor covering industry (2014 NWGA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).
- Between 2000 and 2011, patents within the “textile technologies” field amounted to over 70 percent of total technology patents within the Dalton MSA (2014 NWGA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).
- Research suggests that there is high demand for workers in the floor covering industry with a relatively high level of analytical competence. While a highly skilled workforce and the industry’s concentration in the region provide fertile ground for innovation activity, both workforce skill level and patent activity could be benefit from a talent and innovation pipeline with a research university (2014 NWGA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).

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

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

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

learned will be used to inform and improve workforce efforts nationally and support the creation of new partnerships.

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

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

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

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

The coordination between partners and the resulting initiatives have been a direct product of IMCP. Since 2014, the Floor360 Consortium and various IMCP working committees have provided a space to begin the conversation about what manufacturing means to the

Northwest Georgia region, how the region can leverage its strengths, and a platform for discovering innovative ways to overcome potential threats facing its manufacturing base. The team realized that bringing the industry's biggest competitors to the same table would be a challenge, but quickly discovered that there was shared interest in sustainability-related issues, as well as workforce development needs that were not being met across several interrelated manufacturing sectors in the region. Working on these common interests has led to opportunities for broadening the discussion around how to strengthen manufacturing in the region, and putting competition aside for the greater community good.

The Northwest Georgia IMCP and Floor360 Consortium have been active in IMCP-related conferences and events, and have hosted several senior-level White House officials in the region.

- **The Northwest Georgia Regional Workforce Partnership hosted USDOC Secretary Penny Pritzker and Deputy Secretary Jay Williams on May 6th, 2016 in Dalton, Georgia.** Visit included a tour of Engineered Floors and the Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy (future home of the Advanced Manufacturing and Business Academy), and participating in a roundtable discussion with Floor360 and CTWP leaders from industry, workforce development and the College and Career Academy.
- **EDA National Conference, April 7th - 8th, 2016 in Washington, D.C.** Georgia Tech presented on a conference panel that discussed "Partnerships that Drive Results in Advanced Manufacturing".
- **IMCP Summit, October 20th, 2015 in Washington, D.C.** Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) organized a meeting with other IMCP manufacturing communities in the ARC service area (Tennessee DRIVE and Greater Pittsburgh) to discuss respective experiences with IMCP. Trip also included a site visit to the Front Royal Inland Port. Also met with Congressman Tom Graves and Senator Johnny Isakson and their staff regarding support for the "Made in America Manufacturing Communities Act". The Northwest Georgia delegation also attended the IMCP Summit in 2014.
- **Georgia Tech hosted USEPA Administrator Gina McCarthy on October 2nd, 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia.** For National Manufacturing Day, the Administrator was briefed on how IMCP incorporates sustainability in advanced manufacturing through the newly-formed Alliance for Innovation and Sustainability (AIS) and the recently announced Appalachian Inland Port project in Murray County.
- **Georgia Tech hosted USDOT Deputy Secretary Victor Mendez on July 27th, 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia.** Discussed the need for transportation and infrastructure related to the development of the Appalachian Regional Inland Port.
- The February 2018 Manufacturing Communities Annual Summit in Washington DC with local representatives presented on a panel on Advanced Manufacturing workforce initiatives.

- The Alliance for Innovation and Sustainability (AIS) (as a Floor360 working group and now the lead organization) hosted a February 22, 2018 Lunch and Learn on “Workforce Development in North Georgia” and “Raising the Bar in Corporate Sustainability” on Thursday, November 16, 2017.
- As part of National Manufacturing day in October 2017, AIS hosted a group of middle and high school science teachers from around NW Georgia with a presentation of manufacturing-related programming available at GNTC and Dalton State, as well as a panel of representatives to discuss the region’s workforce and tours of manufacturing facilities.

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

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

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

- d. Provide a completed outline of the sector strategy for the previously identified sector that includes:**
- i. Participating employers** - Beaulieu, Shaw, Mohawk, and J & J Flooring Group
  - ii. Target Occupations** - robotics, PLCs, industrial maintenance, mechatronics, etc. too include career pathways in engineering, marketing, and business disciplines
  - iii. Training programs** – see below Strategy W1.1 through W3.4 for in-school and transitioning youth; Strategy 1.1 for out-of-school youth, adult, and dislocated worker populations.
  - iv. Target Populations** - middle and high school students, minority and female students, post- secondary and incumbent workers who need additional training to advance in their career.

### Outline of Sector Strategy

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

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

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

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

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

*Technology certificate and diploma programs with 24 students enrolled. These programs were designed for replication in other areas of the region. Additionally, programs have been created to better meet the needs of dual-enrolled students. The Chemical Laboratory Tech Assistant Certification and the Chemical Process Control Tech Assistant Certification were added. One student has interned and five are currently enrolled. Three students received the Chemical Laboratory Tech Certification in May 2018 and three students completed the Chemical Process Tech Assistant Certification in May 2018.*

- **Strategy W1.2. (Completed)** Conduct an assessment of historical, current, and projected future job needs, employment trends, and in-house training programs. *This was completed during development of the strategy.*
- **Strategy W1.3. (Underway)** Expand the mechatronics certification at Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy to other career academies in the region. Develop multiple industry recognized certifications at college and career academies in industrial systems, electronics, or electrical engineering to allow students to transition to immediate employment in a manufacturing career, or obtain partial tech college credit. *Mechatronics certification is complete. Other certifications are focus of second phase of Floor360, expansion of pilot efforts to Northwest Georgia region.*
- **Strategy W1.5. (Partially Complete)** Expand the high school co-op employment program (after school hours) during the school year. As part of the program, consider a small financial incentive or scholarship, and credit towards graduation. *Now currently offered at two of five career academies in the region, Floyd College and Career Academy and Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy/Phoenix Academy.*
- **Strategy W1.6. (Complete)** Develop a two-year apprenticeship program (during school hours) with college and career academies and participating employers. Leverage Georgia's dual enrollment/dual credit program, which is available to Georgia high school students to take college-level courses and earn concurrent credit toward a high school diploma and a college degree. *Currently being offered at Floyd College and Career Academy and Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy/Phoenix Academy. \$1.5M grant sought from the Kellogg Foundation to hire and train five STEM Coaches who will work with local middle schools, and secondary schools; while not funded, DSC and AIS are seeking other funding from foundation and local sources.*
- **Strategy W1.9. (Underway)** Provide digital learning experiences at local colleges and career academies, where applicable. Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy is already implementing digital learning in its programming. *Partnership with Clemson University ATE Center to facilitate and mentor a digital learning program in Northwest Georgia.*
- **Strategy W1.12. (Underway)** Expand student access to college and career academies, marketing manufacturing career pathways to rural communities. *Marketing working group began in 2015, utilizing marketing professionals from Shaw and Mohawk; in 2016, expanding to regional efforts in partnership with college and career academies and local chambers of commerce.*

- **Strategy W2.1. (Underway)** Partner with Georgia Tech’s VET2 veteran hiring program to funnel transitioning military personnel into the civilian workforce in Northwest Georgia. *Shaw Industries, one of the largest flooring firms in the world based in Dalton, is currently working with the VET2 program to train and place military personnel in the company.*
- **Strategy W3.1. (Partially Complete, Underway)** Re-focus the Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy on floor covering and advanced manufacturing career pathways. Track student movement from high schools to post-secondary education and/or employment. Design and implement pathways of study in regional career academies/technical high schools and postsecondary institutions and combine with work experience in the manufacturing setting that will prepare students for careers in manufacturing. *Launching the AMBA in Fall 2016 at the existing Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy. The AMBA Program had 117 students in 2017-18 and is expecting 147 students in 2018-19. Apprentices include three in 2017-18 and four expected in 2018-19.*
- **Strategy W3.2. (Complete)** Invest in a mobile STEM/engineering classroom and/or a mobile “maker space” that could travel to schools to provide hands-on learning opportunities for elementary and middle school students. *NWGRC acquired a mobile career center that can provide flexible teaching space.*
- **Strategy W3.3. (Underway)** Expand existing Design, Engineering and Manufacturing (DEM) camp offerings. *June 2015 Camp DEM for Dalton and Whitfield middle schoolers completed with 125 graduating students; now taking applications for 2016 camp. A total of 119 students in 2016 and 123 in 2017 completed Camp DEM.*
- **Strategy W3.4. (Underway)** Implement an “AMP It Up” program (Advanced Manufacturing and Prototyping Integrated to Unlock Potential) in local middle schools to enable students to explore their creativity and apply STEM knowledge using rapid prototyping equipment. *In their first ever competition, Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy’s Team 5900 recently won accolades at the FIRST Robotics worlds competition in April 2016 in St. Louis, MO using a robot designed at the academy’s robotics lab, which includes a 3D printer operated by the students.*

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

- **Strategy P1.1 (Underway)** Support goals of regional initiatives, including the Tennessee Valley IMCP, and Thrive 2055 studies. *Representatives of THRIVE2055, DRIVE, and Floor360 have made efforts to support shared regional projects and needs including workforce development and development of the Appalachian Regional Port (April 20, 2016 meeting with TDOT*

*Commissioner as example), and sustainability-related projects like the upcoming waste-to-energy technology, which could be broadened to include tire scraps.*

- **Strategy P1.2 (Underway)** Conduct international site visits with TCSG to identify potential export and foreign direct investment opportunities. *IMCP Floor360 Consortium members participated in 2015 TCSG visit to Wolfsburg, Germany to develop potential automotive supplier relationships.*
- **Strategy P2.1 (Underway) Create** an advanced manufacturing center for the floor covering industry that provides training and equipment (S-FLOR). Other services include: commercialization assistance, incubator space, advanced materials research lab, energy studio, and R&D space. *A proposed ARC POWER application would feature SFOR as central project.*
- **Strategy P5.3 (Under Development)** Partner with a Makerspace or create a new community manufacturing-focused makerspace, where students/parents, the community at large, and industry professionals can interact through hands-on experiences and competitions. *A \$100,000 ARC award was made in 2016 with IMCP designation to the Calhoun City Schools "Fab Lab" for this purpose.*

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

- **Strategy 1.1** Develop a comprehensive incumbent worker strategy to determine target occupations; develop training curriculum to produce competent worker with appropriate skills; and determine appropriate employers needing this service.
  - **Strategy 1.2** Continue offering on-the-job training to eligible out-of-school youth, adults, and dislocated workers including those with disabilities and other barriers to employment, as needed.
  - **Strategy 1.3** Develop customized training options as the opportunity presents itself in the Region to serve unemployed individuals and meet the needs of employers.
  - **Strategy 1.4** Develop registered apprenticeships in conjunction with the Technical College System of Georgia—Workforce Division or through other non-registered apprenticeships as appropriate offered as ITAs.
  - **Strategy 1.5** Utilizing the mobile career center to promote training opportunities and business services to employers in advance manufacturing sector.
  - **Strategy 1.6** Develop class size training options if existing training through ITAs does not meet the needs of employers.
- e. **Describe the plans for future strategy development for future sectors. If applicable, discuss the next sectors to be targeted.**



### **Advanced Manufacturing**

Advance Manufacturing is the selected sector for development and has had considerable success. However, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will continue to advance further in the coming year as new strategies are planned and implemented. Other proposed strategies, not yet accomplished, may grow from future partnership efforts for Floor360 including the following:

**\*High Demand Career initiative (HDIC)** The Governor’s launch of the High Demand Career Initiative (HDIC), will allow employers and businesses to work with members from an expanded advance manufacturing partnership to assess the regional workforce hiring needs and to coordinate with institutions of education in providing the training necessary for future workforce and to expand advanced manufacturing partnerships that will reach populations not currently being served.

- **Strategy P3.1** Create a regional “supplier match program” that would encourage the use and location of suppliers in the region. GaMEP and AIS may assist.
- **Strategy P4.1** Develop a manufacturing equipment donation tax credit for new/used equipment donation from industry. Consortium has seen the success of this tax credit applied in other states in its best practice “workforce center” research. Partnerships are needed at the state level to move this forward.
- **Strategy P4.2** Invite career academy manufacturing student teams to accompany industry partners at product/industry conventions or expo events. This will be a natural outgrowth of the apprenticeship programs currently being launched with several manufacturers in the region.
- **Strategy P5.2** Build an “invention studio” located at the advanced manufacturing hub (S-FLOR) using donated equipment from industry. This could take the form of an upgraded robotics lab at the NWGCCA/AMBA. Approximately \$50,000 in upgrades are currently needed to the lab.
- **Strategy P5.4** Create middle and high school student design competitions to solve a client or industry problem, from concept to product. Expand First Robotics programs across other career academies and high schools across the region.

Targeted populations of the in-school initiative to be engaged through training and marketing included middle and high school students, minority and female students, as well as their parents and teachers, to attract and retain students interested in manufacturing as a career whether seeking an occupation in manufacturing itself (robotics, PLCs, industrial maintenance, mechatronics, etc.) or in engineering, marketing, and business disciplines. The out-of-school youth, adult, and dislocated worker program sponsored through WIOA will target all eligible applicants interested in pursuing a career in advanced manufacturing, Special care will be taken to implement the Priority of Services by the WDB.

### **\*Logistics/Transportation**

Logistics/Transportation sector strategy will be pursued as an expansion in a new sector to enhance the advanced manufacturing sector’s products being taken to market and will

enhance the regional workforce development. Many of the same employers in advanced manufacturing are also involved in providing logistics/transportation and will allow for program success. The Inland Port will serve as a major thruway to advanced manufacturing in Northwest Georgia.

**\*Healthcare**

Additionally, WorkSource Northwest Georgia, the WDB regional employers and economic development partners plan to explore development of a healthcare sector strategy. This will serve the needs of the region's numerous healthcare facilities (hospitals, nursing homes and others) for a pipeline of well-trained workers to provide quality healthcare to the region's residents.

**6. Description of the One-Stop Delivery System – Provide a description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area that includes the items listed below.**

- a. Provide a description of how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.**

WorkSource Northwest Georgia staff annually conduct comprehensive monitoring of required and optional one-stop service providers and other core service providers in order to ensure strict adherence to local, state, and federal outcomes and regulations and provide quality service to the workforce system customer.

Once a training provider's application, including specific performance goals, cost data, and program certifications/accreditation, meets all requirements, it must be approved by the LWDB in order to be placed on the state's ETPL. Performance will then be monitored by staff. Providers, who are not within budget, are not meeting outcome expectations, or not providing training for demand occupations may be removed from the list.

- b. Provide a description of how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through use of technology, and other means.**

The NWGA One-Stop System has a comprehensive site in Rome that has a self-service resource area equipped with internet and video-telecommunications connectivity, and other multi-media resources. The [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org) web site ensures that individuals can, with internet access, can view information about the services and resources in the Northwest Georgia region. Also, some services can be accessed through use of the Georgia Department of Labor's internet-based enrollment and services system. Individuals are directed by a greeter to appropriate services via internet access, and "Tech Reps" are available to provide assistance in basic computer, software, internet applications, résumé preparation, job search and career opportunities, etc. Partner agencies who are co-located or visit the one-stops have dedicated computers and access to all available technology.

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

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

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

Individuals who seek to utilize the Region's workforce system can expect facilities, policies, and programs, whether physical or virtual, to meet federally-mandated accessibility standards. A complete assessment of all one-stop facilities has been completed to ensure compliance with WIOA §188, ADA/504, EEOC, and Vocational Rehabilitation guidelines. All questions and directives from the foregoing were assimilated, and then separated into the following categories: 1) facility, 2) programs and policies, and 3) operations and procedures. Self-assessments for "Programs and Policies" and "Operations and Procedures" were completed by the one-stop operators and reviewed by WorkSource Northwest Georgia staff during the monitoring process. The assessment of all facility assets was conducted by ADA-qualified staff, and all are wheelchair accessible and equipped with up-to-date disability assistive technology. Furthermore, all one-stops have either on-site bilingual staff or available translation services to assist individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Per federal law, WorkSource Northwest Georgia has designated a local Equal Opportunity Officer to receive and resolve local grievances and complaints, and to ensure WIOA § 188 compliance. All one-stops and off-site partners will be certified every two years. Regulatory

updates and guidance will be provided by the local Equal Opportunity Officer as needed. The “Equal Opportunity” tag line will continue to be prominently displayed in all advertising and print materials and included in personnel policies.

A review of the mobile career center was conducted by GVRA accessibility specialists and assistive technology and equipment was purchased following their suggestions. In addition to a factory-installed hydraulic lift and wheelchair accessible computer station, an additional equipment purchase included a ZoomText Magnifier/Reader, a large print keyboard, a screen reader, Universal Reader Plus, noise cancelling headphones, an FM System plus neck-loop, Marble Mouse, an ergonomic keyboard, and a bariatric heavy-duty chair. The mobile lab will deliver services throughout the region to individuals with special needs who would otherwise be unable to access them.

**d. Provide a comprehensive description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.**

The WIOA Law requires the providers of certain programs to be partners in the One-Stop System. The programs and their providers for WorkSource Northwest Georgia are listed on the next page:

Partner Program	Partner Organization
WIOA title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program	Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)
Career and technical education (CTE) programs at the postsecondary level, authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)	Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC)
Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)	Tallatoona Community Action Partnership
State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C.720 et seq.), as amended by title IV of WIOA	Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)	Mercy Care
	Legacy Link
Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG), authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C.	Georgia Department of Labor
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)	Georgia Department of Labor
1974 Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (ES) program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), as amended by title III of WIOA	Georgia Department of Labor
Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs under state unemployment compensation laws.	Georgia Department of Labor
WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs	Georgia Department of Labor
	Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC)
	Georgia Highlands College
Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD E&T Services)	Northwest Georgia Housing Authority

The NWGRC provides fiscal administration, and oversight of WIOA programs and projects. All other partners provide some, if not all, basic career services. The Georgia Department of

Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the partner colleges provide individualized career services. In addition, the comprehensive one-stop center coordinates and cooperates with additional agencies and organizations that expand the availability of career services for customers of the system.

The Comprehensive One-Stop is located in Rome. Affiliate one-stop centers are located in Department of Labor facilities, Georgia Highlands College, and all TCSG campuses where WIOA is offered. It has been agreed that equipment and areas designated as common areas within the partnership facilities may be used by all partners. All partners further agree to:

- participate in the development of the Centers' procedures/policies, business plan, or operational agreement
- participate in establishing the Center's client flow, assessment and case management, referrals, and other management processes
- participate in the System's program review, monitoring and evaluation process
- participate in Center/System training, when appropriate
- work to support Center/ System performance measures, goals, and objectives which includes applicable WIOA measures and any adopted by the Consortium and/or the local one-stop center's management team
- ensure that its legislated programs, services, and activities are provided in accordance with its goals, objectives, and performance measures
- maintain and provide to monitoring entity appropriate procedures, controls, and records
- abide by Confidentiality, Indemnification, and Referral Agreements
- participate in quarterly and annual reviews by providing budget and activity data

Currently, a tracking system is used to quantify each center partner's contributions and benefits. Expenses and services provided are reported quarterly and data received provides a comparative record of the services to budget ratio for each center. New resource sharing agreements are in place and tracking activities are coordinated through the One-Stop Operator.

- e. Identify the current One-Stop Operator in the local area(s) and describe how the region / local area is preparing for the competitive process for operator selection. Describe how market research, requests for information and conducting a cost and price analysis are being conducted as part of that preparation.**

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

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

The WDB issued the RFP for the procurement of the Operator and GDOL was awarded the grant. The Rome Career Center was also selected as the comprehensive location based upon center location, customer volume and employment data.

**7. Awarding Sub-grants and Contracts – Provide a description of the competitive process to be used to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under this Title I.**

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, as the administrative entity/fiscal agent, is responsible for the competitive procurement process for WIOA sub-grants and contracts. The requirements set forth in the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments (2 CFR 200) were followed in designing the Procurement Policy and Procedure. NWGA utilizes two types of procurement for sub-grants and contracts: Request for Proposal (RFP) and Sole Source Procurement.

- a. Request for Proposal** –When awarding sub-grants to Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth service providers staff develops an RFP that outlines the desired services based on WIOA law and Federal and State policies and regulations. Once drafted, a timeline for issuing the RFP is designed and will include a date for advertising the RFP, dates allowing bidders' access to the RFP – both online and hard copies, the date of the Bidders' Conference, the deadline for submitting questions regarding the RFP, the deadline for accepting proposals, and the date for approval by the Proposal Review Committee or Youth Committee, and Workforce Development Board.

In the competitive procurement process, the Workforce Development Board publicizes the opportunity to bid by providing newspapers with the information regarding the RFP or other solicitation and posting it on the [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org) website. By providing to the public its meeting time(s), minutes of the meetings, the plan, and other guiding documents to select sub-grants and contractors, it assures transparency in the selection process. Once proposals are received and reviewed for compliance, eligible proposals are reviewed and scored by staff members of NWGRC for, at a minimum, project design and implementation, prior experience of proposer, financial capability of the proposer, and cost effectiveness of proposal.

All eligible proposals for Adults and Dislocated Worker Services will be discussed and approved or rejected by the Proposal Review Committee. Its composition is representation of the private sector and/or organized labor representative.

Youth proposals are reviewed for approval by the Youth Committee. Youth Committee members may represent agencies such as education, training, health, mental health, public assistance, or be representatives of philanthropic or economic and development organizations, employers, and/or parents, participants, and youth and well as WDB members.

- b. Sole Source Procurement** - A sole source procurement may be awarded only if one the follow criteria are met:
  - a. The good/service is only available from one source.
  - b. After solicitation from a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate. This is typically met through insufficient bid responses.
  - c. Through a formal request to Technical College System of Georgia- Workforce Division for authorization for a non-competitive proposal.
  - d. Public emergency will not allow a delay resulting from the competitive procurement process. Technical College System of Georgia – Workforce Division must be notified in advance.
- c. Purchase Procedures and Code of Conduct** - Included in Attachment 7 is the policy for Purchase Procedures and Code of Conduct.
  - a. Small Value Purchasing Authority (SVPA) less than \$2500 (Non-Competitive)
  - b. Purchasing of Goods or Administrative Services \$2,500 or more but less than \$25,000
  - c. Purchasing of Goods and Administrative Services \$25,000 or greater
  - d. Sub-Contractor Purchases
  - e. Code of Conduct

The Proposal Review Committee and Youth Committee meeting times are announced as stated in order that all levels of review are available to the public. More information about the committees can be found If the committee approval is met, the selected proposal(s) will be recommended by the appropriate Committee to the Workforce Development Board for approval. See Attachment 7 for a detailed description of the process.

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

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



## **LOCAL BOARDS AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT:**

- 1. Local Boards – Provide a description of the local board that includes the components listed below.**
  - a. Describe how local board members are identified and appointed. Include a description of how the nomination process occurs for adult education and labor representatives. (Proposed § 679.320(g))**

In the spring of 2015, the Council of Chief Elected Officials met to review requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act regarding the Workforce Development Board's composition. At that time, it was determined that existing members of the Workforce Investment Board be given the opportunity as the first priority if they were deemed to meet WIOA representation requirements and if they desired to serve on the newly formed Board. The Council of Chief Elected Officials also determined that the Board should be as small in number as feasible and that it was a preference that at least one member for each county be appointed, if possible.

The President of the Georgia State AFL-CIO has nominated the organized labor representative in the past. This continues to be the first priority for nominations. Should a nomination not be made through this process, local organized labor representatives will be contacted. The union-affiliated registered apprenticeship representative was difficult to locate and only one nominee was found. Hopefully, registered apprenticeships will grow in the Region to foster this training option and to provide continued leadership on the Board. The two organized labor representatives and the registered apprenticeship representative were part of the requirement to meet 20 percent of the membership with workforce representatives. Two other suggested members were a community-based organization representative and members representing demonstrated experience and expertise in serving the youth. One of the existing members was initially selected who was a community-based organization representative. The adult education representative that was chosen also supervises a successful out-of-school program and was selected to meet dual requirements (adult education and youth programs). Future appointments will be made by soliciting nominations from similar organizations. The remaining required representation (i.e. higher education; governmental and economic development entities; Wagner-Peyser, Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) will come in the future from the administrative entities as specified. The remaining representatives provided in 679.320E (1-4) are flexible and will be considered as openings on the Board occur. Only an elected official was added as a required member on the Board and the existing WDB member representing elected officials was selected.

The adult education nominations were solicited from the three adult education partners in the One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding: Chattahoochee Technical College, Georgia Northwestern Technical College, and West Georgia Technical College. Once again, however, the Chief Elected Officials selected a representative of Technical and Adult Education to initially serve as higher education/adult education. When this was determined to be

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

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

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

The Workforce Development Board Member Orientation Manual has been developed to assist new members in learning about the Workforce Development Board goals, responsibilities, programs, initiatives, member listing, bylaws, and other information. The Manual is provided on the Career Depot website. Not only are members given a copy, opportunities are scheduled throughout the year for orientation sessions or for individualized orientation meetings.

**c. Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with regional economic development activities carried out in the region (in which the local area is located or planning region).**

As noted earlier in the plan, WorkSource Northwest Georgia has implemented an action-based process using the strategy results from the Northwest Georgia Advanced Manufacturing Strategy Plan. This combines regional planning, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and WIOA plan action items to address the identified needs of industry in the region.

Partners that have been involved in the process include: Community & Economic Development Staff of NWGRC; local Chambers of Commerce; Georgia Power Economic Development; GNTC Economic Development; TCSG; and other partners that have been involved with the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia has a long history of working closely with the region's economic development partners. They understand that all stakeholders: economic development, education, businesses, workforce development and community providers, must work together to develop optimal solutions that ensure the region's economic prosperity.

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

Board members have determined that their involvement can be enhanced through opportunities to work through a committee structure. There are currently four committees, which have 15 of the 21 Board members actively engaged. This committee structure provides the opportunity to look more closely at issues, local priorities, and funding initiatives. Every effort has been made to assure that Board members participate in state, regional, and/or

federal meetings and conferences where training opportunities for Board members are available. The Georgia Workforce Leadership Association, Southeast Education and Training Association, and National Association of Workforce Boards are opportunities afforded to the Board members for vital information sharing.

The Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board receives the Career Depot newsletter and The Business Informer email blasts periodically to provide valuable information regarding training and work-related activities and resources. The WDB meetings have also been an opportunity for members to be more informed regarding regional activities. Among the presenters at the last few meetings have been partners such as Adult Education, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, TCSG, Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Tech Innovation Institute, and the Advanced Manufacturing sector representative from the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. These presentations are providing a solid background for members regarding one-stop services and other resources.

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

The four committees of the Workforce Development Board of Northwest Georgia are currently: Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, Proposal Review Committee, and Youth Committee.

- The Executive Committee reviews significant monitoring findings of sub-grantees and contractors and acts as needed to review issues not assigned to other committees.
- The Nominating Committee provides a slate of Officers for consideration of the Workforce Development Board. Other nominations, however, may come from the Board Members in the selection of Officers. This Committee is appointed by the Chairman of the WDB and serves as terms expire or officers resign or otherwise vacate their office.
- The Proposal Review Committee serves as an integral part of the procurement review and approval/disapproval process. All adult and dislocated workers proposed activities including one-stop procurement are reviewed through this Committee. Its composition is representation of the private sector and/or organized labor representative. The Proposal Review Committee reviews funding recommendations from the staff and makes their recommendation to the Workforce Development Board. In the event that a quorum is not present, the full Board receives recommendations from the staff and makes a decision based upon the information provided in a proposal summary which includes information regarding the type of training proposed; the agency/individual that is proposing services; the counties proposed to be served; the total cost and cost per participant, if applicable; the review score; and the recommendation by the staff or by the Proposal Review Committee, if appropriate.

- The Youth Committee, under the guidance and approval of the WDB shall, in accordance with an agreement of the WDB with the CCEO:
  - A. Recommend policy direction to the Local Board for the design, development, and implementation of programs that benefit all youth;
  - B. Recommend the design of a comprehensive community workforce development system to ensure a full range of services and opportunities for all youth, including disconnected youth;
  - C. Recommend ways to leverage resources and coordinate services among schools, public programs, and community-based organizations serving youth;
  - D. Recommend ways to coordinate youth services and recommend eligible youth service providers;
  - E. Provide on-going leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs;
  - F. Assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth;
  - G. Oversee eligible youth providers, as well as other youth program oversight responsibilities; and
  - H. Serve to review staff recommendation of funding for youth services and make recommendations to the Workforce Development Board.

The Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board Youth Committee shall include the following:

1. A minimum of one (1) member of the local Workforce Development Board who chairs the Youth Committee and has special interest or expertise in youth policy. Consideration of business, education and human service agency members is encouraged.
2. Members of community-based organizations with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth and other individuals with appropriate expertise who are not members of the local Board.
3. Other members may include other appropriate individuals as determined by the WDB in cooperation with the local Chief Elected Officials and should reflect the needs of youth including out-of-school youth. Members may represent agencies such as education, training, health, mental health, public assistance, or be representatives of philanthropic or economic and development organizations, employers, and/or parents, participants, and youth.

The maximum number of members of the Youth Committee shall be twenty (20). Youth Committee members who are not members of the WDB shall be voting members of the Youth Committee and non-voting members of the WDB.

During the Youth Committee meetings, each goal and objective is discussed and updated to reflect the committee member's efforts in providing youth services to Northwest Georgia. Below is an updated outline of how each goal and objectives have been met:

- A. To identify the workforce needs of businesses through the utilization of the local labor market and educational data and technology and to meet those needs by emphasizing business services.
  - Providing resource directory where individuals and organizations can locate training resources, education, and business resources (Staff, contractors, and committee members routinely update the resource directory yearly).
  - Provide information about the full array of applicable services available through community partners and one-stop partners (Staff has developed a youth brochure for contractors, community organizations, and board members that provide a full array of services available to youth in Northwest Georgia. In addition, information about services is available through the [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org) website).
- B. To improve the economic self-sufficiency of individuals.
  - Strengthening referrals to ensure participants receive appropriate training and educational programs that are customer driven (staff routinely make referrals to contractors, VR, and the youth committee members).
  - Accessible and easy to understand Labor Market Information (LMI) that can engage young job seekers in career exploration, seeking employment and looking to improve skills and education (Through the youth contractors, participants are given opportunities to explore the Labor Market Information website and engage in seeking employment to improve their current condition).
- C. To provide customer-focused services (both for the employers and individuals) through the development and implementation of sector strategies and career pathways.
  - Identify strategies to develop career pathways, career counseling, job readiness, and post-secondary education.
    - Provide Industry sectors in advance manufacturing, medical fields, and logistics (Youth participants are encouraged to explore the Trade Five website).
    - Provide career counseling and career exploration in determining career pathways and goals to be successful (Youth contractors provide year-round mentoring and counseling).
    - Career pathways that include customer center approach connecting employers, training (post-secondary education), and adult education to meet the needs of the individuals and employers (Youth participants are encouraged to complete the Georgia Best program and Job Career Ready soft skills training).
    - Work with technical colleges in developing career pathways programs that make it easier for people to earn industry-recognized credentials and skills that can transfer to work.

Including short-term training programs (The Youth program provides an opportunity for out-of-school youth to complete short-term training that will lead to securing a job in one of the Five Trades outlined in the State Initiative. In addition, Youth may be eligible for enrollment into an Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) training program from eligible training providers. This allows the youth participants to make a self-informed choice about their own employment future and the training needs).

- D. To reduce unemployment rates among older youth, and improve their career prospects.
- Create a comprehensive strategy to help unemployed older youth reconnect with work and further education opportunities.
    - Provide a public awareness of the youth unemployment issue (Staff provides a monthly update of unemployment numbers from DOL for Out-of-School youth ages 16-24).
    - Develop more numbers of school-to-work initiatives (Committee members and staff are researching different programs that would be feasible for this committee structure).

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

WIOA staff and required partners reviewed the State Plan to determine overall goals, strategies, and State resources that had been identified in the State Plan. Based on the information gleaned from this review, the local plan guidance was divided between the partners for an in-depth study of local adaptation needed to develop the Regional Plan. Partners (technical college representatives, including adult education and others, the Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, and WIOA representatives) submitted drafts of pertinent plan sections, consistent with the overall State vision, goals and strategies as adapted for local/regional priorities. For the initial 2016 Plan, a consultant was hired to review the plan sections and make recommendations, which resulted in modifications, as necessary, by the agency submitting the section. For the 2018 update to the Plan, staff and partners provided input.

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

In addition, two advisory councils, the PAID and One Stop Partner Advisory Council provide expertise to the Local Workforce Development Board of Northwest Georgia.

The **Promoting Access for Individuals with Disabilities (PAID)** Advisory Council meets quarterly (at a minimum) to assist individuals in finding employment opportunities, training and individual resources with the following goals:

- A. Assure accessibility of services
  - 1. Physical and programmatic access at One-Stop Centers—(Maia Santamaria and Mike Galifianakis will assess the Rome Comprehensive One-Stop Center (and later other Career Centers) for programmatic accessibility.
  - 2. Accessibility of online services (508 compliance of material)—Web site and social media has been checked and the process to make the site and materials compliant is ongoing.
  
- B. Research and list innovative and creative program offerings to improve the economic self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities by:
  - 1. Continuing to braid service strategies and funding to fully use expertise of partners (WIOA youth programs/VR partnership in progress; VR and TCSG staff routinely utilize the Mobile Career Center for transition fairs in multiple counties); and
  - 2. Continuing to make referrals across programs to ensure job-ready individuals with disabilities receive the assistance they need for a successful job search (DOL staff routinely make referrals to VR, the NWGA CIL, and NWGRC for individuals with disabilities).
  
- C. Provide customer-focused information and resources (both for the employers and individuals) through continued input to the local workforce area regarding:
  - 1. Development and implementation of sector strategies and career pathways;
  - 2. Providing necessary supports to individuals with disabilities (Staff and committee members routinely make referrals to VR, TCSG, the NWGA CIL, NWGRC, and other organizations for individuals with disabilities);
  - 3. Providing insight to the partners and business to help ensure that job seekers with disabilities are included in sector strategies (recruit business representatives for committee participation; regularly attend NWGA CIL meetings and programs); and

4. Emphasizing assistance to veteran job seekers with disabilities: involve WIOA, VR, ES, and Veteran staff to develop strategies to market veterans to employers.
- D. Assist in providing an integrated approach to the system's overall performance management by:
1. Using the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program to assist the local area in providing a system-wide approach (committee members and staff are researching the Baldrige program to determine its feasibility for this committee structure)
    - (a) conducting work sessions with committee members, board members, business representatives, employer committee members, chambers of commerce, and individuals with disabilities in order to continuously improve services and support a culture of high performance (staff regularly attends the NWGA CIL Workshops, employer committee meetings, chamber of commerce meetings; staff also routinely views webinars and accesses/sends other information about services for individuals with disabilities to the PAID Committee members );
    - (b) assist in identifying current and future system organizational needs; and
    - (c) make recommendations to the WDB routinely (PAID Committee reports to WDB as needed).

The **One-Stop Partner Advisory Council** is a group of workforce partners that, under WIOA, are required to be a part of the One-Stop System. The local group meets quarterly with monthly calls on other months to discuss issues and events that affect the One-Stop Partners and the WorkSource Northwest Georgia Workforce System. The group activities and meetings are coordinated by the One-Stop Operator who also provides update to the WDB periodically. The purpose of the One-Stop System is to provide the community with a variety of workforce services at each One-Stop location. The System has one Comprehensive Center where all partners are either physically present or accessible via electronic access. Other Affiliate sites have at least one workforce service. All partners provide services through their participation and receive the benefit of referrals to their programs. The partner group meetings/calls are a way of updating each other on activities in the region and to cross train other partners to better provide partner referrals. Recently the group has developed a One-Stop Referral Guide with partner input that lays out the methods for the referral system between the partners. The goal of this Advisory Council is to increase community knowledge of the Center and to increase the community's utilization the One-Stop System.



Prior to the release of the draft plan a local focus group of youth participating in the WIOA program met on October 4, 2018 and provided their input into the draft document. In addition, the Executive committee of the Northwest Georgia Workforce Board met on October 9, 2018 provided their input into the Plan, and took action to approve posting the plan for the 30-day comment period. The WDB regular schedule meeting will be November 14, 2018, during which time the WDB/CCEO will ratify the approval of the plan.

Upon approval of the Plan by the Executive committee, public notice was given to all legal organs in the regions. This publicized the availability to the public of the Plan, both in printed form at the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, 1 Jackson Hill Drive, Rome, Georgia, and online at [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org). Any comments received will be included with submission of the Plan.

#### **SERVICE DELIVERY AND TRAINING:**

- 1. Expanding Service to Eligible Individuals – Provide a description of how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and how it will improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, academic or industry-recognized.**

WorkSource Northwest Georgia has provided workforce services to the 15 counties in Northwest Georgia beginning with JTPA, WIA, and now WIOA. The Region was the first in the state to implement a full-service one-stop center. WorkSource Northwest Georgia has now expanded the One-Stop Delivery System to include seven full service one-stop centers. The centers, which are responsible for providing core program activities, are comprised of partner agencies including, but not limited to WIOA, TCSG, GVRA, and DOL. The partners have a common goal of building a workforce system that enables individuals to achieve their highest potential and to ensure that employers have the skilled workforce needed to compete effectively in the global economy.

**Employment Services through One-Stop Partners-** The region's One-Stop Center provides many services, including Unemployment Insurance (UI). While there are several points of entry into the workforce system, UI serves as the portal for many customers. As the provider of UI and Wagner Peyser (WP) services, GDOL is uniquely poised to welcome customers into the workforce system and provide comprehensive and targeted referrals to the other core partners. While a large amount of WP referrals come from UI, that system is not the only source of workforce customers. GDOL also utilizes the Business Service Unit (BSU) to attract customers. No matter the entry point into the workforce system, customers are first provided career services (previously core and intensive services) through WP. These services are provided through the one-stop system and other affiliate sites. If the customer is deemed to be ready for gainful employment after receiving

career services, WP staff assists the customer with job search and placement. If the customer is deemed to need training services, then the WP staff refers the customer to the other core partners based on the needs of the customer. Training services are then provided to the customer through WIOA, VR, or Adult Education Services.

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

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

**Mobile Lab** - In PY 2015, Northwest Georgia invested in a state of the art Mobile Learning Unit/Lab to provide Core Services “on the road.” The region has rural counties that do not have a Career Center in close proximity. The Mobile Unit is equipped to bring the Career Center services to business closings, job fairs, and recruitment and training events. It is a fully-equipped mobile lab with 13 computers with flat screen monitors and satellite internet connection.

**Promoting WIOA**—WorkSource Northwest Georgia promotes WIOA through its website and distributes one newsletter to area service providers and individuals. The Career Depot Newsletter is an email blast that is circulated once a quarter and reaches over 3,500 businesses and agencies.

The region’s youth and adult providers also promote WIOA events on social media, local job fairs, chamber of commerce, open house, community meeting, and local news media as avenues to meet and recruit participants.

The Region used marketing materials that include the State Brand. The recognizable State Brand improves program recognition and knowledge for employers, participants, businesses, and industries statewide.

**2. Description of Services to Adult and Dislocated Workers – Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.**

WorkSource Northwest Georgia works in a coordinated effort with key partners to provide career services to all adults and dislocated workers. Employment and training services are administered through the one-stop system. WIOA seeks to deliver a broad array of integrated services to individuals seeking jobs and skills training, as well as employers seeking skilled workers. This is achieved by: improving the workforce system; more closely aligning it with regional economies; and strengthening the network of one-stop centers. Customers must have access to a seamless system of high-quality services through coordination of programs, services and governance structures. The Act builds closer ties among key workforce partners—business leaders, workforce boards, labor unions, community colleges, non-profit organizations, and State and local officials—in striving for a more job-driven approach to training and skills development.

Under WIOA, there is no longer a sequence of services; a participant may receive services in any order that is deemed appropriate and Core and Intensive services have been combined into “Career Services.”

Career services for adults and dislocated workers include three types of career services, as identified in Section 678.430 of the NPRMs: Basic career services; individualized career services; and follow-up services.

- A. Basic career services must be made available and, at a minimum, must include the following services, as consistent with allowable program activities and federal cost principles:
- Determination of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker or youth programs;
  - Outreach, intake and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop system;
  - Initial assessment of skills levels, including literacy, numeracy and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps) and support service needs;
  - Labor exchange services, including:
    - Job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including the provision of information regarding in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
    - Appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including information and referrals to specialized business services not traditionally offered through the one-stop system
  - Provision of referral to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the one-stop system and, when appropriate other workforce development programs;

- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including information related to local, regional and national labor market areas, such as:
    - Job vacancy listings in labor market areas
    - Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs available; and
    - Information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skills requirements and opportunities for advancement in those jobs
  - Provision of performance information and program cost information on the eligible providers of training services, by program and provider type
  - Provision of information on how the LWDA is performing on federal performance measures:
    - Provision of information on the availability of support services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including:
      - i. child care
      - ii. child support
      - iii. medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program
      - iv. benefits under SNAP
      - v. assistance through the earned income tax credit
      - vi. housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
      - vii. assistance under a state program for TANF, and other support services and transportation provided through that program
      - viii. Per Section 134(c)(2)(a)(x) regulations requires as a career service the provision of both information and assistance to customers regarding filing of UI claims. Such assistance must be meaningful and provided by staff who are well training in UI claims. This service helps meet the requirement that the one-stop system, established under WIOA, provides participants with a seamless and professional experience.
  - Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA, including HOPE and Pell.
- B. Individualized career services must be made available if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. In accordance with TEGL 3-15, individuals must be declared eligible to receive these services. These include the following services, as consistent with WIOA requirements and federal cost principles:
- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skills levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, including diagnostic testing and use of other

assessment tools; and in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;

- Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of and information regarding the ETPL;
- Group counseling;
- Individual counseling and mentoring;
- Career planning;
- Short-term pre-vocational skills, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;
- Internships and work experience that are linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities;
- Financial literacy services;
- Out-of-area job search and relocation assistance; and
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

Career services are provided by the one-stop system through the MOUs developed between partners and contracts or agreements with service providers procured through and approved by the local WDB. The WDB and the one-stop center operator will review career services to determine if any of these services are being provided or may be provided by a partner at the one-stop center(s) and update MOUs as appropriate.

- C. Follow-up services must be made available, as appropriate, and include counseling regarding the workplace for adult and dislocated worker participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment. These services must be provided at a minimum of 12 months from the first day of employment.

#### D. Training

The one-stop centers are equipped with staff that administers testing and evaluations to aid in determining which training program would best benefit the participant.

- Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) allows an individual to select from the Eligible Provider List, a training institution that has been State approved. Career Advisers/Career Planners consult with each participant and document in their Individual Employment Plan (IEP) the results of their assessments, employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and the successful academic progress of the

participant. The Career Adviser also utilizes labor market information from O\*NET to assist with the preparation for employment.

The participant must first apply for financial assistance through PELL and HOPE. If a determination is made of an unmet need, WIOA can assist with tuition cost and books. Participants are also eligible to receive support payments to help defray the cost of travel and child care, NRPs, and other support as necessary.

- The On-the-Job Training (OJT) program provides training to participants through hands-on experience with eligible employers. The participant is hired by the employer and engages in productive work for the employer. On-the-Job Training is used to provide knowledge or skills essential for the full and adequate performance of a job. It is limited in duration, as appropriate to the occupation for which the participant is being trained, taking into account the content of the training, the prior work experience of the participant, and the service strategy of the participant, as appropriate.

The WIOA system provides reimbursement to the OJT employers. WIOA regulations allow reimbursements up to 75 percent of the hourly wage of the participant for a pre-determined length of time, to assist with the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the training. OJT may be provided under contract with an employer in the public, private non-profit, or private sectors.

- The Work Experience Program, also known as Transitional Jobs, provides time-limited work experience through subsidized employment in private, non-profit, or public sector jobs for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history, poor work history, or no work history. A 10 percent limitation in expenditures is requested in the Adult/Dislocated Program WIOA requirements for transitional jobs. This service option may be provided when more guidance of new regulations is provided.

Work Experience can be an effective solution for individuals to gain necessary work experience that they would not be able to get through training or an OJT contract. The goal is to establish a work history for the individual, demonstrate work success, and develop skills that lead to entry into unsubsidized employment. Adult Work Experience opportunities are explored to assist the region's hardest-to-serve populations. Transitional jobs/work experience is not currently available for adults/dislocated workers but may be implemented at a later date.

- An Internship is a short-term or part-time work assignment with a private for-profit, non-profit, or public employer, designed to enhance skills learned in a classroom setting, and to provide the opportunity for the application of these learned skills. Internships occur prior to, concurrent with, or subsequent to occupational classroom training, or basic skills training aiding the participant in applying the basic skills necessary to compete successfully in the labor market.

- Customized training is designed to provide our local area with flexibility to ensure that training meets the unique needs of the job seeker and employer or groups of employers. Customized training is to be used to meet the special requirements of an employer, with a commitment by the employer to employ all individuals upon successful completion of training. The employer pays a significant share of the training cost. The WDB is formalizing a customized training policy for selection of providers.
- Incumbent Worker Training is designed to assist workers in obtaining the skills needed to advance within the company or to avert layoffs and increase both a participant's and a company's competitiveness. Policies for incumbent training are in the development process to meet the needs of businesses in the Region.
- The Apprenticeship program offers a combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction in which workers can learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly-skilled occupation. Apprenticeship programs are sponsored by joint employer and labor groups, individual employers, and/or employer associations. The region will seek out apprenticeship opportunities through partnerships with area businesses.

**3. Description of Rapid Response Services – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.**

Georgia's Rapid Response is a team of state and local workforce development partners who plan and coordinate assistance for employers and workers affected by temporary or permanent business layoffs. Once the local staff or State staff has been notified of a company closure or layoff, a WARN notification is issued.

Georgia's local workforce development areas will assist with Rapid Response services. The LWDA representative collaborates with the Georgia Department of Labor Rapid Response Team to coordinate services and provide assistance to employers and laid-off employees.

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

The NWGA WDB mobile lab is used extensively for some of the closings. This permits onsite services for employees, such as completing a resume, filing for Unemployment Insurance, taking an assessment and conducting job searches.

Although most of the services through Rapid Response are in response to immediate separation events, if there is adequate time and opportunity, layoff aversion strategies can be developed and implemented. Flexibility by the Rapid Response team to meet the needs of business operations and employers during non-traditional work hours, off-site, virtually, or other means should be

standard operating procedures to assure layoff aversion and other Rapid Response activities is fully available.

All Trade customers are entitled to Rapid Response and employment services. Based on the nature of the layoff, early intervention by the GDOL representative may include discussions with the employer about Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) before a petition is filed. Once a petition is filed, TAA staff notify partners, the LWDA representative and Georgia DOL Career Centers. TAA staff coordinates and facilitate worker orientations to inform the affected employers about the benefits and services they may receive, as well as the eligibility requirements associated with each benefit. These worker orientation sessions include the LWDA representative, who provides guidance on demand occupations and available training in the local area.

The Rapid Response team along with local staff may discuss with employers when there is adequate time and opportunity for lay-off aversion efforts. Additional opportunities may be discussed with employers when there is adequate time and opportunity for layoff aversion efforts. The layoff aversion strategies are activities which gather information and build partnerships. Assistance to area employers in managing reductions in force is coordinated with rapid response activities and with strategies for aversion of layoffs. This may include strategies such as early identification of firms at risk of layoffs, use of feasibility studies to assess the needs of and options for at-risk firms, and the delivery of employment and training activities to address risk factors.

**4. Description of Youth Services – Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce development activities in the local area, including activities for youth with disabilities. This description and assessment shall include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce development activities.**

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

**WIOA-Eligible Youth** - Eligible youth are individuals between the ages of 14 and 24, that are either out-of-school youth (OSY) or in-school youth (ISY), as defined by WIOA Section 129(a)(1), and meet one of the following additional conditions: Basic skills deficient; English language learner; an offender; homeless, runaway, in foster care or aged out of the foster care system; pregnant or parenting; an individual with a disability; or a person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.

Services are provided to eligible youth participants through a network of youth service providers and their partners. The Act lists fourteen program elements that must be made available to eligible youth. Youth providers in Northwest Georgia have the discretion to determine what specific program services they plan to provide to the youth participants they will serve, based on each participant's objective assessment and individual service plan. Providers who do not provide all elements needed by the individuals enrolled in their program must identify the methods by which those elements will be provided for each WIOA youth participant, as applicable for the individual youth. Collaborative relationships with community resources may be the source of the additional service elements.



The local design framework provided by WorkSource Northwest Georgia Youth Providers for services include: Eligibility intake, objective assessments, the development of individual service strategy, mentoring/case management, 14 Program Elements and other program activities and follow-up services as deemed necessary to enhance the participant's future.

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

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

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

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

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

**LWDB's Youth Providers and Partners will make available to participants, as needed, the following required 14 youth program elements:**

- (1) **Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction and Evidence based Dropout Prevention and Recovery Strategies:** These services must lead to the completion of requirement for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential.
- (2) **Alternative Secondary School Services or Drop-out Recovery Services:** Alternative Secondary School Services or Dropout Recovery Services provide options for students who are at risk of dropping out of high school to remain engaged in an alternative learning environment that focuses on their particular skills, abilities, and learning style.
- (3) **Paid and Unpaid Work Experience:** Paid and Unpaid Work experiences are planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workforce for a limited period of time. A work experience may take place in the private for profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. Labor standards apply in any work experience where an employee/employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act or applicable State law, exists. Work experiences provide the youth participant with opportunities for career exploration and for skill development. The types of youth work experiences include the following categories:
  - A. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; summer employment opportunities are a component of the work experience program element.
  - B. Pre-apprenticeship programs; a pre-apprenticeship is a program of set strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program and has a documented partnership with at least one, if not more, registered apprenticeship programs;
  - C. Internships and job shadowing; and
  - D. On-the-job training opportunities.
- (4) **Occupational Skills Training:** Occupational Skills Training is an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. Priority consideration to training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the LWDA.
 

In order to enhance individual participant choice in their education and training plans and provide flexibility to service providers, WIOA allows ITAs to be provided to out-of-school youth, ages 18-24, using WIOA youth funds when appropriate.
- (5) **Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation:** This program element reflects the integrated education and training

model and requires integrated education and training to occur concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training. This program element describes how workforce preparation activities, basic academic skills, and hands on occupational skills training are to be taught within the same time frame and connected to training in a specific occupation, occupation cluster, or career pathway.

- (6) **Leadership Development:** Leadership Development includes community service and peer- centered activities focusing on positive social and civic behaviors that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive behaviors, such as:
- A. Exposure to postsecondary educational possibilities;
  - B. Community and service learning projects;
  - C. Peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring;
  - D. Organizational and team work training, including team leadership training;
  - E. Training in decision making, including determining priorities and problem solving;
  - F. Citizenship training, including life skills training such as parenting and work behavior training;
  - G. Civic engagement activities which promote the quality of life in a community; and
  - H. Other leadership committees, such as a standing Youth Committee.

Positive social and civic behaviors are outcomes of leadership opportunities, which are incorporated by local programs as part of their menu of services. Positive social and civic behaviors focus on areas such as:

- Positive attitudinal development;
- Self-esteem building;
- Openness to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds;
- Maintaining healthy lifestyles, including being alcohol and drug free;
- Maintaining positive social relationships with responsible adults and peers, and contributing to the well-being of one's community, including voting;
- Maintaining a commitment to learning and academic success;
- Avoiding delinquency;
- Responsible parenting, including child support education;
- Positive job attitudes and work skills; and

- Keeping informed in community affairs and current events.
- (7) **Supportive Services:** Supportive services enable a youth to participate in WIOA activities. The Supportive Services policy is provided within this plan beginning on page 86.
- (8) **Adult Mentoring:** Adult mentoring must occur for duration of at least 12 months and may occur both during and after program participation. Adult mentoring for youth must:
- A. Last at least 12 months. Be documented and may take place both during the program and following exit from the program;
  - B. Be a formal relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement to develop the competence and character of the mentee;
  - C. Include a mentor who is an adult other than the assigned youth case manager. While group mentoring activities and mentoring through electronic means are allowable as part of the mentoring activities, at a minimum, the local youth program must match the youth with an individual mentor with whom the youth interacts on a face-to-face basis.

Mentoring may include workplace mentoring where the local program matches a youth participant with an employer or employee of a company.

- (9) **Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling:** Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling provides individualized counseling to participants. This includes career and academic counseling, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling and referral to partner programs, as appropriate.

When referring participants to necessary counseling that cannot be provided by the local youth program or its service providers, the local youth program must coordinate with the organization it refers to in order to ensure continuity of service.

- (10) **Financial Literacy Education:** Financial Literacy Education includes a variety of activities, including – but not limited to:
- A. Support the ability of participants to create budgets, initiate checking and savings accounts at banks, and make informed financial decisions;
  - B. Support participants in learning how to effectively manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans consumer credit, and credit cards;
  - C. Teach participants about the significance of credit reports and credit scores; what their rights are regarding their credit and financial information; how to determine the accuracy of a credit report and how to correct inaccuracies; and how to improve or maintain good credit;
  - D. Support a participant's ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities and to make informed financial decisions;

- E. Educate participants about identity theft, ways to protect themselves from identify theft, and how to resolve cases of identity theft and in other ways understand their rights and protections related to personal identity and financial data;
  - F. Support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of non-English speakers, including providing the support through the development and distribution of multilingual financial; literacy and education materials;
  - G. Provide financial education that is age appropriate, timely, and provides opportunities to put lessons into practice, such as by providing access to safe and affordable financial products that enable money management and savings; and
  - H. Implement other approaches to help participants gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed financial decisions that enable them to attain greater financial health and stability by using high quality, age appropriate, and relevant strategies and channels, including, where possible, timely and customized information, guidance, tools and instructions.
- (11) **Entrepreneurial Skills Training:** Training should provide the basis of starting and operating a small business. Such training must develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship. Some examples of entrepreneurial skill development include, but are not limited to, the ability to:
- A. Take initiative;
  - B. Creatively seek out and identify business opportunities;
  - C. Develop budgets and forecast resource needs;
  - D. Develop a customer-centered environment;
  - E. Understand various options for acquiring capital and the tradeoffs associated with each option; and
  - F. Communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas.
  - G. Entrepreneurship education that provides an introduction to the vales and basics of starting and running a business, Entrepreneurship education programs often guide youth through the development of a business plan and may also include simulations of business start-up and operation;
  - H. Enterprise development which provides support and services that incubate and help youth develop their own businesses. Enterprise development programs go beyond entrepreneurship education by helping youth access small loans or grants that are needed to begin business operation and by providing more individualized attention to assist in the development of viable business ideas.
- (12) **Labor Market and Employment Information Services:** Labor Market and Employment Information Services provide labor market and employment information about demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness,

career counseling, and career exploration services. The Labor Market Area is an economically integrated geographic area within which individuals can reside and find employment within reasonable distance or can readily change employment without changing their place or residence.

- (13) **Activities that Prepare for Transition to Postsecondary Education and Training:** Activities include career exploration and research. LWDA's are encouraged to provide youth with relevant information and opportunities.

LWDA's may utilize case managers to assist students with gaining entrance into postsecondary education and training and financial aid applications. LWDA's may provide access to postsecondary education and training entrance examination preparation, and may also provide access to the remedial coursework necessary to gain entrance into post-secondary education and training.

- (14) **Follow-up Services:** Follow-up Services are provided following a youth's exit from the program to help ensure the youth is successful in employment and/or post-secondary education and training.

#### **Other Youth Program Elements:**

**Career Portfolios** - Out-of-School youth providers must incorporate into their program design individual career portfolios for each youth served. A career portfolio is a place to record and store information about the individual's values, skills, and ideas regarding their career plans. It is also a place to record career goals and plans for achieving those goals. As the individual takes the time to reflect on his or her life and work, the career portfolio becomes a place to arrange that data and, as such, it becomes a worthwhile investment in the future. Career portfolios are not intended for use by employers but rather are to be a place for the individual to keep up-to-date information about themselves, the skills acquired, and credentials/certificates received. It is also to be used to add new information that will help the youth each time he or she needs to make a career decision.

**Computer Skills and Other Innovative Training** – WorkSource Northwest Georgia's youth providers are encouraged to incorporate computers into the training to ensure that participants attain basic computer skills.

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

- a. Making Career Decisions;
- b. Using Labor Market Information; Interviewing Skills;
- c. Job Keeping Skills;
- d. Preparing Resumes;

- e. Filling out Applications;
- f. Maintaining Consistent Punctuality;
- g. Maintaining regular attendance;
- h. Demonstrating Positive Attitudes and Behaviors;
- i. Presenting Appropriate Appearance;
- j. Exhibiting Good Interpersonal Relationship skills; and
- k. Completing Tasks Effectively.

**Local Trade Five Strategy** - In support of in-demand careers, Governor Deal launched Go Build Georgia on January 17, 2012, a state initiative designed to increase awareness of skilled trade careers that are focused on manufacturing, telecommunications, energy, logistics, and construction. On March 24, 2017, Governor Deal retitled the Go Build Georgia as Trade Five. Trade Five is a workforce initiative that shows Georgians the benefits and opportunities of careers in the “skilled trades” of five industries: Construction, Energy, Logistics, Manufacturing, and Telecommunications. The Trade Five initiatives educate future workers about in-demand skilled trade careers and supplies employers with a young, talented workforce to meet their business needs. The goal of this public-private partnership is to enhance the state’s talent pipeline in these high-demand industries by educating Georgia’s future workforce on promising careers in the skilled trades. Trade Five launched a grant and scholarship program in early 2016.

The Trade Five Grant program is a \$500 grant, awarded to Georgia high schools who seek financial support for the enhancement of their skilled trade education efforts. The Trade Five Scholarship program is a \$1,000 scholarship, awarded each year to graduating Georgia high school seniors who will be attending a Technical College System of Georgia institution to study a skilled trade-related program. The Trade Five Foundation Board funds both the Trade Five Grant and Scholarship programs, a private entity of employers and industry leaders who support the mission of skilled trade education in Georgia. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will refer youth as appropriate to learn about the options through the Trade Five initiative. The local Trade Five Strategy includes:

- a. Key to the success of Trade Five is the Career Pathways initiative endorsed by Georgia, whereby every high school student has the financial support to study a skilled trade-related program. Northwest Georgia’s WIOA in-school participants will have as part of the Individual Service Strategy the identification of the career cluster and the additional WIOA services which can enhance the youth’s achievement of their career clusters.

- b. The Career Depot website will maintain a link to the Trade Five web site. This website will provide general information regarding skill trades (and corresponding Career Pathway).
- c. The 14 required services of WIOA will be constantly monitored to assess how they can be enhanced for youth desiring to work in the trades.
- d. Mentors will be identified in the trade-related professions (with proper background checks) on an annual basis in each county where participants are being served.
- e. Work sites/apprenticeships will be identified when possible that support participants' desires to work in trades per the ISS.
- f. The out-of-school participants will receive information about the career pathways deemed appropriate that shows the benefits and opportunities of careers in the "skilled trades" of five industries: Construction, Energy, Logistics, Manufacturing, and Telecommunications.
- g. Trade Five representatives will be invited to participate in WDB meetings, Youth Committee meetings, and other appropriate venues. Additionally, information helpful to business and community organizations will be published as achievements, opportunities, or noteworthy events occur.

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

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

**Model:** Georgia Northwestern Technical College, an out-of-school youth provider, has Adult Education Liaisons who assist in recruiting customers for the WIOA program by building



relationships with the adult education staff. This ensures that all youth participants who are attending adult education instruction and who meet eligibility requirements are served through the WIOA Youth Success Academy. Orientation sessions are conducted with registrants to complete the proper paperwork and enter participant information into the Georgia Adult Learner Information System (GALIS - the adult education data management system), which benefits the Adult Education Program. The Adult Education Liaison also maintains participants' class attendance in GALIS daily, maintains post-test scores, assessments and conference notes in GALIS as they occur. They also monitor each participant's file to ensure that all applicable paper work is included. The liaisons are able to co-enroll every youth participant in adult education and WIOA. This effort ensures that participants will be more attractive as future employees upon receipt of their GED® credential.

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

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

The proposed **Georgia Pathways to Work** program aims to significantly change the way the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) transitions students and youth with disabilities throughout the state, in partnership with the core program partners and local employers. This will be accomplished by working with statewide initiatives such as HDCI to ensure responsiveness to the known workforce demands in Georgia, as well as supporting their efforts to better engage those with disabilities. The overall goal of the Georgia Pathways to Work program is to increase the number of youth who achieve competitive integrated

employment through improving the 18 existing career pathways for students with disabilities, and creating community-based alternative career pathways for out-of-school youth. This will be achieved by tailoring the career pathways to a variety of work opportunities available in the communities. The program will also engage employers in the model design and employ social media strategies to connect youth across the nation. Additionally, a result of the program will be to increase the average weekly wage and employer benefits of participants in each occupational cluster through successful completion of career pathways.

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

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

Georgia's workforce development system collaborates with the Georgia Prisoner Reentry Initiative (GA-PRI) to help returning citizens in navigating barriers to successful reentry and reducing recidivism. GA-PRI designated returning citizens are those citizens releasing from prison who are considered to be at a moderate to high risk to re-offend based on the Georgia Department of Corrections' risk instrument. DCS staff; corrections professionals; local community service providers, including WIOA staff and other One-Stop partners, assist returning citizens with transportation and housing issues; providing job training services, where applicable; providing referrals to mental health and substance abuse counseling, where appropriate; and other issues relevant to successful reentry. The goal of the collaboration with GA-PRI is to enhance public safety by reducing crime through the implementation of a seamless plan of services and supervision developed with each returning citizen—delivered through state and local collaboration—from the time of their entry to prison through their successful transition, reintegration, and aftercare in the community.

Another way to support returning citizens is to provide incentives to the business community. The Federal Bonding Program, managed by GDOL, is a program that alleviates much of the potential risk involved in hiring an ex-offender. Federal Bonding provides employers with liability coverage at no cost when they hire job applicants who cannot be covered by a commercial bond. In addition, business can benefit from WOTC, a tax incentive to businesses that hire and retain new employees who are members of qualified groups, including ex-offenders. Information on Federal Bonding and WOTC are available at one-stop centers across the state.

Georgia also helps to reduce recidivism through The Offender Parolee Probationer State Training Employment Program, or TOPPSTEP, operated by GDOL and DCS. GDOL delivers 90 workshops and staffs a TOPPSTEP coordinator in over 40 centers across the state to help returning citizens find and keep a job. Additionally, GDOL staff provide assistance to businesses and job seekers on the use of criminal records and background checks in the application process. Youth Contractors will assess each youth need and make referrals as necessary.

Partner staffing is conducted monthly with returning citizens to give them an opportunity to express their concerns of what to expect when transitioning into society. This type of engagement can help change the trajectory of their lives.

**Change to Success**-- The Change to Success program is a collaborative transition program between WorkSource Northwest Georgia, Georgia Northwestern Technical College Adult Basic Education program and the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. The program is primarily housed in the Rome Regional Youth Detention Center. WorkSource Northwest Georgia has several roles in the Transition to Success collaboration. Through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding, WorkSource Northwest Georgia has provided the cost for a GED instructor through a contract with Northwest Georgia Technical College, as well as the cost of GED testing fees for incarcerated youth. In addition to the funding aspect, WorkSource Northwest Georgia offered workshops and mentoring to the incarcerated youth participating in this program. Workshops include character building, Career Scope, job-ready Career Skills, soft skills training, employability skills (which is hands-on and is designed to challenge them), interviewing skills, dressing for success and how to get a job and keep it. The primary goal of the program is to provide GED preparation and testing opportunities, technical college enrollment opportunities, job training, and employment to youth who are incarcerated or on probation. WorkSource Northwest Georgia began this program in January 2018, and unfortunately, despite all the time and effort by staff, the program is still developing.

**Post-program and follow-up services** - These services are critical as they continue to develop early in their career path. Staff dedicated to these follow-up services contact all youth for one year after officially completing WIOA services. Some young adults require continued follow-up to increase their chances of staying employed and progressing on their chosen career path. Staff provides referrals to local one-stops for continued job search services, career coaching, mentoring, and employability skills, to offer a continual improvement process for the young people in our area.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia will continue to focus on reaching youth with barriers directly after high school graduation, by offering services to help them transition into post-secondary education in high-demand occupation training areas. In order for this to be successful, the local area will partner with high schools, Juvenile Justice and adult education programs to identify and engage the youth. The local area will partner with community organizations, non-profits and GVRA to engage youth with disabilities, foster youth, youth who are English language learners, and youth leaving the Juvenile Justice system. These partnerships will ensure that the youth are provided with the resources to ensure their successful entry into the workplace. The training provided to the youth will focus on GEDs, the use of career pathways and stackable credentials to promote lifelong learning and upward mobility. The local area will ensure all engaged youth are afforded the opportunity to successfully connect to the workforce system.

**5. Implementation of Work-Based Learning Initiatives – Provide a description of how the area will implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the business service strategy.**

WorkSource Northwest Georgia has provided training programs to the region since the implementation of JTPA and continued with WIA (1998) and now WIOA (2014). The area has been a long-time provider of OJT, Youth Services, and ITA training and has begun to implement strategies to expand into other work-based training areas. With WIOA's increased emphasis on work-based training, WorkSource Northwest Georgia assessed resources available to provide these services. All of our services are contracted out to service providers in the region via a bid process. The collaboration with service providers and one-stop partners provides us with additional resources we might not ordinarily have.

The area's WBL service provider is Georgia Department of Labor. Their team of WIOA WBL recruiters has been integrated into the GDOL Business Service Unit (BSU) as part of a pilot program to more effectively target employer needs. This partnership with the BSU has provided the WBL/OJT team with access to the many business relationships and regional collaborations that BSU has developed. It is proving to be a highly successful program as the WIOA team is involved in all BSU initiatives to reach out to area businesses.

In addition, WIOA Work Based Learning (WBL) opportunities are communicated to area businesses through the network of collaborations in the region. Georgia Department of Economic Development Region 1 Business and Industry Manager collaborates with the BSU/OJT Recruiters to share the WIOA programs to business contacts region wide.

BSU OJT Recruiters collaborate with the Georgia WorkSmart program coordinator. This program develops apprenticeships for which the WIOA OJT program may provide the OJT component to the apprenticeship.

The region's Incumbent Workers Training Program began in PY 16-17. IWT opportunity is now shared with area employers as an option available through WIOA.

Other ways the region communicates with area business is through participation in Chamber of Commerce meetings, Employer Committees, SHRM events, HDCI meeting participation to name a few. Through these events the staff has met many people in industry as well as other service providers. Information is distributed via social media, Business Informer newsletter, brochures and flyers handed out at area events.

Career pathways are another learning opportunity sought out to meet the needs of the regions' employers. The aim is to provide and connect education and training strategies and support service concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities that enable individuals to secure industry relevant certification and obtain employment in the WorkSource Northwest Georgia region for youth and adults.

Career pathways development will be ongoing to align with education and workforce systems based on the assessment provided and the customer and employer needs. Services will prepare an individual to be successful in secondary or postsecondary education including apprenticeships which can develop within an industry sector. Counseling is included to support an individual in achieving their education and career goals. Training and other services are organized to meet the particular needs of an individual and to accelerate the educational and career advancement of the individual. A career pathway enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster. In addition, career pathways may be developed as part of a larger sector strategy that brings together education, economic development, workforce systems, and community organizations to identify and meet the workforce needs of the regions labor market.

#### Work Based Training Utilizing ITAs

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

### Work-Based Training RFP

Under WIOA, the decision was made to expand the Region's RFP to include, in addition to OJT, other work-based training, such as Work Experience, Incumbent Worker Training, Customized Training, Internships, and Apprenticeships. As a result, the region approved a proposal that has provided two of these services: OJT and Incumbent Worker Training.

Through the provider contract we are able to tap into the vast resource of dislocated workers and employers that they do business with. This approved Work-Based Training provider is a part of our one-stop system and the participants will, therefore, have easy and convenient access to other partner services available as well.

- **On-the-Job Training** is training provided by an employer to the WIOA participant. The participant is hired by the employer and engages in productive work for the employer. OJT must be for a job that teaches the participant the skills needed to be proficient at the job. It is limited in duration to the time it takes to learn these skills, taking into account the content of the training, the prior work experience of the participant, and the service strategy of the participant. The WIOA system provides reimbursements to the employer for up to 75 percent of the training wages earned during the agreed-upon training hours. The OJT program is designed to assist the employer with the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the training, while providing the participants with an opportunity into a career pathway.
- **Incumbent Worker Training** is designed to either assist workers in obtaining the skills necessary to retain employment or to avert layoffs. The training must increase both a participant's and a company's competitiveness. Workers who receive training should have been employed with the company for at least six months. This training should, wherever possible, allow the participant to gain industry-recognized training experience, and ultimately should lead to an increase in wages. An ideal incumbent worker training program would be one where a participant acquires new skills allowing him or her to move into a higher-skilled and higher paid job within the company, thus allowing the company to hire a job seeker to backfill the incumbent worker's position.

Area employers have expressed a need for incumbent worker training. IWT will be used in coordination with Rapid Response to avert layoffs, where possible. The employees at risk of layoff would receive incumbent worker training in an effort to upgrade their skills and avoid the layoff.

Future training opportunities for **Internships** and **Customized Training** for adults and dislocated workers may be developed. The plan may consist of combining an OJT with a classroom component developed through area training providers. The difference in the two types of training is that Customized Training is at the request of the employer and targets specific skills required by the expanding business and their anticipated needs. Internships are the combination of classroom training and occupational training in a related field.

In addition, the region will collaborate with Georgia WorkSmart, a work-based learning initiative operated by the Technical College System of Georgia. The initiative promotes work-based learning

programs (apprenticeship, internship, on-the-job training, etc.) as a workforce development tool and assists Georgia companies in developing and implementing customized programs to meet their specific hiring and training needs.

A key workforce training model promoted by Georgia WorkSmart is Registered Apprenticeship. Through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship, the Technical College System of Georgia, and other education and state agency partners, Georgia WorkSmart helps organizations create apprenticeship programs that include curriculum and classroom instruction development. Assistance with national apprenticeship registration is also provided through this partnership.

All of the region's work-based training programs are designed to be steps in a career pathway. Depending upon the skills and experience of the participant, the individual may enter the career path at any of these points of training and progress as far as needed to become proficient in their chosen career.

Northwest Georgia is known for having a rich history of textile manufacturing plants. Over time, the facilities that have continued to thrive have been those that moved toward more advanced technologies and training. Our OJT program has developed continuing relationships with employers in this industry sector and has provided services that assess and screen applicants so that quality workers can be trained in these new technologies.

A supporting industry for the manufacturing sector is transportation. The textile industry requires a large supply of trucking companies to move product both locally and via long-haul shipments. Our ITA program continues to train and refer CDL drivers for the industry.

- 6. Provision of ITAs – Provide a description of how training services in WIOA Section 134 will be provided through the use of ITAs. If contracts for the training services will be used, describe how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.**
- a. ITAs are prioritized in programs leading to a recognized post-secondary credential that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.
  - b. Career Advisers/Career Planners will be contracted to provide eligibility, exploration of eligible provider approved programs, case management, and assistance to customers and follow-up throughout their training. Informed customer choice will be ensured as the career adviser inform potential customers of what training is available and work with them to assure that they are referred to appropriate training through the use of ITAs or other services.
  - c. The WDB/NWGRC will maintain information on the EPL regarding all training offered (OJT and customized) with the performance and cost information or appropriate and make referrals based on customer choice.
  - d. Should the WDB/NWGRC determine that there are insufficient eligible training providers and there are identified programs of demonstrated effectiveness offered by a community-

based organization or another private organizations serving individuals with barriers to employment or that it would be appropriate to serve multiple individuals in a contract with a institution of higher education (or other eligible training provider; and the contracts do not limit customer choice) other training options may be used.

- e. If the contract is a pay-for-performance contract, it may be used instead of an ITA to provide an alternative training service.

**7. Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprise Services – Provide a description of how the area will coordinate and promote entrepreneurial skills training and Microenterprise services.**

NWGRC will continue to promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services by focusing on partnerships with local businesses, labor organizations, faith and community-based organizations, colleges and technical schools. Staff and contractors attend monthly Chamber of Commerce meetings, employer meetings and one-on-one meetings with employers to determine the needs of the employer and the community. Strategic partnerships continue in place to build strong, sustainable and successful businesses.

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

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

WorkSource Northwest Georgia is committed to providing entrepreneurial skills training for in school and out-of-school youth and services are provided to eligible youth participants through a network of competitively-procured youth service providers. The work experiences that the youth receive are many times with small start-up businesses. These companies are willing to serve as



work sites for youth, due to the expansion of business. This experience leads youth participants to their next level of education or full-time employment.

NWGRC prepares the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan, which has an entrepreneurship focus. This allows WorkSource Northwest Georgia to work with Chambers, lending institutions, area makerspaces, technical colleges, community colleges and providers such as the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Community Development Financial Initiative (CDFI) in assisting entrepreneurs.

The Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program directly supports the IMCP initiative to boost the manufacturing sector and create well-paying manufacturing jobs, using economic development resources available through existing Federal programs.

NWGRC will continue working with the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC's) Georgia representatives through activities that support entrepreneurship and economic development, especially those promoting new product and technology development. Activities that support entrepreneurship and economic development - business incubation or business mentoring/coaching services and activities that assist the citizens of Appalachia access to higher-paying jobs, and activities that assist businesses make use of new technology; especially those activities that will result in job creation.

Georgia had three distressed counties in 2016, two of which are in the area covered by WorkSource Northwest Georgia - Chattooga and Murray. Six others in NWGA are designated "at risk." Staff will continue to work closely with The Appalachian Regional Commission regarding potential opportunities for these smaller governments. These two counties automatically receive first consideration for ARC funding, and are given bonus points on applications for their economic status.

NWGRC will work closely with local non-profit organizations and USDA Rural Development to support the development and ongoing success of rural micro entrepreneurs and microenterprises. This program will provide loans and grants to Microenterprise Development Organizations for startups and growth through a revolving fund, provide training and technical assistance to the borrowers and micro-entrepreneurs. Businesses with 10 or fewer full-time employees that are located in an eligible area may apply for the loans. Eligible areas are rural areas outside a city or town with a population of less than 50,000. Such businesses may include any type of legal business that meets local standards of decency. Business types may also include agricultural producers, provided they meet the stipulations in this definition.

Grants are available to provide technical assistance to rural micro-entrepreneurs or microenterprises, up to \$205,000 annually. The maximum term is 20 years.

NWGRC will continue to work closely with the Small Business Administration locations in Rome and Dalton, Georgia to help small businesses in the 15-county area succeed. As such, several programs and laws have been sponsored that directly affect small business owners. Staff can keep up-to-date about how legislation, such as the Small Business Jobs Act and SBA initiatives (e.g. the Emerging 200 program) can help the microenterprise succeed.

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

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

Coordination of Adult Services with Educational Institutions

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

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

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

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

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

Coordination of WIOA Services with Educational Institutions

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

Participant Portal (GWROPP) that all potential customers as well as local staff are able to view. The state actively maintains the ETPL.

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

#### Coordination of Vocational Rehabilitation Services with Educational Institutions

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

#### Additional Financial Resources

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

- Georgia's HOPE Grant/Scholarship is available to Georgia residents who have demonstrated high academic achievement. The grant/scholarship provides money to assist students with the educational costs of attending a HOPE eligible college in Georgia.
- Georgia's Zell Miller Scholarship is available to Georgia residents who have demonstrated academic achievement. The scholarship provides money to assist students with their educational costs of attending a Zell Miller-eligible college located in Georgia.
- The Strategic Industries Workforce Development Grant (SIWDG) is a financial award for Technical College System of Georgia students and was first presented by the Governor's Office in fall 2013. It awards funds to students meeting certain criteria who are enrolled in certain programs.
- The Federal Pell Grant Program provides need-based grants to low-income undergraduate and certain post-baccalaureate students to promote access to postsecondary education. Students may use their grants at any one of approximately 5,400 participating post-

secondary institutions. Grant amounts are dependent on: the student's expected family contribution (EFC); the cost of attendance (as determined by the institution); the student's enrollment status (full-time or part-time); and whether the student attends for a full academic year or less.

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

- 9. Description of Supportive Services – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area. Describe the coordination of transportation and other supportive services regionally, if applicable. Please include region/local area Supportive Service Policies.**

The 15-county area of Northwest Georgia is a single service area. The WDB/CCEO that represents the 15-county area requires coordination with other programs in the area for supportive services to ensure efficient, effective, and non-duplicative delivery of services. The coordination requirements are included in the Supportive Services Policies. Coordination of support services will leverage all available services available through DFCS - such as child care and transportation assistance to maximize resources and prevent duplication of services. WIOA will verify the TANF weekly assessed fee to be paid by the participant which is based on family income. The TANF client is responsible for paying the weekly family fee to the child care provider(s) after DFCS has paid the difference. WIOA can then reimburse the assessed weekly family fee to the participant, if within WIOA child care maximum allotted guidelines.

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

Coordination of Funds: Funds provided through WIOA are only to be used to pay for services (i.e., child care and transportation) not covered by other agencies such as DFCS. Written information

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

The Northwest Georgia Region has limited capacity for workforce needs through a public transportation system. It varies from county to county and the hours are daytime 8-5 and may require prior scheduling. Consequently, the WDB has elected to pay transportation for individuals needing it.

**The NWGRC supportive service policy is as follows:**

**I. Definition:**

Supportive Services are defined as services such as transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA. *WIOA §3 (59)*

**II. Supportive Services**

Supportive Services are services which are reasonable and necessary to enable a WIOA participant, who cannot afford to pay for such services, to participate in career and training activities funded under WIOA. **The provision of Supportive Services must be determined on an individual basis.** Limited Supportive Services may be provided to individuals receiving Basic Career Services; however such individuals must be registered as a WIOA participant, are subject to performance outcomes and must receive prior approval from the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission.

Follow-up career services are not a qualifying service for the receipt of supportive services; therefore, an adult/dislocated worker who is only receiving follow-up services may not receive supportive services. Supportive services also may not be used to extend the date of exit for performance accountability purposes. Supportive Service, like follow-up services, does not make an individual a participant or extend participation (TEGL 19-16).

A participant may waive WIOA payments (except for Work Experience) if accepting payment would mean the loss of benefits. The participant may request the payment start at a later date, but may not claim retroactive payments. Advances against future payments are not allowed.

To be eligible for any WIOA financial assistance payments, a participant must have been determined WIOA eligible and:

- A. Participating in career services and/or training services. *Exception:* Limited supportive services may be provided to eligible applicants (e.g., paying for a birth certificate) before they are enrolled as participants to permit participation in assessment activities;
- B. Are unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services; and
- C. Must have complied with program regulations and policies during the period of training

and/or enrollment.

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

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

The Career Adviser will use forms provided to document all support payments. These payment requests shall be submitted on a bi-weekly basis. Participants are expected to comply with these requirements. However, in the event that they do not, for extenuating circumstances such as illness, incapacity, etc., any support claims not submitted shall be limited to three months recovery of these payments and must have approval of the Career Adviser. Northwest Georgia Regional Commission will issue the transportation, dependent, and child care payments directly to the participant. Other support payments may be made to the Vendor. This will be addressed case-by-case and will be upon Career Adviser recommendation and NWGRC approval, represent extenuating circumstance, and have proper documentation in the participant’s file.

The use of supportive services is encouraged to enable the hard-to-serve population to participate in longer-term interventions. The provision of supportive services must be determined on an individual basis and require proof of expenditure in the participant’s file.

III. The policies are consistent with all applicable federal regulations and requirements mandated by the State Workforce Board and the Georgia Department of Economic Development, Workforce Development.

**A. Eligibility and determination of need for supportive services:**

1. All participants will be determined eligible as WIOA participants utilizing the Northwest Georgia Eligibility Manual. They will be enrolled in the Georgia Work Ready Online Participant Portal (GWROPP) prior to the support service being provided.
2. Each support service provided will have justification in the file as to the need for the service. (See forms attached). These services must be necessary to enable the individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA, Title I.
3. The Career Adviser will conduct the needs assessment for support services on a

case-by-case basis.

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

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

a.) Financial/physical need:

There must be documentation in the case file that participants are incapable of providing these services for themselves.

Examples: low income status as documented by family/household income determination, receipt of federal or state public assistance, UI benefits, documentation of skill upgrading that would lead to employment in a local or state in-demand occupation, documentation of lack of employment or underemployment, separation notice, birth certificates for children receiving childcare, documentation of transportation distance to attend training, etc.

b.) Resource Coordination:

There must be documentation supporting that these services or funds for these services were not available from any other state and/or federal grant/program/funding stream/agency. There should be an analysis of all federal/state/local resources available in the LWIOAs and how they are being coordinated to promote the most efficient use of resources.

Examples: UI records, application for applicable state and federal funds (HOPE, Pell, etc.). The cost of attendance form will show both training and support needs and resources and the unmet need that the support services are meeting in public institutions receiving Hope, Pell, and other resources.

c.) Type of supportive service requested and how the supportive service will assist their participation in WIOA Title I activities. (See supportive service request form.)

d.) Amount approved and justification for the amount being necessary and reasonable to enable participation in qualifying WIOA activities. (See supportive service request form.) Case notes must be entered in the GWROPP to document the justification. The supportive service request form and case notes in the GWROPP will stipulate the time frame for support service.

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

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

NWGRC will reimburse participants for transportation, dependent, and child care costs to the participant at specified limits through check issuance bi-weekly. Proper authorization and documentation is provided to NWGRC by the Career Adviser. All other support costs will be paid by check to the vendor providing the support service. Proper documentation must be provided by the vendor prior to issuance of checks. Extenuating circumstances may necessitate payment to the participant. This will be done upon recommendation by the Career Adviser and approved by NWGRC.

**D. Allowable Supportive Services:**

1. The supportive services are primarily provided to qualifying participants in classroom training and to youth in out-of-school programs. Others included in career services such as pre-vocational training must receive prior approval from Northwest Georgia Regional Commission.
2. Those enrolled in Work-Based Training where wages are paid will not qualify for supportive services except for work-related tools, clothing, shoes, equipment, or other necessary items needed for the job. In addition, cost of credential training and books and supplies may be paid as support. These can be paid the day training begins.
3. Flat rate payments are made to qualifying adults and dislocated workers (who must attend a minimum of three hours per day, or hours available to attend, to receive a payment for that day) for the following support services:

a.) Assistance with Transportation:

Providing transportation for a participant enables him/her to get to and from WIOA activities approved or applicable by the WDB. A reimbursement to the participant is limited to amounts specified below and represents round trips:

- 0.5 – 10 miles = \$7.50 per day
- 11 – 25 miles = \$10.00 per day
- 26 + miles = \$12.50 per day

b.) Assistance with Childcare for children ages 12 and under:

- Child(ren) must reside in the home of the participant and the participant must have documentation to show they are providing 100% support to the child(ren). (Ex. Court custody papers, guardianship papers, tax forms, food stamp letter, etc.)



- Reimbursement to the participant is limited to a maximum of \$15.00 per day, per child, up to two (2) children,
- Birth certificates are necessary to verify the age of the child(ren),
- Childcare may not be paid to a provider who resides in the same residence with the participant (example: spouse, older child, live-in parent). Therefore, ALL documentation of provision of daycare services must include, Provider's full name and license number (if applicable), address, phone number, relationship to the participant and the Provider's signature verifying that they are being paid for their services.
- Payments for child care may be required by the provider for a space to be maintained for the child even when the child is not in attendance for sickness or holidays. If this is the policy of the child care center, the provider must provide verification of that for the day(s) in question.
- Weekly receipts will be necessary to verify payments by the participant to the provider.

c.) Assistance with Dependent Care:

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

d.) Assistance with Lodging:

Lodging – Lodging may be requested if a participant's training location is more than 50 miles, one way, from their residence. The participant will be required to obtain three (3) lodging quotes, within the area of the training provider, if the training provider does not offer their own lodging. After all the quotes are received, basis for the selection of the lodging would be the lowest quote. If the basis is something other than

the lowest quote, the Career Advisor will prepare justification for the selection, relevance of need, and the advantage of choosing the lodging other than the one with the lowest quote. The Career Advisor will need to submit the completed lodging form, the approved quote, and the bill to NWGRC for payment.

Total lodging cost should not exceed \$2,500 per participant. Participants are not eligible for transportation support costs if they receive lodging, but childcare support costs can be determined on a case-by-case basis.

e.) Other supportive services:

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

- 1.) Assistance with educational testing;
- 2.) Needs-Related Payments;
- 3.) Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities;
- 4.) Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and related tools\*, including eyeglasses and protective eye gear and other essential safety equipment;
- 5.) Emergency auto repair
- 6.) Emergency Health care and medical services - these services are of a one-time nature, such as a physical examination, prescription drugs, prescription eyeglasses, immediate dental care, and mental health care which are needed to enable an individual to participate in any training activity.
- 7.) Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in post-secondary education classes;
- 8.) Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications; and
- 9.) Legal Aid Services

\*If the total cost of required tools exceeds \$1,000, there will need to be three (3) quotes and documentation from the instructor that the tools are required for the program of training.

f.) Allowable supportive services provided while the participant is still participating in career or training services in order to obtain employment include, but are not limited to:

- Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and related tools, including eyeglasses and protective eye gear;
- Tools, work clothing, and boots/shoes required for employment;

- Drug testing required by employer;
- Financial counseling; and
- Auxiliary aids and services necessary for persons with disabilities to obtain and retain employment

g.) Unallowable Supportive Services

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

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

**E.) Documentation of the provision for supportive services:**

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

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

**F.) Financial cap to be placed on supportive services:**

- a.) There is a limit on total supportive service expenditures for an LWDA by funding stream. No more than 35% of the allocation for a particular funding

stream (i.e., adult, dislocated worker, or youth) will be spent on support unless a waiver is granted by the State. The 35% determination will be taken from that program year's total allocation per funding stream. Separate caps will be determined for each funding stream.

- b.) All supportive service costs which are expended on participants affected by a declared emergency situation will be exempt from the 35% cap.
- c.) Waivers to this policy will be requested from Georgia Department of Economic Development, Workforce Division on a case-by-case basis unless specific populations, groups, or classes are approved.

**The NWGRC Needs-Related Payment policy is as follows:**

Needs-related payments (NRP) provide financial assistance to participants for the purpose of enabling them to participate in training and are a supportive service authorized by WIOA Sec. 134(d)(3). Unlike other supportive services, in order to qualify for needs-related payments a participant must be enrolled in training under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3). **The provision of needs-related payments may be determined on an individual basis.**

Needs-related payments will be payable to eligible participants (Adults and Dislocated Workers) who meet the following criteria:

Adults must: (Ref. § 680.940)

- a. be unemployed;
- b. not qualify for, or have ceased qualifying for, unemployment compensation; and
- c. be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3).

Dislocated Workers must: (Ref. § 680.950)

- a. be unemployed, and;
  - 1. have ceased to qualify for unemployment compensation or trade readjustment allowance under TAA; and
  - 2. be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3) by the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> week after the most recent layoff that resulted in a determination of the worker's eligibility as a dislocated worker, or, if later, by the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> week after the worker is informed that a short-term layoff will exceed six (6) months; or
- b. be unemployed and did not qualify for unemployment compensation or trade readjustment assistance under TAA and be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3).

The term "enrolled in a program of training services" means:

The participant's registration application for training under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3) has been approved by the training provider and that the training provider has enrolled the participant in a qualified training that will begin within thirty (30) calendar days. Extension of the 30-day period (to address appropriate circumstances) requires approval from GDEcD.

Training Services include:

- i. Occupational Skills Training, including training for nontraditional employment;
- ii. On-the job training;
- iii. Incumbent worker training in accordance with subsection (d)(4);
- iv. Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;
- v. Training programs operated by a private sector;
- vi. Skill upgrading and retraining;
- vii. Entrepreneurial training;
- viii. Transitional jobs in accordance with subsection (d)(5);
- ix. Job readiness training provided in combination with services described in any clauses (i) through (viii);
- x. Adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with services described in any clauses (i) through (vii); and
- xi. Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

Adults and Dislocated Workers must:

- a. be enrolled in school/college on a full-time basis. (Full-time status will be based on school definition)
- b. maintain a "C" average or above while receiving NRP. (a minimum of 2.0 gpa on a 4.0 gpa scale)
- c. have their eligibility for NRP determined prior to their receipt of this service if they desire this service option. Current participants will have their eligibility redetermined for NRP at a minimum of every six (6) months from their original begin date of receiving NRP or when the participant receives other income which is self-reported that may make the participant ineligible. Eligibility will be determined by the WIOA Career Advisor. Staff will be verifying on a weekly basis that the participant is not receiving unemployment compensation.

- d. not be out more than thirty (30) calendar days during the school's vacation break in order to receive NRP.
- e. notify their Career Advisor and NWGRC if they are no longer attending school/college on a full-time basis and/or if they change their program of study.
- f. notify their Career Advisor and NWGRC of any monetary change in individual/family income during any particular week.
- g. complete a weekly attendance sheet.
- h. not be receiving income allowances such as employer severance, TRA under TAA, union member supplemental benefits, out-of-area job search assistance, payments under WIOA such as internships, any wages under OJT, work experience or other activities under WIOA where payments may be available except support. If a customer is not receiving but is eligible to receive any of the assistance listed above, every effort will be made to ensure that other assistance is provided prior to application for NRP being approved in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134.

Furthermore, WIOA NRP should not replace or reduce any other federal financial assistance for which the individual may be eligible or entitled, including WIOA support payments.

Adults Guideline:

All participants must meet all eligibility requirements for "adult" services under WIOA provisions. Any adult applying for NRP assistance must meet the income guidelines for WIOA Low Income Poverty Level.

Adults whose income meet the poverty level and are attending school/college on a full-time basis will receive weekly needs-related payments in the amount of \$228. Their eligibility will be reviewed at a minimum of every six (6) months from their original anniversary date of participation in WIOA.

Dislocated Workers Guideline:

All participants must meet all eligibility requirements and be deemed a dislocated worker under WIOA provisions. Payments must not exceed the greater of either of the following levels:

- a.) the applicable weekly level of the unemployment compensation benefit, for participants who were eligible for unemployment compensation as a result of the qualifying dislocation; or
- b.) the poverty level for an equivalent period, for participants who did not qualify for unemployment compensation as a result of the qualifying layoff. The weekly payment level cannot be adjusted lower due to our income limit being the lowest a participant can receive on the poverty scale.

Eligibility will be determined on the day of contact with the applicant. Applicants who *did* qualify for unemployment compensation must provide documentation of their layoff and their benefit amount. Applicants who *did not* qualify for unemployment compensation must have proof of unemployment denial in order to qualify for NRP.

NOTE: Participants enrolled in approved training who are unemployed, but who receive payments as a member of a reserve component of the U.S. Armed Services, or as a member of the Georgia National Guard, for periods of duty of 72 consecutive hours or less, shall be considered unemployed for a purpose of qualifying for NRP.

Payment Limitations:

Needs-related payments shall not exceed 14 weeks (amount of time for UI payment period) per program year and/or will be paid until the week limitation is reached or until the participant completes training, whichever comes first. Participants can begin to receive payments once they start training and submit weekly attendance sheets.

**COORDINATION WITH CORE PARTNERS:**

- 1. Description of the Workforce System – Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies all relevant programs and how the local board will work with the entities to carry out both core and other workforce development programs to deliver well aligned services in support of the strategies identified in the state plan. This should include programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.).**

The active collaboration between the LWDB and WorkSource Northwest Georgia’s one-stop delivery system is the key component of workforce development in the local area. Our LWDB is geared towards creating an effective and efficient method in meeting the needs of our local economy and aligning programs and resources towards the needs of our local employers. To do this, the WDB’s strategy is focused on supporting a unified workforce system that involves the coordinated services and resources of all core program partners. WorkSource Northwest Georgia has programs focused on enhancing services to veterans and individuals within the criminal justice system.

Our local area aims to increase the opportunities the workforce system provides, both to individuals and to businesses. The LWDB is also embarking on efforts to analyze and improve the referral process and case management systems to further unify activities at the participant level. These efforts include standardized training for staff, use of virtual training and staff meetings and increased participation in job fairs, resource fairs and other collaborative meetings.

Finally, local core program partners are collaborating with Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), which was recently awarded a USDA grant to develop a multiagency assessment and case management delivery system. This collaboration will enable staff delivering Wagner-Peyser services and related partner programs to provide intensive customized reemployment

services to a broad segment of customers in need. Staff will be able to continuously share information and insights via a centralized case management system. Similarly, all necessary participants tracking and reporting will be accomplished within a single system.

#### LWDA and Labor Market Information

The local area plans to coordinate with all core program partners to ensure data and data analytics are at the forefront of the workforce development system. WorkSource Northwest Georgia has several tools at its disposal to support this strategy, which are described in the Implementation of Technology section.

As in-demand occupations grow and the skill-gap widens, employers have an increased need for skilled positions and training programs. To meet these, WorkSource Northwest Georgia has developed long-term learning strategies such as those delivered through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). The use of ITAs along with use of labor market information to identify employer needs, will build partnerships of employers, training providers, community organizations, and other key stakeholders around specific industries to address the workforce needs of employers and the training, employment, and career advancement needs of workers. The defining elements of our local area strategies include a focus on customized solutions for specific industry/industries at a regional level, bringing the industry partnerships together.

#### LWDA and Workforce System

Some of our core program partners, including WFD, GDOL, GVRA, and TCSG, have recently joined other regional agencies and offices on a Career Pathways initiative. WorkSource Northwest Georgia is looking to increase the number of high school graduates who also attain a postsecondary credential that can enhance their value in the labor market. Local area partners are engaging educators and employers in building a system of career pathways that launches young people into promising careers.

The long-term goal for our local area is to create seamless pathways for students from primary and secondary education, through college and training, and into successful in-demand careers. This work will include: increasing the level of communication and collaboration between educational institutions and the businesses in the local area, increasing the number of work-based learning programs in the region, improving the early exposure students have to industry and career options, analyzing state and local policies to ensure they properly foster this work, as well as other efforts.

#### LWDA and Employer Participation

Our local area provides a variety of customized services to employers in various formats. For example, labor market information can be self-accessed by employers or provided through varying levels of staff assistance. Employer centers in one-stop locations are used by employers in a self-service mode for recruitment and interviewing or with staff-assisted screening and testing.

Various marketing materials are also available and used to educate employers and facilitate employer involvement. The local area also markets to employers consistently by providing information related to employment, Unemployment Insurance and partial Unemployment



benefits, tax and wage reports and payments, employing individuals with disabilities, employer committees, layoff information and resources, child labor info, tax credits and incentives, workforce and business development services and resources, employment law issues, and employee recruitment services.

### LWDA and Carl Perkins Act

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) sits at a critical stage between national, state, and local education and workforce development systems. The need for cross-system collaboration between these communities is more important than ever before, and one important step is to appropriately and effectively align the federal investments made through WIOA and Perkins. This collaboration is important due to the increasingly complex education and training necessary for students to succeed in the current economy. In order to do this, career and technical education (CTE) must find the appropriate balance between the educational needs of students and the needs of employers. WorkSource Northwest Georgia believes the implementation of WIOA and the upcoming reauthorization of the Perkins Act provide important opportunities to efficiently collaborate across these systems and to develop and strengthen mechanisms to further encourage this work.

Currently, Perkins funds are used in Georgia to fund vocational-technical education. The Perkins Act defines vocational-technical education as organized educational programs offering sequences of courses directly related to preparing individuals for paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations that don't require a baccalaureate or advanced degree. Programs include competency-based applied learning which contributes to an individual's academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning, problem solving skills, and the occupational-specific skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society. Perkins Act funds are allotted between GaDOE, as the *secondary*-level recipient, and TCSG, as the *post-secondary* recipient.

GaDOE, in accordance with the Perkins Act, will distribute funds on an annual basis to eligible recipients according to several allocation factors. The majority of the funds are distributed based on two main factors:

- Local population of school-age children relative to state population of school-age children; and
- Percentage of local system enrollees whose families qualify for free/reduced school lunch

An additional portion of the funds may be withheld from allocation under the above formula and may be allocated based on a combination of factors that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Rural or urban designations;
- Local percentage of CTAE enrollees; and
- Local number of CTAE enrollees.

Carl Perkins Act *secondary* funds may only be used for students in grades 7-12, and only for new programs or improvement of existing programs. Carl Perkins Act also encourages state and local recipients to ensure that students are engaged in programs related to high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations.

TCSG, in accordance with Section 132(a) of the Perkins Act, distributes post-secondary Perkins funds to eligible institutions within the state by a formula which allocates funding proportionately to the college's percent of the statewide total of Pell grant recipients. No grant provided to any institution under this section shall be for an amount less than \$50,000. Any amount which is not allocated pursuant to Section 132(c) (2) shall be redistributed to eligible institutions in accordance with provisions of this section.

From amounts made available under subsection 112(a)(1), TCSG will allocate up to a 10 percent reserve to each eligible recipient as allowed under Section 112(c)(1) of the legislation. The reserve will be allocated using the percentage of rural areas in the State. Rural areas will be determined by the percent rural population for the college's service area according to 2000 census data.

- 2. Coordination with Wagner-Peyser – Provide a description of plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the state employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.**

Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources

The coordination of service delivery is a primary principle of WIOA, which brings together the core programs of Federal investment in skill development. GDOL embraces WIOA's primary goal of service delivery integration to provide a more seamless experience for participants in federal skills development and employment services programs, as indicated below:

- Providing information to GDOL customers on community resources, labor market information, GED<sup>®</sup>, occupational training, OJT, and support services that make training possible to enhance an individual's ability to return to work;
- As the "front door" to the workforce system, staff from the career centers throughout the region identify customers' needs, assist them with UI, employment and reemployment assistance, trade services, automated resources, workshops and referrals to more intensive services such as training, which are provided by WIOA through LWDBs, and other partners.

Employment Service Professional Staff Development

Georgia Department of Labor's local Career Centers continuously improve and update staff knowledge through training and Career Center partner information sharing. This training may be provided by or supported by the State office resources. This consistent and strategic investment in staff development reflects Georgia's commitment to integrated workforce services.

Employment Services staff of GDOL are trained in both employment services and UI programs, enabling customers to receive seamless services geared to facilitate their return to employment.

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

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

Other staff development activities include:

- Comprehensive online resources on GDOL's website at [www.dol.georgia.gov](http://www.dol.georgia.gov);
- Job shadowing for new staff at State and local offices;
- Active participation in IAWP; hosting the international conference in 2015;
- Active participation in SETA;
- Departmental leadership training program through EXCEL, offered through the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia;
- Ongoing assessment of GDOL and partner staff training needs by local GDOL career center managers;
- Participation on LWDBs to keep abreast of information on local, State, and national issues; and
- Regular reviews by the STAR team, delivering on-site extensive technical assistance and staff training during site visits, and identifying training needs based on policy changes, new initiatives, etc.

#### Career Center Partners

GDOL offers training, technical assistance and support to partner staff who serve local job seekers and employers. This ensures that program partners are highly engaged in local and State workforce partnerships providing constant exchange of information on core programs, UI legislation, new workforce training providers, and available programs.

### UI and Regional Operations Division

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

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

Finally, workforce partners have access to select data elements, such as customer contact information and work history from GDOL. Sharing data between organizations assists staff in providing comprehensive, unduplicated services while eliminating unnecessary trips or contacts for the customer.

### Additional Initiatives and Services available in NWGA through WP and Partner Agencies

- Georgia Department of Labor's Business Service Units (BSU) was developed in 2013 to promote economic growth in the region by fostering relationships with employers and potential employers. The BSU in Northwest Georgia works in coordination with the OJT Team to provide customized or specialized recruitment events. The OJT Staff funded by WIOA is now a part of the Business Service Unit and continues to work with WP staff to address job seekers with pre-employment needs such as work readiness skills and overcoming barriers to employment. The OJT staff also provides employers with recruitment, pre-employment services such as occupational assessments and screenings as well as reimbursement of up to 75 percent of training costs.
- WP Services will also be utilizing the NWGA Mobile Learning Unit/Lab to provide ES services at employer closings, recruitment events, and training events. They will be working coordination with the WIOA staff to promote the availability and benefits of the mobile unit and services available.

### The Use of WP Funds to Support UI Claimants

Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants are required by the WP Act; Georgia's UI and WP labor exchange systems are each administered by GDOL, and UI staff has access to all ES job referral, case management, employment, and other information as needed. Staffing is funded in accordance with Federal circulars, to the allowable benefiting fund source.

Aside from a limited number of exempt UI recipients, all receive reemployment services, as they are required to register with the State ES. Approximately 60 percent of ES registered customers

are UI claimants. Each GDOL career center has a resource area that customers can access for their employment needs. Some of the resources available to all customers include: the Job Information System which includes jobs in Georgia, throughout the Southeast, and across the nation; labor market information, including GLME, O\*Net tools and others; over 40 TapDance Live! self-directed career exploration and assessment tools; instructional software for typing and résumé development; automated job referral options; training and education resources; financial aid information; online filing of initial UI claims; telephones, fax machines and copiers.

Services routinely provided to ES job seeker customers (including UI claimants) by local centers include:

- Self-service resources such as EG labor exchange services, unemployment claims application, books, videos, and pamphlets;
- Access to computers and job search software;
- Résumé development and typing tutorials;
- Job openings in Georgia, the Southeast, and across the nation;
- Labor market information for career exploration, fields in demand, average salaries, etc.;
- Training and education resources, financial aid options;
- Vocational assessment;
- Automated referral assistance;
- Workshops on a variety of employment-related topics (e.g., effective job search, interviewing, résumé development, coping with job loss, financial management);
- Career expos;
- Job search assistance and job referral;
- Job development;
- Job clubs;
- Individualized assistance for customers with unique needs;
- Assistance for ex-offenders;
- Assistance with federal bonding; and
- Referral to partner and community provider services.

Staff-assisted employment services are provided to more than 500,000 individuals annually, and tens of thousands of additional individuals receive self-services made available by GDOL at career centers and online. More than 1.6 million job referrals were provided during Program Year 2014. Also, Georgia businesses list approximately 150,000 available jobs on a daily basis, with a goal of increasing that number to 300,000 in the future. This increased number of job openings is a result of growth in the local economy and the strengthening of employer relationships with the

workforce system. As a result of the improving economy and the focused reemployment strategies of connecting job seekers to meaningful job opportunities, Georgia's Entered Employment Rate shows steady recovery and is approaching pre-recession rates.

#### WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

**The State of Georgia hereby certifies the following: *Common Assurances:***

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3));
  2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers;
  3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and
  4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.
- 3. Coordination with Adult Education – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy services under Title II in the local area, including a description of how the local board will carry out, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 107(d)(11) of the WIOA law, the review of local applications submitted under Title II.**

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

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

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

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

### **Local Applications for Title II Funds**

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

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

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

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

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

Those institutions or agencies who wish to become a local provider of adult education services will submit the completed RFA package to the Regional Commission of Northwest Georgia for review and comment prior to submission to OAE.

Local providers of adult education services will further enhance adult education content through the adoption and execution of CCR Standards for Adult Education that were disseminated through the OCTAE. Local providers will be required to adhere to these standards in order to maximize the

effectiveness of curricula and instruction, and to prepare students for transition to post-secondary education and/or the workforce. In order to ensure that all instructors are knowledgeable on CCR standards and that they understand how to use them effectively to guide classroom instruction, OAE will provide significant levels of professional development to all instructional staff in currently funded programs and to any future adult education grantees.

**4. Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation - Provide a description of the cooperative agreement between the local Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation office and the local board which describes efforts made to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, cross-train staff, provide technical assistance, share information, cooperate in communicating with employers and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration and coordination.**

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

GVRA currently funds transition services for select school districts within the state of Georgia, primarily focused on high school students with disabilities. As of July 1, 2016, GVRA has Interagency Cooperative Agreements with 89 school districts throughout the state. Through these agreements, GVRA provides a transition counselor to work with students. Gilmer County Board of Education served 27 high school seniors through the WIOA Youth program in the 2017 – 2018 school year. WorkSource Northwest Georgia youth program provides work experience throughout the school year, as well as mentoring and case management. Basic skills, along with remedial activities for youth aged 16 – 21, are also provided. This includes credit recovery and instruction leading to the acquisition of primary computer or problem-solving skills, reading, writing or speaking English at or below the 8th-grade level or the level necessary to function on a job, in the youth's family or society. WorkSource Northwest Georgia also provides tutoring, internships and job shadowing, occupational skills training, leadership development, financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills training, career counseling, and support services. Of the 27 students enrolled in the Gilmer High School in-school youth program, 11 were referred by GVRA, and all succeeded in attaining their goals.

GVRA staff assisted the students with the application process for WIOA, assistive technology and other accommodations, as needed. GVRA staff work closely with WIOA staff in assisting students with any barriers that may arise during their program participation. Barriers might include housing, transportation or work clothes – anything that is employment-related. Follow-up



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

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

To enhance workforce services to individuals with disabilities, GVRA in Rome has worked closely with WorkSource Northwest Georgia in selecting assistive technology to be installed in the mobile lab. This resource will be used throughout the 15-county area to assist with testing, assessment and job search for WIOA applicants and participants.

In line with input GVRA has received from stakeholders during listening sessions and public hearings, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will participate in ongoing statewide initiatives to:

- Improve communication between GVRA and WIOA staff about opportunities provided by the WDB and other workforce partners
- Improve communication among GVRA and other regional agencies that serve a common population and/or specialty populations, including USG, TCSG and the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Enhance collaborative relationships between GVRA and WIOA staff regarding employment potential and abilities of individuals with disabilities. This will also include identifying opportunities through grants and blended funding.

The WDB has established a Service to Individuals with Disabilities Committee to formulate goals to assist in finding employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It is included under Committee Structure within this planning document.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia will work closely with GVRA Business Division staff to ensure all businesses in the region are aware of all qualified candidates for job openings, and to ensure that services to businesses are coordinated among partners. The WorkSource partners will develop integrated approaches for regional sector strategies and other employer-related initiatives.

#### **PERFORMANCE, ETPL AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY:**

- 1. Description of Performance Measures. – Provide a description of the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official pursuant to WIOA Sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under subtitle B and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area.**

Performance accountability measures apply across the core programs and assess the effectiveness of States and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by

those programs. WIOA mandates six performance measures for its core programs. Performance measures are calculated using the following methodology:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The state's data and information team also monitors performance year round, and LWDA's are given an opportunity to renegotiate their performance levels if they are under-performing based on special and/or unforeseen considerations. WFD staff will also take a proactive stance, making every effort to intervene early if quarterly performance data suggests that an LWDA is struggling with a measure. This type of support ensures that program design changes can be made in time to rectify issues and ensure final performance measures are met.

WFD utilizes GWROPP to store participant information and to enroll WIOA participants. The system collects information which can be utilized by LWDA case managers and management to provide systems reports on LWDA performance. LWDAs can produce reports on hard-to-serve populations as well as pre-determine performance measure achievement. This self-assessment by LWDAs is encouraged and the GWROPP is used extensively by WFD for performance monitoring.

WIOA performance percentages were negotiated with TCSG.

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>WIOA</b>
<b>ADULTS AND DISLOCATED WORKER MEASURES</b>	
Q2 Entered Employment Rate	Employed in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit
Q4 Entered Employment Rate	Employed in unsubsidized employment 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter after exit
Median Earning	Median earnings in Q2 after exit only
Credential Rate	Percentage of participants who obtain a credential or diploma during or up to 1 year after exit from participation
Measureable Skills Gain	Percentage of participants in education leading to credential or employment during program year, achieving measurable gains.
<b>YOUTH MEASURES</b>	
Q2 Entered Employment Rate	Employed in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit
Q4 Entered Employment Rate	Employed in unsubsidized employment 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter after exit
Median Earnings	Median earnings in Q2 after exit only
Credential Rate	Percentage of participants who obtain a credential or diploma during or up to 1 year after exit from participation
Measureable Skills Gain	Percentage of participants in education leading to a credential or employment during program year, achieving measurable gains.

*Negotiated levels for 2017 and 2018 are included as Attachment 2.*

## Past Performance for Northwest Georgia

The following report shows quarters of performance for Program Year 2017.

### WIA PY 17

#### Quarterly Performance Report

<b>Local Area Name</b>				
<b>Northwest Georgia (Area 01)</b>				
<b>Performance Measure Q2 Entered Employment Rate</b>	<b>Performance Group</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Negotited Level</b>	<b>% Negotiated Level Achieved</b>
	<b>Adults</b>	89.6%	84.0%	106.6%
	<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	93.3%	86.0%	108.5%
<b>Q4 Entered Employment Rate</b>	<b>Adults</b>	90.8%	77.0%	117.9%
	<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	92.4%	84.0%	110.0%
<b>Credential Attainment Rate</b>	<b>Adults</b>	81.9%	75.0%	109.2%
	<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	82.9%	77.0%	107.6%
<b>Q2 Entered Employment Rate</b>	<b>Youth (14-21)</b>	83.5%	75.0%	111.3%
<b>Q4 Entered Employment Rate</b>	<b>Youth (14-21)</b>	77.4%	74.0%	104.6%
<b>Credential Attainment Rate</b>	<b>Youth (14-21)</b>	81.3%	79.0%	102.8%

In PY16 there was no performance, and PY16 was deemed a "ghost year" because the Georgia Work Ready Online Participant Portal was changing from WIA to WIOA. Above is the available Performance for PY17. The Georgia Work Ready Online Participant Portal didn't start collecting WIOA Performance Data until participants registered on July 1, 2016. Full Performance Data will not be available until PY18. Based on currently available performance data Worksource Northwest Georgia is meeting all required Performance Measures. Two new Performance Standards, Measureable Skills Gain and Q2 Median Earnings, will be monitored and tracked for reporting.

**2. One-Stop System Performance and Assessment – Provide a listing of locally/regionally developed one-stop performance standards and describe the criteria used to develop the performance standards. Describe how the one-stop system and regional service delivery is assessment by the local board.**

The one-stop centers are monitored annually by WDB staff to evaluate the level of compliance with the criteria. Evaluations are based on interviews with one-stop managers and extensive data provided about services to customers. Recertification of the one-stops occurs on a biennial schedule, based on the monitoring reviews. All monitoring results and recertification recommendations are reported to the WDB/CCEO for approval. All centers have been certified based upon state/federal guidelines.

Each partner agency is responsible for ensuring that its legislated programs, services, and activities are provided in accordance with its goals, objectives, and performance measures. Each partner agrees to work to support the achievement of the one-stop center/system performance measures, goals, and objectives which include applicable WIOA measures and those additional measures established by the WDB, Consortium and/or the local one-stop center's management team.

The One-Stop Operator, WDB/CCEO and/or their designated staff, and officials from the State/Federal entities have the right to monitor the one-stop system and one-stop center activities to ensure that performance goals are being met; that appropriate procedures, controls, and records are maintained; and that terms and conditions of all Memorandum(s) of Understanding (MOU) and Agreement(s) are being fulfilled.

**3. ETPL System - Describe the regional Eligible Training Provider System, including the elements listed below.**

**a. Provide a description of the public notification to prospective providers.**

Prospective eligible providers can learn of our program through our web site, career advisers, local partners, and are encouraged to call our agency for more information on how to apply to be a provider. It is our policy to run an ad in the paper every two years soliciting new providers.

**b. Provide a description of how the board(s) evaluates providers and proposed training programs for initial eligibility, based on (at a minimum) criteria of proven effectiveness, local employer/industry demand, accreditation and customer accessibility.**

After completing a Georgia ETP Application, our agency looks at past performance information, accreditation of the agency, training credentials, if the training provided is an in-demand/growth occupation, plus all of the information provided by the State on the program/provider application responsiveness checklist. This information is gathered on the Georgia ETP application. After staff reviews the application it is brought before the Proposal Review Committee and their recommendation is brought to the Workforce Development Board (WDB) for final approval. It is then submitted to the State for inclusion on the ETPL.

**c. Provide a description of the formal appeals process for aggrieved ITA customers and providers of unapproved training programs.**

Aggrieved ITA customers and providers first contact the Worksource Northwest Georgia WDB staff. Every attempt is made for an informal resolution of their concern or alleged grievance. If this is not successful, then the area follows our agency complaint/grievance procedure, which is Included in Attachment 3.

**d. Provide a description of the ongoing process used to update the data on the eligible providers list (exclusive of the state-conducted continued eligibility process).**

Data is updated on the eligible provider list as providers notify us of any cost increases or changes in the program rate. Changes such as price increases go through the Proposal Review Committee and WDB and are then communicated to the State and updated on the ETPL.

**e. Provide a description of any regional policies or agreements for ITAs or training providers.**

An Individual Training Account (ITA) is similar to a bank account in that a sum of money is set aside to assist in paying for an individual's training. In Northwest Georgia's 15-county area, the ITA system is managed by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. Adults or dislocated workers determined eligible for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funded services may select a provider from the STATE and local approved listing after consultation with a WIOA Career Advisor. If a participant receives career advisement and support services and the program is funded by PELL/HOPE funds, the Individual Training Account (ITA) policies will apply. The following policies may be utilized to establish local parameters for service.

**Policies:**

- Training must be in occupations identified in the local WIOA Plan as growth and/or demand occupations or documentation of employment prospects for areas not listed in the Plan should be provided.
- Training must result in an employment wage sufficient to attain self-sufficiency without the aid of public assistance.
- Training must be at full-time status (as defined by the institution as specified in the contract with NWGRC). Exceptions to this policy may be approved, in writing, on a case-by-case basis.
- Programs should not exceed 104 weeks (two years). Exceptions to this policy may be approved on a case-by-case basis and requests should include evidence that financial support is available during extended training periods.
- RN, dental hygienist, teachers and radiological technicians, without limitations of funding, may be extended for three years. If necessary, and with approval of staff, the four occupations may be extended beyond the three year limitation.
- In general, all training programs must be within a reasonable commute of the WIOA local area that may include out-of-the-area and out-of-state training institutions. Out-of-the-area and out-of-state training programs that are not within commuting distance

to the local area may be approved on a case-by-case basis. All approved training must be located within the contiguous United States.

- All applicants must apply for the PELL Grant and/or HOPE Grant/Scholarship program, if eligible. All grants must be applied towards tuition and fees prior to the use of WIOA funding. If it is determined through an analysis of cost of attendance that the total cost of attending training exceeds the amount available through HOPE and WIOA funding, NWGRC allows Pell funds to be utilized by the participant for living expenses and other appropriate personal expenses during the training period. [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(B)]
- WIOA funding may be provided for college level instruction only if all of the following conditions have been met:
  - (a) The customer must be accepted into a certificate, diploma, or degree program, and the course of study must be occupation specific (i.e. Radiologic technician, accounting, teacher certification, etc.);
  - (b) Total course of study will take no longer than 104 weeks (2 years) to complete and will be a certificate, diploma, or degree program;
  - (c) The customer must demonstrate that he/she has the financial resources to attend long-term training;
- Continuing education and other similar courses may be approved if the following conditions apply:
  - (a) The customer must have a specific occupational goal;
  - (b) The customer must present evidence describing how the proposed training will increase their employment marketability.
- ITAs may be utilized for expenses related to training, including, but not limited to, the following: books, tuition and fees, supplies, uniforms and shoes, certification, licensing, testing fees, drug testing for entrance into training, medical requirements for training entrance, etc.
- Customers accepted on a provisional basis may receive assistance on a case-by-case basis.
- ITAs will not be used for payment of late fees cause by customer error or delay. The customer will be responsible for these fees, as he/she is responsible for other fines or penalties.
- Each local Workforce Development Board will determine funding limitations. A guide to training limitations follows:
  - (a) Up to \$6,500 in training costs, excluding support, may be expended for each participant for the first year of training;

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

If the cost of training exceeds funds limitation guidelines, career advisers should assist in developing a financial plan to cover total costs of training. Customers shall not be required to apply for or access student loans, or incur personal debt as a condition of participation.

**f. Provide a description of the process to track and manage all ITA activity.**

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

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

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

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

Registered apprenticeships, if approved by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) are automatically eligible to be placed on the state's ETP list if they request to do so. They are not subject to the same initial application and performance information as regular ITAs as they are subject to a detailed application and vetting process with the USDOL. We will still send them a Training Provider Agreement to work with us and notify the state that they wish to be placed on the EPTL. Non-apprenticeships that ETP must follow local procedures.

**4. Implementation of Technology – Provide a description of the technology used to enhance customer (participant and business) experience and any additional data analytics used to enhance planning and measure outcomes beyond mandated performance measures.**

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

Following those lines, WorkSource Northwest Georgia uses a data collection system provided by the Georgia Department of Labor (GeoSolutions) to track participant's services, attainment of credentials and financial information. In addition, the region has purchased TrackSource, software used to track participant expenses to ensure participants do not exceed their maximum financial expenditures allowed and to reconcile the information to the data collection system.



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

WorkSource Northwest Georgia also uses a labor market information (LMI) website called the Georgia Market Explorer. This website is maintained by the Georgia Department of Labor, Workforce Statistics and Economic Research. This information is used (in collaboration with economic data provided by The Conference Board), to track state and local unemployment information. This information is then communicated to the WDB and service contractors.

In early 2016, the WDB purchased a 13-station state of the art fully accessible computer lab (equipped with Microsoft Office and assessment software). The unit offers a full array of services. Internet connection is via satellite. Printer, scanner, and copy services are available on the unit. A fully accessible ADA workstation and auxiliary equipment is available adjacent to the Wheelchair Lift.

The Mobile Career Resource Center provides workforce solutions for businesses and individuals. Businesses may use the mobile unit for recruiting, pre-employment screening, interviewing and training. Individuals will be served through various job search/career development activities such as on-line job search, resume and cover letter development, on-line tutorials and individual assessments and exploration of training eligibility and options.

In the summer of 2015, WorkSource Northwest Georgia tested the computer-based interactive system, Skype. This tool can be used to conduct participant interviews and long distance interactions with WDB, contractors and business partners, minimizing time and reducing cost-prohibited travel. This program was successfully tested.

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

With current economic conditions on the rise, WorkSource Northwest Georgia staff continues to help customers identify in-demand jobs. WIOA has added the requirement to promote an alignment of workforce development programs with regional economic development strategies, to meet the needs of local and regional employers. To achieve this alignment, WorkSource Northwest Georgia is researching other LMI products to ensure individuals attain proper skills for in-demand occupations. Access to LMI is critical in analyzing the dynamic regional and sector-focused labor markets to align educational/training systems with the public workforce system. LMI systems analyze demographics (population, education attainment), industry, occupation, wage information (growing or declining occupations, staffing patterns, wages) and skill/certification requirements by occupation and career exploration. The LMI portal will not only be used to provide economic information but also provide real-time job postings (current and

historical trends) and matching job seekers with existing job experience, skills, certifications and competencies to other potential occupations and careers.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia's vision of a LMI portal is to actualize an opportunity to expand the scope of WIOA services to the WDB, individuals, businesses and community colleges. Never before has the link between training/education and job prospects been more important. NWGRC's goal is to provide career counseling and thereby close the job information gap by giving job seekers access to information needed to become employed. A LMI tool would allow WIOA to identify top employers and top occupations (via easy-to-understand illustrated graphs and charts), to communicate what occupations are available to be filled by trained and skilled applicants. For WIOA staff to be able to offer this type of labor market information and assistance, a LMI system would prove invaluable.

The goal of a more in depth LMI is to:

- Utilize labor market and educational data and technology, in coordination with local data, to inform and guide strategic workforce development decisions.
- Increase the value of the workforce system as a tool for employers by emphasizing business services.
- Increase the participation and utilization of the workforce system by both employers and individuals.
- Serve as the convener of economic development stakeholders in order to connect individuals, educational systems, and employers, thereby helping create a sustainable, skilled workforce.

Worksource Northwest Georgia is, and will continue to be, very proactive in researching and using new technologies to support WIOA initiatives and to provide information to the WDB, contractors and business partners. The mission of this advancement is to assist in providing our region with resources to enable local participants and/or employer to establish effective strategies for job development, job search, hiring, assessment, and information on the local labor market, services offered, and providers of services.

## **STATE INITIATIVES AND VISION:**

### **1. State Branding – Provide a description for how the area will adopt and utilize the state brand.**

In order to achieve a coordinated and unified identity across the one-stop system, the LWDA incorporated the state's branding standards into all signage, print and media materials used for training, marketing, and communication purposes. The LWDA marketing campaign was coordinated with the WFD branding roll-out, using consistent logo, colors, and message to create awareness of, and provide information about the services provided and funded by WorkSource Northwest Georgia and WIOA.

**2. State Initiatives – Describe how the area will coordinate with WFD state initiatives, including: Go Build Georgia, Operation: Workforce, WorkSmart Georgia and the High Demand Career Initiative.**

**Trade Five**, launched in March 2017, is a state initiative designed to increase awareness of skilled trade careers that are focused on manufacturing, telecommunications, energy, logistics, and construction. This labor neutral, public-private partnership is designed to inform youth, educators, and the public at large about the benefits and opportunities within skilled trade industries. By building a broad coalition of essential public and private stakeholders, Georgia Trade Five strives to increase the number of those entering the skilled trade workforce, while increasing the awareness of existing training programs leading to these in-demand occupations.

**Operation: Workforce** has a tremendous web-based information platform for returning veterans. WorkSource Northwest Georgia has sought to inform the public of the resources of this initiative by covering it in newsletters and providing a link on the [careerdepot.org](http://careerdepot.org) web site. WorkSource Northwest Georgia's service providers participated in a Summit for Veterans sponsored by Operation: Workforce and will continue to coordinate with other statewide events to promote training and employment for veterans. Local employers have been encouraged to list their jobs on the website in order not only to assist them in getting good workers but to help the veterans, in many cases, find jobs near their families and homes.

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

Representatives of WorkSource Northwest Georgia met with key advanced manufacturing leaders in the region in 2014 through Governor Deal's **High Demand Career Initiative** (HDCI) to receive input from the private sector representatives regarding the Region's workforce needs and challenges. Among the outcomes of the meetings were the expressed need for more apprenticeships, internships, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training and co-op programs. Consequently, WorkSource Northwest Georgia increased OJT opportunities in PY 2014-2015 and PY 2015-2016 for individuals. In PY 2016-2017 IWT was made available to employers. Additionally, internships and work experience are projected to be an integral sequence for many individuals entering the workforce either directly from occupational skills training, where they have little or no experience in this field of study or no work experience at all. Skills learned in the workplace regarding soft skills, work culture, and skill gaps for an individual transitioning from an academic setting to actual work can be overcome as more opportunities for work-based learning are available.

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

**High Demand Career Initiative:** In March of 2017, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission applied for a High Demand Career Initiative Grant with the Georgia Department of Economic Development -Office of Workforce Development. The grant was approved in May 2017 in the amount of \$232,500.

The Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board submitted a Request for Proposal seeking consultant services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) High Demand Career Initiative Grant. Georgia Tech Research Corporation was approved in July 2017 by the WDB as the Consultant for this initiative.

Georgia Tech Innovation Technology supplied a 30% match to assist in the development of this initiative and in developing industry-led sector partnerships that creates communication and collaboration between industry, education, business and workforce

September 2017, the project team worked with the NWGRC to identify and develop a comprehensive list of potential partners in which to engage. Potential partners were identified from the pre-award activities, such as the HDCI regional workshops. The project team drafted an invitation letter to send to partners inviting them to the sector partnership. The project team continue recruiting additional partners, specifically advanced manufacturing employers that have not been engaged in any previous planning efforts to date.

## **Phase I**

### **Project Kickoff**

The project officially kicked off on September 28, 2017 at the Gordon County Agricultural Building in Calhoun, GA. Workforce system partners in the region were invited to attend the kickoff meeting. The 25 attendees included employers in the advanced manufacturing industry, secondary and higher education, economic development professionals, workforce development entities, and other state and regional partners.

### **Goals:**

- (1) Reconvene the stakeholders involved in the pre-planning phase of the HDCI grant during the fall of 2016,**
- (2) Introduce Georgia Tech's EI2 as the project lead,**
- (3) Review the planned process for strategy development, and**
- (4) Discuss the goals and benefits of the partnership. Participants were given an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the information provided.**

Industry representatives mentioned their desire for an expedited planning process, greater level of in-school funding, and revision of the curriculum development process currently in place for manufacturing. The group also participated in an activity geared to identify “who’s missing” that should be engaged in the process, and were asked to list one outcome they hoped would result from the project. Thirty people and/or organizations were identified as potential partners in which to connect, and six specific outcomes were submitted, all of which aligned well with the goals of the grant.

### **Inventory of Assets**

During October and November of 2017, the project team inventoried some of the assets in the region. Sources for this information included data collected at the state-led HDCI regional meetings, and information collected during previous planning grants, such as the Investing in Manufacturing Community Partnership (IMCP). The project team used desk research to supplement, classify, and categorize the list. Most of the assets fell into one of four broad categories: Workforce and Technical Training, Industry Partnerships and Conveners, Community-based Organizations, and Economic Development Organizations. The regional inventory of programs was presented at the HDCI sector partnership workshop on November 17th to obtain feedback from partners. This step helped to validate the programs and initiatives captured, and acted as the first step in analyzing the alignment of the programs to the training needed. Future interviews with manufacturers will aid the alignment analysis, however, there appears to be a gap in available funding for training and partnerships.

### **Occupational Data Collection**

The project team collected manufacturing industry data during the months of October and November to begin the skills gap analysis. Data collected include top occupations in the manufacturing industry, fastest growing occupations, entry-level education and training requirements, and job posting analytics. Interviews with manufacturing employers will help to validate this data in order to complete a comprehensive skills gap analysis.

### **HDCI Sector Partnership Workshop**

The first HDCI sector partnership workshop was held on November 17th, 2017 at the Gordon County Agricultural Building in Calhoun, GA. The objectives of the workshop were to (1) provide a project recap and overview of the preliminary in-demand occupation data and inventory of assets, (2) hear from the CTAE Economic Development Liaison at the Georgia Department of Education regarding the Industry Recognized Credentials they have commissioned, and (3) facilitated small group discussion.

The small group discussion was designed to solicit feedback and consensus around talent attraction, obtain a greater understanding of the expectations partners have about outcomes of the partnership, and identify the next steps needed to move the partnership forward.

The questions were as follows:

- Describe the ideal mechanism(s) to attain the talent businesses need.
- It's five years from now, what has changed in the region that tells you talent needs are no longer a challenge?
- What do you want to happen next to move the sector partnership forward?

Attendees identified work based learning programs and on-the-job training as being the ideal mechanism to attain the talent that businesses need, followed by increased exposure to students at all levels of education. There was more diversity in responses from the group on what specific changes should occur to signal that talent needs are no longer a challenge. However, attendees identified increased enrollment/overall improvements in talent attraction most frequently. Other responses ranged from increased industry involvement to low unemployment to sustained efforts. According to attendees, the next steps needed to move the sector partnership forward include marketing and industry outreach and communication.

### Other Activities

- **Leadership team communication.** The NWGRC and Georgia Tech have bi-weekly calls to discuss HDCI-related tasks, address any issues, plan meetings, and move the development of the sector partnership forward.
- **HDCI Sector Partnership Opportunities for Increased Visibility.** Members from the project team were able to present on the NWGA HDCI Sector Partnership at the following events from September 2017 to December 2017:
  - o Northwest Georgia Joint Development Authority, November 2, 2017
  - o Manufacturing Growth Seminar, November 8, 2017
  - o Workforce Development Board and the Council of Chief Elected Officials, November 15, 2017
  - o Workforce Development Board Meeting, January 17, 2018 (planned)
- **HDCI Grantee Conference.** On November 6 and 7, members of the NWGA HDCI sector partnership attended the HDCI Grantee Conference at Jekyll Island, GA. The NWGA delegation coordinated which breakout sessions to attend in order to get exposure to as much of the information shared as possible.

### Next Steps

#### Employer Interviews (Conducted and Analyzed)

November through February the project team developed an interview guide that was use for the employer interviews, Using confidential firm-level employment data from the Georgia Department of Labor, the largest manufacturers in each of the counties in the 15-county region were identified in which to target for interviews. The project team reached out to local economic developers in the region to obtain contact information for each of the companies on the target list. and scheduled in-person interviews with regional advanced manufacturers. These interviews were held over a three-day period throughout the northwest Georgia region. Nineteen manufacturing firms completed the workforce assessment and surveys. Also

included were surveys from 90 manufactures in northwest Georgia region from the Georgia Manufacturing Survey (<http://www.gms-ei2.org>). The information collected completed the needs assessment, and aided in the alignment analysis of educational programs and initiatives. The results will be analyzed and presented at a future partnership meeting.

During the March 2018 steering committee meeting Georgia Tech presented an analysis of the manufacturer's interviews. Ten priorities were identified and will serve as the foundation in which to build specific workforce strategies. They include three categories, marketing (rebranding of mills, marketing manufacturing to K-12 students and parents, encouraging industry involvement in marketing, continuing education and training (increasing incumbent worker training, creating pathways along the entire education spectrum increasing dual enrollment opportunities and soft skills or employability skills.

### **Steering Committee formation**

A core component of the HDCI Sector Partnership grant was the development of steering committee made up of leaders from both the private and public sectors comprised of advanced manufacturers, local high schools, post-secondary educational institutions, economic development practitioners, and workforce development organizations.

### **Visioning and Branding, Vision/Mission Statement**

The committee met on February 28, 2018 for A Vision and Mission workshop at the Gordon County College and Career Academy let by Georgia Tech and facilitated by the MBDA Business Center-Atlanta. The focus was to assist with the direction of the workforce efforts in northwest Georgia Advance sector.

In addition, the committee developed a name/brand, for the NWGA HDIC sector Partnership, "Investing in Workforce Opportunities, Resources, Knowledge, and Skills" (iWorks).

Vision Statement: The vision of iWORKS is a well-trained, educated, and sustainable workforce in Northwest Georgia

Mission Statement: Fostering industry growth and stability with an advanced workforce that will grow the Northwest Georgia Regional economy and open global opportunities for our community.

### **WEBSITE**

A link to the HDCI Initiative was developed within the WorkSource Northwest Georgia website at [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org) that will provide notice of planned meetings and allow the public to access meeting agendas, minutes, and presentations, and to check the status of the partnership's activities. This space acts as a temporary placeholder until the partnership has its own standalone website.

### **Partnership strategy**

Turning research into action, the Georgia Tech team developed a plan to direct future workforce development efforts and facilitate a plan tailored to meet the needs of the advanced manufacturing sector in the region. The Partnership Strategy is the culmination of

the project's first phase and represents the blueprint enabling the Partnership to begin implementation activities. The plan will focus on closing the skills and training gaps in advanced manufacturing to align the talent acquisition and development needs of employers in the sector.

### **HDCI Sector Partnership Meeting**

The entire HDCI sector partnership convened on April 25, 2018 at the Bartow County College and Career Academy. Forty employers and workforce system partners were in attendance. Presentations were given by CEO/Principal Paul Sabin, on work based learning, an update provided by Georgia Tech on HDCI activities over the last few months and a panel discussion centered on the needs and opportunities that arose during Georgia Tech's engagement with employers (marketing, training, and soft skills). Jamie Jordan, Business Services Manager with the Georgia Department of Economic Development moderated the panel discussion. Panel members were: Lisa Adkisson, Regional Coordinator, Northwest Georgia Department of Labor; Jasmine Carr, WorkSmart Program Specialist, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Linda McEntire, PHR, SHRM-CP, Director of Technical Training, Mohawk Industries; and Connie Smith, GeorgiaBest Program Director, Georgia Department of Labor.

### **Strategy Development**

The project team drafted strategies identified by the steering committee and best practice research to draft specific strategies that iWORKS could implement. Overall strategies fell into three categories: continuing education, training & marketing and soft skills. These were presented at the steering committee in June 2018. In addition, on June 27, 2018 the steering committee met and Laura Gammage, Deputy Commissioner at TCSG presented information on the Troup Training Program. Troup Training is a workforce program aimed to provide industry recognized credentials and employability skills to the unemployed and underemployed. The remainder time was spent reviewing and developing draft strategies for iWORKS to implement.

### **Partnership Structure for Implementation and Sustainability**

A working meeting of the HDCI leadership team was planned for August 2018 in Rome, Georgia to discuss the structure and governance of the partnership for both the implementation of strategies, and the long-term sustainability of the partnership.

### **Strategic Plan**

Based on the culmination of extensive research, engagement, and outreach process, the Georgia Tech project team will develop the strategic planning document that will guide iWORKS into the implementation phase of the grant.

This document will include:

- An overview of the major assets for the advanced manufacturing talent pipeline,
- Analysis of the employer interview,



- Overview of the in-demand occupations and skills needed by the region's advanced manufacturing sector,
- Vision and mission statements for the partnership,
- Partnership name (brand),
- Specific action items or strategies that will help to close the skills and training gaps, and
- Roles, responsibilities, and metrics for each strategy.
- Specific action items or strategies that will help to close the skills and training gaps, and
- Roles, responsibilities, and metrics for each strategy.

### **Next Step Phase II**

Georgia Tech and the NWGRC are preparing for the next phase of the grant which begins in September 2018 and will continue through April 2019. This next phase, or “phase II”, will set the plan into motion with a “boots on the ground” approach. Over the course of eight months, Georgia Tech will assist iWORKS with the implementation of strategies developed during the first phase of the HDCI grant, develop a HDCI website and implement strategies for sustainability.

The Region intends to identify from the HDCI lessons learned from private sector representatives across the State. This will help to identify other demand occupations that could lead to sector strategies for WorkSource Northwest Georgia. Specifically, healthcare and logistics will be examined and key workforce needs for these industries found across the state will lead to appropriate service strategy and design for WorkSource Northwest Georgia.

The Region will also utilize [Georgia.org/Workforce Assessment](http://Georgia.org/Workforce_Assessment), specifically for healthcare and logistic businesses in the Region, to develop a more comprehensive inventory of workforce needs in these sectors. With this undertaking, Chambers, technical colleges, the Georgia Department of Labor, and other partners will be utilized to assure adequate response is obtained and maximum coordination achieved.

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

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

Through this initiative, Georgia will develop and utilize a coordinated, multiagency assessment and case management delivery system. Rather than merely “handing off” or “passing along” participants from one entity to another, an integrated case management

system will be employed. Primary case managers will work closely with secondary case managers (i.e., specialists in partner organizations), continuously sharing information and insights via a centralized management information system. Similarly, all necessary participant tracking and reporting will be accomplished within a single system.

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

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

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

The WDB has established a Disability Advisory Council comprised of GVRA, WIOA, TCSG, and private sector representatives, who will tend to any special circumstances required for equitable and fair treatment of this population.

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

The proposed Georgia Pathways to Work program aims to significantly change the way GVRA does business statewide in transitioning students and youth with disabilities in partnership with the core program partners, GaDOE, as well as local employers. This will be accomplished by working with statewide initiatives such as HDCI to ensure responsiveness

to the known workforce demands in Georgia, as well as supporting their efforts to better engage those with disabilities. The overall goal of the Georgia Pathways to Work program is to increase the number of youth who achieve competitive integrated employment through improving the 18 existing career pathways for students with disabilities, and creating community-based alternative career pathways for out-of-school youth. This will be achieved by tailoring the career pathways to a variety of work opportunities available in the communities. The program will also engage employers in the model design and employ social media strategies to connect youth across the nation. Additionally, a result of the program will be to increase the average weekly wage and employer benefits of participants in each occupational cluster through successful completion of career pathways.

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

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

Another way to support returning citizens is to provide incentives to the business community. The Federal Bonding Program, managed by GDOL, is a program that alleviates much of the potential risk involved in hiring an ex-offender. Federal Bonding provides employers with liability coverage at no cost when they hire job applicants who cannot be covered by a commercial bond. In addition, business can benefit from WOTC, a tax incentive to businesses that hire and retain new employees who are members of qualified groups, including ex-offenders. Information on Federal Bonding and WOTC is available at one-stop centers across the state.

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

It is our practice that no individual is turned away from receiving services from our program. Our area is working very closely with the GA-PRI initiative in an attempt to capture returning citizens and assist them with returning to the workforce. The GA-PRI Steering Team consists

of individuals from WIOA, the Housing Authority, GVRA, Dept. of Corrections, Dept. of Human Services, Dept. of Labor, a minister to name a few. There have been numerous obstacles identified for these returning citizens. However, The Community Coordinator from the Governor's Office of Transition, Support and Reentry has taken this special project as a mission to aid those who have been incarcerated for a period of time and need the assistance of the community to become self-reliant. The plan is to transition these citizens into the community with as much ease as possible.

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

- D. TANF** - Through the TANF Family Service Plan (TFSP) and TANF work activities, these individuals with barriers to employment are served.
- E. Long-Term Unemployed** - The State has many strategies to reduce the number of weeks an individual spends separated from the workforce, with a particular focus on reconnecting the long-term unemployed.
- F. Workforce Services for Veterans** - Georgia's unemployment rate for post 9/11 veterans is significantly higher than the national average. Services to veterans are provided by LVERs and DVOPs specialists located in one-stop centers across the state.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Worksource Northwest Georgia established a priority of services policy whereby veterans are given priority for services. Veterans and eligible spouses, who are also recipients of public assistance, are low income individuals, or who are basic skills deficient receive the highest priority. Since military earnings are not included as income for veterans or transitioning service members, they will receive every consideration to receive priority and be enrolled in services in local programs if they meet other entrance requirements. The Operation: Workforce initiative, however, assures that they are able to use existing skills to transition to civilian jobs and careers and that they are knowledgeable of all options available to them across the State—not just in Northwest Georgia. (See *Priority of Service Policy; Attachment 4*).

## **Attachments**

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

MEMBER NAME	TITLE	ENTITY	BOARD CATEGORY
Lisa Adkisson	Regional Coordinator	Georgia Department of Labor	Wagner-Peyser Representative
Cheryl Allison	Executive Director	Dade County Chamber of Commerce	Business Representative
Dickie Bone	Training Director	Southeastern Carpenters Training Trust	Apprenticeship/Local 225/Millwright 1263
Donny Boswell	Sales/Training Manager	Becker Electric	Business Representative
Bruce Bowman	Vice President	Fox Systems, Inc.	Business Representative
Illya Copeland	Executive Director	Murray County Industrial Dev. Authority	Economic Development
Michael Hamilton	Business Manager	Millwright Local 1263	Labor Representative
Jim Henry	President	Customer Precision Components	Business Representative
Todd Hooper	Asst. Vice President	ShawHankins	Business Representative
Kerri Hosmer	Director of Instruction	Georgia Northwestern Technical College	Adult Ed/Supervisor of Youth Success Academy
Scott Jackson	Unit Manager	Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency	Vocational Rehabilitation
Beth Kelley	Owner	KBruce Farms, Inc.	Business Representative
Robert Martin	Controller	QSR, Inc.	Business Representative
Linda McEntire	Director, Technical Training,	Mohawk Industries	Business Representative
Mitchell Morgan	Chairman	United Community Bank Board	Business Representative
Mike Murphy	COO	McWhorter Capital	Business Representative
Rick Partain	North Georgia President	First Bank	Business Representative
John Parton	VP Institutional Effectiveness	West Georgia Technical College	Higher Education Representative
April Rogers	Community Services Director	Tallatoona CAP, Inc.	Community-Based Organizations
Larry Stansell	Mayor	Town of Trion	CCEO
Carey Tucker	Marketing Representative	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and HVACR Technicians, Local 72	Labor Representative

**Attachment 2:** Local Negotiated Performance

<b>WIOA Performance Measure</b>	<b>PY16 Goal</b>	<b>PY17 Goal</b>
<b>Adult Q2 Entered Employment</b>	85%	86%
<b>Adult Q4 Entered Employment</b>	82%	82.5%
<b>Adult Median Earnings</b>	\$6,300	\$6,400
<b>Adult Credential Attainment Rate</b>	77%	78%
<b>DW Q2 Entered Employment</b>	87%	88%
<b>DW Q4 Entered Employment</b>	86%	87%
<b>DW Median Earnings</b>	\$6,500	\$6,600
<b>DW Credential Attainment Rate</b>	78%	79%
<b>Youth Q2 Placement in Employment or Education</b>	76%	77%
<b>Youth Q4 Placement in Employment or Education</b>	76%	77%
<b>Youth Credential Attainment Rate</b>	81%	80%

**Attachment 3:** Complaint/Grievance Procedures

**NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION**  
**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program Services**  
**Complaint/Grievance Policy and Procedures**

Pursuant to section 181 and 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and in compliance with 29 U.S.C. 3241 and 29 U.S.C 3248, the Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board (WDB) shall adhere to an established complaint and grievance procedure.

The following complaint and grievance procedure shall be implemented for any complaints and/or grievances that arise at the Workforce Development Area – Region 1 (WIOA-1) level:

**GENERAL POLICY**

If any individual, group, or organization has a complaint, the problem should first be discussed informally between those involved before a grievance is filed. Applicants and Participants for services through WIOA Title I paid for by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) and/or the Northwest Georgia Regional Workforce Development Board (NWGWDB) will be treated fairly. Complaints/grievances should be filed in accordance with the written procedures established by Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. Signed and dated grievance forms with accurate contact information are included in all participant case files. **If you believe you have been harmed by the violation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or regulations of this program, you have the right to file a complaint/grievance.**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY**

NWGRC adheres to the following United States law: "No individual shall be excluded from participation, denied the benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in the administration of or in connection with any such program or activity because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status), national origin (including Limited English Proficiency (LEP)), age, gender identity, disability, or political affiliation, belief, or against any beneficiary of being considered for any WIOA Title I financially assisted aid, benefit, service, or training, or an individual who has been determined eligible to participate in and who is receiving any aid, benefit, service or training under a program or activity financially assisted in whole or in part under Title I of WIOA, or citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States." References include: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 P. L. 113-128 USDOL Regulations Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 29 C.F.R.§ 38.1 effective January 3, 2017.

**COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION**

The NWGRC is prohibited from, and does not engage in, discriminating against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, gender identity, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted



immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity.

If you think that you have been subjected to discrimination under a WIOA-funded program or activity, you may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation with the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer, Phyllis Walker, P.O. Box 1798, Rome, GA 30162-1798, 706.295.6485, TDD 800.255.0056, [pwalker@nwgrc.org](mailto:pwalker@nwgrc.org), or with the Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 4123, Washington, DC 20210.

OR

Complaints may also be filed with the State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer, David Dietrichs. The address is Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development, 1800 Century Place NE, Suite 150, Atlanta, GA 30345-4304, 404.679.1371, TTY/TDD 800.255.0056.

Furthermore, the USDOL Civil Rights Center provides a complaint form which should be utilized, if sending a discrimination-based complaint, and can be found at <http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc/external-enforc-complaints.htm>

If the complainant chooses to file the discrimination complaint with the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission or the State-Level WIOA, Title I, Administrator then State-Level Administrator or the NWGRC has 90 days to resolve the complaint and issue a written Notice of Final Action. The Notice of Final Action for each issue raised in the complaint will contain a statement from either NWGRC or the State-Level WIOA, Title I, Administrator, a decision on the issue and an explanation of the reason underlying the decision or a description of the way the parties resolved the issue.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution of his/her complaint at NWGRC or the State-Level WIOA, Title I, Administrator, the complainant may file a new complaint with the CRC within 30 days of the date on which the complainant receives the Notice of Final Action. Options for resolving the complaint must include alternative dispute resolution (ADR) at the complainant's choice. The complainant may attempt ADR at any time after the complainant has filed a written complaint with NWGRC or the State-Level WIOA, Title I, Administrator, but before a Notice of Final Action has been issued. The choice whether to use ADR or the customary process rests with the complainant. A party to any agreement reached under ADR may notify the Director in the event the agreement is breached. In such circumstances, the non-breaching party may notify the Director within 30 days of the date on which the non-breaching party learns of the alleged breach and the Director must evaluate the circumstances to determine whether the agreement has been breached. If the Director determines that the agreement has been breached, the complaint will be reinstated and processed in accordance with NWGRC's procedures. If the parties do not reach an agreement under ADR, the complainant may file a complaint with the EO Officer (or the person who has been designated for this purpose) or Director. Complaints filed with the Director should be sent to: The Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210, or electronically at [www.dol.gov/crc](http://www.dol.gov/crc).

If the State-Level WIOA, Title I, Administrator, or NWGRC fails to issue the Notice within 90 days of the date on which the complaint was filed, the complainant may file a new complaint with CRC within 30 days of the

expiration of the 90-day period (in other words, within 120 days of the date on which the original complaint was filed).

NWGRC will offer full cooperation with any local, state, or federal investigation in accordance with the aforementioned proceedings, or with any criminal investigation.

### **PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING A COMPLAINT**

At a minimum, the procedures will include the following elements:

1. Initial, written notice to the complainant that contains the following information:
  - a. An acknowledgment that the complaint has been received; and
  - b. Notice that the complainant and respondent have the right to be represented in the complaint process by an attorney or other representative;
  - c. Notice of rights contained in the Equal Opportunity poster; and
  - d. Notice that the complainant has the right to request and receive, at no cost, auxiliary aids and services, language assistance services, and that this notice will be translated into non-English languages.
2. NWGRC will issue a written statement of the issue(s), provided to the complainant, that includes the following information:
  - a. A list of the issues raised in the complaint; and
  - b. For each such issue, a statement whether NWGRC will accept the issue for investigation or reject the issue, and the reasons for each rejection.
3. A 30 day period for fact finding or investigation of the circumstances underlying the complaint.
4. A 60 day period during which NWGRC attempts to resolve the complaint

Procedures for filing a complaint are listed at [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org) .

### **COMPLAINTS OF FRAUD, ABUSE OR OTHER ALLEGED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY**

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

1. State-Level WIOA, Title I, Administrator  
 Tel: 404.679.1371  
 Mailing Address: Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development  
 Attn: OWD Compliance Team  
 1800 Century Place, NE, Suite 150  
 Atlanta, GA 30345-4304
2. Georgia Office of Inspector General  
 Tel: 866.435.7644 (866.HELPOIG)  
 Mailing Address: 2 M.L.K. Jr. Drive, SW  
 1102 West Tower  
 Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Complaint Form: <http://oig.georgia.gov/file-Complaint>

3. United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General  
 Tel: 202.693.6999 or 800.347.3756  
 Mailing Address: Attn: Hotline, Office of Inspector General  
 U.S. Department of Labor  
 200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
 Room S-5506 Washington, D.C. 20210  
 Complaint Form: <https://www.oig.dol.gov/hotlinecontact.htm>

### **COMPLAINTS AGAINST PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

If the complaint is not resolved informally and it involves public schools of the State of Georgia, the grievance procedure will comply with WIOA and OCGA 20-2-989.5.

### **ALL OTHER COMPLAINTS (VIOLATIONS OF THE ACT OR REGULATIONS)**

All other complaints must be filed within 180 days after the act in question by first submitting a **written** request for resolution to:

Phyllis Walker	Lloyd Frasier
WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer	Executive Director
Northwest Georgia Regional Commission	Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
P.O. Box 1798	P.O. Box 1798
Rome, Georgia 30162-1798	Rome, GA 30165
709.295.6485	706.295.6485
<a href="mailto:pwalker@nwgrc.org">pwalker@nwgrc.org</a>	<a href="mailto:lfrasier@nwgrc.org">lfrasier@nwgrc.org</a>

Complaints filed with NWGRC must contain the following:

- A. Full name, telephone number, email (if any), and address of the person making the complaint.
- B. Full name, telephone number, email, and address of the person/organization against whom the complaint is made.
- C. A clear but brief statement of the facts that the alleged violation occurred, including date(s), identification of ALL relevant parties, and any supporting documentation.
- D. Relief requested.
- E. Complainant's printed name, signature and date.

For the grievance/complaint submission form, see pages six and seven of these procedures. The staff of the NWGRC shall provide assistance with the filing of the grievance/complaint submission form upon request of the person making the complaint. Such assistance may include, but shall not be limited to, providing instructions on how to file a complaint; providing reasonable accommodations to complainants with disabilities in accordance with Federal law; providing relevant copies of documents such as WIOA, regulations, local rules, contracts, etc.; and providing clarifications on the relevant provisions. This requirement shall not be interpreted as requiring the release of identifiable information.

A complaint will be considered to have been filed when NWGRC receives from the complainant a written statement, including information specified above which contains sufficient facts and arguments to evaluate the complaint.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the NWGRC WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer will initiate efforts with the complainant and others involved bringing resolution as soon as possible. This will include a meeting of all parties with the hope of reaching a mutually satisfactory resolution. If the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant during the informal resolution effort, the NWGRC WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer will arrange appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing for settlement of the complaint to be held within 60 days of grievance filing, if the complainant wishes. Complainant may request a hearing provided that such request must be written and addressed to the NWGRC WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer.

A complaint may be amended to correct a technical deficiency at any time up until the date of resolution or the date of a hearing, if a hearing is requested in writing prior to the issuance of a resolution. Complaints may be withdrawn by the complainant at any time prior to the issuance of a resolution. In the event a Complaint is received which does not contain enough information to enable the NWGRC to resolve the issue, the NWGRC shall make reasonable efforts to contact the complainant and gather additional, necessary information.

In the event that a complaint is filed and NWGRC lacks jurisdiction to resolve the complaint, NWGRC shall notify the complainant in writing within 5 business days of making such determination, informing him/her of their lack of jurisdiction.

NWGRC shall record all complaints in a complaint log. At a minimum, the following information shall be collected: complainant's name and contact information; the date the complaint was filed; the date the NWGRC issued a formal or informal resolution; and a brief description of the complaint. As the complaint log may contain personally identifiable information, the NWGRC shall take every step necessary to ensure the information is protected and only made available to staff or management authorized to view it. In compliance with 29 C.F.R. § 38.39, all alleged discrimination records will be kept at a minimum of three (3) years at a second facility. If the file is in litigation, the file will be kept until the issue has been resolved.

NWGRC shall issue a written resolution for each complaint received no later than 60 days from the date the complaint is filed. The written resolution shall contain the following, at a minimum:

- A recitation of the issues alleged in the complaint;
- A summary of any evidence and witnesses presented by the complainant and the respondent;
- An analysis of the issues as they relate to the facts; and
- A decision addressing each issue alleged in the complaint.

Every complainant shall have the opportunity for a hearing for any complaint that is filed. A request for a hearing must be made in writing by the complainant, preferably at the time the complaint is initially filed. However, a complainant may file a written request for a hearing within 60 days of the date the complaint was filed. If a request for a hearing is made, then the hearing shall be held as soon as reasonably possible to enable a resolution of the complaint no later than 60 days from the day the complaint is filed. The NWGRC shall use the following procedures if a hearing is requested:

Upon receiving written notice of the complainant's request for a hearing, the NWGRC shall respond in writing acknowledging the complainant's request and notifying the complainant and the respondent of the date of the hearing. Such acknowledgment and notice shall be transmitted to the complainant and the respondent within 10 business days of receipt of the complainant's request. The notice shall include, at a minimum:

1. The date of issuance;
2. The name of the complainant;
3. The name of the respondent against whom the complaint has been filed;
4. A statement reiterating that the complainant and respondent may be represented by legal counsel at the hearing;
5. The date, time, and place of the hearing, including the name of the hearing officer serving as an impartial party;
6. A statement of the alleged violations of WIOA (This may include clarification of the original complaint, but must accurately reflect the content of the submitted documentation of the complainant);
7. A copy of any policies or procedures for the hearing or identification of where such policies may be found; and
8. The name, address, and telephone number of the contact person issuing the notice.

The hearing must include an impartial hearing officer selected by the NWGRC; an opportunity for both the complainant and respondent to present an opening statement, witnesses and evidence; an opportunity for each party to cross-examine the other party's witnesses; and a record of the hearing which the NWGRC shall create and retain.

The hearing officer, considering the evidence presented by the complainant and respondent, shall issue a written decision which shall serve as the official resolution of the complaint. The decision shall include the following information, at a minimum: the date, time, and place of hearing; A recitation of the issues alleged in the complaint; a summary of any evidence and witnesses presented by the complainant and the respondent; an analysis of the issues as they relate to the facts; and a decision addressing each issue alleged in the complaint.

Hearings on any complaint/grievance filed shall be conducted within 30 days of any failed informal resolution. Written decisions shall be rendered not later than 60 days after the hearing. Attempts at informal resolution may proceed during the 30-day period between the filing and hearing of the complaint/grievance and prior to the rendering of a decision on the complaint/grievance.

If the complainant(s) does not receive a written decision from the Hearing Officer within 60 days of the hearing of the complaint/grievance, or receives a decision unsatisfactory to the complainant(s), the complainant(s) then has/have a right to request a review by the state using the WIOA complaint Information Form found at <https://tcsg.edu/workforce/worksource-georgia/eo-and-grievance-procedure-information/>.

David Dietrichs, State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer  
 Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development  
 1800 Century Place NE, Suite 150  
 Atlanta, GA 30345-4304  
 Telephone: 404-679.1371  
 Email: [wioacompliance@tcsg.edu](mailto:wioacompliance@tcsg.edu)

Such appeal shall be filed within 60 days of the date of the written decision issued by the NWGRC.

The State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer, David Dietrichs shall act as the Governor's authorized representative. Either an informal resolution or a hearing will take place within 60 calendar days of the filing. If the State does not respond within the 60 days, or either party wants to appeal the decision, WIOA allows for a formal appeal by certified mail, return receipt requested to Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20210, Attention: ASET 202.693.3015. A copy of the appeal must be simultaneously provided to the appropriate ETA Regional Administrator and the opposing party.

Federal appeals must be made within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the local or State decision. USDOL will make a final decision no later than 120 days after receiving a formal appeal. USDOL will only investigate grievances and complaints arising through the established procedures. WIOA does not allow for federal intervention until and unless the proper, formal procedure has been followed.

No applicant, participant, employee, service provider or training provider will be intimidated, threatened, coerced or discriminated against because they have made a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding or hearing.

**Attachment 4:** Priority of Services

**Priority of Service  
Adult and Dislocated Worker**

**I.** Service Priority for Individualized Services and Training Services

Priority of service is not an eligibility criterion, but rather a means to ensure emphasis on providing services to populations.

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

- A. Public assistance recipients, other low-income adults; and
  - B. Individuals who are basic skills deficient.
- **Basic Skills Deficient** – An individual that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. Criteria used to determine whether an individual is basic skills deficient includes the following:
    - a. Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education/Literacy program in first four Educational Functioning Levels.
    - b. Unable to read English or write at an 8.9 or below grade level (through TABE assessment) or assessing as appropriate using BEST Literacy any of the six Adult Educational functioning levels at or below 78 score.
    - c. Unable to speak English and determined to be Limited English speaking proficient through staff-documented observations or administering Best Plus which meets any of the six Adult Education levels at or below 540 score.
    - d. Being at an 8.9 or below grade level on TABE in computing skills.
    - e. Other objective criteria determined to be appropriate by the local area and documented in its required policy.

Veterans under WIOA Sec. 3 (63)(A) receive priority of service as described in the Jobs for Veterans Act (38 U.S.C 4215 (2)). Veterans and eligible spouses of veterans who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for adults programs must receive the highest priority for services. TEGL 19-16 references TEGL 10-09 regarding order of priority for veterans and eligible spouses. Priority must be provided in the following order:

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, are

low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Military earnings are not included as income for veterans and transitioning service members.

- Second, to individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses who meet WIOA priority criteria.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- Last, to individuals outside the groups given priority under WIOA including individuals with disabilities, single parents, older individuals, long-term unemployed, ex-offenders, individuals who lack a high school diploma or GED, individuals lacking self-sufficiency, and other groups needing assistance as long as the priorities groups are adhered to in order.

## II. Veterans' Service Priority

In accordance with the Veterans' Priority Provisions of the "Jobs for Veterans Act" (PL107 288) and as specified by the Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006 the following policy and procedure is adopted by the Northwest Georgia Workforce Innovative and Opportunity Act Program.

### References:

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

### • Definitions -

For priority of service purposes, a covered person is a:

1. Veteran - an individual who has served at least one day in active military, naval or air service, and was discharged under "other than dishonorable" conditions. This includes full-time duty in the National Guard or a Reserve component, except full-time duty for training purposes.
2. Eligible spouse - the spouse of:
  - a. any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
  - b. any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of the spouse's request for priority has been listed for at least 90 days as: missing inaction; captured in line of duty by a hostile force; or forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power;
  - c. a veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability (as determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs); or
  - d. a veteran who died while a total disability, resulting from a service-connected disability, was in existence



\* Veteran, as specified at 38 U.S.C. 101(2) and under the Workforce Innovative and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and codified at 29 U.S.C. 2801(49)(A)

- Identifying and Informing Covered Persons:

All covered persons will be identified at the point of entry to WIOA programs and/or services so they can take advantage of priority of service. Point of entry includes W IA physical locations, One Stop Career Centers, web sites and other virtual service delivery resources. All covered persons must be made aware of their entitlement to priority of service; the full array of programs and services available to them; and, any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services. Covered persons must be given priority of services throughout the continuum of services.

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

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

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

- Implementing and Applying Priority of Service

Veterans and eligible spouses will receive priority of service.

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

The data to be collected includes the services provided to and the outcomes experienced by covered persons and non-covered persons receiving services.

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

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

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

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

- Services to Individuals Not Residing in the Area:

Priority for training services will be given to residents of the Northwest Georgia area for adult, youth, and dislocated worker applicants. Services for dislocated workers will also be given to employees of companies whose place of employment is/was within the Northwest Georgia service area. Informational and core services will be universally available to all customers regardless of residence. Residents of other service areas desiring intensive and/or training services, unless dislocated workers as stated above, will be referred to the WDB in their area.

**Attachment 5: Comments that Express Disagreement****Comment 1****Originating Entity:****Comment:****Comment 2****Originating Entity:****Comment:****Comment 3****Originating Entity:****Comment:****Comment 4****Originating Entity:****Comment:**

**Attachment 6:** Signature Page

The undersigned hereby agree to adhere to all applicable federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and policies in performing any duty associated with the funds made available to under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Name: Lesia Lambert

Title: Director of Workforce Development

Entity Representing: Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

Signature: 

Name: Ted Rumley

Title: Chief Local Elected Official

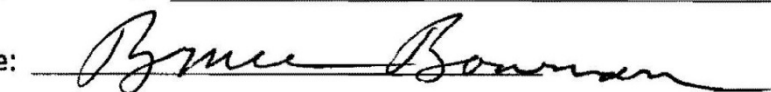
Entity Representing: Council of Chief Elected Officials of Northwest Georgia

Signature: 

Name: Bruce Bowman

Title: Chairman

Entity Representing: Workforce Development Board of Northwest Georgia, Inc.

Signature: 

**Attachment 7** : Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board Policy and Procedures  
Procurement

**Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board  
Policy and Procedures**

**Procurement**

**A. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) PROCESS FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS OR VENDORS**

1. The WDB/CCEO Agreement assigns the procurement process to the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC).
2. A Bidders' List will be maintained to be used in acquiring goods and services and will to the degree possible identify enough sources to ensure fair and open competition.
3. The procurement rules contained herein do not apply to pass through monies from any unit of state or local government (or Service Delivery Region [SDR] administrative entities) to other such units. To qualify as a pass through, the receiving entity must pass the funds to another such entity which will then procure services in accordance with these procedures.
4. At least once every two years, all organizations on the Bidders' List will receive letters by mail inquiring if they wish to remain on the Bidders' List and a return checklist to indicate the services/training areas in which they wish to be notified when RFP's are issued. The check list also requests, for administrative purposes only, information regarding small and minority/female owned business, community based organizations and/or educational agency status for service provider applications.
5. All potential service providers and/or vendors representing small, minority, and women's businesses (SMW), known labor surplus area suppliers, community- based organizations and/or educational status will be identified on the Bidder's List in regard to this status.
6. In the competitive procurement process, notice of the RFP and the Bidders' Conference will be advertised in all legal newspaper organs of the counties and the Atlanta and Chattanooga papers.
7. The Workforce Development Director is authorized to issue solicitations for proposals for service provider/vendor and to establish funding parameters or ranges within such solicitations. Individual staff members may compile the request for proposal documents. Each RFP document will contain responsiveness criteria and the minimum competitive score and meet any requirements specified by Georgia Department of Economic Development - Workforce Development (GDEcD-WD) policies and procedures.
8. Announcements of RFP's and RFP Amendments will be mailed to appropriate agencies and organizations as indicated on the Bidders' List. RFP's and RFP Amendments will be mailed to those requesting RFP's in writing or the RFP's may be picked up at the NWGRC office. In the event a request for an RFP is received near the submission deadline, the

Workforce Development Director may instruct the Workforce Development Administrative Assistant to send the proposal by overnight express. RFP's and RFP Amendments may be provided online or by hard copy.

9. Those desiring to pick up the RFP at NWGRC will sign a statement in receipt of the RFP. The Workforce Development Administrative Assistant is responsible for maintaining this log.
10. Appropriate Educational and known Community-Based Organizations will be maintained on the Bidders' List and will receive routinely notice of all training service solicitations. They will receive RFP's in the areas that they have previously indicated interests unless they specifically request in writing or pick up additional RFP's in response to the notification of solicitations or request that the documents not be mailed to them.
11. The term "community-based" organizations means private non-profit organizations which are representative of communities or significant segments of communities and which provide job training services, for example: literacy organizations, agencies or organizations serving older individuals, organizations that provide service opportunities, youth corps programs, organizations operating career intern programs, neighborhood groups and organizations, community action agencies, community development corporations, vocational rehabilitation organizations, rehabilitation facilities, agencies serving youth, agencies serving individuals with disabilities and disabled veterans, agencies serving displaced homemakers, union-related organizations, and employer-related nonprofit organizations, and organizations serving non-reservation Indians, as well as tribal government and Native Alaskan groups. "Educational organizations" include the public schools, the vocational technical institutes, and the colleges which must be located within the area.
12. Technical assistance regarding the RFP will be provided only at the Bidders' Conference unless an error in notification is made by NWGRC. If so, questions may be submitted in writing to the staff for consideration and responses mailed to all to whom the solicitation (RFP) has been distributed; or an additional Bidders' Conference may be scheduled. All other inquiries during the RFP process are prohibited. Comments regarding any errors in the RFP are welcomed and will be recorded in order to issue corrections if necessary. Additionally, an opportunity to submit questions by email or in written format by a particular date may be provided due to the complexity of the RFP. These questions will be addressed together with the questions from the Bidder's Conference, if applicable.
13. A copy of each question/answer at the Bidders' Conference (and any other questions as qualified in Number 12 preceding) will be maintained. This will be available to any person requesting it and it will be posted online at [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org).
14. Proposals will be stamped and logged in as to date and time of receipt by the Workforce Development Administrative Assistant or the receptionist.
15. Should proposals be received and only one (or no) responsive proposals are received in a

category, the non-responsive bidders may be notified of a failed competition and offered an opportunity to re-submit. The opportunity to re-submit will not be re-publicized in the newspapers. Or, if appropriate, non-competitive negotiation with the one responsive offeror may occur.

16. The proposal responsiveness checklist will be utilized to determine responsive proposals. Those deemed non-responsive will not be considered for funding. Offerors submitting bids which are judged to be non-responsive will be notified with the reason(s) for non-responsiveness identified.
17. No proposal will be considered to be responsive if it is received after the date and time specified (unless staff error was the cause). Faxed RFP's will not be considered responsive. The correct number of copies of the proposal (one with original signature) and the correct number of completed proposals must be submitted in order to be considered responsive.
18. The Workforce Development Director will assign Workforce Development staff members to the RFP's considered to be "responsive" for their evaluation of proposals. At least two (2) staff members will review each RFP and evaluate the information contained in the proposal utilizing the evaluation criteria presented in the RFP. Staff members reviewing the proposals will not possess conflicts of interests (as specified in the Code of Conduct) which would prevent fair and impartial review. Each scorer's scores should be given by the rater independently and consistently, based upon the individual's best judgement.
19. Pertinent performance data will be provided to each of those rating the proposals to facilitate the evaluation of proposals. For training services, evaluators will be given performance data consistent with the performance standards negotiated with GDEcD-WD and/or pertinent to the type of contract (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, etc.). Other information/instructions will be provided as needed to facilitate the evaluation process, including allocability, appropriateness, and necessity.
20. An average of the scores will be presented to the Proposal Review Committee or Youth Committee along with a summary of each proposal. Results of proposals for Youth Services will first be presented to the Youth Committee for their review and recommendation to the WDB. Adult and Dislocated Worker recommendations will be made to the Proposal Review Committee for funding. The Proposal Review or Youth Committee, respectively, will then select those to be recommended for funding to the Workforce Development Board (WDB). The Youth Committee and/or Proposal Review Committee may request additional information and/or request staff to obtain additional information from the offeror. Additionally, the Youth Committee or the Proposal Review Committee may request a "best and final offer" prior to the final award of the contract.
21. Only competitive proposals will be considered for funding. If the proposals are evenly rated and one of these proposals has been submitted by a community-based organization

(CBO) or educational agency, the tie breaker may go to the CBO or educational agency if the organization passes the performance test.

22. Scores on the evaluation form are not the only criteria for funding. For example, a proposal with a lesser score may be selected for funding if it serves a geographic area or target group needing additional services. This applies also to those on the contingency list. The evaluation criteria then serve primarily to determine the competitiveness of the proposals and lesser scored proposals may be awarded over other higher ranked proposals if other factors necessitate.
23. The WDB will approve proposals for funding prior to the execution of contracts with service providers/vendors. A review of the ability of the training service offeror to achieve competency standards for participants with deficiencies will be part of the evaluation for competitiveness for training service offerors. Any new contractor must have a favorable rating on the technical performance and business capabilities as specified in the RFP prior to the execution of the contract. These capabilities include proposed facilities and equipment of the service provider, qualifications and experience of staff, required financial capability, systems and procedures for reporting and record keeping and adequate financial management systems. Current service providers need only the absence of any noted significant deficiencies in monitoring reports from the preceding program year to document technical performance. A re-evaluation of financial capability, however, must occur for all contracts. The award letter should state this condition for funding.
24. The CEO will concur with the selection of service providers. Additionally, NWGRC must approve all contracts.
25. NWGRC Procurement Procedures are designed to promote fair and open competition. Specifically the system will assure:
  - a. That it will prohibit noncompetitive pricing practices between firms, organizations or affiliated companies or organizations; and
  - b. That it will prohibit noncompetitive awards to consultants who are on a retainer contract.
26. The Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct Policy will be adhered to in procurement and the award of contracts process. This is found in Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 159.21-06.
27. Priority for funding will be:
  - a. Those approved by the WDB in the initial review will be funded.
  - b. Those placed on the contingency list may be considered at later dates and may be funded contingent upon the availability of funds and the current training or other needs of the SDR.
  - c. The "Contingency List" shall list all backup proposals by category of training, geographical area proposed, and population to be served. The Contingency List



for vendors shall list the services/goods, price and critical capabilities, if applicable. Only responsive and competitive proposals will be placed on the Contingency List. Priority for award of a contract among bidders listed on the List shall be on the basis of ranking within the areas in which the bid was made unless:

- (1) The offeror declines the award;
- (2) The offeror cannot serve the geographical area and/or the population for which the SDR has determined an additional need exists; or
- (3) The training proposed duplicates existing services and the training is not considered more effective than the existing services.

In the above instances, proposals with lower scores may be awarded contracts over proposals with higher scores.

28. Notification of the outcome of the solicitation process will be provided to both successful and unsuccessful bidders within a reasonable period of time as specified in the solicitation. Competitive bidders not awarded a contract may be notified that they have been placed on a contingency list and how that list will be used.
29. Contractors will be selected competitively utilizing the most economical process to acquire goods and/or services under the following conditions plus any others specified within these procedures:
  - a. Effectiveness in delivering comparable or related services based on demonstrated performance capability, in terms of the likelihood of meeting performance goals, cost, quality of training, and characteristics of participants reflected in the solicitation.
  - b. Consideration will be given to community-based organizations as service providers.
  - c. Funds will not be used to duplicate services unless alternatives would be more effective or more likely to achieve the SDR's performance goals.
  - d. Education agencies in the SDR shall be provided the opportunity to provide educational services unless alternatives would be more effective or have greater potential to enhance the participants' continued occupational and career growth.
  - e. Opportunity to participate in the procurement process shall be provided to small, minority, and women's businesses and labor surplus suppliers.
  - f. Assurance will be secured by NWGRC that contracts meet WIOA cost allocation criteria.
30. To ensure that the solicitation provides the necessary information for the development of competitive bids, the following information will be provided in the Service Provider RFP:

- a. Name and address of Northwest Georgia Regional Commission;
- b. Name, address, and telephone number of person(s) representing NWGRC to contact regarding the solicitation;
- c. Preparation and submission requirements including due date and time, content and format, number of copies, number of original signed copies, and location/person to where/whom bid should be submitted;
- d. If need for training and/or services is based on a multi-year training plan, it may be stated in the solicitation, with a provision that contract performance must be evaluated prior to renewal based on criteria established in the contract;
- e. General description of program including specification of applicable federal and state laws and regulations with which bidders must comply including:
  - (1) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and directives, 2 CFR parts 200, 215, 225, 230 and Appendices I through XI including any exceptions identified at 2 CFR part 2900.
  - (2) Applicable policies and procedures issued by GDEcD-WD.
- f. Description of training and other services requested, population to be served, minimum service levels to specific target groups, period of performance, estimated number (or range) of individuals to be served, coordination requirements, funding parameters (or ranges), and expected program results;
- g. Process and procedures by which proposals will be evaluated including factors to be used to determine responsiveness and competitiveness, provisions for ensuring independence of ratings by those involved in the evaluation process, minimum competitive score, and specific weighted criteria and an evaluation worksheet which will be used for proposal review;
- h. Applicable reporting and monitoring requirements including, but not limited to, data entry, performance, and financial reporting;
- i. Method to be used for invoicing and/or payment;
- j. Documentation required to establish programmatic and financial capability to perform the work and debarment and suspension requirements;
- k. Code of Conduct;
- l. Approximate dates scheduled for review and award, information on the Bidders' Conference, and how inquiries of Bidders will be handled;
- m. Affirmative action assurance that the offeror will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the WIOA of 2014, including the Nontraditional Employment for Women Act of 1991; Title VI of

the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended; and with all applicable requirements imposed by or pursuant to regulations implementing those laws, including but not limited to 29 CFR part 34. The United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance;

- n. Prohibition against sub-contracting without SDR approval and full disclosure of the relationship with any approved subcontractor and any profits to be realized by the entity;
  - o. Line item budget of proposed costs including funds to be contributed by the organization;
  - p. Other services or requirements that may affect proper budgeting by the offeror;
  - q. Applicable coordination requirements.
31. In making the selection for contract awards, the WDB will negotiate with the most responsible bidder(s). This is the offeror(s) who appear(s) to possess the ability to perform most successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement.
32. The following elements will be included in evaluation and selection procedures:
- a. All proposals must first be deemed responsive prior to being evaluated. A checklist documents responsiveness.
  - b. Criteria by which proposals are evaluated which may include the following:
    - (1) Adequate financial resources and technical skills to perform the work;
    - (2) The ability to meet the program design specifications at a reasonable cost;
    - (3) The ability to meet performance goals;
    - (4) Justification of additional need for any proposed expenditures for new facilities;
    - (5) Justification of additional need for class-size training in occupations in which training is already being provided in the service area;
    - (6) A satisfactory record of past performance in applicable training or related activities including quality of training, reasonable outcomes in areas such as service to target groups, training completion, job placement, job retention, wages at placement or median wage, number of participants credentialed, reasonable drop-out rates in past programs, the ability to provide or arrange for appropriate supportive services, including child care;
    - (7) If applicable, the ability to provide services that can lead to the

achievement of competency standards for participants with identified deficiencies;

- (8) A satisfactory record of integrity, business ethics, and financial accountability;
- (9) Technical skills to perform the work;
- (10) The necessary organization, experience, accounting, and operational controls;
- (11) Cost effectiveness including allowability, allocability, appropriateness, and necessity.

33. The procurement record will include:
- a. A copy of the solicitation package;
  - b. A copy of the public notification;
  - c. Bidders' List to which notices were mailed;
  - d. List of all organizations/entities sent a solicitation;
  - e. Agenda and minutes of the Bidders' Conference, if a conference is conducted;
  - f. A copy of each question and answer issuance, if applicable;
  - g. Log sheet for receipt of bids;
  - h. A copy of each bid which was received;
  - i. Rating and scoring sheets completed in the evaluation process;
  - j. Business operation capability evaluations;
  - k. Documentation of the rationale for selection and funding of any offeror which did not receive the highest score/ranking in the evaluation process;
  - l. Completed Negotiations Checklist for each subrecipient contract and memo, as applicable;
  - m. Completed cost analysis for each selected bidder;
  - n. A copy of any submitted grievances and the resolution of each;
  - o. High risk determinations and special award/contract conditions, if appropriate.
34. The WDB reserves the right to accept or reject any/or all bids received as qualified, to accept other than the lowest bid and/or to cancel in part or in its entirety, the request if it is in the best interests of the WDB to do so.
35. Situations may arise during the course of the year which prompts the need to plan for the use of additional resources beyond those identified in the RFP and provided under

a contract. If appropriate, a new RFP may be issued.

36. Competitive procurement requirements are not required for on-the-job training contracts executed with individual employers provided that an employer/employee relationship exists and that the employer will provide job training to enable the participant to perform as a regular employee of the employer's establishment. On the other hand, where a service provider is responsible by contract for operating an on-the-job training program, including the identification of OJT sites and participants to fill them, all requirements for competitive procurement would apply.

**B. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) PROCESS FOR COMPREHENSIVE ONE-STOP OPERATOR**

1. Introduction and Background

- a. All RFPs that contain requests for one-stop operators must include the minimum duties set forth in 20 CFR 678.620 which cites the mandatory duties of the One-Stop Operator.
- b. An entity serving in a different role within the One-Stop delivery system, may be selected and designated as the One-Stop Operator provided there are sufficient firewalls and conflict of interest policies and procedures in place (Reference: 20 CFR 678.620b; 20 CFR 679.430).
- c. The RFP will include a reference page that provides relevant WIOA references, the local entity's policies and procedures, and other applicable state and/or federal regulations.

2. Procurement Procedures/Process

- a. The planning phase of the procurement process must include the following steps:
  - (1) Specify all parameters to be negotiated with the one-stop operator and outlined in the subsequent contract, agreement, or MOU (e.g., duties, budget, performance levels, duration);
  - (2) Conduct market research;
  - (3) Issue Requests for Information (RFIs);
  - (4) Identify procurement method;
  - (5) Develop requirements for one-stop operator;
  - (6) Develop procurement solicitation (e.g., RFP or IFB);
  - (7) Develop factors for evaluation/scoring; and
  - (8) Identify panel and signatory authority.
- b. A list will be developed using information gathered on eligible entities that may be able to provide One-Stop Operator services. These entities will be added to the bidder's list to ensure a comprehensive bidder's list is maintained. The bidder's list should contain both local and non-local eligible entities, including non-profit as well

as for-profit agencies. Best practices include allowing at least a thirty (30) day response time for receipt of bids or proposals from the date of issuance of a solicitation in widely circulated publication.

- c. The RFP will be published in all applicable legal organs, as well as on the procuring entity's website. The RFP will be published as widely as possible. This can be done by sending the written solicitation to local, State, and national entities that will assist in advertising the competition. These efforts may include posting on WFD's website or working with groups such as the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia and the Georgia Municipal Association.
- d. A bidder's conference will be held to ensure clarity of requirements.

### 3. Requested Documentation

- a. In order to be considered responsive, a bidder must provide two years of audited financial history. Adequate documentation could include recent audit reports, the entity's CAFR, an independent CPA review, tax records, or another recognized review of accounting process and procedures. Bidders who fail to provide this information will be deemed non-responsive.
- b. In order to be considered responsive, a bidder must provide an organizational chart.
- c. All bidders must provide a completed Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act affidavit at the time of submitting a bid.
- d. All organizations that are private, for-profit, or not-for profit should be able to provide documentation of the registration under either Georgia or their home state's Secretary of State's office.
- e. All bidders are required to provide a DUNS number. NWGRC will verify that the bidders are not on the federal debarred/suspended list prior to reviewing the responses.

### 4. Requested Information/Responses for Evaluation

- a. Bidders must discuss how they will work to incorporate all partners into the comprehensive one-stop. This discussion must include partners who are electronically present in the comprehensive one-stop.
- b. Bidders should be able to describe how the proposed one-stop operations will fit into their organization chart and whether current or newly hired staff would be providing the services. Where possible, bidders should either provide resumes of current staff or titles and job descriptions/posting for any new positions that would be hired.
- c. Bidders should describe their customer service experience and discuss any experience with handling complaints and/or concerns from customers. Other required experience should include oversight of staff teams and experience in developing and delivering technical assistance.

- d. Bidders should propose outcome measures that effectively capture and evaluate their efficacy and system effectiveness. This response should also include a proposed data collection and validation methodology as well as a proposed reporting method.
- e. Bidders should discuss how they will ensure all partner agencies are collaborating and cooperating in the implementation of the partner programs. This should include discussions on both training for the one-stop operator staff and cross-training for the partner-program staff. Capacity building experience would be relevant to this discussion.
- f. Bidder should discuss how they will bring together the partner programs to ensure adequate outreach of the one-stop center and demonstrate a thorough understanding of target populations for partner programs. Discussion should also include how the bidder will take ownership/leadership in ensuring all partners are contributing to the center, both financially as well as through resources and staff time.
- g. Bidders should discuss how they will comply with all federal/state/local regulations, as well as provide oversight to ensure that all partner agencies are also in compliance.

5. Requirements for Evaluation Criteria

- a. There must be at least one evaluation criterion that assesses the bidder's financial capabilities.
- b. There must be at least one evaluation criterion that assesses the bidder's technical/programmatic capabilities.
- c. There must be at least one evaluation criterion that assesses the bidder's service delivery experience. (It is not mandatory that bidders have WIOA experience, but it is recommended that the bidders have some experience with customer service and/or service delivery.)

6. Upon receipt of the responses, the WDB will evaluate and score each proposal.

7. If the submitted proposals/bids do not reach an awardable score based upon the evaluation criteria, the WDB may identify an operator and develop an award under a sole source method consistent with 2 CFR 200.320(f).

**C. SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT**

Sole source procurement may be awarded only if one of the following criteria is met:

- 1. The good/service is only available from one source.
- 2. After solicitation from a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate. This is typically met through insufficient bid responses.
- 3. Through a formal request, GDEcD-WD authorizes a noncompetitive proposal.
- 4. Public emergency will not allow a delay resulting from the competitive procurement

process. If the WDB plans to use the public emergency criteria, GDEcD-WD must be notified in advance.

#### **D. PRE-VOCATIONAL SERVICES**

These services are intended for individuals who lack occupational credentials/certifications and require short-term services to enhance and upgrade skills for employment. Pre-vocational services may include services that:

- Prepare individuals for licensing or certification exams
- Enhance the employability of individuals who already possess occupational skills in demand but lack up-to-date skills required in most workplaces hiring for the occupation

Examples of pre-vocational services include, but are not limited to, nursing license exam courses and computer skills training to enhance employability when individuals already possess a set of core occupational skills but do not have the technology skills required. Short-term is defined as less than 120 clock hours.

Additionally, documentation procedures are outlined below:

- a. A review of assessment results, customer interests and work experience should support the need for the services and should be documented in the individual employment plan.
- b. If the service/training is not available in an approved course on the ETPL, small purchase competitive procurement should be used to purchase the services. Three price quotes or bids showing name of course, number of instruction hours, instructional fee, cost of curriculum materials, credential information, exam fee and school withdrawal/refund policy must be obtained. A printout of a web page will suffice. The provider with the lowest price quote or bid will be selected to provide the prevocational activity. If the vendor who submitted the lowest bid is not selected, justification for choosing a higher bid must be documented for reasons such as: distance, start date too late, schedule prohibits attendance at instructional hours, etc.

Customers in short-term pre-vocational services will be enrolled in GWROPP as 215 "Short Term Pre-Vocational Training".

#### **E. CLASS-SIZE SERVICES**

Class-size service contracts are groups of WIOA registrants receiving occupational skills training in a demand occupation. Class-size services include the full range of occupational skills training, adult education and literacy services, prevocational services, and customized training as described in WIOA Section 134. (The class may be comprised solely of WIOA registrants or may be combined with customers of other programs such as TANF, Trade, etc. or non-WIOA students). In the case of non-WIOA students, the cost of service is prorated based on the number of WIOA students in the class.



Class-size services may be offered in lieu of an ITA when it is determined appropriate to contract with an institution of higher education or other eligible providers of training services in order to facilitate the training of multiple individuals for in-demand industry sectors or occupations and such contract does not limit customer choice.

1. Applicants interested in class-size training will be subject to the same eligibility requirements as other WIOA applicants.
2. Customers enrolled in short-term pre-vocational services will be enrolled in GWROPP as 215 "Short Term Pre-Vocational Training".
3. Training provider should develop the class curriculum detailing skills to be learned.
4. Attendance for each class session must be verified with a signature on the class roster.
5. Provider will invoice NWGRC at the completion of the training.
6. Training provider will provide NWGRC with a copy of each participants credential.

**NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
PURCHASE PROCEDURES**

It is the policy of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (Commission or RC) that all procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner that provides maximum open and free competition consistent with applicable Federal and State regulations. This policy will be carried out in such manners as to insure that procurements are transacted which are most beneficial to the Commission in terms of efficiency, economy, and effectiveness. The purpose of these procedures is to provide fair and equitable procurement guidelines. The objective is to get a quality product at a fair price in the most economical and cost effective manner. The Commission, when possible, desires to purchase locally (within the Region) in support of the local economy as long as it meets the above requirements.

If a state agency has made arrangements for purchases which are available to the RC at the substantially lowest price through state procurement procedures, the RC may purchase through the state in lieu of the procedures set forth herein.

Any state or federal contract entered into by NWGRC which has more stringent purchasing requirements, shall supersede these purchasing procedures. This shall include adhering to dollar thresholds established by pass-through agencies that require prior written approval before purchase.

**SMALL VALUE PURCHASING AUTHORITY (SVPA) LESS THAN \$2,500 (NON-COMPETITIVE)**

The small value purchasing procedure may be used to purchase consumable materials without a formal award or competitive bidding process. The Small Value Purchasing Method may be used if all of the following requirements are met.

1. Purchases are limited to consumable goods and/or supplies and may not exceed \$2,500 per transaction.
2. It is used for immediate over the counter purchases and/or to take advantage of cost-saving purchases such as advertised specials. Splitting or multiple orders to avoid the dollar limitation is not allowable.
3. Documentation of each purchase is maintained, such as purchase order or a detailed sales receipt to show that the item was bought.
  - a. A purchase order shall be used for each purchase. The purchase order will list name and address of the vendor, the quantity ordered, the part number, and the price of each item. A grand total of all items listed shall be printed after all items are listed. The purchase order will be signed and dated by the Program Manager, Fiscal Officer, Director of Finance and the Executive Director.
  - b. The packing slip or other receiving documentation will be attached to the purchase

order. The purchase order and all documentation shall be stapled to the Invoice and submitted to the Director of Finance for payment approval. The invoice shall be entered into the Accounts Payable System and paid.

#### **PURCHASING OF GOODS OR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES \$2,500 OR MORE - BUT LESS THAN \$25,000**

For items or administrative services costing \$2,500 or more, at least three (3) vendors or potential vendors will be identified and solicited for price quotes. If three quotes cannot be obtained, sole source justification must be explained and attached to the purchase order with all other documentation.

The identification or solicitation of quotes must be documented. The following may be used as documentation:

1. Product or service catalogs with current price lists;
2. A log of telephone contacts to obtain quotes;
3. Written quotes;
4. A combination of the above

After all quotes are received, the basis for the selection of a vendor to supply the goods or services would be the lowest price. If the basis is something other than the lowest price, the Commission staff will prepare a memo describing the criterion for selection, relevance to need, and the advantage of choosing a vendor other than the one with the lowest price.

Upon selection of a vendor, a purchase order is then issued and signed by the Program Manager, Fiscal Officer, Director of Finance and the Executive Director. A numbered Purchase Order system is used and PO Numbers are issued by the Director of Finance or his/her designee.

Purchases where the unit price is \$5000 or greater and the useful life of the proposed purchase is more than one calendar year must be submitted to the State for approval. A narrative explaining the need for the purchase, documentation to illustrate that all local, state, and federal procurement regulations were met, and copies of all quotes and supporting documentation considered in selecting a vendor. Additional information may be required if the unit price is \$50,000 or more. The State will review all requests and provide a written determination within 30 days of receiving the documentation.

#### **PURCHASING OF GOODS OR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES - \$25,000 OR GREATER**

If the item or administrative service requested is \$25,000 or more, formal Invitations to Bid or Requests for Proposal are required. A copy of proposal specifications will be mailed to prospective bidders. Sealed Bids or Proposals are then received and the vendor whose bid is most beneficial to

the Commission is selected. A formal Contract, letter of intent to contract or Purchase Order will be provided to those selected.

### **SUB-CONTRACTOR PURCHASES**

For the procurement of Services from Sub-Contractors, the RC will follow the procedures authorized and/or required by the Grantor Agency. If the Grantor Agency utilizes, is governed by, or promulgates procurement procedures which are less restrictive than those of the RC, then the RC is to follow those less restrictive procurement procedures in lieu of those set forth herein.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Commission's officers, employees, or agents shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or potential contracts. This is not intended to preclude bona fide institutional fund-raising activities.

No Commission employee, officer, or agent shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved. Any violation of the above code shall be communicated to the Commission Personnel/Financial Management Committee, and the appropriate disciplinary action will be prescribed by the same.