WIOA STATE PLAN FOR
THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

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

OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

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

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

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

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))*
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

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* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

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

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
  - o State Strategy Implementation,
  - o State Operating Systems and Policies,
  - o Assurances, and
  - o Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
  - o Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs.

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.* While discussion of and strategies for every target population is not expected, States must address as many as are applicable to their State's population and look beyond strategies for the general population.

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

I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

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

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

Combined State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Worker Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program as well as one or more of the optional combined State Plan partner programs identified below.   No

COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

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

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

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)   No

Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))   No

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

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))   No

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)   No

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

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

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

Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))   No

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))]   No

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

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

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

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

1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include-

I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

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

II. EMERGING INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATION

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

III. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in 1 and 2 above, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

South Carolina has made notable progress in recovering from the Great Recession. Most economic indicators now point to increasing employment and economic activity throughout the state. Mark Vitner, Senior Economist with Wells Fargo Securities wrote in his economic roundup in early 2015, "South Carolina's recovery is accelerating and is now firmly outpacing the nation. The state has bounced back as a formidable manufacturing hub, with a high concentration in transportation–related production, thanks to BMW and Boeing." Vitner, M. (2015). Southern States: 2015 Economic Outlook (February 12, Rep.). Wells Fargo.

The report went on to praise the state for its economic development efforts in the export markets, including tire manufacturing. The S.C. Department of Commerce reported that in 2014 the state closed deals worth over $5 billion in capital investments, adding more than 19,000 new jobs to the state. 2014 Activity Report (Rep.). (2014). SC: S.C. Department of Commerce.

Recently, Volvo Car Corporation selected the Charleston, S.C. area for the location of it first North American plant. Certainly, these projects will add to the momentum the state is currently experiencing.

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

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

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

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

Professional and Business Services; Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; and Leisure and Hospitality led the state in private sector industry employment growth from 2009 to 2014. South Carolina had over 1.876 million wage and salary employees in 2014 with an average hourly wage of $19.03. The state's industry and occupational employment are projected to grow by 11.5 percent over the period of 2012–2022.

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

Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

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

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

Current Nonfarm Industry Employment

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

Another measure of the strength of an economy is industry specialization or answering the question "How does an industry's proportion of the employment mix in the state compare to its proportion in the nation?" This question defines the location quotient (LQ). An LQ above 1.0 indicates that the industry has a higher concentration of employment in the state than it does in the nation. Six industry sectors led the state in 2013 in terms of employment specialization with LQs greater than 1.0 as measured by the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) — Utilities, Construction,

Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Administrative and Waste Services, and Accommodation and Food Services. These industries highlight the state's strong economic base of tourism and manufacturing.

Current Occupations

South Carolina had 1.876 million wage and salary employees in 2014 with an average hourly wage of $19.03. The Office and Administrative Support category had the highest employment with 294,000 employees, followed by Sales and Related Occupations with 209,000, and then Production Occupations with 186,000 employees. The highest average hourly wages were found in Management Occupations at $45.29, Legal Occupations at $36.03, and Architecture and Engineering Occupations at $35.56. Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations had the lowest average wage at $9.61 per hour.

Retail Salespersons, Cashiers, and Team Assemblers are among the state's largest occupations.

Local Workforce Development Areas Existing Industries and Occupations

South Carolina's 12 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) have diverse economies as their industry wage and salary employment shows. The LWDAs containing the state's primary urban areas have the highest percentage of employment with Midlands leading the way at 18 percent of the state total, followed by Trident with 16 percent, and Greenville with 13 percent. Santee-Lynches has the smallest total employment with three percent of the state total, followed by Upper Savannah with four percent, and Lowcountry with five percent.

Manufacturing is the leading industry in several LWDAs including Upper Savannah with 26 percent of area employment, Upstate with 22 percent of the area's employment, and WorkLink with 21 percent of the area's employment total. Accommodation and Food Service leads in Waccamaw with 22 percent of its employment, while Retail Trade is important in all LDWAs, ranging from 10 percent of the area total in Upper Savannah to 17 percent in Lowcountry and Waccamaw.

Trident has the highest average hourly occupational wage at $20.56, while Waccamaw has the lowest at $16.17. Four of the LWDAs have average wages above the state average of $19.03. They are Trident, followed by Greenville at $19.87, Midlands at $19.86, and Catawba at $19.24.

Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Industry Projections to 2022

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

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

Occupational Projections to 2022

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

Fastest Growing and Declining Occupations

The fastest growing occupations statewide in percentage terms over the projection period 2012-2022 are in the healthcare industry, including occupations such as Home Health Aides and Physician Assistants, while many of the declining occupations are being displaced by technological innovation, including several types of textile machine operators and postal service workers.

Local Workforce Development Areas Emerging Industries and Occupations

Trident leads the way in terms of projected industry employment growth over the 2012-2022 period with 20 percent of the state's total growth, followed by Midlands with 17 percent of the total, and Greenville with 16 percent. Health Care and Social Assistance lead in area employment growth in all LWDAs except Upper Savannah, where Manufacturing garners the most growth at 29 percent of its total projected growth. Administrative and Support and Waste Management is projected to grow notably in Greenville with 20 percent of the area's gain as well as in Lower Savannah with 14 percent of the area's growth.

In terms of projected occupational job openings, Trident garners 16.9 percent of the state's 71,000 total annual openings from 2012 to 2022, followed by Midlands with 16.8 percent of the state total, and Greenville with 13.7 percent. Retail Salespersons, Cashiers, and Food Preparation and Serving Workers are the top three occupations with the largest number of projected job openings in six of the 12 LWDAs as well as in the state overall. Team Assemblers are among the top three occupational openings in Greenville, Upstate, and Upper Savannah. The Registered Nurse occupation is the largest occupation requiring more than a high school education in each of the 12 LWDA.

Employers' Employment Needs

Understanding industry requirements for jobs is crucial to keep the state's economy moving ahead. The knowledge, skills, and abilities of today's jobs vary greatly by occupation. This section highlights the education level of the workforce that is currently demanded by employers, presents several comparisons of employer needs in educational terms, and gives an assessment of the state's workforce for knowledge, skills, and abilities as well as the top certifications and licenses requested by employers in recent job postings. In addition, a detailed description of employers' employment needs from a recent employer survey, conducted by the state's technical college system, is presented.

Education Level Required by Employers

Education required by employers can be assessed by examining data collected by state and federal government partnerships. Workforce data series measuring labor demand of employers from multiple government sources, such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and U.S. Census Bureau, can be summarized in four general categories of educational requirement: Less than high school, High school diploma or equivalent, Some college or Associate's degree, and Bachelor's degree or higher. In South Carolina, 17 to 19 percent of jobs require a Bachelor's degree or higher,

while 51 percent to 73 percent of jobs require only a high school diploma or less, depending on the data series being examined. Positions requiring some college or Associates' degree range from 11 percent to 31 percent.

Employer Needs Identified by Current Online Job Advertisements

Help Wanted Online® (HWOL) data, produced by The Conference Board, is an additional measure of employer demand, and it includes an occupational code that is matched to required education for entry into an occupation. A comparison of HWOL job postings in 2013 shows that percentages for the two upper levels of education, as identified in the previous section, is significantly higher compared to BLS and Census sources of occupation data for those same levels of education. The gap is even wider at the lowest education level possibly reflecting the fact that many job seekers with less than some college find work through non-online sources.

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

Assessment of the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities of the State's Workforce

The BLS defines three worker characteristics for each of the over 800 detailed occupations for which it summarizes current employment. Those worker characteristics of the state's occupational employment, from the Occupational Employment Survey (OES)), represent the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the workforce in today's economy. Specifically, the education required to enter into an occupation relates to the knowledge of the workforce. The previous work experience required to enter an occupation relates to the abilities of the workforce, and the on-the-job training needed to obtain job competency relates to job skills. Several observations can be made concerning those characteristics in the workforce.

Overall, 70 percent of jobs currently in South Carolina require a high school diploma or less, while 18 percent require a Bachelor's degree or higher. For the vast majority of those jobs requiring a doctorate degree, no abilities gained through prior work experience are required, mostly in education services, though a small percent require an internship or residency, many in the health care industry. Of those who earn Bachelor's degrees, many attained additional abilities necessary for their current positions through prior work, such as managers in a number of industries, and many others developed job skills through internships, especially in educational services. The distribution of methods to reach competent job skills is more widespread for jobs requiring high school diplomas or less compared to jobs requiring more education. Almost all jobs requiring less than a high school education and the majority of those requiring a high school diploma need on-the-job training to gain the skills necessary for success. Many high school graduates use apprenticeships to gain needed skills, mostly in skilled trade occupations.

Employer-Requested Certifications in Job Advertisements

Analysis of online job postings in the state from November 2014 to October 2015 revealed that recommended, required, or suggested certifications were mentioned in 305,725 of those job advertisements. Four of the top ten requested certifications were in healthcare-related fields, such as Certified Registered Nurse, Basic Life Support, and Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation.

South Carolina Business and Industry Survey

Proviso 117.127 of the South Carolina 2015-16 budget called for the S.C. Technical College System, in collaboration with the S.C. Department of Commerce, the S.C. Department of Education, and the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce, to develop a plan that addresses the state's skills gap. As part of the statewide planning process, the Technical College System conducted an electronic survey and in-depth telephone interviews with business and industry leaders across the state. The goal of the survey and interviews was to ensure that existing and future training programs provide the necessary skills and training to prepare students for careers in high-demand fields and critical needs positions.

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

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

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

The top three recruiting sources for respondents were:

1) online recruiting websites like Monster and CareerBuilder (68.66 percent),

2) technical college career centers (53.73 percent), and

3) SC Works Centers (52.74 percent).

The top three training providers used by respondents included:

1) company-provided or in-house training (73.74 percent),

2) local technical colleges (53.54 percent), and

3) vendors (29.29 percent).

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

1) internship and/or co-op (70.56 percent),

2) training that leads to a recognized credential or certification (65.99 percent),

3) adult apprenticeship (55.33 percent), and

4) customized short-term training (54.82 percent).

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

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

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

• Finding qualified, skilled workers.

• Finding workers with a good work ethic.

• Finding workers with soft skills and communication skills.

• Finding workers with problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

• Retaining good workers.

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

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

• Educate parents, teachers, and students about how manufacturing and other STEM-related fields have evolved.

• Continuously focus on STEM education and workforce readiness focusing on both present and long-term needs.

• Build collaboration among schools, business and the state.

• More funding for education is critical.

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

• Educate students on today's reality of manufacturing and other STEM-related employment.

• Develop students' math skills and encourage STEM curriculum.

• Identify and build upon each child's strengths at an early age.

• Align education with the needs of the community.

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

• Too much pressure on kids to pursue four-year degrees – not all good jobs require a four-year degree.

• Collaboration is key – education provided needs to reflect the workforce needs of the state.

• Focusing on manufacturing, STEM and healthcare is essential.

• Soft skills and good work ethic are important.

Workforce Challenges Identified through Pipeline Study and Business & Industry Survey

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

• Job openings and workforce demand will increase over the next two to five years.

• A great deal of this increase will be due to an aging workforce.

• This will lead to unprecedented demand in manufacturing and other STEM-related fields, including healthcare.

• Finding qualified, skilled workers in these fields is a top priority.

• Current perception issues exist around careers in these fields and must be addressed.

• Perception issues also exist around the educational pathways to these careers.

• Soft skills, critical-thinking skills, and good work ethic are challenges faced by employers with the existing workforce.

• Competition for good workers compounds these problems.

• Collaboration among educators and the business community is essential to successfully address challenges.

Soft Skills Gap

Soft skills are those attributes not defined by technical accomplishments or certifications attained. They are interpersonal skills or character traits that define an individual. Job advertisements from the HWOL database identify hard and soft skills that employers seek. Analysis of data over the past three years indicates that many soft skills are listed as a part of the job postings, such as communication skills, integrity, team-orientation, detail-orientation, problem solving skills, and self-motivation. For example, oral and written communication skills appeared in 46,800 job postings in

the state, or 27 percent of the total ads, over a four-month period from late 2014 to early 2015. Over 20,500 ads for the same time frame listed the soft skill "integrity." These are basic skills in human relations that employers have found lacking in the workforce and must specifically advertise for in their job postings.

B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA.* This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups** in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes: Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.   ** Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

I. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

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

II. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

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

III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

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

IV. SKILL GAPS

Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

Groups with Barriers to Employment

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

Hispanics

Hispanics have accounted for a significant portion of the state's population growth over the past decade. This population more than doubled from 2000 to 2010 and has continued to grow, reaching 254,780 in 2013. Hispanics were responsible for almost one quarter of the state's 2000-2010 population growth and now represent slightly more than five percent of the state's population. Though the growth has slowed to 13 percent of population change since 2010, there is still a growing need for programs that serve the Hispanic community. (U.S. Census Bureau; Census 2000, Annual Estimates of Population, Summary File 1, Table DP–1, U.S. Census Bureau; Census 2010, Demographic Profile, Tables PEPASR6H and Table DP–1).

Homeless

In January 2013, there were an estimated 6,544 homeless people in the state, including 636 veterans. (National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2014). The State of Homelessness in America 2014.) South Carolina's homeless rate per 10,000 people is 13.7, while the national rate is 19.3. The state's rate of veteran homelessness is 16.1, and for the nation the figure is 27.3. The state's number of homeless increased by 33 percent from 2012 to 2013.

Veterans

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

Ex-Offenders

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

Inmates older than 21 who are not high school or GED graduates are served in Corrections' Adult Education programs. For Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, more than 5,700 inmates received credentials in education programs including GED/high school academics (1,209), vocational courses (2,769), and WorkKeys® training (1,756). (Palmetto Unified School District. (2012). Annual Report to the Public.)

Juvenile Offenders

In 2013, the S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) handled 16,754 cases, a 27.5 percent decrease from 2008-2009. (S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice. (2012-2013). Annual Accountability Report, S.C. Department of Juvenile Justice. (2012-2013). A Report Card to Our Citizens.) Of these cases, 3,495 were paroled or on probation, and the average offender population at a facility was 369. There is a 15 percent recidivism rate among young offenders in community programs under DJJ supervision. The top five offenses putting a person into DJJ custody are assault and battery, shoplifting, disturbing school, public disorderly conduct, and simple marijuana possession.

Limited English Proficiency

The 2012 American Community Survey lists 98,188 people of foreign–born status in S.C. who were identified as having Limited English Proficiency (LEP). Noncitizens were more likely to have LEP than citizens (foreign–born but naturalized) (U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2012 1–Year Estimates, Table B16005).

Migrant/Seasonal Workers

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

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

Foster Care

The average time a child spent in foster care was 15.9 months in FY 2013, the lowest average during the past four years. In FY 2013, there were 1,220 children waiting for adoption. As of June 2013, there were 3,734 children receiving in–home foster care services (S.C. Department of Social Services. (2013). Annual Accountability Report FY 2012–2013).

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

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

South Carolina Data At A Glance:

• 74.0% of persons without disabilities aged 18 to 64 are employed.

• 29.0% of persons with disabilities aged 18 to 64 are employed.

• There remains a 45 point gap in the labor force participation rate (LFPR) between people with and without disabilities.

• 701,093 people in SC have a disability.

• 20,800 persons aged 16 to 20 have a disability.

• 352,200 persons aged 21 to 64 have a disability.

• 55,700 persons with disabilities aged 18 to 64 receive benefits.

• In 2012, SC's total expenditure on SSDI benefits was $733,120,000.

• 14,490 individuals were eligible for SCVRD services at the end of FFY 2014.

• Of the total number of individuals who received SCVRD services in FFY 2014, 33.7% were age 14 to 24 at application.

• 297 individuals were eligible for SCCB services at end of FFY 2014.

• Of the total number of individuals who received SCCB services in FFY 2014, 16.1% were age 14 to 24 at application.

Employment and Unemployment

Labor Force

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

By definition, the labor force measures people at their resident location and equals the sum of the employed and the unemployed. Employment in South Carolina declined sharply during the "Great Recession" but surpassed its pre–recession highs after years of slow, steady growth. The steady increases in employment encouraged more individuals to join the labor force and since early 2014, the state's labor force has experienced solid growth.

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

Unemployment

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

Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate is the percent of the labor force that is unemployed. In South Carolina, the unemployment rate remained relatively steady at approximately 6.7 percent from 2005 through the third quarter of 2006 when it fell to a pre-recession low of 5.6 percent in May and June of 2007. In early 2008, the rate began to climb and accelerated in the fall of that year to reach a high of 11.7 percent by December 2009 and January 2010. The unemployment rate then began to fall, reaching

6.1 percent in early 2014. At that point, the rate rose modestly to 6.7 percent in March 2015 as the job recovery enticed people to join the workforce.

Employment

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

Labor Force Participation Rate

The Labor Force Participation Rate is defined as the labor force divided by the civilian noninstitutionalized population aged 16 and older, expressed as a percent. Labor force participation has been on a downward trend in South Carolina for a number of years. Although, there was an uptick in the rate in the early 2000s during the housing construction boom and in 2015, the overall trend is unmistakable. The rate slid from nearly 66 percent in 2005 to 59 percent in 2015.

Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Labor Supply

Similar to the discussion earlier of labor being demanded by employers, a measure of labor supply can be summarized with the same four levels of educational attainment — Less than high school, High school diploma or equivalent, Some college or Associate's degree, and Bachelor's degree or higher. The U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey shows that nearly 31 percent of South Carolina's labor force holds a Bachelor's degree or higher. About 30 percent has some college education or holds an Associates' degree. Another 30 percent has a high school diploma, and only 10 percent of the labor force has less than a high school education.

Skill Gaps

The skill gap issue is a complex one. The focus in this report is on the objective data that can be identified to better understand the topic. Skill gaps are assessed using four approaches. One, a comparison is made of various labor supply versus demand elements by educational level. Second, a postsecondary completer contrast is made with projected job openings on an industry and educational credential basis. Also, an example of top occupations requiring a high school education or less but filled by higher-educated employees is presented. Finally, information regarding the soft skill gap that employers experience is discussed.

Gaps Revealed in Comparison of Labor Supply and Demand

Comparing various measures of labor supply and demand yields an understanding of whether or not supply can or will meet projected demand. The following discussion presents comparisons of several data series by the four educational attainment levels identified previously. One such comparison is of the available labor force (supply) and the projected job openings (demand). For the top two educational categories, 61 percent of the labor force is trained with at least some college education, while only 30 percent of the job openings are available at those same levels. Generally, the opposite situation is true for the lower two levels of education. That is, more job openings are available (70

percent) for a smaller share of the labor force (40 percent). This means that persons not able to find positions at their higher level of training may be required to search for jobs requiring less education.

Another useful comparison is the labor force (supply) and the HWOL job postings information (demand). The data shows a close agreement between the two for the Bachelor's degree or higher category with just a two-percentage point difference. In fact, the greatest difference for any category is nine percentage points in the Some college or Associate's category. Overall, there is a good match between labor supply and demand. Taking the top three categories together shows that supply outpaces demand by 91 percent to 86 percent. This demand data, however, takes into account online posted jobs only.

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

It appears that for the most part labor supply exceeds demand on the upper end of the educational spectrum.

Postsecondary Completer Education Gap with Projected Job Openings

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

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

Postsecondary Education Gap Summary

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

•More graduates with Bachelor's degrees are required in Architecture and Construction;

•More graduates with Doctorate degrees are required in Education and Training;

•More graduates with Bachelor's degrees are required in Finance;

•Health Science is short of graduates at the Associate's and Doctorate levels;

•Information Technology is short of Bachelor's degree-holders by more than 400 graduates;

•More graduates with post-secondary certificates are required in Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security; and

•More graduates with Bachelor's degrees and non-degree awards are required in Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics.

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

Occupations Requiring High School but Filled by More Educated Employees

Analysis of the two previous school-year completers, not shown, revealed similar numbers of graduates as well as distributions across degrees and career clusters. It is possible for more than just recent graduates to be able to fill the projected job openings. The oversupply of graduates overall may partially explain why many occupations are filled with overqualified candidates. Many of the in-demand occupations in the state require only a high school diploma for entry into the position but are filled by higher educated workers. Analysis of the Current Population Survey shows that, for example, 28 percent of the Retail Salesperson occupation is filled by workers holding a Bachelor's degree or higher, and 41 percent have some college education or an Associate's degree. Thirty-four percent of Cashiers have at least some college education. Likewise, 65 percent of Customer Service Representatives do as well.

Soft Skills Gap

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

Skills Gap Conclusion

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

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

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

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in *Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce* above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in *Employers' Employment Needs* above. This must include an analysis of –

A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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

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

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

Overview of Core Programs

Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs

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

Title II – Adult and Family Literacy Act Program

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

Adult Education offers a range of program accessibility, certified instructors, current curriculum materials, especially computer–based materials, instructional resources, and career transition services/resources. Programs provide individual learning plans supported by individual instruction. Instruction is delivered in small groups, whole groups, and in contextualized classroom learning. Program staff consistently monitors attendance and readiness for assessment to move students toward a high school diploma (HSD), high school equivalency degree (HSED) and/or National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), as well as transition them to post–secondary education and/or employment as expediently as possible.

Title III – Wagner–Peyser Employment Services Program

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

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

Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Act Programs

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

S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department

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

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

S.C. Commission for the Blind

SCCB is the state administrator of the Rehabilitation Act program for the blind and visually impaired providing individualized services across the state through a network of district offices. SCCB also operates the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center in Columbia, S.C. where eligible individuals

receive comprehensive vocational evaluation services, adjustment to blindness services, low–vision services, assistive technology evaluation and training services, and pre–vocational training.

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

Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities

Unemployment Insurance Benefits and Employment Services

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

Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

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

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

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

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

EvolveSC

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

S.C. Certified Work Ready Communities

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

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

1. WorkKeys® Assessments.

2. Career Ready 101, a comprehensive program that prepares and/or remediates users for WorkKeys® testing and NCRC™.

3. NCRC™ work readiness credential to measure and close the skills gap.

4. Job Profiling, a job analysis tool used to match individual skill sets with the skill requirements of available job opportunities.

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

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

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

Learn2Earn/Statewide Soft Skills Training Curriculum

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

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

K–12 Education and Workforce Preparation Activities

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

SC Profile of a Graduate

In 2015, the S.C. Department of Education adopted the Profile of the S.C. Graduate (Figure 10: https://www.scworks.org/media/wioaup/Figure_10_Profile_of_the_SC_Graduate.pdf). The profile was developed by a coalition of education and business leaders organized as TransformSC, and represents a shared vision of the knowledge, skills, and characteristics needed for students to be successful in higher learning and careers. It also provides a common goal to which all efforts to transform South Carolina's public education system can be aligned.

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

College and Career Ready Standards

More recently, the S.C. Department of Education implemented new College and Career Ready Standards for Mathematics (http://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards–learning/mathematics/standards/scccr–standards–for–mathematics–final–print–on–one–side/) and English Language Arts (ELA) (http://ed.sc.gov/scdoe/assets/file/programs–services/59/documents/ELA2015SCCCRStandards.pdf). The development and implementation of these standards was in direct response to Act 200, ratified on June 6, 2014, which required the Department to facilitate the process of developing new high–quality, college– and career–ready standards for implementation during the 2015–2016 school year. The new math and ELA standards are closely aligned with the knowledge, skills and characteristics outlined in the Profile of the S.C. Graduate.

WorkKeys® Testing

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

WorkKeys® was administered to all 11th graders for the first time in spring 2015. Of the 48,613 students with valid scores on all three tests, 87.9 percent earned a NCRC™, which measures and certifies essential work skills needed for success in jobs across industries and occupations (S.C. Department of Education, Sept. 2015: http://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/news–releases/spearman– announces–positive–act–workkeys–results/).

Career and Technical Education

There are 42 career and technical education centers in South Carolina offering a variety of programs that correspond with S.C. Department of Education career clusters and provide a pathway for students to continue their education and/or transition to post–secondary employment. A list of career clusters and programs can be found on the Department of Education's website (http://ed.sc.gov/instruction/career–and–technology–education/programs–and–courses/career– clusters/).

Dual Enrollment

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

The S.C. Technical College System provides 95 percent of the state's dual enrollment courses. Overall, the system had 15,283 dual enrollments during the 2012–13 academic year. This number represents a 7 percent increase from 2011–12. At the end of AY2012–13, the Technical College System offered 1,066 course selections – 61 more than the previous year (S.C. Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education. (2016). Proviso 117.127 South Carolina Workforce Study).

Regional Workforce Advisors (RWA)

The S.C. Department of Commerce employs 12 Regional Workforce Advisors (RWA) who bridge the gap between the business and education communities and facilitate collaboration on how best to prepare a workforce that meets industry demands. One RWA is assigned to each local workforce development area (LWDA) and is a resource for business and industry, teachers, administrators,

school counselors, and career specialists, and for students and parents (Regional Workforce Advisor Local Area Map: http://sccommerce.com/node/2308/regional–workforce–advisors). RWAs play an integral role in South Carolina's goal to develop and maintain a skilled pipeline of the job seekers who are prepared to fill high–growth, high–demand positions.

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

Two– and Four–Year Education

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

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

In addition to the technical college system, South Carolina has three research institutions, 10 comprehensive four–year colleges/universities, and four two–year regional USC campuses. There are also 25 private senior and two–year institutions, and two professional schools (S.C. Commission on Higher Education. (2015). About CHE and SC Higher Education Quick Facts. Retrieved from http://www.che.sc.gov/CHE_Docs/ExecutiveDirector/SCHigherEdSummary.pdf).

Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities

A number of unfulfilled jobs in South Carolina require more than a high school diploma, but less than a four–year college degree. With an average salary of $20.58 an hour, these jobs are projected to grow 17 percent over the 10 year period, 2012–2022 (SC Department of Employment and Workforce, Occupational Employment Projections (OEP) Program). Developing a skilled talent pipeline that meets the needs of business and industry throughout the state will require the state to increase the number individuals with high school diplomas and high school equivalency diplomas.

Adult Education serves South Carolinians who need a HSD, HSED, NCRC™, basic literacy skills, English language improvement, family literacy, and college preparatory skills. Many of these services are also available to those who are incarcerated. Candidates for Adult Education services

are referred by multiple agencies including workforce providers and other community and civic organizations. HSED preparation and testing are frequently funded by WIOA programs, for both adult and youth participants. Adult Education students with identified physical and learning disabilities are provided services based on their needs. SCVRD, SCCB and other organizations, provide supportive services that help individuals with disabilities successfully earn their HSED.

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

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

Programs and Activities that Enhance Services to Priority Populations

Youth

The state youth unemployment rate was 18.2 percent in 2014 (U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2014 American Community Survey 1–Year Estimates, Youth Unemployment Rate in South Carolina for 2014 for ages 16–24), higher than the state's general unemployment rate of 6.4 percent, and many of the state's youth face multiple significant barriers to employment. These statistics affirm the importance of "providing high–quality services for all youth and young adults beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in–demand industries and occupations, and culminating with a good job along a career pathway, enrollment in post–secondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship." The WIOA legislation places a greater focus on serving out–of–school or disconnected youth and preparing youth for employment through education and training. It also emphasizes and increases the requirement that the workforce system meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, including students and youth with disabilities, by increasing work opportunities to improve workplace skills.

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

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

Youth Standing Committees. DEW also issued State Instruction 14–03 (https://www.scworks.org/media/14_ET_Instruction/et_instruction_14–03.pdf), which requires each LWDB to have a youth standing committee. This standing committee is required to include community–based organizations with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth. The State Youth Coordinator is working with each LWDB to ensure that youth committees are in place, meet the requirements of WIOA, and are developing strategies that align with the state's vision for preparing individuals for employment in high–wage, high–demand occupations

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

Youth Apprenticeship. Apprenticeship Carolina™ has a robust youth apprenticeship program that combines relevant education with critical on–the–job experiences, giving South Carolina's youth an opportunity to earn while they learn and ensuring a well–educated, well–trained workforce for South Carolina's continued competitiveness in attracting and retaining business and industry. Youth apprenticeship programs exist in 24 of South Carolina's 46 counties. To further expand apprenticeships, the SWDB approved $200,000 in funding for the development and implementation of innovative apprenticeships for youth, individuals with disabilities, ex–offenders, and veterans. Apprenticeship grants will be awarded through a competitive application process. Applications must address the strategies that will be used to serve the populations identified above and explain how the lead grant applicant will partner with a community based organization, a local workforce development board, and a business to implement the apprenticeship grant. The grant period will be 18 months. Awards will be issued spring 2016.

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

A committed Career Specialist in each affiliated school functions as a teacher, coach, counselor, and advocate for students with documented barriers to success. Over the course of their enrollment, students master 81 competencies identified by business as essential to successful employment, while developing skills in the areas of academics, career development, leadership, civic–mindedness, social awareness, and community service. This is accomplished through competency instruction and the hands–on involvement of school and community partners.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

industry recognized certificate. The first Job ChalleNGe session started in January of 2016 with 50 SCYC graduates.

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

SCVRD

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

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

• job exploration counseling;

• work–based learning experiences;

• counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post–secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;

• workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and

• instruction in self–advocacy, which may include peer mentoring

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

SCCB

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

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

• Junior Student Internship Program (JSIP) – The SCCB provides eligible high school students who an opportunity to gain valuable work experience during a summer internship with business partners throughout the state. Participants receive a stipend upon successful completion of the program. This program is also available to college students.

• Career Readiness Workshop – The SCCB provides a four week workshop onsite at JL Mann High School designed to enhance students' readiness for post–secondary opportunities. Other school districts have expressed interest in this program and the plan is to implement it throughout other school districts in the state.

• Summer Teen Program ¬– The SCCB provides an individualized program for in–school youth who are 14–19 years old. This program reinforces and expands teens' adjustment to blindness while providing independent living, career readiness and leisure skills. For our older youth, career exploration and meaningful work experience are a component of the program.

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

Individuals with Disabilities

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

One example of effective leadership in creating an inclusive workforce is the Walgreens Distribution Center in Anderson, SC. SCVRD has partnered with this center since its inception to identify and train employment candidates. As cited by Respectability (Cann, S. (2012). Disability Assurance. Retrieved March, 21, 2016 from http://hr.blr.com/HR–news/Discrimination/Workplace–Diversity/Diversity–inclusion–your–bottom–line/; RespectAbility USA): "A study of Walgreens Distribution Centers" conducted in 2012 showed that "workers with disabilities had a turnover rate 48% lower than that of the nondisabled population, with medical expenses 67% lower and time–off

expenses 73% lower.". SCVRD concurs with the input received that this is critically important given the sectors of SC's economy that have traditionally high rates of turnover: Hospitality, Food Service, and Retail Trade. Meaningful and strategic outreach to employers and business owners that assists in reducing stigmas and misconceptions regarding disabilities and accommodations can serve to expand workplace diversity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

people with disabilities, and collecting quantitative and qualitative data about the experiences of employers and employees with disabilities, among other activities.

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

Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council).

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

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

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

STEP for SC. STEP for SC is a pilot project executed by Community Options, Inc. in the Midlands region that connects high school students with disabilities with community–based career experiences. A job coach assesses students' job skills and provides training so students are able to participate in community–based internships at local businesses. Job coaches work with students to transition internship experiences and supports into job accommodations and employment.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Recipients of SNAP and TANF Benefits

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

barriers that prevent successful employment and to coach participants through the process of obtaining and retaining employment.

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

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

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

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

Offenders

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Juvenile Offenders

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

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

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

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

Job Readiness Training Center (JRTC). In October of 2013, DJJ opened its innovative Job Readiness Training Center (JRTC) in Columbia, S.C. Developed in collaboration with community partners, the JRTC provides life and job skills classes (in addition to job readiness training, the JRTC also offered a range of "soft" skills courses designed to enhance a youth's chance of being

successful in finding and keeping a job. Course curriculum includes: Tacking the Tough Skills – Attitude, Responsibility, Communication, Problem Solving, and Preparing for the Workplace; Resume and Cover Letter Writing, Interviewing Skills, Social Networking…Face–to–Face; Dressing for Success, Personal Grooming for Young Men & Women; Planning for a Future of Financial Success, Setting Priorities for Life; Time Management & Organization; Business Entrepreneurship; Kids Law; ServSafe™ and Healthy Eating; Becoming Job Smart; and Trades Exposure – Carpentry, Plumbing, Electrical, Welding, and Office and Industrial Environments) to DJJ youth on probation, parole, or in committed status ranging primarily from ages 12 to 18, and other youth as part of the agency's prevention and intervention efforts. This facility is equipped with video conferencing and projection capabilities and, while centrally located on BRRC in Columbia, the JRTC is accessible to remote sites across the state in county offices and wilderness programs. Instruction is provided by DJJ staff as well as community partners from different disciplines. The class sessions are taught in complete one–to–two hour blocks, with certificates provided to participants upon completion. During FY 14–15, the JRTC expanded its mission to include a job development component. Four regional job developers are now working across the state to connect DJJ involved youth with employment, vocational training and post–secondary education. Almost 2,000 youth were served through the JRTC in FY 14–15.

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

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

Veterans

SC Works representatives are available in centers throughout the state to help veterans transition into the workforce. Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff conducts employer outreach and job development in the local community to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups. Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist are trained to provide intensive case management services to veterans and eligible spouses with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE), and age priority veterans ages 18 to 24, including individual career coaching, job referrals, resume preparation assistance, career fairs and job search workshops, job training programs, and referrals to supportive or training services.

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

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

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

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

Aging Workers and Workers that Acquire Disabilities

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

As highlighted in the 34th Institute on Rehabilitation Issues titled "The Aging Workforce," services and interventions must be adapted to meet the diverse needs of mature workers. This includes, but is not limited to, timely provision of supports, identification of training needs and process/procedure barriers, and planning for effective strategies to enhance outcomes and work options later in life (The Aging Workforce Primary Study Group, 34th IRI, University of Arkansas CURRENTS, 2009).

Local Initiatives that Demonstrate Partnership and Collaboration

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

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

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

living with transitionally reduced supports. Students who complete the basic or advanced programs receive corresponding certificates of post–secondary education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Programs and Activities that Impact Business/Employer Services

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

readySC™

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

E–Zone

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

Business Services Teams

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

SCVRD Business Partnership Networks (BPN)

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

Apprenticeship Carolina™

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

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

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

On–The–Job and Incumbent Worker Training Programs

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

Layoff Aversion Strategies

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

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

Defense Diversification Grant

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

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

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

The goal of South Carolina's response strategy is to assist defense firms in reducing their dependency on (DoD) procurement activity by encouraging them to diversify into other growing industries, primarily the aerospace industry. Defense firms will be provided planning and market

exploration assistance. Simultaneously, a thorough supply chain analysis will be conducted on South Carolina's defense industry to identify the Tier I, II, III and IV suppliers and the potential economic impact the state and regions are facing with pending defense budget cuts. The ultimate goal of this analysis is to identify which businesses are most able to diversify into new markets and allow the state and regions to identify at–risk communities, creating the opportunity to develop community diversification strategies.

B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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

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

Strengths of the South Carolina Workforce Delivery System

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

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

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

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

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

Perhaps, the strongest evidence of partnership is the ongoing development of a state partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Phase I of the MOU covered 12 agencies and was signed by 14 entities, including the SWDB and Gov. Haley, in 2015. The emphasis of Phase I is coordination of services among partners to foster cooperation, better education, and specify the responsibilities of state agencies and mandatory partner programs under WIA/WIOA. Phase II, which will be executed in 2016, will incorporate and include Phase I and establish shared accountability of and resources for SC Works center services.

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

– developing and implementing a universal intake process that reduces duplication and streamlines the service delivery process;

– creating an effective statewide referral and follow–up system to ensure that job seekers receive the appropriate services from partner programs;

– making the delivery system accessible to all job seekers, especially those with disabilities and language barriers; and

– reaching outside of the traditional delivery system to serve the hard to serve.

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

Weaknesses of the South Carolina Workforce Delivery System

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

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

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

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

Inconsistent Service Delivery. Most workforce, economic development, and education programs are managed locally, and the quality of service delivery may vary by area. A number of measures are underway to improve the consistency of service delivery, including: the implementation of SC Works Center Standards and WIOA Eligible Training Provider provisions. The SC Works Center Standards address service delivery to job seekers and employers and center management, and will be used by LWDBs to evaluate effectiveness, programmatic and physical accessibility, and continuous improvement of the SC Works delivery system. Along the same lines, training providers are now required to submit program data and meet certain requirements to be eligible to receive WIOA training funds. This will help ensure that participants receive high–quality training in high–demand, high–wage occupations.

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

C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

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

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

Job Seeker Services. There is at least one comprehensive SC Works Center in each LWDA and one or more satellite center or access point. Through these centers, job seekers can access WIOA programs and Wagner–Peyser Employment Services. Individuals can also get assistance filing for UI benefits and reemployment assistance, including but not limited to: looking for a job, resume preparation, and interviewing skills workshops. Job seekers can also access employment services and manage UI benefits remotely using SC Works Online Services (SCWOS) and the MyBenefits

portal, respectively. In many local areas, partner programs are co–located or staff is cross–trained to provide information or make appropriate referrals to other programs and services.

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

SCVRD has 24 area offices and 24 work training centers across the state. Through a team approach, SCVRD staff work to prepare clients for employment opportunities within their local labor market, as well as develop relationships with business and industry to individually match clients with employment opportunities that fit their strengths, abilities, capabilities, and skill sets. Comprehensive programs, including occupational therapy and physical therapy services, rehabilitation engineering, IT training centers, and two residential alcohol and drug treatment centers further expand the capacity of SCVRD to meet the individualized needs of eligible individuals with disabilities. Similarly, SCCB has 9 area offices across the state through which VR services for the blind are delivered. SCCB staff work to prepare consumers for employment opportunities within their local labor market, as well as develop relationships with business and industry to individually match consumers with employment opportunities that fit their unique strengths, skills, abilities, capabilities, and informed choice. Through the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center consumers learn adjustment to blindness skills such as Braille Literacy, Orientation and Mobility Skills, Daily Living Skills that support employment, and receive individualized and group therapy to deal with emotional adjustment to blindness. SCCB works in partnership with South Carolina's K-12 and higher education systems to enable individuals who are blind or visually impaired to obtain the education and training necessary for employment.

There are a number of education and training opportunities available to job seekers through the technical college system and private providers. The S.C. Technical College System has a network of 16 technical colleges serving the 49 counties. Many of these colleges have satellite campuses making them accessible to job seekers in rural counties, and offer online and non–traditional formats to reach those who cannot participate in the traditional classroom experience. IWT, OJT, and apprenticeships are also commonly used benefitting both the job seeker and the employer.

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

Partnership and Collaboration. Reduced funding is a very real concern for many programs. The SWDB, through its efforts to develop and strengthen partnerships with workforce partners, has positioned the state to work toward aligning programs and funding so that programs can continue to provide the same level of high–quality service with less funding. The SWDB Collaboration and Partnership Committee spearheaded the development of Phase I of South Carolina's state partner MOU and Phase II, which will focus significantly on partner resource sharing, will be executed in

2016. Additionally, the continued use of collaborative work groups allows partners to gain a better understanding of the resources available and to identify opportunities for braiding and leveraging resources.

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

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

1. VISION

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

(II)(b)(1) and (2) are combined. See (II)(b)(2) for a description of the state's vision.

2. GOALS

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

- Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers of employment* and other populations.**
- Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

_____

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

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

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

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

1) Strengthen the state's workforce pipeline through: middle skill/wage attainment; creation of education and career pathways; and development of one, consistently delivered soft skills curriculum that addresses defined competencies.

2) Align the state's current public workforce development resources to ensure a customer–centered delivery system for South Carolina's businesses and job seekers by: coordinating business engagement activity; building and using data driven decision making and evaluation methods; and expanding specific partnerships and collaborations to include outreach to populations experiencing barriers to employment.

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

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

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

Strategic Goals and Corresponding Actions

1. Strengthen the Workforce Pipeline

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

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

The Strategic Actions needed to effectuate this goal include:

A. Facilitation of middle skills and middle wage attainment;

B. Creation of education and career pathways;

C. Development of one, consistently delivered soft skills competency–based curricula; and

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

A. Facilitation of Middle Skills and Middle Wage Attainment

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

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

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

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

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

B. Creation of Education and Career Pathways

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A. Coordinate Agency Business Engagement Activity;

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

C. Expand Specific Partnerships and Collaboration

A. Coordinate business engagement activity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

C. Expand Partnerships and Collaborations

As a precursor to the state–wide agency MOU, several individual agencies have been working together on a variety of pilot programs across the state. Current successes with DEW, Department of Corrections, Department of Social Services, Local Workforce Investment Boards, and the State Technical College System will be expanded and/or replicated over the next few years.

Enhanced collaborations with many other agencies, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, Able SC, and Commission for the Blind will not only

improve workforce services, but minimize duplication of services, and work toward greater collaboration to serve and find relevant employment for all our citizens.

3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

The Departments of Labor and Education have designated certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators for the first plan submission. Indicators designated as "baseline" vary by program. A "baseline" indicator is one for which the state will not propose an expected level of performance in the state plan. For all other measures, the state's proposed levels of performance are outlined in Appendix 1. A summary of the methodology used by each program to determine projected levels of performance for PY 16 and 17 is provided below:

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

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

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

4. ASSESSMENT

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

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

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

C. STATE STRATEGY

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

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

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

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

• Gov. Haley has declared workforce a "top priority".

• Proviso 117.127 requires that a plan be developed to address the workforce skill shortage in high–growth industries through the collaborative efforts of S.C. Department of Education, S.C. Department of Commerce, the S.C. Technical College System and the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce.

• South Carolina continues to recruit new businesses and see expansions in existing industries at a high rate, and clear state goals include addressing 70,000 unfilled jobs in the short term, and providing a highly skilled workforce to new and existing employers in the longer term.

• In these contexts, many areas in the state have experienced and/or recognized the potential for significantly enhanced outcomes when employing sector strategies.

• Passage of the WIOA Federal legislation, which incentivizes and otherwise encourages adoption of an integrated approach to sector strategies, and also requires regional workforce planning, the data–based foundation for a "sectors" approach.

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

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

Regional Workforce Planning and Implementation Teams have been organized in each of the planning regions consisting of partner representation similar to that of the State Leadership Team. Teams will participate in a self–assessment exercise designed to help determine each region's readiness to develop and implement sector strategies and to generally advocate for and lead the development of sector strategies and integrated services in each region.

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

• Create the sectors mentality and approach

• Marry sectors to career pathways development

• Begin unification of business service delivery

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

• STEP 1: Gather workforce data and intelligence. The objective is to understand the regional economy and industry staffing structure, and to achieve consensus across disciplines on the industries to target. There is collaboration in collecting and analyzing data; anecdotal information on industries' futures is collected systematically from stakeholders, especially economic development entities; and collaborative decisions are made on identifying target industries and occupations.

• STEP 2: Form a sector partnership team and develop a future vision. Initially, workforce, economic development and education partners are convened regionally to develop a sector partnership. This group/team is then responsible for the development of sector strategies and career pathways.

• STEP 3: Assess Talent Needs. Occupational skill gaps, training, and credential needs are identified along with an inventory of education and training programs. An Education and Training Gap Analysis is developed in relation to industry and workforce needs.

• STEP 4: Develop strategies and align resources. The partners work collaboratively to identify and develop education, training and related resources to convert into investments that actualize Career Pathways.

• STEP 5: Operationalize. Sector strategies are transformed into actual customer – centered service delivery, and business services target sectors on a regional basis. This will involve reengineering SC Works customer flow. Having created a shared understanding of the region's workforce investment needs, a shared vision of how the regional workforce system can be designed to meet those needs, and agreement on the key strategies to realize this vision, regional partners will determine the most efficient and effective arrangement for organizing and delivering services.

• STEP 6: Assess, Adjust, Improve, and Sustain. The full partnership team will continue to assess the value received by industry employers as well as customer flow and job seeker/student outcomes. During this phase, recommendations for adjustments and improvements are formulated and "Can–Be" changes are implemented.

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

• Diversified Manufacturing

• Business and Information Technology Services

• Health Care

• Transportation, Logistics, and Wholesale Trade

• Construction

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

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2).

South Carolina envisions an effective, customer–driven workforce system that facilitates financial stability and economic prosperity for employers, individuals, and communities. To achieve this vision, workforce, economic development, education, and other community–based partners will work together to align workforce development resources and strengthen the state's workforce pipeline. The strategies discussed below will align partners to achieve a more integrated system and will also strengthen the workforce, education, and training activities discussed in section (II)(2)(A). Strategies to Align Partner Programs One of the state's strategic goals is to align workforce development resources to ensure that employers and job seekers receive high–quality services. To achieve this goal, the state will coordinate agency business engagement activity, build and use data driven decision making and evaluation methods, and expand specific partnerships and collaborations.

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

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

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

Strategies to Strengthen the Workforce Pipeline As demonstrated by the Economic and Workforce Analysis in section (II)(a)(1), the state's current labor supply is generally lacking the preparation needed to compete for in–demand occupations that pay a self–sustaining wage and offer the opportunity for advancement along a career pathway. Many of the state's educated job seekers have

degrees or credentials in fields where there is little or no demand; too few are trained for jobs in STEM fields, including Manufacturing and Healthcare, and many lack the soft skills required by hiring employers. To close the skills gap, workforce, economic development, and education partners have focused on strengthening the workforce pipeline through middle skill, middle wage attainment, creating education and career pathways, developing a universal soft skills curriculum, and enhancing school–to–work transition and youth focused programs.

Increase Middle Skill, Middle Wage Attainment. South Carolina has already began the process of increasing middle skill, middle wage attainment by identifying state and regional high–growth, high–demand industries and occupations, and surveying the immediate and future needs of businesses across the state. Through sector strategies, education, training, and supportive services will be aligned to the needs of employers in these key industries. The result will be more individuals with the required trade and soft skills to fill current and projected unfilled jobs; who will also earn a family–sustaining wage and be able to continue along a career pathway should they desire additional education or advancement

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

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

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

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

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

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

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

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

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

Figure 13 - SWDB Organizational Chart:
https://www.scworks.org/media/wioaup/Figure_13_State_Workforce_Development_Board_Organizational_Chart.pdf.

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

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

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

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

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

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

(III)(a)(2)(A) and (B) are combined. See (III)(a)(2)(B).

B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

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

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

Aligning the State's Current Public Workforce Development Resources

Information System and Data Integration

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

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

Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)

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

SC Works Certification Standards

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

Business Services Teams

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

Continuation of Partner Work Groups

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

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

Phase II State Partner MOU

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

WIOA State and Local Boards

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

SWDB and LWDB Committees

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

Youth Coordinator

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

SNAP E&T – SCDSS and DEW Partnership

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

Strengthening the Workforce Pipeline

Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

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

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

Soft Skills Training

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

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

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

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

Work Based Learning for Youth

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

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

SCVRD Pre–Employment Transition Services

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

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

WorkKeys® and National Career Readiness Certificate

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

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

Improving Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities

Adult Education plays a vital role in the state's goal to strengthen the workforce pipeline, and the inclusion as a core partner is a natural transition. To align the adult education curriculum with the state's vision and goals for workforce development, providers will incorporate workforce preparation activities in all adult education classes, and provide appropriate career and labor market information services to their students. These activities will be defined by the needs of business and industry with a focus on preparing students to earn their diploma and have a successful transition into employment. Additionally, all adult education and family literacy programs will be modified to include occupational skills training to increase the educational and career advancement of participants. One approach to Integrated Education and Training (IET) is concurrent or dual enrollment with post–secondary institutions. Local providers are engaging technical colleges to develop dual enrollment programs where students will attend adult education classes and simultaneously work toward the completion of a certificate or industry–recognized credential. Adult Education will continue to administer and prepare individuals for WorkKeys® testing, and advance its partnership with the SNAP Employment and Training program, which helps SNAP recipients gain skills, training, and work experience that increase self–sufficiency. Emphasis has been placed on diploma/high school equivalency diploma and NCRC attainment.

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

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

Several strategies have been identified by the collaborative work groups formed to implement WIOA, including: the development and consistent implementation of a universal intake and referral process; consistent use of LMI to make data driven decisions about the delivery of services; the integration of information, case management, data and reporting systems; and, Phase II of a statewide MOU with all required and other system partners.

The core partner workgroups are currently making progress toward universal referral and intake systems. A statewide plan for training frontline staff is being developed to ensure all partners in the

SC Works Centers have the knowledge and understanding of each program to guarantee all customers get the services they most need. Core partners have already begun the planning for the training and will be pooling resources and talent for the most effective delivery methods. It is expected that the web-based training will be tested and available by July 1, 2017. Although, web-based, it is envisioned that viewing will be facilitated by local operators to allow for local and regional customization. The training will be a useful tool in onboarding new staff. All of these actions will lead to tailored, effective and streamlined customer services.

A State-level Vision for System Integration has been outlined with an initial timeline. Activities that have occurred or are in process include the following: review of final rules regarding performance and reporting, review of current intake forms/applications, and identification of common elements and referral processes. Early fall activities will include a review of system needs and project planning in the context of final reporting guidelines and data collection instructions. Each core program is adapting and making changes to data collection and reporting systems to adhere to the final reporting requirements.

Although the WIOA Integration workgroup consisting of state and local level core and partner program representatives has been convened to plan for universal referral and intake, the integrated operating system will be the most difficult to achieve. Each agency already has a system procured and in place that works well for their programs. Adopting an entirely new system to be used by all partners may take many years to facilitate. Instead the group will likely continue to investigate systems that offer the flexibility to use individual systems but share common data elements and reporting through a portal. All options will require a lengthy process, but integration remains a top priority for the state.

The consistent use of current and accurate LMI data is also a priority for South Carolina workforce partners. A State Data Committee with research and data staff from several agencies is combining resources to ensure use of the best available data. This ongoing effort allows partners to better align limited resources for education, training, and supportive services to the skill needs of in-demand industries and occupations. As a result, job seekers will be better prepared to fill high-demand, high-growth jobs. The use of LMI to make such data driven decisions to develop a talent pipeline for new and expanding businesses is consistent with the sector strategies framework that is being implemented through partnership and collaboration with all core programs and many one-stop partners.

Finally, Phase II of the state partner MOU addressing resource sharing will be executed in Program Year 2016. Through the development of this MOU, partners will continue to identify strategies for aligning programs and resources to better serve job seekers and employers. The next State Partner meeting will be scheduled for October with the intent to begin drafting the MOU.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

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

Similarly, coordinating business engagement activity is one of South Carolina's strategies for bringing together numerous programs into an integrated customer–focused network. Ideally,

business engagement activities and employer services will be delivered in a manner that reduces duplication, is consistent throughout the state, and integrates all partners.

The delivery of employer services and business engagement activities is coordinated through Business Services Teams in all twelve LWDAs. In most areas, all of the core partner programs are represented on the BST as well as many other partners. This approach ensures that employers receive a consistent message about the services and resources available through SC Works and other partner programs, that employer contacts are coordinated to reduce the number of agencies contacting the same employers, and that job fairs and other hiring events are organized to include all workforce partners as opposed to each partner hosting individual events.

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

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

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

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

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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

The state is facing staggering workforce demand stemming from an ever–increasing call for high–skilled workers, an aging workforce fast approaching retirement, and an increasing number of new

and expanding businesses in South Carolina. STEM–related fields are among the industries projected to grow and experience vacancies due to retirement calling for an increase in the number of South Carolinians who are trained in STEM–related or high demand fields.

A considerable factor in South Carolina's workforce challenge is the unfavorable perception of manufacturing and other STEM–related fields, including information technology and healthcare (Proviso 117.127, South Carolina's Workforce Study, pg. 10–11, State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, 2015). The more South Carolinians understand about the wide variety of opportunities available to them the more likely we are as a state to close the workforce skills gap. Education and building awareness among the general public are key to overcoming these perception challenges (Proviso 117.127, pg. 11). South Carolina's educational institutions are vital partners in the workforce development system providing education and training programs that are aligned with employer needs and preparing individuals for family–sustaining careers.

Through Career and Technology Education (CATE) students are exposed to a variety of viable career options and are prepared for fast–growing, high–paid jobs in high–growth occupations – including healthcare, the skilled trades, STEM, information technology, and marketing (Proviso 117.127, pg. 19). Classroom instruction and student experiences are linked to career clusters (The idea of career clusters was introduced as part of the Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) enacted in 2005 to give South Carolina students the educational tools needed to build prosperous, successful futures. The EEDA created a system called Personal Pathways to help students understand and become better prepared to meet employer skill needs. Personal Pathways requires all students to declare a career major and to develop an individual graduation plans (IGPs) that outlines their personal education and career strategies. Students and their parents revisit these plans at least once a year to make appropriate adjustments) . Career clusters connect what students learn in school with the knowledge and skills they need for success in college and careers. Each career cluster identifies different pathways from secondary school to two– and four–year colleges, graduate school, and the workplace. Exposure to career pathways in these fields is one way to change the outdated perception of manufacturing and other STEM–related fields that contributes to the SC workforce skills gap.

Over 300 CTE courses were offered in secondary schools in 2012–13 and approximately 186,000 students were enrolled in at least one CTE course in the same academic year. The Graduation Rate for CTE students who complete at least four courses in a state–approved CTE program was 95% (as compared to the state average of 77.5%) and the Placement Rate into post–secondary education, employment, or military service was 96.5% (Proviso 117.127, pg. 19). High school students also have the opportunity to participate in dual enrollment, which allows students to be enrolled in high school while earning credits toward a college degree, diploma, or certificate. The Community College Research Center's recent study found that dual enrollment participation is positively related to a range of college outcomes, including college enrollment and persistence, greater credit accumulation, and a higher college GPA (Proviso 117.127, p. 19). The S.C. Technical College System provides 95% of the state's dual enrollment programs (Proviso 117.127, p. 19); serves more than a quarter million South Carolinians each year and educates more undergraduates than all other public higher education institutions combined (SC Technical College System http://www.sctechsystem.com/about–us/system–impact.html). The System has three main components – the technical colleges, readySC™, and Apprenticeship Carolina™. The 16 colleges combined offer 77 degrees, 28 diplomas, and 1,078 certificates.

The colleges also provide education and training for WIOA participants and SCVRD/SCCB clients. Adult Education has MOAs with all 16 local technical colleges to provide reciprocal referrals where

appropriate and many Adult Education programs are partnering with technical colleges to establish dual enrollment programs.

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

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

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

Proposed state legislation creates a Coordinating Council for Workforce Development and requires that the Executive Director for the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education and the State Superintendent of the Department of Education participate as members of the council. It also requires these two entities to partner with DEW and the S.C. Department of Commerce to implement a Pathways Initiative to improve employment outcomes and address critical workforce development needs statewide. Through this legislation, the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education will also establish a Workforce Scholarships and Grants fund for eligible individuals to be used for tuition and education related expenses. Finally, the legislation creates a Career Pathways Tax Credit (H. 4145, South Carolina Workforce Development Act, South Carolina General Assembly, 121st Session, 2015–2016).

F. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS.

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

The state's vision for workforce development cannot be accomplished without the engagement and partnership of all education and training providers. Education partners prepare South Carolina's workforce for competitive employment in in-demand industries and occupations, and their perspective is vital. Workforce development, economic development, and education partners are committed to strengthening these existing partnerships through the Talent Pipeline Project and other initiatives that aim to close the workforce skills gap. Regional sector strategies teams are also engaging technical colleges and other training providers to be certain there are training programs available in the selected industries and occupations. In addition to the technical college system, South Carolina has a history of utilizing private sector training providers for in-demand training.

South Carolina is creating a new Eligible Training Provider List called Palmetto Academic Training hub (PATh) to meet the expectations of WIOA and to better serve those seeking education and training opportunities. When developing PATh as well as the procedures for all providers, DEW engaged the technical colleges, the Commission for Higher Education, and several independent and for-profit training providers in the process for applications, selection, and participation on the ETPL.

In 2015, every eligible training provider was invited to one of several information sessions held in Columbia to let ETPs learn and understand the requirements being put into place and how to proceed. There has been ongoing communication on the progress of the system and the expectations of the providers. In building PATh, consideration for every size provider is made to ensure the ability to continue providing a robust list of available ETPs.

Another type of engagement includes a variety of training providers. The SPICE program (Self-Paced In-Classroom Education) is a faith-based community partnership among S.C. Department of Corrections, S.C. Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon, SCVRD, and the S.C. Technical College System. The SPICE program consists of two components: an institutional component and a community-based supervision component. Participants receive vocational skills training, career readiness training, life skills training, and spiritual awareness. SCVRD also has formal and informal partnerships with a wide variety of community organizations such as the Spinal Cord Injury Association, Brain Injury Association, SC Brain Injury Leadership Council, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Diabetes Outreach Council, Arthritis Advisory Council, Homeless Council, and SC Disability Inclusion Advisory Council for education and training of both VR staff and clients.

Additionally, the SWDB set aside funds to engage training providers to implement training opportunities "behind the wire" for incarcerated individuals preparing for release. Programs will likely be coordinated among several providers, state agencies, and other organizations that can help create and facilitate the programs to provide targeted, job-driven training.

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

G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

The state's vision is to create a workforce system that results in financial stability and economic prosperity for employers, job seekers, and communities. To do this, the state will focus on strengthening the workforce pipeline and aligning workforce development resources.

As discussed in section (E), South Carolina has a robust technical college system that offers 77 degree, 28 diploma, and 1,078 certificate programs, and a wide variety of short-term training options that are aligned with the needs of business and industry.

The existing framework includes the use of state and federal scholarship funds in conjunction with WIOA funds to increase South Carolinian's access to employment and training opportunities and supportive services. For example, nearly 30% of the students who attend a South Carolina technical

college rely on Lottery Tuition Assistance (LTA) to achieve their academic and prepare for a self-sustaining career. Since its inception, the technical college system has made nearly 400,000 LTA awards. LTA is funded annually by the South Carolina General Assembly. Additionally, WIOA leverages opportunities such as TAACCCT grants, Technical College H-1B grants and Quick Job Scholarships available in the state.

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

As mentioned previously, the SWDB approved funding for EvolveSC, a grant program that allows businesses to develop a training program in partnership with technical colleges that meet employer skill needs and improves educational access for incumbent workers and newly hired employees. EvolveSC is another example of braiding and leveraging resources to increase educational access. Co-enrollment strategies also facilitate resource sharing across workforce development programs. One of the state's strategies for alignment and coordination is co-enrollment across core, mandatory, and optional programs, replicating the co-enrollment practice that already exists between TAA and WIOA and increasing access to education and training, case management, and supportive services.

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

In PY '16, sector strategies will be implemented and DEW will work with partnering state agencies to asset map state and federal funding sources that enable low-skilled individuals to enter and complete training programs that lead to credentials. At a minimum, the funds available through the WIOA I, II, III, and IV Programs, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Pell Grants, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program will be mapped out to determine the resources available to train SC's workforce in the high-growth, high-demand sectors.

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

H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

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

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

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

Additionally, the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) will be closely aligned with the industry sectors and occupations identified at the state and regional levels ensuring that job seekers are being trained for in–demand occupations that pay a self–sustaining wage. DEW is partnering with Apprenticeship Carolina™ to add Registered Apprenticeship programs to the ETPL further increasing access to industry–recognized credentials and apprenticeship certificates.

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

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

I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES.

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

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

Sector Strategies/South Carolina Talent Pipeline Project The S.C. Department of Commerce is a co–chair of the Talent Pipeline State Leadership Team partnering with DEW, the S.C. Technical College System, and the S.C. Department of Education to adopt a sector strategies approach to developing a skilled talent pipeline for South Carolina's business community. S.C. Department of

Commerce Regional Workforce Advisors (RWA) and economic alliances are partnering with workforce and education entities to develop and implement sector strategies on a regional basis.

SC Certified Work Ready Communities The S.C. Department of Commerce was a member of the CWRC state leadership team formed to implement this initiative, and continues to be a strong supporter. Likewise, at the county–level, economic developers have played a vital role in recruiting business support and helping counties earn the Certified Work Ready Community designation as a strategy for meeting the talent needs of employers. Business Services Teams Each LWDA has a Business Services Team (BST) consisting of members who represent a variety of workforce and economic development entities. In nearly all of the areas, economic development entities are represented on the BST.

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

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

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

1. THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF–

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCWOS desktop and on–site monitoring is conducted at both the state and local levels. During the monitoring process DEW staff reviews local area policies and processes for compliance with WIOA law and regulations. Performance monitoring coupled with the ability to view and track user service

data enhances and improves both the state's and local areas' ability to make effective WIOA program policies.

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

Labor Market Information (LMI)

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

BID's Labor Market Information website provides real–time, monthly and annual information and publications. The following are a sampling of what is available on the LMI website: Community Profile Report: A comprehensive report with economic, demographic, industry, occupation and education statistics for counties, metropolitan and workforce areas.

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

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

Online Job Bank

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

Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs:

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

The Office of Adult Education (OAE) has access to each local program's database as well as a combined database for state reporting. While Adult Education produces aggregate reports for a number of partners and other entities, the Office of Adult Education and local providers are the only entities that have access rights to this web–based application. South Carolina School Boards

Insurance Trust (SCSBIT) requests information annually concerning instructional hours for each school district. Adult Education conducts data matches with S.C. Dept. of Social Services, DEW, and the S.C. Technical College System, and anticipates broadening accessibility to this information by data matching with the S.C. Commission on Higher Education.

SCVRD: Rehabilitation Act Programs

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

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

SCCB: Rehabilitation Act Programs

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

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

The Systems Alignment and Performance Accountability Work Group is and will continue to evaluate the feasibility of adopting an integrated case management, performance, and reporting system that

will increase efficiency, reduce duplication of efforts, and improve the level of service to job seekers and employers.

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

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

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

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

The state follows Federal performance and reporting processes. SCWOS supports Federal quarterly and annual reporting, WIASRD (Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data), (WIASRD is a collection of individual participant records, each of which contains information about a participant's characteristics, activities, and outcomes. These standardized records are maintained by state workforce investment agencies for all individuals who receive services or benefits from programs funded by WIA Title IB, including services financially assisted by National Emergency Grants), and data validation. Specifically, the Document Imaging Management and Scanning module in SCWOS allows staff to more efficiently access source documentation and complete the data element validation process.

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

Adult Education and Family Literacy Programs:

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

SCVRD: Rehabilitation Act Programs

The Case Management System (CMS) for SCVRD is an internally developed set of programs that allows for the flexibility of interfacing with partners as necessary. For example, SCVRD's system works with the South Carolina Enterprise Information System (SCEIS) to process client procurements, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) for Social Security verification and beneficiary status through the State Verification and Exchange System

(SVES), and the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Commission. An exchange of data from DEW will be available in the near future. CMS also allows the agency to make changes and improvements quickly, deliver consistent services to clients statewide, react to data changes enacted by RSA as mandated, and provide real–time reporting.

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

– identifying and collecting data which has not been required in the past and is not yet in the CMS;

– identifying the appropriate data sources consistent with other VR programs;

– concern about the potential for disparity among agencies' interpretations/definitions of data reporting requirements pending final regulations;

– adequacy of resources to work on WIOA–mandated data collection and reporting requirements; and

– identifying and accessing data that is not available from UI wages, such as self–employment, military, etc.

SCCB: Rehabilitation Act Programs

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

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

* For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators.

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

Phase I State Partner Memorandum of Understanding

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

As a step toward achieving this vision, Phase I of a state partner MOU was executed in2015. Appendix 3. The following partners joined in the MOU:

• S.C. Workforce Investment Board (SWIB)

• S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce

• State Board of Technical and Comprehensive Education

• Department of Social Services

• S.C. Vocational Rehabilitation Department

• Lieutenant Governor's Office on Aging

• State Department of Education

• Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (now under S.C. Department of Administration)

• Indian Development Council, Inc.

• Bamberg Job Corps Center

• Department of Juvenile Justice

• Department of Corrections

• Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services

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

Phase II Memorandum of Understanding

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

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

Co–enrollment Policies

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

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

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

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

Process for Developing Guidelines for Resource Sharing and Infrastructure Funding

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

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

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

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

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

The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce is responsible for paying unemployment insurance benefits, collecting unemployment taxes, helping people find jobs, matching businesses with qualified candidates, and collecting and disseminating state/federal employment statistics.

Our main goal is to match jobseekers with employers quickly, efficiently, and effectively, and we offer a variety of services to assist both groups.

Our Mission

To promote and support an effective, customer-driven workforce system that facilitates financial stability and economic prosperity for employers, individuals, and communities.

Our Vision

To be viewed as an efficient, transparent, customer-friendly partner in providing quality workforce solutions.

Our Commitment

DEW is dedicated to the motto: See it. Own it. Work it. DEW it. We know that each and every employee plays a role in the success of the agency and accomplishing the mission. At its core, See it. Own it. Work it. DEW it. means that as employees of DEW, if we know of an issue, we take ownership of that issue and work to come up with a solution.

Our Funding

The majority of DEW's budget is funded through federal sources.

The U.S. Department of Labor allocates funds from the Federal Unemployment Tax (FUTA) to the states to pay for administrative and operational costs. Employer-paid state unemployment taxes pay for state unemployment benefits.

Our Divisions

Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment Insurance (UI) is a nationwide program created to financially help eligible individuals, who are unemployed through no fault of their own, while they actively search for new work.

The program allows UI recipients to maintain purchasing power, therefore, easing the serious effects of unemployment on individual households, the community and the state. In South Carolina, a UI claim can provide up to 20 weeks of benefits. The average weekly benefit amount is $236. The maximum weekly benefit is $326.

Employers finance the UI program through tax contributions, and DEW is responsible for the collection, accounting and auditing functions of South Carolina's UI tax program. DEW administers the UI program according to guidelines established by the South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 41, and South Carolina Code of Regulations, Chapter 47.

Workforce and Economic Development

The Division of Workforce and Economic Development (WED) is responsible for the administration of federal programs which provide funding and services to help businesses meet their need for skilled workers and individuals secure training to prepare for work. Additionally, the WED Division directs and oversees veterans programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance Program, Alien Labor, and federal tax incentives.

DEW in partnership with SC Works provides all jobseekers with career counseling, job referrals, testing and training services, and resume-writing assistance. Free tools to assist employers include training opportunities, posting job openings, recruiting and screening candidates and reviewing job market trends.

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

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

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

SCVRD State Office consists of the following Departments:

Administration; Area Operations; Client Services; Facility Planning and Management (Buildings and Grounds); Finance Operations; Grants and Funds Management; Human Resources; Human Resource Development; Internal Audits; Information Technology; Job Readiness Training Center Services; Legal, Safety and Risk Management; Planning and Program Evaluation; Procurement and Facilities Services; and, Public Information.

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

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

Adult Education: The South Carolina State Board of Education oversees the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). The SCDE is responsible for K-12 public education and is under the supervision of the elected State Superintendent of Education. The Office of Adult Education is contained within the SCDE under the Division of Federal, State, and Community Resources, and is managed by the position of State Director of Adult Education. Technical support and compliance monitoring are provided by Education Associates within the Office of Adult Education. There are 81 school districts in South Carolina that are required by state legislation to provide Adult Education services.

Adult education programs are voluntary and afford opportunities for students to obtain a high school equivalency diploma (HSED), a high school diploma (HSD), a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), participate in English as a second language classes (ESL) and family literacy (FL). Some adults enroll to improve their basic literacy and/or numeracy skills. Adult education classes are taught by certified teachers and trained volunteers who are overseen by certified teachers. Each adult education program has a program director, instructors, administrative support, a designated data specialist, a transition specialist, and key staff to support initiatives offered by the program.

B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

South Carolina's State Workforce Development Board was reconstituted under Governor Haley's vision of a workforce system that provides employment and training services to build and maintain a highly skilled, demand-driven talent pipeline. Following the federal requirements for membership, leaders were identified based upon an understanding and experience with current workforce issues and proven record in driving change and reform.

The SWDB is currently a 33 member group comprised of majority business representatives who are leading efforts towards developing a demand-driven system that supports high-growth sectors. These representatives are from the health care, manufacturing, information technology, transportation and logistics, and construction industries. Coupled with the leadership of the core programs, chief elected officials, and State Legislatures, other state agencies and community based organizations, the Board will seek program alignment and partnership. Business representatives will apply their expertise to measure outcomes towards building program accountability through the development and evaluation of performance measures.

The Board has divided its priorities amongst four committees. The Board Governance Committee's purpose is to prepare, assist, and equip the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) to be the leading advocate for innovative, coordinated workforce development in South Carolina. Its functions include:

• Equipping SWDB members with resources and tools to be leaders and drivers of workforce development

• Providing opportunities for SWDB members to be engaged with workforce efforts and support SWDB initiatives

• Supporting SWDB direction and decisions with data and systematic processes

• Developing members to be effective advocates on a local, state, and national level

• Developing and monitor board-related policies

• Establishing and internally communicate the board's position on governance issues

• Evaluating the workforce development system on a continual basis

• Gathering and presenting data for establishment of best practices and continuous quality improvement

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

• Championing initiatives to make in-person and online services and access to services more user-friendly

• Overseeing the implementation of the SC Works Certification process by the local areas, and monitor and maintain the progression of the standards

• Developing benchmarks and baseline standards to measure and evaluate SC Works system performance

• Identifying training needs (hard, middle, and soft skills) and opportunities for businesses and jobseekers and implement and/or drive efforts to close gaps

• Initiating statewide operational practices to improve service delivery

• Improving communication with local workforce development boards

• Promoting business engagement with the workforce system

The Collaboration and Partnership Committee's purpose is to increase collaboration among workforce, economic development, and educational allies, in partnership with business and industry. Its functions include:

• Sustaining the alignment and partnerships among workforce development, economic development, education, and community-based organizations

• Improving state-level partnerships through development of a cross agency workforce development strategic plan, regular meetings, and MOU(s) to facilitate local-level collaboration

• Supporting the Certified Work Ready Communities Initiative by targeting increased business support through the utilization of Job Profiles

• Promoting the integration of state level data systems, identifying resources and strategies that remove duplicate efforts and costs

• Advocating for the implementation of regional strategies that align public resources around targeted industry sectors

The Priority Population Committee's purpose is to strengthen South Carolina's workforce system through the development of strategies and policies that ensure priority populations are served. Its functions include:

• Promoting outreach efforts to all WIOA priority populations with a focus on youth with barriers, ex-offenders, veterans, individuals with disabilities, homeless and long term unemployed

• Working with the State Youth Coordinator to establish a written strategic plan and subsequent policies to support WIOA Youth program services

• Developing benchmarks and baseline standards to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services for individuals with barriers to employment

• Initiating statewide operational practices to improve service delivery to priority populations

• Improving communication with appropriate agencies, non-profits, the faith community, and other community based organizations that already serve priority groups

Additional state and local stakeholders are routinely invited to attend or present at committee and full Board meetings, lending their expertise and feedback to policy development and workforce strategies.

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

Three year term with the option for reappointment for one consecutive three year term:

• State Legislators and Chief Elected Officials

• "Other" Representatives as the Governor may designate

Four year term with the option for reappointment for one consecutive four year term:

• Representatives of Business

• Representatives of Labor

• Representatives of Community-Based Organizations

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

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

1. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

Governor: Honorable Nikki Haley

Members of Each Chamber of the State Legislature:

Senator Bryant

Representative Forrester

Representatives of Business:

Palmetto Health, Valerie Richardson

Virginia College, Nick P. Foong

Overhead Door Company of Greenville, William Thomas Freeland

Find Great People, John Uprichard

OCS Garage Doors and Hurricane Services, James Holloway

Cox Industry, Robert Johnson

Richardson, Plowden and Robinson, P.A., Michelle Kelley

Google, Eric Wages

The Timken Company, Robert Friedman

VC3, David Dunn

U-Save Auto Rental, Archie Maddox

Horry Telephone Cooperative, Inc., Glenda Page

Piedmont Bushings and Insulators, LLC, Michael Sexton

Schaeffler, Gregory Tinnell

Cooper Standard, James Snead

Southeastern Freight, Clifford Bourke

Greenville Healthcare System, Dr. Windsor Sherrill

Representatives of Labor Organizations, Apprenticeship Programs and Community Based Organizations:

International Longshoremen Association, Charles Brave

SC Painters and Allied Trades, JAC, Local 1756, Edward Sturcken

Goodwill Industries of the Upstate/Midlands, Pat Michaels

Gleams, HRC, Inc., Dr. Joseph Patton

Columbia Urban League, James T. McLawhorn

SC Future Minds, Fred Dubard

Transitions Colonel Craig Currey

Core Partners:

Department of Employment and Workforce, Cheryl Stanton (Wagner-Peyser and WIOA)

Department of Education, David Stout (Adult Education)

Vocational Rehabilitation, Dennis Getsinger (Vocational Rehabilitation)

Chief Elected Officials:

Spartanburg County Council, Roger Nutt

Additional Workforce Partners:

Central Carolina Technical College, Dr. Tim Hardee

Local Workforce Development Area, Dr. Gregory M. Mikota

Recruitment efforts are underway to fill in the few remaining required slots. With so few labor organizations in South Carolina, filling these required slots has been difficult. With active recruitment underway, SC's Board will be in full compliance by the end of calendar year 2016.

2. BOARD ACTIVITIES

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

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

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

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

SWDB Strategic Planning: The SWDB will develop a strategic plan to focus its efforts in growing the capacity and performance of the workforce system. The project will be facilitated by an external consultant who will: – facilitate brainstorming sessions with SWDB members on the Board's inputs, value added processes, future goals, and strategies; – develop goals and objectives to be addressed through the Board and each standing Committee; and – transfer the Board Strategic Plan into a professional publication. The Strategic Plan is expected to be complete in 2016.

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

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

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

WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance

The WIOA Core Programs will provide data for federal reporting on the common indicators of

performance required by section 116(b) of WIOA:

1. Employment in the 2nd quarter after program exit;

2. Education or training, or employment 2nd quarter after program exit (youth);

3. Employment in the 4th quarter after program exit;

4. Education or training, or employment 4th quarter after program exit (youth);

5. Median earnings in the 2nd quarter after program exit;

6. Post-secondary credential attainment during program participation or within 1 year after

program exit or secondary school diploma or equivalent;

7. Measurable skill gains; and

8. Effectiveness in serving employers.

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

In addition to the mandated performance indicators, there are many other ways the programs are assessed and evaluated.

The SWDB constantly seeks ways to asses and improve services to individuals and businesses. Board initiatives include the SC Works Certification Standards; business engagement incentives; expenditure; obligations; performance sanctions; and priority of service policies that demand continuous quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs.

The SC Works Certification Standards were created in 2010, revised for system changes, and with the implementation of WIOA, will be a responsibility of the LWDBs to ensure and certify adherence

to each of the standards. There are sets of standards for job seeker services, business services, and center management. As needed, the standards will continue to be revised to ensure effectiveness in fostering quality services.

As data is analyzed by staff and reviewed by the SWDB, needs of the system are discovered and addressed. The Board identified the need for a broader number of businesses to be aware of the public program services and created an incentive for local business teams to reach a specified higher percentage of employers in their local area. The first year solely incentivized quantity and was very effective. The total number of new businesses engaged for the year was 11,635. The SWDB is now focusing on the quality of services provided by all programs as well as increasing the effectiveness of business service teams.

The State monitoring system is developed and utilized to monitor and evaluate the WIOA, TAA, and Wagner-Peyser DOL funded programs to ensure that (1) applicable Federal awards are used for authorized purposes in compliance with laws, regulations, and the provisions of contracts or grant agreements; and (2) the applicable programs are being implemented as intended in an efficient and effective manner. The ongoing review of program operations provide a greater degree of oversight, compliance, and operational efficiency which has the potential to eliminate bottlenecks, streamline processes and activities, and enhance delivery of operations while maintaining program cost-effectiveness across coordinating entities.

Based on annual monitoring visits, technical assistance site visits, and local board discussions, several areas of improvement are identified and recommended or required actions follow to obtain desired improvement and outcomes. An example is the identified need for staff training on the implementation of WIOA. The core programs, working together, are addressing the need for staff training at all levels to ensure cohesiveness in the centers. Core and other partners are creating an inclusive training plan to ensure an expected level of staff knowledge and professionalism across the workforce system. Staff will be evaluated on their understanding of the material and the training will be able to be adapted for locally specific processes and resources.

Each year, state agencies submit an annual Accountability Report to the State Legislature. This report includes each agency's strategic planning goals, strategies, objectives and performance results.

As indicated in the most recent Accountability Report, SCVRD continues its focus on individual employee responsibility for quality client service delivery, one client at a time, and quality partnerships, one partner at a time. The agency's goals, strategies and objectives in the accountability report reflect the mission, vision and values as well as the needs assessment-based VR Portion of the Unified State Plan submitted to and approved by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, U.S. Department of Education.

Accordingly, continuous improvement initiatives to build on the agency's long-term history of success have focused on quality. SCVRD has embarked on an initiative known as "Quality One" (or "Q1"), which has a theme of "Quality happens one person at a time." This included the establishment of workgroups to address quality measures and provide recommendations for a cohesive system that supports the provision of quality client services and metrics to gauge success and to realize results in increased successful employment outcomes for clients. Areas of current focus in the quality initiative include referral development, vocational assessment, individualized plans for employment, placement/employment retention, and employer relationships.

This initiative aligns with SCVRD's longstanding commitment to its Program Integrity model, which seeks a balance among productivity, customer service, and compliance assurance. Each of those components has measurable results and can be used to evaluate the agency at levels ranging from specific caseload or work unit up to an agency-wide level. National standards and indicators, issued by the agency's parent federal organization, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, are also critical measures of SCVRD's success. The agency's performance levels in meeting those standards have been consistently high. The agency is proactively integrating the new WIOA common performance measures into program evaluation, data collection and management information reports.

The use of data continues to be an important tool in the evaluation of the programs and overall system effectiveness. A statewide awareness of the need to improve data, data integration, and data analysis will greatly assist with system improvements at the state, regional, and local levels.

B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

SC Works Certification Standards

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

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

Other Assessment Methods

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

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

Other agencies/organizations use internal processes to assess their programs and activities. The S.C. Technical College System, for example, evaluates associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs offered by local community and technical colleges on an annual basis. There are several indicators against which local programs perform in order to be considered productive, such as:

enrollment, graduation rates, and job placement. Regular evaluations are conducted with organizations that use the System's statewide programs and the System also conducts internal audits of programs and processes.*

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

C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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

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

D. EVALUATION

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

The South Carolina workforce system continuously seeks ways to improve processes, policies, services and outcomes for job seekers and employers. As such, the core program partners will work alongside the SWDB and LWDBs to identify areas of opportunity that would benefit from further evaluation and research. For example, the new legislation highlights the need for system and data integration among core programs. In 2015, a partner agency work group began to research existing unified data collection and reporting systems in addition to other methods of data sharing. Although the group's work is still in its infancy, several systems have been demonstrated and options for portals or overlays to existing systems have been explored. As the federal oversight agencies provide more guidance on performance measures and reporting requirements, the work group can further hone the study to determine precise system needs.

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

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

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

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

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

Youth Funds

• 33.3 percent based on the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each workforce development area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the state;

• 33.3 percent based on the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each workforce development area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state; and

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

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

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

Adult Funds

• 33.3 percent based on the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment within each workforce development area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the state;

• 33.3 percent based on the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each workforce development area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state; and

• 33.3 percent based on the relative number of disadvantaged adults in each workforce development area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults in the state.

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

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

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

• Insured Unemployment Data 30%

• Unemployment Concentrations 25%

• Mass Layoff Data 10%

• Declining Industries Data 5%

• Farmer–Rancher Economic Hardship Data 5%

• Long–Term Unemployment Data 25%

Hold Harmless

• Applies to each funding stream. Ensures that funds are distributed without significant shifts in funding levels.

• A local area will not receive an allocation percentage that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the 2 preceding years.

Title I Financial Reporting Requirements

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

• Training and related expenses (participant cost)

• Staff working directly with participants

• Other staff and operating expenses.

B. FOR TITLE II:

1. MULTI-YEAR GRANTS OR CONTRACTS

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

The SC Department of Education (SCDE) is the state's eligible agency for adult education and literacy programs. SCDE's Office of Adult Education (OAE) is responsible for administering funds

and providing program and performance oversight of adult education grantees. These providers, which were approved under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), will continue to receive AEFLA funding through June 30, 2017, so long as they adhere to state and federal grant requirements and financial and programmatic performance expectations. During the 2016-2017 grant year, OAE will implement a new competitive grant application process to identify, assess, and award multi-year adult education grants to eligible providers according to the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. The same grant announcement, application, and process will be used to award funding for all three AEFLA programs – Sections 231, 225, and 243.

AEFLA Section 231 (Grants and Contracts for Eligible Providers) grant funds will be allocated on a county-wide basis to each of South Carolina's 46 counties. OAE is in the process of determining the specifics of the allocation method but is strongly considering distributing funds to counties based on the percentage of the working age population (18-64 years old) without a high school diploma or equivalent. Data from the American Community Survey will be used to identify the number of individuals needing literacy services within each county and the funding allocation per county.

The SCDE-OAE will set aside up to 20% of AEFLA funds for correctional education. OAE is in the process of determining the exact dollar amount to be reserved for correctional education with consideration of total past spending on adult education services to institutionalized individuals in South Carolina. Section 225 (Corrections Education) grant funds will distributed on a state-wide basis based upon the number of applications received and proposed services to be provided.

While OAE is still finalizing the local allocation method for IEL/CE grants, in the past, priority has been given to areas where there are a significant number of English as a Second Language (ESL) individuals. The number or percentage of ESL adults is determined by using school district data of the number of K-12 English language learners. ESL youth is a strong indicator of ESL parents and individuals within a given school district and/or county.

Initially, AEFLA grant funds, for all three sections (231 funds, 225 funds, and 243 funds), will be awarded to eligible providers for a three-year period, July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020. Annually, service providers will be required to confirm their eligibility for continued funding under Title II of WIOA. All providers will be on the same funding cycle.

The anticipated timeline beginning in 2017 is as follows:

January 4 RFP Release

January 12 Pre-Award Webinar and/or Face-to-Face Meeting

March 15 Proposals Due

March 20 Begin Proposal Review

April 24 Complete Proposal Review

May 26 Send Award Letters and Grant Notifications

June 7 Required Grantee Meeting/Training

June 14 Make-up Grantee Meeting/Training

July 1 Program Begins

The SC Department of Education – Office of Adult Education will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for adult education services in early January 2017. AEFLA grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to eligible providers for the purpose of developing, implementing, and improving adult education within the state. Eligible providers are determined by demonstrating effectiveness in serving adults and may include:

(A) a local educational agency;

(B) a community-based organization or faith-based organization;

(C) a volunteer literacy organization;

(D) an institution of higher education;

(E) a public or private nonprofit agency;

(F) a library;

(G) a public housing authority;

(H) a nonprofit institution that is not described in any of subparagraphs (A) through (G) and has the ability to provide adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals;

(I) a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in any of subparagraphs (A) through (H); and

(J) a partnership between an employer and an entity described in any of subparagraphs (A) through (I).

As outlined in Section 463.24, an eligible provider may demonstrated effectiveness in 2 ways: providers that has been previously funded could demonstrate effectiveness by providing performance data in it's application. An eligible provider that has not been previously funded under title II of WIOA, may demonstrate effectiveness by providing performance data related to it's record of improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly those eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the state's application for funds. All eligible providers must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, high school completion, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

All proposals will be reviewed and rated on various elements to include demonstrated effectiveness as well as the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA as identified in Section 231(e), local workforce development board (LWDB) local plan alignment, and partnership/collaboration.

AEFLA GRANT AWARD CONSIDERATIONS

• 13 WIOA Title II Grant Considerations (Section 231(e)):

(1) the degree to which the eligible provider would be responsive to—

(A) regional needs as identified in the local plan under section 108; and

(B) serving individuals in the community who were identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals—

(i) who have low levels of literacy skills; or

(ii) who are English language learners;

(2) the ability of the eligible provider to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities;

(3) past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy;

(4) the extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under section 108, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners;

(5) whether the eligible provider's program—

(A) is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and

(B) uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction;

(6) whether the eligible provider's activities, including whether reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction delivered by the eligible provider, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice;

(7) whether the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance;

(8) whether the eligible provider's activities provide learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;

(9) whether the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the State, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means;

(10) whether the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce investment boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways;

(11) whether the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;

(12) whether the eligible provider maintains a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with section 116) and to monitor program performance; and

(13) whether the local areas in which the eligible provider is located have a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

• Additional Considerations:

o The extent to which the eligible provider includes information, assurances, and a description of the following:

(1) how funds awarded will be spent consistent with the requirements of Title II;

(2) cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities;

(3) how the eligible provider will provide services in alignment with the local plan under section 108, including how such provider will promote concurrent enrollment in programs and activities under title I, as appropriate;

(4) how the eligible provider will meet the State adjusted levels of performance described in section 116(b)(3), including how such provider will collect data to report on such performance indicators;

(5) how the eligible provider will fulfill one-stop partner responsibilities as described in section 121(b)(1)(A), as appropriate; and

(6) how the eligible provider will provide services in a manner that meets the needs of eligible individuals;

o Bonus points will be awarded to applications that show strong collaboration (e.g., a single application to include multiple partners or a single application with regional partners).

2. ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS

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

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

The SC Department of Education will hold a full and open competitive competition consistent with the standards of CFR 200.319. SCDE will ensure compliance with all state and federal laws regarding the awarding of contracts and the expenditure of public funds as well as requirements outlined in Title II of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act of 2014.

The SCDE – Office of Adult Education will also ensure direct and equitable access in its processes and procedures related to the RFP announcement/distribution, the grant application, and technical assistance.

• RFP Announcement/Distribution: An announcement of the availability of federal funds, under the auspices of WIOA – Title II, will be circulated to the widest extent possible. Various sources and mediums will be used to make the public and eligible providers aware of the RFP. SCDE's Public Information Office will send out an announcement to the public, school districts, and other stakeholders. The grant opportunity will be posted on the SC Department of Education's website and distributed via SCDE's GrantNews listserv. The announcement will also be forwarded to current adult education providers and organizations such as the SC Association of Nonprofit Organizations (SCANPO); the South Carolina Library Association (SCLA); South Carolina Technical Education Association (SCTEA); South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA); and others.

The RFP and all announcements will be consistent and contain information such as:

• Type of grants available

• RFP contact person

o Applicants will be given a designated timeframe to ask questions and to receive a response.

• RFP process timeline (see above)

• Other pertinent items

• Any information required by state law regarding the awarding of contracts and the expenditure of public funds

• The same grant and application process will also be used for all eligible providers in the state. The SC Department of Education will require that all eligible providers under WIOA sections 225

(Corrections Education), 231 (Grants and Contracts for Eligible Providers), and 243 (Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education) use the same application with the same due date.

• All applications will be evaluated using the same scoring criteria. In addition, all proposal reviewers will receive adequate training to help ensure consistent scoring.

• Pre-Award/Technical Assistance sessions will be made available to all interested stakeholders and eligible providers via webinar and/or face-to-face meetings. During these sessions, there will be a review of the RFP and the awarding process. Attendees will also have a chance to ask questions specific to the RFP and adult education services. Dates, times, and locations of pre-award/technical assistance sessions will be included in the announcements and the Request for Proposals. In addition, eligible providers will have a stated timeframe to ask additional questions. Responses to all questions will be made available to the public.

C. TITLE IV VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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

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

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

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

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

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

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

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

3. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL ASSIST THE GOVERNOR IN ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SYSTEMS ACROSS REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS (INCLUDING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON INTAKE,

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

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

4. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO DEVELOP AND PRODUCE THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 116, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM. (WIOA SECTION 116(D)(2)).

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

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

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

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

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

– employment during 2nd and 4th quarter after exit (adult/DW),

– education, training, or employment 2nd and 4th quarter after exit (youth),

– median earnings 2nd quarter after exit, and

– credential attainment (during or) 1 year after program exit.

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

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

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

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

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

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

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

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

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

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

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

The state monitors priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses by ensuring that local workforce areas have implemented appropriate priority of service policies. Local policies are assessed to determine the following: • whether the policy explains the differences between Veterans' Services and priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses; • whether the policy describes the roles and responsibilities of SC Works Center staff and management as they pertain to Veterans' Priority of Service; and, • whether the policy demonstrates appropriate actions for showing priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses for Department of Labor funded programs in SC Works Centers.

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

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

The state has issued guidance regarding services under the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP). DVOP staff must limit their activities to providing services to eligible veterans and eligible spouses who: • meet the definition of an individual with a significant barrier to employment (SBE), as defined and updated by DOL, or • are members of a veteran population identified by the Secretary of Labor as eligible for DVOP services, currently defined as veterans aged 18 to 24. Per state guidance, an eligible veteran or eligible spouse who is identified as having a SBE must be immediately referred to a DVOP specialist. Veterans ages 18 to 24 must also be referred to DVOP specialists. In instances where a DVOP specialist is not available, referrals to a DEW career development specialist will be made. DVOP specialists will conduct an initial assessment to determine if the veteran or eligible spouse will benefit from the provision of case management. In the event that case management is determined not suitable, the DVOP will refer the veteran or eligible spouse to the other program staff who would best be able to meet their needs.

Veterans with a SBE and those aged 18 to 24 must have access to all appropriate SC Works services and are not limited to receiving services only from DVOP specialists. Additionally, veterans and eligible spouses who do not meet the SBE definition, or are not within a specified category identified by the Secretary of Labor, are to be referred to appropriate non–JVSG SC Works staff member(s) to receive services, on a priority basis.

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

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

South Carolina's one–stop delivery system is designed to be fully accessible so that all job seekers and employers can participate in the services offered. The Methods of Administration (MOA) – a state document required by the Civil Rights Center – is a "living" document that ensures current federal regulations and directives are implemented at the state and local level expeditiously, and details how compliance with WIOA Section 188 will be accomplished. Monitoring performed at both the state and local level ensures that all SC Works Centers are in compliance with Section 188 of WIOA, the ADA, and other applicable regulations. Individuals who seek to utilize South Carolina's workforce system can expect facilities, whether physical or virtual (e.g., SC Works Online Services) to meet federally–mandated accessibility standards. Complaints of discrimination are directed to the State Equal Opportunity Officer.

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

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

Through participation in the S.C. Disability Employment Coalition, DEW is coordinating efforts with Able SC, SCVRD, and other disability advocacy groups to increase outreach and employment opportunities for citizens with disabilities. These partnerships assist in providing resources, developing materials to benefit individuals with disabilities, and encouraging self–disclosure.

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

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

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

As part of the SC Works center certification process, LWDBs are required to evaluate accessibility of the SC Works delivery system. SC Works centers will be evaluated in 2016 and every three (3) years thereafter as required by WIOA. In order to be certified according to the SC Works certification standards, each center must meet the following accessibility baseline measures • The Center is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Every workforce area will work with Vocational Rehabilitation partners and DEW Office of Equal Opportunity, as needed, to ensure ADA compliance. • The Center provides assistive technology for customers to use when accessing computers and other services. This includes customers with visual impairments, physical disabilities, and hearing impairments. • Staff should be identified to assist people with disabilities in case of emergency. • There are linkages to services for people with special needs, including veterans and others, related to disability. SC Works centers may be evaluated by SCVRD, and in some instances SCCB, to ensure ADA compliance. LWDAs have also partnered with SCVRD to assist with the procurement of accessible equipment. SCVRD is represented on all of the LWDBs and will participate on the disability standing committees discussed above.

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

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

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

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

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

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

• the Lowcountry Workforce Development Area

• the Pee Dee Workforce Development Area

• the Upper Savannah Workforce Development Area

• Palmetto Goodwill

• Charleston Adult Education

• Developmental Disabilities Council

• RespectAbility USA

• the S.C. Department of Education

• Able SC

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

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that—

1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;   Yes

2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;   Yes

3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;   Yes

4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;   Yes

5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;   Yes

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

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

8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;   Yes

9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;   Yes

10. The State has a One-Stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);   Yes

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

12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.   Yes

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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

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

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

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

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

South Carolina re–designated all 12 local workforce development areas that were designated as local areas for purposes of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and identified four (4) intrastate planning regions: Upstate, Central, Pee Dee, and South Coast.

The Upstate region includes four (4) local areas: Greenville, Upper Savannah, Upstate, and Worklink.

The Central region includes three (3) local areas: Catawba, Lower Savannah, and Midlands.

The Pee Dee region includes three (3) local areas: Pee Dee, Santee Lynches, and Wacammaw.

The South Coast region includes two (2) local areas: Lowcountry and Trident.

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

State Instruction 14–05 (https://www.scworks.org/media/14_ET_Instruction/et_instruction_14–05.pdf), Local Workforce Development Area Designation and Local Workforce Development Board Certification, outlines the process used for designating local areas. The policy defines "performed successfully" as meeting or exceeding the performance goals for the WIA common measures for each of the last two consecutive years for which data is available. It further provides that "sustained fiscal integrity" means that the Secretary has not made a formal determination, during either of the last two consecutive years, that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area misexpended funds provided under WIA due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration. Each local workforce area submitted a formal designation petition, including documentation of successful performance and fiscal integrity.

State Instruction 15–08 (https://www.scworks.org/media/15_ET_Instruction/ET_Instruction_15–08.pdf), Regional Identification, provides an overview of the process used to identify planning regions. In making this determination, the state considered the factors listed in Sec. 106(b)(1)(B): the extent to which the local areas in a proposed region are consistent with labor market areas in the state, are consistent with regional economic development areas in the state, and have available the federal and non–federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under subtitle B and other applicable provisions of WIOA, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and area career and technical

education schools. South Carolina also considered population centers, labor force conditions, commuting patterns, industrial composition, location quotients, geographic boundaries, income, poverty, educational attainment, and in–demand occupation groups.

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

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

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

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

For Program Year 2016, state-issued guidance to local workforce development boards focused on increased resource sharing by partners and local agreement regarding MOUs and sharing of infrastructure costs. The State considered the actions of DOL and ED in postponing implementation of the state funding mechanism, and tabled this portion of its guidance. The State chose to wait for publication of the Final Rule and additional guidance from DOL. The appeal process is linked to the state funding mechanism and the Governor's determination regarding a one-stop partner's portion of funds to be provided for one-stop infrastructure costs. Therefore, when additional state guidance is issued on the state funding mechanism, an appeal process will be incorporated. Such process will include the grounds upon which an appeal may be made, the deadline for submitting an appeal, and assurance of prompt resolution of an appeal.

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

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

(VI)(2)(A) and (B) are combined. See (VI)(2)(B).

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR'S SET ASIDE FUNDING. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS TO RESPOND TO LAYOFFS AND PLANT CLOSINGS AND COORDINATE SERVICES TO QUICKLY AID COMPANIES AND THEIR AFFECTED WORKERS. STATES ALSO

The following are South Carolina's general practices for determining the use of state funds for workforce activities:

WIOA statewide activities funding proposals are developed when there is a general idea of the level of funds that will be received. In addition to the State Plan, information and ideas are gathered from partner agencies, local areas and business partners to identify potential areas of need and opportunity. Several initiatives are proposed to the SWDB. Each appropriate SWDB Committee reviews, discusses, and votes on final proposals of fund use to go before the full SWDB. Typically, the full Board votes on the use of statewide activities funding for the following year in their June meeting.

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

Utilization of Rapid Response Funds

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

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

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

• Step 1: Research & Discovery. The DEW Rapid Response team is proactive, using resources to identify businesses that are at risk of layoff or closure. Often, the business is contacted and provided information and resources that may minimize the risk of layoff or closure.

• Step 2: Activation. Upon receipt of a layoff announcement, WARN (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification) or early warning notification, the Rapid Response team gathers information about the business, layoff or closure, and affected workers and develops a layoff aversion strategy specific to the employer's needs. The Rapid Response team also contacts business management to schedule a Management Meeting.

• Step 3: The Management Meeting. The ultimate goal of the Management Meeting is to avert or lessen the impact of the announced layoff or closure while at the same time, scheduling pre–layoff meetings with the affected workers.

• Step 4: Group Orientation. Group Orientations are scheduled with affected workers on–site and during normal business hours. Typically, affected workers receive information about WIOA, TAA (when appropriate), filing a UI benefits claim, partner services and any other information that may alleviate long–term unemployment.

• Step 5: On–site Reemployment Services. Reemployment Services are provided by a Workforce Specialist on–site to assist workers with rapid reentry into the workforce. Services include, but are not limited to the following: SCWOS registration, resume preparation, job search assistance, and interview preparation.

Additionally, the Rapid Response team works closely with the Existing Industry Division at the South Carolina Department of Commerce (SCDOC) and the South Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership to identify businesses that are at risk of layoff or closure. The Existing Industry Division provides referrals and coordinates with the DEW Rapid Response team to provide services to employers who may be experiencing or at risk of a layoff or closure. The Rapid Response team and local area business service teams work with the SC Manufacturing Extension Partnership (SCMEP) to assess the sustainability and training needs of businesses. SCMEP conducts a Competiveness Review and notes warning signs.

Often, businesses must expand their customer base and, to do so, must elevate the skill set of their workforce to industry standards to be competitive. Lean principals reduce overhead expenses and increase productivity. Equipment upgrades and technological advancement require workers to be trained in new processes or risk being separated, regardless of their existing skill set.

The state has developed forms and processes to identify, target, and award Rapid Response funded Incumbent Worker Training to businesses at risk of imminent layoffs or closures. Once a company completes an application, the LWDA business services team lead reviews the training application, assesses the business, the worker group and proposed training prior to endorsing the application and forwarding it to DEW for final funding approval. In determining whether to fund Rapid Response IWT applications, training is evaluated to ensure the skills are transferrable to future employment opportunities if the aversion strategy is unsuccessful. Rapid Response funded IWT is approved only if a credential or certification is issued.

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

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

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

and/or humanitarian efforts. The state coordinates with FEMA to ensure non–duplication and adherence to maintenance of effort requirements.

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

• DUA/UI claims filing

• referrals to FEMA to file claims

• job matching

• referrals to partner agencies.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A).) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TRADE-AFFECTED WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PETITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE TRADE-AFFECTED DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION.

TAA/Rapid Response Early Intervention

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

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

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

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

Utilization of Rapid Response Funds for TAA Eligible Individuals

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

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. IF THE STATE IS UTILIZING WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS (E.G. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING, INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING, TRANSITIONAL JOBS, AND CUSTOMIZED TRAINING) AS PART OF ITS TRAINING STRATEGY AND THESE STRATEGIES ARE NOT ALREADY DISCUSSED IN OTHER SECTIONS OF THE PLAN, DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGIES FOR HOW THESE MODELS ENSURE HIGH QUALITY TRAINING FOR BOTH THE PARTICIPANT AND THE EMPLOYER.

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

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL INCORPORATE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP INTO ITS STRATEGY AND SERVICES.

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

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

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

3. PROVIDE THE PROCEDURE, ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA, AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR DETERMINING TRAINING PROVIDER INITIAL AND CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS (WIOA SECTION 122).

As outlined in the South Carolina ETPL Procedures Document, the procedure for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility is as follows:

Training providers seeking initial eligibility on the South Carolina Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) are required to complete items 1(a) through 1(e) below, as well as 2 through 6. For continued eligibility, training providers are required to complete items 1(d) and 1(e) below, as well as 2 through 6.

1. Submit a completed Providers of Training Services Initial Application for processing to the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW). This application will require the following information:

a. Provider name, contact information, Federal Employer Identification (FEIN) number, and other information as specified in Appendix B of the ETPL procedures.

b. Evidence of Provider accreditation and/or licensure with appropriate state or other governing entity.

c. Student grievance and refund policy and procedure.

d. Information pertaining to program cost, partnership with business, and alignment of training with in–demand occupations. Template for program data submission is found in Appendix C of the ETPL procedures.

e. Evidence of Program accreditation and/or licensure with appropriate state or other governing entity.

f. The provider agrees they will begin to gather student data based on Appendix D of the ETPL procedures document and will submit student data by September 30th of each year after the first full year for performance calculation. Initial submission of data is not a requirement for eligibility.

2. Complete required Memorandum of Understanding covering use of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in Student Data and various wage records which will be mailed to the signatory official by DEW.

3. Upon receipt of completed application and program data, DEW will review the application for completeness and adherence to instructions, add to the statewide database, and send to the appropriate Local Workforce Development Area for approval.

4. The Local Workforce Development Board will then review each provider and program and then make a determination of local eligibility.

5. Upon successful initial eligibility determination by both DEW and the Local Workforce Development Board, the training program will be added to the ETPL. Additionally, new provider information will be added to the SC Works Online system by DEW personnel.

6. New providers will be continually added to the ETPL as they become eligible. Initial eligibility remains in effect at least one full year.

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

A resource has been identified at the state level to work with Apprenticeship Carolina™, the state apprenticeship agency, in order to facilitate contact with Registered Apprenticeships within the state. Initially, RAs will be contacted via email or phone and will indicate interest in being included on the

ETPL. If there is interest, a brief survey will be sent to them to complete and return to DEW with information required by Training and Employment Guidance Letter WIOA No. 41–14. These entities will then be added to the ETPL with no expectation of performance submissions in the future unless the entities volunteer. The list of Registered Apprenticeships will be revisited every two years to determine if any have voluntarily or involuntarily deregistered. The list will be amended accordingly.

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

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

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

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

C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS.*

* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

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

To ensure all WIOA Youth Service Providers meet basic programmatic standards, the state has developed the following criteria for Local Workforce Development Areas to consider during their provider selection process: • Providers must demonstrate experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, specifically out–of–school or disconnected youth. • Providers must demonstrate experience and/or strategies in connecting youth to education, training and employment opportunities with emphasis on career readiness activities and promoting career pathways for participants. • Providers must exhibit strong community and business linkages to ensure the ability to develop work–based learning opportunities and meet the skill and training needs for the state's talent pipeline. • Providers must demonstrate ability to meet performance accountability measures through program design and strategies. As the WIOA statute mandates, 75 percent of youth funds are to be expended on the out–of–school population. This shift in program design stems from the significant number of individuals who are disconnected from education and training across the country. Although South Carolina is positioned to achieve this requirement, local areas will further support this change by requiring prospective youth providers to have direct experience in serving priority populations and be able to illustrate strategies that motivate and engage youth with barriers.

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

Understanding that youth providers may not be able to directly offer each of the 14 elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2), youth providers will be responsible for connecting with other

workforce and community partners to achieve a holistic service delivery model. It is imperative that providers communicate closely with agencies and organizations that serve similar populations to allow for co–enrollment where appropriate and leveraging of resources. As formula funding has seen a decrease, local areas are faced with the challenge of providing quality services to individuals in need with less staff and financial resources. Providers must be imbedded in their respective areas to build mutually beneficial partnerships that generate referral processes, space sharing, and alternative funding.

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

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

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

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

LWDB Youth Committees. Each LWDB is required to form a Youth Committee that will provide information and assist with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth. The Youth Committee is charged with developing local service strategies that will increase the number of out–of–school youth served and improve outcomes for this population. The State Youth Coordinator works with each LWDA to ensure that their Youth Committee engaged with State initiatives and collaborating with key partners.

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

Aligning Programs and Services. Aligning programs and services through co-enrollment and referral processes has historically increased the number of individuals served and generally improved outcomes. As mentioned earlier, South Carolina was positioned to achieve the 75 percent OSY

expenditure due to alignment strategies such as co-location and co-enrollment practices. Although the graduation rate continues to improve, South Carolina's Title I youth programs serve a high number of youth who have dropped out of secondary school. Seeing the overlap in customers, Local Workforce Development Areas have chosen to co-locate with Adult Education Providers to promote communication between provider staff and effectively recruit OSY and serve co-enrolled participants. Co-locating with Adult Education, allows those individuals who engage in equivalency programs to access the extra supports and services that WIOA provides. Additionally, the comprehensive SC Works centers are equipped to serve the OSY population and connect them to the many services, programs and partners represented. Some of the centers actually offer basic skills and equivalency classes on site, further providing a holistic approach to serving youth.

Another opportunity for increased program alignment is with the Local Workforce Development Board Youth and Disability Committees. Each local area has created a LWDB committee to address the needs of youth and one to ensure outreach and services for people with disabilities in the workforce. With Vocational Rehabilitation taking a leading role in the Disability Committee, the local areas are gaining a better understanding of the services that are offered to students and youth with disabilities through VR and other disability service providers. This has resulted in refined referral processes and opportunities to engage people with disabilities in the SC Works Centers. Similarly, at the state level, the Transition Alliance of South Carolina, an interagency collaborative to increase positive post-secondary outcomes for youth with disabilities, is working to expand partnerships between education and workforce at the state and local levels. As the special education programs in school districts are connected to the various services available through the SC Works system, youth with disabilities gain access to work-based learning opportunities through programs like Project Search and VR transition services while in school. With Project Search expanding across the state, local areas are working with VR and the host sites to establish referral processes to co-enroll students and provide additional work experience opportunities as well as supportive services after they exit the school setting.

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

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

Education to Employment. The state was awarded a Youth Demonstration Grant to serve out of school youth in the North Charleston area. There has been much success with creating local partnerships with the legal and justice systems in the area for the activities associated with this grant. Best practices have been shared and replicated for WIOA in several areas of the state.

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

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED.*

* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

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

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII).

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

5. INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION, AS DEFINED IN LAW, FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ATTENDING SCHOOL AS SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(I) AND SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(I). IF STATE LAW DOES NOT DEFINE "NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL" OR "ATTENDING SCHOOL" INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.

State law does not define "not attending school" or "attending school." However, South Carolina compulsory education laws require children to attend regularly a public or private school or kindergarten which has been approved by the State Board of Education, a member school of the South Carolina Independent Schools' Association, a member school of the South Carolina Association of Christian Schools, or some similar organization, or a parochial, denominational, or church–related school, or other programs which have been approved by the State Board of

Education from the school year in which the child is five years of age before September first until the child attains his seventeenth birthday or graduates from high school (S.C. Code, § 59–65–10).

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

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

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

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)

2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)

3. THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING AN IDENTIFICATION OF SUCCESSFUL PROVIDERS OF SUCH ACTIVITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

N/A

E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their Title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;

3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;

4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:

A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;
B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;
C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;
D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND
E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESS USED TO:

A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;
B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;
C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;
D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.
E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE'S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT

The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver;

The Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) federal requirements are creating a hardship for many training providers, including the technical colleges, resulting in a decreased number of providers adding their programs to the ETPL. Many training providers do not have existing staff to perform the data gathering processes required to submit program information and performance data and cannot

justify hiring additional staff. The proposed regulations and related performance measures requiring providers to include an "all students" cohort also interfere with FERPA laws, and providers do not currently have students complete a waiver for data gathering purposes. These issues are leading to South Carolina having a less than robust list of training providers.

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

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;   Yes

2. The state has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;   Yes

3. The state established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members.   Yes

4. The state established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2).   Yes

5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership.   Yes

6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the state consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the state in determining the distributions.   Yes

7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7).   Yes

8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan.   Yes

9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I.   Yes

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

11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);   Yes

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

All program-specific requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

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

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

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

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

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

UI programs play a vital role in the integrated workforce system by providing income support benefits to eligible individuals who continue to be important customers of the workforce system. These benefits allow unemployed workers to engage in work search activities for suitable employment, and the workforce system is a key source of services to support the reemployment of UI claimants. To ensure efficiency, a Workforce Information Portal (WIP) was developed to provide a secure method for partner staff to obtain the necessary UI data that is used to determine an individual's potential eligibility for services and training under WIOA. The WIP also allows staff to communicate potential UI fraud and availability issues in an efficient and streamlined manner. Sharing such information with UI staff helps to accelerate the claimants' return to suitable employment and ensure their continued eligibility to receive UI benefits.

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE.

Access to the online claim filing system is available at every SC Works location across the state. Resource rooms are staffed with individuals who can assist with filing a claim. A toll free number is also available for individuals with questions specific to their claims. A network of access points has been established statewide for individuals to apply for benefits and perform their work search. Registration in the South Carolina Online System (SCWOS) is required for all UI Claimants and one of the four required weekly work searches must be conducted within the system. Access to SCWOS is available at all comprehensive centers and access points. Claim filing guides are available in resource rooms at SC Works locations and employment service staff is available to assist and answer question about the filing process. An Unemployment Insurance "Frequently Asked Questions" guide is in development and will be distributed to Employment Service and partner staff.

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

Universal Access

Individuals seeking employment and eligible to work in the United States are eligible for Wagner–Peyser services. These services can be provided in person or remotely. Job search assistance, access to labor market information, résumé assistance, workshops, and hiring events are offered in all comprehensive centers.

To identify individuals who are at risk of exhausting benefits, South Carolina requires all UI claimants to register for Employment Services in SCWOS. Individuals attending Worker Profiling and RESEA are first given information on services provided by the workforce system, and after an initial assessment they are provided with more customized services for their situation. These services could include referrals to employment, referral to partners, participation in workshops, and information on the local labor market, training options, and other services that are available.

RESEA

The Re–employment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program (RESEA) provides a bridge between Employment Services (ES) and Unemployment Insurance in the provision of services to Unemployment Compensation for ex–Military members (UCX) and lack of work claimants with the goal of reducing duration and improving the integrity of the UI program. Numerous services are provided through the program to include but not limited to reemployment services, provision of labor market information, one stop orientations, development of employability plans, referrals to training and unemployment compensation eligibility reviews. The RESEA program is operated from all comprehensive SC Works Centers.

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

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

All individuals applying for UI benefits are required to register with the state Employment Service by creating an account in SCWOS. This allows individuals to search for jobs, job referrals, create a resume, set up job matching criteria, develop employment plan, take self–assessments and search labor market information. SC Works Centers have resource rooms that support these services, and staff is available to assist. As a result of aligning these agencies and services, individuals with barriers to employment are provided staff assisted services. Additionally, referrals to partner and community service providers are available along with information on Federal Bonding.

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

As stated previously, South Carolina law requires UI claimants to register in SCWOS and perform one job search per week using the system. Wagner–Peyser staff is available to assist individuals with the registration process and the weekly work search if assistance is needed. Workshops on various reemployment topics are also offered at SC Works centers, and anyone interested is able to attend.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND

In order to receive and maintain benefits in South Carolina, individuals must register in the SC Works Online System (SCWOS). Individuals must also be able, available, and actively seeking work. Claimants are required to perform four work searches per week, with at least one taking place in SCWOS. If an individual fails to perform a search or declines a request for an interview with a prospective employer, an issue can be placed on the claim for further clarification.

Job finding and placement services are offered both remotely and in person. To facilitate these services, each comprehensive SC Works location has staff available to assist individuals looking for employment. ES staff post available positions for employers and help individuals match their skills with available positions for which they qualify, including UI claimants. SCWOS also spiders in jobs posted on many other job boards and individual company websites.

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

Staff in SC Works centers across the state use an initial assessment to determine customers' needs. Based on information received during this process, coupled with an individual's stated goals, a path forward is identified for each customer. This path could include information or workshops offered in centers or at partner locations, or referrals to training programs and other partner or community based services. In addition, staff may assist customers with training or financial aid applications as

needed. Coordination and communication among partners is critical to the success of each individual in order to provide an array of options that will benefit the customer most.

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

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

(E)(1)(a) and (b) are combined. See (E)(1)(b).

A. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE.

(E)(1)(a) and (b) are combined. See (E)(1)(b).

B. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWS IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION.

There are several factors that make the needs of the South Carolina's farm worker unique. Although the agricultural industry is a long established tradition in South Carolina, its workforce has seen dramatic changes in recent years. Foreign workers have steadily increased as a percentage of the local and migrant workforce. Also, there is an exponential increase in H-2A workers and this trend is expected to continue.

South Carolina's MSFWs are predominantly from Latin-American countries – having Mexico as the main contributor of workers but also including individuals from Central America and the Caribbean. Most of them speak Spanish, but we have also detected several indigenous dialects from the south of Mexico and regions of Central America.

Since most of the MSFWs are Latino, one important aspect when analyzing the needs of the farmworker is to consider the Latino community in the state as a whole. The Latino community in South Carolina is growing rapidly (it had the highest percentage rate of increase nationwide from 2000 to 2010). However, this community is still considered an "emergent" community. As a result, this community lacks the resource network that would be easily found in states with a traditional Latino community such as California, Texas or Florida – or even North Carolina. In those states, farm workers utilize resource networks, usually comprised of Latino community-based and religious-based organizations, to learn about the workforce system and how they can access workforce development services. In our state, this resource network is new and small. Furthermore, sometimes when farmworkers are able to navigate the system, they find that the agency providing the service lacks bilingual/bicultural staff to understand their language and overcome cultural differences. As a result, we have a community that is at risk of being isolated and unable to access available resources.

In PY 2015, the number of H–2A workers is expected to continue to increase. The peach and strawberry industries continue to increase the size of the H–2A worker program. Other specialty crops, as well as nursery and greenhouse work, have also contributed to the increase. These activities are primarily in the Savannah Ridge and Piedmont areas.

Overall, the projected agricultural workforce need for South Carolina in program year 2015 was approximately 11,750 workers. This is a small increase in the number of workers that was needed in program year 2014. April through September are the peak harvest months in South Carolina. It is anticipated that the number of agricultural job openings received by DEW will remain steady at about 9,000. This total includes 3,615 H–2A and approximately 4,850 migrant and seasonal farm workers. The number of domestic MSFWs in South Carolina is difficult to estimate and could be understated as some of these workers cannot be located.

In the SC Works Centers throughout the state, bilingual staff members work with MSFWs of limited English proficiency to provide career services. When no qualified and trained bilingual employee is available, DEW will offer and secure, at no cost to the client, a qualified interpreter or translator service. If there is a need for remedial and/or occupational training, the MSFW is generally referred to a local Adult Education office for English as a Second Language and is then referred to a training provider.

Telamon is also a partner of the SC Works Centers and provides additional services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers. In the coming program year, efforts will be made to establish closer cooperation and service collaboration with partners, such the state's NFJP grantee, to ensure greater alignment of career and training services to MSFWs.

2. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

Section IV.e.2.A below describes outreach efforts to MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities.

Section IV.e.2.B below describes the technical assistance being provided to outreach workers.

A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES.

DEW staff conduct outreach activities with agricultural workers through five significant offices: Beaufort, Charleston, Greenwood, Spartanburg, and Sumter, are located in SC Works Centers. Other public and private community service agencies and migrant and seasonal farmworker groups also provide outreach services.

Other outreach efforts occur in traditional community settings such as housing facilities, faith-based organizations, health departments and restaurants, community centers or other areas where MSFW congregate. Outreach efforts should also include innovative ideas to continue increasing the number of individuals accessing services. Outreach workers are encouraged to continuously propose new ideas for effective outreach.

The farmworkers are contacted at their living, gathering or other assembly areas by outreach workers. An explanation of workforce services available to MSFWs, including the availability of referrals to agricultural and nonagricultural employment, training, and supportive services, and other job development services is provided in their native language. MSFW outreach workers are required to be bilingual and provide language appropriate services as needed. MSFWs are also provided information about other area organizations available to serve them.

The MSFW Program will continue to establish working relationships with local, regional and statewide agencies to disseminate information regarding the job services provided to MSFWs. Resource and information sharing are essential to reach this goal. MSFW outreach workers are experts in their own regions and are aware of the "best practices" to reach MSFW who are not being reached by normal intake activities. Quarterly MSFW outreach worker training/meetings led by the State Monitor Advocate provide a standardized framework for continued success.

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

Outreach workers participate in the following training sessions:

• What is Outreach? Techniques for Effective MSFW Outreach: When, Where, and How

• Managers' Training: MSFW Outreach Worker Roles and Responsibilities

• New MSFW Outreach Worker Training

• Job Service Complaint Resolution System

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) is implementing a new training schedule that includes quarterly training for all outreach workers. This quarterly training includes topics inherent to the MSFW program such as: Federal Guidelines and Regulations, Federal LEARS Reporting, Migrant Immigration of Compliance Reports, Outreach Worker Roles and Responsibilities, and MSFW Effective Outreach and Best Practices. The quarterly training will also include information about DEW's job service activities and other workforce development programs, including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, as well as other local and regional workforce development and supportive services programs, such as: Migrant Health Services, Migrant Education Program, and other community-based programs. These Quarterly Outreach Worker training/meetings also provide an opportunity for Outreach Workers to better understand the challenges and opportunities that may arise when serving MSFWs.

The SMA will consider current and future staff training needs when developing the agenda for training during the program year. One goal of quarterly training is to ensure that all outreach workers are equally proficient in their position.

C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES.

As described in the previous section, MSFW outreach workers will receive training on a quarterly basis starting in Program Year 2016. A component of this training will focus on the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. As a result of this training, outreach workers will have improved awareness and knowledge of the UI program and a greater ability to identify and assist with UI eligibility issues. Outreach workers will also become more familiar with programs and services offered by workforce system partners that may benefit MSFWs.

D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

Professional development opportunities are available for state merit outreach staff such as resume writing certification, career development facilitator certification and other training options.

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

Coordination with NFJP grantees will take place with outreach workers across the state to provide services. DEW outreach staff will coordinate visits with Telamon to locations across the state. The coordination of outreach efforts with the NFJP grantees includes agency field staff working in conjunction with the NFJP regional field representatives in the designated regions.

Figure 22
(https://www.scworks.org/media/wioaup/Figure_22_MSFW_SC_Works_Five_Significant_Offices_and_Coverage_Areas.pdf)

Vigorous outreach activities will be conducted to ensure that migrant and seasonal farmworkers are aware of the full range of employment services. DEW outreach workers and Rural Manpower staff

will work together to coordinate outreach activities, thus maximizing program effectiveness and efficiency. Statewide, there will be five, full–time outreach worker positions dedicated to outreach activities. MSFW outreach staff, as well as Rural Manpower staff, will be primarily supported through Wagner–Peyser funding. The estimated number of MSFWs to be contacted by each outreach worker per area is provided in Table 17. Due to the varying concentrations of MSFWs in the different areas, some movement of outreach workers between areas will be necessary.

Table 17 (https://www.scworks.org/media/wioaup/Table_17_Estimated_MSFW_Outreach.pdf)

DEW partners with other agencies across the state of South Carolina that also target the MSFW population, including the WIA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) Grantee – Telamon Corporation, S.C. Legal Services, S.C. Department of Education Migrant Education Program, SCPHCA–Migrant Health Program, East Coast Migrant Head Start Program, and faith–based migrant community organizations and associations.

In addition, staff will continue to foster cooperation with other governmental and community–based organizations in providing information and promoting the MSFW program at appropriate meetings and through other avenues. For example, DEW conducts annual farmer meetings regionally to allow organizations that work with the MSFW population an opportunity to inform farmers of the many services and benefits available to farmworkers. Both the State Monitor Advocate and the Rural Manpower supervisor serve on the USDOL Wage & Hour Farm Labor Coordinating Task Force which provides a forum for farm worker and labor partners and stakeholders to share information. The State Monitor Advocate is also a member of the South Carolina Primary Health Care Association Advisory Council.

DEW will comply with CFR 20 653.107, Sub–part B, in delivering services to MSFWs. The roles and responsibilities of the outreach worker include:

– Contact and locate the MSFWs where they work, live or gather

– Observe the work and living conditions

– Explain the services available

– Provide information about the job service complaint system and assist in the preparation of a worker complaint

– Explain basic farmworker rights when the outreach worker refers an MSFW to a job (20 CFR 653 and 658)

– Refer to job openings and assist in the preparation of a work application

– Refer to supportive services, if needed

– Assist in making appointments

The farmworkers will be contacted at their living, gathering or other assembly areas by outreach workers. An explanation of workforce services available to MSFWs, including the availability of referrals to agricultural and nonagricultural employment, training, and supportive services, and other

job development services will be provided in a language readily understood by them. MSFW outreach workers are required to be bilingual and provide language appropriate services as needed. MSFWs will also be provided with information about other area organizations available to serve them.

Each outreach worker will maintain a log of daily contacts which will include the number of MSFWs contacted and details of assistance provided. The name of the individual contacted will be recorded in all cases where an application for work is taken, a referral to a job is made, and/or a complaint is filed. Detailed reports relative to the number of MSFWs, their office of registration, and services provided can be retrieved through the reporting module in SC Works Online Services (SCWOS), the data management, service delivery system for WIA, Wagner–Peyser, and Trade Adjustment Assistance. The "Notice to Job Seekers" which lists the services available through the SC Works Centers and the toll–free farmworker helpline flyers will be distributed to all MSFWs contacted.

Outreach workers will be familiar with working and living conditions of the migrant and seasonal farmworkers. If they observe, have reason to believe, or are in receipt of information regarding a suspected violation of employment related laws or employment service regulations by an employer, the outreach worker shall document the suspected violation and provide the information to the SC Works Center Employment Services Management staff. They will provide assistance in the preparation of job service and non–job service complaints. Complaints will be recorded using the Employment Services (ES) Complaint Log, and resolved using the ES Complaint System.

3. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM.

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

(A) PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

I. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS;
II. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES.

DEW's outreach program will focus on increasing MSFWs' ability to access core, intensive and training services through SC Works Centers. Outreach workers will inform MSFWs of and refer them to verified employment opportunities and the Employment Services Complaint System. Outreach workers will encourage the MSFWs to utilize the SC Works Centers to obtain the full range of employment services; however, on–site assistance will also be offered in the preparation of applications, on a limited basis.

Outreach workers will refer individual MSFWs, or family members, who may be eligible, to WIA and supportive services and, as needed, will provide assistance in making appointments and arranging transportation to and from SC Works Centers or other appropriate agencies. Further, the outreach workers will make follow–up contacts as necessary and appropriate to provide, to the maximum extent possible, the foregoing described services. MSFWs also will be shown how to use SC Works

Online Services (SCWOS), an Internet–based workforce data management and service delivery system. Through SCWOS, MSFWs can establish a Wagner–Peyser application and apply for jobs.

In the SC Works Centers throughout the state, bilingual staff members work with MSFWs of limited English proficiency to provide core and intensive services. When no qualified and trained bilingual employee is available, DEW will offer and secure, at no cost to the client, a qualified interpreter or translator service. If there is a need for remedial and/or occupational training, the limited English proficiency MSFW is generally referred to a local Adult Education office, first, for an "English as a Second Language" course, then is referred to a training provider. Telamon is also a partner of the SC Works Centers and provides additional services to migrants and seasonal farm workers. In the coming program year, efforts will be initiated to establish closer cooperation and service collaboration with partners, such as the state's WIA Section 167 NFJP grantee, to ensure greater alignment of intensive and training services to MSFWs.

Table 18 (https://www.scworks.org/media/wioaup/Table_18_SC_MSFW_Employer_Outreach.pdf)

Extensive outreach to agricultural employers is an on–going process. This is critical to maintaining interpersonal contact with the employers. Employers are contacted by Rural Manpower coordinators operating out of two SC Works Centers strategically located throughout the state. The map below reflects the statewide coverage provided by Rural Manpower staff through a lead coordinator and support staff.

Figure 23 (https://www.scworks.org/media/wioaup/Figure_23_Rural_Manpower_Staff_Coverage.pdf)

Examples of services provided to agricultural employers by DEW staff include:

– Local, regional and national recruitment assistance

– Screening job applicants

– Provision of information such as crop conditions, labor supply, and labor market information

– Connection and coordination of services with government and community agencies

– Technical assistance with foreign labor certification

– Soliciting and filling job orders

– Disseminating information on farm–related rules and regulations

– Registering of farm labor contractors

– Conducting prevailing wage and prevailing practice surveys

– Providing consultant inspections of migrant housing

– Offering assistance to farmers in obtaining supplies for migrants

– Referring complaints to proper enforcement agencies

– Assisting employers in obtaining work–related posters and notices

– Participating in agricultural related meetings and notifying farmers of these meetings

Many contacts with agricultural employers are made as a result of referrals from other agencies such as the S.C. Department of Agriculture and Clemson University as well as by word–of–mouth from other workers or farmers.

DEW periodically hosts grower meetings to inform agricultural employers of services available through the state workforce system. Intensive efforts will be made in the upcoming year to increase the market penetration of agricultural employers.

The most basic service provided to agricultural employers is the filling of job openings. Job orders from agricultural employers are entered in SCWOS and qualified candidates are referred. All H–2A order users are mandated to take all qualified United States referrals through the workforce system. Rural Manpower, in particular, strives to refer local applicants to all H–2A orders through community contacts and referrals. In addition, training has been provided to SC Works Center staff throughout the state to encourage local domestic U.S. workers to apply for H–2A jobs.

Other services include the certification and renewals of certification for farm labor contractors and housing inspections of both H–2A and MSFW camps. The Rural Manpower coordinators also perform field checks and communicate with the Chicago National Processing Center in addressing matters relative to any H–2A deficiencies. They also provide critical coordination services by moving MSFW crews to the growers at the appropriate times.

The Employment Services staff will strive to meet and exceed federal program requirements with respect to equity and minimum service level indicators of compliance.

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

DEW will market the complaint system to farmers utilizing field staff along with a poster for posting onsite.

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

Services available to farmers and farmworkers are available online at www.dew.sc.gov that shows phone numbers and services provided to agricultural employers.

4. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

(A) COLLABORATION

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

DEW partners with several agencies across the state that also serve the MSFW population. Such organizations include the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee - Telamon Corporation, South Carolina Legal Services, South Carolina Department of Education Migrant Education Program, South Carolina Primary Health Care Association-Migrant Health Program, East Coast Migrant Head Start Program, and faith-based migrant community organizations and associations.

In addition, staff continues to foster collaborative partnerships with other governmental and community-based organizations in providing information and promoting the MSFW program at appropriate meetings and through other outreach efforts. For example, DEW conducts annual farmer meetings regionally to allow organizations that work with the MSFW population an opportunity to inform farmers of the many services and benefits available to farmworkers. Both the State Monitor Advocate and the Rural Manpower supervisor serve on the USDOL Wage & Hour Farm Labor Coordinating Task Force which provides a forum for farm workers, labor partners, and stakeholders to share information. The SMA is also a member of the South Carolina Primary Health Care Association Advisory Council. In addition, Outreach workers are encouraged to participate in local boards/meetings and become part of efforts to increase the quantity and quality of services delivered to the MSFW community. The SMA monitors and evaluates the Outreach Workers' collaborative efforts and their participation in local board/groups that are inherent stakeholders of the MSFW community.

The MSFW Program has become part of the organizing committee for the South Carolina Farm Worker Institute. This institute is a networking and learning opportunity for agencies, organizations and community leaders working with farm workers across the state.

The State Monitor Advocate has established an ongoing effort to foster shared communications and promote a statewide collaboration to enhance quantity of services delivered to the MSFW community through the sharing of useful information and timely exchange of ideas.

(B) REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT.

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organization, and other interested employer organizations were given 30 days to review and comment on the AOP. Comments were solicited from the following organizations:

– Telamon Corporation

– S.C. Primary Health Care Association/S.C. Migrant Health Program

– S.C. Farm Bureau

– S.C. Department of Agriculture

No comments were received on the Agricultural Outreach Plan.

(C) DATA ASSESSMENT.

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Statewide assessments have shown an opportunity to increase services directly provided to migrants. The state has had success in referrals to employment, referrals to supportive services, job development, referral to staff assisted services, and job placement. For the four preceding program years, the state met all of its Equity Ratio Indicators except two in PYs 2012 and 2013: Job Development Contact and Career Guidance. Similarly, the state met all of its Minimum Service Level Indicators except one in PYs 2011, 2012, and 2013: Placed in $.0.50 Above Minimum Wage.

The "$0.50 over minimum wage" indicator remained a challenging indicator to meet due to the inability to reflect "rate per piece" in the SC Works Online System (SCWOS). The SMA researched best practices for capturing the "$ 0.50 over minimum wage" indicator in electronic performance and reporting systems like SCWOS. A strategy to solve this issue was to increase collaborative efforts to provide services to MSFWs as well as improve the tracking system for services provided. DEW is establishing activities to increase the number of MSFWs registered in SCWOS, focusing our efforts on increasing the number of services delivered to MSFW. We are working with local employers and workforce development initiatives to capture current and reliable information regarding all placements of MSFW.

(D) ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

The state has gone from 6 significant offices to 5. Staff has continued to build working relationships in their region with entities to help serve migrant workers. All outreach staff are now bilingual and have more access to the farm community. The state plans to continue to look for effective ways to serve the migrant and farm communities.

(E) STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.l07, the State Monitor Advocate participated in the preparation of the agricultural plan and has been afforded the opportunity to approve and comment on the plan. Recommendations from the Annual MSFW Summary have been included in this plan.

F. WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3));   Yes

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;   Yes

3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and   Yes

4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.   Yes

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

In the 2015-2016 academic year, South Carolina implemented the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards (SCCCRS) for English language arts and mathematics. SCCCRS now serves as South Carolina's K-12 Standards.

Prior to the state's development and adoption of its own standards, the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education were already being implemented by the adult education system of South Carolina. During Fall 2014, SCDE – Office of Adult Education (OAE) and its local programs began the process and are continuing to align CCRS to South Carolina's K-12 standards through Standards in Action training.

OAE has compiled many helpful resources to share with adult education practitioners. Crosswalks have been developed to reflect correlations between the GED, TABE, TASC, CCRS, and SCCCRS. In addition, our adult education teachers and directors have developed ELA and Math units and lessons. Integrated units, which are driven by reading, writing, and math standards as well as work readiness goals, are also available. Teachers and directors have created charts that unpack the Standards along with sample exercises.

In the coming year, the OAE and its Regional Adult Education Technical Assistance Centers (RAETAC) will offer a SCCCRS Implementation Institute that consists of train-the-trainer sessions; math and ELA introduction and overview trainings; and walk-throughs and observations of Standards-based classrooms.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide the adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
    1. Provides adult education and literacty activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
    2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

South Carolina Department of Education serves as the administrative/fiscal agent for Title II Adult

Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). As administrative/fiscal agent, SCDE will solicit eligible providers to offer services to individuals who:

(a) have attained 16 years of age;

(b) are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under the S.C. Compulsory School law; and

(c) are basic skills deficient;

(d) do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or

(e) are English language learners.

All activities funded under WIOA are authorized, approved and overseen by the SCDE – OAE. South Carolina will establish programs according to the narrative in III.b.5.B.i – Multi-year grants or contracts.

By federal law, providers are prohibited from using federal funds to supplant state or local dollars. All federal funding will be used to enhance learner services, as outlined in this Plan. South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Adult Education, will conduct competitions under WIOA upon receiving guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education.

Awards to eligible providers will be made through the Request for Proposals (RFP) application process. To help ensure direct and equitable access to funds for adult literacy and basic skills activities, RFPs will be announced directly to providers and through multiple media outlets. In addition, all providers will be considered for grants based on the same scoring criteria. These criteria are aligned with the directions contained in this Plan and the thirteen considerations required by federal legislation. Applicants must provide narrative detail to demonstrate how they will meet each consideration. Future efforts will be made to assess what support eligible providers might need in order to implement this Plan and broaden the discussion of how these needs can be met.

Only programs that incorporate the 13 key statutory requirements (Section 231(e)) are considered for funding.

South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Adult Education will use the following process to distribute funds to approved applicants:

1. not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contacts under section 231 and to carry out section 225, Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carry out section 225;

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

3. shall use not more than 5 percent of the grant funds, or $85,000, whichever is greater, for administrative expenses of the eligible agency.

Local grants will be distributed based on an eligible provider's ability to meet WIOA Subpart C requirements and to administer an adult education program according to AEFLA's core purpose which is to:

(1) assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;

(2) assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that

(a) are necessary to becoming full partner in the education development of their children and

(b) lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;

(3) assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to post-secondary education and training including through career pathways;

(4) assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in

(a) improving their reading, writing, math, speaking, and comprehension skills in English and mathematics skills, and

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

All allowable costs for the federally funded Adult Basic Education program are defined in the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards subpart E (2 CFR Part 200). This will be the document of determination for reasonableness, allowability, and allocability of costs. All costs must be supported by source documentation including cancelled checks, paid bills, payrolls, time and attendance records, purchase orders and signed copies of sub-grant award documents. South Carolina purchasing and procurement laws must be followed by South Carolina school districts or other state agencies in the acquisition of all goods associated with the sub-grant.

Adult Education means academic instruction and education services below the post-secondary level that increase an individual's ability to:

a) read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;

b) transition to post-secondary education and training; and

c) obtain employment

As the eligible agency to receive AEFLA funds, SCDE-OAE will require that each eligible provider use the grant to establish or operate one or more programs that provide services or instruction in one or more of the following categories:

1. Adult education (basic and secondary)

2. Literacy

3. Workplace adult education and literacy activities, including work-based project learners

4. Family literacy activities

5. English language acquisition activities

6. Integrated English literacy and civics education

7. Workforce preparation activities

8. Integrated education and training

WIOA activities will be implemented along with incorporating employability skills. Adult education program compliance will be observed through monitoring these local programs. Technical assistance will focus on individual program needs including but not limited to the following: integrated education and training, contextualized education, workforce preparation, career pathways, family literacy, and integrated English literacy and civics education. Local adult education programs will offer the following services:

Adult Education

• Adult Basic Education Program

Adult Basic Education instruction is designed for an adult who lacks competence in reading, writing, speaking, problem solving or computation at a level necessary to function in society, on a job or in a family. Education functioning levels are as follows:

a) Beginning ABE Literacy (Grade Levels 0-1.9)

b) Beginning Basic Education (Grade Levels 2.0-3.9)

c) Low Intermediate Basic Education (Grade Levels 4.0-5.9)

d) High Intermediate Basic Education (Grade Levels 6.0-8.9)

• Adult Secondary Education

Adult Secondary instruction is designed for adults who have some literacy skills and can function in everyday life but do not have an equivalent to a secondary school diploma. The educational functioning levels are:

a) Low Adult Secondary Education (Grade Levels 9.0-10.9)

b) High Adult Secondary Education (Grade Levels 11.0-12.9)

Literacy

This is a program designed to teach an individual to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society. Adult Education Programs recognize that there are threshold levels of language and literacy proficiency. Program planning, and content development for instruction, is based on student TABE assessment data and educational functioning levels (EFL) of enrolled students. Adult learners at even the lowest levels of literacy are immersed in instructional activities that are geared to helping them reach academic goals. Literacy is addressed through the adult basic education (ABE) program and is an integral part of ESOL and Family Literacy activities.

Adult education programs also address digital literacy in an integrated fashion for both students and instructors. Teachers examine, through the adult education academies sponsored by OAE, the research of the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), and their standards for technology for both students and teachers. Adult Education programs are building a working definition of "digital literacy" for the College and Career Ready Adult Education Student in a WIOA compliant program.

Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities

Local eligible providers will offer these services for the purpose of improving the productivity of the workforce in their area through raising the basic skills level. Employers work with our programs and some sponsor classes at their worksites while others send them to regular adult education classes. This will further allow us to provide adult education activities concurrently and contextually with any workforce preparation activities and workforce training for either a specific occupation or cluster. Work-based Projecting learning is another workplace activity option. Work-based project learners are identified at intake, and the instruction is designed to teach work-based skills and will specify

educational outcomes and standards. These students are not assessed for an educational functioning level and are not included in data for the first four tables of the National Reporting System (NRS).

Family Literacy Activities

Family Literacy programs address the literacy strengths and needs of the family while promoting adults' involvement in children's education and their own education. Programs provide both parent-initiated and child-initiated activities to support development of those relationships and to increase the motivation to learn for both parent and child. Family literacy programs provide services that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family and that integrate all of the following activities:

• Interactive Literacy Activities between parents and their children (Interactive Literacy)

• Education for Parents (Parent Education) in facilitating children's learning and becoming full partners in their education

• Parent literacy training (Adult Education) that leads to economic self-sufficiency and meets adults' stated goals

• Age-appropriate education (Early Care and Education) to prepare children for success in school and life experiences

English Language Acquisition

English Language Acquisition programs assist English language learners in:

a) improving their

i. reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English and

ii. mathematics skills; and

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

An English language learner means an eligible individual who has limited ability in reading, writing, speaking, or comprehending the English language. Their native language is a language other than English and they usually live in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.

Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE)

IEL/CE instruction is a program or class which focuses on enabling English language learners to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. This shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, which may include workforce training. Projects

must offer flexible schedules and should offer necessary support services (such as child care and transportation) when possible to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to participate.

Workforce preparation activities

Workforce preparation activities include activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills. This also includes competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment. Workforce preparation activities will occur in conjunction with academic activities. Local eligible providers will offer these services for the purpose of improving the productivity of the workforce.

Integrated Education and Training

Integrated education and training is a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Special Rule- Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

SPECIAL RULE

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of Title II, subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

a. Adult education and literacy activities;
b. Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
c. Secondary school credit;
d. Integrated education and training;
e. Career pathways;
f. Concurrent enrollment;
g. Peer tutoring; and
h. Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

Section 225(a) of the Act states: "From funds made available under Section 222(a)(1) for a fiscal year, each eligible agency shall carry out corrections education or education for other institutionalized individuals." The S.C. Department of Education - OAE will reserve up to 20 percent of its federal grant received under the Act to provide programs for corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals as described in Section 225 of the Act. The correctional programs of instruction include adult basic education, adult secondary education, and workforce preparation training. Section 225(b) of WIOA further states: "The funds described in subsection (a) shall be used for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and for other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs."

Corrections programs will be established according to the narrative in III.b.5.B.i – Multi-year grants or contract. The grant application process will be used to competitively identify, assess, and award multi-year corrections education grants. The same grant announcement, application, and process will be used to award funding for all three AEFLA programs – Sections 231, 225, and 243.

Initially, AEFLA grant funds will be awarded to eligible providers for a three-year period, July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020. Annually, service providers will be required to confirm their eligibility for continued funding under Title II of WIOA. All providers will be on the same funding cycle. See III.b.5.B.i – Multi-Year Grants or Contracts for greater detail about the competitive grant process, eligible provider requirements, and grant award timeline.

Grants and contracts awarded with section 225 funds will be competed for and will comply with the requirements of WIOA Title II - Subpart C, in the following ways:

• The SCDE will hold a full competition open to eligible providers. SCDE will ensure compliance with all state and federal laws regarding the awarding of contracts and the expenditure of public funds as

well as specific requirements outlined in Title II of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act and Subpart C.

• The same grant announcement, application, and process that is being required of all eligible providers under WIOA section 231 (Grants and Contracts for Eligible Providers) and section 243 (Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education) will also be required of all eligible providers under section 225 (Corrections Education).

• All applications will be evaluated using the same scoring criteria. In addition, all proposal reviewers will receive adequate training to help ensure consistent scoring.

• Proposals will be reviewed and rated on the thirteen considerations to include demonstrated effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals as outlined in Subtitle C.

• The RFP and all announcements will be consistent and contain the same information. An announcement of the availability of federal funds, under the auspices of WIOA – Title II, will be circulated to the widest extent possible. Various sources and mediums will be used to make the public and eligible providers aware of the RFP. The grant opportunity will be posted on the SC Department of Education's website and distributed via SDE's GrantNews listserv and shared with special interest groups and stakeholders who serve institutionalized individuals and ex-offenders.

• Pre-Award/Technical Assistance sessions will be made available to all interested stakeholders and eligible providers via webinar and/or face-to-face meetings. During these sessions, there will be a review of the RFP and the awarding process. Attendees will also have a chance to ask questions specific to the RFP and adult education services. Dates, times, and locations of pre-award/technical assistance sessions will be included in the announcements and the Request for Proposals. In addition, eligible providers will have a stated timeframe to ask additional questions. Responses to all questions will be made publicly available to everyone.

Each eligible provider using funds provided under WIOA section 225: Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution will be required to give priority to programs serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program. These funds will be used to provide the following academic activities:

1. adult education and literacy activities

2. integrated education and training

3. career pathways

4. concurrent enrollment.

As a part of the RFP application, corrections education providers will be required to indicate and describe at least one of the eight academic program areas in which they intend to provide academic instruction. Applicants will also have to describe how they will deliver academic program. Allowing applicants to determine their academic program area of focus creates an avenue for innovation and allows providers to design programs as they see fit according to their students, geographical location, local workforce development plan, and local employment opportunities.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ESTABLISH AND OPERATE INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 243 OF WIOA, FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WHO ARE ADULTS, INCLUDING PROFESSIONALS WITH DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS IN THEIR NATIVE COUNTRIES.

The purpose of the IEL/CE program is to integrate civics instruction into English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom instruction. To receive IEL/CE funds, the instructional program should include contextualized English language acquisition instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation, U.S. history and government, integrated education and training and workforce preparation. This will equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to become active and informed parents, productive workers, involved community members and/or transition into a vocational or academic program.

OAE's application for Section 243 IEL/CE funds will require applicants to describe how they plan to provide English language acquisition and civics education concurrently and contextually. The proposed activities and budget will be reviewed by OAE to ensure that they meet all statutory requirements. Current IEL/CE providers, which were approved under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), will continue to receive funding through June 30, 2017, so long as they adhere to state and federal grant requirements and financial and programmatic performance expectations. During the 2016-2017 grant year, OAE will implement a new competitive grant application process to identify, assess, and award multi-year adult education grants to eligible providers according to the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.

Programs will be established according to the narrative in III.b.5.B.i – Multi-year grants or contract. Applicants must show demonstrated effectiveness and provide a program for non-English speaking students. Providers must agree to use these supplemental grant funds to incorporate civics instruction into the curriculum in combination with integrated education and training activities.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL FUND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE II, SUBTITLE C, INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION SERVICES AND HOW THE FUNDS WILL BE USED FOR THOSE SERVICES.

Initially, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE) funds made available under section 243 will be awarded to eligible providers for a three-year period, July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020. Annually, service providers will be required to confirm their eligibility for continued funding under Title II of WIOA. All providers will be on the same funding cycle. Grant funds are available to enable the eligible providers to develop, implement, and improve English Literacy and Civics Education.

IEL/CE funds are to be used to integrate civics instruction into ESL classroom instruction. Funds may be used to support activities and instructional costs related to English literacy and civics education, including instructors, materials and equipment, staff training, and support services, such as child care and transportation for program participants.

These funds must be used to supplement, not supplant the ESL program. Applicants must demonstrate that their ESL program budget of existing state and federal funds is sufficient to support the current ESL program. The SCDE-OAE will review annual budgets to ensure compliance.

No more than 5 percent of IEL/CE grant funds may be used for administrative costs.

The design and implementation of a program receiving IEL/CE funds must incorporate the following activities:

1. appropriate intake/assessment procedures (as outlined in the SC Adult Education Assessment Policy.)

2. class offerings designed for and including students at all of the federal ESL functioning levels.

3. a contextually relevant curriculum that addresses the skills necessary for learners served by this funding to function in the multiple adult roles of family member, community member, and employee. When developmentally appropriate to the students' language proficiency, activities should address instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation, U.S. history and government and workforce preparation.

4. a program design that includes a concurrent and contextual curriculum that—

(a) prepares adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and

(b) integrates with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

5. an effective program design (including sufficient intensity and duration) to facilitate the participants meeting their educational, citizenship skills, and employment goals.

The same grant and application process will be used for all eligible providers in the state. SCDE will require that all eligible providers under WIOA sections 225 (Corrections Education), 231 (Grants and Contracts for Eligible Providers), and 243 (Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education) use the same application with the same due date. All applications will be evaluated using the same scoring criteria. In addition, all proposal reviewers will receive adequate training to help ensure consistent scoring. While OAE is still finalizing the local allocation method for IEL/CE grants, in the past, priority has been given to areas where there are a significant number of English as a Second Language (ESL) individuals. The number or percentage of ESL adults is determined by using school district data of the number of K-12 English language learners. ESL youth is a strong indicator of ESL parents and individuals within a given school district and/or county.

The SC Department of Education – Office of Adult Education will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for adult education services in early January 2017. AEFLA grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to eligible providers. The SC Department of Education – Office of Adult Education will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for adult education services in early January 2017.

Potential applicants must show demonstrated effectiveness as outlined in III.b.5.B.i – Multi-year grants or contract.

All proposals will be reviewed and rated on various elements to include demonstrated effectiveness as well as the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA, Section 231(e), local workforce development board (LWDB) local plan alignment, and partnership/collaboration.

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

The SC Department of Education will hold a full and open competitive competition consistent with the standards of CFR 200.319. SCDE will ensure compliance with all state and federal laws regarding the awarding of contracts and the expenditure of public funds as well as requirements outlined in Title II of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act of 2014.

The SCDE – Office of Adult Education will also ensure direct and equitable access in its processes and procedures related to the RFP announcement/distribution, the grant application, and technical assistance.

• RFP Announcement/Distribution: An announcement of the availability of federal funds, under the auspices of WIOA – Title II, will be circulated to the widest extent possible. Various sources and mediums will be used to make the public and eligible providers aware of the RFP. SCDE's Public Information Office will send out an announcement to the public, school districts, and other stakeholders. The grant opportunity will be posted on the SC Department of Education's website and distributed via SCDE's GrantNews listserv. The announcement will also be forwarded to current adult education providers and organizations such as the SC Association of Nonprofit Organizations (SCANPO); the South Carolina Library Association (SCLA); South Carolina Technical Education Association (SCTEA); South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA); and others.

The RFP and all announcements will be consistent and contain information such as:

• Type of grants available

• RFP contact person

o Applicants will be given a designated timeframe to ask questions and to receive a response.

• RFP process timeline (see above)

• Other pertinent items

• Any information required by state law regarding the awarding of contracts and the expenditure of public funds

• The same grant and application process will also be used for all eligible providers in the state. The SC Department of Education will require that all eligible providers under WIOA sections 225 (Corrections Education), 231 (Grants and Contracts for Eligible Providers), and 243 (Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education) use the same application with the same due date.

• All applications will be evaluated using the same scoring criteria. In addition, all proposal reviewers will receive adequate training to help ensure consistent scoring.

• Pre-Award/Technical Assistance sessions will be made available to all interested stakeholders and eligible providers via webinar and/or face-to-face meetings. During these sessions, there will be a review of the RFP and the awarding process. Attendees will also have a chance to ask questions specific to the RFP and adult education services. Dates, times, and locations of pre-award/technical assistance sessions will be included in the announcements and the Request for Proposals. In addition, eligible providers will have a stated timeframe to ask additional questions. Responses to all questions will be made available to the public.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA.

The OAE will use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) to enhance the quality of programming in the adult education system. Not more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out State Leadership activities under section 223. The activities to be supported with federal leadership funds that will be expanded using State funding include:

a) organizing collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to align and coordinate services for program participants.

1. OAE has been providing career pathway development training through the existing regional training system since Fall 2015. Effective Summer 2016, OAE is working jointly with other core partners to develop frontline service training for local level partner agencies. In Summer 2016, OAE began researching high quality products which will enhance professional development services supporting local providers. Every Fall and Spring OAE conducts a statewide training institute for adult education practitioners to include ESL/ABE career pathways development, high school equivalency test preparation, data management and state data standards.

b) the establishment or operation of high quality professional development programs.

1. The OAE will establish and provide high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under Section 231 (b) including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, dissemination of information about best practices (models) related to these programs, and teaching strategies to assist volunteers. College level professional development courses adapted to WIOA requirements are provided at low or no cost to adult education practitioners.

c) the OAE providing technical assistance to local programs that will be comprised of:

1. the development and dissemination or instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous scientifically valid research.

2. the role of eligible providers as a one-stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services.

3. assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies. Examples of professional development activities are Assessment Policy Training, Assessment Policy Monitoring, and National Reporting System training.

4. statewide or regional professional development conferences that are conducted and held quarterly, semi-annually or annually.

5. virtual training.

6. graduate credit courses. Content examples: digital literacy, career pathway development, integrated education and training, fundamentals of adult education.

d) the OAE will conduct compliance monitoring based on identified risk factors, disseminate information about proven models, evidence based instruction, and best practices to eligible providers.

• Risk factors may include: program performance, changes in leadership and staff, and financial review.

• Risk factor ranking determines the level of compliance monitoring to be conducted (virtual or face-to-face).

• Face-to-face monitoring will provide the opportunity to identify proven models which may be founded on evidence-based instruction or best practices.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE.

The OAE will use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) to enhance the quality of programming in the adult education system. The permissible activities to be supported with federal leadership funds that will be expanded using State funding include:

a) regional technical assistance centers which provide training for adult education practitioners to include assessment policy, career pathway development and integrated education and training.

b) development of adult education standards to mirror state adopted standards.

c) the purchase of distance education packages for use by local education providers.

d) development of graduate level college course based on WIOA guidelines for adult education practitioners.

e) development of transition services to be provided locally.

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

Local adult education programs are accountable to the Office of Adult Education (OAE) in meeting quality standards for administration and instruction. Local program effectiveness is assessed through systematic evaluations. OAE compliance monitoring consists of a periodic analysis of performance indicators, desktop review, on-site or virtual evaluation, and a program's risk factor level. OAE evaluates local programs to determine needed technical assistance. Continuous improvement or corrective action plans may be required.

Performance Indicators

One component of local program effectiveness is the ability to meet and/or exceed performance indicator goals. The SCDE-OAE negotiates proposed target percentages for each of the core indicators of performance with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE). Each local adult education program is responsible for meeting or exceeding the negotiated performance targets set for the State. All providers of adult education and literacy services adhere to the same performance targets. Programs are strongly encouraged to analyze progress on an ongoing basis.

Quarterly Desktop Monitoring Report

Local programs are required to collect and enter student data which is used to evaluate program performance. The analysis includes a review of academic and secondary credential measures, the percentage of students post-tested, the percentage of students who made gain, and student retention. National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) data is also included. Local programs must adhere to the National Reporting System of Adult Education data quality standards. Local programs produce quarterly desktop monitoring reports that compare their outcomes to the negotiated performance targets.

Local Program Review

Under the mandate of the S.C. State Plan for Adult Education and Family Literacy, the OAE assigns a Local Program Review (LPR) Team to all school district programs and community based organizations receiving federal funds and/or state aid to support approved adult education and literacy activities. All programs with a new Adult Education Director are required to go through the LPR process during their first year. All other programs are on a four-year rotating cycle.

The LPR process is a systemic approach designed to assess the educational opportunities and the effectiveness of the adult education programs and services by the providers. During a Local Program Review, team members review the quality indicators and documentation requirements for the following focus areas:

I. Administration

II. Professional Development

To be successful, the Local Program Review requires continuous follow-up and support activities including professional development and on-site assistance.

The on-site review process involves careful, systematic research and examination of the activities, practices, and systems. In order to form sound recommendations in each of these areas, the LPR Team should be provided with documentation that serves as evidence. The basis for the on-site review process is founded on three methods of obtaining evidence:

• review of documentation

• conducting interviews

• observations

Upon completion of the Local Program Review, findings are shared with the Superintendent, Board Chair, and Program Director, who is responsible for correcting any issues. The local program is required to respond to a formal written report, if there are any required actions.

Risk Factors

OAE currently uses multiple factors to determine the risk level of each program. Risk factor categories include staff turnover, financial, family literacy, performance, and ESL. Programs are determined to be High, Medium or Low Risk dependent on the cumulative point value of the identified factors. Program technical assistance and monitoring are based on an individual program's level of risk.

Intensive Technical Assistance Programs (ITAP)

The Intensive Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) plan is designed to assist identified programs with their program performance.

OAE identifies programs for intensive technical assistance based on the following three criteria:

1. Adult Basic Education (ABE) program performance is less than 55% aggregate average.

2. English as a Second Language (ESL) program performance is less than 55% aggregate average.

3. Overall program attendance – 50% or more of students had less than 30 hours of attendance.

Technical assistance may be provided in statewide, regional, or individual on-site sessions. Sessions are tailored to focus on specific strategies for improving program performance.

Professional Development

In addition to program performance reviews and technical assistance, SCDE-OAE provides a variety of professional development opportunities through the four Regional Adult Education & Technical Assistance Centers (RAETAC). Annually, a spring and fall conference is also hosted and used as a platform to inform adult education staff of priorities and changes and to educate them on new practices and tools. Professional development topics include college and career readiness standards, career pathways, assessment policy, digital literacy, WIOA, essential components of reading instruction, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, and much more.

During the summer, graduate level courses are offered as an additional learning opportunity for adult education practitioners (paid and volunteer). OAE and the RAETACs will be adding newly developed online course options and modules. Adult education practitioners will be encouraged to utilize existing professional development resources such as the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) and WorkforceGPS.

Trainings and webinars serve as avenues to disseminate and implement proven models and promising and best practices. Information is also shared via email and listservs. Adult education practitioners also have the opportunity to learn about promising practices and models through conference calls, webinars, and conferences/trainings hosted by national agencies and organizations. In addition, a stronger emphasis will be placed on ensuring that materials and training will incorporate research-based components.

Participants are surveyed after all workshops, conference presentations, and training webinars to evaluate the activity/event. Survey results are used for continuous improvement purposes and to identify what additional training may be needed. The survey results will also be used to improve professional development offerings. OAE and the RAETACs will also be implementing other methods to assess the impact of professional development on student performance.

The design, development, and delivery of professional development to improve the quality of instruction, administration, and services will continue to be a top priority in order to improve adult education effectiveness and student outcomes. Training will continue for local adult education and literacy providers using the many resources available locally, state-wide, and nationally.

CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan.   Yes

2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program.   Yes

3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan.   Yes

4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law.   Yes

5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan.   Yes

6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan.   Yes

7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan.   Yes

8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program.   Yes

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization   **South Carolina Department of Education**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Molly M. Spearman**

Title of Authorized Representative: **State Superintendent of Education**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to OCTAE_MAT@ed.gov

ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions).   Yes

2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA.   Yes

3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA.   Yes

4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities;   Yes

5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and   Yes

6. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.   Yes

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (GENERAL)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

_____

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

SCVRD is an independent commission.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

SCVRD is an independent commission.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

SCVRD is an independent commission.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

SCVRD has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

SCVRD has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

3. ALL STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

SCVRD has not requested a waiver of statewideness.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the servivces and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

In carrying out its mission to prepare and assist eligible individuals to achieve and maintain competitive employment, the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) actively seeks referrals and comparable services and benefits. In doing so, the department has established formal and informal partnerships with other providers of facilities and services. For the purpose of referral, service collaboration, facility allocation, and staff designation, cooperative agreements have been established with the following agencies in South Carolina: Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Corrections, the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). Detailed agreements between SCVRD and the SCDE describe the coordination of school–to–work transition services and also Adult Education services. With regard to the S.C. Independent Living Council, the department acts in an advisory and technical support capacity. The SCVRD portion of the Unified State Plan assures that an interagency agreement or similar document for interagency coordination between any appropriate public entities becomes operative. The department has entered into collaborative arrangements with institutions of higher education as well. This is to ensure the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, described in Title I of WIOA, is included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual. This includes the provision of vocational rehabilitation services during pending disputes as described in the interagency agreement or similar document. SCVRD will seek to assure the participation of individuals with physical and mental impairments in training and employment opportunities, as appropriate. With the exception of services specified in paragraph (E) and in paragraphs (1) through (4) and (14) of section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) enacted on July 22, 2014, information shall specify policies and procedures for public entities to identify and determine interagency coordination responsibilities of each public entity in order to promote coordination and timely delivery of vocational rehabilitation services.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

SCVRD works closely with the S.C. Assistive Technology Program (SCATP) through ongoing communication, cross–participation in staff trainings, and participation in the annual AT Expo. Staff with the SCATP also participates in TASC, the Transition Alliance of South Carolina, and the annual Youth Leadership Forum.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

SCVRD will provide input to the US Department of Agriculture–Office of Rural Development as it endeavors to support the development activities that empower and build capacity of local communities.

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

In addition, SCVRD partners with multiple agencies and entities serving out–of–school youth to include DJJ (job readiness training and teen centers), Centers for Independent Living, Center for Disability Resources, Developmental Disabilities Council, PRO–Parents of S.C., and Family Connection of S.C.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

No State Use Contracting Program is in place in South Carolina.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. DSU'S PLANS

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

SCVRD considers service provision to high school students with disabilities a significant priority and collaborates with local and state education agencies to serve them. SCVRD serves students with disabilities who have various pre–employment transition needs in their efforts to prepare for, find and maintain competitive employment. From students who pursue high school diplomas and occupational credentials to those who will receive certificates of attendance, SCVRD provides individualized services that will help students successfully enter competitive, integrated employment.

The State Board of Education statute, 43–243, requires the mandatory participation of representatives of state agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities in the state's Advisory Council on the Education of Students with Disabilities. The Advisory Council's purpose is to provide recommendations and input on special education and related services for students with disabilities to the Office of Special Education Services.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

SCVRD and the SCDE are signatories and partners in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). This agreement expresses a basic commitment on behalf of both agencies to provide comprehensive vocational and educational services to individuals with disabilities. The agreement details each entity's roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, in identifying and serving students with disabilities. Items covered in the agreement include: student identification and exchange of information, procedures for outreach to students with disabilities who need transition services, methods for dispute resolution, consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for school–to–work transition activities, and the requirements for regular monitoring of the agreement. Timing of student referrals is individualized based on need but should generally occur no later than the second semester of the year prior to the student's exit from school.

Using the SCVRD–SCDE MOA as a model, SCVRD has developed agreements with all local education agencies in the state. These MOAs clarify roles and responsibilities at the local level. There is an SCVRD counselor assigned to each of the high schools in the state whose purpose is to be a resource for career development, participate in school–based meetings as appropriate, and to seek referrals of students who can benefit from SCVRD services. SCVRD also maintains an agreement with the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

Provision of pre–employment transition services is a cornerstone of the agreements with local education agencies/school districts in terms of SCVRD's role. SCVRD provides a robust set of student and youth services to enhance the transition from school to work or post–secondary training opportunities. As indicated in WIOA, SCVRD transition counselors provide pre–employment transition services for students prior to their exit from high school, and SCVRD staff continue to provide services to support placement into competitive employment, or completion of post–secondary training and/or credential–based programs. The number of successful employment outcomes for transition–aged youth has grown by 48 percent from SFY 2013 to SFY 2015.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

SCVRD utilizes the "Guideposts for Success" (based on the work of the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth – NCWD/Y) as a framework for school–to–work transition services. This includes regular activities that focus on each of the required pre–employment transition service activities: job exploration counseling, work–based learning, counseling on opportunities for comprehensive transition or post–secondary educational programs, workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living skills, and instruction in self–advocacy. Group activities provide opportunities to not only facilitate peer mentoring, but also allow transition staff to observe and cultivate students' leadership skills, as well as communication and social skills. Mentoring is a key component of the High School High Tech (HS/HT) program, and SCVRD collaborates with organizations that have youth–led mentoring programs in place. Through the agency's VR Partners program, former clients that have successfully transitioned into employment or post–secondary activities are available to assist with mentoring and participation in transition activities such as Disability Mentoring Day, and summer transition institutes.

SCVRD maintains a priority on providing work–based learning experiences for students. Following a 5–year transition demonstration grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and in keeping with evidence–based practices that support work experience to be one of the most influential factors in successful post–secondary employment outcomes, transition staff actively pursue job tryout, job shadowing, internship and apprenticeship opportunities for students. This impacts not only the ultimate outcome of competitive, integrated employment but has shown to be an integral support for school completion and drop–out prevention.

In collaboration with the S.C. Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) and the SCDE, SCVRD's school–based transition counselors work together with local education agencies, community partners, and business partners to advise students with disabilities, and their families, regarding available career pathways and educational/training opportunities.

SCVRD maintains a Transition Services Coordinator position and additional regional Transition Specialist positions whose duties include: • Coordinate all transition–related activities and projects including those that involve other agencies, community organizations and local SCVRD field offices; • Develop, monitor and update all transition documents and cooperative agreements; • Provide technical assistance, professional development and training on transition–related issues to field

office staff, education personnel, community organizations, families, and students; • Review and update client service policy to ensure policies and procedures are reflective of SCVRD mission and focus on quality in serving youth in transition; • Serve on the planning committee for the interagency South Carolina Youth Leadership Forum, a summer youth development and leadership program • Participate in TASC, an interagency initiative to create systems change and support development of local interagency transition teams. SCVRD continues to facilitate the development of innovative transition services to improve the successful outcomes of transition–aged youth. In this effort, SCVRD has integrated evidence–based practices for successful transition into the service delivery system. SCVRD also offers several additional programs to enhance transition services: • HS/HT – an initiative of the Office of Disability Employment Policy, US Department of Labor whose mission is to reduce the dropout rate of youth with disabilities, increase their enrollment in post–secondary education and training, and improve their participation in employment–related activities. HS/HT expanded to an additional location this year, bringing the total HS/HT program locations to 12 across the state. • Transition Services Specialist (TSS) – a cooperative funding initiative that enhances the general transition services offered to a school by engaging a school employee designated as the Transition Services Specialist. The TSS coordinates with the assigned SCVRD counselor, to provide career assessments, occupational exploration, and participation in meaningful work experience for students with disabilities. The intent of this program is to support higher rates of successful secondary school completion, enrollment in post–secondary training, and subsequent entry and maintenance of competitive employment. • Transition Services Counselor (TSC) – a cooperative funding initiative in which a designated SCVRD counselor provides the transition activities and work–based experiences. These efforts have resulted in an increase in transition referrals in the areas in which the programs are operating and have increased our collaborative efforts with the local school districts. The Youth Employment Services (YES) programs that operated through an RSA demonstration grant and were completed in December 2012 have been incorporated into either a TSC cooperative agreement or are receiving ongoing transition services through the efforts of the local transition staff assigned to the schools in those locations. • Project SEARCH – this nationally recognized program is a one–year high school transition internship program providing training and education leading to employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. SCVRD is partnering with two Project SEARCH programs in South Carolina, serving on the steering committee as well as providing job coaching services. • Post–Secondary Programs for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities – SCVRD collaborates with the five post–secondary programs in South Carolina for young adults with intellectual disabilities: • Carolina LIFE, • Clemson LIFE, • Coastal Carolina LIFE, • [College of Charleston] REACH, and • Winthrop Think College. Each program has an SCVRD counselor liaison who provides services for eligible students. SCVRD counselors monitor progress and assist with transition planning as the student approaches program completion. These efforts support continuity and coordination of services with the SCVRD office located in the student's home town. These programs provide students with critical competitive employment and independent living skills. SCVRD counselors work closely with staff and students to explore careers, determine a suitable vocational goal, and assist with job placement. • Transition Coaches – SCVRD has successfully implemented a demonstration project to provide transition coach positions for local area offices. The transition coach works with transition counselors to identify students with the most significant disabilities (as defined in WIOA) who need job coaching, work experiences and job placement assistance to ensure a successful competitive, integrated employment outcome. The transition coach provides these services to students in their final year of high school. • SCVRD continues to explore and develop new initiatives that promote successful post–school outcomes for students with disabilities. These outcomes include competitive, integrated employment, independent living, community participation and post–secondary education.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

Using the SCVRD–SCDE MOA as a model, SCVRD has developed agreements with all local education agencies in the state. These MOAs clarify roles and responsibilities at the local level. There is an SCVRD counselor assigned to each of the high schools in the state whose purpose is to be a resource for career development, participate in school–based meetings as appropriate, and to seek referrals of students who can benefit from SCVRD services. SCVRD also maintains an agreement with the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The designated state unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under Section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA, and the independent living centers described in Part C of Chapter I of Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities. In addition, TASC is an interagency group whose mission is to increase successful student post–secondary transition outcomes through active, interagency collaboration. With 16 partner agencies currently, TASC works to support transition services through training, professional development and technical assistance provided to local interagency teams that provide direct transition services, both at the pre–employment stage and following post–secondary activities. SCVRD has partnered with a non–profit organization, Project HOPE foundation, to provide workplace readiness training for individuals with autism. This program utilizes individualized plans for Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy conducted in a vocational preparation setting. Development of social skills and independent living skills as well as job coaching and placement into competitive employment are expected outcomes of this partnership. SCVRD has cooperative agreements and works collaboratively with other non–profit organizations such as the Spinal Cord Injury Association, Traumatic Brain Injury Association, Family Connection of S.C., College Transition Connection and multiple other community organizations.

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

SCVRD's supported employment goals and plans regarding the Title VI program are based on an analysis of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment and the department's performance on the common performance measures as well as agency key performance indicators. The priorities are as follows: • Strengthening service delivery afforded to individuals whose disabilities and vocational needs are so significant that SCVRD's 110 traditional program services would not be sufficient to meet their employment needs; • Providing services to people with the most significant disabilities, especially SSI and/or SSDI recipients, in order to successfully achieve and maintain competitive employment in integrated work settings. • Providing supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities. In SFY 2015, SCVRD used designated funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services for the following goals and priorities: • Job coaches serving the Aiken, Orangeburg, Laurens, and Lexington areas. • SCVRD further expanded its partnership with DDSN in an ongoing demonstration project designed as an intensive placement and support program in the Lexington, Greenwood, and Conway areas. DDSN makes referrals to a specified VR counselor and job coach who are designated to exclusively serve these clients. This demonstration project incorporates many of the IPS evidence–based practices in providing services to individuals with most significant disabilities including those with intellectual disabilities. The key practices focus on individualized, client–centered services to assist persons with cognitive impairments and emphasize rapid job placement as appropriate into competitive, integrated jobs. Follow up supports are provided in integrated work settings. In SFY 2015, the Lexington site achieved a 67% rehabilitation rate. Activities with funds reserved for services for youth with the most significant disabilities (section 603(d)) included the following: • Transition job coaches serving youth with most significant disabilities in the Sumter, Greenville, Richland and Rock Hill areas. Transition job coaches provide work–based learning experiences, job preparedness instruction, job development and placement with follow along supports. • Project SEARCH is a national model based on intensive internship experience and job coaching. It pairs students in their final year of school with a host business/employer site that includes a series of internships to build job skills as well as to explore career opportunities. This program model is business–led, with partner support provided through the school district, VR, Development Disabilities agencies and other community partners. It focuses on serving young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as other students that may not otherwise have access to the immersion–based approach of this program. Interns in Project SEARCH train in real work settings, which allow the program staff to teach competitive, marketable, and transferable skills. The outcome goal of the program is competitive, integrated employment. The first site in South Carolina was established in Spartanburg during SFY 2014. This has now expanded to a second site in the Midlands/Lexington area with additional sites under consideration. In this program, students participate in a series of internships at a host business site, receive intensive instruction and job coaching, and are placed into competitive employment, often at the host business site and often prior to completion of their final year of high school. For the Spartanburg location, following their first year program participants achieved an 86% success rate (participants achieving competitive, integrated employment). • SCVRD leverages other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services. Extended services providers are identified in each area to provide follow along

and extended services following successful exit from the VR program. Partnerships at the state and local level with DDSN and the local DSN boards continue to grow and provide key linkages to extended services providers. Strategies that contributed to the achievement of overall goals and specific objectives included: • Review and measurement of key performance indicators on a quarterly basis. • Monthly monitoring and specialized reporting on the results of outreach efforts to underserved and emerging disability populations. • Monthly monitoring and specialized reporting on services to youth and pre–employment transition services. • Dedicated staff for specific populations and specialized services: school–to–work transition; deaf and hard of hearing; supported employment. • Demonstration programs to enhance supported employment services and services for youth with the most significant disabilities, individuals diagnosed with ASD, and demand–driven training based on community labor market information.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

SCVRD utilizes multiple methods of working with employers to identify competitive, integrated employment and career exploration opportunities to facilitate the provision of VR services for adults and transition services, including pre–employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities. On a statewide and local basis, the Business Partnership Network, or BPN, provides an opportunity for regular engagement with business partners to gain input on hiring needs, training curricula, and opportunities for outreach with business and industry. Business Advisory Councils (BACs) are established to provide input on specific programs, such as the I.T. Training Centers, in Columbia and at the Bryant Center in Lyman. Members of the BAC assist in evaluating courses of study and curricula to ensure SCVRD stays current with what is needed in the workplace for I.T. professionals. Also, SCVRD utilizes Business Development Specialists (BDSs) across the state whose role is to identify opportunities for training, work–based learning, job development and placement, and emerging career pathways. BDS staff participate on local business services teams, along with partners from SC Works and local workforce development boards, to provide a coordinated approach to business development activities. BDS staff also work with transition counselors and coaches to identify opportunities for work–based learning experiences, internships, apprenticeships, and on–the–job training for students in conjunction with the pre–employment transition services that are provided in high school settings.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

SCVRD utilizes multiple methods of working with employers to identify competitive, integrated employment and career exploration opportunities to facilitate the provision of VR services for adults and transition services, including pre–employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities. On a statewide and local basis, the Business Partnership Network, or BPN, provides an opportunity for regular engagement with business partners to gain input on hiring needs, training curricula, and opportunities for outreach with business and industry. Business Advisory Councils (BACs) are established to provide input on specific programs, such as the I.T. Training Centers, in Columbia and at the Bryant Center in Lyman. Members of the BAC assist in evaluating courses of study and curricula to ensure SCVRD stays current with what is needed in the workplace for I.T. professionals. Also, SCVRD utilizes Business Development Specialists (BDSs) across the state whose role is to identify opportunities for training, work–based learning, job development and placement, and emerging career pathways. BDS staff participate on local business services teams, along with partners from SC Works and local workforce development boards, to provide a coordinated approach to business development activities. BDS staff also work with transition counselors and coaches to identify opportunities for work–based learning experiences, internships, apprenticeships, and on–the–job training for students in conjunction with the pre–employment transition services that are provided in high school settings.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

SCVRD is establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DHHS, the agency responsible for administering the state Medicaid plan. This MOU outlines roles, responsibilities, and collaborative efforts of both agencies. The purpose and objectives of this MOU include strengthening the partnership between the two agencies, with the ultimate outcome of developing opportunities for competitive, integrated employment for Medicaid beneficiaries who have disabilities.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

SCVRD has an MOU with DDSN. Staff works collaboratively with local Disabilities and Special Needs (DSN) boards and providers in serving individuals in need of supported employment services and long–term follow along supports to maintain competitive, integrated employment. DDSN has representatives on TASC to assist in school–to–work transition efforts as well as ensuring youth with the most significant disabilities have access to the supports needed to gain and maintain competitive employment. Through these efforts, clients/consumers are served in a complementary fashion based on the expertise and distinct roles of each agency.

In addition, SCVRD works closely with the Developmental Disabilities Council, an Executive Program designated to the Department of Administration. Collaborative efforts include partnering on many projects and grant–funded initiatives, as well as being signatories to an MOU for the Transition Alliance of South Carolina.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

SCVRD works collaboratively with DMH. Several cooperative agreements are in place across the state for IPS (Individualized Placement and Support) caseloads to provide rapid placement and job coaching for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. Transition counselors working within the schools to provide pre–employment transition services coordinate with school–based mental health counselors to identify students in need of services, whether that is VR or mental health services. Through this "no wrong door" approach, students in need of services are connected to the appropriate resources in a timely manner.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

Staffing patterns are set through a joint effort of SCVRD commissioner, director of human resources, executive staff, and local supervisors. Employee turnover data are reviewed in an effort to determine trends and to identify staffing concerns. In addition, succession planning for critical need positions is being managed via the department's Professional Development and Leadership Program (PDLP). Below is a chart which provides details, by personnel category, on the number of personnel needed and currently employed in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services at SCVRD.

Counselors (includes transition counselors): 242 total positions; 17 current vacancies; 125 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

Area client services managers: 26 total positions; 4 current vacancies; 13 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

Vocational evaluators and job preparedness instructors: 49 total positions; 7 current vacancies; 25 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

Job readiness trainers: 81 total positions; 6 current vacancies; 42 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

Area supervisors: 23 total positions; 2 current vacancies; 12 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

Training center managers: 26 total positions; 1 current vacancy; 13 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

Employment/job coaches: 41 total positions; 4 current vacancies; 21 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

Administrative and team support specialists: 78 total positions; 6 current vacancies; 40 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

Addictions counselors: 8 total positions; no current vacancies; 4 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

Transition coaches: 11 total positions; 2 current vacancies; 6 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

SCVRD utilizes a caseload management system that allows for monitoring and planning for service delivery capacity based on referral sources and the projected number of individuals expected to receive services.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

Counselors (includes transition counselors): 242 total positions; 17 current vacancies; 125 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Area client services managers: 26 total positions; 4 current vacancies; 13 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Vocational evaluators and job preparedness instructors: 49 total positions; 7 current vacancies; 25 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Job readiness trainers: 81 total positions; 6 current vacancies; 42 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Area supervisors: 23 total positions; 2 current vacancies; 12 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Training center managers: 26 total positions; 1 current vacancy; 13 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Employment/job coaches: 41 total positions; 4 current vacancies; 21 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Administrative and team support specialists: 78 total positions; 6 current vacancies; 40 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Addictions counselors: 8 total positions; no current vacancies; 4 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Transition coaches: 11 total positions; 2 current vacancies; 6 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Counselors (includes transition counselors): 242 total positions; 17 current vacancies; 125 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Area client services managers: 26 total positions; 4 current vacancies; 13 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Vocational evaluators and job preparedness instructors: 49 total positions; 7 current vacancies; 25 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Job readiness trainers: 81 total positions; 6 current vacancies; 42 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Area supervisors: 23 total positions; 2 current vacancies; 12 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Training center managers: 26 total positions; 1 current vacancy; 13 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Employment/job coaches: 41 total positions; 4 current vacancies; 21 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Administrative and team support specialists: 78 total positions; 6 current vacancies; 40 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Addictions counselors: 8 total positions; no current vacancies; 4 projected vacancies over the next 5 years. Transition coaches: 11 total positions; 2 current vacancies; 6 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

SCVRD maintains close relationships with the University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University, both of which produce graduates who have Master of Rehabilitation Counseling degrees. SCVRD has opted to use a state Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) standard and can recruit not only from candidates with a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, but also with a Master's degree in related fields. These strategies satisfy staffing needs.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

The following chart shows statistics for the in–state university vocational rehabilitation counseling degree programs. All graduates are eligible for Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification and the South Carolina Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) designation. As of this date, 5 have obtained their CRC certification. Data are collected annually by program directors at each university and shared with executive staff to assist in current and future staffing.

South Carolina State University Rehabilitation Counseling Program: Students Enrolled 55 ; Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA 2; Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA 7; Graduates from the previous year 12.

University of South Carolina Rehabilitation Counseling Program: Students Enrolled 60; Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 2; Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 8; Graduates from previous year: 16.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of theose institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

The following chart shows statistics for the in–state university vocational rehabilitation counseling degree programs. All graduates are eligible for Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification and the South Carolina Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) designation. As of this date, 5 have obtained their CRC certification. Data are collected annually by program directors at each university and shared with executive staff to assist in current and future staffing.

South Carolina State University Rehabilitation Counseling Program: Students Enrolled 55 ; Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA 2; Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA 7; Graduates from the previous year 12.

University of South Carolina Rehabilitation Counseling Program: Students Enrolled 60; Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 2; Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 8; Graduates from previous year: 16.

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Progress toward meeting the required CSPD standard began in January 2001. The department has a working relationship with the University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University (a historically black university), both of which offer all of the courses required by the Council On Rehabilitation Education (CORE). A recruitment plan is in place to recruit graduates from all schools in South Carolina as well as out–of–state schools which have counseling and rehabilitation counseling degree programs. When this is not possible due to high demand, the department will continue to hire counselors with closely related Master's degrees. In accordance with South Carolina state law, each transcript is assessed and the counselor is placed in a plan that allows up to 30 months to complete the current state educational requirements. The University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University prepare individuals for graduate degrees in rehabilitation counseling. SCVRD conducts outreach programs to these universities and other universities to include: publications and distribution of targeted recruiting material, attendance at career days and job fairs, and recruitment events. In addition, practicum placements and internships are offered to students who are in CSPD qualifying programs. These efforts are designed to recruit qualified personnel, including minority graduates and those with disabilities. SCVRD Human Resources and Human Resources Development offices coordinate recruitment efforts with active support from local supervisors. Employees of the department are assigned to work with school officials to assist in curriculum development for the graduate school programs. The Human Resources Development (HRD) director is an active member of the Rehabilitation Counseling Degree Advisory Boards for the University of South Carolina, South Carolina State University and East Carolina University. SCVRD has been especially successful in recruiting personnel from the S.C. universities, particularly those from minority backgrounds. Students from these programs and out–of–state programs are encouraged to accept student internships and practicum placements with the department. The HRD staff coordinates the placement of non–paid practicum and internships, and the human resources department coordinates placements for students who qualify for paid internships. In addition, regular classes and tours are conducted in department facilities, and staff is available to present in university programs. A substantial New Employee Orientation program is vital to the recruitment and retention of SCVRD staff. All new staff members are required to complete New Employee Orientation Parts I, II, and III. New Employee Orientation is intensive and comprehensive. The orientation program incorporates training in the following topics: * A history of vocational rehabilitation * Philosophical overview * SCVRD agency mission, policies, procedures, and benefits * An overview of training requirements and an intro to online training * Campus tour * Ethics in the workplace * Client Relations and CAP (Client Assistance Program) * Disability awareness and disability etiquette * Customer service * True Colors (personality assessment for team building) * Medical and psychosocial aspects of specific disabilities * Safety in the workplace * Nonviolent crisis intervention *Security: Personally Identifiable Information (PII) * Panic alarm system * Human Resources Development * Public information * Time management * Job specific training *SCVRD Grievance Procedures for Handling Client Discrimination Complaints New employees are assigned mentors, participate in job shadowing, and receive performance coaching from their supervisors. New counselors and selected direct service delivery staff are required to take the following training sessions: * Motivational Interviewing * Medical terminology (for those who did not have this as a

graduate course) * Client Services training *Counseling Skills training * Rehabilitation technology online trainings In addition to the New Employee Orientation program and to retain qualified staff, SCVRD uses a system for staff evaluation that is a modification of a system that is available to all state employees. The system focuses on the individual employee's job duties compared to stated goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are identified and discussed with the employee at the beginning of the rating period. Ongoing communication between the employee and supervisor clarifies the employee's understanding of how to meet the performance standards and enhances service delivery to the client. At the conclusion of the rating period, an evaluation is performed to rate the employee on each duty in relation to performance objectives. The system provides for employee input into the development of the goals and objectives in order to support successful performance. Another feature of the system allows objectives to be amended throughout the review period. This system also provides a mechanism for helping a substandard performer improve and a means of removing an employee from a position should performance not improve to an acceptable level. It is as follows: A covered employee is entitled to adequate notice of substandard performance and the opportunity to improve the substandard performance before receiving a "below performance requirements" rating and being removed from the position. If during the performance period an employee is considered "below performance requirements" in any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance, the employee may be provided with a written "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance." The warning notice shall provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 days and no more than 120 days. The warning notice may be issued at any time during the review period. An employee who receives more than two warning notices within a 365–day period shall be removed from the position. A warning notice is not required on the third occurrence. The department has developed career path matrices for staff to encourage retention of qualified staff and promotion to higher level positions. These career paths are keyed to requirements in the areas of education, experience, productivity, quality, and training. The matrices include elements related to the department's Program Integrity model which emphasizes a balance among customer service, compliance assurance, and productivity. Counselors are required to meet the state's CSPD standard within the required time frame in order to maintain status as a counselor and to advance to a higher level. A counselor who does not achieve the state CSPD standard within the required timeframes will be removed from his/her position. The career path matrices are published on SCVRD intranet site. The department takes an active role in employee/employer relations. Through strong leadership and the assistance of all staff, the department provides a healthy and safe work environment. Employee behavior and performance problems are dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner, with an emphasis on assisting the employee to improve. The department promotes internal and external customer service and has made teamwork an integral part of day–to–day operations. The department's Celebration of Success program (a reward and recognition system) allows employees to recognize coworkers for customer service, productivity, program excellence, as well as individual accomplishments.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

Section 101(a)(7)(B) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.18 indicates that the state VR agency is to establish and maintain standards to ensure that all professional personnel are prepared and trained and that the standards are consistent with national or state approved requirements. Given this option of selecting federal or state standards in order to achieve stability regarding standards and to develop a diverse staff, SCVRD has opted to use state standards to manage its CSPD which are consistent with the initial guidelines. In 2006, the South Carolina General Assembly passed a bill which established a state standard for the minimum educational and training requirements for counselors of the public vocational rehabilitation agency. This bill was signed by the governor on March 15, 2006. Under this state law, the department can continue its practice of hiring individuals with rehabilitation–related Master's degrees while mandating that they complete Master's level rehabilitation courses commensurate with their degree. The law reads as follows: A State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor must meet the following standards: a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, a master's degree in the field of counseling with a graduate course in theories and techniques of counseling, or a Master's degree in any discipline. In addition to the Master's degree, the individual shall be required to document at least 18 credit hours of coursework at the Master's level or above, within thirty months of date of hire, in the core areas that follow: one graduate course with a primary focus on the theories and techniques of counseling and three graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas: occupational information, job development and placement, medical aspects of disabilities, foundations of rehabilitation, psychological aspects of disabilities, and personal and vocational adjustment; and two graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas: assessment, research methodology, vocational and career development, community resources, case management, and delivery of rehabilitation services, or a current Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification, regardless of degree. As stated in detail in the previous section of this document, qualified candidates are recruited from universities who meet the minimum requirements of the state's CSPD standard. Paid internships and practicum opportunities are also offered to qualified candidates. Each candidate's transcript is reviewed and evaluated. New hires who do not meet the standard are immediately placed in a program to meet the standard within the 30 month time frame. Of the 242 general counselors and 8 addictions counselors who are currently employed by SCVRD, 227 meet the state's CSPD standard for a rehabilitation counselor. Twenty–three (23) counselors have Master's degrees in a related field and are currently under a plan to complete requirements. Funding support for the implementation of a retraining plan to assist VR counselors to meet the state educational requirement of CSPD has traditionally been provided by the department's In–Service Training Grant. Due to discontinuation of the RSA in–service training grant this cost has been absorbed into the agency's overall budget effective 10/1/2015. Other funding options may be provided by RSA grants, if available. Evaluation of the plan to ensure that VR counselors meet the CSPD requirements is conducted through an analysis of transcripts and the department's electronic training records.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

As part of the agency's initiative to expand skills–based, demand driven training, staff are currently trained on accessing and utilizing labor market information for their local communities. In coordination with local BDSs, staff identifies in–demand industries and occupations and develops localized training or connects with the technical college system and other institutions of higher education to provide clients access to training commensurate with the evolving labor force. In addition, SCVRD is a partner in a statewide Talent Pipeline/Sector Strategies project aimed at closing skills gaps and meeting the workforce needs of the current and emerging labor market through collaborative development of career pathways and identification of training and certifications required by employers to meet their hiring needs. Paraprofessional staff must meet minimum hiring requirements according to position descriptions.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

SCVRD conducts needs assessments in order to plan for a balanced HRD program for all staff. The assessments take into account skill development, as well as long–range career opportunities directed toward developing and strengthening the role of qualified rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals. Needs assessments are conducted and evaluated by supervisors and HRD. The information is collected from multiple sources and formulated into a comprehensive HRD program. Institutions of higher education and appropriate professional associations are used to facilitate the recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel. In addition to these efforts, the department provides, when appropriate and subject to the availability of funds, tuition assistance to employees who are taking work–related courses. The systematic needs assessment conducted by HRD includes input from multiple sources. Public hearings, findings of internally conducted program reviews, and responses to staff and customer surveys are several approaches that are utilized. In addition, identified skills deficits from individual staff performance reviews, individual requests from staff for specific skills development, focus groups, and meetings with management and service delivery staff are used to identify and prioritize training needs. The department has developed a retention and succession plan that includes its Professional Development and Leadership Program (PDLP). The plan provides career development opportunities for staff via career paths, and targeted training opportunities. The Human Resources Development and Training Plan includes training provided by various technical assistance centers and other training professionals, management/supervision courses offered by the South Carolina Office of Human Resources and in–house training. In May of 2015, 63 participants graduated from the two–year PDLP program. Each

year, the agency offers entry into Level I, Professional Development, and Level II, Leadership. The PDLP program continues to be cited as an innovative program by training and technical assistance organizations and other agencies. A separate Supervision and Management track continues that focuses on meeting the training needs of new and existing supervisors. During this year supervisors received training on various leadership topics to include communication, conflict management, coaching, managing priorities and projects, managing emotions under pressure, supervisory practices, and teambuilding. SCVRD has an extensive HRD department that facilitates training for all employees, with programmatic training being provided by internal and external subject matter experts. The department provides/sponsors trainings that focus on medical, psychosocial, and vocational aspects of specific disabilities, and feature the application of assistive technology as appropriate. Recent topics include: disability etiquette, brain injury, alcohol/drug addictions, multiple sclerosis, mental illness, autism, deafness and hearing impairments, epilepsy, learning disabilities, musculoskeletal, spinal cord injury, diabetes as well as other disability–specific trainings. Workshops on transition from school to work, HS/HT, supported employment, vocational assessment, serving ex–offenders, serving the Hispanic/Latino population, leadership development, and maintaining a culture of quality were also provided. Counseling skills training is provided on an ongoing basis with a focus on motivational interviewing techniques. A series of statewide trainings focusing on providing specific counseling skills and the application of those skills within the VR setting to counselors and other staff who provide direct services to clients also began in 2013 and will continue for all designated new staff. All direct client service delivery staff receive training on job placement and developing employer relationships. In addition, trainings focusing on living with spinal cord injury, coaching for engagement, and vocational assessment in school–to–work transition were provided. In addition to the focus on technology in specific trainings, SCVRD has two in–house rehabilitation technology centers. Rehabilitation technology engineers provide training and support to staff, businesses and clients as well as tours and presentations for the community. Rehabilitation technology engineers offer onsite services as well as services from the two regional locations. The agency also has a series of 8 online training modules that focus on the identification of the need for rehabilitation technology services and application of those services. Role–specific training is provided for all direct service delivery staff. Customer service, true colors training, ethics, disability awareness/etiquette, safety training, nonviolent intervention, panic alarm training, and a course on securing personally identifiable information are requirements for all employees. Progress continues in building an online library of disability–specific modules which are available upon demand. These modules are interactive and competency based. As always, the impact of these training efforts on staff performance will be assessed and the recommendations considered for the improvement of future training programs. As prior training plans included training on the 1998 Rehabilitation Act, the current training plan will include objectives that focus on WIOA, informed choice, disability–specific trainings and transition. SCVRD staff participate in relevant disability related conferences. These conferences offer current information on disabilities and initiatives in vocational rehabilitation.

B. ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

Numerous local trainings take place and extensive research is conducted when planning these sessions in order to provide the most up–to–date information that will assist staff in providing quality services to clients. When conducting disability–related trainings, SCVRD uses physicians, individuals that experience the specific disabilities and other experts who are current with the latest research in their field. For designated staff, the department sponsors attendance at graduate courses that provide information on cutting–edge initiatives in the field. Executive staff are actively

involved with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation and the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Association. Staff also subscribe to numerous professional and research journals.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

SCVRD has current personnel recruitment and training policies that are reflective of the findings of the US Census Bureau, including the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS). This estimates that 27.8% of South Carolina's population identified themselves as African American (a 4.5% growth rate since the 2010 Census). 5.3% of South Carolina's population identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic, per the 2014 ACS, and the department sponsors Spanish classes for staff to facilitate communication with this minority group. Hiring incentives are also utilized for staff who are bilingual in English and Spanish, which has resulted in an increased number of staff who are bilingual. The remaining minority populations are distributed among Native Americans, Asian or dual race. In addition, the department continues to place emphasis on services for individuals who are deaf to ensure that a counselor in each area can communicate effectively. The department takes advantage of web–based trainings. In addition, weekly American Sign Language (ASL) classes are provided for Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf (RCD). The department has a certified interpreter on staff that provides video remote and on–site interpretation, as well as a Coordinator for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. In addition, qualified interpreters are used if accessing a certified interpreter would delay service provision.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

TASC is a robust state–level interagency collaborative that works in support of increasing positive post–secondary outcomes for students with disabilities. It has multiple stakeholder agencies and organizations, and supports local level interagency teams through training, technical assistance, and strategic planning. The department continues to coordinate the development of designated staff with emerging initiatives by the SCDE and the 81 local school districts (LEAs) under IDEA and state school–to–work transition efforts. Transition training efforts this year included the following: a two–day transition summer series was conducted for transition staff that included presentations and training on vocational assessment, use of ACT and Work Keys assessments, referral development, best practices, documentation and use of school records, work experiences, using O*Net, and post–secondary training. Selected transition staff participated in a session on active training techniques and self–determination. Over 40 transition staff participated in an annual interagency transition conference, focused on local interagency planning and content sessions focused on effective service delivery for students with disabilities. Youth leaders also participated in the conference. Disability–specific modules on learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorders are available for all staff via LOTIS, the agency's online training site. In addition to the disability–specific training modules, a module on transition basics, with a focus on evidence–based practices and quality service delivery, has been developed and is delivered in person to all SCVRD transition

personnel. This has become the standard training for all new staff working with transition students. The agency continues to work collaboratively with the SCDE to provide training as a component of their State Personnel Development Grant – Project Gateway. In addition, selected transition staff will participate in training on transition assessment and facilitating work experiences offered through the SCDE's annual research to practice training. The TSS/TSC collaborative approach to the provision of transition services was continued this year in six schools. This approach designates a transition services specialist – who is a school district employee – or a designated VR counselor, to act as a liaison to refer students to the department and assist these students in participating in transition activities and work–based experiences in the community. This outreach effort has improved access to VR services for students with disabilities in the areas in which the program is operating and has increased our collaborative efforts with the local school district. The department continues to designate a liaison counselor who provides pre–employment transition services to each public secondary school throughout the state. During this past year state office and local staff have provided in–service training to school staff, parents, and students regarding service availability. Also, cooperative agreements with DJJ and the Will Lou Gray Opportunity School afford the ability to work collaboratively to serve at–risk youth prior to their exit from high school.

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

SCVRD designs new initiatives, enhances existing programs and refines policies and procedures based on many factors, including continuous program assessment and evaluation, by analyzing statistical trends and utilizing input from constituency groups. In keeping with SCVRD's strategic plan and, as specified by the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, this feedback loop begins with the statewide needs assessment. A variety of source information is used including information from the United States Census Bureau's ACS, RSA, Cornell University Employment and Disability Institute (EDI, 2013), Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS), US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Social Security Administration (SSA). SCVRD conducts quarterly internal and external customer satisfaction surveys and uses this information to strengthen service delivery. SCVRD participated in the fall 2015 South Carolina State Survey, conducted by the University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research. This is a cost–shared random probability survey of citizens age eighteen and older living in South Carolina. Specific questions were designed to measure experience and familiarity with SCVRD services. Results of this survey reveal that 13.7% of respondents indicated that they or someone they know has been served by SCVRD. This response varied significantly by race and income levels. 33.7% of respondents reported that they were aware of the services provided by SCVRD. Of the respondents that indicated they were aware of SCVRD services, the most common response was that the purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation program is to help people with injury, illness, or disability to enter or re–enter the workforce. These findings reinforce the need to continuously evaluate outreach efforts in the community. However, it should be noted that the consistency of message regarding the purpose of the program among individuals familiar with it appears to be high. South Carolina's unemployment rate has changed from 5.6% in 2014 to 6.6% for the first half of 2015 (Bureau of Labor and Statistics states 5.6% for 2014; National Conference for State Legislators shows average of 6.6% for first half of 2015). These rates accentuate the difficult realities of employment for persons with disabilities. As of 2014, a total of 373,000 individuals aged 16–64 reported having a disability (Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, both 2014 and 2013). Of those included in this group per the 2013 data, 64 percent are white, 27 percent are African American, 1 percent as Asian, 6 percent are Hispanic and the remainder are two or more races (Kaiser Family Foundation (2015) Population Distribution by Race & Ethnicity. Retrieved 25 Nov 2015 from http://kff.org/other/state–indicator/distribution–by–raceethnicity/). In comparison, those served through SCVRD reflected the following: 48% white and 48% African American, .5% Native American, .4% Asian and 2.2% Hispanic.

Given the emphasis on services for students and youth in WIOA, the following information highlights the number of youth with disabilities in transition.

Prevalence of Disability Among Non-Institutionalized People Ages 16 to 20 in South Carolina in 2013 (source: Cornell University):

Any disability: 20,800 (6.3%); visual: 2,900 (0.9%); hearing: 2,300 (0.7%); ambulatory: 2,300 (0.7%); cognitive: 14,900 (4.5%); self-care: 2,000 (0.6%); independent living: 8,200 (2.5%).

The following reflects the range of disabilities among working age people.

Prevalence of Disability Among Non-Institutionalized People Ages 21 to 64 in South Carolina in 2013 (source: Cornell University):

Any disability: 352,200 (13%); visual: 68,700 (2.5%); hearing: 67,100 (2.5%); ambulatory: 190,800 (7%); cognitive: 138,200 (5.1%); self-care: 64,100 (2.4%); independent living: 118,900 (4.4%).

Types of Disability Experienced by Students Served Under IDEA:

As indicated above, data on the types of disabilities for youth that are currently receiving services under IDEA and that can be expected to transition into post–secondary activities in the coming years are important to supporting pre–employment transition services as well as supports to assist with success in training, education and employment after high school.

SC Ages 6 to 21 Served Under IDEA (source: Annual Disability Statistics Compendium):

All disabilities: 88,904 (2012) ; 89,202 (2013)

Specific learning disability: 41,491 (2012); 41,100 (2013)

Speech or Language Impairment: 14,799 (2012); 14,555 (2013)

Intellectual disability: 7,192 (2012); 6,847 (2013)

Emotional disturbance: 2,946 (2012); 2,754 (2013)

Multiple disability: 830 (2012); 954 (2013)

Hearing impairment: 1,046 (2012); 1,011 (2013)

Orthopedic impairment: 571 (2012); 532 (2013)

Other Health Impairment: 11,081 (2012); 11,635 (2013)

Visual impairment: 414 (2012); 421 (2013)

Autism: 4,481 (2012); 5,082 (2013)

Deaf Blindness: 5 (2012); 8 (2013)

Traumatic Brain Injury: 188 (2012); 179 (2013)

Development Delay: 3,860 (2012); 4,124 (2013)

The following is data on labor force participation rates by disability type.

Employment of Non-Institutionalized working-Age People (Age 21 to 64) by Disability Status in South Carolina in 2013 (source: Cornell University:

Any disability: 111,100 (31.5%)

Visual: 24,900 (36.3%)

Hearing: 31,400 (46.8%)

Ambulatory: 42,800 (22.4%)

Cognitive: 30,200 (21.9%)

Self-Care: 9,800 (15.3%)

Independent living: 16,800 (14.2%)

SSI/SSDI Recipients:

According to the Social Security Administration 259,261 South Carolinians received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) in 2010. By 2013, the number of recipients had grown to 352,200 (Cornell EDI, 2013). This represents a 26% increase in just three years. The 352,200 South Carolinians who received SSI/SSDI in 2013 represented 11.6% of South Carolinians over the age of 18. In addition, updated information on SSI/SSDI beneficiaries in South Carolina indicates that there are 218,588 Title II disability beneficiaries and 109,569 Title XVI disability recipients as of FFY 2014. This reflects a substantial talent pool of individuals with barriers to employment. These individuals may not be reflected in the totals for unemployed as many of these individuals may not be actively seeking work, or have never worked (SSA).

The provision of early intervention services is a major issue given the long application process associated with making eligibility determinations for both the SSI and SSDI programs. There will be a need for increased supported employment services to improve the employment outcomes of many SSI/SSDI recipients. As a total count, the number of SSI/SSDI recipients, who applied for services, increased to 2,256 by 2013. The trend reflects an increase of 7.3% from the previous three years.

Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

During SFY 2015, SCVRD served 591 persons with a hearing disability. South Carolina has an incidence of hearing impairments of 4.6% of the population aged 18–64. The South Carolina Association of the Deaf (SCAD) has identified numerous resources for SCVRD counselor use since collaboration began in May of 2012. SCVRD has continued outreach and increased services to individuals that are deaf or hard of hearing.

Emerging Disabilities:

The increased need for services for individuals from identified emerging disabilities was identified in this needs assessment.

Based on the latest data available from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, the prevalence of ASD continued to increase with one out of 88 children in South Carolina being diagnosed with autism. Based on census data, this rate of autism prevalence suggests that 7,000 to 7,500 transition–aged children (ages 16 to 25) in South Carolina experience autism.

Persons who are diagnosed with ASD often benefit from a stable and predictable work environment which can be accomplished with strong supported employment services.

Additionally, transition–aged youth with the most significant intellectual and multiple disabilities continue to need specific services from SCVRD. Persons with multiple disabilities face several challenges to employment including overall poorer health, less access to adequate health care and inactivity. Of the total individuals with disabilities age 24 or under actively receiving services during SFY 2015, 3239 had a second disability. Providing vocational rehabilitation services to transition–aged youth with the most significant or multiple disabilities, including supported employment services, will improve their chance of productive, meaningful employment and will improve poverty and health outcomes (CDC, 2015).

Another area of identified need is response to the increase of traumatic brain injuries (TBI) through outreach and a focus on serving more individuals with brain injuries. This includes the general population as well as veterans from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The number of TBIs in the general population has increased slowly over the last decade according to the CDC; however, deaths from TBI have decreased. This decrease means an increase in the number of persons who might be returning to work and requiring vocational rehabilitation services.

The prevalence of traumatic brain injuries in the veteran population created a shift in the mission of the Defense and Veteran Brain Injury Center (DVBIC). DVBIC's efforts are focused on prevention, evaluation, and treatment. In South Carolina, SCVRD has been an active member of the Veterans Policy Academy since the summer of 2008 and continues to partner with the other agencies/entities to address the service needs of veterans with disabilities to ensure their return to the workforce.

According to the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Statistical Center (2015), approximately 160 new cases of SCI will occur in South Carolina each year. Most of these will be males with an average age of 42 years old. Many of these injuries will be from falls or vehicle accidents. SCVRD is actively pursuing strategies to increase outreach to this group through collaboration with the Spinal Cord Injury Association of South Carolina and other interested groups(National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center (2015).

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

According to 2014 US Census Bureau estimates, South Carolina remains a state with a large minority population. The 2014 estimates reveal that among South Carolina residents, 63.9% are white, 27.8% are African American and 5.2% are Latino or Hispanic. Individuals who are Native American (Catawba Tribe), Asian or dual race comprise the remainder of South Carolina's population. South Carolinians have a 14.2% rate of disability, and Hispanics have the lowest rate at 5.4%. A review of the RSA Minority Service Rate data shows that SCVRD exceeds the performance level for service to minorities. The ratio for minorities to non–minorities was .952 in 2014 and .967 through December 2015. These ratios indicate that minority populations are well represented among the individuals who use SCVRD services.

African American Population: In the 2014 estimates from the US Census Bureau, 27.8% of South Carolina's population identified themselves as African American. This number represents a 4.5% growth rate since the 2010 US Census. Of the 1.3 million African Americans living in South Carolina, 15.3% of persons aged 18 – 64 have a disability. This is a higher percentage than in the population at large where 14.2% of persons have a disability (ACS, 2014).

Native American Population: According to the 2014 ACS, 14,697 South Carolinians identified themselves as being "American Indian and Alaska Native." This number represents 15.7% growth since the 2010 US Census, but still less than 1% of the state's total population. This population (American Indian and Alaska Native) has the highest incidence of disability among demographic groups in South Carolina with 24.4% identified with one disability. This is high even when compared with the higher national average of 16.7% of Native Americans age 18 to 64 with disabilities. In SFY 2014, 2015, and the first half of 2016, 1% of SCVRD applicants identified themselves as Native Americans. Since The American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AVIRS) grant is not awarded in South Carolina, awareness of public VR services may be low for Native Americans in the state. Efforts to increase the number of Native Americans who seek and participate in SCVRD services will continue through outreach in communities where significant numbers of Native Americans live.

Latino/Hispanic Population: Individuals who identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic comprised 2.21% of SCVRD clients. An increase in the number of individuals with disabilities in Latino communities seeking vocational rehabilitation services is anticipated. This represents an opportunity to continue strategies to ensure this population is well served.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Older Adults: There are 640,000 persons aged 65 years and older, which account for 15.8% of South Carolina's population. This is slightly higher than the 14.5% of the population in the US as a whole. A study by the US Census Bureau (2014) estimated that approximately 40% of persons in this age group have at least one disability. In SFY 2015, SCVRD provided services to 365 persons aged 65 to 90 (

Veterans: According to the ACS (2013) and BLS (2014), there are 391,660 veterans in South Carolina. The ACS estimates that 30.5% of Gulf War veterans have a service connected disability. As of 2014, the ACS estimated that 77.9% of these veterans were employed. The percentage of veterans with disabilities is consistent with the general population; however, the percentage of employed veterans is much higher. In 2013, the national employment rate for all veterans was 83%. SCVRD provides services to veterans with disabilities; and, efforts to increase outreach to this population are ongoing. SCVRD has established relationships with local employers in all areas of the state, and collaboration with the Veterans Administration is essential to providing the greatest outreach for veterans with disabilities. Transition–Aged Youth: In South Carolina, the graduation rate for school year 2012 – 2013 was 74% (NCES, 2015; Diplomas Count, 2015). Whites have the highest graduation rate at 80%, with African Americans at 70%, Hispanic/Latino 69% and Native Americans 67%. For transition–aged students with disabilities, the graduation rate was 39% (Ibid, 2015). South Carolina ranks 50th of 57 states and territories in the graduation rates of students with disabilities, according to a report prepared by the National Center for Special Education Accountability and Monitoring (2009). During SFY 2015, SCVRD received 4451 transition–aged referrals (age 14 to 24). During the year, 8988 transition–aged youth were active clients with many of them still in high school or college. 1966 transition–aged youth had successful employment outcomes during SFY 2015, which continues the upward trend that has occurred since SFY 2013

(48% increase). The majority of transition–aged youth with disabilities served are minorities. Demographically, 42% were white, 55% were African American, .5% Native American, .5% Asian and .5% Pacific Islander. The remainder were two races or identified as Hispanic/Latino only. Since only 39% of students with disabilities graduated high school with a standard diploma, and another 33% completed high school with a certificate of completion, it is essential that SCVRD continues to aggressively seek innovative methods to build strong partnerships with education providers and other community stakeholders. The provision of pre–employment transition services and services to youth with most significant disabilities (as defined in WIOA) is a significant area of focus for the agency. Rural Population: SCVRD has long established the maximum distance a client should have to travel to obtain SCVRD services is 50 miles. The department has expanded services to create full area offices in an additional 4 counties since the last needs assessment. This provides ample coverage statewide to all individuals with disabilities who wish to apply for services. However, according a publication of the South Carolina Office of Research and Statistics, "Urban and Rural Population in South Carolina," 39.5% of the population lives in rural areas, which ranks South Carolina 13th in the nation for the highest percentage of population living in rural areas. The rural nature of the state lends itself to minimal transit services. Seven out of the 46 counties do not have any type of public transportation. The lack of transportation creates an additional barrier for individuals to participate in vocational rehabilitation services and enter the work force. Therefore, SCVRD continues to develop partnerships and methods to ameliorate this barrier. Disability Types: SCVRD analyzed service provision to clients by disability categories to assess whether SCVRD successfully served all groups and to establish disability categories which call for more emphasis. The analysis compared three years (2009–2011) of SCVRD and national VR data which focused upon employment outcomes by disabilities (2011 is the last year RSA published agency report cards. The most recent comparative data available from RSA is from FFY 2013.) Consistent with previous findings, SCVRD increased outreach to those persons with physical and mental impairments. The data indicate that SCVRD employment outcome rates for persons with physical and mental impairments exceeded the national average while rates for persons with communicative and cognitive impairments show an opportunity for improvement. For this reason, SCVRD will continue to pursue improved outreach and service provision for these individuals with communicative and cognitive impairments. In addition, SCVRD has identified populations that, in particular, require a strategic focus for enhancing services. These groups include individuals with diabetes, spinal cord injury, brain injury, multiple sclerosis, and cerebral palsy.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

SCVRD actively participates in the Workforce Development system throughout the state. The Statewide Workforce Development Board, the SC Works system, and numerous cooperative arrangements with other state entities and programs enhance vocational rehabilitation efforts and improve employment outcomes throughout the state. With implementation of WIOA, the existing partnerships with core programs continue to be strengthened through unified planning, collaborative initiatives to meet both client/consumer/job seeker's needs as well as the needs of business and industry. DEW is the central point of contact responsible for workforce development and coordinates the State Workforce Development Board. The board oversees the state's efforts to develop a skilled, highly qualified work force to assist citizens to succeed in today's global economy. The board includes representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Corrections, Department of Social Services, Department of Commerce, legislators of the South Carolina Senate and House of Representatives, local elected officials, WIOA core program partners and representatives of community–based organizations. It acts as a forum for collaboration, ensuring that vocational rehabilitation requirements are articulated as part of the statewide plan.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

Transition–Aged Youth: In South Carolina, the graduation rate for school year 2012 – 2013 was 74% (NCES, 2015; Diplomas Count, 2015). Whites have the highest graduation rate at 80%, with African Americans at 70%, Hispanic/Latino 69% and Native Americans 67%. For transition–aged students with disabilities, the graduation rate was 39% (Ibid, 2015). South Carolina ranks 50th of 57 states and territories in the graduation rates of students with disabilities, according to a report prepared by the National Center for Special Education Accountability and Monitoring (2009). During SFY 2015, SCVRD received 4451 transition–aged referrals (age 14 to 24). During the year, 8988 transition–aged youth were active clients with many of them still in high school or college. 1966 transition–aged youth had successful employment outcomes during SFY 2015, which continues the upward trend that has occurred since SFY 2013 (48% increase). The majority of transition–aged youth with disabilities served are minorities. Demographically, 42% were white, 55% were African American, .5% Native American, .5% Asian and .5% Pacific Islander. The remainder were two races or identified as Hispanic/Latino only. Since only 39% of students with disabilities graduated high school with a standard diploma, and another 33% completed high school with a certificate of completion, it is essential that SCVRD continues to aggressively seek innovative methods to build strong partnerships with education providers and other community stakeholders. The provision of pre–employment transition services and services to youth with most significant disabilities (as defined in WIOA) is a significant area of focus for the agency.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

SCVRD designs new initiatives, enhances existing programs and refines policies and procedures based on many factors, including continuous program assessment and evaluation, by analyzing statistical trends and utilizing input from constituency groups. In keeping with SCVRD's strategic plan and, as specified by the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, this feedback loop begins with the statewide needs assessment. A variety of source information is used including information from the United States Census Bureau's ACS, RSA, Cornell University Employment and Disability Institute (EDI, 2013), Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS), US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Social Security Administration (SSA). SCVRD conducts quarterly internal and external customer satisfaction surveys and uses this information to strengthen service delivery. SCVRD participated in the fall 2015 South Carolina State Survey, conducted by the University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research. This is a cost–shared random probability survey of citizens age eighteen and older living in South Carolina. Specific questions were designed to measure experience and familiarity with SCVRD services. Results of this survey reveal that 13.7% of respondents indicated that they or someone they know has been served by SCVRD. This response varied significantly by race and income levels. 33.7% of respondents reported that they were aware of the services provided by SCVRD. Of the respondents that indicated they were aware of SCVRD services, the most common response was that the purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation program is to help people with injury, illness, or disability to enter or re–enter the workforce. These findings reinforce the need to continuously evaluate outreach efforts in the community. However, it should be noted that the consistency of message regarding the purpose of the program among individuals familiar with it appears to be high. South Carolina's unemployment rate has changed from 5.6% in 2014 to 6.6% for the first half of 2015 (Bureau of Labor and Statistics states 5.6% for 2014; National Conference for State Legislators shows average of 6.6% for first half of 2015). These rates accentuate the difficult realities of employment for persons with disabilities. As of 2014, a total of

373,000 individuals aged 16–64 reported having a disability (Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, both 2014 and 2013). Of those included in this group per the 2013 data, 64 percent are white, 27 percent are African American, 1 percent as Asian, 6 percent are Hispanic and the remainder are two or more races (Kaiser Family Foundation (2015) Population Distribution by Race & Ethnicity. Retrieved 25 Nov 2015 from http://kff.org/other/state–indicator/distribution–by–raceethnicity/). In comparison, those served through SCVRD reflected the following: 48% white and 48% African American, .5% Native American, .4% Asian and 2.2% Hispanic.

Given the emphasis on services for students and youth in WIOA, the following information highlights the number of youth with disabilities in transition.

Prevalence of Disability Among Non-Institutionalized People Ages 16 to 20 in South Carolina in 2013 (source: Cornell University):

Any disability: 20,800 (6.3%); visual: 2,900 (0.9%); hearing: 2,300 (0.7%); ambulatory: 2,300 (0.7%); cognitive: 14,900 (4.5%); self-care: 2,000 (0.6%); independent living: 8,200 (2.5%).

The following reflects the range of disabilities among working age people.

Prevalence of Disability Among Non-Institutionalized People Ages 21 to 64 in South Carolina in 2013 (source: Cornell University):

Any disability: 352,200 (13%); visual: 68,700 (2.5%); hearing: 67,100 (2.5%); ambulatory: 190,800 (7%); cognitive: 138,200 (5.1%); self-care: 64,100 (2.4%); independent living: 118,900 (4.4%).

Types of Disability Experienced by Students Served Under IDEA:

As indicated above, data on the types of disabilities for youth that are currently receiving services under IDEA and that can be expected to transition into post–secondary activities in the coming years are important to supporting pre–employment transition services as well as supports to assist with success in training, education and employment after high school.

SC Ages 6 to 21 Served Under IDEA (source: Annual Disability Statistics Compendium):

All disabilities: 88,904 (2012) ; 89,202 (2013)

Specific learning disability: 41,491 (2012); 41,100 (2013)

Speech or Language Impairment: 14,799 (2012); 14,555 (2013)

Intellectual disability: 7,192 (2012); 6,847 (2013)

Emotional disturbance: 2,946 (2012); 2,754 (2013)

Multiple disability: 830 (2012); 954 (2013)

Hearing impairment: 1,046 (2012); 1,011 (2013)

Orthopedic impairment: 571 (2012); 532 (2013)

Other Health Impairment: 11,081 (2012); 11,635 (2013)

Visual impairment: 414 (2012); 421 (2013)

Autism: 4,481 (2012); 5,082 (2013)

Deaf Blindness: 5 (2012); 8 (2013)

Traumatic Brain Injury: 188 (2012); 179 (2013)

Development Delay: 3,860 (2012); 4,124 (2013)

The following is data on labor force participation rates by disability type.

Employment of Non-Institutionalized working-Age People (Age 21 to 64) by Disability Status in South Carolina in 2013 (source: Cornell University:

Any disability: 111,100 (31.5%)

Visual: 24,900 (36.3%)

Hearing: 31,400 (46.8%)

Ambulatory: 42,800 (22.4%)

Cognitive: 30,200 (21.9%)

Self-Care: 9,800 (15.3%)

Independent living: 16,800 (14.2%)

SSI/SSDI Recipients:

According to the Social Security Administration 259,261 South Carolinians received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) in 2010. By 2013, the number of recipients had grown to 352,200 (Cornell EDI, 2013). This represents a 26% increase in just three years. The 352,200 South Carolinians who received SSI/SSDI in 2013 represented 11.6% of South Carolinians over the age of 18. In addition, updated information on SSI/SSDI beneficiaries in South Carolina indicates that there are 218,588 Title II disability beneficiaries and 109,569 Title XVI disability recipients as of FFY 2014. This reflects a substantial talent pool of individuals with barriers to employment. These individuals may not be reflected in the totals for unemployed as many of these individuals may not be actively seeking work, or have never worked (SSA).

The provision of early intervention services is a major issue given the long application process associated with making eligibility determinations for both the SSI and SSDI programs. There will be a need for increased supported employment services to improve the employment outcomes of many SSI/SSDI recipients. As a total count, the number of SSI/SSDI recipients, who applied for services, increased to 2,256 by 2013. The trend reflects an increase of 7.3% from the previous three years.

Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing:

During SFY 2015, SCVRD served 591 persons with a hearing disability. South Carolina has an incidence of hearing impairments of 4.6% of the population aged 18–64. The South Carolina Association of the Deaf (SCAD) has identified numerous resources for SCVRD counselor use since collaboration began in May of 2012. SCVRD has continued outreach and increased services to individuals that are deaf or hard of hearing.

Emerging Disabilities:

The increased need for services for individuals from identified emerging disabilities was identified in this needs assessment.

Based on the latest data available from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, the prevalence of ASD continued to increase with one out of 88 children in South Carolina being diagnosed with autism. Based on census data, this rate of autism prevalence suggests that 7,000 to 7,500 transition–aged children (ages 16 to 25) in South Carolina experience autism.

Persons who are diagnosed with ASD often benefit from a stable and predictable work environment which can be accomplished with strong supported employment services.

Additionally, transition–aged youth with the most significant intellectual and multiple disabilities continue to need specific services from SCVRD. Persons with multiple disabilities face several challenges to employment including overall poorer health, less access to adequate health care and inactivity. Of the total individuals with disabilities age 24 or under actively receiving services during SFY 2015, 3239 had a second disability. Providing vocational rehabilitation services to transition–aged youth with the most significant or multiple disabilities, including supported employment services, will improve their chance of productive, meaningful employment and will improve poverty and health outcomes (CDC, 2015).

Another area of identified need is response to the increase of traumatic brain injuries (TBI) through outreach and a focus on serving more individuals with brain injuries. This includes the general population as well as veterans from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The number of TBIs in the general population has increased slowly over the last decade according to the CDC; however, deaths from TBI have decreased. This decrease means an increase in the number of persons who might be returning to work and requiring vocational rehabilitation services.

The prevalence of traumatic brain injuries in the veteran population created a shift in the mission of the Defense and Veteran Brain Injury Center (DVBIC). DVBIC's efforts are focused on prevention, evaluation, and treatment. In South Carolina, SCVRD has been an active member of the Veterans Policy Academy since the summer of 2008 and continues to partner with the other agencies/entities to address the service needs of veterans with disabilities to ensure their return to the workforce.

According to the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Statistical Center (2015), approximately 160 new cases of SCI will occur in South Carolina each year. Most of these will be males with an average age of 42 years old. Many of these injuries will be from falls or vehicle accidents. SCVRD is actively pursuing strategies to increase outreach to this group through collaboration with the Spinal Cord Injury Association of South Carolina and other interested groups(National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center (2015).

3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT .

SCVRD designs new initiatives, enhances existing programs and refines policies and procedures based on many factors, including continuous program assessment and evaluation, by analyzing statistical trends and utilizing input from constituency groups. In keeping with SCVRD's strategic plan and, as specified by the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, this feedback loop begins with the statewide needs assessment. A variety of source information is used including information from the United States Census Bureau's ACS, RSA, Cornell University Employment and Disability Institute (EDI, 2013), Bureau of Labor and Statistics (BLS), US Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Social Security Administration (SSA). SCVRD conducts quarterly internal and external customer satisfaction surveys and uses this information to strengthen service delivery. SCVRD participated in the fall 2015 South Carolina State Survey, conducted by the University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research. This is a cost–shared random probability survey of citizens age eighteen and older living in South Carolina. Specific questions were designed to measure experience and familiarity with SCVRD services. Results of this survey reveal that 13.7% of respondents indicated that they or someone they know has been served by SCVRD. This response varied significantly by race and income levels. 33.7% of respondents reported that they were aware of the services provided by SCVRD. Of the respondents that indicated they were aware of SCVRD services, the most common response was that the purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation program is to help people with injury, illness, or disability to enter or re–enter the workforce. These findings reinforce the need to continuously evaluate outreach efforts in the community. However, it should be noted that the consistency of message regarding the purpose of the program among individuals familiar with it appears to be high. South Carolina's unemployment rate has changed from 5.6% in 2014 to 6.6% for the first half of 2015 (Bureau of Labor and Statistics states 5.6% for 2014; National Conference for State Legislators shows average of 6.6% for first half of 2015). These rates accentuate the difficult realities of employment for persons with disabilities. As of 2014, a total of 373,000 individuals aged 16–64 reported having a disability (Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, both 2014 and 2013). Of those included in this group per the 2013 data, 64 percent are white, 27 percent are African American, 1 percent as Asian, 6 percent are Hispanic and the remainder are two or more races (Kaiser Family Foundation (2015) Population Distribution by Race & Ethnicity. Retrieved 25 Nov 2015 from http://kff.org/other/state–indicator/distribution–by–raceethnicity/). In comparison, those served through SCVRD reflected the following: 48% white and 48% African American, .5% Native American, .4% Asian and 2.2% Hispanic.

Given the emphasis on services for students and youth in WIOA, the following information highlights the number of youth with disabilities in transition.

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SCVRD and the SCDE are signatories and partners in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). This agreement expresses a basic commitment on behalf of both agencies to provide comprehensive vocational and educational services to individuals with disabilities. The agreement details each

entity's roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, in identifying and serving students with disabilities. Items covered in the agreement include: student identification and exchange of information, procedures for outreach to students with disabilities who need transition services, methods for dispute resolution, consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for school–to–work transition activities, and the requirements for regular monitoring of the agreement. Timing of student referrals is individualized based on need but should generally occur no later than the second semester of the year prior to the student's exit from school.

Using the SCVRD–SCDE MOA as a model, SCVRD has developed agreements with all local education agencies in the state. These MOAs clarify roles and responsibilities at the local level. There is an SCVRD counselor assigned to each of the high schools in the state whose purpose is to be a resource for career development, participate in school–based meetings as appropriate, and to seek referrals of students who can benefit from SCVRD services. SCVRD also maintains an agreement with the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind.

Types of Disability Experienced by Students Served Under IDEA:

As indicated above, data on the types of disabilities for youth that are currently receiving services under IDEA and that can be expected to transition into post–secondary activities in the coming years are important to supporting pre–employment transition services as well as supports to assist with success in training, education and employment after high school.

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Persons who are diagnosed with ASD often benefit from a stable and predictable work environment which can be accomplished with strong supported employment services.

Additionally, transition–aged youth with the most significant intellectual and multiple disabilities continue to need specific services from SCVRD. Persons with multiple disabilities face several challenges to employment including overall poorer health, less access to adequate health care and inactivity. Of the total individuals with disabilities age 24 or under actively receiving services during SFY 2015, 3239 had a second disability. Providing vocational rehabilitation services to transition–aged youth with the most significant or multiple disabilities, including supported employment services, will improve their chance of productive, meaningful employment and will improve poverty and health outcomes (CDC, 2015).

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

Number of individuals in the state eligible for SCVRD services = 30,666 Source: RSA 113 and internal count of supported employment services

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

Title I, Part B (RSA 113 A15+C1+C2 round to nearest 1000) = 30,000 (SCVRD)

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

Title VI, Part B = 250 (SCVRD)

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

SCVRD is not under an order of selection.

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

SCVRD is not under an order of selection.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

$30,315,209 (SCVRD)

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The SCVRD Strategic Planning Template below outlines the goals, strategies and objectives developed for the agency. These goals were established based on the findings of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, and are updated annually in conjunction with the agency's strategic planning efforts as well as state–specific reporting requirements. Each goal is tied to a defined strategy and set of objectives, designed to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic and timely. These are long–term planning goals, strategies and objectives that include, at minimum, annual assessment of results as well as adjustment and revision based on needs of the state and further implementation of WIOA.

SCVRD is an independent commission.

Strategic planning chart:

Goal 1

Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized individualized services.

Strategy 1.1

Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities.

Objective 1.1.1

Support continuous improvement within Program Integrity: Productivity, Compliance Assurance, and Customer Service.

Objective 1.1.2

Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations.

Objective 1.1.3

Identify opportunities for matching client strengths and abilities with community employment needs.

Objective 1.1.4

Demonstrate effectiveness in national comparative data for performance measures.

Strategy 1.2

Enhance school-to-work transition services.

Objective 1.2.1

Maximize relationships with education officials in all S.C. school districts.

Objective 1.2.2

Improve services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Objective 1.2.3

Enhance services for at-risk youth with disabilities.

Objective 1.2.4

Expose students with disabilities to careers in science, technology, engineering and math through High School/High Tech programs.

Strategy 1.3

Enhance job driven vocational training programs.

Objective 1.3.1

Develop job-readiness skills through work training center activities, demand-driven skills training, and on-the-job supports.

Objective 1.3.2

Equip clients for job search through resume development, interviewing skills, other "soft" skills, and disability-related classes.

Goal 2

We will be a team of highly qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability and opportunity to excel.

Strategy 2.1

Provide training to equip staff to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services.

Objective 2.1.1

Develop training based on needs assessment in accordance with the State Plan.

Objective 2.1.2

Enhance job-specific training for specialized areas of agency operations.

Strategy 2.2

Foster opportunities for professional growth and the enhancement of future leadership.

Objective 2.2.1

Provide a professional development and leadership program.

Objective 2.2.2

Maintain a working environment that fosters measurable increases in job satisfaction and rewards accomplishment.

Objective 2.2.3

Structure a work environment that promotes employee accountability for performance and ethical standards.

Goal 3

Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.

Strategy 3.1

Successful outcomes for clients and claimants using resources efficiently.

Objective 3.1.1

High return on investment for clients through successful employment outcomes.

Objective 3.1.2

Demonstrate cost effectiveness that compares favorably with national/regional peers.

Strategy 3.2

Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes.

Objective 3.2.1

Conversion to electronic case management system encompassing time management and compliance aids with statewide access.

Objective 3.2.2

Expansion and enhancement of quality assurance and program evaluation.

Objective 3.2.3

Evaluation and development of fiscal and programmatic joint processes.

Strategy 3.3

Ensure safety and adequacy of infrastructure.

Objective 3.3.1

I.T. and systems security.

Objective 3.3.2

Promote a safe environment for staff and clients, resulting in minimal rates of injury.

Goal 4

Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders.

Strategy 4.1

Increase collaboration with other state agencies and community organizations.

Objective 4.1.1

Inform stakeholders of services and get their feedback on VR performance in meeting needs.

Objective 4.1.2

Provide employment preparations and supports for people with disabilities referred by partner agencies and organizations.

Objective 4.1.3

Build relationships that encourage complementary interagency collaboration.

Strategy 4.2

Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for clients.

Objective 4.2.1

Build and maintain VR Business Partnership Network and collaborate with business and industry associations.

Objective 4.2.2

Actively use business advisory councils for guidance on employment standards and training curricula.

Objective 4.2.3

Advanced solutions for job matching through Career Connect and Universal Business Database.

Objective 4.2.4

Provide outsource opportunities that meet clients' job readiness training needs and local labor market and industry needs.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

Strategic Planning Template

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Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized individualized services.

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Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations.

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Structure a work environment that promotes employee accountability for performance and ethical standards.

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Conversion to electronic case management system encompassing time management and compliance aids with statewide access.

Objective 3.2.2

Expansion and enhancement of quality assurance and program evaluation.

Objective 3.2.3

Evaluation and development of fiscal and programmatic joint processes.

Strategy 3.3

Ensure safety and adequacy of infrastructure.

Objective 3.3.1

I.T. and systems security.

Objective 3.3.2

Promote a safe environment for staff and clients, resulting in minimal rates of injury.

Goal 4

Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders.

Strategy 4.1

Increase collaboration with other state agencies and community organizations.

Objective 4.1.1

Inform stakeholders of services and get their feedback on VR performance in meeting needs.

Objective 4.1.2

Provide employment preparations and supports for people with disabilities referred by partner agencies and organizations.

Objective 4.1.3

Build relationships that encourage complementary interagency collaboration.

Strategy 4.2

Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for clients.

Objective 4.2.1

Build and maintain VR Business Partnership Network and collaborate with business and industry associations.

Objective 4.2.2

Actively use business advisory councils for guidance on employment standards and training curricula.

Objective 4.2.3

Advanced solutions for job matching through Career Connect and Universal Business Database.

Objective 4.2.4

Provide outsource opportunities that meet clients' job readiness training needs and local labor market and industry needs.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

The SCVRD Strategic Planning Template outlines the goals, strategies and objectives developed for the agency. These goals were established based on the findings of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, and are updated annually in conjunction with the agency's strategic planning efforts as well as state–specific reporting requirements. Each goal is tied to a defined strategy and set of objectives, designed to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic and timely. These are long–term planning goals, strategies and objectives that include, at minimum, annual assessment of results as well as adjustment and revision based on needs of the state and further implementation of WIOA.

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

The SCVRD Strategic Planning Template outlines the goals, strategies and objectives developed for the agency. These goals were established based on the findings of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, and are updated annually in conjunction with the agency's strategic planning efforts as well as state–specific reporting requirements. Each goal is tied to a defined strategy and set of objectives, designed to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic and timely. These are long–term planning goals, strategies and objectives that include, at minimum, annual assessment of results as well as adjustment and revision based on needs of the state and further implementation of WIOA.

Strategic Planning Template

Goal 1

Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized individualized services.

Strategy 1.1

Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities.

Objective 1.1.1

Support continuous improvement within Program Integrity: Productivity, Compliance Assurance, and Customer Service.

Objective 1.1.2

Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations.

Objective 1.1.3

Identify opportunities for matching client strengths and abilities with community employment needs.

Objective 1.1.4

Demonstrate effectiveness in national comparative data for performance measures.

Strategy 1.2

Enhance school-to-work transition services.

Objective 1.2.1

Maximize relationships with education officials in all S.C. school districts.

Objective 1.2.2

Improve services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Objective 1.2.3

Enhance services for at-risk youth with disabilities.

Objective 1.2.4

Expose students with disabilities to careers in science, technology, engineering and math through High School/High Tech programs.

Strategy 1.3

Enhance job driven vocational training programs.

Objective 1.3.1

Develop job-readiness skills through work training center activities, demand-driven skills training, and on-the-job supports.

Objective 1.3.2

Equip clients for job search through resume development, interviewing skills, other "soft" skills, and disability-related classes.

Goal 2

We will be a team of highly qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability and opportunity to excel.

Strategy 2.1

Provide training to equip staff to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services.

Objective 2.1.1

Develop training based on needs assessment in accordance with the State Plan.

Objective 2.1.2

Enhance job-specific training for specialized areas of agency operations.

Strategy 2.2

Foster opportunities for professional growth and the enhancement of future leadership.

Objective 2.2.1

Provide a professional development and leadership program.

Objective 2.2.2

Maintain a working environment that fosters measurable increases in job satisfaction and rewards accomplishment.

Objective 2.2.3

Structure a work environment that promotes employee accountability for performance and ethical standards.

Goal 3

Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.

Strategy 3.1

Successful outcomes for clients and claimants using resources efficiently.

Objective 3.1.1

High return on investment for clients through successful employment outcomes.

Objective 3.1.2

Demonstrate cost effectiveness that compares favorably with national/regional peers.

Strategy 3.2

Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes.

Objective 3.2.1

Conversion to electronic case management system encompassing time management and compliance aids with statewide access.

Objective 3.2.2

Expansion and enhancement of quality assurance and program evaluation.

Objective 3.2.3

Evaluation and development of fiscal and programmatic joint processes.

Strategy 3.3

Ensure safety and adequacy of infrastructure.

Objective 3.3.1

I.T. and systems security.

Objective 3.3.2

Promote a safe environment for staff and clients, resulting in minimal rates of injury.

Goal 4

Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders.

Strategy 4.1

Increase collaboration with other state agencies and community organizations.

Objective 4.1.1

Inform stakeholders of services and get their feedback on VR performance in meeting needs.

Objective 4.1.2

Provide employment preparations and supports for people with disabilities referred by partner agencies and organizations.

Objective 4.1.3

Build relationships that encourage complementary interagency collaboration.

Strategy 4.2

Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for clients.

Objective 4.2.1

Build and maintain VR Business Partnership Network and collaborate with business and industry associations.

Objective 4.2.2

Actively use business advisory councils for guidance on employment standards and training curricula.

Objective 4.2.3

Advanced solutions for job matching through Career Connect and Universal Business Database.

Objective 4.2.4

Provide outsource opportunities that meet clients' job readiness training needs and local labor market and industry needs.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

The SCVRD Strategic Planning Template outlines the goals, strategies and objectives developed for the agency. These goals were established based on the findings of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, and are updated annually in conjunction with the agency's strategic planning efforts as well as state–specific reporting requirements. Each goal is tied to a defined strategy and set of objectives, designed to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic and timely. These are long–term planning goals, strategies and objectives that include, at minimum, annual assessment of results as well as adjustment and revision based on needs of the state and further implementation of WIOA.

The Performance Measurement Template outlines exiting measure of performance. This section will be updated in the future as the performance accountability measures required under section 116 of WIOA are implemented.

Performance Management Template

Item 1

Performance Measure: Successful Employment Outcomes (state fiscal year)

Last Value: 6,382

Current Value: 6,747

Target Value: 7,252

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: internal IT program; real-time

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: number of individuals exiting program in employment and who remain employed for at least 90 days

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4

Item 2

Performance Measure: Rehabilitations Per 100,000 Population; national and regional ranking

Last Value: 114; US: 6th; Southeast: 2nd

Current Value: 136; updated national data unavailable

Target Value: Top 5 in US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and US Census; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: state population estimate divided by number of successful outcomes

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 3.1.1

Item 3

Performance Measure: Change in number of successful employment outcomes from previous federal fiscal year

Last Value: 1,141 increase

Current Value: 232 increase (projected)

Target Value: increase of at least 1 (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the difference between the number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current perf. period and the number who achieved an employment outcome during the previous period

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 4

Performance Measure: Percentage of clients with employment outcomes

Last Value: 60.15%

Current Value: 56.08%

Target Value: 55.8% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the percentage of individuals exiting the program during the performance period who have achieved an employment outcome after receiving services

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 5

Performance Measure: Percentage of clients with employment outcomes who were competitively employed

Last Value: 99.54%

Current Value: 98.53%

Target Value: 72.6% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the percentage of individuals who exit the VR program in employment in integrated settings without ongoing support services or self-employment with hourly rate of earnings equivalent to at least the federal or state minimum wage rate, whichever is higher, based on all individuals exiting with an employment outcome after receiving services

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 6

Performance Measure: Percentage of competitively employed clients having significant disabilities

Last Value: 90.22%

Current Value: 91.70%

Target Value: 62.54% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: percentage of those individuals who are competitively employed after receiving services who have disabilities classified as significant

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 7

Performance Measure: Ratio of rehabilitated client wages compared to state average wage

Last Value: 0.55

Current Value: 0.57

Target Value: 0.52 (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: ratio of the average hourly earnings of all individuals in competitive employment after VR services to the average hourly earnings of all employed individuals in the state

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 8

Performance Measure: Difference in percentage of clients self-supporting after services compared with before

Last Value: 66.97%

Current Value: 69.94%

Target Value: 53% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: for all individuals with competitive employment outcomes, the difference in the percentage of individuals who at program entry reported their income as the largest single source of support, and the percentage that reported their personal income as the largest single source of support at program exit

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 9

Performance Measure: Service rate for minority clients as ratio to non-minority

Last Value: 1.01

Current Value: 0.96

Target Value: 0.8 (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the ratio of the percent of individuals with a minority background to the percent of individuals without a minority background exiting the program who received VR services

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 10

Performance Measure: Program Integrity - Customer Service

Last Value: 92.59%

Current Value: 96.29%

Target Value: improvement

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet

Reporting Frequency: quarterly

Calculation Method: percentages of satisfied ratings in client surveys (90% weight) and percentages of satisfied ratings in mystery shopper surveys (10% weight)

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.2.1

Item 11

Performance Measure: Program Integrity - Compliance Assurance

Last Value: 97.20%

Current Value: 97.23%

Target Value: improvement

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet

Reporting Frequency: quarterly

Calculation Method: adherence to client services policy as evidenced in quality assurance reviews; total number of correct procedural and substantial questions divided by total number of correct and incorrect questions

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 3.2.2

Item 12

Performance Measure: Program Integrity – Productivity

Last Value: 97.41%

Current Value: 96.65%

Target Value: 100%

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet

Reporting Frequency: quarterly

Calculation Method: total number of clients who have achieved successful outcomes divided by the prorated goal

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4

Item 13

Performance Measure: Average Total Cost Per Client Served (lower = better); national and regional ranking

Last Value: $2,093; 13th in US; 3rd in Southeast

Current Value: $2,218; updated national data unavailable

Target Value: Top 10 in US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: data from RSA-2 applied to internal calculation annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total VR program expenditures divided by total persons served

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 1.1.1

Item 14

Performance Measure: Average Total Cost Per Rehabilitation (lower = better); national and regional ranking

Last Value: $14,565; 7th in US; 1st in Southeast

Current Value: $12,693; updated national data unavailable

Target Value: Top 5 in US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: data from RSA-2 and RSA-911 applied to internal calculation annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total VR program expenditures divided by total successful employment outcomes

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1., 3.1.2

Item 15

Performance Measure: Amount each successfully rehabilitated client will repay in taxes for each dollar spent on his/her rehabilitation

Last Value: $4.83

Current Value: $4.54

Target Value: increase

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: internal from IT report calculated annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: factors include: total overhead cost; adjustment rate for wage change; unemployment rate; mortality rate; underestimation of referral earnings; gain not attributable to VR services; fringe benefits factor; discount rate; tax factor; retirement age

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1

Item 16

Performance Measure: Number of years for each rehabilitated client to repay cost of rehabilitation

Last Value: 4.44

Current Value: 4.51

Target Value: decrease

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: internal from IT report calculated annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: factors include: total overhead cost; adjustment rate for wage change; unemployment rate; mortality rate; underestimation of referral earnings; gain not attributable to VR services; fringe benefits factor; discount rate; tax factor; retirement age

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1.

Item 17

Performance Measure: Reimbursement from Social Security Administration for SCVRD Job Placements

Last Value: $906,146

Current Value: $1,013,544

Target Value: 10% increase

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: Social Security Administration; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: SSA reimburses state VR agencies for the cost of services provided to beneficiaries with disabilities if services result in achievement of employment at a specified earnings level and provide savings to the SSA trust fund

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.3, 3.1.1

Item 18

Performance Measure: New Applicants Referred to SCVRD

Last Value: 13,716

Current Value: 14,780

Target Value: increase and representative of needs

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; real-time

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: count of new applicants statewide

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.2

Item 19

Performance Measure: Successfully rehabilitated clients working 35+ hours per week exceeds national and regional VR averages

Last Value: 64% SCVRD; 53% Southeast; 48% US (FFY13)

Current Value: 63.4% SCVRD; FFY14 national data unavailable

Target Value: higher percentage than SE and US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept.30

Data Source and Availability: RSA database and internal data; annual

Reporting Frequency: annually

Calculation Method: percentage of status 26 (employed at exit) clients working 35+ hours/week

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.3

Item 20

Performance Measure: Successfully rehabilitated clients (transition-aged) working 35+ hours per week exceeds national and regional VR averages

Last Value: 57% SCVRD; 44% Southeast; 42% US (FFY13)

Current Value: 56% SCVRD; FFY 14 national data unavailable

Target Value: higher percentage than SE and US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA database and Internal data; annual

Reporting Frequency: annually

Calculation Method: percentage of status 26 (employed at exit) clients ages 14-24 working 35+ hours/week

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 21

Performance Measure: Increase successful employment outcomes for transition-age clients (14-24)

Last Value: 1,838

Current Value: 1,969

Target Value: increase

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: SCVRD Planning and Program Development office; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: Totals from all SCVRD field office locations

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 22

Performance Measure: Percentage of individuals served by agency who are in transition age range (14-24)

Last Value: 38.1% SFY2014

Current Value: 37.7% SFY2015

Target Value: +/-' 5% of US avg. (34.9% in 2013, last available data)

Time Applicable: July 1 - June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal data; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: total number of individuals between the ages of 14 and 24 at application who received services divided by the total number of individuals who received services multiplied by 100

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 23

Performance Measure: Student participation in Disability Mentoring Day activities

Last Value: 1,083

Current Value: 1,118

Target Value: increase

Time Applicable: Oct-13

Data Source and Availability: Planning and Program Development; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: total number of students with disabilities participating in local Disability Mentoring Day activities in which employers provide job shadow/mentoring opportunities

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2,1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 24

Performance Measure: Positive outcomes in employee well-being surveys

Last Value: 3.95 on scale of 5.0

Current Value: 3.94 on scale of 5.0

Target Value: Improvement

Time Applicable: July 1- June 30

Data Source and Availability: Surveys compiled by Human Resources department annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Survey of 16 questions related to job satisfaction circulated to all locations and position types; each answered on scale of 5; measure shown is composite average.

Associated Objective(s): 2.2.2, 2.2.1, 3.1.2

Item 25

Performance Measure: Agency staff turnover rates compare favorably with average for S.C. state government and average for state governments nationally

Last Value: 9.1% SCVRD; 10.9% SC state gov. (estimated); 16.2% nationally

Current Value: 10.2% SCVRD; 10.9% SC state gov. (estimated); 14.9% nationally

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: SCVRD: July 1-June 30; most recent available data for comparative

Data Source and Availability: data from state Office of Human Resources, US Department of Labor, SCVRD, annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: compiled from most recently available state and national data; current state comparative value estimated from available OHR data

Associated Objective(s): 2.2.2

Item 26

Performance Measure: Training events for staff (face-to-face, webinars, videoconference, online)

Last Value: 613

Current Value: 684

Target Value: N/A

Time Applicable: July 1- June 30

Data Source and Availability: HRD director; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: bi-annually

Calculation Method: totals from training record system

Associated Objective(s): 2.1.1

Item 27

Performance Measure: Professional Development & Leadership Program completion

Last Value: 80 (professional development level)

Current Value: 37 (professional development); 63 (leadership)

Target Value: 47 (professional development; 33 (leadership)

Time Applicable: July 1- June 30

Data Source and Availability: HRD director; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: number of employees who complete each program

Associated Objective(s): 2.2.1, 2.2.2

Item 28

Performance Measure: Lower the Experience Modifier (EMOD) through excellence in safety precautions

Last Value: 1.13

Current Value: 1.11

Target Value: Lower

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: State Accident Fund

Reporting Frequency: Annual

Calculation Method: EMOD for all 24 work training centers added to EMOD for agency employees, then averaged.

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2

Item 29

Performance Measure: Lower Worker's Compensation premiums

Last Value: $114,857 reduction

Current Value: $81,269 increase (however, it represents 2nd lowest premium since 2003)

Target Value: reduction

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: State Accident Fund premium notices

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Compare total premium amount from all policies from year to year and report change amount

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 3.1.2

Item 30

Performance Measure: Work Training Center client injury rate lower than Goods Producing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: 1.1% SCVRD, 4.1% BLS

Current Value: 1.1% SCVRD, 3.7% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of client trainee injuries divided by total number of client trainees served; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2

Item 31

Performance Measure: Employee injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: 1.8% SCVRD, 3.2% BLS

Current Value: 1.3% SCVRD, 3.6% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 2.2.2

Item 32

Performance Measure: Work Training Center client lost time to injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: new measure

Current Value: .0006% SCVRD, 1.1% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2

Item 33

Performance Measure: Employee lost time to injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: new measure

Current Value: .001% SCVRD, 1.1% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 2.2.2

Item 34

Performance Measure: Growth in Business Partnership Network

Last Value: 343 members

Current Value: 351 members

Target Value: Increase

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Client Services (internal)

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Collected internally from area offices

Associated Objective(s): 4.2.1, 4.2.4

Item 35

Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Cost per Case

Last Value: $437.77

Current Value: $490.01

Target Value: no standard issued

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total operational cost of DDS divided by total number of claims cleared

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 36

Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Documentation Accuracy

Last Value: 98.60%

Current Value: 99.10%

Target Value: 97%

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Percentage of correct decisions from random sample selected and reviewed by SSA

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 37

Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Overall Processing Time

Last Value: 118 days

Current Value: 114.3 days

Target Value: 109 days

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total time from the date of application to the actual decision date

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 38

Performance Measure: Number of client complaints to Client Relations office

Last Value: 127

Current Value: 86

Target Value: Lower

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Client Relations database, reported to RSA; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: number of complaints received either directly from clients or through other advocacy/referral sources

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 2.2.3, 3.2.2

Item 39

Performance Measure: Percentage of client complaints resolved without need for formal administrative review

Last Value: 99.2%

Current Value: 98.8%

Target Value: 100%

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Client Relations database, reported to RSA; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: percentage of complaints received by Client Relations office resolved without client request for a hearing with an independent hearing officer

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 2.2.3, 3.2.2

Item 40

Performance Measure: Single Audit results

Last Value: 2 findings

Current Value: 1 finding

Target Value: 0 findings

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 2014

Data Source and Availability: Office of State Auditor: annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: application of internal controls and accounting compliance with federal Vocational Rehabilitation grant requirements and agency policies

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 3.2.3

Item 41

Performance Measure: Agreed Upon Procedures audit results

Last Value: 1 finding

Current Value: 1 finding involving 3 errors in reporting packages

Target Value: 0 findings

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 2014

Data Source and Availability: Office of State Auditor; annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: application of agreed-upon procedures to internal controls and accounting records as audited by independent contractor of the State Auditor office

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 3.2.3

Item 42

Performance Measure: Administrative Costs as a percentage of total operating expenditures

Last Value: 5.55%

Current Value: 5.43%

Target Value: < 7%

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: SCEIS; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: administrative costs as a percentage of all costs

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 43

Performance Measure: Rehabilitation rate for clients in work training centers

Last Value: 60.1%

Current Value: 57.9%

Target Value: 55.8% (national standard)

Time Applicable: July 1 - June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: number of clients in job readiness training who progressed to competitive employment divided by the sum of that number plus the number whose cases were closed without employment

Associated Objective(s): 1.3.1, 1.3.2,1.1.1, 1.1.3, 4.2.4

Item 45

Performance Measure: Increase in Cooperative Agreements associated with strategic goals

Last Value: New measure

Current Value: 270

Target Value: N/A

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: new memoranda of understanding with community resources, all types

Associated Objective(s): 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

The Performance Measurement Template outlines exiting measure of performance. This section will be updated in the future as the performance accountability measures required under section 116 of WIOA are implemented. In addition, items related to the most recent monitoring activities conducted under section 107 were included in development of both the strategic planning template and the performance measurement template.

Item 1

Performance Measure: Successful Employment Outcomes (state fiscal year)

Last Value: 6,382

Current Value: 6,747

Target Value: 7,252

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: internal IT program; real-time

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: number of individuals exiting program in employment and who remain employed for at least 90 days

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4

Item 2

Performance Measure: Rehabilitations Per 100,000 Population; national and regional ranking

Last Value: 114; US: 6th; Southeast: 2nd

Current Value: 136; updated national data unavailable

Target Value: Top 5 in US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and US Census; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: state population estimate divided by number of successful outcomes

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 3.1.1

Item 3

Performance Measure: Change in number of successful employment outcomes from previous federal fiscal year

Last Value: 1,141 increase

Current Value: 232 increase (projected)

Target Value: increase of at least 1 (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the difference between the number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current perf. period and the number who achieved an employment outcome during the previous period

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 4

Performance Measure: Percentage of clients with employment outcomes

Last Value: 60.15%

Current Value: 56.08%

Target Value: 55.8% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the percentage of individuals exiting the program during the performance period who have achieved an employment outcome after receiving services

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 5

Performance Measure: Percentage of clients with employment outcomes who were competitively employed

Last Value: 99.54%

Current Value: 98.53%

Target Value: 72.6% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the percentage of individuals who exit the VR program in employment in integrated settings without ongoing support services or self-employment with hourly rate of earnings equivalent to at least the federal or state minimum wage rate, whichever is higher, based on all individuals exiting with an employment outcome after receiving services

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 6

Performance Measure: Percentage of competitively employed clients having significant disabilities

Last Value: 90.22%

Current Value: 91.70%

Target Value: 62.54% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: percentage of those individuals who are competitively employed after receiving services who have disabilities classified as significant

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 7

Performance Measure: Ratio of rehabilitated client wages compared to state average wage

Last Value: 0.55

Current Value: 0.57

Target Value: 0.52 (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: ratio of the average hourly earnings of all individuals in competitive employment after VR services to the average hourly earnings of all employed individuals in the state

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 8

Performance Measure: Difference in percentage of clients self-supporting after services compared with before

Last Value: 66.97%

Current Value: 69.94%

Target Value: 53% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: for all individuals with competitive employment outcomes, the difference in the percentage of individuals who at program entry reported their income as the largest single source of support, and the percentage that reported their personal income as the largest single source of support at program exit

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 9

Performance Measure: Service rate for minority clients as ratio to non-minority

Last Value: 1.01

Current Value: 0.96

Target Value: 0.8 (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the ratio of the percent of individuals with a minority background to the percent of individuals without a minority background exiting the program who received VR services

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 10

Performance Measure: Program Integrity - Customer Service

Last Value: 92.59%

Current Value: 96.29%

Target Value: improvement

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet

Reporting Frequency: quarterly

Calculation Method: percentages of satisfied ratings in client surveys (90% weight) and percentages of satisfied ratings in mystery shopper surveys (10% weight)

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.2.1

Item 11

Performance Measure: Program Integrity - Compliance Assurance

Last Value: 97.20%

Current Value: 97.23%

Target Value: improvement

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet

Reporting Frequency: quarterly

Calculation Method: adherence to client services policy as evidenced in quality assurance reviews; total number of correct procedural and substantial questions divided by total number of correct and incorrect questions

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 3.2.2

Item 12

Performance Measure: Program Integrity – Productivity

Last Value: 97.41%

Current Value: 96.65%

Target Value: 100%

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet

Reporting Frequency: quarterly

Calculation Method: total number of clients who have achieved successful outcomes divided by the prorated goal

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4

Item 13

Performance Measure: Average Total Cost Per Client Served (lower = better); national and regional ranking

Last Value: $2,093; 13th in US; 3rd in Southeast

Current Value: $2,218; updated national data unavailable

Target Value: Top 10 in US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: data from RSA-2 applied to internal calculation annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total VR program expenditures divided by total persons served

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 1.1.1

Item 14

Performance Measure: Average Total Cost Per Rehabilitation (lower = better); national and regional ranking

Last Value: $14,565; 7th in US; 1st in Southeast

Current Value: $12,693; updated national data unavailable

Target Value: Top 5 in US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: data from RSA-2 and RSA-911 applied to internal calculation annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total VR program expenditures divided by total successful employment outcomes

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1., 3.1.2

Item 15

Performance Measure: Amount each successfully rehabilitated client will repay in taxes for each dollar spent on his/her rehabilitation

Last Value: $4.83

Current Value: $4.54

Target Value: increase

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: internal from IT report calculated annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: factors include: total overhead cost; adjustment rate for wage change; unemployment rate; mortality rate; underestimation of referral earnings; gain not attributable to VR services; fringe benefits factor; discount rate; tax factor; retirement age

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1

Item 16

Performance Measure: Number of years for each rehabilitated client to repay cost of rehabilitation

Last Value: 4.44

Current Value: 4.51

Target Value: decrease

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: internal from IT report calculated annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: factors include: total overhead cost; adjustment rate for wage change; unemployment rate; mortality rate; underestimation of referral earnings; gain not attributable to VR services; fringe benefits factor; discount rate; tax factor; retirement age

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1.

Item 17

Performance Measure: Reimbursement from Social Security Administration for SCVRD Job Placements

Last Value: $906,146

Current Value: $1,013,544

Target Value: 10% increase

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: Social Security Administration; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: SSA reimburses state VR agencies for the cost of services provided to beneficiaries with disabilities if services result in achievement of employment at a specified earnings level and provide savings to the SSA trust fund

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.3, 3.1.1

Item 18

Performance Measure: New Applicants Referred to SCVRD

Last Value: 13,716

Current Value: 14,780

Target Value: increase and representative of needs

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; real-time

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: count of new applicants statewide

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.2

Item 19

Performance Measure: Successfully rehabilitated clients working 35+ hours per week exceeds national and regional VR averages

Last Value: 64% SCVRD; 53% Southeast; 48% US (FFY13)

Current Value: 63.4% SCVRD; FFY14 national data unavailable

Target Value: higher percentage than SE and US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept.30

Data Source and Availability: RSA database and internal data; annual

Reporting Frequency: annually

Calculation Method: percentage of status 26 (employed at exit) clients working 35+ hours/week

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.3

Item 20

Performance Measure: Successfully rehabilitated clients (transition-aged) working 35+ hours per week exceeds national and regional VR averages

Last Value: 57% SCVRD; 44% Southeast; 42% US (FFY13)

Current Value: 56% SCVRD; FFY 14 national data unavailable

Target Value: higher percentage than SE and US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA database and Internal data; annual

Reporting Frequency: annually

Calculation Method: percentage of status 26 (employed at exit) clients ages 14-24 working 35+ hours/week

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 21

Performance Measure: Increase successful employment outcomes for transition-age clients (14-24)

Last Value: 1,838

Current Value: 1,969

Target Value: increase

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: SCVRD Planning and Program Development office; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: Totals from all SCVRD field office locations

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 22

Performance Measure: Percentage of individuals served by agency who are in transition age range (14-24)

Last Value: 38.1% SFY2014

Current Value: 37.7% SFY2015

Target Value: +/-' 5% of US avg. (34.9% in 2013, last available data)

Time Applicable: July 1 - June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal data; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: total number of individuals between the ages of 14 and 24 at application who received services divided by the total number of individuals who received services multiplied by 100

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 23

Performance Measure: Student participation in Disability Mentoring Day activities

Last Value: 1,083

Current Value: 1,118

Target Value: increase

Time Applicable: Oct-13

Data Source and Availability: Planning and Program Development; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: total number of students with disabilities participating in local Disability Mentoring Day activities in which employers provide job shadow/mentoring opportunities

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2,1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 24

Performance Measure: Positive outcomes in employee well-being surveys

Last Value: 3.95 on scale of 5.0

Current Value: 3.94 on scale of 5.0

Target Value: Improvement

Time Applicable: July 1- June 30

Data Source and Availability: Surveys compiled by Human Resources department annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Survey of 16 questions related to job satisfaction circulated to all locations and position types; each answered on scale of 5; measure shown is composite average.

Associated Objective(s): 2.2.2, 2.2.1, 3.1.2

Item 25

Performance Measure: Agency staff turnover rates compare favorably with average for S.C. state government and average for state governments nationally

Last Value: 9.1% SCVRD; 10.9% SC state gov. (estimated); 16.2% nationally

Current Value: 10.2% SCVRD; 10.9% SC state gov. (estimated); 14.9% nationally

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: SCVRD: July 1-June 30; most recent available data for comparative

Data Source and Availability: data from state Office of Human Resources, US Department of Labor, SCVRD, annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: compiled from most recently available state and national data; current state comparative value estimated from available OHR data

Associated Objective(s): 2.2.2

Item 26

Performance Measure: Training events for staff (face-to-face, webinars, videoconference, online)

Last Value: 613

Current Value: 684

Target Value: N/A

Time Applicable: July 1- June 30

Data Source and Availability: HRD director; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: bi-annually

Calculation Method: totals from training record system

Associated Objective(s): 2.1.1

Item 27

Performance Measure: Professional Development & Leadership Program completion

Last Value: 80 (professional development level)

Current Value: 37 (professional development); 63 (leadership)

Target Value: 47 (professional development; 33 (leadership)

Time Applicable: July 1- June 30

Data Source and Availability: HRD director; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: number of employees who complete each program

Associated Objective(s): 2.2.1, 2.2.2

Item 28

Performance Measure: Lower the Experience Modifier (EMOD) through excellence in safety precautions

Last Value: 1.13

Current Value: 1.11

Target Value: Lower

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: State Accident Fund

Reporting Frequency: Annual

Calculation Method: EMOD for all 24 work training centers added to EMOD for agency employees, then averaged.

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2

Item 29

Performance Measure: Lower Worker's Compensation premiums

Last Value: $114,857 reduction

Current Value: $81,269 increase (however, it represents 2nd lowest premium since 2003)

Target Value: reduction

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: State Accident Fund premium notices

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Compare total premium amount from all policies from year to year and report change amount

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 3.1.2

Item 30

Performance Measure: Work Training Center client injury rate lower than Goods Producing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: 1.1% SCVRD, 4.1% BLS

Current Value: 1.1% SCVRD, 3.7% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of client trainee injuries divided by total number of client trainees served; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2

Item 31

Performance Measure: Employee injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: 1.8% SCVRD, 3.2% BLS

Current Value: 1.3% SCVRD, 3.6% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 2.2.2

Item 32

Performance Measure: Work Training Center client lost time to injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: new measure

Current Value: .0006% SCVRD, 1.1% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2

Item 33

Performance Measure: Employee lost time to injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: new measure

Current Value: .001% SCVRD, 1.1% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 2.2.2

Item 34

Performance Measure: Growth in Business Partnership Network

Last Value: 343 members

Current Value: 351 members

Target Value: Increase

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Client Services (internal)

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Collected internally from area offices

Associated Objective(s): 4.2.1, 4.2.4

Item 35

Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Cost per Case

Last Value: $437.77

Current Value: $490.01

Target Value: no standard issued

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total operational cost of DDS divided by total number of claims cleared

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 36

Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Documentation Accuracy

Last Value: 98.60%

Current Value: 99.10%

Target Value: 97%

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Percentage of correct decisions from random sample selected and reviewed by SSA

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 37

Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Overall Processing Time

Last Value: 118 days

Current Value: 114.3 days

Target Value: 109 days

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total time from the date of application to the actual decision date

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 38

Performance Measure: Number of client complaints to Client Relations office

Last Value: 127

Current Value: 86

Target Value: Lower

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Client Relations database, reported to RSA; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: number of complaints received either directly from clients or through other advocacy/referral sources

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 2.2.3, 3.2.2

Item 39

Performance Measure: Percentage of client complaints resolved without need for formal administrative review

Last Value: 99.2%

Current Value: 98.8%

Target Value: 100%

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Client Relations database, reported to RSA; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: percentage of complaints received by Client Relations office resolved without client request for a hearing with an independent hearing officer

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 2.2.3, 3.2.2

Item 40

Performance Measure: Single Audit results

Last Value: 2 findings

Current Value: 1 finding

Target Value: 0 findings

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 2014

Data Source and Availability: Office of State Auditor: annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: application of internal controls and accounting compliance with federal Vocational Rehabilitation grant requirements and agency policies

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 3.2.3

Item 41

Performance Measure: Agreed Upon Procedures audit results

Last Value: 1 finding

Current Value: 1 finding involving 3 errors in reporting packages

Target Value: 0 findings

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 2014

Data Source and Availability: Office of State Auditor; annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: application of agreed-upon procedures to internal controls and accounting records as audited by independent contractor of the State Auditor office

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 3.2.3

Item 42

Performance Measure: Administrative Costs as a percentage of total operating expenditures

Last Value: 5.55%

Current Value: 5.43%

Target Value: < 7%

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: SCEIS; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: administrative costs as a percentage of all costs

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 43

Performance Measure: Rehabilitation rate for clients in work training centers

Last Value: 60.1%

Current Value: 57.9%

Target Value: 55.8% (national standard)

Time Applicable: July 1 - June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: number of clients in job readiness training who progressed to competitive employment divided by the sum of that number plus the number whose cases were closed without employment

Associated Objective(s): 1.3.1, 1.3.2,1.1.1, 1.1.3, 4.2.4

Item 45

Performance Measure: Increase in Cooperative Agreements associated with strategic goals

Last Value: New measure

Current Value: 270

Target Value: N/A

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: new memoranda of understanding with community resources, all types

Associated Objective(s): 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES.

SCVRD is not implementing an order of selection.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

SCVRD is not implementing an order of selection.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

SCVRD is not implementing an order of selection.

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

SCVRD is not implementing an order of selection.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

SCVRD is not implementing an order of selection.

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

SCVRD is not implementing an order of selection.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

SCVRD's supported employment goals and plans regarding the Title VI program are based on an analysis of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment and the department's performance on the common performance measures as well as agency key performance indicators. The priorities are as follows: • Strengthening service delivery afforded to individuals whose disabilities and vocational needs are so significant that SCVRD's 110 traditional program services would not be sufficient to meet their employment needs; • Providing services to people with the most significant disabilities, especially SSI and/or SSDI recipients, in order to successfully achieve and maintain competitive employment in integrated work settings. • Providing supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

In SFY 2015, SCVRD used designated funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services for the following goals and priorities:

• Job coaches serving the Aiken, Orangeburg, Laurens, and Lexington areas. • SCVRD further expanded its partnership with DDSN in an ongoing demonstration project designed as an intensive placement and support program in the Lexington, Greenwood, and Conway areas. DDSN makes referrals to a specified VR counselor and job coach who are designated to exclusively serve these clients. This demonstration project incorporates many of the IPS evidence–based practices in providing services to individuals with most significant disabilities including those with intellectual disabilities. The key practices focus on individualized, client–centered services to assist persons with cognitive impairments and emphasize rapid job placement as appropriate into competitive, integrated jobs. Follow up supports are provided in integrated work settings. In SFY 2015, the Lexington site achieved a 67% rehabilitation rate.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

Activities with funds reserved for services for youth with the most significant disabilities (section 603(d)) included the following: • Transition job coaches serving youth with most significant disabilities in the Sumter, Greenville, Richland and Rock Hill areas. Transition job coaches provide work–based learning experiences, job preparedness instruction, job development and placement with follow along supports. • Project SEARCH is a national model based on intensive internship experience and job coaching. It pairs students in their final year of school with a host business/employer site that includes a series of internships to build job skills as well as to explore career opportunities. This program model is business–led, with partner support provided through the school district, VR, Development Disabilities agencies and other community partners. It focuses on serving young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as other students that may not otherwise have access to the immersion–based approach of this program. Interns in Project SEARCH train in real work settings, which allow the program staff to teach competitive, marketable,

and transferable skills. The outcome goal of the program is competitive, integrated employment. The first site in South Carolina was established in Spartanburg during SFY 2014. This has now expanded to a second site in the Midlands/Lexington area with additional sites under consideration. In this program, students participate in a series of internships at a host business site, receive intensive instruction and job coaching, and are placed into competitive employment, often at the host business site and often prior to completion of their final year of high school. For the Spartanburg location, following their first year program participants achieved an 86% success rate (participants achieving competitive, integrated employment). • SCVRD leverages other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services. Extended services providers are identified in each area to provide follow along and extended services following successful exit from the VR program. Partnerships at the state and local level with DDSN and the local DSN boards continue to grow and provide key linkages to extended services providers.

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

Activities with funds reserved for services for youth with the most significant disabilities (section 603(d)) included the following: • Transition job coaches serving youth with most significant disabilities in the Sumter, Greenville, Richland and Rock Hill areas. Transition job coaches provide work–based learning experiences, job preparedness instruction, job development and placement with follow along supports. • Project SEARCH is a national model based on intensive internship experience and job coaching. It pairs students in their final year of school with a host business/employer site that includes a series of internships to build job skills as well as to explore career opportunities. This program model is business–led, with partner support provided through the school district, VR, Development Disabilities agencies and other community partners. It focuses on serving young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as other students that may not otherwise have access to the immersion–based approach of this program. Interns in Project SEARCH train in real work settings, which allow the program staff to teach competitive, marketable, and transferable skills. The outcome goal of the program is competitive, integrated employment. The first site in South Carolina was established in Spartanburg during SFY 2014. This has now expanded to a second site in the Midlands/Lexington area with additional sites under consideration. In this program, students participate in a series of internships at a host business site, receive intensive instruction and job coaching, and are placed into competitive employment, often at the host business site and often prior to completion of their final year of high school. For the Spartanburg location, following their first year program participants achieved an 86% success rate (participants achieving competitive, integrated employment). • SCVRD leverages other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services. Extended services providers are identified in each area to provide follow along and extended services following successful exit from the VR program. Partnerships at the state and local level with DDSN and the local DSN boards continue to grow and provide key linkages to extended services providers.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

In addition to the goals, strategies and objectives listed below, current plans for improving community based provision of services in the Richland area are being implemented through an office consolidation project.

Goal 1

Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized individualized services.

Strategy 1.1

Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities.

Objective 1.1.1

Support continuous improvement within Program Integrity: Productivity, Compliance Assurance, and Customer Service.

Objective 1.1.2

Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations.

Objective 1.1.3

Identify opportunities for matching client strengths and abilities with community employment needs.

Objective 1.1.4

Demonstrate effectiveness in national comparative data for performance measures.

Strategy 1.2

Enhance school-to-work transition services.

Objective 1.2.1

Maximize relationships with education officials in all S.C. school districts.

Objective 1.2.2

Improve services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Objective 1.2.3

Enhance services for at-risk youth with disabilities.

Objective 1.2.4

Expose students with disabilities to careers in science, technology, engineering and math through High School/High Tech programs.

Strategy 1.3

Enhance job driven vocational training programs.

Objective 1.3.1

Develop job-readiness skills through work training center activities, demand-driven skills training, and on-the-job supports.

Objective 1.3.2

Equip clients for job search through resume development, interviewing skills, other "soft" skills, and disability-related classes.

Goal 2

We will be a team of highly qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability and opportunity to excel.

Strategy 2.1

Provide training to equip staff to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services.

Objective 2.1.1

Develop training based on needs assessment in accordance with the State Plan.

Objective 2.1.2

Enhance job-specific training for specialized areas of agency operations.

Strategy 2.2

Foster opportunities for professional growth and the enhancement of future leadership.

Objective 2.2.1

Provide a professional development and leadership program.

Objective 2.2.2

Maintain a working environment that fosters measurable increases in job satisfaction and rewards accomplishment.

Objective 2.2.3

Structure a work environment that promotes employee accountability for performance and ethical standards.

Goal 3

Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.

Strategy 3.1

Successful outcomes for clients and claimants using resources efficiently.

Objective 3.1.1

High return on investment for clients through successful employment outcomes.

Objective 3.1.2

Demonstrate cost effectiveness that compares favorably with national/regional peers.

Strategy 3.2

Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes.

Objective 3.2.1

Conversion to electronic case management system encompassing time management and compliance aids with statewide access.

Objective 3.2.2

Expansion and enhancement of quality assurance and program evaluation.

Objective 3.2.3

Evaluation and development of fiscal and programmatic joint processes.

Strategy 3.3

Ensure safety and adequacy of infrastructure.

Objective 3.3.1

I.T. and systems security.

Objective 3.3.2

Promote a safe environment for staff and clients, resulting in minimal rates of injury.

Goal 4

Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders.

Strategy 4.1

Increase collaboration with other state agencies and community organizations.

Objective 4.1.1

Inform stakeholders of services and get their feedback on VR performance in meeting needs.

Objective 4.1.2

Provide employment preparations and supports for people with disabilities referred by partner agencies and organizations.

Objective 4.1.3

Build relationships that encourage complementary interagency collaboration.

Strategy 4.2

Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for clients.

Objective 4.2.1

Build and maintain VR Business Partnership Network and collaborate with business and industry associations.

Objective 4.2.2

Actively use business advisory councils for guidance on employment standards and training curricula.

Objective 4.2.3

Advanced solutions for job matching through Career Connect and Universal Business Database.

Objective 4.2.4

Provide outsource opportunities that meet clients' job readiness training needs and local labor market and industry needs.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS.

Rehabilitation engineers provide evaluation and implementation of assistive technology devices throughout the rehabilitation process based on individualized client needs.

Goal 1

Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized individualized services.

Strategy 1.1

Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities.

Objective 1.1.1

Support continuous improvement within Program Integrity: Productivity, Compliance Assurance, and Customer Service.

Objective 1.1.2

Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations.

Objective 1.1.3

Identify opportunities for matching client strengths and abilities with community employment needs.

Objective 1.1.4

Demonstrate effectiveness in national comparative data for performance measures.

Strategy 1.2

Enhance school-to-work transition services.

Objective 1.2.1

Maximize relationships with education officials in all S.C. school districts.

Objective 1.2.2

Improve services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Objective 1.2.3

Enhance services for at-risk youth with disabilities.

Objective 1.2.4

Expose students with disabilities to careers in science, technology, engineering and math through High School/High Tech programs.

Strategy 1.3

Enhance job driven vocational training programs.

Objective 1.3.1

Develop job-readiness skills through work training center activities, demand-driven skills training, and on-the-job supports.

Objective 1.3.2

Equip clients for job search through resume development, interviewing skills, other "soft" skills, and disability-related classes.

Goal 2

We will be a team of highly qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability and opportunity to excel.

Strategy 2.1

Provide training to equip staff to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services.

Objective 2.1.1

Develop training based on needs assessment in accordance with the State Plan.

Objective 2.1.2

Enhance job-specific training for specialized areas of agency operations.

Strategy 2.2

Foster opportunities for professional growth and the enhancement of future leadership.

Objective 2.2.1

Provide a professional development and leadership program.

Objective 2.2.2

Maintain a working environment that fosters measurable increases in job satisfaction and rewards accomplishment.

Objective 2.2.3

Structure a work environment that promotes employee accountability for performance and ethical standards.

Goal 3

Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.

Strategy 3.1

Successful outcomes for clients and claimants using resources efficiently.

Objective 3.1.1

High return on investment for clients through successful employment outcomes.

Objective 3.1.2

Demonstrate cost effectiveness that compares favorably with national/regional peers.

Strategy 3.2

Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes.

Objective 3.2.1

Conversion to electronic case management system encompassing time management and compliance aids with statewide access.

Objective 3.2.2

Expansion and enhancement of quality assurance and program evaluation.

Objective 3.2.3

Evaluation and development of fiscal and programmatic joint processes.

Strategy 3.3

Ensure safety and adequacy of infrastructure.

Objective 3.3.1

I.T. and systems security.

Objective 3.3.2

Promote a safe environment for staff and clients, resulting in minimal rates of injury.

Goal 4

Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders.

Strategy 4.1

Increase collaboration with other state agencies and community organizations.

Objective 4.1.1

Inform stakeholders of services and get their feedback on VR performance in meeting needs.

Objective 4.1.2

Provide employment preparations and supports for people with disabilities referred by partner agencies and organizations.

Objective 4.1.3

Build relationships that encourage complementary interagency collaboration.

Strategy 4.2

Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for clients.

Objective 4.2.1

Build and maintain VR Business Partnership Network and collaborate with business and industry associations.

Objective 4.2.2

Actively use business advisory councils for guidance on employment standards and training curricula.

Objective 4.2.3

Advanced solutions for job matching through Career Connect and Universal Business Database.

Objective 4.2.4

Provide outsource opportunities that meet clients' job readiness training needs and local labor market and industry needs.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM.

These goals were established based on the findings of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, and are updated annually in conjunction with the agency's strategic planning efforts as well as state–specific reporting requirements. Each goal is tied to a defined strategy and set of objectives, designed to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic and timely. These are long–term planning goals, strategies and objectives that include, at minimum, annual assessment of results as well as adjustment and revision based on needs of the state and further implementation of WIOA.

Goals and strategies related directly to identifying and serving individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved, include the following: Goal 1, strategy 1.1, objectives 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.2.3.

Goal 1

Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized individualized services.

Strategy 1.1

Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities.

Objective 1.1.1

Support continuous improvement within Program Integrity: Productivity, Compliance Assurance, and Customer Service.

Objective 1.1.2

Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations.

Objective 1.1.3

Identify opportunities for matching client strengths and abilities with community employment needs.

Objective 1.1.4

Demonstrate effectiveness in national comparative data for performance measures.

Strategy 1.2

Enhance school-to-work transition services.

Objective 1.2.1

Maximize relationships with education officials in all S.C. school districts.

Objective 1.2.2

Improve services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Objective 1.2.3

Enhance services for at-risk youth with disabilities.

Objective 1.2.4

Expose students with disabilities to careers in science, technology, engineering and math through High School/High Tech programs.

Strategy 1.3

Enhance job driven vocational training programs.

Objective 1.3.1

Develop job-readiness skills through work training center activities, demand-driven skills training, and on-the-job supports.

Objective 1.3.2

Equip clients for job search through resume development, interviewing skills, other "soft" skills, and disability-related classes.

Goal 2

We will be a team of highly qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability and opportunity to excel.

Strategy 2.1

Provide training to equip staff to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services.

Objective 2.1.1

Develop training based on needs assessment in accordance with the State Plan.

Objective 2.1.2

Enhance job-specific training for specialized areas of agency operations.

Strategy 2.2

Foster opportunities for professional growth and the enhancement of future leadership.

Objective 2.2.1

Provide a professional development and leadership program.

Objective 2.2.2

Maintain a working environment that fosters measurable increases in job satisfaction and rewards accomplishment.

Objective 2.2.3

Structure a work environment that promotes employee accountability for performance and ethical standards.

Goal 3

Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.

Strategy 3.1

Successful outcomes for clients and claimants using resources efficiently.

Objective 3.1.1

High return on investment for clients through successful employment outcomes.

Objective 3.1.2

Demonstrate cost effectiveness that compares favorably with national/regional peers.

Strategy 3.2

Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes.

Objective 3.2.1

Conversion to electronic case management system encompassing time management and compliance aids with statewide access.

Objective 3.2.2

Expansion and enhancement of quality assurance and program evaluation.

Objective 3.2.3

Evaluation and development of fiscal and programmatic joint processes.

Strategy 3.3

Ensure safety and adequacy of infrastructure.

Objective 3.3.1

I.T. and systems security.

Objective 3.3.2

Promote a safe environment for staff and clients, resulting in minimal rates of injury.

Goal 4

Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders.

Strategy 4.1

Increase collaboration with other state agencies and community organizations.

Objective 4.1.1

Inform stakeholders of services and get their feedback on VR performance in meeting needs.

Objective 4.1.2

Provide employment preparations and supports for people with disabilities referred by partner agencies and organizations.

Objective 4.1.3

Build relationships that encourage complementary interagency collaboration.

Strategy 4.2

Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for clients.

Objective 4.2.1

Build and maintain VR Business Partnership Network and collaborate with business and industry associations.

Objective 4.2.2

Actively use business advisory councils for guidance on employment standards and training curricula.

Objective 4.2.3

Advanced solutions for job matching through Career Connect and Universal Business Database.

Objective 4.2.4

Provide outsource opportunities that meet clients' job readiness training needs and local labor market and industry needs.

* Please note that rehabilitation engineers provide evaluation and implementation of assistive technology devices throughout the rehabilitation process based on individualized client needs.

*Current plans for improving community based provision of services in the Richland area are being implemented through an office consolidation project.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES).

These goals were established based on the findings of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, and are updated annually in conjunction with the agency's strategic planning efforts as well as state–specific reporting requirements. Each goal is tied to a defined strategy and set of objectives, designed to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic and timely. These are long–term planning goals, strategies and objectives that include, at minimum, annual assessment of results as well as adjustment and revision based on needs of the state and further implementation of WIOA.

The following strategies relate directly to improvement and expansion of VR services for students with disabilities, including coordination of services to facilitate transition of students from school to post-secondary life.

Strategy 1.1 Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities. Objective 1.1.1 Support continuous improvement within Program Integrity: Productivity, Compliance Assurance, and Customer Service. Objective 1.1.2 Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations. Objective 1.1.3 Identify opportunities for matching client strengths and abilities with community employment needs. Objective 1.1.4 Demonstrate effectiveness in national comparative data for performance measures. Strategy 1.2 Enhance school-to-work transition services. Objective 1.2.1 Maximize relationships with education officials in all S.C. school districts. Objective 1.2.2 Improve services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities. Objective 1.2.3 Enhance services for at-risk youth with disabilities. Objective 1.2.4 Expose students with disabilities to careers in science, technology,

engineering and math through High School/High Tech programs. Strategy 1.3 Enhance job driven vocational training programs. Objective 1.3.1 Develop job-readiness skills through work training center activities, demand-driven skills training, and on-the-job supports. Objective 1.3.2 Equip clients for job search through resume development, interviewing skills, other "soft" skills, and disability-related classes.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

These goals were established based on the findings of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, and are updated annually in conjunction with the agency's strategic planning efforts as well as state–specific reporting requirements. Each goal is tied to a defined strategy and set of objectives, designed to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic and timely. These are long–term planning goals, strategies and objectives that include, at minimum, annual assessment of results as well as adjustment and revision based on needs of the state and further implementation of WIOA. Goal 1 Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized individualized services. Strategy 1.1 Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities. Objective 1.1.1 Support continuous improvement within Program Integrity: Productivity, Compliance Assurance, and Customer Service. Objective 1.1.2 Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations. Objective 1.1.3 Identify opportunities for matching client strengths and abilities with community employment needs. Objective 1.1.4 Demonstrate effectiveness in national comparative data for performance measures. Strategy 1.2 Enhance school-to-work transition services. Objective 1.2.1 Maximize relationships with education officials in all S.C. school districts. Objective 1.2.2 Improve services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities. Objective 1.2.3 Enhance services for at-risk youth with disabilities. Objective 1.2.4 Expose students with disabilities to careers in science, technology, engineering and math through High School/High Tech programs. Strategy 1.3 Enhance job driven vocational training programs. Objective 1.3.1 Develop job-readiness skills through work training center activities, demand-driven skills training, and on-the-job supports. Objective 1.3.2 Equip clients for job search through resume development, interviewing skills, other "soft" skills, and disability-related classes. Goal 2 We will be a team of highly qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability and opportunity to excel. Strategy 2.1 Provide training to equip staff to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services. Objective 2.1.1 Develop training based on needs assessment in accordance with the State Plan. Objective 2.1.2 Enhance job-specific training for specialized areas of agency operations. Strategy 2.2 Foster opportunities for professional growth and the enhancement of future leadership. Objective 2.2.1 Provide a professional development and leadership program. Objective 2.2.2 Maintain a working environment that fosters measurable increases in job satisfaction and rewards accomplishment. Objective 2.2.3 Structure a work environment that promotes employee accountability for performance and ethical standards. Goal 3 Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us. Strategy 3.1 Successful outcomes for clients and claimants using resources efficiently. Objective 3.1.1 High return on investment for clients through successful employment outcomes. Objective 3.1.2 Demonstrate cost effectiveness that compares favorably with national/regional peers. Strategy 3.2 Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes. Objective 3.2.1 Conversion to electronic case management system encompassing time management and compliance aids with statewide access. Objective 3.2.2 Expansion and enhancement of quality assurance and program evaluation. Objective 3.2.3 Evaluation and development of fiscal and programmatic joint processes. Strategy 3.3 Ensure safety and adequacy of infrastructure. Objective 3.3.1 I.T. and systems security. Objective 3.3.2 Promote a safe environment for staff and clients, resulting in minimal rates of injury. Goal 4 Maintain a dynamic

network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders. Strategy 4.1 Increase collaboration with other state agencies and community organizations. Objective 4.1.1 Inform stakeholders of services and get their feedback on VR performance in meeting needs. Objective 4.1.2 Provide employment preparations and supports for people with disabilities referred by partner agencies and organizations. Objective 4.1.3 Build relationships that encourage complementary interagency collaboration. Strategy 4.2 Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for clients. Objective 4.2.1 Build and maintain VR Business Partnership Network and collaborate with business and industry associations. Objective 4.2.2 Actively use business advisory councils for guidance on employment standards and training curricula. Objective 4.2.3 Advanced solutions for job matching through Career Connect and Universal Business Database. Objective 4.2.4 Provide outsource opportunities that meet clients' job readiness training needs and local labor market and industry needs.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

The goals, strategies and objectives included in the SCVRD strategic planning template outline the strategies to improve performance of SCVRD with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA. Specifically, strategies and objectives under Goal 1 identify objectives related to client outcomes, including training, education and career pathway related objectives. Goal 4 outlines strategies and objectives related to partnerships with other agencies and organizations, as well as objectives specific to business and employer services.

Goal 1

Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized individualized services.

Strategy 1.1

Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities.

Objective 1.1.1

Support continuous improvement within Program Integrity: Productivity, Compliance Assurance, and Customer Service.

Objective 1.1.2

Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations.

Objective 1.1.3

Identify opportunities for matching client strengths and abilities with community employment needs.

Objective 1.1.4

Demonstrate effectiveness in national comparative data for performance measures.

Strategy 1.2

Enhance school-to-work transition services.

Objective 1.2.1

Maximize relationships with education officials in all S.C. school districts.

Objective 1.2.2

Improve services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Objective 1.2.3

Enhance services for at-risk youth with disabilities.

Objective 1.2.4

Expose students with disabilities to careers in science, technology, engineering and math through High School/High Tech programs.

Strategy 1.3

Enhance job driven vocational training programs.

Objective 1.3.1

Develop job-readiness skills through work training center activities, demand-driven skills training, and on-the-job supports.

Objective 1.3.2

Equip clients for job search through resume development, interviewing skills, other "soft" skills, and disability-related classes.

Goal 2

We will be a team of highly qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability and opportunity to excel.

Strategy 2.1

Provide training to equip staff to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services.

Objective 2.1.1

Develop training based on needs assessment in accordance with the State Plan.

Objective 2.1.2

Enhance job-specific training for specialized areas of agency operations.

Strategy 2.2

Foster opportunities for professional growth and the enhancement of future leadership.

Objective 2.2.1

Provide a professional development and leadership program.

Objective 2.2.2

Maintain a working environment that fosters measurable increases in job satisfaction and rewards accomplishment.

Objective 2.2.3

Structure a work environment that promotes employee accountability for performance and ethical standards.

Goal 3

Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.

Strategy 3.1

Successful outcomes for clients and claimants using resources efficiently.

Objective 3.1.1

High return on investment for clients through successful employment outcomes.

Objective 3.1.2

Demonstrate cost effectiveness that compares favorably with national/regional peers.

Strategy 3.2

Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes.

Objective 3.2.1

Conversion to electronic case management system encompassing time management and compliance aids with statewide access.

Objective 3.2.2

Expansion and enhancement of quality assurance and program evaluation.

Objective 3.2.3

Evaluation and development of fiscal and programmatic joint processes.

Strategy 3.3

Ensure safety and adequacy of infrastructure.

Objective 3.3.1

I.T. and systems security.

Objective 3.3.2

Promote a safe environment for staff and clients, resulting in minimal rates of injury.

Goal 4

Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders.

Strategy 4.1

Increase collaboration with other state agencies and community organizations.

Objective 4.1.1

Inform stakeholders of services and get their feedback on VR performance in meeting needs.

Objective 4.1.2

Provide employment preparations and supports for people with disabilities referred by partner agencies and organizations.

Objective 4.1.3

Build relationships that encourage complementary interagency collaboration.

Strategy 4.2

Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for clients.

Objective 4.2.1

Build and maintain VR Business Partnership Network and collaborate with business and industry associations.

Objective 4.2.2

Actively use business advisory councils for guidance on employment standards and training curricula.

Objective 4.2.3

Advanced solutions for job matching through Career Connect and Universal Business Database.

Objective 4.2.4

Provide outsource opportunities that meet clients' job readiness training needs and local labor market and industry needs.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Strategies and objectives under Goal 1 identify objectives related to client outcomes, including training, education and career pathway related objectives. Goal 4 outlines strategies and objectives related to partnerships with other agencies and organizations, as well as objectives specific to business and employer services.

Goal 1 Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized individualized services. Strategy 1.1 Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities. Objective 1.1.1 Support continuous improvement within Program Integrity: Productivity, Compliance Assurance, and Customer Service. Objective 1.1.2 Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations. Objective 1.1.3 Identify opportunities for matching client strengths and abilities with community employment needs. Objective 1.1.4 Demonstrate effectiveness in national comparative data for performance measures. Strategy 1.2 Enhance school-to-work transition services. Objective 1.2.1 Maximize relationships with education officials in all S.C. school districts. Objective 1.2.2 Improve services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities. Objective 1.2.3 Enhance services for at-risk youth with disabilities. Objective 1.2.4 Expose students with disabilities to careers in science, technology, engineering and math through High School/High Tech programs. Strategy 1.3 Enhance job driven vocational training programs. Objective 1.3.1 Develop job-readiness skills through work training center activities, demand-driven skills training, and on-the-job supports. Objective 1.3.2 Equip clients for job search through resume development, interviewing skills, other "soft" skills, and disability-related classes. Goal 2 We will be a team of highly qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability and opportunity to excel. Strategy 2.1 Provide training to equip staff to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services. Objective 2.1.1 Develop training based on needs assessment in accordance with the State Plan. Objective 2.1.2 Enhance job-specific training for specialized areas of agency operations. Strategy 2.2 Foster opportunities for professional growth and the enhancement of future leadership. Objective 2.2.1 Provide a professional development and leadership program. Objective 2.2.2 Maintain a working environment that fosters measurable increases in job satisfaction and rewards accomplishment. Objective 2.2.3 Structure a work environment that promotes employee accountability for performance and ethical standards. Goal 3 Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us. Strategy 3.1 Successful outcomes for clients and claimants using resources efficiently. Objective 3.1.1 High return on investment for clients through successful employment outcomes. Objective 3.1.2

Demonstrate cost effectiveness that compares favorably with national/regional peers. Strategy 3.2 Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes. Objective 3.2.1 Conversion to electronic case management system encompassing time management and compliance aids with statewide access. Objective 3.2.2 Expansion and enhancement of quality assurance and program evaluation. Objective 3.2.3 Evaluation and development of fiscal and programmatic joint processes. Strategy 3.3 Ensure safety and adequacy of infrastructure. Objective 3.3.1 I.T. and systems security. Objective 3.3.2 Promote a safe environment for staff and clients, resulting in minimal rates of injury. Goal 4 Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders. Strategy 4.1 Increase collaboration with other state agencies and community organizations. Objective 4.1.1 Inform stakeholders of services and get their feedback on VR performance in meeting needs. Objective 4.1.2 Provide employment preparations and supports for people with disabilities referred by partner agencies and organizations. Objective 4.1.3 Build relationships that encourage complementary interagency collaboration. Strategy 4.2 Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for clients. Objective 4.2.1 Build and maintain VR Business Partnership Network and collaborate with business and industry associations. Objective 4.2.2 Actively use business advisory councils for guidance on employment standards and training curricula. Objective 4.2.3 Advanced solutions for job matching through Career Connect and Universal Business Database. Objective 4.2.4 Provide outsource opportunities that meet clients' job readiness training needs and local labor market and industry needs.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

These goals were established based on the findings of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, and are updated annually in conjunction with the agency's strategic planning efforts as well as state–specific reporting requirements. Each goal is tied to a defined strategy and set of objectives, designed to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic and timely. These are long–term planning goals, strategies and objectives that include, at minimum, annual assessment of results as well as adjustment and revision based on needs of the state and further implementation of WIOA. Goal 1 Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized individualized services. Strategy 1.1 Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities. Objective 1.1.1 Support continuous improvement within Program Integrity: Productivity, Compliance Assurance, and Customer Service. Objective 1.1.2 Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations. Objective 1.1.3 Identify opportunities for matching client strengths and abilities with community employment needs. Objective 1.1.4 Demonstrate effectiveness in national comparative data for performance measures. Strategy 1.2 Enhance school-to-work transition services. Objective 1.2.1 Maximize relationships with education officials in all S.C. school districts. Objective 1.2.2 Improve services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities. Objective 1.2.3 Enhance services for at-risk youth with disabilities. Objective 1.2.4 Expose students with disabilities to careers in science, technology, engineering and math through High School/High Tech programs. Strategy 1.3 Enhance job driven vocational training programs. Objective 1.3.1 Develop job-readiness skills through work training center activities, demand-driven skills training, and on-the-job supports. Objective 1.3.2 Equip clients for job search through resume development, interviewing skills, other "soft" skills, and disability-related classes. Goal 2 We will be a team of highly qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability and opportunity to excel. Strategy 2.1 Provide training to equip staff to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services. Objective 2.1.1 Develop training based on needs assessment in accordance with the State Plan. Objective 2.1.2

Enhance job-specific training for specialized areas of agency operations. Strategy 2.2 Foster opportunities for professional growth and the enhancement of future leadership. Objective 2.2.1 Provide a professional development and leadership program. Objective 2.2.2 Maintain a working environment that fosters measurable increases in job satisfaction and rewards accomplishment. Objective 2.2.3 Structure a work environment that promotes employee accountability for performance and ethical standards. Goal 3 Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us. Strategy 3.1 Successful outcomes for clients and claimants using resources efficiently. Objective 3.1.1 High return on investment for clients through successful employment outcomes. Objective 3.1.2 Demonstrate cost effectiveness that compares favorably with national/regional peers. Strategy 3.2 Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes. Objective 3.2.1 Conversion to electronic case management system encompassing time management and compliance aids with statewide access. Objective 3.2.2 Expansion and enhancement of quality assurance and program evaluation. Objective 3.2.3 Evaluation and development of fiscal and programmatic joint processes. Strategy 3.3 Ensure safety and adequacy of infrastructure. Objective 3.3.1 I.T. and systems security. Objective 3.3.2 Promote a safe environment for staff and clients, resulting in minimal rates of injury. Goal 4 Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders. Strategy 4.1 Increase collaboration with other state agencies and community organizations. Objective 4.1.1 Inform stakeholders of services and get their feedback on VR performance in meeting needs. Objective 4.1.2 Provide employment preparations and supports for people with disabilities referred by partner agencies and organizations. Objective 4.1.3 Build relationships that encourage complementary interagency collaboration. Strategy 4.2 Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for clients. Objective 4.2.1 Build and maintain VR Business Partnership Network and collaborate with business and industry associations. Objective 4.2.2 Actively use business advisory councils for guidance on employment standards and training curricula. Objective 4.2.3 Advanced solutions for job matching through Career Connect and Universal Business Database. Objective 4.2.4 Provide outsource opportunities that meet clients' job readiness training needs and local labor market and industry needs.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

These goals were established based on the findings of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, and are updated annually in conjunction with the agency's strategic planning efforts as well as state–specific reporting requirements. Each goal is tied to a defined strategy and set of objectives, designed to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic and timely. These are long–term planning goals, strategies and objectives that include, at minimum, annual assessment of results as well as adjustment and revision based on needs of the state and further implementation of WIOA. Specifically, goals 1 and 3 include strategies and objectives in direct support of innovation and expansion activities. Goal 1 Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized individualized services. Strategy 1.1 Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities. Objective 1.1.1 Support continuous improvement within Program Integrity: Productivity, Compliance Assurance, and Customer Service. Objective 1.1.2 Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations. Objective 1.1.3 Identify opportunities for matching client strengths and abilities with community employment needs. Objective 1.1.4 Demonstrate effectiveness in national comparative data for performance measures. Strategy 1.2 Enhance school-to-work transition services. Objective 1.2.1 Maximize relationships with education officials in all S.C. school districts. Objective 1.2.2 Improve services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities. Objective 1.2.3 Enhance services for at-risk youth with disabilities. Objective 1.2.4 Expose students with disabilities to careers in science, technology, engineering and math through

High School/High Tech programs. Strategy 1.3 Enhance job driven vocational training programs. Objective 1.3.1 Develop job-readiness skills through work training center activities, demand-driven skills training, and on-the-job supports. Objective 1.3.2 Equip clients for job search through resume development, interviewing skills, other "soft" skills, and disability-related classes. Goal 2 We will be a team of highly qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability and opportunity to excel. Strategy 2.1 Provide training to equip staff to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services. Objective 2.1.1 Develop training based on needs assessment in accordance with the State Plan. Objective 2.1.2 Enhance job-specific training for specialized areas of agency operations. Strategy 2.2 Foster opportunities for professional growth and the enhancement of future leadership. Objective 2.2.1 Provide a professional development and leadership program. Objective 2.2.2 Maintain a working environment that fosters measurable increases in job satisfaction and rewards accomplishment. Objective 2.2.3 Structure a work environment that promotes employee accountability for performance and ethical standards. Goal 3 Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us. Strategy 3.1 Successful outcomes for clients and claimants using resources efficiently. Objective 3.1.1 High return on investment for clients through successful employment outcomes. Objective 3.1.2 Demonstrate cost effectiveness that compares favorably with national/regional peers. Strategy 3.2 Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes. Objective 3.2.1 Conversion to electronic case management system encompassing time management and compliance aids with statewide access. Objective 3.2.2 Expansion and enhancement of quality assurance and program evaluation. Objective 3.2.3 Evaluation and development of fiscal and programmatic joint processes. Strategy 3.3 Ensure safety and adequacy of infrastructure. Objective 3.3.1 I.T. and systems security. Objective 3.3.2 Promote a safe environment for staff and clients, resulting in minimal rates of injury. Goal 4 Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders. Strategy 4.1 Increase collaboration with other state agencies and community organizations. Objective 4.1.1 Inform stakeholders of services and get their feedback on VR performance in meeting needs. Objective 4.1.2 Provide employment preparations and supports for people with disabilities referred by partner agencies and organizations. Objective 4.1.3 Build relationships that encourage complementary interagency collaboration. Strategy 4.2 Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for clients. Objective 4.2.1 Build and maintain VR Business Partnership Network and collaborate with business and industry associations. Objective 4.2.2 Actively use business advisory councils for guidance on employment standards and training curricula. Objective 4.2.3 Advanced solutions for job matching through Career Connect and Universal Business Database. Objective 4.2.4 Provide outsource opportunities that meet clients' job readiness training needs and local labor market and industry needs.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

Goals 1 and 4, and their associated strategies and objectives, support activities related to identifying and removing barriers to equitable access to and participation in the SCVRD program, including supported employment services.

Goal 1 Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized individualized services. Strategy 1.1 Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities. Objective 1.1.1 Support continuous improvement within Program Integrity: Productivity, Compliance Assurance, and Customer Service. Objective 1.1.2 Increase services to underserved and emerging disability populations. Objective 1.1.3 Identify opportunities

for matching client strengths and abilities with community employment needs. Objective 1.1.4 Demonstrate effectiveness in national comparative data for performance measures. Strategy 1.2 Enhance school-to-work transition services. Objective 1.2.1 Maximize relationships with education officials in all S.C. school districts. Objective 1.2.2 Improve services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities. Objective 1.2.3 Enhance services for at-risk youth with disabilities. Objective 1.2.4 Expose students with disabilities to careers in science, technology, engineering and math through High School/High Tech programs. Strategy 1.3 Enhance job driven vocational training programs. Objective 1.3.1 Develop job-readiness skills through work training center activities, demand-driven skills training, and on-the-job supports. Objective 1.3.2 Equip clients for job search through resume development, interviewing skills, other "soft" skills, and disability-related classes. Goal 2 We will be a team of highly qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability and opportunity to excel. Strategy 2.1 Provide training to equip staff to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services. Objective 2.1.1 Develop training based on needs assessment in accordance with the State Plan. Objective 2.1.2 Enhance job-specific training for specialized areas of agency operations. Strategy 2.2 Foster opportunities for professional growth and the enhancement of future leadership. Objective 2.2.1 Provide a professional development and leadership program. Objective 2.2.2 Maintain a working environment that fosters measurable increases in job satisfaction and rewards accomplishment. Objective 2.2.3 Structure a work environment that promotes employee accountability for performance and ethical standards. Goal 3 Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us. Strategy 3.1 Successful outcomes for clients and claimants using resources efficiently. Objective 3.1.1 High return on investment for clients through successful employment outcomes. Objective 3.1.2 Demonstrate cost effectiveness that compares favorably with national/regional peers. Strategy 3.2 Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes. Objective 3.2.1 Conversion to electronic case management system encompassing time management and compliance aids with statewide access. Objective 3.2.2 Expansion and enhancement of quality assurance and program evaluation. Objective 3.2.3 Evaluation and development of fiscal and programmatic joint processes. Strategy 3.3 Ensure safety and adequacy of infrastructure. Objective 3.3.1 I.T. and systems security. Objective 3.3.2 Promote a safe environment for staff and clients, resulting in minimal rates of injury. Goal 4 Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders. Strategy 4.1 Increase collaboration with other state agencies and community organizations. Objective 4.1.1 Inform stakeholders of services and get their feedback on VR performance in meeting needs. Objective 4.1.2 Provide employment preparations and supports for people with disabilities referred by partner agencies and organizations. Objective 4.1.3 Build relationships that encourage complementary interagency collaboration. Strategy 4.2 Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for clients. Objective 4.2.1 Build and maintain VR Business Partnership Network and collaborate with business and industry associations. Objective 4.2.2 Actively use business advisory councils for guidance on employment standards and training curricula. Objective 4.2.3 Advanced solutions for job matching through Career Connect and Universal Business Database. Objective 4.2.4 Provide outsource opportunities that meet clients' job readiness training needs and local labor market and industry needs.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

Performance measures are in place for evaluation of the extent to which the goals, strategies and objectives identified in the Strategic Planning Template were achieved. These include both federally required Standards and Indicators (to be updated based on WIOA common performance measures) as well as internal measures of goal attainment. Associated objectives that are tied to specific results are indicated.

Item 1

Performance Measure: Successful Employment Outcomes (state fiscal year)

Last Value: 6,382

Current Value: 6,747

Target Value: 7,252

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: internal IT program; real-time

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: number of individuals exiting program in employment and who remain employed for at least 90 days

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4

Item 2

Performance Measure: Rehabilitations Per 100,000 Population; national and regional ranking

Last Value: 114; US: 6th; Southeast: 2nd

Current Value: 136; updated national data unavailable

Target Value: Top 5 in US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and US Census; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: state population estimate divided by number of successful outcomes

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 3.1.1

Item 3

Performance Measure: Change in number of successful employment outcomes from previous federal fiscal year

Last Value: 1,141 increase

Current Value: 232 increase (projected)

Target Value: increase of at least 1 (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the difference between the number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current perf. period and the number who achieved an employment outcome during the previous period

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 4

Performance Measure: Percentage of clients with employment outcomes

Last Value: 60.15%

Current Value: 56.08%

Target Value: 55.8% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the percentage of individuals exiting the program during the performance period who have achieved an employment outcome after receiving services

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 5

Performance Measure: Percentage of clients with employment outcomes who were competitively employed

Last Value: 99.54%

Current Value: 98.53%

Target Value: 72.6% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the percentage of individuals who exit the VR program in employment in integrated settings without ongoing support services or self-employment with hourly rate of earnings equivalent to at least the federal or state minimum wage rate, whichever is higher, based on all individuals exiting with an employment outcome after receiving services

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 6

Performance Measure: Percentage of competitively employed clients having significant disabilities

Last Value: 90.22%

Current Value: 91.70%

Target Value: 62.54% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: percentage of those individuals who are competitively employed after receiving services who have disabilities classified as significant

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 7

Performance Measure: Ratio of rehabilitated client wages compared to state average wage

Last Value: 0.55

Current Value: 0.57

Target Value: 0.52 (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: ratio of the average hourly earnings of all individuals in competitive employment after VR services to the average hourly earnings of all employed individuals in the state

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 8

Performance Measure: Difference in percentage of clients self-supporting after services compared with before

Last Value: 66.97%

Current Value: 69.94%

Target Value: 53% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: for all individuals with competitive employment outcomes, the difference in the percentage of individuals who at program entry reported their income as the largest single source of support, and the percentage that reported their personal income as the largest single source of support at program exit

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 9

Performance Measure: Service rate for minority clients as ratio to non-minority

Last Value: 1.01

Current Value: 0.96

Target Value: 0.8 (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the ratio of the percent of individuals with a minority background to the percent of individuals without a minority background exiting the program who received VR services

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 10

Performance Measure: Program Integrity - Customer Service

Last Value: 92.59%

Current Value: 96.29%

Target Value: improvement

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet

Reporting Frequency: quarterly

Calculation Method: percentages of satisfied ratings in client surveys (90% weight) and percentages of satisfied ratings in mystery shopper surveys (10% weight)

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.2.1

Item 11

Performance Measure: Program Integrity - Compliance Assurance

Last Value: 97.20%

Current Value: 97.23%

Target Value: improvement

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet

Reporting Frequency: quarterly

Calculation Method: adherence to client services policy as evidenced in quality assurance reviews; total number of correct procedural and substantial questions divided by total number of correct and incorrect questions

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 3.2.2

Item 12

Performance Measure: Program Integrity – Productivity

Last Value: 97.41%

Current Value: 96.65%

Target Value: 100%

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet

Reporting Frequency: quarterly

Calculation Method: total number of clients who have achieved successful outcomes divided by the prorated goal

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4

Item 13

Performance Measure: Average Total Cost Per Client Served (lower = better); national and regional ranking

Last Value: $2,093; 13th in US; 3rd in Southeast

Current Value: $2,218; updated national data unavailable

Target Value: Top 10 in US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: data from RSA-2 applied to internal calculation annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total VR program expenditures divided by total persons served

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 1.1.1

Item 14

Performance Measure: Average Total Cost Per Rehabilitation (lower = better); national and regional ranking

Last Value: $14,565; 7th in US; 1st in Southeast

Current Value: $12,693; updated national data unavailable

Target Value: Top 5 in US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: data from RSA-2 and RSA-911 applied to internal calculation annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total VR program expenditures divided by total successful employment outcomes

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1., 3.1.2

Item 15

Performance Measure: Amount each successfully rehabilitated client will repay in taxes for each dollar spent on his/her rehabilitation

Last Value: $4.83

Current Value: $4.54

Target Value: increase

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: internal from IT report calculated annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: factors include: total overhead cost; adjustment rate for wage change; unemployment rate; mortality rate; underestimation of referral earnings; gain not attributable to VR services; fringe benefits factor; discount rate; tax factor; retirement age

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1

Item 16

Performance Measure: Number of years for each rehabilitated client to repay cost of rehabilitation

Last Value: 4.44

Current Value: 4.51

Target Value: decrease

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: internal from IT report calculated annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: factors include: total overhead cost; adjustment rate for wage change; unemployment rate; mortality rate; underestimation of referral earnings; gain not attributable to VR services; fringe benefits factor; discount rate; tax factor; retirement age

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1.

Item 17

Performance Measure: Reimbursement from Social Security Administration for SCVRD Job Placements

Last Value: $906,146

Current Value: $1,013,544

Target Value: 10% increase

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: Social Security Administration; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: SSA reimburses state VR agencies for the cost of services provided to beneficiaries with disabilities if services result in achievement of employment at a specified earnings level and provide savings to the SSA trust fund

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.3, 3.1.1

Item 18

Performance Measure: New Applicants Referred to SCVRD

Last Value: 13,716

Current Value: 14,780

Target Value: increase and representative of needs

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; real-time

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: count of new applicants statewide

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.2

Item 19

Performance Measure: Successfully rehabilitated clients working 35+ hours per week exceeds national and regional VR averages

Last Value: 64% SCVRD; 53% Southeast; 48% US (FFY13)

Current Value: 63.4% SCVRD; FFY14 national data unavailable

Target Value: higher percentage than SE and US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept.30

Data Source and Availability: RSA database and internal data; annual

Reporting Frequency: annually

Calculation Method: percentage of status 26 (employed at exit) clients working 35+ hours/week

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.3

Item 20

Performance Measure: Successfully rehabilitated clients (transition-aged) working 35+ hours per week exceeds national and regional VR averages

Last Value: 57% SCVRD; 44% Southeast; 42% US (FFY13)

Current Value: 56% SCVRD; FFY 14 national data unavailable

Target Value: higher percentage than SE and US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA database and Internal data; annual

Reporting Frequency: annually

Calculation Method: percentage of status 26 (employed at exit) clients ages 14-24 working 35+ hours/week

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 21

Performance Measure: Increase successful employment outcomes for transition-age clients (14-24)

Last Value: 1,838

Current Value: 1,969

Target Value: increase

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: SCVRD Planning and Program Development office; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: Totals from all SCVRD field office locations

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 22

Performance Measure: Percentage of individuals served by agency who are in transition age range (14-24)

Last Value: 38.1% SFY2014

Current Value: 37.7% SFY2015

Target Value: +/-' 5% of US avg. (34.9% in 2013, last available data)

Time Applicable: July 1 - June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal data; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: total number of individuals between the ages of 14 and 24 at application who received services divided by the total number of individuals who received services multiplied by 100

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 23

Performance Measure: Student participation in Disability Mentoring Day activities

Last Value: 1,083

Current Value: 1,118

Target Value: increase

Time Applicable: Oct-13

Data Source and Availability: Planning and Program Development; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: total number of students with disabilities participating in local Disability Mentoring Day activities in which employers provide job shadow/mentoring opportunities

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2,1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 24

Performance Measure: Positive outcomes in employee well-being surveys

Last Value: 3.95 on scale of 5.0

Current Value: 3.94 on scale of 5.0

Target Value: Improvement

Time Applicable: July 1- June 30

Data Source and Availability: Surveys compiled by Human Resources department annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Survey of 16 questions related to job satisfaction circulated to all locations and position types; each answered on scale of 5; measure shown is composite average.

Associated Objective(s): 2.2.2, 2.2.1, 3.1.2

Item 25

Performance Measure: Agency staff turnover rates compare favorably with average for S.C. state government and average for state governments nationally

Last Value: 9.1% SCVRD; 10.9% SC state gov. (estimated); 16.2% nationally

Current Value: 10.2% SCVRD; 10.9% SC state gov. (estimated); 14.9% nationally

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: SCVRD: July 1-June 30; most recent available data for comparative

Data Source and Availability: data from state Office of Human Resources, US Department of Labor, SCVRD, annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: compiled from most recently available state and national data; current state comparative value estimated from available OHR data

Associated Objective(s): 2.2.2

Item 26

Performance Measure: Training events for staff (face-to-face, webinars, videoconference, online)

Last Value: 613

Current Value: 684

Target Value: N/A

Time Applicable: July 1- June 30

Data Source and Availability: HRD director; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: bi-annually

Calculation Method: totals from training record system

Associated Objective(s): 2.1.1

Item 27

Performance Measure: Professional Development & Leadership Program completion

Last Value: 80 (professional development level)

Current Value: 37 (professional development); 63 (leadership)

Target Value: 47 (professional development; 33 (leadership)

Time Applicable: July 1- June 30

Data Source and Availability: HRD director; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: number of employees who complete each program

Associated Objective(s): 2.2.1, 2.2.2

Item 28

Performance Measure: Lower the Experience Modifier (EMOD) through excellence in safety precautions

Last Value: 1.13

Current Value: 1.11

Target Value: Lower

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: State Accident Fund

Reporting Frequency: Annual

Calculation Method: EMOD for all 24 work training centers added to EMOD for agency employees, then averaged.

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2

Item 29

Performance Measure: Lower Worker's Compensation premiums

Last Value: $114,857 reduction

Current Value: $81,269 increase (however, it represents 2nd lowest premium since 2003)

Target Value: reduction

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: State Accident Fund premium notices

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Compare total premium amount from all policies from year to year and report change amount

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 3.1.2

Item 30

Performance Measure: Work Training Center client injury rate lower than Goods Producing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: 1.1% SCVRD, 4.1% BLS

Current Value: 1.1% SCVRD, 3.7% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of client trainee injuries divided by total number of client trainees served; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2

Item 31

Performance Measure: Employee injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: 1.8% SCVRD, 3.2% BLS

Current Value: 1.3% SCVRD, 3.6% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 2.2.2

Item 32

Performance Measure: Work Training Center client lost time to injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: new measure

Current Value: .0006% SCVRD, 1.1% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2

Item 33

Performance Measure: Employee lost time to injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: new measure

Current Value: .001% SCVRD, 1.1% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 2.2.2

Item 34

Performance Measure: Growth in Business Partnership Network

Last Value: 343 members

Current Value: 351 members

Target Value: Increase

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Client Services (internal)

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Collected internally from area offices

Associated Objective(s): 4.2.1, 4.2.4

Item 35

Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Cost per Case

Last Value: $437.77

Current Value: $490.01

Target Value: no standard issued

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total operational cost of DDS divided by total number of claims cleared

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 36

Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Documentation Accuracy

Last Value: 98.60%

Current Value: 99.10%

Target Value: 97%

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Percentage of correct decisions from random sample selected and reviewed by SSA

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 37

Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Overall Processing Time

Last Value: 118 days

Current Value: 114.3 days

Target Value: 109 days

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total time from the date of application to the actual decision date

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 38

Performance Measure: Number of client complaints to Client Relations office

Last Value: 127

Current Value: 86

Target Value: Lower

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Client Relations database, reported to RSA; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: number of complaints received either directly from clients or through other advocacy/referral sources

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 2.2.3, 3.2.2

Item 39

Performance Measure: Percentage of client complaints resolved without need for formal administrative review

Last Value: 99.2%

Current Value: 98.8%

Target Value: 100%

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Client Relations database, reported to RSA; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: percentage of complaints received by Client Relations office resolved without client request for a hearing with an independent hearing officer

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 2.2.3, 3.2.2

Item 40

Performance Measure: Single Audit results

Last Value: 2 findings

Current Value: 1 finding

Target Value: 0 findings

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 2014

Data Source and Availability: Office of State Auditor: annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: application of internal controls and accounting compliance with federal Vocational Rehabilitation grant requirements and agency policies

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 3.2.3

Item 41

Performance Measure: Agreed Upon Procedures audit results

Last Value: 1 finding

Current Value: 1 finding involving 3 errors in reporting packages

Target Value: 0 findings

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 2014

Data Source and Availability: Office of State Auditor; annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: application of agreed-upon procedures to internal controls and accounting records as audited by independent contractor of the State Auditor office

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 3.2.3

Item 42

Performance Measure: Administrative Costs as a percentage of total operating expenditures

Last Value: 5.55%

Current Value: 5.43%

Target Value: < 7%

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: SCEIS; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: administrative costs as a percentage of all costs

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 43

Performance Measure: Rehabilitation rate for clients in work training centers

Last Value: 60.1%

Current Value: 57.9%

Target Value: 55.8% (national standard)

Time Applicable: July 1 - June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: number of clients in job readiness training who progressed to competitive employment divided by the sum of that number plus the number whose cases were closed without employment

Associated Objective(s): 1.3.1, 1.3.2,1.1.1, 1.1.3, 4.2.4

Item 45

Performance Measure: Increase in Cooperative Agreements associated with strategic goals

Last Value: New measure

Current Value: 270

Target Value: N/A

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: new memoranda of understanding with community resources, all types

Associated Objective(s): 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Performance measures are in place for evaluation of the extent to which the goals, strategies and objectives identified in the Strategic Planning Template were achieved. These include both federally required Standards and Indicators (to be updated based on WIOA common performance measures) as well as internal measures of goal attainment. Associated objectives that are tied to specific results are indicated.

Factors that impeded the achievement of goals and priorities, or resulted in a necessary shift in goals and priorities during the year, include: unanticipated staffing vacancies; adjustments and programmatic changes required for full implementation of requirements under WIOA.

Item 1

Performance Measure: Successful Employment Outcomes (state fiscal year)

Last Value: 6,382

Current Value: 6,747

Target Value: 7,252

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: internal IT program; real-time

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: number of individuals exiting program in employment and who remain employed for at least 90 days

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4

Item 2

Performance Measure: Rehabilitations Per 100,000 Population; national and regional ranking

Last Value: 114; US: 6th; Southeast: 2nd

Current Value: 136; updated national data unavailable

Target Value: Top 5 in US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and US Census; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: state population estimate divided by number of successful outcomes

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 3.1.1

Item 3

Performance Measure: Change in number of successful employment outcomes from previous federal fiscal year

Last Value: 1,141 increase

Current Value: 232 increase (projected)

Target Value: increase of at least 1 (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the difference between the number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current perf. period and the number who achieved an employment outcome during the previous period

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 4

Performance Measure: Percentage of clients with employment outcomes

Last Value: 60.15%

Current Value: 56.08%

Target Value: 55.8% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the percentage of individuals exiting the program during the performance period who have achieved an employment outcome after receiving services

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 5

Performance Measure: Percentage of clients with employment outcomes who were competitively employed

Last Value: 99.54%

Current Value: 98.53%

Target Value: 72.6% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the percentage of individuals who exit the VR program in employment in integrated settings without ongoing support services or self-employment with hourly rate of earnings equivalent to at least the federal or state minimum wage rate, whichever is higher, based on all individuals exiting with an employment outcome after receiving services

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 6

Performance Measure: Percentage of competitively employed clients having significant disabilities

Last Value: 90.22%

Current Value: 91.70%

Target Value: 62.54% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: percentage of those individuals who are competitively employed after receiving services who have disabilities classified as significant

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 7

Performance Measure: Ratio of rehabilitated client wages compared to state average wage

Last Value: 0.55

Current Value: 0.57

Target Value: 0.52 (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: ratio of the average hourly earnings of all individuals in competitive employment after VR services to the average hourly earnings of all employed individuals in the state

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 8

Performance Measure: Difference in percentage of clients self-supporting after services compared with before

Last Value: 66.97%

Current Value: 69.94%

Target Value: 53% (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: for all individuals with competitive employment outcomes, the difference in the percentage of individuals who at program entry reported their income as the largest single source of support, and the percentage that reported their personal income as the largest single source of support at program exit

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 9

Performance Measure: Service rate for minority clients as ratio to non-minority

Last Value: 1.01

Current Value: 0.96

Target Value: 0.8 (national standard)

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: the ratio of the percent of individuals with a minority background to the percent of individuals without a minority background exiting the program who received VR services

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4

Item 10

Performance Measure: Program Integrity - Customer Service

Last Value: 92.59%

Current Value: 96.29%

Target Value: improvement

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet

Reporting Frequency: quarterly

Calculation Method: percentages of satisfied ratings in client surveys (90% weight) and percentages of satisfied ratings in mystery shopper surveys (10% weight)

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.2.1

Item 11

Performance Measure: Program Integrity - Compliance Assurance

Last Value: 97.20%

Current Value: 97.23%

Target Value: improvement

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet

Reporting Frequency: quarterly

Calculation Method: adherence to client services policy as evidenced in quality assurance reviews; total number of correct procedural and substantial questions divided by total number of correct and incorrect questions

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 3.2.2

Item 12

Performance Measure: Program Integrity – Productivity

Last Value: 97.41%

Current Value: 96.65%

Target Value: 100%

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet

Reporting Frequency: quarterly

Calculation Method: total number of clients who have achieved successful outcomes divided by the prorated goal

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4

Item 13

Performance Measure: Average Total Cost Per Client Served (lower = better); national and regional ranking

Last Value: $2,093; 13th in US; 3rd in Southeast

Current Value: $2,218; updated national data unavailable

Target Value: Top 10 in US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: data from RSA-2 applied to internal calculation annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total VR program expenditures divided by total persons served

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 1.1.1

Item 14

Performance Measure: Average Total Cost Per Rehabilitation (lower = better); national and regional ranking

Last Value: $14,565; 7th in US; 1st in Southeast

Current Value: $12,693; updated national data unavailable

Target Value: Top 5 in US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: data from RSA-2 and RSA-911 applied to internal calculation annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total VR program expenditures divided by total successful employment outcomes

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1., 3.1.2

Item 15

Performance Measure: Amount each successfully rehabilitated client will repay in taxes for each dollar spent on his/her rehabilitation

Last Value: $4.83

Current Value: $4.54

Target Value: increase

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: internal from IT report calculated annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: factors include: total overhead cost; adjustment rate for wage change; unemployment rate; mortality rate; underestimation of referral earnings; gain not attributable to VR services; fringe benefits factor; discount rate; tax factor; retirement age

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1

Item 16

Performance Measure: Number of years for each rehabilitated client to repay cost of rehabilitation

Last Value: 4.44

Current Value: 4.51

Target Value: decrease

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: internal from IT report calculated annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: factors include: total overhead cost; adjustment rate for wage change; unemployment rate; mortality rate; underestimation of referral earnings; gain not attributable to VR services; fringe benefits factor; discount rate; tax factor; retirement age

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1.

Item 17

Performance Measure: Reimbursement from Social Security Administration for SCVRD Job Placements

Last Value: $906,146

Current Value: $1,013,544

Target Value: 10% increase

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: Social Security Administration; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: SSA reimburses state VR agencies for the cost of services provided to beneficiaries with disabilities if services result in achievement of employment at a specified earnings level and provide savings to the SSA trust fund

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.3, 3.1.1

Item 18

Performance Measure: New Applicants Referred to SCVRD

Last Value: 13,716

Current Value: 14,780

Target Value: increase and representative of needs

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; real-time

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: count of new applicants statewide

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.2

Item 19

Performance Measure: Successfully rehabilitated clients working 35+ hours per week exceeds national and regional VR averages

Last Value: 64% SCVRD; 53% Southeast; 48% US (FFY13)

Current Value: 63.4% SCVRD; FFY14 national data unavailable

Target Value: higher percentage than SE and US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept.30

Data Source and Availability: RSA database and internal data; annual

Reporting Frequency: annually

Calculation Method: percentage of status 26 (employed at exit) clients working 35+ hours/week

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.3

Item 20

Performance Measure: Successfully rehabilitated clients (transition-aged) working 35+ hours per week exceeds national and regional VR averages

Last Value: 57% SCVRD; 44% Southeast; 42% US (FFY13)

Current Value: 56% SCVRD; FFY 14 national data unavailable

Target Value: higher percentage than SE and US

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: RSA database and Internal data; annual

Reporting Frequency: annually

Calculation Method: percentage of status 26 (employed at exit) clients ages 14-24 working 35+ hours/week

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 21

Performance Measure: Increase successful employment outcomes for transition-age clients (14-24)

Last Value: 1,838

Current Value: 1,969

Target Value: increase

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: SCVRD Planning and Program Development office; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: Totals from all SCVRD field office locations

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 22

Performance Measure: Percentage of individuals served by agency who are in transition age range (14-24)

Last Value: 38.1% SFY2014

Current Value: 37.7% SFY2015

Target Value: +/-' 5% of US avg. (34.9% in 2013, last available data)

Time Applicable: July 1 - June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal data; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: total number of individuals between the ages of 14 and 24 at application who received services divided by the total number of individuals who received services multiplied by 100

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 23

Performance Measure: Student participation in Disability Mentoring Day activities

Last Value: 1,083

Current Value: 1,118

Target Value: increase

Time Applicable: Oct-13

Data Source and Availability: Planning and Program Development; annual

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: total number of students with disabilities participating in local Disability Mentoring Day activities in which employers provide job shadow/mentoring opportunities

Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2,1.2.3, 1.2.4

Item 24

Performance Measure: Positive outcomes in employee well-being surveys

Last Value: 3.95 on scale of 5.0

Current Value: 3.94 on scale of 5.0

Target Value: Improvement

Time Applicable: July 1- June 30

Data Source and Availability: Surveys compiled by Human Resources department annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Survey of 16 questions related to job satisfaction circulated to all locations and position types; each answered on scale of 5; measure shown is composite average.

Associated Objective(s): 2.2.2, 2.2.1, 3.1.2

Item 25

Performance Measure: Agency staff turnover rates compare favorably with average for S.C. state government and average for state governments nationally

Last Value: 9.1% SCVRD; 10.9% SC state gov. (estimated); 16.2% nationally

Current Value: 10.2% SCVRD; 10.9% SC state gov. (estimated); 14.9% nationally

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: SCVRD: July 1-June 30; most recent available data for comparative

Data Source and Availability: data from state Office of Human Resources, US Department of Labor, SCVRD, annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: compiled from most recently available state and national data; current state comparative value estimated from available OHR data

Associated Objective(s): 2.2.2

Item 26

Performance Measure: Training events for staff (face-to-face, webinars, videoconference, online)

Last Value: 613

Current Value: 684

Target Value: N/A

Time Applicable: July 1- June 30

Data Source and Availability: HRD director; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: bi-annually

Calculation Method: totals from training record system

Associated Objective(s): 2.1.1

Item 27

Performance Measure: Professional Development & Leadership Program completion

Last Value: 80 (professional development level)

Current Value: 37 (professional development); 63 (leadership)

Target Value: 47 (professional development; 33 (leadership)

Time Applicable: July 1- June 30

Data Source and Availability: HRD director; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: number of employees who complete each program

Associated Objective(s): 2.2.1, 2.2.2

Item 28

Performance Measure: Lower the Experience Modifier (EMOD) through excellence in safety precautions

Last Value: 1.13

Current Value: 1.11

Target Value: Lower

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: State Accident Fund

Reporting Frequency: Annual

Calculation Method: EMOD for all 24 work training centers added to EMOD for agency employees, then averaged.

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2

Item 29

Performance Measure: Lower Worker's Compensation premiums

Last Value: $114,857 reduction

Current Value: $81,269 increase (however, it represents 2nd lowest premium since 2003)

Target Value: reduction

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: State Accident Fund premium notices

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Compare total premium amount from all policies from year to year and report change amount

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 3.1.2

Item 30

Performance Measure: Work Training Center client injury rate lower than Goods Producing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: 1.1% SCVRD, 4.1% BLS

Current Value: 1.1% SCVRD, 3.7% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of client trainee injuries divided by total number of client trainees served; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2

Item 31

Performance Measure: Employee injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: 1.8% SCVRD, 3.2% BLS

Current Value: 1.3% SCVRD, 3.6% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 2.2.2

Item 32

Performance Measure: Work Training Center client lost time to injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: new measure

Current Value: .0006% SCVRD, 1.1% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2

Item 33

Performance Measure: Employee lost time to injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS)

Last Value: new measure

Current Value: .001% SCVRD, 1.1% BLS

Target Value: lower rate

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data

Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 2.2.2

Item 34

Performance Measure: Growth in Business Partnership Network

Last Value: 343 members

Current Value: 351 members

Target Value: Increase

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Client Services (internal)

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Collected internally from area offices

Associated Objective(s): 4.2.1, 4.2.4

Item 35

Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Cost per Case

Last Value: $437.77

Current Value: $490.01

Target Value: no standard issued

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total operational cost of DDS divided by total number of claims cleared

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 36

Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Documentation Accuracy

Last Value: 98.60%

Current Value: 99.10%

Target Value: 97%

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Percentage of correct decisions from random sample selected and reviewed by SSA

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 37

Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Overall Processing Time

Last Value: 118 days

Current Value: 114.3 days

Target Value: 109 days

Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30

Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: Total time from the date of application to the actual decision date

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 38

Performance Measure: Number of client complaints to Client Relations office

Last Value: 127

Current Value: 86

Target Value: Lower

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Client Relations database, reported to RSA; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: number of complaints received either directly from clients or through other advocacy/referral sources

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 2.2.3, 3.2.2

Item 39

Performance Measure: Percentage of client complaints resolved without need for formal administrative review

Last Value: 99.2%

Current Value: 98.8%

Target Value: 100%

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Client Relations database, reported to RSA; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: percentage of complaints received by Client Relations office resolved without client request for a hearing with an independent hearing officer

Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 2.2.3, 3.2.2

Item 40

Performance Measure: Single Audit results

Last Value: 2 findings

Current Value: 1 finding

Target Value: 0 findings

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 2014

Data Source and Availability: Office of State Auditor: annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: application of internal controls and accounting compliance with federal Vocational Rehabilitation grant requirements and agency policies

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 3.2.3

Item 41

Performance Measure: Agreed Upon Procedures audit results

Last Value: 1 finding

Current Value: 1 finding involving 3 errors in reporting packages

Target Value: 0 findings

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 2014

Data Source and Availability: Office of State Auditor; annually

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: application of agreed-upon procedures to internal controls and accounting records as audited by independent contractor of the State Auditor office

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 3.2.3

Item 42

Performance Measure: Administrative Costs as a percentage of total operating expenditures

Last Value: 5.55%

Current Value: 5.43%

Target Value: < 7%

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: SCEIS; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: administrative costs as a percentage of all costs

Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2

Item 43

Performance Measure: Rehabilitation rate for clients in work training centers

Last Value: 60.1%

Current Value: 57.9%

Target Value: 55.8% (national standard)

Time Applicable: July 1 - June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; ongoing

Reporting Frequency: monthly

Calculation Method: number of clients in job readiness training who progressed to competitive employment divided by the sum of that number plus the number whose cases were closed without employment

Associated Objective(s): 1.3.1, 1.3.2,1.1.1, 1.1.3, 4.2.4

Item 45

Performance Measure: Increase in Cooperative Agreements associated with strategic goals

Last Value: New measure

Current Value: 270

Target Value: N/A

Time Applicable: July 1-June 30

Data Source and Availability: Internal

Reporting Frequency: annual

Calculation Method: new memoranda of understanding with community resources, all types

Associated Objective(s): 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

Strategies that contributed to the achievement of overall goals and specific objectives included: • Review and measurement of key performance indicators on a quarterly basis. • Monthly monitoring and specialized reporting on the results of outreach efforts to underserved and emerging disability populations. • Monthly monitoring and specialized reporting on services to youth and pre–employment transition services. • Dedicated staff for specific populations and specialized services: school–to–work transition; deaf and hard of hearing; supported employment. • Demonstration programs to enhance supported employment services and services for youth with the most significant disabilities, individuals diagnosed with ASD, and demand–driven training based on community labor market information.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

These goals were established based on the findings of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment, and are updated annually in conjunction with the agency's strategic planning efforts as well as state–specific reporting requirements. Each goal is tied to a defined strategy and set of objectives, designed to be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant/realistic and timely. These are long–term planning goals, strategies and objectives that include, at minimum, annual

assessment of results as well as adjustment and revision based on needs of the state and further implementation of WIOA.

Factors that impeded the achievement of goals and priorities, or resulted in a necessary shift in goals and priorities during the year, include: unanticipated staffing vacancies; adjustments and programmatic changes required for full implementation of requirements under WIOA.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

These results are based on current performance indicators. They will be updated in the future to incorporate performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

Item 1 Performance Measure: Successful Employment Outcomes (state fiscal year) Last Value: 6,382 Current Value: 6,747 Target Value: 7,252 Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: internal IT program; real-time Reporting Frequency: monthly Calculation Method: number of individuals exiting program in employment and who remain employed for at least 90 days Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4 Item 2 Performance Measure: Rehabilitations Per 100,000 Population; national and regional ranking Last Value: 114; US: 6th; Southeast: 2nd Current Value: 136; updated national data unavailable Target Value: Top 5 in US Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and US Census; annual Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: state population estimate divided by number of successful outcomes Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 3.1.1 Item 3 Performance Measure: Change in number of successful employment outcomes from previous federal fiscal year Last Value: 1,141 increase Current Value: 232 increase (projected) Target Value: increase of at least 1 (national standard) Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: the difference between the number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current perf. period and the number who achieved an employment outcome during the previous period Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4 Item 4 Performance Measure: Percentage of clients with employment outcomes Last Value: 60.15% Current Value: 56.08% Target Value: 55.8% (national standard) Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: the percentage of individuals exiting the program during the performance period who have achieved an employment outcome after receiving services Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4 Item 5 Performance Measure: Percentage of clients with employment outcomes who were competitively employed Last Value: 99.54% Current Value: 98.53% Target Value: 72.6% (national standard) Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: the percentage of individuals who exit the VR program in employment in integrated settings without ongoing support services or self-employment with hourly rate of earnings equivalent to at least the federal or state minimum wage rate, whichever is higher, based on all individuals exiting with an employment outcome after receiving services Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4 Item 6 Performance Measure: Percentage of competitively employed clients having significant disabilities Last Value: 90.22% Current Value: 91.70% Target Value: 62.54% (national standard) Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: percentage of those individuals who are competitively employed after receiving services who have disabilities classified as significant Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4 Item 7 Performance Measure: Ratio of rehabilitated client wages compared to state average wage Last Value: 0.55 Current Value: 0.57 Target Value: 0.52 (national standard) Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept.

30 Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: ratio of the average hourly earnings of all individuals in competitive employment after VR services to the average hourly earnings of all employed individuals in the state Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4 Item 8 Performance Measure: Difference in percentage of clients self-supporting after services compared with before Last Value: 66.97% Current Value: 69.94% Target Value: 53% (national standard) Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: for all individuals with competitive employment outcomes, the difference in the percentage of individuals who at program entry reported their income as the largest single source of support, and the percentage that reported their personal income as the largest single source of support at program exit Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4 Item 9 Performance Measure: Service rate for minority clients as ratio to non-minority Last Value: 1.01 Current Value: 0.96 Target Value: 0.8 (national standard) Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: RSA Standards and Indicators and internal data Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: the ratio of the percent of individuals with a minority background to the percent of individuals without a minority background exiting the program who received VR services Associated Objective(s): 1.1.4 Item 10 Performance Measure: Program Integrity - Customer Service Last Value: 92.59% Current Value: 96.29% Target Value: improvement Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet Reporting Frequency: quarterly Calculation Method: percentages of satisfied ratings in client surveys (90% weight) and percentages of satisfied ratings in mystery shopper surveys (10% weight) Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.2.1 Item 11 Performance Measure: Program Integrity - Compliance Assurance Last Value: 97.20% Current Value: 97.23% Target Value: improvement Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet Reporting Frequency: quarterly Calculation Method: adherence to client services policy as evidenced in quality assurance reviews; total number of correct procedural and substantial questions divided by total number of correct and incorrect questions Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 3.2.2 Item 12 Performance Measure: Program Integrity – Productivity Last Value: 97.41% Current Value: 96.65% Target Value: 100% Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; Intranet Reporting Frequency: quarterly Calculation Method: total number of clients who have achieved successful outcomes divided by the prorated goal Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4 Item 13 Performance Measure: Average Total Cost Per Client Served (lower = better); national and regional ranking Last Value: $2,093; 13th in US; 3rd in Southeast Current Value: $2,218; updated national data unavailable Target Value: Top 10 in US Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: data from RSA-2 applied to internal calculation annually Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: Total VR program expenditures divided by total persons served Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 1.1.1 Item 14 Performance Measure: Average Total Cost Per Rehabilitation (lower = better); national and regional ranking Last Value: $14,565; 7th in US; 1st in Southeast Current Value: $12,693; updated national data unavailable Target Value: Top 5 in US Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: data from RSA-2 and RSA-911 applied to internal calculation annually Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: Total VR program expenditures divided by total successful employment outcomes Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1., 3.1.2 Item 15 Performance Measure: Amount each successfully rehabilitated client will repay in taxes for each dollar spent on his/her rehabilitation Last Value: $4.83 Current Value: $4.54 Target Value: increase Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: internal from IT report calculated annually Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: factors include: total overhead cost; adjustment rate for wage change; unemployment rate; mortality rate; underestimation of referral earnings; gain not attributable to VR services; fringe benefits factor; discount rate; tax factor; retirement age Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1 Item 16 Performance Measure: Number of years for each rehabilitated client to repay cost of rehabilitation Last Value: 4.44 Current Value: 4.51 Target Value: decrease Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: internal from IT report calculated annually Reporting

Frequency: annual Calculation Method: factors include: total overhead cost; adjustment rate for wage change; unemployment rate; mortality rate; underestimation of referral earnings; gain not attributable to VR services; fringe benefits factor; discount rate; tax factor; retirement age Associated Objective(s): 3.1.1. Item 17 Performance Measure: Reimbursement from Social Security Administration for SCVRD Job Placements Last Value: $906,146 Current Value: $1,013,544 Target Value: 10% increase Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: Social Security Administration; annual Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: SSA reimburses state VR agencies for the cost of services provided to beneficiaries with disabilities if services result in achievement of employment at a specified earnings level and provide savings to the SSA trust fund Associated Objective(s): 1.1.3, 3.1.1 Item 18 Performance Measure: New Applicants Referred to SCVRD Last Value: 13,716 Current Value: 14,780 Target Value: increase and representative of needs Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; real-time Reporting Frequency: monthly Calculation Method: count of new applicants statewide Associated Objective(s): 1.1.2, 4.1.1, 4.1.2 Item 19 Performance Measure: Successfully rehabilitated clients working 35+ hours per week exceeds national and regional VR averages Last Value: 64% SCVRD; 53% Southeast; 48% US (FFY13) Current Value: 63.4% SCVRD; FFY14 national data unavailable Target Value: higher percentage than SE and US Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept.30 Data Source and Availability: RSA database and internal data; annual Reporting Frequency: annually Calculation Method: percentage of status 26 (employed at exit) clients working 35+ hours/week Associated Objective(s): 1.1.3 Item 20 Performance Measure: Successfully rehabilitated clients (transition-aged) working 35+ hours per week exceeds national and regional VR averages Last Value: 57% SCVRD; 44% Southeast; 42% US (FFY13) Current Value: 56% SCVRD; FFY 14 national data unavailable Target Value: higher percentage than SE and US Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: RSA database and Internal data; annual Reporting Frequency: annually Calculation Method: percentage of status 26 (employed at exit) clients ages 14-24 working 35+ hours/week Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4 Item 21 Performance Measure: Increase successful employment outcomes for transition-age clients (14-24) Last Value: 1,838 Current Value: 1,969 Target Value: increase Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: SCVRD Planning and Program Development office; ongoing Reporting Frequency: monthly Calculation Method: Totals from all SCVRD field office locations Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4 Item 22 Performance Measure: Percentage of individuals served by agency who are in transition age range (14-24) Last Value: 38.1% SFY2014 Current Value: 37.7% SFY2015 Target Value: +/-' 5% of US avg. (34.9% in 2013, last available data) Time Applicable: July 1 - June 30 Data Source and Availability: Internal data; annual Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: total number of individuals between the ages of 14 and 24 at application who received services divided by the total number of individuals who received services multiplied by 100 Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4 Item 23 Performance Measure: Student participation in Disability Mentoring Day activities Last Value: 1,083 Current Value: 1,118 Target Value: increase Time Applicable: Oct-13 Data Source and Availability: Planning and Program Development; annual Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: total number of students with disabilities participating in local Disability Mentoring Day activities in which employers provide job shadow/mentoring opportunities Associated Objective(s): 1.2.1, 1.2.2,1.2.3, 1.2.4 Item 24 Performance Measure: Positive outcomes in employee well-being surveys Last Value: 3.95 on scale of 5.0 Current Value: 3.94 on scale of 5.0 Target Value: Improvement Time Applicable: July 1- June 30 Data Source and Availability: Surveys compiled by Human Resources department annually Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: Survey of 16 questions related to job satisfaction circulated to all locations and position types; each answered on scale of 5; measure shown is composite average. Associated Objective(s): 2.2.2, 2.2.1, 3.1.2 Item 25 Performance Measure: Agency staff turnover rates compare favorably with average for S.C. state government and average for state governments nationally Last Value: 9.1% SCVRD; 10.9% SC state gov. (estimated); 16.2% nationally Current Value: 10.2% SCVRD; 10.9% SC state gov. (estimated); 14.9% nationally Target Value: lower rate Time Applicable: SCVRD: July 1-June 30;

most recent available data for comparative Data Source and Availability: data from state Office of Human Resources, US Department of Labor, SCVRD, annually Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: compiled from most recently available state and national data; current state comparative value estimated from available OHR data Associated Objective(s): 2.2.2 Item 26 Performance Measure: Training events for staff (face-to-face, webinars, videoconference, online) Last Value: 613 Current Value: 684 Target Value: N/A Time Applicable: July 1- June 30 Data Source and Availability: HRD director; ongoing Reporting Frequency: bi-annually Calculation Method: totals from training record system Associated Objective(s): 2.1.1 Item 27 Performance Measure: Professional Development & Leadership Program completion Last Value: 80 (professional development level) Current Value: 37 (professional development); 63 (leadership) Target Value: 47 (professional development; 33 (leadership) Time Applicable: July 1- June 30 Data Source and Availability: HRD director; ongoing Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: number of employees who complete each program Associated Objective(s): 2.2.1, 2.2.2 Item 28 Performance Measure: Lower the Experience Modifier (EMOD) through excellence in safety precautions Last Value: 1.13 Current Value: 1.11 Target Value: Lower Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: State Accident Fund Reporting Frequency: Annual Calculation Method: EMOD for all 24 work training centers added to EMOD for agency employees, then averaged. Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2 Item 29 Performance Measure: Lower Worker's Compensation premiums Last Value: $114,857 reduction Current Value: $81,269 increase (however, it represents 2nd lowest premium since 2003) Target Value: reduction Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: State Accident Fund premium notices Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: Compare total premium amount from all policies from year to year and report change amount Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 3.1.2 Item 30 Performance Measure: Work Training Center client injury rate lower than Goods Producing Industries rate (BLS) Last Value: 1.1% SCVRD, 4.1% BLS Current Value: 1.1% SCVRD, 3.7% BLS Target Value: lower rate Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: Total number of client trainee injuries divided by total number of client trainees served; compared with BLS data Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2 Item 31 Performance Measure: Employee injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS) Last Value: 1.8% SCVRD, 3.2% BLS Current Value: 1.3% SCVRD, 3.6% BLS Target Value: lower rate Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 2.2.2 Item 32 Performance Measure: Work Training Center client lost time to injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS) Last Value: new measure Current Value: .0006% SCVRD, 1.1% BLS Target Value: lower rate Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2 Item 33 Performance Measure: Employee lost time to injury rate lower than Service Providing Industries rate (BLS) Last Value: new measure Current Value: .001% SCVRD, 1.1% BLS Target Value: lower rate Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: Bureau of Labor Statistics and SCVRD injury database Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: Total number of agency employee injuries divided by total number of agency employees; compared with BLS data Associated Objective(s): 3.3.2, 2.2.2 Item 34 Performance Measure: Growth in Business Partnership Network Last Value: 343 members Current Value: 351 members Target Value: Increase Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: Client Services (internal) Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: Collected internally from area offices Associated Objective(s): 4.2.1, 4.2.4 Item 35 Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Cost per Case Last Value: $437.77 Current Value: $490.01 Target Value: no standard issued Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued

internally by SSA Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: Total operational cost of DDS divided by total number of claims cleared Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2 Item 36 Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Documentation Accuracy Last Value: 98.60% Current Value: 99.10% Target Value: 97% Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: Percentage of correct decisions from random sample selected and reviewed by SSA Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2 Item 37 Performance Measure: SSA Disability Determination Overall Processing Time Last Value: 118 days Current Value: 114.3 days Target Value: 109 days Time Applicable: Oct. 1-Sept. 30 Data Source and Availability: SSA Management Information; issued internally by SSA Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: Total time from the date of application to the actual decision date Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2 Item 38 Performance Measure: Number of client complaints to Client Relations office Last Value: 127 Current Value: 86 Target Value: Lower Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: Client Relations database, reported to RSA; ongoing Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: number of complaints received either directly from clients or through other advocacy/referral sources Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 2.2.3, 3.2.2 Item 39 Performance Measure: Percentage of client complaints resolved without need for formal administrative review Last Value: 99.2% Current Value: 98.8% Target Value: 100% Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: Client Relations database, reported to RSA; ongoing Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: percentage of complaints received by Client Relations office resolved without client request for a hearing with an independent hearing officer Associated Objective(s): 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 2.2.3, 3.2.2 Item 40 Performance Measure: Single Audit results Last Value: 2 findings Current Value: 1 finding Target Value: 0 findings Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 2014 Data Source and Availability: Office of State Auditor: annually Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: application of internal controls and accounting compliance with federal Vocational Rehabilitation grant requirements and agency policies Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 3.2.3 Item 41 Performance Measure: Agreed Upon Procedures audit results Last Value: 1 finding Current Value: 1 finding involving 3 errors in reporting packages Target Value: 0 findings Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 2014 Data Source and Availability: Office of State Auditor; annually Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: application of agreed-upon procedures to internal controls and accounting records as audited by independent contractor of the State Auditor office Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2, 3.2.3 Item 42 Performance Measure: Administrative Costs as a percentage of total operating expenditures Last Value: 5.55% Current Value: 5.43% Target Value: < 7% Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: SCEIS; ongoing Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: administrative costs as a percentage of all costs Associated Objective(s): 3.1.2 Item 43 Performance Measure: Rehabilitation rate for clients in work training centers Last Value: 60.1% Current Value: 57.9% Target Value: 55.8% (national standard) Time Applicable: July 1 - June 30 Data Source and Availability: Internal IT program; ongoing Reporting Frequency: monthly Calculation Method: number of clients in job readiness training who progressed to competitive employment divided by the sum of that number plus the number whose cases were closed without employment Associated Objective(s): 1.3.1, 1.3.2,1.1.1, 1.1.3, 4.2.4 Item 45 Performance Measure: Increase in Cooperative Agreements associated with strategic goals Last Value: New measure Current Value: 270 Target Value: N/A Time Applicable: July 1-June 30 Data Source and Availability: Internal Reporting Frequency: annual Calculation Method: new memoranda of understanding with community resources, all types Associated Objective(s): 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

Innovation and expansion activities have been identified within these strategies and include: • Continued expansion of work–based learning activities for students • Expansion of Project SEARCH sites • Cooperative agreement with Project HOPE Foundation, a non–profit organization that provides a lifespan of services and activities for individuals with autism • Expansion of transition job coaches focused on providing supported employment services to students and youth with the most significant disabilities • Maintaining a full–time counselor to provide vocational rehabilitation services to incarcerated youth, which has expanded to include additional programs operated by DJJ (e.g., Camp Aspen) • Maintaining a part–time program manager providing job readiness training and serving as liaison with DJJ job readiness training program as well as local areas involved in ongoing service provision for youth involved in the juvenile justice program • Maintaining a staff interpreter for clients who are deaf to provide video remote interpreting, on–site services to mutual clients of SCVRD and DHHS, extend consistent access to interpreter services in rural areas, and enhance the accessibility of VR productions and client and staff training materials • Creation of apprenticeships tailored to increase the participation levels of clients who are deaf in SCVRD's Skill Workforce Apprenticeship Training (SWAT) services • Maintaining a statewide business employment specialist who provides support to local business development specialists across the state as well as providing support to local and regional business services teams that are interagency groups that coordinate business services under WIOA • Upgrades and continued development of job readiness training services, including an electronic MAP (My Action Plan) document, which is an individualized plan for job readiness training, and development of demand–driven skills training opportunities • Continued development of career matching and business database systems (Career Connect and Universal Business Database) to enhance client service delivery, career placement activities, and benchmarking services to employers

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

SCVRD employs 41 full–time job coaches having a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree in a related field. This includes the job coaches who provide IPS services to DMH consumers through an MOA. In addition, SCVRD employs 11 transition job coaches that provide supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities. Job coaches work as part of a team along with other SCVRD staff and extended support representatives. Through the efforts of these job coaches, supported employment services are available statewide to individuals with the most significant disabilities. Initial diagnostic evaluation services are conducted while in the traditional 110 program. If needed, a supplemental evaluation may be performed with the use of a job coach. At the time of acceptance for supported employment services, an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed outlining the job coach services to be provided. Such services include job development, job placement, on–the–job training, observation or supervision at or away from the job site, and support services with the employer, client, or family. SCVRD policy allows for any activity performed by a supported client at the employer's location to be a paid work experience. SCVRD's ongoing support services are limited to 24 months unless extended by an amendment to the IPE. Transition to extended services starts after an individual is stabilized in his/her job setting and has met the individualized work goal. The client's employment stability is determined by the achievement of adequate job performance without a need for ongoing, intensive shadowing/mentoring from the job coach. The client, employer, job coach, and SCVRD counselor agree that this has occurred before transition to the extended service provider takes place. SCVRD continues to leverage resources for identifying extended service providers to meet long–term support needs. Contingent upon the significance of the client's supported employment needs; there could be an initial training period of two to six weeks, which would be followed by ongoing job coach involvement of least 90 or more days prior to determining whether the client is ready for extended services. In addition, SCVRD may provide post–employment services following transition if needed to maintain the placement. The overall objective for each individual receiving supported employment services is successful competitive employment in an integrated work setting. For this to occur, the supported employment team works to assure client and employer satisfaction in terms of both production and fulfillment of the individual's needs. The individual placement model for competitive employment remains the primary supported employment model being used by SCVRD. Emphasis is placed upon providing services to people with most significant disabilities, especially SSI and/or SSDI recipients, whose employment needs are so significant that traditional 110 program services would not be sufficient to meet them. SCVRD coordinator of supported employment services also assists area office staff to identify and serve all eligible clients with the most significant disabilities.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

SCVRD's ongoing support services are limited to 24 months unless extended by an amendment to the IPE. Transition to extended services starts after an individual is stabilized in his/her job setting and has met the individualized work goal. The client's employment stability is determined by the achievement of adequate job performance without a need for ongoing, intensive shadowing/mentoring from the job coach. The client, employer, job coach, and SCVRD counselor agree that this has occurred before transition to the extended service provider takes place. SCVRD

continues to leverage resources for identifying extended service providers to meet long–term support needs. Contingent upon the significance of the client's supported employment needs; there could be an initial training period of two to six weeks, which would be followed by ongoing job coach involvement of least 90 or more days prior to determining whether the client is ready for extended services. In addition, SCVRD may provide post–employment services following transition if needed to maintain the placement. The overall objective for each individual receiving supported employment services is successful competitive employment in an integrated work setting. For this to occur, the supported employment team works to assure client and employer satisfaction in terms of both production and fulfillment of the individual's needs.

CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate   **South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department**

Name of designated State agency   **South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Neal Getsinger**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner, SCVRD**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.**   Yes

2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;   Yes

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;**   Yes

4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;   Yes

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.   Yes

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.   Yes

7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;   Yes

8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;   Yes

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.   Yes

FOOTNOTES

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Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CERTIFICATIONS FROM THE STATE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization   **South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Neal Getsinger**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner, SCVRD**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization   **South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Neal Getsinger**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner, SCVRD**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:**The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. SUBMISSION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EITHER A STATE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OR STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(21) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable   **(A) is an independent State commission**

C. CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(16)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

D. THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION BY THE STATE, OR IF THE STATE SO ELECTS, BY THE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, TO PROVIDE THE AMOUNT OF THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF THE COST OF CARRYING OUT THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(3).

E. THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds   **No**

F. THE SHARED FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF JOINT PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **No**

G. STATEWIDENESS AND WAIVERS OF STATEWIDENESS REQUIREMENTS, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan.   **No**

H. THE DESCRIPTIONS FOR COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(11) AND (24)(B); AND 606(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. ALL REQUIRED METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(6) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

J. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(7) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

K. THE COMPILATION AND SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSIONER OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS, ESTIMATES, STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, AND PROGRESS REPORTS, AS APPROPRIATE, AND AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(15), 105(C)(2), AND 606(B)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

L. THE RESERVATION AND USE OF A PORTION OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TO THE STATE UNDER SECTION 110 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH

DISABILITIES, PARTICULARLY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

M. THE SUBMISSION OF REPORTS AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

A. COMPLY WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 101(A)(5)(D) AND (20) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. IMPOSE NO DURATION OF RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT AS PART OF DETERMINING AN INDIVIDUAL'S ELIGIBILITY FOR VR SERVICES OR THAT EXCLUDES FROM SERVICES UNDER THE PLAN ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PRESENT IN THE STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(12) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

C. PROVIDE THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES LISTED IN SECTION 103(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AS APPROPRIATE, TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above   **Yes**

D. DETERMINE WHETHER COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

E. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

F. COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PROVISIONS OF INFORMED CHOICE FOR ALL APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

G. PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO AMERICAN INDIANS WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING IN THE STATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(13) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

H. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SEMIANNUAL OR ANNUAL REVIEWS, AS APPROPRIATE, FOR INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED EITHER IN AN EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT SETTING IN A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 14(C) OF THE FAIR

LABOR STANDARDS ACT OF 1938, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(14)OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTIONS 101(A)(17) AND 103(B)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT IF THE STATE ELECTS TO CONSTRUCT, UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

J. WITH RESPECT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THE STATE,

I.   HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT,
A.   STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENTS; AND
B.   STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE, TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ON A STATEWIDE BASIS; AND
II.   HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (SECTIONS 101(A)(15) AND 101(A)(25)).

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT TITLE VI SUPPLEMENT:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT ASSURES THAT IT WILL INCLUDE IN THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN ALL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 606 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL SUBMIT REPORTS IN SUCH FORM AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUCH PROCEDURES AS THE COMMISSIONER MAY REQUIRE AND COLLECTS THE INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT SEPARATELY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE I AND INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

C. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES WITH ANY OTHER STATE AGENCY THAT IS FUNCTIONING AS AN EMPLOYMENT NETWORK UNDER THE TICKET TO WORK AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 1148 OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.

6. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL EXPEND NO MORE THAN 2.5 PERCENT OF THE STATE'S ALLOTMENT UNDER TITLE VI FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF CARRYING OUT THIS PROGRAM; AND, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR AGENCIES WILL PROVIDE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ENTITIES, NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN AN AMOUNT THAT IS NOT LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF THE

COSTS OF CARRYING OUT SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WITH THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR SUCH PURPOSE UNDER SECTION 603(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(G) AND (H) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL USE FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ONLY TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SUCH SERVICES; AND, THAT SUCH FUNDS ARE USED ONLY TO SUPPLEMENT AND NOT SUPPLANT THE FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, WHEN PROVIDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SPECIFIED IN THE INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(A) AND (D), OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

7. PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AS DEFINED IN SECTION 7(39) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT:

I.   THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 102(B)(1) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND FUNDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT INCLUDES CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AS AN APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 606(B)(7)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

II. AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT , WHICH IS DEVELOPED AND UPDATED WITH TITLE I FUNDS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 102(B)(3)(F) AND 606(B)(6)(C) AND (E) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE ASSURANCES FROM THE STATE

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

_____

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind (SCCB) is an independent consumer controlled commission with a Governor appointed State Board that provides governance and program guidance, and as such is not required to submit this section. The results of the 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs and this subsequent State Plan submission has been reviewed and approved by the SCCB Board of Commissioners.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind participated and oversaw the development of the 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs and the development of the WIOA Unified State Plan. On January 21, 2016 the Board voted to approve the plan.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

N/A

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

SCCB ensures all services are available on a statewide basis and is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

N/A

3. ALL STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

N/A

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the servivces and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

A Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) was conducted in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016. The findings indicate that SCCB has a need relative to reestablishing Cooperative Agreements and meaningful reciprocal community partnerships consistent with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA).

SCCB is focusing efforts during this State Plan Period to realign all Cooperative Agreements to comply with WIOA mandates and build meaningful reciprocal partnerships. SCCB will develop appropriate Cooperative Agreements with various federal, state, and local agencies and programs. In addition to updated Cooperative Agreements with agencies carrying out activities under the Statewide Workforce Development System as part of the Unified State Plan process, SCCB will coordinate with other agencies and programs that do not carry out activities under the Statewide Workforce Development System to ensure people with disabilities receive appropriate services. These non–Statewide Workforce Development System agencies include: • South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to create administrative efficiencies and improve services to consumers statewide; • South Carolina Worker's Compensation Commission (WCC) to facilitate the referral process of injured workers to SCCB to enhance return–to–work efforts; • Social Security Administration (SSA) to collaborate on employment incentives and supports and maximize Social Security Administration/Vocational Rehabilitation (SSA/VR) reimbursement activity through the Ticket to Work Program; • South Carolina Office of Veterans' Affairs (OVA) to help identify veterans who need additional supports in securing benefits, gaining employment, and accessing advocacy services; • South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN) to eliminate potential duplication of services and increase coordination of employment services provided to the shared consumer populations; • South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) to eliminate duplication of services and increase coordination of employment services provided to the shared consumer populations; • SCCB will develop a Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Mental Health to collaborate, coordinate, eliminate potential duplication of services, and enhance the employment outcomes of shared consumer populations.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

SCCB has a cooperative agreement with the South Carolina Assistive Technology Program at the University Of South Carolina School Of Medicine to access comparable benefits, eliminate duplication of services, and increase coordination of employment services provided to the shared consumer populations. SCCB will work to enhance and improve this partnership.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

SCCB is working to develop partnerships with the local office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to develop cooperative efforts to provide services to South Carolinians who are blind or visually impaired.

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

Non–educational agencies serving out of school youth participate in South Carolina's statewide workforce development system and are partnered with through the provisions of the Unified State Plan and the Workforce Development System.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

No such State Use Contracting Program is in place in South Carolina.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. DSU'S PLANS

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

SCCB is in the process of developing new Cooperative Agreements with education officials and agencies to enhance, improve, and innovate programs and services provided to ensure a seamless and effective transition from school to post–secondary education, careers, and adult life for students with disabilities.

This collaborative partnership will include relationships with all 81 Local Education Authorities (LEA's) otherwise known as Independent School Districts.

Coordination with education officials will be accomplished on two (2) distinct levels of the SCCB service delivery process. These two levels will include:

SCCB Children's Services Program: This program serves children between the ages of 3 and 14 years of age. The Children's Services Counselors coordinate care with educational entities such as the local school districts and the SC School for the Deaf and Blind (SCSDB). Service delivery includes evaluations for low vision aids and assistive technology, consultation and advocacy and information and referral services.

SCCB Vocational Rehabilitation Program: This program serves students from age 15 until exit from high school at which time they are served by the SCCB adult VR program. SCCB has four (4) dedicated Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors statewide building program infrastructure and education relationships to improve services to Transition Students. The Transition Counselors primarily collaborate with education officials such as the South Carolina Department of Education (local school districts), the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind (SCSDB) and the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (SCDDSN). Transition Counselors develop the initial Individualized Plan of Employment (IPE) while the consumer is attending high school. The IPE includes services pertaining to the adjustment, prevention or stabilization of vision, and Pre–Employment Transition Services as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA).

In an effort to avoid the duplication of services, low vision and assistive technology needs will be coordinated with local school districts in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and IPE. In such instances, the alternative service providers and funding sources will be identified on the IPE and coordinated accordingly.

SCCB will conduct semiannual meetings with the statewide vision teachers in an effort to facilitate the coordination of services to the most significantly disabled students and their need for supported employment services. Discussions will include, but not be limited to, collaboration with SCDDSN, SCDOE and the SCSDB to coordinate transition services. The main source of referrals to the

Transition Counselors is the school district. Procedures for outreach to, and identification of blind and visually impaired students include, but are not limited to, the utilization of SCCB program data, statistical data from the Data Analysis System of the US Department of Education (Office of Special Education) and the American Community Survey data. An annual analysis of the data from these sources identifies the location of transition aged unserved and underserved individuals.

In an effort to address the assistive technology needs of college bound transition consumers, SCCB sponsors an annual Technology Day. The need for this initiative arose due to an increase in the number of blind and visually impaired students who were failing college courses due to an inability to take notes and complete assignments. During technology day, consumers are assessed and trained on the latest assistive technology software and equipment. Assistive technology recommendations for each student are contingent upon the level of blindness, skill level and school requirements. Technology Day is conducted by the SCCB Training and Employment Department.

SCCB is currently working to become an actively engaged partner in the Transition Alliance of South Carolina (TASC) a multi– agency partnership between the South Carolina Department of Education, South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, South Carolina Department of Disability and Special Needs, and Local Education Agencies to facilitate the coordination of services to transition students leading to employment and independent adult living.

SCCB is currently seeking proposals for a demonstration project called "CareerBOOST" (Building Occupational Opportunities for Students in Transition) through which Pre–Employment Transition Services will be provided to students in their communities. These services will include: 1. Self–Advocacy Training 2. Work Readiness Workshops 3. Work Based Learning Experiences 4. College and Higher Education Exploration 5. Career Exploration Experiences

SCCB is currently negotiating a formal written Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Education that includes provisions for: (A) mutual consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies and SCCB in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post–school activities, including VR services; (B) transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs; (C) roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and (D) Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

SCCB is currently negotiating a formal written Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Education that includes provisions for: (A) mutual consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies and SCCB in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post–school activities, including VR services. The agency is also working on new cooperative agreements with Local Education Agencies (LEA's). In addition SCCB is engaged in the Transition Alliance of South Carolina where educational partners coordinate,

collaborate and provide technical expertise. Finally, SCCB has been an active partner in the South Carolina Vision Alliance that brings Blind and Visual Impairment Educators and VR Transition Counselors together for collaborative training, team building, and technical assistance.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

SCCB is currently negotiating a formal written Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Education and Local Education Agencies that includes provisions for transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs. SCCB provides technical expertise, assistive technology assessments, and Pre–Employment Transition Services to students in cooperation and collaboration with educational entities.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

SCCB is currently negotiating a formal written Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Education and LEA's that includes provisions for clarity of roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

SCCB is currently negotiating a formal written Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Education and LEA's that includes provisions for procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services. SCCB is an active partner in the Transition Alliance of South Carolina where VR Transition Counselors partner with local educators who assist in the identification and referral of potentially eligible students who need transition services. SCCB involvement in the South Carolina Vision Education Partnership also creates relationships with educators who refer potentially eligible students to SCCB. Finally, SCCB staff participate in parent outreach, information, and referral events.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

Findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment indicate that SCCB needs to reestablish Cooperative Agreements and community partnerships. SCCB is committed to becoming a cooperative and collaborative partner with community entities wherever such reciprocal relationships can benefit consumers and enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the VR program. SCCB will vigilantly seek out community partnerships that enhance our ability to provide comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services that lead to competitive integrated employment outcomes and career pathways. SCCB will develop and maintain new Cooperative Agreements with the following entities not carrying out activities under the Statewide Workforce Development System: • The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of South Carolina for the purposes of ensuring statewide availability of adjustment to blindness training, job readiness and computer skills training, and independent living skills training. • The Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI) for the purposes of ensuring statewide availability of adjustment to blindness training, job readiness and computer skills training, and independent living skills training. • South Carolina Association of the Deaf, Inc. • Goodwill Industries for the purposes of providing statewide access to job readiness and computer skills training. • The Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) for the purpose of expanding training options for consumers who are Deaf/Blind and need training beyond the scope of programs provided at the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center (EBMRC). • And informal partnerships with community based partners such as faith based organizations, charitable organizations, and non–governmental community based organizations.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

SCCB has not historically had the program infrastructure or resources to provide Supported Employment services. SCCB has been actively engaged in several initiatives to develop options and partnerships to provide Supported Employment (SE) services. SCCB has explored potential Fee–For–Service Outcome Milestone Payment arrangements with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP's). SCCB has also explored possible partnerships with the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD). SCCB has discovered that the greatest barrier to such Cooperative Agreements and or Fee–For–Service arrangements is the limited fiscal resources available to SCCB to pay for such services due to South Carolina being a minimum SE allotment state. The fiscal resources available are not sufficient to entice or enable CRP's to hire, train, and retain qualified job coaches. SCCB is currently working on internal options to provide Supported Employment services with existing positions, and is in the preliminary process of program design and implementation. SCCB will continue to explore options for Cooperative Agreement and/or Fee–For–Service arrangements with other entities while pursuing internal options previously mentioned.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

Findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment indicate that SCCB has an existing gap relative to the scope, depth, and effectiveness of coordination with employers. SCCB will refocus efforts to actively engage with the South Carolina business community through services provided by the Training & Employment Division (T&E) Employment Consultants. SCCB T&E Employment Consultants will enhance partnerships and re–engage with businesses to: • Assess and better understand the unique human resource needs of South Carolina businesses; • To help align SCCB programs to better meet the unique and specific human resource needs of South Carolina businesses; • To create, establish, and foster relationships with South Carolina businesses that help them meet their unique and specific human resource needs, including talent acquisition and talent retention; • Develop opportunities for Work Based Experiences, Internships, Job Shadowing, and other work based learning experiences that provide South Carolina Businesses with opportunities to gain experience with a diverse and qualified workforce; • Create mutually beneficial relationships and facilitate linkages of job openings to a highly skilled and diverse talent pool of candidates. Referrals of consumers who are seeking employment and who have been judged to be Job Ready are received from SCCB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. The Employment Consultant's role is job development and placement that meets the needs of the business and the consumer. The Consultant also provides businesses and consumers with access to services that can be provided by SCCB or other governmental agencies. Incentives that may be applicable are also presented. These include: – The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). This program allows a maximum available credit of $2,400 per eligible worker. – Sensitivity and awareness training for employers and organizations. This training includes American Disability Act (ADA), sighted guide techniques and attitudes regarding blindness. The presentation is designed to remove myths and apprehensions about blindness. – Technical assistance for the implementation and support of assistive technology. SCCB T&E Division also employs Assistive Technology Consultants (AT Consultants) who work directly with businesses and consumers to: • Provide assessment and technical assistance in the provision of work place modifications and/or assistive technology solutions considered reasonable accommodations that enable a consumer who is blind to become an asset to the business partner; • Make recommendations for software and/or other equipment which would enable the consumer to successfully engage in employment; • Creates customized software solutions which may be necessary to allow the consumer to access computer systems effectively; • Recommends the purchase of required equipment and/or software to the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor; and, • Oversees the delivery and installation of this equipment on the work site and provides the consumer training on any specialized applications.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

SCCB has a Summer Internship Program (SIP) that partners with business to match a college aged Junior or Senior with a paid internship over the summer. This highly successful program is being expanded to include transition students in our new Summer Internship Program Jr. (SIP Jr.) where transition students in their Junior and Senior year of High School will be matched with internships in local businesses where they gain work experience, conduct career exploration, and establish

relationships with employers. SCCB supports the employers by funding the paid internship, providing assistive technology or other workplace accommodations, providing technical assistance and ADA compliance information, and helping workplaces become more diversified and accessible.

During this state plan period SCCB plans to establish a Business Advisory Council that will provide SCCB with guidance on expanding business services including a focus on transition students.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

Findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment indicate that SCCB has an existing gap relative to Cooperative Agreements and community partnerships. SCCB is working on developing a new Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the state agency responsible for administering the state Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.). This Cooperative Agreement will outline the roles and responsibilities of all parties regarding the delivery of VR services, including extended services, for individuals with the most significant disabilities who have been determined to be eligible for home and community–based services under a Medicaid waiver, Medicaid state plan amendment, or other authority related to a state Medicaid program as applicable to South Carolina.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

SCCB will develop a new Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN) to avoid duplication of services, increase coordination of employment services provided to the shared consumer populations, and to enhance Supported Employment programs.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

SCCB will develop a new Cooperative Agreement with the South Carolina Department of Mental Health to collaborate, coordinate, avoid duplication of services, and enhance the employment outcomes of shared consumer populations.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

Staffing patterns are set through a joint effort of the SCCB Commissioner, Director of Consumer Services, Senior Management staff as appropriate, and Regional Directors. In an effort to assess current staffing and hiring needs, SCCB analyzes the following data on an annual basis: 1. Rate of consumer referrals to the VR Program 2. Ratio of VR Counselors to consumers certified eligible for VR services 3. Ratio of VR Counselors to consumers served 4. State Demographic Trends (Incidence of Blindness, Population estimates) 5. Employment/Unemployment data trends 6. Current and projected monetary resources

In FFY 2015, the SCCB VR Program received 674 referrals and served a total of 1,225 consumers. This represented a consumer to VR Counselor ratio of 87 to 1. Based on the incidence of visual disability data, the ratio of VR Counselors to the number of individuals in South Carolina with a visual impairment is 1 to 3,829. Staffing patterns will continue to be evaluated by staff in an effort to make projections for future capacity to provide vocational rehabilitation services.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

SCCB has 10 current vacancies at this time in open recruitment. This includes 2 vacancies at the Rehabilitation Counselor positions; 1 VR Counselor Assistant; 1 Rehabilitation Instructor; 2 Jobs Oriented Blind Service Specialists (SE); and 4 other (Drivers, BEP, Support Staff)

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

SCCB estimates the follow projected personnel needs by personnel category over the next 5 years: VR Counselors (2); VR Counselor Assistants (3); Rehabilitation Instructors (6); Nurse (1); Support Staff (8); Job Placement Specialists (1).

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

The agency developed close relationships with the University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University, both of which produce graduates who have Master of Rehabilitation Counseling degrees. In addition SCCB has recently developed an agreement to provide internship opportunities to Alabama State University Master of Rehabilitation Counseling students.

SCCB has set a standard for our Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) standard and can recruit not only from candidates with a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, but also with a Master's degree in related fields. These strategies satisfy staffing needs. The following chart shows statistics for the in–state university vocational rehabilitation counseling degree programs. Data is collected annually by program directors at each institution and shared with executive staff to assist in current and future staffing.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

South Carolina

State University Rehabilitation Counseling Program has 55 students enrolled. University of South Carolina Rehabilitation Counseling Program has 60 students enrolled.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of theose institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

South Carolina State University Rehabilitation Counseling Program had 12 graduates from the previous year. The University of South Carolina Rehabilitation Counseling Program had 16 graduates during the previous year.

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

The agency has established relationships with graduate training programs that are Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited located at the University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University. SCCB's recruitment plan ensures recruitment activities are conducted at

all South Carolina schools that have graduates in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling. In addition SCCB has written agreements with Alabama State University to provide internships to Master's degree students as part of our recruitment efforts. In accordance with South Carolina state law, each transcript is assessed, and if positions are under–filled below the agencies CSPD standard, the VR Counselor is placed in a plan that allows up to 30 months to complete the current state educational requirements.

The University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University prepare individuals for graduate degrees in rehabilitation counseling. SCCB is improving and increasing outreach efforts to these universities and other universities to include: publications and distribution of targeted recruiting material, attendance at career days and job fairs, and recruitment events. In addition, practicum placements and internships are offered to students who are in CSPD qualifying programs. These efforts are designed to recruit qualified personnel, including minority graduates and those with disabilities.

SCCB has been especially successful in recruiting personnel from the SC institutions, particularly those from minority backgrounds. Students from these programs and out–of–state programs are encouraged to accept internships and practicum placements with the Commission.

In addition to the New Employee Orientation program and to retain qualified staff, SCCB uses a system for staff evaluation that is available to all state employees. The system focuses on the individual employee's job duties compared to stated goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are identified and discussed with the employee at the beginning of the rating period. Ongoing communication between the employee and supervisor clarifies the employee's understanding of how to meet the performance standards and enhances service delivery to the client.

At the conclusion of the rating period, an evaluation is performed to rate the employee on each duty in relation to performance objectives. The system provides for employee input into the development of the goals and objectives in order to support successful performance.

Another feature of the system allows objectives to be amended throughout the review period. This system also provides a mechanism for helping a substandard performer improve and a means of removing an employee from a position should performance not improve to an acceptable level. SCCB takes an active role in employee/employer relations. Through strong leadership and the assistance of all staff, the Commission provides a healthy and safe work environment. Employee behavior and performance problems are addressed appropriately and in a timely manner, with an emphasis on assisting the employee to improve. SCCB promotes internal and external customer service and has made teamwork an integral part of day–to–day operations.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR

SCCB utilizes state standards to administer the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) as it relates to hiring practices. According to state law, VR Counselors must have a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, or a Master's degree in the field of counseling with a graduate course in Theories and Techniques of Counseling, or a Master's degree in any discipline and at least 18 credit hours of coursework at the Master's level or above within thirty months of the date of hire. The 18 credit hours of coursework must include the following: One graduate course with a primary focus on the Theories and Techniques of Counseling three graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas: Occupational Information, Job Development and Placement, Medical Aspects of Disabilities, Foundations of Rehabilitation, Psychological Aspects of Disabilities, and Personal and Vocational Adjustment Two graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas: Assessment, Research Methodology, Vocational and Career Development, Community Resources, Case Management, and Delivery of Rehabilitation Services; or a current Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification, regardless of degree.

SCCB currently has 3 vacant VR Counselor positions that are in various stages of the recruitment process. Of the counselors currently employed by SCCB all meet the state minimum standard.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

SCCB utilizes state standards to administer the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) as it relates to hiring practices. According to state law, VR Counselors must have a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, or a Master's degree in the field of counseling with a graduate course in Theories and Techniques of Counseling, or a Master's degree in any discipline and at least 18 credit hours of coursework at the Master's level or above within thirty months of the date of hire. The 18 credit hours of coursework must include the following: One graduate course with a primary focus on the Theories and Techniques of Counseling three graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas: Occupational Information, Job Development and Placement, Medical Aspects of Disabilities, Foundations of Rehabilitation, Psychological Aspects of Disabilities, and Personal and Vocational Adjustment Two graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas: Assessment, Research Methodology, Vocational and Career Development, Community Resources, Case Management, and Delivery of Rehabilitation Services; or a current Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification, regardless of degree.

SCCB currently has 3 vacant VR Counselor positions that are in various stages of the recruitment process. Of the counselors currently employed by SCCB all meet the state minimum standard.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

SCCB will work to develop a comprehensive staff development training program designed to expand and strengthen the knowledge and skill level of service delivery staff. The four objectives outlined in the training program are based on the need to increase staff competency so that the quality and quantity of competitive employment placements can be improved. SCCB has partnered with the University of South Carolina and private and public consultants specializing in the field of vocational rehabilitation and/or blindness in order to provide quality staff development training. The most critical training needs of SCCB staff were determined from the results of a Staff Development Training Needs Assessment, comments from Training Evaluations, and the VR Staff Survey results from Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. Staff development training needs have been identified in the areas of Leadership Skills, Administrative Skills and Technical Skills.

Four (4) training objectives were identified as follows:

• Objective 1 (Leadership Training Objective) Organization assessment, problem solving skills, basic supervisory skills and best personnel practices are the primary focus areas of Objective 1. To accomplish the leadership training objective, SCCB will utilize Certified Public Management (CPM) training, State sponsored supervisory training, National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute (NRLI) and other targeted trainings and conference to keep our business practices up to date with current paradigms. SCCB recognizes that staff development needs may change. • Objective 2 (Technical Skills Training) The development of technical skills to achieve the SCCB mission and vision is the primary focus of Objective 2. Private contractors who specialize in the field of blindness and vocational rehabilitation will also be utilized to accomplish Objective 2. Continued professional development and retention CRC credentials is encouraged and supported by SCCB. • Objective 3 (Communication of Policies and Procedures) Orienting staff to the SCCB organizational structure and service delivery policies and procedures is the primary focus of Objective 3. In order to accomplish this, new staff will participate in an agency wide two day Employee Orientation provided by HR. They will also receive field specific training in AWARE, VR training modules on policy and procedures, and shadow adjustment and VR staff for a two week period. • Objective 4 (Specialty Training) For FY 2015, each region is scheduled for quarterly meetings in which case staffing and regional specific trainings will be included. Departmental training schedules are currently being developed with the intention of holding one annual in–service when feasible. Bi–annual surveys of staff are done to stay abreast of trends in staff training needs. In an effort to provide equal access to staff development training for all staff, accessible formats (i.e. Braille, large print, electronic format, etc.) will be provided to those who require alternative formats.

B. ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

SCCB conducts in–service trainings for professional staff throughout the fiscal year. These trainings are planned based on a yearly assessment of training needs that includes recent and emerging trends in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling, current research findings, best practices, and quality

assurance activities. SCCB works to encourage and support professional staff in developing professional development plans that may include specific professional conferences, workshops, and on–line training.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

SCCB strives to have qualified staff proficient in Braille production, in communication with the Deaf/Blind, and a bilingual counselor to communicate with the rapidly growing Hispanic population. SCCB engages in ongoing efforts to study demographic trends and changes to the population to identify areas of needed expertise. Braille services are provided to SCCB staff and upon request to other public and/or private entities statewide. SCCB has a Deaf/Blind Consultant who is proficient in the use of sign language for the deaf, hard of hearing and dual sensory impaired. In FFY 2015, SCCB sponsored sign language training for the VR Counseling staff to facilitate communication with the dual sensory impaired consumers. SCCB contracts interpreter services as needed in order to serve all other individuals who have limited English speaking ability or limited modes of communication. SCCB has expanded one counselor position to aid in the coordination of interpreter services so that services are not delayed when the Deaf/Blind Coordinator is not available.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

SCCB will improve collaboration with the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDOE) to coordinate procedures and activities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The focus of the collaboration will be the development of strategies for improving service delivery systems for blind and visually impaired individuals who are receiving services from the SCCB Children's Services program and VR Transition Counselors. SCCB is currently working on becoming fully engaged and active partners in the Transition Alliance of South Carolina (TASC) that includes regional coordinating councils where the partner agencies receive training, develop collaborative plans, and develop professional relationships. TASC is a partnership of the Department of Education, Department of Disability and Special Needs, Vocational Rehabilitation Department, and SCCB.

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

SCCB contracted with the National Center for Innovation, Training and Excellence (NCITE), a part of San Diego State University Research Foundation's Interwork Institute (SDSURF–II) during FFY 2016 to conduct a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment to determine the vocational rehabilitation needs of South Carolinians who are blind or visually impaired, identify the areas of VR program operations where service gaps exist, and identify areas of program innovation and improvement to become fully compliant with requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. This assessment was designed to specifically assess the areas noted under section (j) above.

This assessment determined that the following gaps exist in this area: • SCCB does not offer supported employment or customized employment services to its consumers with significant and most significant disabilities. This is reflected in the low numbers of employment outcomes for these individuals. • Individuals with disabilities identified the following as barriers to achieving employment outcomes: o Attitudes of the public and employers toward individuals who are blind or visually impaired. o Lack of reliable and accessible transportation. • A significant number of SCCB consumers receive SSA benefits and fear the loss of benefits if they seek employment. Access to benefits counseling provided by either SCCB or outside agencies appears to be minimal. • Independent living skills are a major need of SCCB consumers. The Rehabilitation Center (EBMRC or the Center) meets this need for a small percentage of SCCB consumers, but many individuals, staff and partners expressed a need for more comprehensive services to be available throughout South Carolina especially in rural areas.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

Gaps included: • Individuals with blindness and vision impairments who are Hispanic may be underserved by SCCB. South Carolina has experienced one of the largest increases of Hispanics in the country. • The needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments from minority ethnic groups are similar to the needs of other ethnic group with the possible addition of language barriers.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Gaps included: • Individuals who have multiple and most significant disabilities have been unserved or underserved due to a lack of Supported Employment program capacity and resources; Individuals who have co-existing psychological disorders may have been traditionally unserved or underserved as SCCB has focused primarily on adjustment to blindness issues. SCCB is actively working to close these gaps and better serve these populations.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

Gaps included: • America's Job Centers (AJCs) in South Carolina (SC Works) have not effectively served individuals with blindness and vision impairments. There have been no documented instances of SCCB cases that are jointly served by other workforce entities. • Historically, the relationship between SCCB and the AJCs, although cordial, is primarily one of referral with no evidence of substantial services after referral; • Although the AJCs are accessible, the technology is frequently out of date and the AJC staff lack the skills to effectively operate/demonstrate the technology; Under WIOA there are legal requirements around the development of partnerships between SCCB and entities in the greater workforce development system. This will become an area of focus for SCCB.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

Gaps included: • A high percentage of youth with disabilities have multiple disabilities requiring multiple services. Historically, SCCB's VR program has not effectively served individuals with multiple disabilities including youth with the most significant disabilities; • Transition–age youth appear to have limited exposure to work prior to exiting the school system. School staff indicated that their focus is upon academics and they do not have the resources to provide employment related services; • Soft skill development, typically delivered in job readiness/preparation programs, is a major need for this group. This is available to a limited degree through Goodwill; • Individuals and education partners expressed a lack of involvement of SCCB staff in the planning and delivery of transition services to youth in school. There appears to be minimal involvement of SCCB in activities beyond IEP meetings and minimal provision of Pre–Employment Training Services; • Transition–age youth have a great need for mentors who would foster high expectations and build self–advocacy skill; • Parents and family members of youth with disabilities need more information on the services available through SCCB and how to access them; • Parents and youth with disabilities need training on self–advocacy. Education partners stated that greater involvement of families leads to accessing more services potentially leading to better outcomes. Families who are poor and live in rural areas are less likely to advocate for services and are most in need of training and support; • Teachers working with youth who are blind or visually impaired need training and support in working with students using assistive technology. Assistive technology is a strength of SCCB, and the capacity to provided quality assistive technology support could be increased using school resources; • Education partners and consumers suggested that SCCB take a lead role in bringing stakeholder groups together to foster greater integration of services and increase consumer awareness of services available to them.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

The majority of intensive VR services are delivered at the EBMRC located in Columbia. Services in outlying areas, especially rural areas, are not considered adequate to meet the needs of consumers living in these areas who cannot or choose not to attend EBMRC. VR 'outreach' services to this population are limited in scope and duration. CRPs are considered one way of addressing the need for geographic access to services. The most common themes that emerged in this area were: • Historically, SCCB has not relied on CRPs to provide rehabilitation services to applicants and eligible individuals in South Carolina. SCCB has focused its service delivery system on the EBMRC and

'Outreach' services to individuals who cannot or choose not to attend EBMRC. Outreach services are limited in scope and duration. • SCCB has a limited contractual agreement with Goodwill Industries and the National Federation for the Blind to provide limited independent living skills training and job preparation services. • Individuals expressed a need for community programs that provide more comprehensive services in the northern and southern parts of South Carolina • The ABVI center near Charleston (a private non–profit CRP) appears to be under–utilized and reports it has the capacity to partner with SCCB to deliver more comprehensive services to that part of the state.

3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT .

Gaps included: •A high percentage of youth with disabilities have multiple disabilities requiring multiple services. Historically, SCCB's VR program has not effectively served individuals with multiple disabilities including youth with the most significant disabilities; • Transition–age youth appear to have limited exposure to work prior to exiting the school system. School staff indicated that their focus is upon academics and they do not have the resources to provide employment related services; • Soft skill development, typically delivered in job readiness/preparation programs, is a major need for this group. This is available to a limited degree through Goodwill; • Individuals and education partners expressed a lack of involvement of SCCB staff in the planning and delivery of transition services to youth in school. There appears to be minimal involvement of SCCB in activities beyond IEP meetings and minimal provision of Pre–Employment Training Services; • Transition–age youth have a great need for mentors who would foster high expectations and build self–advocacy skill; • Parents and family members of youth with disabilities need more information on the services available through SCCB and how to access them; • Parents and youth with disabilities need training on self–advocacy. Education partners stated that greater involvement of families leads to accessing more services potentially leading to better outcomes. Families who are poor and live in rural areas are less likely to advocate for services and are most in need of training and support; • Teachers working with youth who are blind or visually impaired need training and support in working with students using assistive technology. Assistive technology is a strength of SCCB, and the capacity to provided quality assistive technology support could be increased using school resources; • Education partners and consumers suggested that SCCB take a lead role in bringing stakeholder groups together to foster greater integration of services and increase consumer awareness of services available to them.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

Based on data obtained from the American Community Survey (ACS) and Cornell University's Annual Disability Status Report for South Carolina, SCCB estimates that 2.7% of the South Carolinians experience a visual impairment or blindness. (ACS criteria for visual impairments is broader than VR program eligibility) The most recent American Community Survey data indicates that there are an estimated 6,800 South Carolinians who have some level of visual impairment who are working age (21 to 64) and who are not currently working but are actively seeking employment. In addition to the ACS estimates there are 2,900 youth (age 16–20) who have visual impairments in the state. This is a total estimate of 9,700 individuals who have visual impairments between the ages of 16 and 64.

The visual impairment categorization in the ACS is very broad, all–inclusive, and self–reported. In estimating the number of individuals who would meet the more narrow VR program eligibility criteria, SCCB estimates that in any given federal fiscal year there are approximately 3,500 potentially eligible individuals within the state.

Of those SCCB is currently serving 1,173 eligible individuals. SCCB is working on outreach efforts and strategies that strive to increase accessibility and awareness of the VR program so that potentially eligible individuals are aware of, and can access VR services. In addition SCCB is working with WIOA core partners to ensure that blind and visually impaired individuals seeking employment can access services through the one–stop centers as part of the Statewide Workforce Development System.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

SCCB estimates that the VR program will serve 1,173 eligible individuals during FFY 2016, 1,257 during FFY 2017, 1,350 during FFY 2018, and 1,400 during FFY 2019.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

SCCB is currently building program capacity and resources to provide Supported Employment services. It will take some time for SCCB to get this program developed and producing outcomes. SCCB has established goals to provide Supported Employment services to 1 eligible individual during FFY 2016, 3 individuals during FFY 2017, 4 individuals during FFY 2018, and 6 individuals during FFY 2019.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

SCCB is does not anticipate the need for an order of selection.

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

SCCB does not anticipate the need for an order of selection.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

N/A

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

Based on the findings of the FFY 2016 SCCB Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, and a thorough review of SCCB's performance under accountability measures of WIOA, SCCB has identified several programmatic gaps that need to be addressed in accordance with new requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. The gaps include the following themes:

Gap: SCCB will develop stronger, formalized and more effective collaborative partnerships with community partners, other state agencies, the One–Stop Workforce Development System, consumer communities, minority groups, rural populations, and the business/employer community.

Gap: SCCB will develop the capacity, resources, and staff expertise to provide Job Driven vocational counseling and guidance that utilizes Labor Market Information and aligns with South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project and Sector Strategies initiatives to assist eligible consumers in accessing career pathways that lead to high and middle skill/income jobs.

Gap: SCCB will develop the capacity to assist eligible consumers in the development of occupational knowledge, skills, and abilities that culminate in obtaining industry recognized credentials to include GED attainment, certifications, degrees, apprenticeships, occupational licensure, among others.

Gap: SCCB will build VR program capacities, expertise, and partnerships to provide improved transition services including Pre–Employment Transition Services to students who are blind or visually impaired.

Based on these identified gaps, SCCB establishes the following Goals and Priorities to address these VR program gaps. These Goals and Priorities have been jointly developed and agreed to by the South Carolina Commission for the Blind Board.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

Goal 1: Increase Program Capacity by Leveraging Partnerships & Community Engagement

Priority 1.1: Improve WIOA Partnerships & One–Stop System Engagement Priority 1.2 Improve Partnerships & Strategic Alliances to Increase Program Capacity Priority 1.3: Increase Public Awareness & Community Engagement Priority 1.4: Align Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center (EBMRC) to WIOA & VR

Goal 2: Increase Quantity & Quality of Employment Outcomes

Priority 2.1: Align VR Program with South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project, Emphasizing Career Pathways, Attainment of Industry Recognized Credentials, Job Driven/Sector Strategies & Labor Market Information Priority 2.2: Increase Employment for those with Most Significant Disabilities Priority 2.3: Increase Vocational Exploration & Opportunities for Transition Students Priority 2.4: Increase Employment for all eligible consumers Goal 3: Increase & Improve Innovative Coordinated Services to Business.

Priority 3.1: Engage with Business Community & Business Organizations Priority 3.2: Improve Talent Acquisition & Retention Services to Business Priority 3.3: Increase Coordination with WIOA Partner's Business Services Priority 3.4: Seek Opportunities for Customized Training Partnerships

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

SCCB assures that agency Goals, Priorities, and Strategies are based on an analysis of the following areas:

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

SCCB contracted with the National Center for Innovation, Training and Excellence (NCITE), a part of San Diego State University Research Foundation's Interwork Institute (SDSURF–II) during FFY 2016 to conduct a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment to determine the vocational rehabilitation needs of South Carolinians who are blind or visually impaired, identify the areas of VR program operations where service gaps exist, and identify areas of program innovation and improvement to become fully compliant with requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. The text of that report follows:

San Diego State University

Interwork Institute

The South Carolina

Commission for the Blind

and

The State Board of Commissioners

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

Submitted to:

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind

The South Carolina Board of Commissioners

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San Diego State University

March 25, 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind, the State Board of Commissioners and the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University jointly conducted an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation (VR) needs of persons with blindness and vision impairments residing in the state of South Carolina. The purpose of the assessment was to provide planners with VR information pertinent to the allocation of resources, to provide a rationale for the development of SCCB's State Plan, and to comply with the needs assessment mandate in the Rehabilitation Act.

The process that was developed for conducting the needs assessment involved four primary data-gathering approaches:

Electronic surveys conducted with four stakeholder groups and hard copy surveys of a random sample of former and current SCCB consumers, other individuals with blindness and vision impairments, and businesses in South Carolina;

Focus groups conducted with three stakeholder groups (individuals with blindness and vision impairments, representatives of organizations that provide services to persons with blindness and vision impairments, and businesses);

Key informant interviews conducted with SCCB staff; individuals identified as knowledgeable about the needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina, businesses; and

Analysis of a variety of existing demographic and case service data relevant to individuals with disabilities.

Through the data collection efforts, researchers solicited information from four primary stakeholder groups: (a) former, current or potential consumers of SCCB located throughout South Carolina; (b) community partners (e.g., the Commission, educational institutions, municipalities) and representatives of organizations that provide services to individuals who are potential or actual consumers of SCCB; (c) SCCB staff; and (d) representatives of businesses operating in South Carolina or surrounding areas.

The approach was designed to capture input from a variety of perspectives in order to acquire a sense of the multi-faceted needs of persons with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina. Efforts were made to gather information pertinent to the following eight main categories:

1. General agency performance;

2. Needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment;

3. Needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

4. Needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system;

5. Needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments in transition;

6. Need for community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) that serve individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina;

7. Business relations and services, including SCCB's ability to meet the needs of businesses in South Carolina regarding recruiting, hiring, accommodating and retaining employees with blindness or vision impairments; and

8. Alignment of other SCCB programs and services, including the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center and the Training and Employment Division (EBMRC), with the VR program in meeting the needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina.

As part of this CSNA, at the agency's request, an interim report was issued in January to address specific issues related to SCCB's work under the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA). Some of the same findings are included in this final report. SCCB has already proposed actions to address gaps identified in both reports. The full Interim Report is included in Appendix A.

Over 300 key informants provided input for the CSNA research through surveys, interviews and focus groups.

It is important to put the following in perspective when reading these reports and the supporting data:

1. In the context of this report "SCCB" refers exclusively to the VR program of the Commission and not to any of the other state or federal programs administered by the agency.

2. This CSNA covers a period of time when SCCB operated under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the authorizing legislation for VR programs across the country. WIOA, the new authorizing legislation, was passed into law in July of 2014. It places new requirements upon SCCB with varying dates of implementation. SCCB is working diligently to build the capacity of the agency to comply with the new requirements of WIOA.

3. SCCB has experienced significant staff turnover during the time period of this CSNA. This turnover undoubtedly affected the performance of SCCB. The turnover situation has stabilized and SCCB has filled many positions that provide critical direct services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired in South Carolina.

4. Though findings are reported from all groups, the limited participation rates from community partners and businesses decrease the generalizability of findings pertaining to them and suggest a need for increased partnerships in those sectors.

The following summary highlights the results of the most commonly cited needs and themes derived from the surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews in the eight main areas of investigation.

Section One: General Agency Performance.

The most common themes that emerged in this area were:

• Although SCCB has consistently met most Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) standards and indicators over the past five years there has been a significant drop off in the past three years in the number of cases closed with an employment outcome. Possible explanations for the decline in

performance include reductions in force, office closures, staff turnover, and ending the practice of taking "Homemaker" and "Unpaid Family Worker" closures.

• There was a high frequency of comments by key informants (individuals and agency partners) about the speed of services, lack of consistent communication and unclear rationales for many agency decisions including eligibility, discontinuation of services at EBMRC and case closure.

• There was a high frequency of comments from staff concerning low morale across the agency. Staff concerns were centered around high turnover, low pay, high workloads and lack of recognition. Staff did recognize that SCCB's VR program is turning in a positive direction and are generally hopeful their concerns will be appropriately addressed.

• There has been a marked decrease over a three year period in the numbers of SSI/SSDI recipients served and the number achieving an employment outcome.

• SCCB serves a very low rate and has a low rehabilitation rate for individuals with multiple disabling conditions. This includes a low rehabilitation rate for those attending EBMRC. The number of individuals served who are coded as having most significant disabilities is very small.

• SCCB has minimal disputes with applicants or eligible individuals that result in mediations, impartial hearings or civil legal action. However, it should be noted that interviews with individuals a majority expressed lack of awareness of the Client Assistance Program

• SCCB ranks high nationally among agencies serving the blind in average case expenditures and time in service. Historically, the most prevalent services provided have been Assessment and Diagnostic/Treatment.

• SCCB ranks high nationally among agencies serving the blind in the number of hours worked at closure.

• SCCB ranks low nationally among agencies serving the blind for indicators of the quality of employment outcomes (wages and medical benefits).

• Average time in service for individuals is almost one year longer for individuals whose cases are closed without an employment outcome. This, coupled with expenditure data, indicate that significant agency resources are utilized in cases that do not lead to an employment outcome. On average $250,000 per year is expended on cases closed unsuccessfully after acceptance.

• Nearly 20 percent of the cases closed without an employment outcome are the result of individuals 'no longer interested in services' or 'refused services' or 'unable to locate'.

• Of those individuals attending EBMRC over the past five years, 43 percent were closed unsuccessfully or as homemakers.

• SCCB does not have a supported employment program indicating that individuals with the most significant disability are underserved.

• According to the agency's data, the rehabilitation rate for individuals who are transition age is 0%. This is significant considering the federal requirements under WIOA around employment for youth with disabilities.

• The rehabilitation rate for individuals between the ages of 55- 64 served by SCCB over the past three fiscal years is 58 percent (below national averages). This is significant considering the trend of older workers, including those with disabilities wanting or needing to remain in the workforce.

• RSA data and comments from key informants (staff and individuals) indicate that few individuals served by SCCB are also served by other partners in the workforce development system. SCCB consumer awareness of workforce system services that may benefit them is minimal.

• The data reviewed indicates the following segments of the population of South Carolina who may be underserved are:

o Youth between the ages of 13-24

o Adults between the ages of 55-64

o Adults over the age of 65 who wish or need to continue working

o Individuals who are Hispanic, Native American or Asian

o Individuals with the most significant disabilities

o Individuals with multiple disabilities including cognitive, mental health, deaf/blindness, and physical disabilities

o Individuals with disabilities who live in rural areas of South Carolina and cannot or choose not to access services at EBMRC

o Individuals with disabilities who live at or below the poverty level

Section Two: Needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including supported employment

The most common themes that emerged in this area were:

• SCCB does not offer supported employment or customized employment services to its consumers with significant and most significant disabilities. This is reflected in the low numbers of employment outcomes for these individuals.

• Individuals with disabilities identified the following as barriers to achieving employment outcomes:

o Attitudes of the public and employers toward individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

o Lack of reliable and accessible transportation.

• A significant number of SCCB consumers receive SSA benefits and fear the loss of benefits if they seek employment. Access to benefits counseling provided by either SCCB or outside agencies appears to be minimal.

• Independent living skills are a major need of SCCB consumers. The Rehabilitation Center (EBMRC or the Center) meets this need for a small percentage of SCCB consumers, but many individuals, staff and partners expressed a need for more comprehensive services to be available throughout South Carolina especially in rural areas.

Section Three: Needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

The most common themes that emerged in this area were:

• Individuals with blindness and vision impairments who are Hispanic may be underserved by SCCB. South Carolina has experienced one of the largest increases of Hispanics in the country.

• The needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments from minority ethnic groups are similar to the needs of other ethnic group with the possible addition of language barriers.

Section Four: Needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

The most common themes that emerged in this area were:

• America's Job Centers (AJCs) in South Carolina (SC Works) have not effectively served individuals with blindness and vision impairments. There have been no documented instances of SCCB cases that are jointly served by other workforce entities.

• Historically, the relationship between SCCB and the AJCs, although cordial, is primarily one of referral with no evidence of substantial services after referral;

• Although the AJCs are accessible, the technology is frequently out of date and the AJC staff lack the skills to effectively operate/demonstrate the technology;

• Under WIOA there are legal requirements around the development of partnerships between SCCB and entities in the greater workforce development system.

Section Five: Needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments in transition

The most common themes that emerged in this area were:

• A high percentage of youth with disabilities have multiple disabilities requiring multiple services. Historically, SCCB's VR program has not effectively served individuals with multiple disabilities including youth with the most significant disabilities;

• Transition-age youth appear to have limited exposure to work prior to exiting the school system. School staff indicated that their focus is upon academics and they do not have the resources to provide employment related services;

• Soft skill development, typically delivered in job readiness/preparation programs, is a major need for this group. This is available to a limited degree through Goodwill;

• Individuals and education partners expressed a lack of involvement of SCCB staff in the planning and delivery of transition services to youth in school. There appears to be minimal involvement of SCCB in activities beyond Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and minimal provision of Pre-Employment Training Services (Pre-ETS);

• Transition-age youth have a great need for mentors who would foster high expectations and build self-advocacy skill;

• Parents and family members of youth with disabilities need more information on the services available through SCCB and how to access them;

• Parents and youth with disabilities need training on self-advocacy. Education partners stated that greater involvement of families leads to accessing more services potentially leading to better outcomes. Families who are poor and live in rural areas are less likely to advocate for services and are most in need of training and support;

• Teachers working with youth who are blind or visually impaired need training and support in working with students using assistive technology. Assistive technology is a strength of SCCB, and the capacity to provided quality assistive technology support could be increased using school resources;

• Education partners and consumers suggested that SCCB take a lead role in bringing stakeholder groups together to foster greater integration of services and increase consumer awareness of services available to them.

Section Six: Need for Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) in South Carolina

The majority of intensive VR services are delivered at the EBMRC located in Columbia. Services in outlying areas, especially rural areas, are not considered adequate to meet the needs of consumers living in these areas who cannot or choose not to attend EBMRC. VR 'outreach' services to this population are limited in scope and duration. CRPs are considered one way of addressing the need for geographic access to services.

The most common themes that emerged in this area were:

• Historically, SCCB has not relied on CRPs to provide rehabilitation services to applicants and eligible individuals in South Carolina. SCCB has focused its service delivery system on the EBMRC and 'Outreach' services to individuals who cannot or choose not to attend EBMRC. Outreach services are limited in scope and duration.

• SCCB has a limited contractual agreement with Goodwill Industries and the National Federation for the Blind to provide limited independent living skills training and job preparation services.

• Individuals expressed a need for community programs that provide more comprehensive services in the northern and southern parts of South Carolina

• The Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI) center near Charleston (a private non-profit CRP) appears to be under-utilized and reports it has the capacity to partner with SCCB to deliver more comprehensive services to that part of the state.

Section Seven: Business Relations and Services

The information gathered from businesses in South Carolina was very limited as a result of a low return rate on the survey and the small size of the three small focus groups. Common themes included:

• Low survey response rates and low representation for the focus groups could be an indication that VR's partnerships with the business community are limited in quantity and/or quality. Two of the businesses represented in the focus groups had hired individuals who had approached them directly for employment. SCCB was then brought in to provide necessary supports which secured the employment. The project team did not interview any employer in which SCCB initiated the placement.

• Businesses expressed a need for assistance with training on understanding disability and disability sensitivity in recruiting and hiring qualified employees with disabilities. Respondents encouraged SCCB to take a leadership role with businesses in South Carolina as a disability expert and to develop long-term and trusting relationships with businesses.

• ABVI in Charleston indicated that Boeing is building a large plant near Charleston. This presents an opportunity for SCCB to develop a partnership that could lead to significant employment opportunities especially in high-wage, high-demand jobs. ABVI also indicated that the Lighthouse of Seattle was opening a community rehabilitation program and working directly with Boeing.

• Over the past few years and under WIA, SCCB (and most VR agencies nationally) has not maintained an effective working relationship with other workforce entities. Therefore, SCCB has not been in a position to use these relationships to leverage opportunities to develop relationships with businesses. Also, other workforce agencies have not had full access to the expertise that SCCB would bring to the table around blindness, low vision and assistive technology that would provide a useful job retention resource to the workforce system.

Concluding Remarks

This CSNA identified gaps in performance, needs of individuals who are blind and visually impaired and the needs of community partners and educators in South Carolina. It also identifies population segments that appear to be underserved and provides recommendations for SCCB to consider in addressing their needs. This CSNA is intended to serve as a starting point and resource for SCCB and the Board to develop goals, objectives and strategic plans to address these needs. It is important to look at needs as a gap between desired and achieved results. SCCB is to be highly commended for already taking steps to address these needs as part of the requirements under WIOA.

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

Impetus for Needs Assessment

Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) contains the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and requires all state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies to assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals within the respective state and relate the planning of programs and services and the establishment of goals and priorities to those needs. According to Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act, each participating state shall submit a Unified State Plan every year for vocational rehabilitation services that includes the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council every three years describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the vocational rehabilitation service needs of (I) individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment; (II) individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program; (III) individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and (IV) youth with disabilities and students with disabilities including their need for pre- employment transition services or other transition services.

In addition, Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act indicates that the comprehensive statewide needs assessment must include an assessment of the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State. In response to this mandate and to ensure that adequate efforts are being made to serve the diverse needs of persons with disabilities in South Carolina, the South Carolina Commission for the Blind (SCCB), in partnership with the State Board of Commissioners, entered into a contract with the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University for the purpose of jointly developing and implementing a comprehensive statewide assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments residing in South Carolina.

Purpose of Needs Assessment and Utilization of Results

The purpose of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) is to identify and describe the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments residing within South Carolina. In particular, the CSNA seeks to provide information on:

The overall performance of SCCB as it relates to meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina;

The rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

The rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments who are minorities, or who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;

The rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments in transition;

The rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments served through other components of the statewide workforce development system;

The need for community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with blindness and vision impairments within South Carolina;

The effectiveness of SCCB's business relations and services and the needs of businesses as it relates to recruiting, hiring, accommodating and retaining individuals with blindness and vision impairments; and

The alignment of other SCCB programs and services (including the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center and the Training and Employment Division) with the VR program in meeting the needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina.

Data collection efforts solicited input from a broad spectrum of VR stakeholders, including persons with blindness and vision impairments, service providers, SCCB staff and businesses.

It is expected that data from the needs assessment effort will provide SCCB and the Board of Directors with direction when creating the VR portion of the Unified State Plan and when planning for future program development, outreach and resource allocation.

Description of Needs Assessment Process

The needs assessment approach was designed to elicit quantitative and qualitative data about the needs of persons with blindness and vision impairments. Focus group and key informant interview activities yielded qualitative data that may be used to complement and lend depth to the findings of the survey efforts and the analysis of extant data. The use of multiple data collection strategies, both quantitative and qualitative, facilitates data collection that captures both the breadth and the depth of concerns relevant to individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina.

The process that was developed for conducting the needs assessment involved four primary data-gathering approaches:

Electronic surveys conducted with four stakeholder groups (individuals with blindness and vision impairments, representatives of organizations that provide services to persons with blindness and vision impairments, SCCB staff, and businesses in South Carolina). Hard copy surveys were sent to a random sample of 400 individuals with blindness and vision impairments who are either former, current or potential consumers of SCCB, in addition to the electronic survey for this group;

Focus groups conducted with staff and three stakeholder groups (individuals with blindness and vision impairments, community partners – representatives of organizations that provide services to persons with blindness and vision impairments, and businesses);

Key informant interviews conducted with individuals with blindness and vision impairments, SCCB staff, organizations that provide services to individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina, businesses; and

Analysis of a variety of existing demographic and case service data and reports relevant to individuals with blindness and vision impairments.

Through the data collection efforts, researchers solicited information from four primary stakeholder groups: (a) former, current or potential consumers of SCCB located throughout South Carolina; (b) representatives of organizations that provide services to, advocate for, or represent the interests of individuals who are potential or actual consumers of SCCB; (c) SCCB staff; and (d) representatives of businesses operating in South Carolina. In addition, the approach was designed to capture input from a variety of perspectives in order to acquire a sense of the multi-faceted needs of persons with

blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina. Responses to the individual survey reflect the opinions of current, former and potential clients of SCCB.

Efforts were made to gather information pertinent to the investigated categories through inquiries with individuals who serve a broad range of persons with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina (whether they are affiliated with SCCB or not).

Inherent in any type of research effort are limitations that may constrain the utility of the data that is generated. Therefore, it is important to highlight some of the most significant issues that may limit the ability to generalize the needs assessment findings to larger populations. One potential source of bias is the participant sample. The findings that are reported reflect only the responses of those who could be reached and who were willing to participate. Individuals who were disenfranchised, dissatisfied, or who did not wish to be involved with SCCB may have declined to participate.

A second significant concern is that the information gathered from respondents may not accurately represent the broader concerns of all potential constituents and stakeholders. Data gathered from service providers, for example, may reflect only the needs of individuals who are already recipients of services, to the exclusion of those who are not presently served. Although efforts were made to gather information from a variety of stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process, it would be presumptuous to conclude with certainty that those who contributed to the focus groups, the key informant interviews, and the survey research efforts constitute a fully representative sample of all of the potential stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process in South Carolina.

The time period covered by this comprehensive statewide needs assessment includes the three fiscal years from October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2014 as well as any available information for FY 2015 that was supplied by SCCB. The time frame was determined by the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) requirement that VR programs perform a CSNA every three years at a minimum.

The specific methods for gathering the quantitative and qualitative data used in this assessment are detailed below.

Analysis of Existing Data Sources

The project team at San Diego State University (SDSU) reviewed a variety of existing data sources for the purposes of identifying and describing demographic data within South Carolina including the total possible target population and subpopulations potentially served by SCCB. Data relevant to the population of South Carolina, the population of persons with disabilities (and where possible data specific to blindness) in South Carolina, as well as the number of Veterans, income level, educational levels and other relevant population characteristics were utilized in this analysis. Sources analyzed include the following:

Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration's RSA 911, RSA 2, RSA 113, RSA 107 monitoring data for SCCB, and Agency Report Cards (a national ranking of agencies across several performance measures).

2013 American Community Survey

2013 US Census Bureau Statistics

2014 Social Security Administration SSI/DI Data

Cornell University's Disabilitystatistics.org (2013 Data)

UNH Disability Compendium 2015 http://www.disabilitycompendium.org/ (2014 Data)

South Carolina's Census Bureau

SCCB case service data compiled at the request of the project team

2010 RSA 107 Monitoring Report

Key Informant Interviews

Instrument. The instrument used for the key informant interviews was developed by the researchers at SDSU and reviewed and revised by SCCB.

Key informant population. The key informant population consisted of SCCB staff, community partners, individuals with blindness and vision impairments and business partners. A total of 210 individuals responded to surveys. This included 48 SCCB staff members, 4 partner agencies, 156 consumers and two business persons.

Qualitative data collection. Key informant interviews and focus groups were conducted from September 21, 2015 to October 23, 2015. Forty-seven face-to-face sessions were held. The general format was consistent among consumers, with introductory questions followed by open-ended questions about their experiences and their needs and services, as well as their perceptions of the needs of others, the services they receive and suggested changes in SCCB service delivery.

Similarly, the format was consistent among SCCB staff and representatives of agencies/ organizations that provide services to, advocate for, or represent the interests of individuals with blindness and vision impairments.

First, participants were asked questions to ascertain their personal and professional expertise and their experience with SCCB. Participants were then asked open-ended questions about their perceptions of the needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina. Finally, participants were asked to share their perceptions of how SCCB could improve their ability to help meet those needs, especially as it relates to helping consumers obtain and retain employment.

Efforts to ensure respondent confidentiality. Names and other identifying characteristics were not recorded by the interviewers. Participants were informed that their responses would be treated as confidential information, would not be reported with information that could be used to identify them, and would be consolidated with information from other respondents before results were reported.

Data analysis. The interviewers took notes on the discussions as they occurred. The notes were transcribed and analyzed by the researchers at SDSU. Themes or concerns that surfaced with consistency across interviews were identified and are reported as common themes in the report narrative.

Surveys

Survey of Individuals with Disabilities

Instrument. The instrument used for the electronic survey of individuals with blindness and vision impairments was developed by the project team and reviewed and revised by SCCB.

Survey population. Participants in this portion of the survey effort can be described as individuals with blindness and vision impairments who are potential, former or current clients of SCCB. The agency broadly dispersed the electronic survey via USPS and e-mail invitations. Hard copy surveys were mailed to SCCB consumers using a random sample of 400 former or current consumers.

Data collection. Data was gathered from this population through the use of an accessible, Internet-based survey that was also made available in printed form. Once the survey was active, SCCB distributed it to 1,628 individuals via electronic links (mailed and emailed) and print copies (with self-addressed, postage-paid return envelopes).

Approximately 100 were returned marked undeliverable, for a total distribution to 1,528 individuals. SCCB also posted the link on its website and Newslink. One week after the initial distribution, another electronic notice was sent as both a "thank you" to those who had completed the survey and a reminder to those who had not. A third and final reminder was sent 5 weeks after the second invitation.

Surveys were then placed into "inactive" status and the data analyzed. Printed surveys returned by mail were collected and entered into the system by the project team at SDSU for further analysis.

Efforts to ensure respondent confidentiality. Respondents to the individual survey were not asked to identify themselves when completing the survey. In addition, responses to the electronic and printed surveys were aggregated by the project team at SDSU prior to reporting results, which served to further obscure the identities of individual survey respondents.

Accessibility. The electronic survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. On the printed and electronic versions of the individual survey, respondents were provided with the name and contact information of the Research Director at SDSU in order to place requests for other alternative survey formats.

Data analysis.

Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative responses from individuals, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

Number of completed surveys. A total of 132 electronic surveys were received from individuals with blindness and vision impairments. Only 104 of the surveys were completely filled out. While this suggests a return rate of approximately 9% of the 1,146 who received the electronic link, it is difficult to gauge the true return rate as some responses may have come as a result of forwarded invitations or from postings on

SCCB's website and Newslink.

Of the four hundred surveys sent in hard copy by mail to a random sample of former or current consumers of SCCB, 18 were returned marked as undeliverable due to having the wrong address on file. Fifty-two completed surveys were received. When the undeliverable surveys are removed from the equation, the return rate for the hard copy surveys is 14%.

Survey of Partners

Instrument. The instrument used for the electronic survey of community partners was developed by the project team and reviewed and revised by SCCB.

Survey population. Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as representatives of organizations that provide services, coordinate services, or serve an advocacy role for persons with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina. Invitations were issued to 33 partners.

Data collection. Data was gathered from this population through the use of an Internet-based survey. SCCB identified 33 partners for participation in the survey effort. Once the survey was active, SCCB sent an invitation and link to the survey by e-mail. Approximately one week after the distribution of the initial invitation, another electronic notice was sent as both a "thank you" to those who had completed the survey and a reminder to those who had not. A third and final invitation was sent 5 weeks after the second invitation. Surveys were then placed into "inactive" status and the data analyzed.

Efforts to ensure respondent confidentiality. Respondents to the partner survey were not asked to identify themselves or their organizations when completing the survey. In addition, responses to the electronic surveys were aggregated by the project team at SDSU prior to reporting results, which served to further obscure the identities of individual survey respondents.

Accessibility. The survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. Respondents were also provided with the name and contact information for the Research Director at SDSU in order to place requests for other alternative survey formats.

Data analysis. Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative responses from individuals, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

Number of completed surveys. A total of 8 electronic surveys were started with only 4 entirely completed by representatives of partner organizations, which yields a 1% return on the 33 invitations. It may be that the low response rate corresponds to SCCB's limited track record of collaboration, partnering with business or contracting for services.

Survey of SCCB Staff

Instrument. The instrument used for the electronic survey of SCCB staff was developed by the project team at SDSU and reviewed and revised by SCCB.

Survey population. Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as all staff working for SCCB between September and December 2015.

Data collection. Data was gathered from SCCB staff through the use of an Internet-based survey. All 125 staff were sent an electronic invitation and link to the survey. Approximately one week after the initial distribution, a subsequent notice was sent as both a "thank you" to those who had completed the survey and a reminder to those who had not. A third and final invitation was sent out 5 weeks after the second invitation. Surveys were then placed into "inactive" status and the data analyzed.

Efforts to ensure respondent confidentiality. Respondents to the staff survey were not asked to identify themselves by name when completing the survey. Responses to the electronic surveys were aggregated by the project team at SDSU prior to reporting results. This served to further protect the identities of individual survey respondents.

Accessibility. The survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. Respondents were also provided with the name and contact information for the Research Director at SDSU in order to place requests for other alternative survey formats.

Data analysis. Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative responses from individuals, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

Number of completed surveys. Out of a total of 125 SCCB staff invited to participate, 77 electronic surveys were started, with only 48 being entirely completed, for a 38% response rate.

Survey of Businesses

Instrument. The instrument used for the electronic survey of businesses in South Carolina was developed by the project team at SDSU and reviewed and revised by SCCB.

Survey population. Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as representatives of South Carolina businesses in operation between September and December 2015.

Data collection. Data was gathered from businesses through the use of an Internet-based survey. Twenty business representatives were sent an electronic invitation and link to the survey. Approximately one week after the initial distribution, a subsequent notice was sent as both a "thank you" to those who had completed the survey and a reminder to those who had not. A third and final invitation was sent out 5 weeks after the second invitation. Surveys were then placed into "inactive" status and the data analyzed.

Efforts to ensure respondent confidentiality. Respondents to the business survey were not asked to identify themselves by name when completing the survey. Responses were aggregated by the project team at SDSU prior to reporting results. This served to further protect the identities of individual survey respondents.

Accessibility. The survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. Respondents were also provided with the name and contact information for the Research Director at SDSU in order to place requests for other alternative survey formats.

Data analysis. Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative

responses from individuals, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

Number of completed surveys. Of the 20 businesses invited to participate, only 2 surveys were returned for a response rate of 10%. Although the numbers are so small they cannot be generalized to all South Carolina businesses, they are presented here for illustrative purposes. The low response rate suggests that the agency should strengthen its relationships with employers. The project team has included recommendations to more effectively engage businesses in the Business Relations section of the report.

Focus Groups

Instrument. The focus groups were conducted based on a protocol developed by the researchers at SDSU. The protocol was reviewed and revised by SCCB. The central question raised in each of the focus group meetings was, "What are the most important employment-related needs encountered by people with blindness and vision impairments?"

When appropriate the moderator introduced additional questions prompting respondents to discuss needs associated with preparing for, obtaining and retaining employment, and increasing the employment of persons with blindness and vision impairments. Participants in the staff and partner agency groups were also asked to discuss the needs of individuals with most significant disabilities; those from cultural, racial, or ethnic minority groups; and students with blindness and vision impairments transitioning from high school. They were also asked about the need to establish, develop or improve CRPs.

Population.

Thirteen focus groups were conducted for the assessment, with a total of 64 participants. They consisted of three consumer groups, five partner groups (including the Board of Commissioners), three business groups and two staff groups.

Data collection. The 13 focus groups were held in Greenville, Columbia and Charleston from September 21 through October 23, 2015, involving 64 individuals, 22 of whom were consumers, with the remainder representing the agency, partner agencies and businesses. The format of the focus groups was consistent for all groups. A few minutes were devoted to introductions, personal background, and rapport building in order to establish a productive focus group environment. The focus group moderator explained the purpose of the focus group and provided a brief description of the larger needs assessment effort. The moderator explained the role of San Diego State University in the needs assessment effort and assured participants of the confidentiality of their statements. A note-taker recorded the discussion as it occurred.

Efforts to ensure respondent confidentiality. Names and other identifying characteristics were not recorded by the note-taker. Focus group participants were informed that their responses would be treated as confidential information, would not be reported with information that could be used to identify them, and that information from multiple focus groups would be consolidated before results were reported. In addition, SCCB staff did not attend the focus groups consisting of individuals with disabilities and partner agencies in order to ensure an open dialogue amongst participants.

Accessibility. SCCB included a request for reasonable accommodation in their electronic invitations to all of the research groups. One individual requested an interpreter.

Data analysis. Notes were transcribed and analyzed by the researchers at SDSU. Results were organized according to the eight categories under investigation in the assessment.

Themes or concerns that surfaced with consistency across groups were identified and reported as consensus themes in the report narrative.

Analysis and Triangulation of Data

The data gathered from the national and agency-specific data sets, key informant interviews, surveys and focus groups were analyzed by the researchers on the project team.

The common themes that emerged regarding needs of persons with disabilities from each data source were identified and compared to each other to validate the existence of needs, especially as they pertained to the target populations of this assessment. These common themes are identified and discussed in the Findings section.

Dissemination Plans

The CSNA report is delivered to SCCB and the Board of Commissioners. The project team received several requests by consumers and partner agencies to share the results of the CSNA. We recommend that SCCB publish the report on their website for public access and that they notify the public of the availability of the report by e-mail.

SOUTH CAROLINA'S DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

& SERVICE DELIVERY CONTEXT

In 2014, there were 4,832,482 people with disabilities living in South Carolina, with approximately 77,406 of them (1.6%) being individuals with a visual disability, of working age, living in the community. 75.4% of working age civilians without disabilities living in the community were employed, as opposed to 34.4% of those with disabilities and 32% of those with visual disabilities. Economically, the pattern of lower employment continues with lower earnings and higher poverty rates. To wit, the median earnings for South Carolinians without disabilities 16 years or older in inflation adjusted dollars for 2014 was $27,296 whereas for those with disabilities it was $20,157. With respect to poverty, the rate for working age civilians without disabilities living in the community is half that (15%) for those with disabilities (30%).

SCCB VR programs consist of approximately 30 counselors located in 9 District offices throughout South Carolina. The administrative and service delivery hubs for SCCB are located in Columbia. The most intense independent living and job training services are provided at the residential EBMRC in Columbia. To access the services at EBMRC, individuals are transported from their residence to EBMRC on Monday and return on Friday.

Individuals living locally in the Columbia area may also access EBMRC programs and services. SCCB also provides 'Outreach' services, delivered by staff in the 9 district offices. The Outreach services do not provide the same intensity and duration as those provided by EBMRC.

EBMRC also houses training programs in assistive technology (JAWS, Zoomtext etc.) as well as summer Transition programs for high school students.

SCCB provides job development and placement services via a cadre of Employment counselors who serve the state.

Transition services are provided by a cadre of Transition counselors who also serve the entire state.

SCCB does limited outsourcing of services through community rehabilitation programs.

CSNA FINDINGS

The CSNA findings are reported below in sections that correspond with the requested areas of inquiry. They are presented in narrative form. Each section starts with a summary across all data collection methods, followed by a breakdown according to data collection method. Data tables that were too large to be included in the body of the report are presented in the Appendices.

SECTION 1

OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE

The data on agency performance included below comes from the case management system used by SCCB and is compared to the available data submitted by SCCB to the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods

The following recurring themes emerged in the area of Overall Agency Performance:

Indicators

As summarized above, demographic data for South Carolina indicates that 1.6% of people with disabilities of working age who are living in the community are individuals with a visual disability.

Surveyed consumers, staff and partners agreed that the top barriers to achieving employment goals relate to geographic access to services and jobs, followed by lack of individuals' education and job skills, and employer perceptions about their ability to work.

Agency performance

SCCB estimates that the VR program will serve 1,173 eligible individuals during FY 2016, 1,257 during FY 2017, 1,350 during FY 2018, and 1,400 during FY 2019.

SCCB serves males and females equally, and ethnic/racial minorities in equal or greater proportion to their representation in the general population. Recent data regarding SCCB's active cases indicates that 56% are Black or African American and 41% are White.

SCCB serves youth and individuals with most significant disabilities at very low rates.

There was a consistent decrease in both the number and percentage of cases closed with an employment outcome over the 2009-2014 period.

SCCB ranks high for per case expenditures and low for quality of employment outcomes nationally among agencies for the blind.

SCCB staff have a strong knowledge of assistive technology relating to blindness and visual impairment. The agency makes this technology readily available to students and adults.

SCCB provides strong transition programs at the EBMRC, but these programs are limited to a small number of youth who are blind or visually impaired.

Historically, SCCB VR has not viewed itself or been viewed by other agencies as an integral partner at the statewide workforce level due to (1) SCCB's paradigm under WIA of being a sole one-stop shop, attempting to meet all the needs of its consumers independently, and (2) external silos and territorialism that has existed among state agencies. However, the agency has expressed the intention of working more closely with partners going forward.

Historically, the most prevalent services provided by SCCB are Assessment and Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments.

The VR program's service delivery system is centered in Columbia, resting primarily with the EBMRC. The majority of consumers participating in the adjustment to blindness program were closed as "N/A" (41.3%), "homemaker" (22.3%), or "unsuccessful" (20.1%). The breakdown of "closure reason" indicates that 36.9% were "successful closures."

SCCB's service delivery was rated by surveyed consumers to be strongest in relation to vision restoration, low vision aids and assistive technology. The biggest barriers to SCCB services identified by all survey respondents were slow service delivery, inadequate information about SCCB services and lack of geographic access.

Key informants in all categories had the perception that SCCB returns unmatched federal dollars every year, at the expense of delivering needed services. The research team determined that SCCB has not in fact returned federal dollars in the past several years.

Gaps

Currently, SCCB's memoranda of agreement with other state agencies, including the general VR agency, the Mental Health agency, and the Developmental Disability agency, must be updated to meet the requirements of WIOA.

The vast majority of substantive independent living (IL) training received by SCCB consumers is conducted at the Center in Columbia. This is a residential center, therefore to access the training, an individual must either be a resident at the center or live in close proximity where commuting to and from the center on a daily basis is feasible.

Key informants suggest that this, coupled with significant transportation barriers statewide, presents a major challenge in accessing SCCB services.

In 2014, only 3% of Center participants came from the 10 lowest median income counties in South Carolina indicating that individuals who live below the poverty line and in rural areas may be underserved.

SCCB has limited contracts or other arrangements with external service providers especially community rehabilitation programs.

? There are limited VR 'outreach' services throughout the state. Outreach services consist of independent living services (orientation/mobility and home/personal management) and are not as comprehensive as services offered at the EBMRC.

? Lack of affordable, accessible transportation is an historic, significant and pervasive barrier to independent living, employment and services for individuals with disabilities everywhere, and despite its wide acceptance as a critical need, little progress is made in addressing it systematically. South Carolina is no exception, with key informants and survey participants representing all stakeholder groups identifying this as an issue.

? All individuals surveyed for this study were in agreement that the highest priorities should be to improve geographic access (outreach, transportation, community-based services) and to address staffing issues (vacancies, skill levels, morale). These were followed by somewhat divergent suggestions depending on the respondent group: Staff and partners focused on internal improvements (collaboration, assessment, individualized services), whereas consumers focused on stronger job training, placement and support.

Results by Data Collection Method

Services Provided to Individuals by SCCB:

Quantitative Data

SCCB estimates that the VR program will serve 1,173 eligible individuals during FFY 2016, 1,257 during FFY 2017, 1,350 during FFY 2018, and 1,400 during FFY 2019. The following tables and discussions present statistical data on SCCB VR's performance in providing services to individuals with blindness and vision impairments from 2012 through 2014.

2014 SCCB Data on EBMRC Services

50% of EBMRC attendees were from Richland or the immediately adjacent counties.

3% of EBMRC attendees were from the state's ten poorest counties as measured by median income.

82% EBMRC closed cases did not have an employment outcome: 41% "N/A," 20% "homemaker," 20% "unsuccessful" and 0.6% "failure to cooperate."

Observations Based on the SCCB Data

Performance in key areas has declined from 2012 through 2014. Applications, eligibility decisions, individualized plan for employment (IPE) development and employment outcomes decreased significantly.

The cost of serving individuals whose cases are closed successfully or unsuccessfully has risen dramatically. This data may suggest case management issues resulting in higher case service expenditures and lower employment outcomes.

The percentage of cases coded Most Significantly Disabled (MSD) is low and may reflect an unclear interpretation of agency policies and/or coding errors. It may also reflect eligibility decisions that screen out individuals with most significant disabilities.

Services to youth under 18 appear to be very low and will need to be addressed in light of WIOA requirements.

RSA Data Highlights The following data highlights are drawn from various RSA reports, including Standards and Indicators, RSA-911, RSA-722, RSA State Report Card [See Appendix H for RSA reports relating to SCCB]

Indicator 1.1, "Number of closures with employment outcome," has consistently decreased from 2006 (546) to 2015 (137). Source: Standards and Indicators.

There has been a downward trend in Indicator 1.2, "Percentage of closed cases with an employment outcome," from 2006-2015. Source: Standards and Indicators.

SCCB consistently exceeds the other federal performance standards relating to closed cases.

Both males and females are equally served by SCCB.

SCCB consistently significantly exceeds standard 2.1, "Ratio of minority services to non-minority services."

SCCB outcomes for Hispanics are somewhat low in comparison with the representation of Hispanics in the general population. The state's Hispanic population is rapidly increasing and South Carolina is among the states with the highest percentage increases in the country.

Other minorities such as Native Americans and Asians represent very small percentages of the population served, corresponding to very small percentages in South Carolina's general population.

SCCB has minimal (a total of 2 in FY 2014) disputes with applicants or eligible individuals resulting in mediation, impartial hearings or civil actions. Source: RSA-722.

Average time to closure is 12 months longer for individuals closed with no employment compared with individuals closed with employment. Source: RSA-911.

Historically for SCCB, the percentage of competitive employment outcomes is highest for the age range 25-35. Source: RSA-911.

Historically for SCCB, the percentage of employment outcomes is lowest for age range 14-24. Source: RSA-911.

SCCB ranks high (nationally among agencies for the blind) for expenditures, months of service and hours worked per week at closure. Source: RSA State Report Card.

SCCB ranks low (nationally among agencies for the blind) in quality of employment outcomes including wages and medical benefits. Source: RSA State Report Card.

SCCB appears to underserve individuals with multiple disabilities especially individuals with cognitive and mental disabilities. Source: RSA-911.

Historically, the most prevalent services provided by SCCB are Assessment and Diagnosis and Treatment of Impairments.

Almost 19% of unsuccessful closures for SCCB were for the following reasons: No longer interested in services; refused services; unable to locate. Source: Agency Data.

Of those attending EBMRC, 43% of cases were closed either unsuccessfully or as homemakers. 38% were closed successfully.

2010 RSA Monitoring Report Findings and Recommendations. RSA conducted a 107 monitoring review in 2010 and issued findings and recommendations for SCCB to address. Those findings and recommendations that coincide with this report's findings on overall agency performance include:

SCCB serves individuals not requiring extensive funding.

Stakeholders reported that SCCB focuses on serving those who are already employed at application.

SCCB does not integrate internal functions (including fiscal, programmatic and program evaluation).

It does not appear that the agency was successful in fulfilling the 2010 report's recommendations relating to:

shifting resources from low- to high-impact services to address service gaps

decentralizing service delivery

adding staff with capacity and skill sets needed to offer programs, reduce waiting lists, etc.

partnering with other agencies

implementing a dual service system with South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) including marketing and training

Observations Based on RSA Data

In general, performance in key service delivery fell over a 3-year period, possibly due to staff turnover.

Key issues documented in the RSA Monitoring report have not been resolved and may continue to impact agency performance.

Individuals with multiple disabilities that included blindness are significantly underserved. Lack of partnerships with other agencies including SCVRD appear to be contributing factors.Case management issues appear to contribute to higher cost, lower successful outcomes and less efficient service delivery. The root causes of the case management issues require further investigation. Services Provided to Individuals by SCCB: Qualitative Data on Barriers and Improvements Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews Some consumers reported positive experiences with SCCB. "Staff and fellow consumers who are visually impaired definitely inspired me." One individual new to South Carolina said the agency "opened doors to blindness resources" and "I look forward in the future to give back to SCCB to help other consumers not as fortunate as myself." Consumers' employment barriers (lack of education or job skills, employer perceptions, etc.) are compounded by challenges they encounter in accessing the services needed to overcome those barriers. Key informants frequently observed that many individuals seeking employment-related services are unaware of SCCB's existence, or the services are either lacking (in quality and quantity) or geographically inaccessible. Several consumers said they would not have known about SCCB if they didn't already have a connection (e.g., a relative who is on staff or is already receiving services). Others indicated that even as SCCB consumers they were not fully informed of what services are available. A Board member acknowledged that "Consumers need to be more aware of our services and we need to find them." Slow service delivery was frequently cited. One individual observed, "Things move at a snail's pace." Others reported that services outside EBMRC are inconsistent and often delayed; processes are slow and communication between the agency and individuals is a problem. "There is too much bureaucracy for such a small agency." There is an appearance of narrow or inconsistently applied criteria for service acceptance. Key informants perceived eligibility criteria as a means for SCCB to screen people out of rather than into programs. "Eligibility is a roadblock rather than to help a person." Key informants reported that the VR program does not have adequate vocational evaluation resources for all those seeking employment, especially if they cannot go to EBMRC. It was observed that the VR program does not provide needed services such as GED, computer training, Trial Work Experience, job coaching or competitive job placement. None of those interviewed indicated they had received assistance from SCCB in finding employment. One individual stated, "I understand that now it is required for individuals to look for their own work. I tried that, it did not work well for me, trying to do a resume was difficult. I realize it is a large undertaking and there is not enough manpower but some people need extra help especially if they are older and haven't been in the workforce for a long time." Service access or availability is especially challenging for individuals with multiple disabilities, those transitioning from school to employment, individuals living in poverty, those living in rural areas and older workers. A partner noted that "the agency caters to the 40% whose only disability is blindness vs. the 60% with multiple diagnoses" and that "there is no plan for those with intellectual disabilities." One individual observed, "Many older people want to work longer." The geographic access issue cuts across all areas of inquiry. Key informants' suggested solutions included improved transportation and outreach services, more out-stationing of services, and increased partnering or contracting for services. While not a direct area of inquiry, the issue of low staff morale was raised unsolicited by staff and other key informants as a contributing factor in the agency's performance and service delivery challenges. In general, comments focused on low pay, lack of recognition and increased workloads due to loss of staff and office closures. Key informants in all categories had the perception that SCCB returns unmatched federal dollars every year, at the expense of delivering needed services. The research team determined that SCCB has not in fact returned federal dollars in the past several years. This misperception could be damaging to the agency's reputation among stakeholders. Survey Results by Type Individual Survey Individual Survey: Respondent Characteristics There were a total of 132 responses (104 of which were complete) to the individual survey for this study. 87% of the individuals who responded were either current or former clients of SCCB. Approximately 58% of the respondents were SSA beneficiaries and almost 33% of the total number of respondents met with their SCCB counselor in their community. The primary disability of

the respondents was, as expected, blindness or vision impairment. Individual Survey: Barriers to Employment. Respondents to the individual survey were prompted with a number of questions that asked about specific barriers to achieving their employment goals. Barriers identified by the greatest proportions of individual survey respondents included lack of disability-related and other transportation, lack of assistive technology, not having enough education or training, employers' perceptions about hiring people with disabilities and not having enough job search skills. Each of these concerns was identified as a barrier by over a third of the individual survey respondents. Several other concerns (e.g., not enough available jobs, health issues and not having job skills) were also identified as barriers with considerable frequency. At the conclusion of the survey section prompting respondents to identify employment-related barriers, participants were asked an open-ended question to describe the most significant barrier to achieving their employment goals. Seventy-six respondents provided narrative statements describing their perceptions of the most significant barriers they faced. The most common barriers expressed by respondents were: Geographic isolation / transportation Insufficient job skills and job readiness Lack of SCCB responsiveness Other barriers to achieving employment goals mentioned frequently by respondents included unreceptive employer community, health complications and lack of IL skills. Individuals were asked an open-ended question that requested they identify the top three most helpful services they received from SCCB. Seventy-six individuals responded to this question. The services that were identified with the most frequency included: Vision restoration (eye exams, glasses, surgery, appointments, etc.); Low vision aids; Assistive technology; IL – Orientation and Mobility (O&M) especially – and adjustment to blindness training; Tuition and college training costs; and Employment counseling. Individual Survey: Barriers to Accessing SCCB Services. Individual survey respondents were presented with several questions about specific challenges or barriers to accessing SCCB services. The barriers to accessing SCCB services mentioned most frequently by respondents to the individual survey pertained to difficulties scheduling meetings with counselors (30%), other difficulties working with SCCB staff (28%), limited accessibility to SCCB via public transportation and lack of information about the services available from SCCB. At the conclusion of the survey, respondents were presented with an open-ended question asking if there were any other challenges or barriers that made it difficult for them to access SCCB services. Twenty-two respondents detailed other barriers they encountered in response to this question. Most frequently mentioned were challenges relating to lack of (or slow or bureaucratic) response from SCCB, lack of awareness of SCCB services, and need to spend 2-3 months in Columbia. Individuals who indicated that other difficulties working with the SCCB were a barrier to accessing SCCB services were asked to describe these difficulties. Twenty-eight respondents supplied answers to this question. The most commonly reported difficulties included: Slow service delivery Counselor unresponsiveness Change in counselors Lack of information about available services Lack of confidentiality Individual Survey: Improvements to SCCB Services. Respondents were presented with an open-ended question that asked what changes to SCCB services might improve their experience with SCCB and help them to achieve their employment goals. Sixty-nine respondents provided narrative statements describing suggested changes. It should be noted that 18 (26%) indicated "none" or that they were satisfied. Others identified the following suggestions: Address staffing issues (lack of interest/motivation and training, poor communication, high turnover) Provide information about available resources and services More assistance with transportation Job training, job placement and on the job support Partner Survey Thirty-three partner agencies were invited to participate in the survey. Eight individuals participated, with four providing complete responses. The low response rate may be related to the fact that VR does not typically contract for services and provides most services in-house and therefore does not have relationships with outside partner agencies. Partner Survey: Capacity of Provider Network. When asked if the state's network of rehabilitation providers is able to meet SCCB consumers' vocational rehabilitation needs, 4 partners responded "yes" and 3 responded "no." One respondent elaborated that the system (including SCCB) is challenged in meeting the needs of dually diagnosed individuals; another said the system is challenged in meeting

the needs of students in transition. The reasons cited included insufficient quantity and quality of provider services, client barriers and staff cutbacks. Partner Survey: Barriers to Employment. Partners were asked to identify the reasons why individuals with blindness and vision impairments find it difficult to achieve their employment goals. Only 5 partners responded, so results cannot be generalized to all provider organizations, but are worth taking into account. Three out of five partners responding to this survey identified the following reasons consumers find it difficult to achieve their employment goals: not enough jobs available, transportation issues, lack of job skills and job search skills, and mental health, substance abuse and other health issues. When asked to identify the top three reasons why SCCB consumers find it difficult to achieve their employment goals, partners most frequently identified transportation, employer's perceptions about job skills and not having education and training. Partner survey: Barriers to accessing SCCB services. Partner survey respondents were given a list of barriers and asked to identify the top three reasons that individuals with blindness and vision impairments found it difficult to access SCCB services. Most frequently mentioned among respondents' top three barriers were slow service delivery and limited physical accessibility. Also mentioned by one respondent each were inadequate disability-related accommodations and assessment services as well as SCCB staff not meeting clients in the communities where they live. These same barriers were identified as being greater than for the general population for individuals with the most significant disabilities, youth in transition and racial or ethnic minorities. Partner survey respondents were presented with an open-ended question asking if there were any other difficulties for consumers to access SCCB services. One partner pointed to SCCB's staff retention issues as a significant barrier for transition students, saying that SCCB should have more of a presence, attend meetings for students transitioning to supported employment, provide resources for college-bound students, provide more timely information about summer camp and other statewide activities. Partner survey: Improvements to SCCB Services. Partner survey respondents were also presented with an open-ended question that asked them what important changes SCCB could make to improve services, increase access to services and support their consumers' efforts to achieve their employment goals. Three respondents provided narrative statements describing the following suggested changes: Transition counselor consistently available to go to the schools, establishing relationships with teachers and transition specialists. Increased staff. Fee for service option with job training providers. Two partner survey respondents also indicated that, system-wide, the network of vocational rehabilitation providers could bring about service improvements by better coordinating with the general VR agency rather than duplicating services. One respondent suggested focusing on improving the community perception of employing individuals with disabilities. Staff Survey There were 77 SCCB staff survey responses (48 of which were complete) representing various job classifications. Years on the job for these respondents ranged from 5 months to 21 years. Staff Survey: Barriers to Employment. SCCB staff survey respondents were given a list of barriers identical to those presented to partner survey respondents and asked to identify the reasons why SCCB consumers have difficulty achieving their employment goals. Surveyed staff identified lack of education and training, job skills, disability-related personal care and language skills as barriers that are not adequately addressed by SCCB. These were followed by housing issues, poor social skills, and convictions for criminal offenses as challenges not adequately addressed by the agency. Staff Survey: Barriers to Accessing SCCB Services. Staff were then asked to identify the top three reasons that people with disabilities find it difficult to access SCCB services. Over 50% of staff respondents place limited accessibility via public transportation in their top three consumer barriers to accessing SCCB services. Next most frequently ranked in the top three was slow service delivery. Other barriers mentioned most frequently pertained to difficulties accessing training or education programs, other challenges related to the physical location of the SCCB office and inadequate assessment. SCCB staff were presented with an open-ended question asking if there was anything else that should be known about why individuals with disabilities might find it difficult to access SCCB services. Nineteen responses were received. The overwhelming themes included slow service delivery (linked to high staff turnover) and lack of awareness of SCCB

and community-based services. Staff Survey: Improvements to SCCB Services. SCCB staff were also presented with an open-ended question asking them to identify the most important changes that SCCB could make to support consumer efforts to achieve their employment goals. Twenty-nine staff members responded to the question. The most frequently cited changes included: Easier geographic access to services Employment plans and services oriented to individual goals, competitive jobs, advancement and careers Business engagement and education Holistic assessment and services to individuals with most significant / multiple disabilities Staff survey: Staff-focused changes. SCCB staff were presented with a survey question prompting them to identify the top three staff-focused changes that would enable them to better assist their clients. Increased outreach to clients in their own communities and improved business partnerships were the most frequently mentioned among the top three changes that would enable staff to better assist their consumers. These were followed in frequency by improved assessment tools, smaller caseloads and more effective community-based service providers. Other changes mentioned commonly were additional training, more administrative support and better data management tools. Summary of survey results (individuals, staff and partners) Employment barriers - Surveyed consumers, staff and partners agreed that the top barriers to achieving employment goals relate to geographic access to services and jobs, followed by lack of education and job skills and employer perceptions. SCCB services - SCCB's service delivery was rated by consumers to be strongest in relation to vision restoration, low vision aids and assistive technology. The biggest barriers to SCCB services identified by all survey respondents were slow service delivery, lack of information about SCCB services and geographic access. Suggested improvements - All surveyed individuals suggested improvements relating to geographic access (outreach, transportation, community-based services) and staffing. These were followed by somewhat divergent suggestions depending on the respondent group: Staff and partners focused on internal improvements (collaboration, assessment, individualized services), whereas consumers focused on stronger job training, placement and support. Recommendations The following recommendations are offered to SCCB based on the results of the research in the area of Overall Agency Performance: If it is determined that the recent decline in the agency's performance is attributable to staff turnover, reductions in force and office closures, SCCB should consider evaluating its workforce needs and realigning staffing levels and qualifications as well as quantity and location of field offices to meet identified consumer demand. Given the frequency with which staff morale was identified as an issue by key informants SCCB should consider the following: ? Assign a team to assess the impact of the current organizational culture and develop strategies to recommendations for addressing the findings of the assessment. Create a consensus vision of the culture and working environment of SCCB and develop a strategic plan to achieve the vision; or include strategies to address organizational culture as a priority in any existing strategic plan. Given the perception among some consumers and staff that SCCB is turning back federal funds, SCCB should consider communicating to all stakeholders its plans and efforts to secure all available resources needed to provide effective services. The observation of the 2010 RSA monitoring report that SCCB does not integrate its internal functions is consistent with information shared by agency staff. The agency is encouraged to continue recent efforts to coordinate and communicate across internal divisions and departments. SCCB should strongly consider building the capacity of its program evaluation section that analyzes data on needs and services (as was done in this CSNA) to provide timely analysis to agency leadership and program administrators. SCCB should consider strengthening its approach to assessing consumer satisfaction especially assessing satisfaction immediately after case closure. This would provide more timely information on consumer perceptions of quality of services and outcomes. Needs surfacing in this report or arising from new requirements of WIOA will require a focused strategic approach that maximizes fiscal resources. SCCB should investigate options for consultation around aligning fiscal resources with programmatic needs. SCCB should conduct an analysis of the staff competencies needed to provide effective services to individuals with multiple, significant and most significant disabilities. The agency should then develop strategies to address gaps in competencies. SCCB should consider looking at methods

to more comprehensively evaluate the quality of services delivered for both active and closed cases. Resources available through the Summit Group or the Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance Technical Assistance Center should be explored. SCCB should consider developing a comprehensive and strategic approach to outreach, using resources available through the workforce system to target underserved populations that are interested in exploring employment options. SCCB could use the physical locations of workforce partners for outreach and out-stationing of staff on an as needed basis. SCCB could also leverage the resources available through contracting with community rehabilitation programs to reach underserved populations. Lack of affordable, accessible transportation is a workforce system issue that affects all disability populations and anyone experiencing geographic access challenges. As in all states, this is a system-wide workforce issue in South Carolina. SCCB should join with workforce partners to take action, bringing in all stakeholders, including consumer groups and representatives of state and local transportation systems. The aims would be to better understand the scope and impact of transportation deficits and to collaborate on strategic solutions to address them. SECTION 2 NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT Section 2 provides an assessment of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment, as conveyed by statistical data and as expressed by the different groups interviewed and surveyed. Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities including their need for supported employment: Indicators Employers' perceptions, lack of education and training and job skills, and geographic access to services and jobs were all identified by key informants as major barriers to employment for individuals with most significant disabilities. A large majority of SCCB consumers receive SSA benefits, and fear of benefit loss affects their return-to-work behavior. Staff and partners agree that employment barriers are different for individuals with most significant disabilities than for the general population. SCCB has a long-standing history of not providing Supported Employment services. SC residents do not have access to long term supports, or job coaches, either through SCCB in-house or through CRPs. There is no evidence of collaboration between SCCB and SCVRD on behalf of customers with multiple diagnoses. Agency performance Surveyed partners and staff were in agreement that geographic access and slow service delivery are the biggest barriers to SCCB services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. SCCB served a very small number of individuals with most significant disabilities over a 3-year period, declining from a total of 18 in 2012 to 8 in 2014. SCCB appears to provide limited services to individuals with cognitive or mental health disabilities. SCCB does not appear to partner with agencies that might provide services to these populations. Despite SCCB's agreement with RSA recommendations to establish a Supported Employment program and to partner with SCVRD on dual enrollment of consumers with most significant disabilities, the agency has not successfully implemented such actions. Gaps Since SCCB has no Supported Employment program (in-house or by contract with CRPs) it is difficult to determine to what extent individuals coded MSD are served without looking at individual cases. In interviews with staff, it was indicated that these individuals "tend to sit around," receiving no services. There is a significant gap between the needs of and services available to individuals with the most significant disabilities. Agency services appear to be targeted to individuals who are blind or visually impaired and have no additional disabilities. Individuals with cognitive and mental disabilities in addition to blindness appear to be significantly underserved, and in many cases may receive no substantial services. There is also a significant gap in the employment outcomes for these populations. Results by Data Collection Method Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities: Quantitative Data on Barriers and Improvements National and/or Agency Specific Data Related to the Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment. SCCB uses a definition for MSD consistent with federal requirements. SSA Beneficiaries SSA Beneficiaries Applying for SCCB Services (SCCB data) - Total number and percentage of applicants who were SSA recipients: 2012: 169 (29%) 2013: 134 (25%) 2014: 88 (21%) SSI/SSDI Recipients

(RSA Annual Review Report) – Total number of applicants who were SSA recipients, broken down by SSI and SSDI: FY2012 - 57 SSI recipients, 94 SSDI beneficiaries FY2013 - 60 SSI recipients, 126 SSDI beneficiaries SCCB Programming: Asset Development Services - SCCB does not provide benefits counseling to consumers. Outcomes for SSA Beneficiaries (RSA 911 FY2014 Data) SSI and SSDI beneficiaries earn on average $5.00 per hour less than non-beneficiaries. SSI/SSDI beneficiaries worked on average 10 hours less per week than non-beneficiaries. Observations Based on the Data The percentage of SCCB applicants who are individuals with blindness was fairly constant over time at approximately 25% from 2012 to 2014. Very few deaf-blind consumers applied for services over the 3-year period. Vision impaired is the disability-type most highly represented among SCCB applicants, although the percentage declined from 61% to 53% over the three years while those classified as "Other" climbed from 13% to 20%. In each of the three years 2012 to 2014, individuals with the most significant disabilities were virtually unserved by VR, declining in number from 18 to 8, and from 5% to 2.5% of all applicants, over the 3-year period. According to SCCB, 21% of its 2014 consumers were SSA beneficiaries. While it is unclear whether these individuals have more significant disabilities than other consumers, it is evident that SSI and SSDI beneficiaries earn less per hour and work fewer hours per week than non-beneficiaries, suggesting that they have more employment-related challenges. Many of these individuals and their families are concerned about losing the safety net that is provided by either SSI or SSDI if they go to work. These fears may adversely affect return-to-work behavior and result in settling for part-time work that keeps them under the Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) amount, or prevents them from going over the "cash-cliff." Benefits counseling, along with financial literacy training, could improve consumer perceptions of employment options available to them resulting in increased wages and lifting many of them above the poverty level. 2010 RSA Monitoring Report Findings and Recommendations As a result of a federal monitoring visit conducted in 2010, RSA issued findings and recommendations for SCCB to address. Those that coincide with this report's findings on services to individuals with the most significant disabilities include: SCCB has a long-standing history of not providing Supported Employment, and SC residents do not have access to long term supports, or job coaches, either in-house or through CRPs. While consumers with multiple disabilities could benefit from joint service provision between SCCB and SCVRD, and despite an interagency agreement with SCVRD, there has been no evidence of collaboration even though consumers could benefit from dual enrollment. Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities: Qualitative Data on Barriers and Improvements Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews conducted for this assessment regarding the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment: Partners indicated that 60% of individuals with blindness and vision impairments have multiple diagnoses, but that SCCB caters to the 40% whose only diagnosis is blindness and does not have the capacity to meet the needs of the 60% with multiple disabilities. One parent reported, "My son's principle disability is autism but blindness trumps it. I have a hard time getting a call back from the Commission. The information flow is very lean." He further observed, "A prerequisite for going to Columbia [EBMRC] is that he be able to care for himself, yet with his autism that's not an option." Staff observed that the severely disabled population is the most difficult to assist in securing gainful employment. When asked about services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, many staff indicated that these services do not exist, and that Supported Employment services are needed. One staff indicated that these cases just 'sit on caseloads.' Staff indicated that EBMRC programs do not meet the needs of individuals with multiple disabilities. Outreach services provided by SCCB are even more limited in scope than EBMRC services, which indicates those individuals who cannot or choose not to access EBMRC are severely underserved. Staff do not appear to have the experience or training to provide services this population. An education partner observed that staff are not comfortable serving this population. Staff indicated that lack of effective partnerships with community resources inhibit their ability to effectively serve individuals with most significant disabilities. Staff recommended that SCCB provide centralized benefits counseling. Survey Results

by Type Partner survey: Barriers to Employment. Partner survey respondents were asked if the barriers to achieving employment goals for SCCB consumers with the most significant disabilities are different from the overall population. All five individuals who responded to this question indicated that the barriers are different. They were asked to identify the top three barriers to employment for consumers with the most significant disabilities. Three of them ranked employers' perceptions and disability-related transportation issues among the top three barriers, and two placed lack of education and training, disability-related accommodations and social skills in the top three. Barriers cited by one respondent each included other transportation issues, health issues other than mental health and substance abuse, lack of available jobs, job skills and job search skills, and language barriers. Staff survey: Barriers to Employment. Staff survey respondents were asked if the barriers to accessing SCCB services experienced by individuals with the most significant disabilities are different from the overall population. Forty-five individuals responded to this question and 32 (71%) indicated that the barriers are different while 13 (29%) indicated that the barriers are not different. Thirty-one of the 32 staff who indicated that the barriers are different identified the top three barriers. The barriers most commonly identified by staff for SCCB consumers with most significant disabilities to achieve employment goals are employers' perceptions about employing people with disabilities, not having job skills, lack of transportation and not having enough education or training. Partner Survey: Barriers to Accessing SCCB Services. Partner survey respondents were asked if the barriers to accessing SCCB services experienced by individuals with the most significant disabilities are different from the overall population. Three of the five respondents to this question indicated that the barriers are different while the other two indicated that the barriers are not different. The three who indicated that barriers are different for SCCB consumers with the most significant disabilities were asked to identify the top three barriers to accessing SCCB services for consumers with the most significant disabilities. They were unanimous in placing slow service delivery among their top three. Two cited limited accessibility of SCCB via public transportation and SCCB staff not being responsive. One individual each identified the following barriers: SCCB staff do not meet clients in their communities, difficulty accessing training or education programs, inadequate assessment services, language barriers, inadequate disability-related accommodations and other challenges related to SCCB physical location. Staff Survey: Barriers to Accessing SCCB Services. Staff survey respondents were asked if the barriers to accessing SCCB services by individuals with the most significant disabilities are different from the overall population. Forty-six individuals responded to this question and 22 (48%) indicated that the barriers are different while 24 (52%) indicated that the barriers are not different. Twenty of the 22 individuals who indicated that the barriers are different for SCCB consumers with the most significant disabilities identified the top three barriers to accessing SCCB services for consumers with the most significant disabilities. The most commonly identified barriers to accessing SCCB services identified by respondents to the staff survey were limited accessibility of SCCB by public transportation, slow service delivery, difficulties accessing training or education programs, inadequate assessment services and inadequate disability-related accommodations. Summary of Survey Results (staff and partners) Barriers to employment - Staff and partners were in agreement that employment barriers are different for individuals with most significant disabilities than for the general population. The barriers they identified as presenting the greatest challenges included employers' perceptions, lack of education and training and job skills, and geographic access to services and jobs. Barriers to SCCB services - Partners and staff were in agreement that geographic access and slow service delivery are the biggest barriers to SCCB services for individuals with the most significant disability. Following these barriers, partner respondents also identified unresponsive staff as a challenge, whereas staff identified difficulty accessing education and training programs. Recommendations The following recommendations are offered to SCCB based on the results of the research on the area of Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment: SCCB should conduct an individual review of cases coded 'most significant disability' and determine what services and competencies are needed to improve outcomes. SCCB should consider developing partnerships

with other state agencies, including SCVRD, to determine if individuals with most significant disabilities who are also blind and visually impaired can be served in existing programs. SCCB should consider modification of its programs at EBMRC to address the needs of individuals with most significant disabilities. Specifically, SCCB should investigate how Supported Employment and Customized Employment can be integrated into EBMRC's programs. SCCB should consider assigning a program administrator the responsibilities of reaching out to individuals with the most significant disabilities and overseeing services that meet their needs. Once SCCB either creates or gains access to Supported Employment programs, these programs should have administrative oversight as well. In compliance with WIOA, SCCB should investigate the options for creating Customized Employment programs that would serve individuals with the most significant disabilities. While there are several organizations around the country that provide training in Customized Employment, it should be noted that training alone will not increase SCCB's capacity to serve individuals with most significant disabilities. Extensive planning, partnership development, policy and fee structure development are also needed. SCCB should develop an extensive strategic plan around building capacity for serving this population. SECTION 3 NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH BLINDNESS AND VISION IMPAIRMENTS FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM Section 3 identifies the needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by SCCB. Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods The following themes emerged across all data collection methods in the area of the needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments from different ethnic groups, including individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program: Indicators Hispanic or Latino residents make up 5% of the state's general population. South Carolina is one of only four states in the country to see an over 150% increase (specifically 167%, the 2nd highest in the nation) in the Hispanic population from 2000-2013. ? 68% of SC residents are White. African-Americans make up 28% of the general population. ? According to 2014 data from the Kaiser Family Foundation, poverty rates for minority populations in South Carolina were higher than for Whites: the poverty rate for Whites was 12% in contrast to 27% for African-Americans, and 17.5% for Hispanics. 2015 data from Talk Poverty indicates even higher rates for minority populations: 28.8% for African-Americans, 32.5% for Latinos, and 30.8% for Native Americans. Agency performance The 2% Hispanic or Latino consumers served by SCCB in 2012-2014 somewhat underrepresents the 5% in the state's general population and it is not clear whether SCCB has a plan to address the 167% upward trend in this population. The 44% White consumers served by SCCB are significantly underrepresentative of the 68% in the general population. African-Americans are the one group that occurs at a significantly higher rate among SCCB consumers (54%) than the general population (28%). Gaps Individuals with blindness and vision impairments who are Hispanic may be underserved by SCCB. Individuals who have deaf-blindness may be underserved by SCCB. The needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments from different ethnic groups are similar to the needs of other SCCB consumers. Lack of geographic access to employment and SCCB programs is especially problematic for individuals living in rural areas who are among those likely to be underserved. A strong relationship between ethnicity and poverty in South Carolina may contribute to the degree that ethnic populations are underserved. Results by Data Collection Method Needs of Individuals from Different Ethnic Groups, including Unserved or Underserved: Quantitative Data on Barriers and Improvements National and/or Agency Specific Data Related to the Needs of Individuals with Blindness and Vision Impairments from Different Ethnic Groups, Including Needs of Individuals who have been Unserved or Underserved by SCCB The majority of respondents to the staff and partner surveys conducted by the CSNA team were of the opinion that the barriers to employment and the barriers to services are no different for South Carolina's various ethnic groups than for the general population. Individuals who are Asian, American Indian, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific occur in very small percentages in the general population of South Carolina, and are likewise reflected in very small percentages

among SCCB consumers. The 2% Hispanic or Latino consumers served somewhat underrepresents the 5% in the state's general population, and this population is increasing at one of the fastest rates in the country. The 44% White consumers served are significantly underrepresentative of the 68% in the general population. African-Americans are the one group that occurs at a significantly higher rate among SCCB consumers (54%) than the general population (28%). It is important to understand that there are many reasons why a particular ethnic group does or does not require or seek out services from SCCB at the same rate as they occur in the general population. It is not possible to identify what those reasons might be in this report. There are no tribal VR programs in South Carolina at this time, although there is one in neighboring North Carolina. The Catawba tribe is located in Rock Hill South Carolina (2010 Census data indicates a population of 841). Poor and rural populations tend to be underserved by the EBMRC where most SCCB programming occurs. 50% of all EBMRC attendees are from Richland and adjacent counties. In 2013, thirty-five of South Carolina's 46 counties had poverty rates above the state's already higher-than-national poverty rate of 18.5 percent. Only 3% of Center attendees come from the state's ten lowest median income counties. Needs of Individuals from Different Ethnic Groups, including Unserved or Underserved: Qualitative Data on Barriers and Improvements Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the focus groups and individual interviews conducted for this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program: Many of the individuals interviewed for this assessment could not think of any population that was underserved by SCCB. The organization was characterized by some as serving any individual with blindness or a vision impairment who is interested in applying. In contrast, other key informants identified Hispanics, Native Americans and Asians among those populations that are underserved. Individuals who have deafness and blindness were identified as potentially underserved. Although the numbers of deaf-blind individuals were characterized as small, there are very few SCCB staff identified as trained to work with this population. In addition, if an individual is deaf-blind, and they need hearing aids, the purchase must be made through the general VR agency, which was repeatedly characterized as being a slow and cumbersome process. Some of the more rural areas of South Carolina do not access services from SCCB. Many reasons were expressed for this including a lack of trust in the government, a reliance on family, and a general tendency towards isolationism. Geographic access is a major barrier in these areas, resulting in the need for SCCB counselors to go to the homes of these individuals to provide services. In addition, there are few local resources and even Internet connectivity can be a challenge in some remote areas. In some cases, staff indicated they had to travel great distances in order to see one client. Staff also expressed concern for their personal safety in some situations. Survey Results by Type Partner survey: Employment Barriers. Partner survey respondents were asked if the barriers to achieving employment goals for SCCB consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities are different from the overall population. Two of the five individuals who responded to this question indicated that the barriers are different while the remaining three indicated that the barriers are not different. The two individuals who indicated that the barriers are different for SCCB consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities were asked to identify the top three barriers to employment for these individuals. One each of the following barriers was ranked in the top three by these individuals: Lack of education and training, job skills and available jobs, as well as employer perceptions, language barriers and disability-related transportation issues. Staff Survey: Employment Barriers. Staff survey respondents were asked if the barriers to achieving employment goals for SCCB consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities are different from the overall population. Forty-one individuals responded to this question and 13 (32%) indicated that the barriers are different while 28 (68%) indicated that the barriers are not different. Seventeen individuals identified top barriers to employment for consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities. SCCB staff most frequently identified lack of education, training and job skills, as well as employers' perceptions about employing people with disabilities as the top three barriers to achieving employment goals. Not having job search skills was cited with the next

highest frequency. Partner Survey: Barriers to Accessing SCCB Services. Partner survey respondents were asked if the barriers to accessing SCCB services by individuals who are racial or ethnic minorities are different from the overall population. Two of the five individuals responding to this question indicated that the barriers are different while the other three indicated that the barriers are not different. One respondent each cited three barriers: inadequate access to assessment services, slow service delivery and staff not meeting clients in the communities where they live. Staff Survey: Barriers to Accessing SCCB Services. Staff survey respondents were asked if the barriers to accessing SCCB services by individuals who are racial or ethnic minorities are different from the overall population. Thirty-eight individuals responded to this question and 7 (18%) indicated the barriers are different than for the general population. Twelve respondents identified the top three barriers to accessing SCCB services for consumers who are racial or ethnic minorities. The most commonly identified barriers to accessing SCCB services identified by respondents to the staff survey included limited accessibility to SCCB via public transportation, difficulty accessing training and education programs and inadequate disability-related accommodations. Summary of Survey Results (staff and partners) - Both groups tended to think barriers for this population are no different than for the general population. They were in agreement on barriers to employment and SCCB services. Their responses included: Barriers to employment - lack of education and training, job skills, employer perceptions and lack of transportation Barriers to SCCB services - lack of transportation, limited access to education and training, and limited disabilities accommodations Recommendations The following recommendations are offered to SCCB based on the results of the research in the area of Needs of Individuals with Disabilities from Different Ethnic Groups, including needs of Individuals who have been Unserved or Underserved by the VR Program: Given recent population trends, SCCB should consider performing targeted outreach to the growing Hispanic population in South Carolina by contacting community programs serving Hispanics and meeting potential consumers in their communities. Since there are no tribal VR programs in South Carolina and there is a small Catawba tribe, SCCB should consider outreach to them in order to address any identified needs. SCCB should consider utilizing the services of workforce partners, as well as the Targeted Populations Technical Assistance Center, for assistance in developing effective outreach as well as modifications of services, especially at EBMRC, to accommodate underserved populations. SCCB should incorporate into its service delivery system strategies to more effectively reach and serve individuals living in the extensive rural corridors of the state. Expanded use of community rehabilitation providers or increased scope of services of itinerant staff are two possibilities. Given the role transportation plays in improving geographic access for all underserved populations, SCCB should advocate with workforce partners and transportation providers to understand the scope of the issues and find strategic solutions. SECTION 4 NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH BLINDNESS AND VISION IMPAIRMENTS SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM Information for this section was gathered by this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments served through other components of the statewide workforce development system. Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments served through other components of the statewide workforce development system: Indicators There are 21 America's Job Centers (AJCs) in South Carolina. Key informants report that consumers have mixed awareness and utilization of AJCs, and mixed levels of success. AJCs in South Carolina do not do a good job of serving individuals with blindness and vision impairments. Although the AJCs are accessible, the technology is frequently out of date and the AJC staff do not know how to operate the technology; Agency performance The relationship between SCCB and the AJCs, although friendly, is primarily one of referral. Field office relationships with AJCs are mixed. SCCB is working with WIOA core partners to ensure that blind and visually impaired individuals seeking employment can access services through the one-stop centers. Gaps There is considerable room to develop the partnership between SCCB and the greater workforce development system. Results by Data Collection Method

Needs of Individuals Served by Other Components of the Workforce System: Quantitative Data on Barriers and Improvements There are AJCs (SC Works Centers) in 21 locations in South Carolina, generally with two centers in each workforce area. Numerous studies document the challenges of AJCs nationwide in meeting the employment needs of individuals with disabilities. These can range from geographic inaccessibility to lack of specialized programming or staff expertise, to outdated or inaccessible assistive technology. Thirty of 99 individual survey respondents had tried to access AJC services. While more specific data on AJC utilization rates for South Carolina residents with blindness and vision impairments was not available, key informant data would suggest that utilization rates are not high. SCCB's section of the draft Unified Plan states that the agency "is working with WIOA core partners to ensure that blind and visually impaired individuals seeking employment can access services through the one-stop centers as part of the Statewide Workforce Development System." Needs of Individuals Served by Other Components of the Workforce System: Qualitative Data on Barriers and Improvements Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews The following information was gathered from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System: The relationship between SCCB and America's Job Centers (AJCs), known in South Carolina as SC Works, across the state was described by key informants as positive, but AJCs were not characterized as serving people with disabilities well, and this was particularly true of individuals with blindness and vision impairments. The relationship between the AJCs and SCCB was characterized by most as primarily a relationship of referral. One field staff member who met clients at the local AJC reported that the AJC manager "asked what I was doing there." Another reported SCCB expects staff to write up their own MOUs with the local AJC. When an individual with blindness or a vision impairment goes to an AJC, they are likely to encounter assistive technology that does not work properly or is not up to date, and AJC staff who do not know how to operate the technology. Individual Survey Respondents to the individual survey were presented with several questions pertaining to their experiences with AJCs. The first question asked respondents if they ever tried to use the services of America's Job Centers. Of those who replied to the question 30 (31%) indicated that they had tried to use the services of AJCs and 68 (69%) indicated that they had not to tried to use the services. Respondents were asked if they experienced any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building. Of those who responded, one (3%) indicated that they experienced difficulties, while 29 (97%) indicated that they did not have any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building. Respondents were asked if they had any difficulty accessing the programs at the center. Of those who responded to the question, 11 (37%) indicated that they had difficulty and 19 (63%) indicated that they had no difficulty accessing the programs at the center. Respondents were asked if they went to the center to get training. Of those who responded, five (17%) indicated that they went to the center to get training and 25 (83%) indicated that they did not go to the center to get training. Of the five respondents who said they sought training at AJCs two indicated they received the training they were seeking. Six individuals completing the survey indicated that the training they received from AJCs did not result in employment. Respondents were asked if they went to AJCs to find a job. Twenty-eight individuals responded to this question, with 18 (64%) indicating that they went to the center to find a job and 10 (36%) indicating that they did not go to the center to find a job. Respondents were then asked if AJCs helped them to find employment. Twenty individuals responded to this question, with four (20%) indicating that they did get help finding employment and 16 (80%) indicating that they did not get help finding employment. Thirty-one respondents answered a question asking them to describe their opinion of the helpfulness of the staff at AJCs. Eight (26%) described the staff as "Very helpful", 15 (48%) described the staff as "Somewhat helpful", and eight (26%) described the staff as "Not helpful." Thirty-one respondents answered a question asking them to describe their opinion of the value of the services at the center. Eight (26%) described the services as "Very valuable"; 16 (52%) described the services as "Somewhat valuable"; and seven (23%) described the services as "Not valuable." Recommendations The following recommendations are offered to SCCB based on the

results of the research in the area of Needs of Individuals with Disabilities served through other Components of the Statewide Workforce Development System: Under the South Carolina Unified State Plan, there are several programs that SCCB could access that would address many of the issues highlighted in this report. They include programs that provide internships for youth, efforts designed at employer outreach, Project Search serving youth with developmental or mental disabilities, and program serving targeted populations including ex-offenders, veterans and other disadvantaged populations. SCCB should work closely with SC Works to identify a small number of pilot cases that will include shared funding of training by SCCB and these centers. These cases can demonstrate how collaborative planning can maximize resources, improve outcomes for both organizations, and provide the consumers with increased support. For instance, if an individual with blindness or a vision impairment wanted to go to a training program to become an IT Specialist, then the AJC could fund a part of the training with an ITA, and SCCB could fund part of the training with case service dollars, or provide AT, transportation, or other needed support services. The case becomes a shared case with both entities and the consumer benefits from the employment experience of the AJC and the disability experience of SCCB. SCCB should offer its technical expertise to the SC Works centers to insure they are fully accessible and include the latest and most relevant assistive technology. In addition, SCCB should work with SC Works staff to provide inservice training and support in the the use of assistive technology. SCCB and the SC works centers should regularly provide cross-training to each other on the services they provide and the required processes that each organization must go through. This occurs infrequently at the current time and staff turnover and the passage of time requires more frequent training. SCCB should partner with the Social Security Administration and provide training to w the SC Works Partnership Plus model that allows SCCB to "hand-off" an SSA beneficiary in the Ticket to Work program to the SC Works center as the Employment Network (EN). This is a rarely used model that can bring resources to the SC Works Center and provide support to individuals with blindness and vision impairments for several years. SECTION 5 NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS IN TRANSITION The reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act under WIOA places a greater emphasis on the provision of transition services to youth and students with disabilities, especially their need for pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for 34 CFR 361 and 363 released recently by RSA indicates that the comprehensive statewide needs assessment must include an assessment of the needs of youth and students with disabilities in the State, including their need for Pre-ETS. The project team investigated the needs of youth and students with blindness and vision impairments in this assessment and includes the results in this section. Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals in transition: Indicators In 2014, 2% of South Carolina residents under the age of 18 had blindness or vision impairment. In 2013, there were 12,700 individuals with blindness or vision impairment aged 20 and under. 57% of South Carolina residents with disabilities under the age of 18 live in poverty. 35% of South Carolina residents with disabilities attained a level of education equivalent to a high school diploma, and 12% attained a level of education equivalent to a college degree. Agency performance From 2012 to 2014, the rate of transition-age youth served by SCCB was 50% or more lower than the national average for Blind agencies. SCCB reported zero successful outcomes for transition age youth over the 2012-2014 reporting period. In its 2010 monitoring report, RSA recommended that SCCB expand its array of programming, including services for transition-age youth. The agency responded that transition programming would be expanded, but this had not been accomplished as of the end of 2015. Gaps There is need for clarity and understanding among the education community in South Carolina as to what services SCCB can and will provide. This goes along with the need for targeted outreach by SCCB. There is a need for increased SCCB presence and involvement in mainstream schools as well as the state school for deaf/blind. There is an increasingly high percentage of youth with blindness and vision impairments with multiple disabilities. The needs of these individuals can be complex and require creative solutions delivered through a network of partners and stakeholders. Youth who live in rural settings are disadvantaged

in accessing services both in and out of school. Youth in transition coming from a poor and disadvantaged background, and their families, need both access to advocacy services and training on self-advocacy to increase their knowledge about and utilization of necessary services. There is a need for IL services for youth with blindness and vision impairment, especially orientation and mobility. School systems in South Carolina may lack adequate resources to provide this. Teachers in the schools need support in utilizing assistive technology to better assist students. Results by Data Collection Method Needs of Individuals in Transition: Quantitative Data on Barriers and Improvements National and/or Agency Specific Data Related to the Needs of Individuals in Transition The 2010 RSA Monitoring Report recommended that SCCB expand its array of programming, especially around transition. Observations Based on the Data Table 21 indicates that very few transition age individuals with blindness and vision impairments applied for SCCB services from 2012-2014, representing more than 5% of total SCCB applicants, and diminishing to 2% (10 individuals) in 2014. Most of those applicants became actual consumers of SCCB and interestingly, the reported number served in 2014 was more than double the number of applicants for that year (perhaps suggesting carryover from 2013). The rate of transition-age youth served by SCCB was approximately 50% or more lower than the national average for Blind agencies. The average time for the development of an IPE for transition-age youth varied significantly from the overall population of SCCB consumers, but dropped precipitously from 103 days in 2012 to 5 and 4 days in 2013 and 2014, respectively. The rehabilitation rate of transition-age youth served by SCCB was zero per cent in all three years. This is an area of some concern given the importance of transition services in general and the recent WIOA requirements for increased transition services. Per case cost figures varied significantly from one year to the next and from overall per case costs, which could be a function of the exceedingly low number of transition cases served. Needs of Individuals in Transition: Qualitative Data on Barriers and Improvements Key Informant Interviews The following recurring themes emerged among the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals in transition: There is limited outreach informing youth and families about SCCB services. One consumer said, "SCCB failed me. I didn't know college was an option. I struggled on my own in tech school, dropped out; randomly learned about SCCB resources. I wish I'd known earlier when my vision was better; could have started sooner." Many youth lack the education required for a job or career. A partner agency observed, "Not every kid can get a high school diploma. There's still a need for GED; I'm not sure why SCCB discontinued their program." There is a gap in the amount and quality of work experience opportunities available for youth. This includes summer jobs, internships, mentoring opportunities, job shadowing, etc. Youth with disabilities have limited access to career counseling or exposure to other experiences from school or SCCB transition counselors. One education partner observed, "I've had lots of families not go to summer camps or technology days because they're only held in Columbia." Transition services to youth with most significant disabilities are extremely limited. One educator observed, "There are blind youth with behavioral concerns, cognitive issues. Without support (e.g., job coaches) they're not going to sustain the gains they've made." Focus Group Results

There is a strong need for parent advocacy training. Partners noted that parent/family involvement increases the likelihood of success for the student. Parents from families living in poverty are less likely to become involved and advocate for their child. The combination of rural location and poverty further decreases the likelihood of parental involvement. There is a compelling need for SCCB counselors to develop effective working relationships with the Teachers of Visually Impaired who have a strong connection to the students, understanding their needs both inside and outside of school. Strengthening this connection would allow SCCB Transition Counselors to understand and respond to the needs of students with visual disabilities. Partners at the state School for the Deaf and Blind expressed a need for increased presence of SCCB staff on campus to assist school staff in providing career counseling and other services to students. There is a need to update Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) to reflect a strategic partnership between education and SCCB. These

MOUs should be outcome oriented and reflect the Pre-ETS requirements under WIOA. Survey Results by Type Partner survey: Barriers to achieving goals for youth in transition. Partner survey respondents were asked if the barriers to achieving employment goals for SCCB consumers who are transition-age youth are different from the overall population. Five individuals responded to this question, with three indicating that the barriers are different. Asked to identify the top three barriers to employment for consumers who are transition-age youth, they were unanimous in identifying slow service delivery as one of the top three barriers. Two cited limited accessibility via public transportation among the top three. One each of other barriers rated among the top three included SCCB staff not meeting clients in the communities where they live, agency understaffing, inadequate disability-related accommodations and difficulties accessing training or education programs. Staff survey: Barriers to achieving goals for youth in transition. Staff survey respondents were asked if the barriers to achieving employment goals for SCCB consumers who are transition-age youth are different from the overall population. Forty-one individuals responded to this question and 23 (56%) indicated that the barriers are different while 18 (44%) indicated that the barriers are not different. Twenty-six individuals who indicated that the barriers are different identified the top three barriers to employment for consumers who are transition-age youth. Not having job skills, education and training were most frequently identified among the top three barriers by SCCB staff respondents. Other barriers commonly identified for youth in transition included poor social skills and lack of job search skills. Partner survey: Barriers to accessing SCCB services for youth in transition. Partner survey respondents were asked if the barriers to accessing SCCB services experienced by transition-age youth are different from the overall population. Five individuals responded to this question, with three indicating the barriers are different. These three respondents cited lack of job skills and disability-related transportation among the top three barriers to accessing SCCB services for consumers who are transition-age youth. Two respondents rated lack of education or training, job search skills and social skills to be among the top three barriers. One respondent each rated employer perceptions, not enough jobs, and lack of help with disability-related health care to be among the top three barriers. Staff survey: Barriers to accessing SCCB services for youth in transition. Staff survey respondents were asked if the barriers to accessing SCCB services by transition-age youth are different from the overall population. Forty-one individuals responded to this question and 17 (42%) indicated that the barriers are different while 24 (59%) indicated that the barriers are not different. Fifteen individuals identified the top three barriers to accessing SCCB services for consumers who are transition-age youth. The challenges cited most frequently among the top three barriers related to the physical location of the SCCB office, including limited accessibility via public transportation. These were followed by slow service delivery, inadequate assessment services and inadequate disability-related accommodations. Summary of Survey Results Barriers to employment - Partners identified slow service delivery; staff identified lack of job skills, education and training. Barriers to SCCB services - Partners identified lack of job skills, transportation and education and training; staff identified geographic access, slow service delivery, lack of quality assessments and lack of accommodations. Recommendations The following recommendations are offered to SCCB based on the results of the research in the area of Needs of Individuals in Transition: SCCB should consider developing a network of consumers who have been closed successfully rehabilitated as mentors to young people with blindness and vision impairments. These mentors can provide inspiration and advice to young people on how to be successful in postsecondary education and work and can provide them with high expectations. SCCB can help pair current consumers with these mentors and recruit future mentors from the ranks of individuals who have become successfully employed. The importance of self-advocacy training has been cited above for individuals with blindness and vision impairments. This training is especially important for youth. Similar services should also be made available for family members. SCCB should consider expanding the Summer Internship Program at EMBRC. This program has demonstrated positive outcomes but on a limited basis. SCCB should consider duplicating this program in other parts of the state to increase access. Collaborating with other workforce partners would also provide a means of

integrating this program in the general population. SCCB should also consider bringing in business partners not only to increase the exposure and buy-in of the business community but also to build relationships that lead to internship and other work related outcomes for youth in transition. SCCB should develop programs that provide outreach, information and resources to youth with disabilities, their families and other stakeholders. SCCB should be considered a statewide leader in coalescing partnership networks dedicated to providing the necessary resources that lead to positive employment opportunities and outcomes. SCCB should work in partnership with the higher education system and the secondary school system in South Carolina to create or replicate programs for youth with blindness and vision impairments who are college-bound to live for a few weeks in the summer on a college campus and to be exposed to college life. Programs like this would build their IL and social skills and reduce anxiety about attending college. It also provides an opportunity for SCCB and the student to identify the needed supports for the individual to attend college, which works to reduce the dropout rate. SECTION 6 NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN SOUTH CAROLINA Section 6 identifies the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs in South Carolina that serve individuals with blindness and vision impairments. The data in this section comes primarily from individual interviews and surveys. Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods The following themes emerged in the area of the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina: Indicators Existing providers serving individuals with blindness and vision impairments include ABVI (Goodwill), Federation for the Blind, ABLE, Lighthouse for the Blind and Association for the Blind. While these and other providers may offer employment-related services, it does not appear that any of them offer Supported Employment services. The majority of surveyed staff and partners were of the opinion that the current provider network is capable of meeting the VR needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina. Employment-related resources identified by key informants as the most readily available from providers included assistive technology, job training, job search and other education services. Agency Performance SCCB provides outreach and in-house services for consumers. These services are limited in scope and duration. Individuals who cannot access EBMRC receive less substantial services. SCCB has a history of not contracting or partnering with external providers for VR services. The RSA 2010 Monitoring Report recommended that SCCB expand vendor relationships in order to provide Supported Employment services. Gaps In recent years SCCB has experienced a reduction in staff and office closures. The result is higher caseloads and counselors must travel greater distances to serve individuals who are unable to travel to services. There is a need for consumer access to more providers who can deliver a wide variety of independent living and employment services in the rural areas of South Carolina. Independent living skills are a major need of SCCB consumers. EBMRC meets this need for a small percentage of SCCB consumers, but many people would like to see the EMBRC expand its reach and provide low vision services. Results by Data Collection Method Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews The following recurring themes were identified in interviews and focus groups for this assessment in the area of the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina: Individuals who are being served by the agency expressed dissatisfaction with the speed of services as well as the frequency of contact from SCCB counselors. Individuals expressed frustration at the inability to get services in a timely manner. This may be the result of counselors' heavy caseloads and large areas of coverage, which could be addressed by contracting for services with CRPs that have a range of relevant expertise and capacity to deliver services throughout the state. Individuals expressed a need to receive timely independent living skills and employment services where they live (instead of traveling to Columbia), which could be addressed by SCCB contracting for services with CRPs that have relevant IL expertise and capacity to deliver services throughout the state. A CRP in Charleston expressed the desire and the capacity to serve more SCCB consumers. Partners expressed the need for CRPs "to reach those who can't travel to

Columbia." Staff expressed the need for "other ways to access services we can't offer in-house." Survey Results by Type Partner Survey: Readily Available Services. Partner survey respondents were provided with a checklist of services and asked to indicate which of the services are readily available in the area to individuals with a range of disabilities. While it is not possible to generalize from only five partner responses. Assistive technology as well as job training, job search and other education services were most frequently listed as being readily available services to individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina. Vehicle modification and other transportation assistance were identified by one respondent each as being readily available, as were treatment services (medical, mental health and substance abuse), and financial assistance. Partners were asked if they thought the current network of service providers is able to meet the rehabilitation needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina. Of seven who responded, four indicated that the current network of providers is sufficient to meet the VR needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments, while three indicated that the network of providers is not able to meet the needs. The survey asked why they are not able to meet the needs. Partner Survey: Improvements to the Provider Network. Partner survey respondents were also presented with an open-ended question that asked them what changes providers could make to help individuals with blindness and vision impairments achieve their employment goals. Three partners responded that the most important changes are: Meet the individuals where they are. Coordinate with the general VR agency, including in working with transition students. Improve community perception of employing individuals with disabilities. Staff Survey: Readily Available Services. SCCB staff were provided with a checklist of services identical to the list given to providers and asked to indicate which of the services are readily available in the area to individuals with blindness and vision impairments. Sixty to seventy-eight per cent of staff indicated that assistive technology, job search and job training are readily available services. Also identified frequently as readily available services were other training services and transportation assistance. Staff were asked if they feel that the current network of vendors is able to meet the VR needs of SCCB's clients. Sixty-seven percent of staff indicated that the current network is able to meet the needs of consumers. Those who indicated the current network is not sufficient were asked the primary reasons that providers are not able to meet the need. According to the staff respondents, the top two reasons that vendors are not able to meet the VR needs of SCCB consumers are that there are not enough vendors in the area and client barriers prevent successful interaction. Summary of survey results (staff and partners) - a majority of respondents indicated that the current provider network is sufficient to meet consumer needs. Readily available services - Assistive technology, job training, job search, other education. Improvements - According to partner respondents, the current network of providers needs to meet individuals where they are, coordinate with the general VR agency, and improve the community's perception of employability of people with disabilities. Staff survey respondents who did not think the current network of providers is sufficient indicated this is because there are not enough vendors, client barriers impede interaction with the vendor, and service rates are too low. SUB-SECTION: ELLEN BEACH MACK REHABILITATION CENTER The Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center (EBMRC or the Center) is located in Columbia. It is designed to comprehensively meet the need for independent living skills, adjustment to blindness and employment of individuals from around the state. It is the de facto center of comprehensive training, available to all of those who can and choose to access it. The EBMRC program provides independent living services, including orientation and mobility training, personal and home management, Braille, keyboarding and assistive technology, low vision services, and other basic living and IL skills. EBMRC is a six to nine month residential program, though a few participants may go home in the evenings if they live in the Columbia area and travel home in the evening is possible. In 2014, 50% of program participants were from Richland and surrounding counties. Qualitative and quantitative data gathered by the research team indicate that the Center's program is lacking in the flexibility, accessibility and quality to meet varying needs. 50% of 2014 EBMRC attendees were from Richland or the immediately adjacent counties. Only 3% of 2014 EBMRC attendees were from the state's ten poorest counties as

measured by median income. 82% of 2014 EBMRC closed cases did not have an employment outcome: 41% "N/A," 20% "homemaker," 20% "unsuccessful" and 0.6% "failure to cooperate." EBMRC's curriculum is not individualized. Consumer comments included "Not everyone needs to learn how to cook" and "Most people don't want to spend 16 weeks at SCCB, and only need parts of the training." 58% of SCCB staff who had referred clients to EBMRC were either neutral, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the services received. The program has not historically served individuals with multiple and complex disabilities. According to one parent, "A prerequisite for our son going to Columbia is that he has to be able to care for himself; with his autism that's not an option." Another individual said, "I was sent home because I was too slow; they said I wasn't picking up on skills fast enough" No supported employment services are offered through the Center. There are few if any community activities included in the Center's programs. Data supplied by SCCB suggest that employment outcomes (and the rehabilitation rate) are low. According to SCCB's most recently reported data FY 2011-2015 37% of EBMRC cases were closed successfully. Survey Results 25 respondents to the individual survey were offered services at the EBMRC. Fourteen of them (56%) were satisfied or very satisfied with EBMRC services. Eleven (44%) were either neutral, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Twenty-three other respondents had declined EBMRC services for a variety of reasons, ranging from preferring to receive services in their own community or the required length of stay being too long, to not wishing to be in a residential setting or the difficulty of entering the program. Twenty-three respondents to the staff survey had referred consumers to the Center. Eleven (42%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the EBMRC services their clients received. Fifteen (58%) were either neutral, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Of the 37 respondents who did not refer consumers to the Center, six indicated that their clients prefer services either in their own community or a non-residential setting. Twenty-one of survey respondents were not in a position to refer individuals to EBMRC. Surveyed staff were provided an open-ended format to make recommendations to improve EBMRC services. Most frequently mentioned improvements are listed below. Strengthen assessment in order to better individualize services and measure quality. Update/Upgrade offerings: More comprehensive, more holistic, computer training, technology Expand target population: consumers with traumatic brain injury, low cognitive skills, most significant disabilities, older blind, outreach program participants Provide more day services, flexible hours (e.g., after 5pm) Management needs to be more supportive of the program; more qualified staff need to be hired and better staff development needs to be offered. Key Informants The following additional themes emerged from interviews and focus groups regarding the EBMRC: Focus more on employment related training. There is a significant amount of unused physical space. Explore options for maximizing the space (e.g. for training programs). SCCB should be less risk averse and afford more independent and community experiences for individuals attending the Center. Lack of accommodation of individuals with vision impairments (lighting, duration, resources). Everyone who comes to the Center gets the same program irrespective of their individual needs, interests, capacities. Recommendations The following recommendations are offered to SCCB based on the results of the research in the area of Need to Establish, Develop or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in South Carolina: SCCB should conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of its services in areas outside of Columbia, especially in rural areas. Results of this evaluation as well as the findings for this needs assessment should be used to determine a course of action to meet the needs of all individuals in a manner that is effective, timely and accessible for them. In pursuing this course of action, SCCB should weigh options between funding CRPs and/or expanding in-house services. SCCB should take a statewide inventory of existing CRPs and determine their capacity to deliver comprehensive independent living and employment services to the underserved areas of the state. EBMRC SCCB should evaluate the outcomes of individuals attending EBMRC, especially those closed without a competitive employment outcome. Since EBMRC is the focus of SCCB's VR service delivery system, maximizing employment outcomes is critical to justify the operations of EBMRC using VR funds. SCCB should use evaluation data to inform a strategic plan to maximize the employment outcome potential of EBMRC. SCCB should

also explore the options around expanding the curriculum and services at EBMRC to increase the number of individuals with multiple and most significant disabilities attending, completing and obtaining employment outcomes as a result of attending the Center. SECTION 7 BUSINESS SERVICES AND RELATIONS Three small focus groups were conducted with a total of ten business representatives for this assessment. There were only two responses to the business survey. Consequently, it is difficult to generalize any of the findings to the business community at large in South Carolina. A brief summary of the findings is offered here with recommendations that SCCB might find helpful as they form strategies for improving relationships with businesses in the future. Recurring Themes Across all Data Collection Methods Agency Performance One employer reported having hired 3 SCCB-referred individuals and wished to hire more. Agency and RSA data indicate that SCCB has not accessed high wage, high demand jobs in South Carolina. Wage data reported by RSA indicates that those individuals served by SCCB earn less than the average wage in South Carolina. It is difficult to determine from the data if individuals whose cases were closed as competitively employed were placed in jobs by SCCB staff or obtained their own job (or remained pre-existing jobs as a result of sight restoration). It did not appear that SCCB had leveraged relationships with employers that led to multiple job placements in areas other than call centers. Results by Data Collection Method Key Informants The following observations were made by individuals about employers and SCCB's business relationships: Employer awareness about the capabilities of individuals with disabilities (blindness and vision impairments, in particular) is a consistent theme across all key informant groups. One consumer observed, "Unless you have SCCB on your side, employers misjudge you." Another said, "I would have great interviews but they always said 'We have someone else.'" Several key informants observed that SCCB could be more proactive in engaging with businesses. One individual indicated that SCCB has done some partnering with businesses but only on behalf of the 40% of consumers whose only disability is blindness. Others suggested providing sensitivity training and connecting employers with each other to share experiences. Employer Focus Groups One employer represented in a focus group had hired three SCCB referrals and was interested in hiring more. SCCB support was key in securing hirings in two instances once the needs of the individual and employer were identified. Two of the employers in one focus group hired individuals who had approached them independently of SCCB. SCCB was contacted to facilitate the hiring by buying equipment. A third employer represented a large hospital that had not hired clients of SCCB, but expressed a strong desire to and was interested in Customized Employment. Most employers in the focus groups were not aware of the services provided by SCCB and the benefit of those services to them prior to hiring an individual with visual disabilities. Survey Results The following results come from the two surveys returned by businesses for this study. One of the businesses has utilized SCCB services and rated themselves "satisfied" with those services. While it is not possible to generalize these findings to the larger population of businesses in South Carolina, they are offered to provide SCCB with a starting point for conversations about how to effectively engage employers and meet their recruiting and hiring needs. Both employers responded that they need help with incentives, job accommodations and job retention for employing workers with blindness or vision impairments. Other needs identified by one employer each include assistance with recruitment, obtaining information on training programs, sensitivity training, disability-related legislation. When asked to identify the top three challenges to job retention for individuals with blindness and vision impairments they encountered, one employer each responded that poor attendance, poor social skills and identifying effective accommodations are factors affecting job retention. One employer responded that they have never experienced a job retention problem with an employee with blindness or other vision impairment. When asked what services SCCB provides to employers, the one business that had been served by SCCB indicated services received included help recruiting, accommodating and retaining individuals with blindness and vision impairments. Recommendations The following recommendations are offered based on the limited information gathered in the area of Business Services and Relations: SCCB should build the capacity of its Training and Employment section to establish effective relationships with business

and industry in South Carolina. This can be done in a variety of ways. SCCB should prioritize increasing the number of and skills of Employment Counselors. By doing this, SCCB would see immediate benefits of increased employment outcomes. SCCB should also take advantage of the requirement of WIOA around partnerships with workforce entities. Building the network of partnerships with other workforce agencies would give SCCB access to existing relationships with employers. SCCB should leverage its capacity around assistive technology by building a public awareness campaign around job retention for employees who are losing or in danger of losing vision. Business awareness of SCCB, in general, is probably low. Employers would benefit from having an available resource for job retention. SCCB would benefit from increased employment outcomes, and would be able to leverage these relationships for a number of positive outcomes including internships and work experience for students and youth with visual disabilities. SCCB should conduct a comprehensive evaluation of its efforts around employer engagement/relations, job placement and job development. Many VR agencies take a strategic approach to business relationships. SCCB should consider inclusion of this area in its strategic plan. Under WIOA, SCCB will have exponentially greater access to the business community. Partnerships with other workforce entities to create partnerships can lead to business partnerships. SCCB should position itself to take full advantage of the partnership aspects of WIOA to create opportunities for the individuals it serves. SCCB should adopt strategies that incorporate labor market information into its business relationship strategies. In addition, SCCB should develop strategies that allow it to access the 'hidden job market' that includes those jobs arising from relationships with employers and meeting their needs, without the employer advertising jobs on the open job market. SCCB devotes considerable fiscal resources to post-secondary education. The agency should conduct an evaluation of outcomes for individuals receiving post-secondary education services. "Meeting the Needs of Employers" will be a performance indicator under WIOA. SCCB should develop an understanding of how this will be measured and develop a strategic plan to increase performance in this area. CONCLUSION This Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment solicited information concerning the needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments from persons with disabilities, service providers, SCCB staff and businesses for the purpose of providing SCCB and the Board with direction for future planning. The results of these efforts provide information and data needed for goal setting and strategic planning as required by RSA. They also offer stakeholders a means of communicating needs and educating service providers. Data from the needs assessment suggest agreement among individuals with disabilities, partners, and SCCB staff with respect to several perceptions of need. It is anticipated that SCCB and the Board will use this information in a strategic manner that results in provision of vocational rehabilitation services designed to address current and future needs of individuals with blindness and vision impairments in South Carolina who seek employment.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

SCCB will be using performance data required under section 116 of WIOA for program year 2016 and 2017 to establish baselines for performance measurement, continuous improvement and goal setting.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

SCCB has also analyzed previous Rehabilitation Services Administration Monitoring reports, Recent State Audit Reports, and historical performance data to inform the Goals, Priorities, and Strategies of this state plan.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES.

SCCB tracks resources on a continual ongoing basis and has determined that the agency currently has the staff and financial resources to provide required and effective VR services to all eligible individuals in the state and does not anticipate implementing an Order of Selection.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

N/A

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

N/A

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

N/A

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

N/A

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

N/A

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind has established the following goals and priorities, (as detailed in section I. above) in response to the FFY 2016 CSNA findings for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for Supported Employment:

Goal 2: Increase Quantity & Quality of Employment Outcomes

Priority 2.2: Increase Employment for those with Most Significant Disabilities Strategy 2.2.1: JOBS Specialists (Job Oriented Blind Services) SCCB will establish three (3) Job Oriented Blind Services (JOBS) Specialist positons that will provide Supported Employment (SE), Customized Employment (CE), and on–going supports for consumers who have Most Significant Disabilities. These positions will function in a one–on–one consumer centered approach as Job Placement Specialists, On–The– Job Coaches, and in other employment related supportive roles allowed under Title VI. Strategy 2.2.2: CRP Establishment & Development SCCB will continue to seek opportunities and partnerships to aid in the development and establishment of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) to provide community based adjustment to blindness services, supported employment (SE) services, customized employment (CE) services and life skills training. Strategy 2.2.3: Build SSA Benefits Counseling Capacity SCCB will work to build the capacity and specialized expertise necessary to provide effective and accurate benefit planning to help improve consumer knowledge of how employment affects SSA benefits and incentives for engaging in employment. The perceived risks of losing benefits are a significant barrier to employment for this population.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

SCCB will develop the capacity and resources to provide Supported Employment to youth with most significant disabilities during this plan period. SCCB is hiring three in–house Supported Employment Specialists to provide job placement and on–the–job supported employment services to consumers who have most significant disabilities. Further, SCCB is engaging in the redevelopment of a cooperative agreement with the state Medicaid and Developmental Disability agencies to facilitate transition to on going supports where available.

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

As required by WIOA 50% of Supported Employment funds will be used to provide Supported Employment Services to youth with most significant disabilities. SCCB is in the process of building in–house capacities and resources to meet this goal. SCCB will look for opportunities to engage with

private and public partners to fund extended and ongoing supported employment services for this population.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

The findings of the FFY 2016 SCCB Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) identified several programmatic gaps that need to be addressed in accordance with new requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act and to improve services to meet the needs of South Carolinians with blindness or visual impairments. The gaps include the following:

Gap: SCCB will develop stronger, formalized and more effective collaborative partnerships with community partners, other state agencies, the One–Stop Workforce Development System, consumer communities, minority groups, rural populations, and the business/employer community.

Gap: SCCB will develop the capacity, resources, and staff expertise to provide Job Driven vocational counseling and guidance that utilizes Labor Market Information and aligns with South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project and Sector Strategies initiatives to assist eligible consumers in accessing career pathways that lead to high and middle skill/income jobs.

Gap: SCCB will develop the capacity to assist eligible consumers in the development of occupational knowledge, skills, and abilities that culminate in obtaining industry recognized credentials to include GED attainment, certifications, degrees, apprenticeships, occupational licensure, among others.

Gap: SCCB will build VR program capacities, expertise, and partnerships to provide improved transition services including Pre–Employment Transition Services to students who are blind or visually impaired.

Goal 1: Increase Program Capacity Leveraging Partnerships & Community Engagement

Priority 1.1: Improve WIOA Partnerships & One–Stop System Engagement

Strategy 1.1.1: One Stop Center Engagement SCCB will engage in partnership development that better aligns agency activities with those of the other core WIOA partners by developing new Cooperative Agreements, increasing involvement and program presence in the One–Stop Centers, developing referral pathways, leveraging resources to ensure consumer success, and developing formal cost sharing agreements. In addition each VR Counselor is required to be located in local one–stop centers for 4.5 hours per month.

Strategy 1.1.2: Public Education Engagement SCCB has hired four (4) statewide Transition Specialist VR Counselors to engage with Local Education Authorities, build meaningful partnerships with special educators, be present and engaged in IEP meetings, develop innovative collaborative programs for transition students, and develop and maintain actionable and effective Cooperative Agreements to leverage resources for consumer success.

Strategy 1.1.3: Adult Education Engagement SCCB will work to develop a partnership with Adult Education where GED Preparation Courses and GED Testing can be accessed at the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center and in local communities to prepare consumers for middle skill high demand jobs.

Priority 1.2: Improve Partnerships & Strategic Alliances to Increase Program Capacity

Strategy 1.2.1: Centers for Independent Living Engagement SCCB will engage with South Carolina's Centers for Independent Living in order to explore potential opportunities, collaborative partnerships, and fee–for–service arrangements where appropriate.

Strategy 1.2.2: Engagement with Department of Disability & Special Needs SCCB will engage with DDSN to develop a new Cooperative Agreement designed to improve collaboration and leverage long term supported employment funding to meet the needs of persons with Most Significant Disabilities.

Priority 1.3: Increase Public Awareness & Community Engagement

Strategy 1.3.1: Public Awareness Campaign SCCB will improve public awareness of available services through the production of Public Service Announcements, website resource expansion and enhancement, preparation and dissemination of agency newsletters and other publications, and by re–engaging in community service events to increase public awareness and referrals.

Strategy 1.3.2: Unserved, Underserved, Minority, Rural Outreach SCCB will engage with the community by having staff attend community resource fairs and other community events to disseminate information, build referral pathways, and enhance community awareness in areas where unserved or underserved populations reside including minorities, transition students, youth, veterans, seniors seeking employment, with an emphasis on rural communities.

Strategy 1.3.3: Standardized Welcome Sessions (Shaping Expectations) SCCB will develop and standardize a program orientation/welcome session to ensure that potential consumers are fully informed about VR services, have realistic expectations about program services, timelines, processes, and vocational outcomes.

Strategy 1.3.4: Blind Organizations Engagement to Improve Perceptions SCCB VR leadership will engage with blind community organizations to improve agency reputation and perceptions regarding service quality and effectiveness. In addition SCCB will seek opportunities for partnerships, collaboration, and coordination of vocationally related programming.

Priority 1.4: Align Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center (EBMRC) Programing

Strategy 1.4.1: Soft Skills Training to Support Employment Curriculum In partnership with the core WIOA partners SCCB will participate in the purchase and implementation of a state wide standardized curriculum on the "soft skills" that South Carolina Businesses have been requesting from the statewide Workforce Investment Board. SCCB will implement this curriculum as a course offered at the EBMRC.

Strategy 1.4.2: EBMRC Curriculum Review & Realignment to WIOA As part of the Comprehensive Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs, SCCB is analyzing the operations and curriculum of the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center. This review will inform an EBMRC curriculum review,

standardization, and realignment effort scheduled to be completed and implemented during FFY 2017. This effort is intended to refocus EBMRC services on the goals and broader vision of WIOA, and bring the EBMRC into alignment with the VR program and our WIOA partner's initiatives for workforce development. In addition this project will find ways to include consumer attainment of industry recognized credentials such as the GED, possible use of Work Keys, and other credentialing efforts.

Goal 2: Increase Quantity & Quality of Employment Outcomes

Priority 2.1: Align VR Counseling with South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project, Emphasizing Career Pathways, Attainment of Industry Recognized Credentials, Job Driven/Sector Strategies & Labor Market Information

Strategy 2.1.1: Staff Training SCCB in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) Business Intelligence Unit staff will conduct extensive SCCB staff training during FFY 2016 in order to expand VR staff knowledge, skills, and abilities to access current Local Labor Market Information, conduct Job Driven research, utilize Job Driven and Sector Strategies to provide informed choice and guidance to consumers in selecting vocational goals, assessing skills, locating vocational training to close skill gaps, and connect skilled consumers with existing or emerging vacant positions.

Strategy 2.1.2: Talent Pipeline Project Engagement SCCB has been an engaged partner in South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project with the WIOA core partners. SCCB will continue to be engaged in this workforce development effort, and will work to align SCCB VR program efforts with the broader state goals, strategies, and objectives. These include focus on developing a strategy for Career Pathways, Customized Training, and services to business including talent acquisition and talent retention services.

Priority 2.2: Increase Employment for those with Most Significant Disabilities

Strategy 2.2.1: JOBS Specialists (Job Oriented Blind Services) SCCB will establish three (3) Job Oriented Blind Services (JOBS) Specialist positons that will provide Supported Employment (SE), Customized Employment (CE), and Individual Placement and Support (IPS) models employment services to consumers who have Most Significant Disabilities. These positions will function in a one–on–one consumer centered approach as Job Placement Specialists, On–The–Job Coaches, and in other employment related supportive roles allowed under Title VI.

Strategy 2.2.2: CRP Establishment & Development SCCB will continue to seek opportunities and partnerships to aid in the development and establishment of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) to provide community based adjustment to blindness services, supported employment (SE) services, customized employment (CE) services and life skills training.

Strategy 2.2.3: Build SSA Benefits Counseling Capacity SCCB will work to build the capacity and specialized expertise necessary to provide effective and accurate benefit planning to help improve consumer knowledge of how employment affects SSA benefits and incentives for engaging in employment. The perceived risks of losing benefits are a significant barrier to employment for this population.

Priority 2.3: Increase Vocational Exploration & Opportunities for Transition Students Strategy 2.3.1: CareerBOOST Pre–Employment Transition Services SCCB will pilot a demonstration project called

CareerBOOST (Building Occupational Opportunities for Students in Transition). This program will augment SCCB's transition services program by providing the five (5) required Pre Employment Transition Services (PETS) to eligible or potentially eligible students statewide. These PETS services will include: 1. Self–Advocacy Training 2. Work Readiness Workshops 3. Work–based Learning Experiences 4. Post–Secondary Education Enrollment and Careers Exploration 5. Information & Referral to SCCB's Transition VR Program

Strategy 2.3.2: Student Business Enterprise Program Career Exploration The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) trains eligible consumers to operate vending businesses located on government properties, and then assists trained vendors in obtaining contracts to operate as independent business operators. Traditionally BEP has been a program available to adult consumers. SCCB is working to partner with the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind to create innovative career counseling and guidance to transition students including exposure to the Business Enterprise Program and opportunities to complete BEP curriculum at the school. The intent is to identify students who may be interested in running their own business, provide counseling and guidance to inform them of their options under the BEP program, and enable students to complete half of the BEP training curriculum prior to exiting school. This will fast–track their ability to complete the second half of the required training and enter an on–the–job internship thereby accelerating their ability to become vendors.

Strategy 2.3.3: Student Internship Program Jr. SCCB will work to expand our highly successful Student Internship Program (SIP) that provides paid summer internships for college seniors and juniors, by developing a SIP Jr. Program that will provide paid summer internship opportunities in a variety of career fields to transition students in their senior and junior year of High School.

Strategy 2.3.4: Inventor Lab SCCB will use authority under "innovation and expansion" utilizing Pre–Employment Transition Services set aside funds to establish "Inventor Lab" where transition students will be exposed to career exploration in functional 3–D fabrication, manufacturing using 3–D printer technology, product development, business development, microenterprise development, entrepreneurship, marketing and other science, technology, engineering, and math careers.

Strategy 2.3.5: Summer Teens Program SCCB will continue the very successful Summer Teens Program that brings students from across the state to the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center for 5 weeks each summer. This program introduces students to career exploration & counseling, assistive technology, social skills and work readiness skills training, adjustment to blindness skills training, and other activities designed to increase confidence, improve knowledge, skills, and abilities, and create peer mentor networks & self–advocacy.

Priority 2.4: Increase Employment for all eligible consumers

Strategy 2.4.1: Talent Pipeline Project SCCB will align vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance activities with South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project, Sector Strategies, and Local Labor Market Information in order to effectively and efficiently provide consumers with data driven informed choices in selecting vocational goals that reflect existing, job driven, middle skill, high demand, high vacancy, career pathways consistent with their individualized primary employment factors. SCCB will focus efforts on assisting consumers in obtaining industry recognized credentials, certifications, and academic degrees. SCCB will also develop the capacity to provide services to business including talent acquisition and talent retention services.

Strategy 2.4.2: Staff Training & Development in Blind Services Due to staff turnover SCCB has lost institutional knowledge and expertise. SCCB will launch an aggressive staff training and development program that will emphasize best practices in providing vocational rehabilitation services to persons who are blind.

Strategy 2.4.3: Staff Training & Development in Evidence Based Practice SCCB will invest in staff training and development in VR evidence based practices such as: Motivational Interviewing; Customized Employment; Discovery Assessment; Supported Employment; Individual Placement and Supports; Integrating Labor Market Information into Vocational Goal Setting, IPE Development and Informed Choice.

Strategy 2.4.4: Summer Internship Program (SIP) SCCB will continue to offer the successful Summer Internship Program (SIP) where college students engage in a paid summer internship program in their chosen field of study. Students complete a set number of working internship hours and receive a stipend upon successful completion. SIP has a proven track record of influencing the obtainment of permanent employment.

Goal 3: Increase & Improve Innovative Coordinated Services to Business.

Priority 3.1: Engage with Business Community & Business Organizations Strategy 3.1.1: Business Services Engagement SCCB will engage with the business community to create alliances, relationships, partnerships, and strategic alignments by having a presence and being visible where business leaders are. This will include staff engagement in Chambers of Commerce, trade organizations where appropriate and effective, and Society of Human Resource Management meetings.

Strategy 3.1.2: Establish an SCCB Business Advisory Council SCCB Business Relations will work to establish an eight (8) member Business Advisory Council consisting of specific membership representing the sectors of: Health Care, Manufacturing, Technology, Service Industries, Hospitality & Tourism, Agriculture, Public Service, and Federal Contractors. This advisory council will meet quarterly to advise SCCB Business Relations and the Vocational Rehabilitation program on high demand jobs, credentialing and minimum qualifications, customized training development, job placement and supports, and other business partner needs. Priority 3.2: Improve Talent Acquisition & Retention Services to Business

Strategy 3.2.1: Business Services & Talent Acquisition & Retention SCCB will develop presentations to business leaders helping them understand the array of services that the agency can offer them such as: 1. Talent Acquisition 2. Talent Retention 3. Customized Training 4. Assistive Technology Services 5. ADA Consultation Strategy 3.2.2: Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) SCCB will develop resources to enable the agency to fully utilize the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) to connect qualified quality applicants to South Carolina businesses who are engaged in the TAP program.

Priority 3.3: Increase Coordination with WIOA Partner's Business Services

Strategy 3.3.1: Coordination of Business Services with WIOA Partners SCCB will coordinate and collaborate with the core WIOA partner's efforts to build a customer centered delivery system to South Carolina's businesses by linking the Talent Pipeline Project, Job Driven, Sector Strategies, and Talent Pool Development. This will be accomplished by scheduling regular coordination meetings, sharing information and contacts, and collaborating on meeting business needs.

Priority 3.4: Seek Opportunities for Customized Training Partnerships

Strategy 3.4.1: Technical & Community College Relationship Building During FFY 2016 SCCB VR and Training & Adjustment leadership staff in collaboration with WIOA core partners will conduct outreach and relationship building with South Carolina's technical and community colleges to explore potential partnerships for industry responsive customized training initiatives that are accessible to individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS.

SCCB's Employment and Training Division provides SCCB consumers with assistive technology assessments when necessary at each stage of the vocational rehabilitation process to ensure that eligible individuals have the tools and AT resources necessary to succeed in their Individualized Plan For Employment activities and services. VR Counselors make referrals to the T & E Division staff for assessments when the need is identified.

In addition, SCCB has a cooperative agreement with the South Carolina Assistive Technology Program at the University Of South Carolina School Of Medicine to access comparable benefits, eliminate duplication of services, and increase coordination of employment services provided to the shared consumer populations. SCCB will work to enhance and improve this partnership.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM.

In order to identify and make VR services available to minorities, individuals with most significant disabilities, and those traditionally unserved or underserved by the VR program, SCCB has initiated Goal 1, Priority 1.2, Strategy 1.2.2 to engage with the Department of Disability and Special Needs in order to develop a new Cooperative Agreement designed to improve collaboration and leverage long term supported employment funding to meet the needs of persons with Most Significant Disabilities.

Goal 1, Priority 1.3, Strategy 1.3.1improves public awareness of available services through the production of Public Service Announcements, website resource expansion and enhancement, preparation and dissemination of agency newsletters and other publications, and by re–engaging in community service events to increase public awareness and referrals. Strategy 1.3.2: Unserved, Underserved, Minority, Rural Outreach SCCB will engage with the community by having staff attend community resource fairs and other community events to disseminate information, build referral pathways, and enhance community awareness in areas where unserved or underserved populations reside including minorities, transition students, youth, veterans, seniors seeking employment, with an emphasis on rural communities.

Strategy 1.3.4: Blind Organizations Engagement to Improve Perceptions SCCB VR leadership will engage with blind community organizations to improve agency reputation and perceptions regarding service quality and effectiveness. In addition SCCB will seek opportunities for partnerships, collaboration, and coordination of vocationally related programming.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES).

Goal 2, Priority 2.3: Increase Vocational Exploration & Opportunities for Transition Students Strategy 2.3.1: CareerBOOST Pre–Employment Transition Services SCCB will pilot a demonstration project called CareerBOOST (Building Occupational Opportunities for Students in Transition). This program will augment SCCB's transition services program by providing the five (5) required Pre Employment Transition Services (PETS) to eligible or potentially eligible students statewide. These PETS services will include: 1. Self–Advocacy Training 2. Work Readiness Workshops 3. Work–based Learning Experiences 4. Post–Secondary Education Enrollment and Careers Exploration 5. Information & Referral to SCCB's Transition VR Program

Strategy 2.3.2: Student Business Enterprise Program Career Exploration The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) trains eligible consumers to operate vending businesses located on government properties, and then assists trained vendors in obtaining contracts to operate as independent business operators. Traditionally BEP has been a program available to adult consumers. SCCB is working to partner with the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind to create innovative career counseling and guidance to transition students including exposure to the Business Enterprise Program and opportunities to complete BEP curriculum at the school. The intent is to identify students who may be interested in running their own business, provide counseling and guidance to inform them of their options under the BEP program, and enable students to complete half of the BEP training curriculum prior to exiting school. This will fast–track their ability to complete the second half of the required training and enter an on–the–job internship thereby accelerating their ability to become vendors.

Strategy 2.3.3: Student Internship Program Jr. SCCB will work to expand our highly successful Student Internship Program (SIP) that provides paid summer internships for college seniors and juniors, by developing a SIP Jr. Program that will provide paid summer internship opportunities in a variety of career fields to transition students in their senior and junior year of High School.

Strategy 2.3.4: Inventor Lab SCCB will use authority under "innovation and expansion" utilizing Pre–Employment Transition Services set aside funds to establish "Inventor Lab" where transition students will be exposed to career exploration in functional 3–D fabrication, manufacturing using 3–D printer technology, product development, business development, microenterprise development, entrepreneurship, marketing and other science, technology, engineering, and math careers.

Strategy 2.3.5: Summer Teens Program SCCB will continue the very successful Summer Teens Program that brings students from across the state to the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center for 5 weeks each summer. This program introduces students to career exploration & counseling, assistive technology, social skills and work readiness skills training, adjustment to blindness skills training, and other activities designed to increase confidence, improve knowledge, skills, and abilities, and create peer mentor networks & self–advocacy.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

Strategy 2.2.2: CRP Establishment & Development SCCB will continue to seek opportunities and partnerships to aid in the development and establishment of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) to provide community based adjustment to blindness services, supported employment (SE) services, customized employment (CE) services and life skills training.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

It is the position of SCCB that the Goals, Priorities, and Strategies listed in this state plan will lead to improvements on performance accountability measures after the initial "baseline" establishing year of FFY 2016.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

SCCB has been an active partner in the WIOA Unified State Plan Implementation Team. South Carolina's plans are to continue convening this group of core WIOA partners to continue to develop meaningful and effective partnerships, share expertise and knowledge, skills, and abilities, and to expand the ability of the system to serve all individuals including those with disabilities. In addition SCCB is working to ensure that there is agency presence in the local one stop American Job Centers on a consistent basis to provide support and expertise to consumers who are blind or visually impaired.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

The Goals, Priorities, and Strategies detailed in the SCCB VR program portion of the Unified State Plan were designed to directly address the gaps in service needs identified in the 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. These Goals, Priorities, and Strategies form the basis of our 4 year Strategic Plan for the VR program at SCCB. The Senior Management Team meets on a monthly basis to review progress toward Strategic Plan goals.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

SCCB has a history of innovative programs designed to meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of consumers. The following strategies are newly developed, expanding, and/or innovative initiatives included in this state plan: Strategy 1.4.1: Soft Skills Training to Support Employment Curriculum In partnership with the core WIOA partners SCCB will participate in the purchase and implementation of a state wide standardized curriculum on the "soft skills" that South Carolina Businesses have been requesting from the statewide Workforce Investment Board. SCCB will implement this curriculum as a course offered at the EBMRC. Strategy 2.1.1: Staff Training SCCB in collaboration with the Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) Business Intelligence Unit staff will

conduct extensive SCCB staff training during FFY 2016 in order to expand VR staff knowledge, skills, and abilities to access current Local Labor Market Information, conduct Job Driven research, utilize Job Driven and Sector Strategies to provide informed choice and guidance to consumers in selecting vocational goals, assessing skills, locating vocational training to close skill gaps, and connect skilled consumers with existing or emerging vacant positions.

Strategy 2.1.2: Talent Pipeline Project Engagement SCCB has been an engaged partner in South Carolina's Talent Pipeline Project with the WIOA core partners. SCCB will continue to be engaged in this workforce development effort, and will work to align SCCB VR program efforts with the broader state goals, strategies, and objectives. These include focus on developing a strategy for Career Pathways, Customized Training, and services to business including talent acquisition and talent retention services. Strategy 2.2.1: JOBS Specialists (Job Oriented Blind Services) SCCB will establish three (3) Job Oriented Blind Services (JOBS) Specialist positons that will provide Supported Employment (SE), Customized Employment (CE), and Individual Placement and Support (IPS) models employment services to consumers who have Most Significant Disabilities. These positions will function in a one–on–one consumer centered approach as Job Placement Specialists, On–The–Job Coaches, and in other employment related supportive roles allowed under Title VI. This is an expansion of a proven model. Strategy 2.2.2: CRP Establishment & Development SCCB will continue to seek opportunities and partnerships to aid in the development and establishment of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) to provide community based adjustment to blindness services, supported employment (SE) services, customized employment (CE) services and life skills training.

Strategy 2.2.3: Build SSA Benefits Counseling Capacity SCCB will work to build the capacity and specialized expertise necessary to provide effective and accurate benefit planning to help improve consumer knowledge of how employment affects SSA benefits and incentives for engaging in employment. The perceived risks of losing benefits are a significant barrier to employment for this population. Strategy 2.3.1: CareerBOOST Pre–Employment Transition Services SCCB will pilot a demonstration project called CareerBOOST (Building Occupational Opportunities for Students in Transition). This program will augment SCCB's transition services program by providing the five (5) required Pre Employment Transition Services (PETS) to eligible or potentially eligible students statewide. These PETS services will include: 1. Self–Advocacy Training 2. Work Readiness Workshops 3. Work–based Learning Experiences 4. Post–Secondary Education Enrollment and Careers Exploration 5. Information & Referral to SCCB's Transition VR Program Strategy 2.3.3: Student Internship Program Jr. SCCB will work to expand our highly successful Student Internship Program (SIP) that provides paid summer internships for college seniors and juniors, by developing a SIP Jr. Program that will provide paid summer internship opportunities in a variety of career fields to transition students in their senior and junior year of High School. Strategy 2.3.4: Inventor Lab SCCB will use authority under "innovation and expansion" utilizing Pre–Employment Transition Services set aside funds to establish "Inventor Lab" where transition students will be exposed to career exploration in functional 3–D fabrication, manufacturing using 3–D printer technology, product development, business development, microenterprise development, entrepreneurship, marketing and other science, technology, engineering, and math careers. Strategy 2.3.5: Summer Teens Program SCCB will continue the very successful Summer Teens Program that brings students from across the state to the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center for 5 weeks each summer. This program introduces students to career exploration & counseling, assistive technology, social skills and work readiness skills training, adjustment to blindness skills training, and other activities designed to increase confidence, improve knowledge, skills, and abilities, and create peer mentor networks & self–advocacy. Strategy 3.1.2: Establish an SCCB Business Advisory Council SCCB Business Relations will work to establish an eight (8) member Business Advisory Council consisting

of specific membership representing the sectors of: Health Care, Manufacturing, Technology, Service Industries, Hospitality & Tourism, Agriculture, Public Service, and Federal Contractors. This advisory council will meet quarterly to advise SCCB Business Relations and the Vocational Rehabilitation program on high demand jobs, credentialing and minimum qualifications, customized training development, job placement and supports, and other business partner needs.

Strategy 3.2.1: Business Services & Talent Acquisition & Retention SCCB will develop presentations to business leaders helping them understand the array of services that the agency can offer them such as: 1. Talent Acquisition 2. Talent Retention 3. Customized Training 4. Assistive Technology Services 5. ADA Consultation

Strategy 3.2.2: Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) SCCB will develop resources to enable the agency to fully utilize the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) to connect qualified quality applicants to South Carolina businesses who are engaged in the TAP program.

Strategy 3.4.1: Technical & Community College Relationship Building During FFY 2016 SCCB VR and Training & Adjustment leadership staff in collaboration with WIOA core partners will conduct outreach and relationship building with South Carolina's technical and community colleges to explore potential partnerships for industry responsive customized training initiatives that are accessible to individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

SCCB is committed to ensuring that services are provided in an equitable manner and are fully accessible. SCCB reviews, assesses and monitors agency programs to conduct continuous improvement activities. The greatest gap identified in the 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment pertained to the lack of a Supported Employment program at SCCB. In response SCCB has committed itself to Strategy 2.2.1: JOBS Specialists (Job Oriented Blind Services) SCCB will establish three (3) Job Oriented Blind Services (JOBS) Specialist positons that will provide Supported Employment (SE), Customized Employment (CE), and Individual Placement and Support (IPS) models employment services to consumers who have Most Significant Disabilities. These positions will function in a one–on–one consumer centered approach as Job Placement Specialists, On–The–Job Coaches, and in other employment related supportive roles allowed under Title VI. As well as Strategy 1.2.2: Engagement with Department of Disability & Special Needs SCCB will engage with DDSN to develop a new Cooperative Agreement designed to improve collaboration and leverage long term supported employment funding to meet the needs of persons with Most Significant Disabilities.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

Based on the 2013 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment the South Carolina Commission for the Blind established the following Federal Fiscal Year 2015 State Goals.

GOAL 1: SCCB will increase the quantity and quality of employment outcomes. Employment outcomes will increase by (3%) per year, and the rate of competitive employment outcomes will represent 80% of all employment outcomes.

Report of Progress: SCCB has not achieved the targeted 3% increase in quantity and quality employment outcomes during FFY 2015. Many complex factors contributed to continued declining numbers of consumers closed in successful competitive and integrated employment. First, the agency has experienced significant turnover during FFY 14 and 15. Half of all VR Counselor positions in the agency have had significant periods of vacancy. In addition, the agency has had turnover at the VR leadership level. SCCB experienced turnover at the Director of Consumer Services position, a Regional Director Position, and the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center position. Second, the agency has aggressively ended a long term practice allowed under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 of having significant "Homemaker", (unpaid family worker) closures. This has contributed in declining successful closures as the agency refocuses and realigns to our mission of helping consumers obtain quality competitive employment in integrated settings. In addition the elimination of "Homemaker" closures has required agency staff to reshape community expectations of the services and intended outcome of VR services. Lastly, the agency has experienced significant decline in community partnerships due to declining engagement with partners due to our significant staff turnover, inability to meet partner needs, and disengagement due to staff limitations. Please note that this area is a continuing goal area for FFY 2016.

GOAL 2 SCCB will develop the capacity to provide Supported Employment services for consumers with the most significant disabilities.

Report of Progress: SCCB put great effort into exploring opportunities to develop partnerships with community based vendors or to develop Community Rehabilitation Programs to meet this need. However these efforts were largely unsuccessful because SCCB financial resources are not sufficient in and of themselves to entice or attract vendors into the market. Many potential partners felt that the funding levels would make such efforts unstable, unsustainable, and not scalable to a level that would be viable. It should be noted that this continues to be a goal for SCCB in FFY 2016, and that the agency has found creative and innovative internal capabilities to meet these needs. We are currently in the program development, staff recruitment, hiring, and training stage, and it is anticipated that this capacity will take some time to develop.

GOAL 3 SCCB will develop the capacity to identify and provide VR services to minority groups that are presently underrepresented on the caseload.

Report of Progress: SCCB made several efforts to conduct outreach to these populations during FFY 2015. However full engagement was hampered by extensive staff turnover and extended position vacancies. Please note that this area is a continuing goal area for FFY 2016.

GOAL 4 SCCB will identify and provide VR services for visually impaired persons that reside in counties where there are presently ten or fewer consumers.

Report of Progress: SCCB has worked to decentralize service delivery and has assigned outreach staff across the state to provide one–on–one orientation and mobility training and daily living skills training in local communities. While some progress has been made, findings of the FFY 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs indicated that gaps still exist in this area and more work needs to be done.

GOAL 5 SCCB will expand the availability of community rehabilitation services in two areas, Spartanburg and Charleston, South Carolina.

Report of Progress: SCCB has very recently signed fee for service agreements with three (3) new Community Rehabilitation Programs that provide Orientation & Mobility and Daily Living Skills/Home Management instruction in consumers' homes and/or communities. In addition SCCB has signed contracts with another CRP that provides basic computer training in consumer's communities. This is also a continuing goal for the FFY 2016 plan.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Many complex factors contributed to continued declining numbers of consumers closed in successful competitive and integrated employment. First, the agency has experienced significant turnover during FFY 14 and 15. Half of all VR Counselor positions in the agency have had significant periods of vacancy. In addition, the agency has had turnover at the VR leadership level. SCCB experienced turnover at the Director of Consumer Services position, a Regional Director Position, and the Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center Director position. Second, the agency has aggressively ended a long term practice allowed under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 of having significant "Homemaker", (unpaid family worker) closures. This has contributed to declining successful closures as the agency refocuses and realigns to our mission of helping consumers obtain quality competitive employment in integrated settings. In addition the elimination of "Homemaker" closures has required agency staff to reshape community expectations of the services and intended outcome of VR services. Lastly, the agency has experienced significant decline in community partnerships due to declining engagement with partners due to our significant staff turnover, inability to meet partner needs, and disengagement due to staff limitations. Please note that this area is a continuing goal area for FFY 2016.

SCCB put great effort into exploring opportunities to develop partnerships with community based vendors or to develop Community Rehabilitation Programs to meet the need for supported employment services. However these efforts were largely unsuccessful because SCCB financial resources are not sufficient in and of themselves to entice or attract vendors into the market. Many potential partners felt that the funding levels would make such efforts unstable, unsustainable, and not scalable to a level that would be viable. It should be noted that this continues to be a goal for

SCCB in FFY 2016, and that the agency has found creative and innovative internal capabilities to meet these needs. We are currently in the program development, staff recruitment, hiring, and training stage, and it is anticipated that this capacity will take some time to develop.

SCCB made several efforts to conduct outreach to unserved and underserved populations during FFY 2015. However full engagement was hampered by extensive staff turnover and extended position vacancies. Please note that this area is a continuing goal area for FFY 2016.

SCCB has worked to decentralize service delivery and has assigned outreach staff across the state to provide one–on–one orientation and mobility training and daily living skills training in local communities. While some progress has been made, findings of the FFY 2016 Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs indicated that gaps still exist in this area and more work needs to be done.

SCCB has very recently signed fee for service agreements with three (3) new Community Rehabilitation Programs that provide Orientation & Mobility and Daily Living Skills/Home Management instruction in consumers' homes and/or communities. In addition SCCB has signed contracts with another CRP that provides basic computer training in consumer's communities. This is also a continuing goal for the FFY 2016 plan.

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

Report of Progress: SCCB did not expend any Supported Employment revenue during FFY 2015. The reason for this lack of a Supported Employment Program appears to be two fold. First, currently a network of Community Rehabilitation Programs providing SE services does not exist in South Carolina due to a historical practice by both VR agencies to provide all services using in–house employees. Second, due to this lack of capacity and resources it appears that SE appropriate consumers have not engaged with the Commission. Building a quality Supported Employment program is a continued goal of SCCB for FFY 2016. However the agency has specific strategies that are being implemented that will build our capacity to serve this population.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Report of Progress: SCCB did not expend any Supported Employment revenue during FFY 2015. The reason for this lack of a Supported Employment Program appears to be two fold. First, currently a network of Community Rehabilitation Programs providing SE services does not exist in South Carolina due to a historical practice by both VR agencies to provide all services using in–house employees. Second, due to this lack of capacity and resources it appears that SE appropriate consumers have not engaged with the Commission. Building a quality Supported Employment program is a continued goal of SCCB for FFY 2016. However the agency has specific strategies that are being implemented that will build our capacity to serve this population.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

During the first program year under WIOA, SCCB has been working to build the information technology infrastructure to track and report the following performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA:

(I) the percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program; (II) the percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program; (III) the median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program; (IV) the percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (subject to clause (iii)), during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program; (V) the percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and (VI) the indicators of effectiveness in serving employers established pursuant to clause (iv).

Because the agency has not been required to track or report this data prior to WIOA, SCCB has nothing to report for these data elements for FFY 2015. SCCB has elected to use the FFY 2016 program year to baseline these measures.

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

During FFY 2015 SCCB utilized Innovation and Expansion funding to expand the Summer Teens program and the Summer Internship Program. Summer Teens brought transition students to the Columbia Ellen Beach Mack Rehabilitation Center for a 5 week instructional program that provided instruction in home management, independent living skills, Braille literacy, orientation and mobility, and social interaction programs designed to foster self advocacy, leadership, and peer to peer mentoring. The Summer Internship Program provided paid internships to college Juniors and Seniors in their field of study during the summer.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

Report of Progress: SCCB did not expend any Supported Employment revenue during FFY 2015. The reason for this lack of a Supported Employment Program appears to be two fold. First, currently a network of Community Rehabilitation Programs providing SE services does not exist in South Carolina due to a historical practice by both VR agencies to provide all services using in–house employees. Second, due to this lack of capacity and resources it appears that SE appropriate consumers have not engaged with the Commission. Building a quality Supported Employment program is a continued goal of SCCB for FFY 2016. However the agency has specific strategies that are being implemented that will build our capacity to serve this population.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

In compliance with 34 CFR 363.6 SCCB policy requires that an individual must transition to extended services within 24 months of starting to receive supported employment services unless a longer time period is agreed to in the individualized plan for employment. SCCB policy requires supported employment outcomes to be in competitive integrated employment.

CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate   **South Carolina Commission for the Blind**

Name of designated State agency   **South Carolina Commission for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **James Kirby**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.**   Yes

2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;   Yes

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;**   Yes

4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;   Yes

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.   Yes

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.   Yes

7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;   Yes

8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;   Yes

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.   Yes

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FOOTNOTES

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Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CERTIFICATIONS FROM THE STATE

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CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization   **South Carolina Commission for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **James Kirby**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

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The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization   **South Carolina Commission for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **James Kirby**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:**The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. SUBMISSION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EITHER A STATE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OR STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(21) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(A) is an independent State commission**

C. CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(16)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

D. THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION BY THE STATE, OR IF THE STATE SO ELECTS, BY THE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, TO PROVIDE THE AMOUNT OF THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF THE COST OF CARRYING OUT THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(3).

E. THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds   **No**

F. THE SHARED FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF JOINT PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **No**

G. STATEWIDENESS AND WAIVERS OF STATEWIDENESS REQUIREMENTS, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan.   **No**

H. THE DESCRIPTIONS FOR COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(11) AND (24)(B); AND 606(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. ALL REQUIRED METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(6) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

J. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(7) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

K. THE COMPILATION AND SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSIONER OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS, ESTIMATES, STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, AND PROGRESS REPORTS, AS APPROPRIATE, AND AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(15), 105(C)(2), AND 606(B)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

L. THE RESERVATION AND USE OF A PORTION OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TO THE STATE UNDER SECTION 110 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH

DISABILITIES, PARTICULARLY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

M. THE SUBMISSION OF REPORTS AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

A. COMPLY WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 101(A)(5)(D) AND (20) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. IMPOSE NO DURATION OF RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT AS PART OF DETERMINING AN INDIVIDUAL'S ELIGIBILITY FOR VR SERVICES OR THAT EXCLUDES FROM SERVICES UNDER THE PLAN ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PRESENT IN THE STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(12) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

C. PROVIDE THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES LISTED IN SECTION 103(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AS APPROPRIATE, TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above   **Yes**

D. DETERMINE WHETHER COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

E. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

F. COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PROVISIONS OF INFORMED CHOICE FOR ALL APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

G. PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO AMERICAN INDIANS WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING IN THE STATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(13) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

H. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SEMIANNUAL OR ANNUAL REVIEWS, AS APPROPRIATE, FOR INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED EITHER IN AN EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT SETTING IN A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 14(C) OF THE FAIR

LABOR STANDARDS ACT OF 1938, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(14)OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTIONS 101(A)(17) AND 103(B)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT IF THE STATE ELECTS TO CONSTRUCT, UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

J. WITH RESPECT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THE STATE,

   I.   HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT,
      A.   STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENTS; AND
      B.   STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE, TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ON A STATEWIDE BASIS; AND
   II.   HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (SECTIONS 101(A)(15) AND 101(A)(25)).

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT TITLE VI SUPPLEMENT:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT ASSURES THAT IT WILL INCLUDE IN THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN ALL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 606 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL SUBMIT REPORTS IN SUCH FORM AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUCH PROCEDURES AS THE COMMISSIONER MAY REQUIRE AND COLLECTS THE INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT SEPARATELY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE I AND INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

C. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES WITH ANY OTHER STATE AGENCY THAT IS FUNCTIONING AS AN EMPLOYMENT NETWORK UNDER THE TICKET TO WORK AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 1148 OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.

6. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL EXPEND NO MORE THAN 2.5 PERCENT OF THE STATE'S ALLOTMENT UNDER TITLE VI FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF CARRYING OUT THIS PROGRAM; AND, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR AGENCIES WILL PROVIDE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ENTITIES, NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN AN AMOUNT THAT IS NOT LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF THE

COSTS OF CARRYING OUT SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WITH THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR SUCH PURPOSE UNDER SECTION 603(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(G) AND (H) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL USE FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ONLY TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SUCH SERVICES; AND, THAT SUCH FUNDS ARE USED ONLY TO SUPPLEMENT AND NOT SUPPLANT THE FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, WHEN PROVIDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SPECIFIED IN THE INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(A) AND (D), OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

7. PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AS DEFINED IN SECTION 7(39) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT:

I.   THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 102(B)(1) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND FUNDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT INCLUDES CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AS AN APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 606(B)(7)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

II.   AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT , WHICH IS DEVELOPED AND UPDATED WITH TITLE I FUNDS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 102(B)(3)(F) AND 606(B)(6)(C) AND (E) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE ASSURANCES FROM THE STATE

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program— and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program.* If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" in Sections II and III of that document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program (available on www.regulations.gov for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at http://www.regulations.gov by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.

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* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

APPENDIX 1. PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

Include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

Instructions:Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each State submitting a Unified or Combined Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The State is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

TABLE 1. EMPLOYMENT (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	69.00	73.10	69.00	75.30
Dislocated Workers	77.00	77.00	77.00	79.30
Youth	53.00	75.10	53.00	76.60
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	62.00	64.00	62.00	64.00
Vocational Rehabilitation</	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 1

TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT (FOURTH QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	68.00	70.80	68.00	72.90
Dislocated Workers	75.00	75.00	75.00	77.30
Youth	57.00	67.60	57.00	69.10
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	61.00	66.00	61.00	66.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 2

TABLE 3. MEDIAN EARNINGS (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	4,573.00	4,628.00	4,573.00	4,859.00
Dislocated Workers	6,345.00	6,100.00	6,345.00	6,405.00
Youth	2,207.00	Baseline	2,207.00	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	4,085.00	4,405.00	4,085.00	4,405.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 3

TABLE 4. CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT RATE

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	45.00	51.00	45.00	52.50
Dislocated Workers	44.00	54.40	44.00	56.00
Youth	70.00	68.10	70.00	69.60
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 4

TABLE 5. MEASUREABLE SKILL GAINS

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	42.00	42.00	44.00	44.00
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 5

TABLE 6. EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 6

TABLE 7. COMBINED FEDERAL PARTNER MEASURES

Measure	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level

User remarks on Table 7