
STATE OF GEORGIA

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Four Year Unified State Plan

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Governor's Letter

February 15, 2018

As global corporations continue to choose Georgia to plant their next operation, and as homegrown companies expand, thousands of jobs are being created each year. This rapid job growth means we must take every measure to leverage our workforce development efforts in order to ensure that Georgia businesses have a strong and reliable workforce. In compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the State of Georgia has developed a comprehensive, data-driven set of goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce. The updated Georgia Unified State Plan is the result of a collaboration amongst the Georgia Department of Economic Development, the Georgia Department of Labor, the Technical College System of Georgia, the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, and the Georgia Department of Human Services to identify successful strategies and best practices for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. This Plan continues to align statewide efforts by combining federal, state, and local resources to meet the workforce needs in Georgia's diverse regional economies. It also enables workforce development leaders to customize their strategies to the real-time needs of employers while guiding services to reach Georgians at their point of need.

In 2011, I launched the Georgia Competitiveness Initiative (GCI), a public-private partnership to enhance our economic development strategy, which focused on key factors that influence economic success. Since its launch, GCI has paved the way for many employment-driven programs and initiatives, such as the High Demand Career Initiative, Operation Workforce, and Georgia WorkSmart. These efforts, which focused on bolstering the state's workforce development infrastructure, aided Georgia in being ranked the No. 1 in the nation in which to do business for five consecutive years by several leading business and economic development publications. This Plan helps establish and support the future of education, skills training and career preparation for Georgians, providing a readily accessible pool of resources which will ensure that job seekers are equipped to enter the promising careers of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

Nathan Deal
Governor

STATE OF GEORGIA

UNIFIED STATE PLAN: REQUIRED PARTNERS SIGNATURE PAGE

Please refer to Appendix 7: Required Partners Signature Page

Submitted June 15, 2018

Chairman Wendell Dallas
Georgia State Workforce Development Board

Deputy Commissioner Ben Hames
Georgia Department of Economic Development

Commissioner Mark Butler
Georgia Department of Labor

Commissioner Matt Arthur
Technical College System of Georgia

Executive Director Sean Casey
Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

ACRONYM GUIDE

ACS	American Community Survey	DOC	Georgia Department of Corrections
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	DoDD	Division of Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)
AEFLA	Adult Education & Family Literacy Act	DSU	Designated State Unit
AO	Accelerating Opportunity	DVOP	Disabled Veteran Outreach Program
AOP	Agricultural Outreach Plan	EG	Employ Georgia (GDOL)
ASL	American Sign Language	EMSI	Economic Modeling Specialists Intl
BER	Benefits Eligibility Review	ERP	Eligibility Review Process
BGLI	Burning Glass Labor Insight	ES	Employment Services
BLS	Bureau of Labor Statistics	ESP	Extended Services Plan
BSU	Business Services Unit (housed in GDOL)	ETA	Employment & Training Administration (USDOL)
CAD	Computer Aided Design	ETP	Eligible Training Provider
CAP	Client Assistance Programs	ETPL	Eligible Training Provider List
CAP	Corrective Action Plan	EXCEL	Executive Commitment to Excellence in Leadership
CAPI	Customized Apprenticeships & Paid Internships	FB	Federal Bonding
CCR	College & Career Readiness Standards	FY	Fiscal Year
CCSS	Common Core State Standards	GaDOE	Georgia Department of Education
CIL	Centers for Independent Living	GALIS	Georgia Adult Learners Information System
CJCC	Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council	GA-PRI	Georgia Prisoner Reentry Initiative
CLEO	Chief Local Elected Official	GDEcD	Georgia Department of Economic Development
CNC	Computer Numerical Control Operator	GDOL	Georgia Department of Labor
CR	Customized Recruitment	GED®	General Educational Development test ¹
CRC	Certified Rehabilitation Counselors	GEPS	Georgia Enterprises for Products & Services
CRCC	Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification	GLME	Georgia Labor Market Explorer
CRP	Community Rehabilitation Programs	GOTSR	Governor's Office of Transition, Support & Reentry
CSB	Community Service Boards	GSE	Georgia Standards of Excellence
CSPD	Comprehensive System for Personal Development	GVRA	Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
CSPM	Client Services Policy Manual	GWROPP	Georgia Work Ready Online Participant Portal
CSU	Constituent Services Unit	GWS	Georgia Workforce System
DBHDD	Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities	HDCI	High Demand Career Initiative
DCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	IATSE	International Association of Theatrical & Screen Employees
DCH	Georgia Department of Community Health		
DCS	Georgia Department of Community Supervision		
DFCS	Division of Family & Children Services (DHS)		
DHS	Georgia Department of Human Services		
DJJ	Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice		
DOAS	Georgia Department of Administrative Services		

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IAWP	International Association of Workforce Professionals	OSY	Out-of-School Youth
ICR	Information Collection Request	PIP	Performance Improvement Plan
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	PLC	Programmable Logic Controller
IELCE	Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education	PWP	Personal Work Plan
IEP	Individualized Education Plan	PY	Program Year
IPE	Individualized Plan for Employment	REA	Reemployment Assistance Program
IPS	Individualized Placement & Support	RESEA	Georgia's Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment
ISY	In-School Youth	RFA	Request for Application
ITA	Individual Training Account	RSA	USDOE Rehabilitation Services Administration
ITP	Individualized Transition Plan	SCSEP	Senior Community Service & Employment Program
IWT	Incumbent Worker Training	SDVS	Georgia Department of Veteran's Services
ITW	Internet Tax and Wage	SE	Supported Employment
JFF	Jobs for the Future	SES	Supported Employment Services
LEOs	Local Elected Officials	SETA	Southeastern Employment & Training Association
LVERs	Local Veteran Employment Representatives	SILC	Statewide Independent Living Council
LWDA	Local Workforce Development Area	SIWDG	Strategic Industries Workforce Development Grant
LWDB	Local Workforce Development Board	SMA	State Monitor Advocate
LWIA	Local Workforce Investment Area	SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
MHS	Migrant Head Start	SPC	Statistical Process Control
MIS	Management Information System	SPMI	Serious & Persistent Mental Illness
MOA	Methods of Administration	SRC	State Rehabilitation Council
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
MSFW	Migrant & Seasonal Farmworkers	SSDR	State Service Delivery Regions
MVR	Muskogee Vocational Rehabilitation	SSI	Supplemental Security Income
NAICS	North American Industry Classification System	STAR	Staff Technical Assistance & Review
NASWA	National Association for State Workforce Agencies	STEM	Science, Technology, engineering and Math
NDI	Non-Destructive Inspectors	SUP	State Unified Plan
NDT	Non-Destructive Testers	SWAT	Special Workforce Assistance Team
NDWG	National Dislocated Worker Grants	SWDB	State Workforce Development Board
NEG	National Emergency Grant	SWIS	Statewide Workforce Investment System
NFJP	National Farmworker Jobs Program	TAA	Trade Adjustment Assistance
NPRM	Notice of Proposed Rulemaking	TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
NRS	National Reporting System	TCSG	Technical College System of Georgia
O*Net	Occupational Information Network	TEGL	Training Employment Guidance Letter
O.C.G.A.	Official Code of Georgia Annotated	TFSP	TANF Family Service Plan
OA	Office of Apprenticeship (USDOL)	UCX	Unemployment Compensation for Ex-service members program
OAE	Office of Adult Education (TCSG)	UGA	University of Georgia
OCTAE	Office of Career, Technical & Agricultural Education (USDOE)	UI	Unemployment Insurance
OJT	On-the-Job		
OOS	Order of Selection		

UI and RO	Unemployment Insurance & Regional Operations	WEx	Work Experience
UIREA	UI Employment Assistance	WFD	Workforce Division (GDEcD)
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture	WIA	Workforce Investment Act
USDOE	United States Department of Education	WIG	Workforce Implementation Guidance Letter
USDOL	United State Department of Labor	WIOA	Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act
USG	University System of Georgia	WOTC	Work Opportunity Tax Credit
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation	WP	Wagner-Peyser Act/programs
VRP	Vocational Rehabilitation Program	WSP	TANF Work Support Program
WARN	Worker Adjustment & Retraining Notification	YDC	Youth Detention Center

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

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

(a) Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis

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

(1) Economic and Workforce Analysis

(A) Economic Analysis

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

Tables and narrative in this section have been revised to include the most recent data and updates.

In 2011, Governor Nathan Deal announced the Georgia Competitiveness Initiative, a public-private partnership to enhance the state's economic development strategy. The initiative focuses on the key factors that drive long-term economic success: Business Climate, Education & Workforce Development, Innovation, Infrastructure, Global Commerce, and Government Efficiency & Effectiveness. This initiative also led to strategic efforts to support both the manufacturing and construction industries in Georgia.

The campaign paved the way for Georgia's selection ranking as the No. 1 state in the nation in which to do business by CNBC, Site Selection Magazine, and other leading business and economic development publications. Through limited regulation and taxation, low cost of living, a strong workforce, and high quality of life, Georgia has established a strong business climate that is attracting jobs and investment. In Fiscal Year 2017, 83,000 jobs were created in Georgia, the State experienced \$35.6 in Georgia based exports, the tourism industry generated a record breaking \$60 billion, and the film industry generated \$9.5 billion in economic impact. Georgia is now ranked as the #1 filming location in the world by Film L.A. The film industry, one of Georgia's fastest growing industries, created a \$9.5 economic impact (\$4.6 in wages) and produced 320 feature film and television productions. The film industry created more than 92,100 jobs within 3000 film-related companies that have relocated or expanded to Georgia. In addition to this growing industry.

(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

To gain real-time labor market information, the State, led by WFD, contracted with Burning Glass to access the BGLI tool which uses a sophisticated algorithm to extract key data from

electronic job postings, eliminate duplicates, and process the raw information into a condensed online database. The State now accesses data on the demand for talent across hundreds of standard and custom industry sectors, inventorying the skills requested/required to fill job postings. BGLI provides the State with data regarding industry sectors, occupations, job openings, the licensing or credential required, educational requirements and skills requirements, which include not only technical skills, but baseline and software skills. Since the data is gleaned from actual real-time job postings, the workforce community, including LWDA workforce staff and training providers, is able to determine which skills gaps exist and the training necessary to eliminate those skills gaps.

Figure 1. indicates BGLI data for Georgia’s Top Industry Sectors.

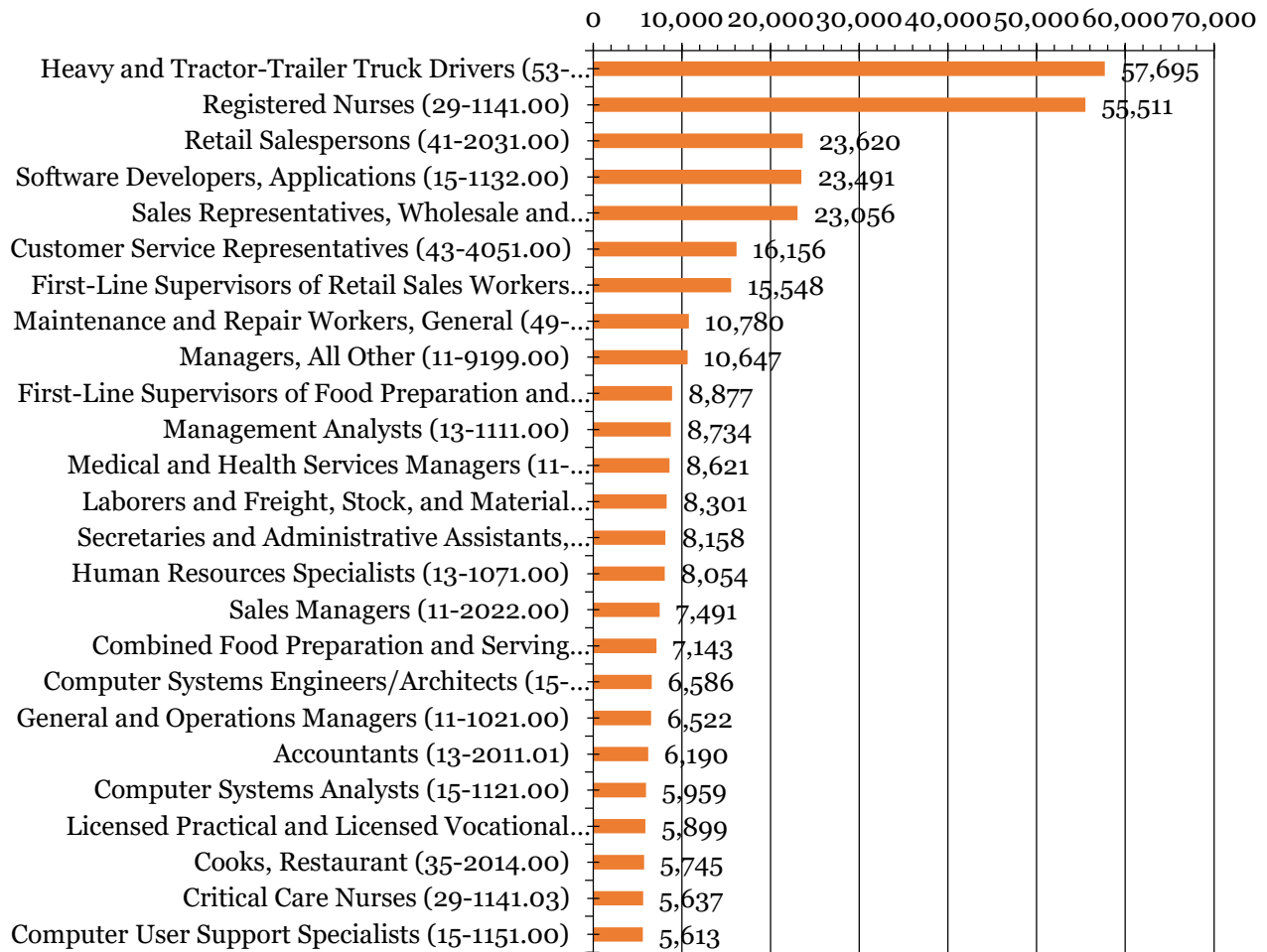
Figure 1. TOP INDUSTRY SECTORS Based on e 783,667 Job Postings Updated Feb. 01, 2017 - Jan. 31, 2018		
Industry Sector	#of Job Postings	Percent
Health Care & Social Assistance	150,909	19.26%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	61,841	7.89%
Retail Trade	81,139	10.35%
Transportation & Warehousing	63,824	8.14%
Manufacturing	53,174	6.79%
Finance & Insurance	50,517	6.45%
Accommodation & Food Services	52,828	6.74%
Public Administration	13,057	1.67%
Educational Services	25,245	3.22%
Information	19,962	2.55%
Administrative & Support and Waste Management & Remediation Services	23,325	2.98%

Source: BGLI Updated

The top in-demand employment Sectors are Health Care & Social Assistance, Professional, Scientific & Technical, and Retail Trade. However, data indicates an increased demand in Transportation & Warehousing, Manufacturing and Finance & Insurance. State trends in healthcare mirror national trends; however, the state’s demand for Professional, Scientific & Technical Services indicates the state’s success in attracting corporate headquarters as well as highly educated workers.

BGLI data on the top occupations in the state is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Top Occupations



Source: BGLI – 783,667 postings Feb. 01, 2017 - Jan. 31, 2018

The Top Occupations indicate the need for traditional Heavy Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers and Registered Nurses, however; the increased need for Software Developers is seen across industries. Other top occupations indicate the increased need for additional Information Technology workers in various disciplines.

For a regional view of in-demand sectors and job openings, see the following breakdown of each of Georgia’s Workforce Regions below:

Georgia Local Workforce Area Trends:

Region 1 WorkSource Northwest Georgia (LWDA 1): Region I has seen significant growth in Health Care & Social Assistance (9,598), Transportation (5,642), Retail Trade (4,911), and Manufacturing (4,819). Employers such as Hospital Corporation of America continue to show increased need for healthcare employees. An upsurge in Manufacturing, due to the recovery of the flooring industry, shows increased employment at Shaw Industries and Mohawk. For the period 2/1/2017 – 1/31/2018 job postings for CDL Truck Drivers (6,601) and Registered Nurses (4,144) show the continued need for certified employees in those fields.

Region 2 – WorkSource Georgia Mountains (LWDA 2): Region 2 has seen significant growth in job postings for Health Care & Social Assistance (6,524), Retail Trade (3,765), Transportation & Warehousing (2,663), and Manufacturing (1,983). Employers such as Northside Hospital, Anthem Blue Cross, the University of North Georgia and Northeast Georgia Health Systems continue to expand and generate jobs. Additionally, the upsurge in the Transportation & Warehousing and Manufacturing sectors are attributed to the growth of Home Depot and Lowes. For the period 2/1/2017 – 1/31/2018 job postings for CDL Truck Drivers (2,919) and Registered Nurses (2,863) show the continued need for certified employees.

Region 3 – WorkSource Metro Atlanta (LWDAs 3,4,5,6 & 7: WorkSource City of Atlanta (3), WorkSource Cobb (4), WorkSource DeKalb (5), WorkSource Fulton (6), WorkSource Atlanta Regional (7)): Metro LWDAs have experienced significant growth in Professional, Scientific & Technical employment (48,864), Health Care & Social Assistance (80,544), Retail Trade (42,531), Finance & Insurance (34,505), Manufacturing (28,611), and Transportation & Warehousing (30,011). The sector growth is most visible in the following occupations, listed during the period 2/1/2017 – 1/31/2018 with the job postings for: Software Applications Developer (21,374), other IT related occupations (23,010), CDL Drivers (21,860), and Registered Nurses (28,338). Primary employers include Wellstar Health Systems, Children’s Healthcare, Emory Healthcare, Northside Hospital, Piedmont Healthcare, Gwinnett Medical Center, Grady Hospital, Waterbury Hospital, Anthem Blue Cross, Accenture, Deloitte, Home Depot, and Coca-Cola.

Region 4- WorkSource West Central (LWDA 8): Region 4 has experienced significant growth in Health Care & Social Assistance (5,804), Retail Trade (3,075) Transportation & Warehousing (3,307), and Manufacturing (1,731). This growth represents the continued needs for healthcare workers at WellStar Health Systems, Piedmont Hospital and other healthcare facilities. For the period 2/1/2017 – 1/31/2018, job postings for CDL Truck Drivers (3,830) and Registered Nurses (2,170) illustrate the continued need for certified employees in those fields.

Region 5 – WorkSource Northeast Georgia (LWDA 9): Region 5 has experienced significant growth in openings in Health Care & Social Assistance (7,305), Retail Trade (3,809), Transportation & Warehousing (4,344), and Manufacturing (2,603). This growth represents the continued need for workers at employers such as the University of Georgia, Piedmont Healthcare, Mercy Medical Center Home Depot, Ritz Carlton, and Marriott. For the period 2/1/2017 – 1/31/2018 job postings for CDL Truck Drivers (4,748) and Registered Nurses (2,693) show the continued need for certified employees in those fields.

Region 6 – WorkSource Macon-Bibb (LWDA 10) & WorkSource Middle Georgia (LWDA 11): Region 6 has experienced growth in Health Care & Social Assistance (6,663), Retail Trade (3,512), and Transportation & Warehousing (2,414). Hiring at employers such as Anthem BlueCross, HCA of America, Houston Medical Center, U.S. Air Force represent the need for skilled workers. Openings for CDL Truck Drivers (2,319) and Registered Nurses (2,393) show the continued need for certified employees in those fields.

Region 7 – WorkSource CSRA (LWDA 12) & WorkSource East Central (LWDA 13): Region 7 has experienced growth in openings in Health Care & Social Assistance (7,193), Transportation & Warehousing (2,590), and Professional, Scientific and Technical (2,592). Major employers associated with this growth include University HealthCare, Piedmont Hospital,

Anthem Blue Cross, Doctors Hospital of Augusta. Postings for CDL Truck Drivers (2,633) and Registered Nurses (3,215) show the continued need for certified employees in those fields.

Region 8 – WorkSource Lower Chattahoochee (LWDA 14) & WorkSource Middle Flint (LWDA 15): The region has a diverse industry base and strong workforce demand in the Finance sector (3,249 openings), Health Care (6,463) and Transportation & Warehousing (2,248). Hiring is strong at employers such as Fort Benning, Anthem Blue Cross, Lifepoint Health, TYSS, Synovus, and AFLAC. The need for CDL Truck Drivers (12,495) and Registered Nurses (2,163) remains strong.

Region 9- WorkSource Heart of Georgia (LWDA 16): Region 9, a geographically large workforce area with diverse industry sectors, has experienced employment growth in Health Care & Social Assistance (2,227), Transportation & Warehousing (1,570), Retail Trade (1509) and Public Administration (508). Hiring is attributed to employers such as Hospital Corporation of America, Royal Express, Southern Frozen Foods, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Corrections. For the period 2/1/2017 – 1/31/2018 job postings for CDL Truck Drivers (2,114), Registered Nurses (734) shows the continued need for certified employees in those fields.

Region 10 – WorkSource Southwest Georgia (LWDA 17): Region 10, a geographically large workforce area with diverse industry sectors, indicates growth in Health Care & Social Assistance (3,959), Transportation & Warehousing (1,894), Retail Trade (2,086), and Manufacturing (1,186). Growth is attributed to employers such as Management and Training Corporation and Phoebe Putnam Health Systems. Lowes and Winn Dixie. The need for CDL Truck Drivers (2,062) and Registered Nurses (1,802), as well as many other healthcare occupations, remains elevated.

Region 11 – WorkSource Southern Georgia (LWDA 18): LWDA 18, a geographically large workforce area with diverse industry sectors indicates growth in Health Care & Social Assistance (3,879), Transportation & Warehousing (1,921), Retail Trade (2,762), Accommodation and Food Services (835), and Manufacturing (829). This growth is reflected in job openings at employers including Valdosta State University, Tift Regional Medical, South Georgia Medical, Lowes and Winn-Dixie. For the period 2/1/2017 – 1/31/2018 job postings show the continued need for CDL Truck Drivers (766) and Registered Nurses (561) as well as many other healthcare occupations persists.

Region 12 – WorkSource Coastal = (LWDA 20): Region 12 has experienced robust employment growth and strong demand remains in place as illustrated by openings in the following fields: Health Care & Social Assistance (8,987), Manufacturing (5,136), and Transportation & Warehousing (4,380). For the period 2/1/2017 – 1/31/2018 job postings show continued growth for CDL Truck Drivers (3,745), and Registered Nurses (3,497). With the deepening of the port in Savannah, it is expected that the area will further emerge as the leading transportation and logistics hub for the Southeast.

(ii) [Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations](#)

Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

Using USDOL BLS Statistics as well as state data, GDOL's Workforce Statistics and Economic Research division produces annual short-term employment projections and biennial long-term employment projections. The most current short-term projections are for base year 2016, while the most current long-term projections are for base year 2014.

Figure 3. indicates short-term industry employment and projections for the State, 2016-2018.

Figure 3. Short-Term Industry Employment & Projections, Georgia, 2016-2018					
Industry Title	2016 Employment	2018 Projected Employment	Total 2016-2018 Employment Change	% Change in Employment	Projected Annual Growth Rate
Total Employment, All Industries	4,475,420	4,674,830	199,410	4.46%	2.20%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	88,350	95,380	7,030	7.95%	3.90%
Construction	163,370	186,300	22,930	14.04%	6.79%
Manufacturing	382,860	394,830	11,970	3.13%	1.55%
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities					
<i>Utilities</i>	20,210	20,950	740	3.66%	1.81%
<i>Wholesale Trade</i>	192,840	202,320	9,480	4.91%	2.43%
<i>Retail Trade</i>	478,860	498,880	20,020	4.18%	2.07%
<i>Transportation and Warehousing</i>	217,440	237,930	20,490	9.42%	4.61%
Information	103,060	105,860	2,800	2.71%	1.35%
Financial Activities					
<i>Finance and Insurance</i>	158,670	161,580	2,910	1.83%	0.91%
<i>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</i>	61,290	68,390	7,100	11.59%	5.64%
Professional & Business Services					
<i>Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services</i>	239,740	255,430	15,690	6.55%	3.22%
<i>Management of Companies & Enterprises</i>	64,090	67,820	3,730	5.81%	2.86%
<i>Administrative & Support and Waste Management & Remediation</i>	283,590	294,890	11,300	3.98%	1.97%
Education & Health Services					
<i>Educational Services</i>	377,440	388,390	10,950	2.90%	1.44%

<i>Health Care & Social Assistance</i>	514,450	540,780	26,330	5.12%	2.53%
Leisure & Hospitality					
<i>Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation</i>	43,320	46,160	2,840	6.55%	3.22%
<i>Accommodation & Food Services</i>	400,430	432,010	31,580	7.89%	3.87%
Other Services (Except Government)	150,970	155,900	4,930	3.27%	1.62%
Government	293,730	290,830	-2,900	-0.99%	-0.50%
<i>Federal Government, Excluding Post Office</i>	81,820	79,600	-2,220	-2.71%	-1.37%
<i>State Government, Excluding Education & Hospitals</i>	70,200	68,330	-1,870	-2.66%	-1.34%
<i>Local Government, Excluding Education & Hospitals</i>	141,720	142,910	1,190	0.84%	0.42%

Source: GDOL (updated)

Georgia’s service-based industries are projected to continue growing. Short-term projections indicate the largest growth in the Construction industry, Transportation and Warehousing, Real Estate and Rental and Leasing. Growth is predicted in most other industry sectors. Taken as a whole, these projections show an increase in critical sectors of Georgia’s economy and reflect the national trends of a broad recovery from the Great Recession. This change is seen throughout the economy, illustrated by a return of jobs within the real estate and leasing sectors.

One industry projected to decline is Government. This continues the trend that began in 2008. Most of the decline in the government sector is due to continued budget cuts across federal and state agencies.

Figure 4. indicates GDOL’s long-term industry projections for Georgia, 2014-2024.

Figure 4. Industry Projections (Long-term) for Multiple Industries in Georgia (2014-2024)					
Industry	2014 Estimated Employment	2024 Projected Employment	Total 2014-2024 Employment Change	Total Percent Change	Annual Avg. Percent Change
Total, All Industries	4,286,110	4,762,840	476,730	11.1%	1.1%
Accommodation & Food Services	381,310	426,320	45,010	11.8%	1.1%
Administrative & Support and Waste Management & Remediation Services	281,290	344,960	63,670	22.6%	2.1%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	58,720	61,810	3,090	5.3%	0.5%

Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	42,970	48,180	5,210	12.1%	1.2%
Construction	150,340	180,700	30,360	20.2%	1.9%
Educational Services	367,990	421,220	53,230	14.5%	1.4%
Finance & Insurance	154,100	168,480	14,380	9.3%	0.9%
Government	290,830	299,570	8,740	3.0%	0.3%
Health Care & Social Assistance	452,330	573,740	121,410	26.8%	2.4%
Information	102,130	109,920	7,790	7.6%	0.7%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	60,610	58,450	-2,160	-3.6%	-0.4%
Manufacturing	363,900	369,590	5,690	1.6%	0.2%
Mining, Quarrying, & Oil and Gas Extraction	4,830	3,590	-1,240	-25.7%	-2.9%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	166,840	164,770	-2,070	-1.2%	-0.1%
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	246,140	291,850	45,710	18.6%	1.7%
Real Estate & Rental and Leasing	57,790	68,000	10,210	17.7%	1.6%
Retail Trade	461,430	509,620	48,190	10.4%	1.0%
Transportation & Warehousing	188,210	197,570	9,360	5.0%	0.5%
Utilities	19,630	18,200	-1,430	-7.3%	-0.8%
Wholesale Trade	203,540	221,280	17,740	8.7%	0.8%

Source: GDOL (updated)

Georgia's long-term projections show positive growth trends across major industries. Health Care and Social Assistance and Administrative and Support Services will continue to be one of the largest areas of growth (2.4% and 2.1% annual growth), as will Professional and Technical Services (1.7% annual growth). Georgia's service-providing industries continue to grow. Growth in the Construction and Real Estate sectors evidence a return of pre-recession growth with 1.9% and 1.6 projected annual growth rates, respectively. Government will continue to experience declines.

Figure 5. indicates GDOL's projections for fastest growing occupations, 2014-2024.

Figure 5. Fastest Growing Occupations - Long-Term Occupational Projections 2014-2024										
SOC Code	Occupation	Education Code	2014 Base Employment	2024 Projected Employment	Total Change in Employment	Percent Change in Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Annual Openings from Growth	Annual Openings from Replacements	Annual Openings
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	2	3,500	5,350	1,850	52.7%	4.3%	180	80	260
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	4	1,270	1,920	650	51.8%	4.3%	70	40	110
29-1071	Physician Assistants	2	2,560	3,850	1,290	50.6%	4.2%	130	60	190
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	4	410	610	200	49.6%	4.1%	20	10	30
29-2092	Hearing Aid Specialists	7	300	430	130	46.1%	3.9%	10	0	10
31-1011	Home Health Aides	8	8,390	12,110	3,720	44.3%	3.7%	370	190	560

51-4012	Computer Numerically Controlled Machine Tool Programmers, Metal and Plastic	7	320	450	130	43.4%	3.7%	10	10	20
31-2022	Physical Therapist Aides	7	960	1,370	410	43.1%	3.6%	40	30	70
29-1161	Nurse Midwives	2	260	370	110	41.9%	3.6%	10	10	20
29-1123	Physical Therapists	1	4,860	6,800	1,940	39.9%	3.4%	190	130	320
51-4011	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	7	1,810	2,530	720	39.6%	3.4%	70	60	130
29-1067	Surgeons	1	1,230	1,710	480	39.4%	3.4%	50	30	80
51-3099	Food Processing Workers, All Other	8	720	990	270	37.7%	3.3%	30	20	50
29-2081	Opticians, Dispensing	7	1,360	1,870	510	37.7%	3.3%	50	40	90
27-4032	Film and Video Editors	3	470	650	180	37.6%	3.2%	20	0	20
29-2057	Ophthalmic Medical Technicians	5	1,300	1,790	490	37.6%	3.2%	50	10	60
31-9092	Medical Assistants	5	21,130	29,040	7,910	37.5%	3.2%	790	440	1,230
25-4012	Curators	2	160	220	60	36.9%	3.2%	10	10	20
53-3021	Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	7	3,320	4,530	1,210	36.5%	3.2%	120	40	160
27-3091	Interpreters and Translators	3	1,630	2,220	590	36.4%	3.2%	60	30	90

Education Codes: 1 Doctoral or professional degree, 2 Master's degree, 3 Bachelor's degree, 4 Associate's degree, 5 post-secondary non-degree award, 6 Some college, no degree, 7 High school diploma or equivalent, 8 Less than high school
Source: GDOL

The majority of the projected fastest growing occupations are in the healthcare and education fields. Twelve of the twenty listed occupations require Associate Degrees or some college level courses.

Figure 6. indicates GDOL data on the top 20 occupations based on annual openings – long-term projections, 2014- 2024.

Figure 6. Top 20 Occupations based on Annual Openings - Long-Term Occupational Projections 2014-2024										
SOC Code	Occupation	Education Code	2014 Base Employment	2024 Projected Employment	Total Change in Employment	Percent Change in Employment	Annual Growth Rate	Annual Openings from Growth	Annual Openings from Replmmts	Annual Openings
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	8	140,340	155,660	15,320	10.9%	1.0%	1,530	4,870	6,400
41-2011	Cashiers	8	99,450	106,080	6,630	6.7%	0.6%	660	4,230	4,890
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	8	96,880	114,190	17,310	17.9%	1.7%	1,730	3,130	4,860

53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	8	100,840	115,510	14,670	14.6%	1.4%	1,470	3,000	4,470
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	8	75,970	83,270	7,300	9.6%	0.9%	730	3,660	4,390
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	7	90,860	103,130	12,270	13.5%	1.3%	1,230	2,240	3,470
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	3	79,760	89,400	9,640	12.1%	1.1%	960	2,020	2,980
29-1141	Registered Nurses	3	68,200	81,920	13,720	20.1%	1.8%	1,370	1,610	2,980
43-5081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	8	56,520	64,640	8,120	14.4%	1.4%	810	1,790	2,600
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	7	80,180	86,050	5,870	7.3%	0.7%	590	1,730	2,320
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	3	39,950	49,160	9,210	23.1%	2.1%	920	1,070	1,990
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	3	46,460	54,970	8,510	18.3%	1.7%	850	1,030	1,880
51-2092	Team Assemblers	7	46,490	54,680	8,190	17.6%	1.6%	820	1,000	1,820
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	7	53,030	59,440	6,410	12.1%	1.1%	640	1,090	1,730
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	7	44,440	50,030	5,590	12.6%	1.2%	560	1,170	1,730
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	8	51,480	58,500	7,020	13.6%	1.3%	700	1,020	1,720
39-9011	Childcare Workers	7	41,970	46,460	4,490	10.7%	1.0%	450	1,240	1,690
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	7	33,290	40,980	7,690	23.1%	2.1%	770	900	1,670
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	5	36,810	43,830	7,020	19.1%	1.8%	700	830	1,530
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	7	47,620	51,860	4,240	8.9%	0.9%	420	1,060	1,480

Source: GDOL

Skilled trades' occupations may have a high demand for skilled labor without appearing in the fastest growing occupations projections. Georgia will need to replace almost half of the current workers in the skilled labor occupations due to an aging workforce. As these occupations require an extensive amount of specialized knowledge and lengthy training, many of these skilled trade occupations will be in high demand.

Two industry sectors in Georgia, Construction and Manufacturing, are facing skilled labor shortages. The Construction Labor Market Analyzer reports that by the year 2020, the industry will have a deficit of 1 million craft professionals. An earlier CLMA report notes that 83% of construction firms are now having trouble finding qualified craft workers, especially in the Southeast. In Georgia, nonresidential building construction is expected to see a 44% increase in employment by 2022.

Further, BGLI indicates a 38% increase in job postings in the Construction sector and a 47% increase in the Manufacturing sector from 2007 – 2017. GDOL estimates the construction industry will experience a 6.79% annual growth rate with a 14.04% growth rate expected by 2018. Manufacturing, as a whole, is estimated to grow 2% per year through 2018.

The skilled labor shortage is a direct result of the Great Recession, which directly hit the construction and manufacturing industries. There are also fewer people entering the two sectors due to the trend away from technical trades by young adults. As a result, the average age of skilled trade workers is older than any other workforce sector as a whole. A smaller and aging workforce makes it increasingly difficult to complete projects on time, which means firms must pay more to outsource or subcontract work.

A shortage of skilled talent also exists in the manufacturing industry and this shortage is likely to become more severe in the coming years. Manufacturing has become more efficient through automation, which has resulted in a reduction in workforce size overall. Although the workforce is smaller, a greater percentage of remaining U.S. manufacturing roles require skilled workers who need many months and, in some cases, years of experience and training to perform the jobs efficiently and effectively. Data suggests this workforce trend will continue with increasing automation, requiring highly-skilled workers.

An Accenture press release May 2016 notes that “Although the majority of manufacturers have implemented digital platforms, more than half (51 percent) lack the skills to operate digital factories, according to a new study from Accenture (NYSE: ACN). The Accenture Strategy report revealed that the more successful manufacturers have advanced talent strategies in place to digitally enable the workforce of the future. *Cracking the Code on the Digital Factory*, a report based on a global study of 450 manufacturers, found that a growing skills gap is one of their biggest concerns – a situation that has worsened in recent years as manufacturers have transformed their operations using new technology, analytics and mobility capabilities.

Fifty-five percent of manufacturers, up from 38 percent in 2013, reported a skills gap among skilled trades laborers, who need to operate increasingly advanced digital machinery and equipment, such as 3D printers or modeling and simulation tools on the plant floor. Likewise, 60 percent of manufacturers, up from 31 percent in 2013, cited a shortage of maintenance workers skilled in the use of predictive maintenance analytics that leverage data from embedded sensors in a machine-to-machine environment.

A previous Accenture survey² reported that nearly 80% of manufacturing roles fell into the categories of Skilled (associate degree or equivalent 12-24 months of training and/or experience) or Highly Skilled (bachelor’s degree or equivalent 36+ months of training and/or

² Accenture 2014 Manufacturing Skills and Training Study “Out of Inventory”

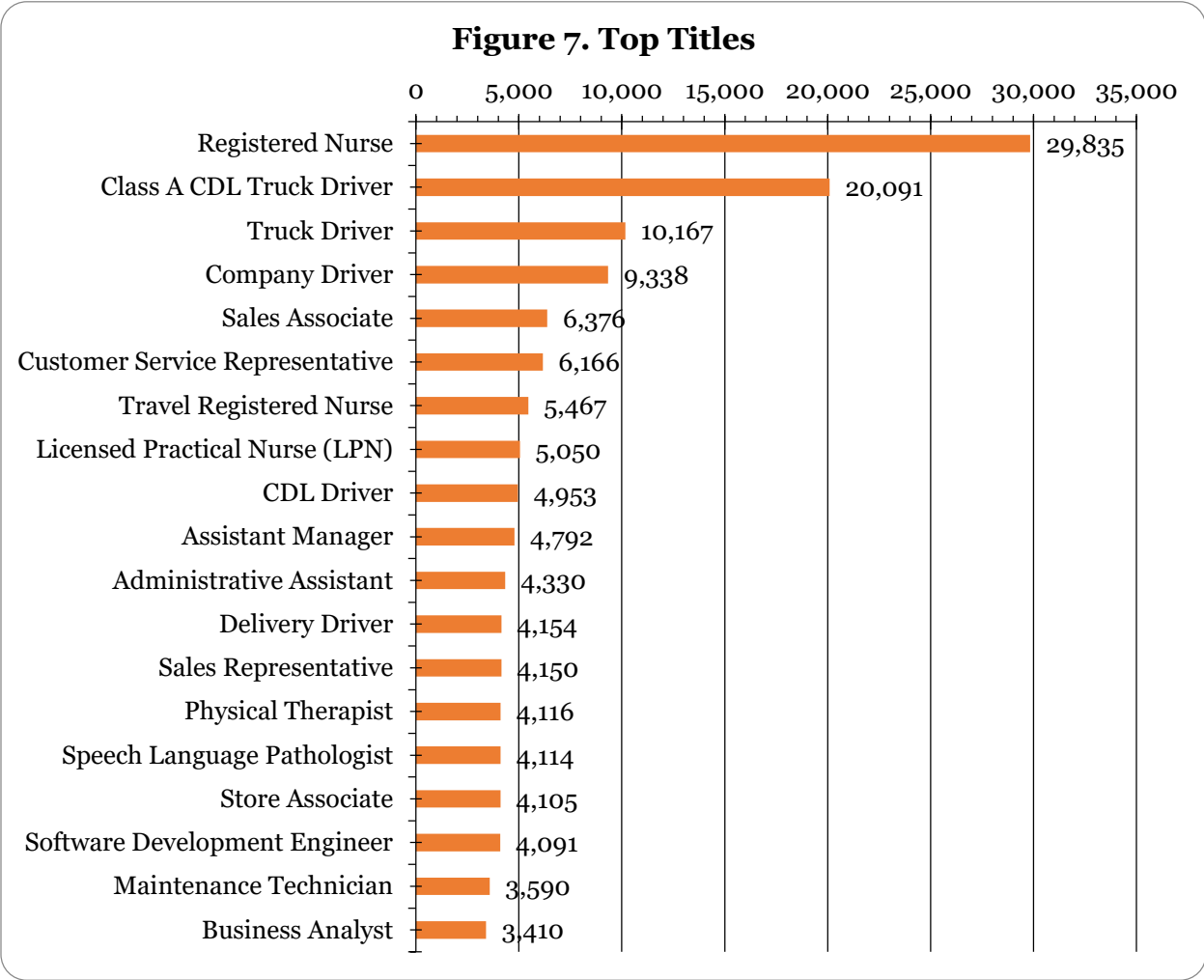
experience). Respondents to the survey confirmed that they are having difficulty filling skilled manufacturing roles. More than 75% of manufacturers report a moderate-to-severe shortage of skilled labor and over 80% of manufacturers report a moderate-to-severe shortage in highly-skilled manufacturing labor. 59% of manufacturers have increased base pay levels for craft workers in hopes of gaining and retaining employment. For example, a skilled welder is a critical player in the manufacturing of many metal-based products. In addition to mastering the craft of welding itself, an entry-level welder must master basic trigonometry, geometry, metallurgy, and blueprint reading.

As Georgia attracts new business to the region, there will also be a need to meet the labor requirements of these newly-located companies. Georgia has had recent success in attracting advanced manufacturing to the state and must be prepared to provide workers to operate complex machinery. These new opportunities are creating critical workforce demands for new labor skills across multiple LWDAs in the state.

(iii) Employers' Employment Needs

Employers' Employment Needs. With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

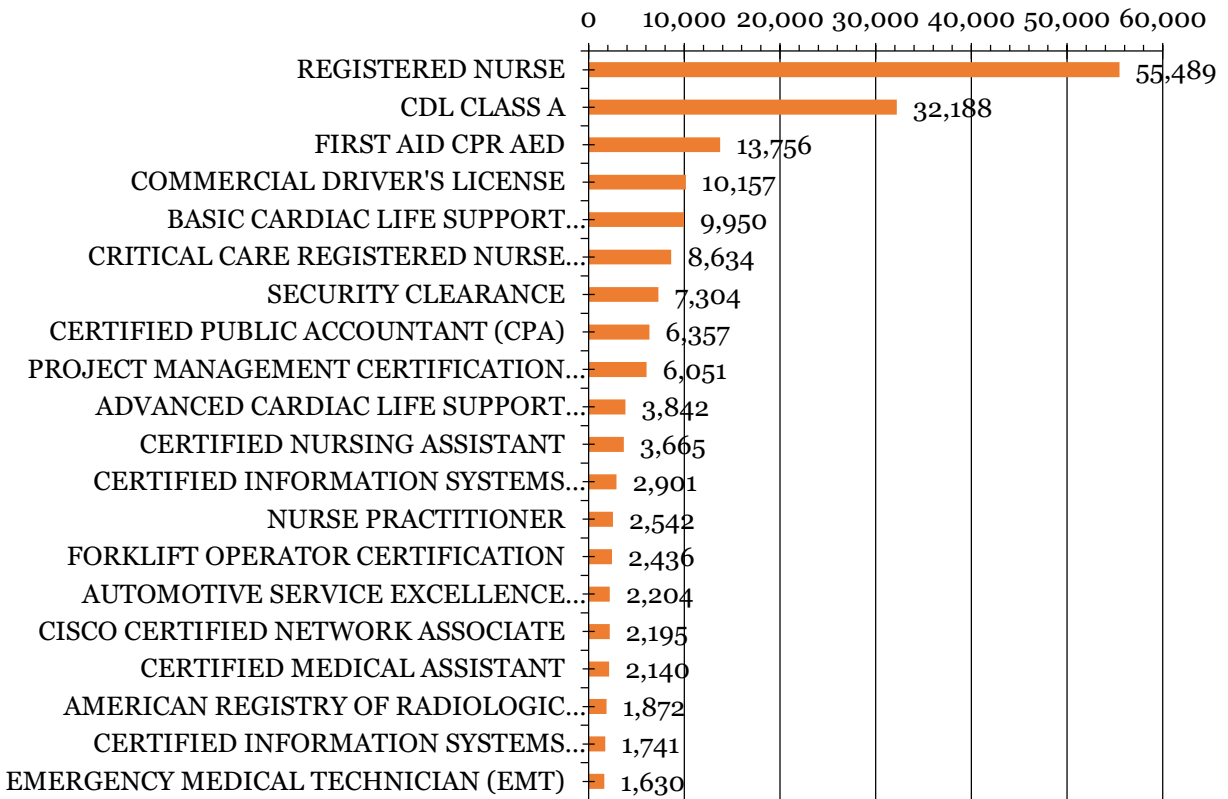
BGLI data provides a real-time view of existing employer needs. Figure 7. indicates that the demand continues for traditional jobs such as Registered Nurses and CDL Truck Drivers.



Source: BGLI 783667 job postings Feb.1, 2017 – Jan. 31, 2018

Figure 8. indicates that the top certifications are shared by the Health Care, Trucking and IT sectors.

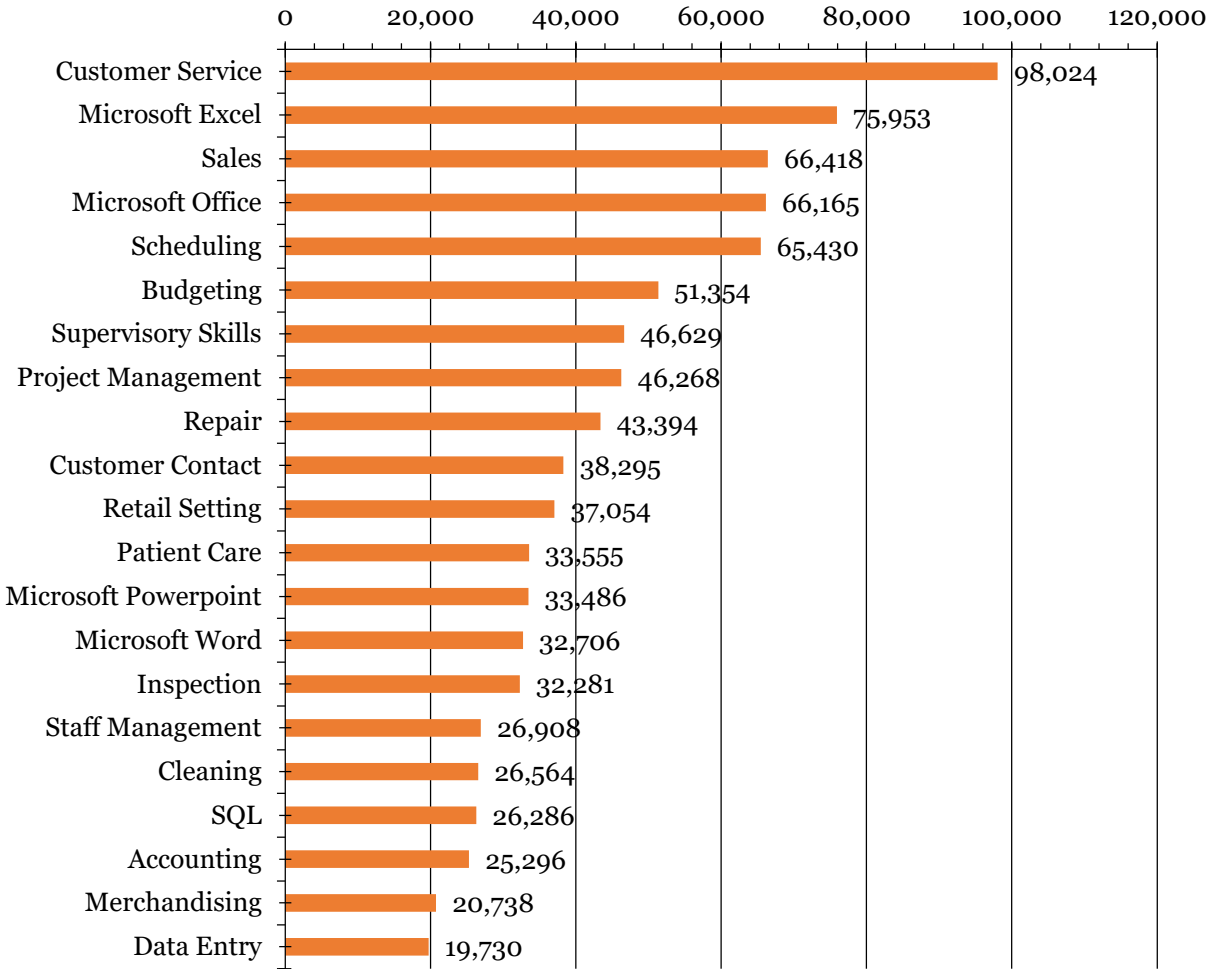
Figure 8. Top Certifications



Source: BGLI 783,667 Job Postings Feb 1, 2017 – Jan. 31,2018

Figure 9. indicates that top specialized skills requested include IT skills as well as skills in collaboration and decision making.

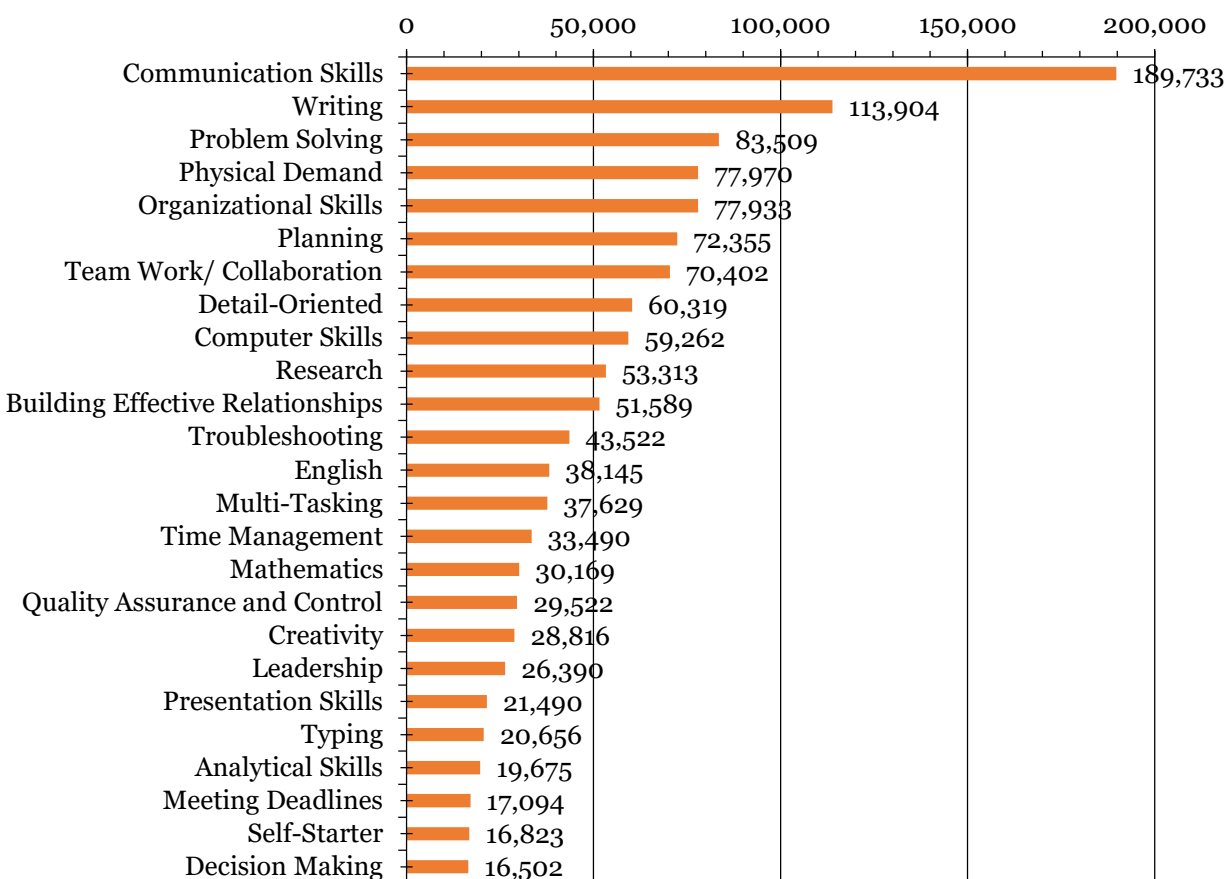
Figure 9. Top Specialized Skills



Source: BGLI 783,667 Job Postings Feb 1, 2017 – Jan. 31, 2018

Figure 10. indicates that top baseline skills include basic computer skills as well as traditional baseline skills such as communication skills and problem solving.

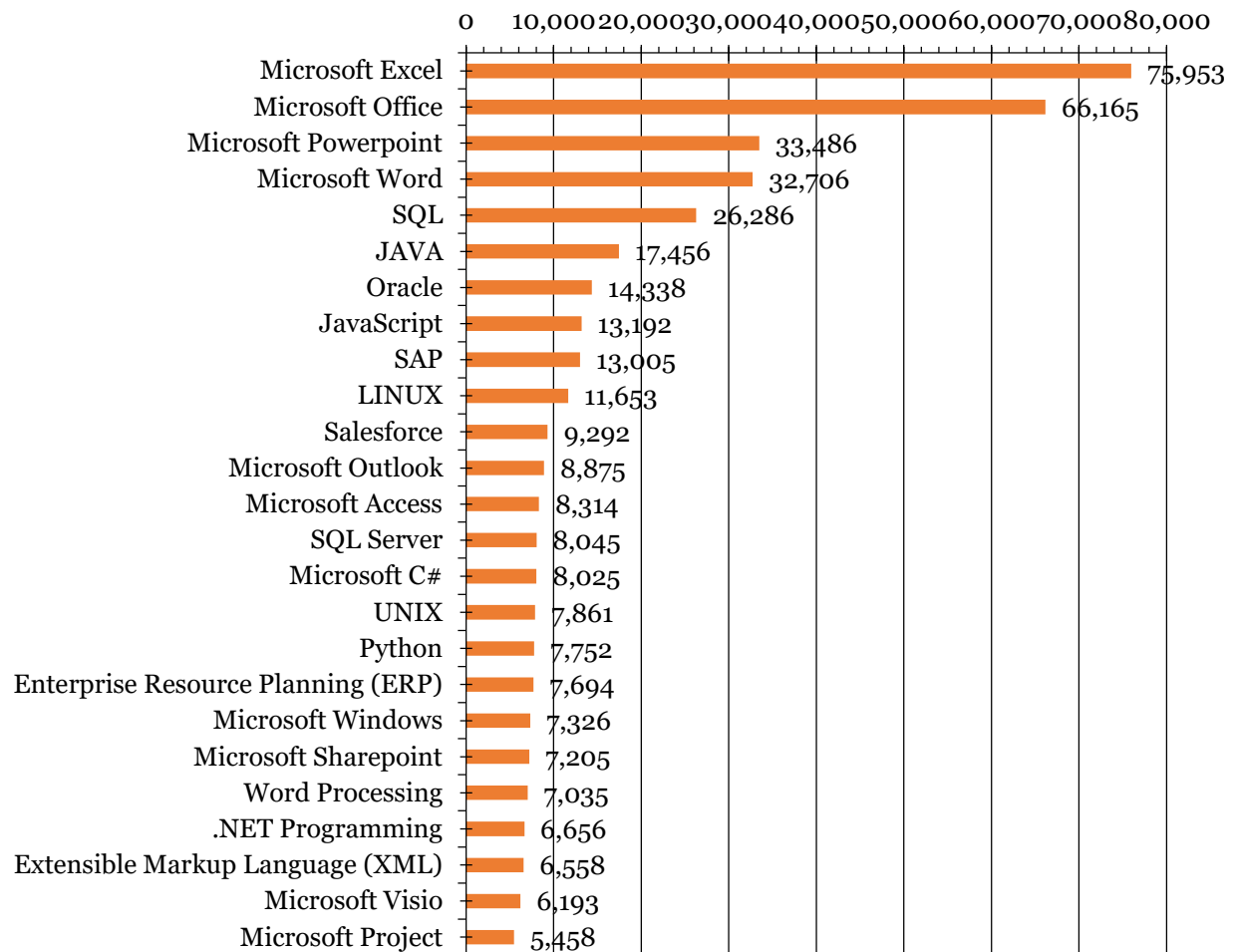
Figure 10. Top Baseline Skills



Source: BGLI 783,677 Job Postings Feb. 1, 2017 – Jan.31, 2018

Figure 11. indicates the increased need for higher-level IT workers with a variety of skill sets. (See HDCI [Section II\(a\)](#)). Additional training and education are needed to support the growth of Georgia’s IT workforce.

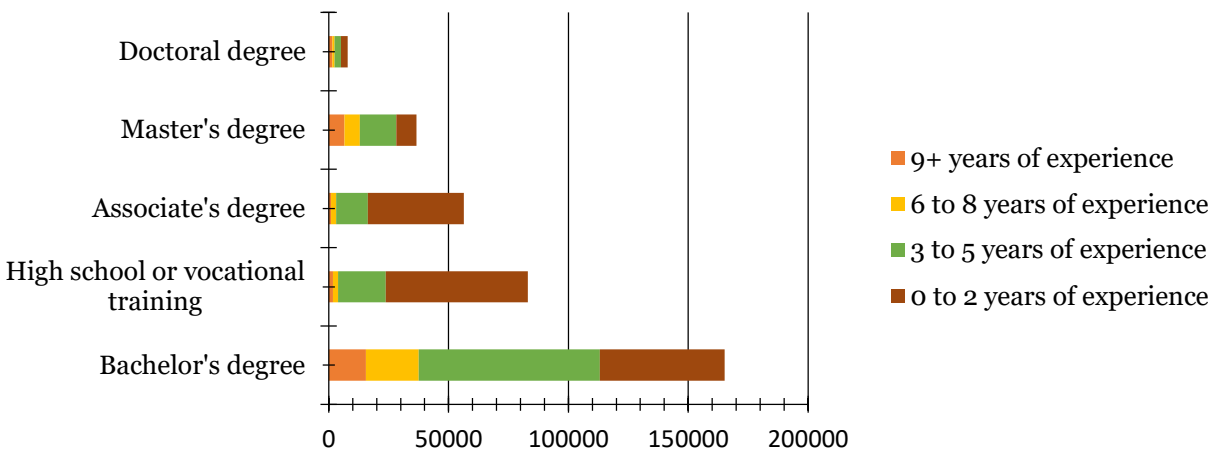
Figure 11. Top Software and Programming Skills



Source: BGLI 783,677 Job Postings Feb 1, 2017 – Jan. 31, 2018

Figure 12. indicates the education and experience requirements noted in the BGLI postings for 2017, year to date. 65% of records were excluded because employers did not include both a degree level and experience requirements in job postings.

Figure 12. Education and Experience



Source: BGLI 783,667 Job Postings Feb. 1, 2017 – Jan. 31, 2018

High Demand Career Initiative

In order to gauge the employment needs of employers in existing and in-demand industries in Georgia, Governor Nathan Deal launched the High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI) in April of 2014. HDCI was created to allow those state partners involved in training Georgia’s future workforce to hear directly from the private sector about specific workforce needs (i.e., degrees/majors, certificates, courses, skillsets, etc.). With that goal in mind, GDEcD partnered with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia to organize 17 listening sessions around the state in 2014 and 2015. At each session, private-sector participants were asked to discuss workforce needs and challenges with Georgia workforce training leaders. Representatives from GDEcD, TCSG, and USG were on hand to connect businesses with current resources, and develop solutions to workforce challenges. Over 130 private sector partners representing targeted industries participated in the sessions.

Common Trends

During the 17 meetings across Georgia, there were certain key trends that were common among many of the represented companies and industries. (1) There is a growing problem with an aging workforce throughout the state. Many employers have older employees and expect a large percentage of employees to retire in the near future. Specifically, 19 companies in a variety of industries specifically cited aging workforce as a concern. (2) Soft skills/workplace skills are a crucial need. Nearly every employer discussed the importance of soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and work ethic. Many employers stated that they found these skills especially lacking in younger employees. (3) Employers also have increasing difficulty in recruiting employees that can pass background screenings and drug tests. (4) Additionally, there is great demand for basic educational skills. Employers stated that they were looking for individuals with “work ready skills,” such as proficiency in reading, mathematics, statistics, and writing. (5) There is a great need to begin introducing STEM to students at a much younger age. Employers reported that STEM career fields need to be introduced to students at a younger age and made a key part of the curriculum. Employers agreed that educators play a large role making STEM fields

appealing to youth. Further, companies in various sectors highlighted the need to attract more women and minorities into STEM-related jobs. There is a talent shortage in these career fields, and recruiting women and minorities would help to better fill the talent pipeline. Companies seek to match Georgia’s diverse population with hiring practices and employee make up. (6) Another common trend was the shortage of local skilled trades’ workers in the state. Employers expressed interest in hiring Georgians, but found many lacked the requisite skills. This was expressed across many of the industries, but it was especially prevalent in the industries that require skilled workers, such as manufacturing and entertainment (television & film production).

To assist in solving these problems, many employers expressed the need for more apprenticeships, internships, on-the-job (OJT) training, and co-op programs. Employers that currently use internships and co-op programs find these programs valuable in identifying, assessing, and training future employees. Employers also emphasized the importance of OJT in the employee development process. These programs help them fill positions that require years of specialized experience in addition to relevant training or educational background required. Several employers expressed a desire for assistance from the state with OJT training. Additionally, there was a desire for more productive partnerships with workforce development resources. Employers in various sectors reported that partnerships with LWDAs, local boards of education, TCSG, and USG institutions were very productive. Georgia Quick Start was a key part of the hiring and training processes for many companies.

Most High Demand Careers & Skills

Participating companies identified 162 unique high demand careers and 96 unique high demand skills and attributes. Many of the skills and careers crossed industries. Figure 13. shows the critical careers mentioned most often by participating companies and lists them in order, based on the number of times the careers were mentioned in the meetings. Likewise, Figure 14. shows the critical skills and attributes that were most often identified by the participants.

Figure 13. High Demand Careers	
Mechanical Engineer	Software Developer
Electrical Engineer	Business Support Roles (Accounting, HR, Marketing)
Welder	Computer Programmer
Machinist	Maintenance Technician
Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Operator	Manufacturing Associate
Programmable Logic Controller (PLC)	

Figure 14. High Demand Skills/Attributes	
Soft Skills	Robotics
Mathematics	Analytical
Work Ethic	Business Acumen
Customer Focus	Problem Solver
Project Management	Teamwork

Companies are divided into nine different industry sectors: Agriculture & Food; Aerospace, Automotive Manufacturing; Defense; Film, Television & Interactive Entertainment; Healthcare & Life Sciences; Information Technology; Logistics & Transportation; and Manufacturing. Each sector provided helpful information, which gave a snap-shot of the current and future needs within each industry.

Agriculture & Food Sector

The Agriculture and Food sector is rapidly evolving and sector participants emphasized growing reliance on advanced technology in operations. Food safety standards are increasing, food companies are using more automated equipment, and agriculture is changing to include techniques such as precision agriculture. Another key point many sector representatives made was that there is a great need for skilled employees such as welders, scientists, agribusiness experts, and those with four-year degrees in agricultural subjects.

There is a need for more students to study agriculture in Georgia. According to UGA’s Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development, USG institutions are only producing 55% of the needed graduates for agricultural fields. Companies in the Agriculture and Food sector report difficulties hiring skilled employees such as welders, mechanics, and maintenance technicians. As a result, these candidates are often recruited from out of state.

Figure 15. High Demand Careers	
Bakery Engineer	Field Service Representative
Brewery Worker	Industrial Engineer
Business Support Role	Machinist
Chemical Engineer	Manufacturing Associate
CNC Operator	Mechanic
Computer Programmer	Mechanical Engineer
Craftsman	Welder
Electrical Engineer	

Figure 16. High Demand Skills/Attributes	
Adaptable	Machine Tool Technology
Ammonia Systems Certification	Math Skills
Analytical	Power Plant Operations Certificate
CNC Equipment	Soft Skills
Communication Skills	Stick, MIG & TIG Welding
Computer Skills	Waste Water Treatment Certificate
Degrees in Science Fields (Chemistry, Microbiology, Fermentation Science, Food Science)	Work Ethic
Hand Torch & Plasma Welding	

Aerospace Sector

Georgia is home to a robust aerospace industry that generated an economic output of \$50.8 billion in 2013. Aerospace companies emphasized a need for employees with specialized skills, certifications, training, and experience. Several aerospace companies reported strong relationships with Georgia’s Technical Colleges and USG institutions. Many companies forecasted continued growth in Georgia over the years to come.

Several companies in the aerospace industry have experienced success with targeting veterans for recruitment. Many companies identified a demand for Non-Destructive Testers (NDT)/Inspectors (NDI) and stated there is a need for training in this area. NDT involves the testing of parts through techniques that do not damage them such as X-Ray. Companies stressed that most of the positions require experience in addition to educational requirements. Some companies have used internships and apprenticeships as workforce development tools to address the experience gap and grow the talent base.

Figure 17. High Demand Careers	
A&P Mechanic	Ground Maintenance Mechanic
Aerospace Engineer	Industrial Engineer
Aircraft Inspector	Interiors Mechanic
Aircraft Mechanic	Machine/Facilities Technician
Aircraft Support Mechanic	Machinist
Assembly Associates	Maintenance Technician
Aviation Maintenance Technician	Manufacturing Engineer
Avionics Technician	Material Buyer
Bonding Associate	Material Science Engineer
CNC Machinist	Mechanical Engineer
Composite Mechanic	Metallurgy Technician
Computer Programmer	Nondestructive Testing Ins.
Continuous Improvement Engineer	Pilot
Customer Service Specialist	Production Mechanic
Electrical Engineer	Production Supervisor
Electronics Technician	Structures Mechanic
Engineer	Warehouse Worker
Financial Analyst	Welder
Forge Operator	

Figure 18. High Demand Skills/Attributes Careers	
Attention to Detail	Flexibility
Blueprint Reading	Math Skills
Business Acumen	NDI Certifications
Computer Aided Design (CAD)	PLC Programming
CNC Operation	Project Management
Communication	Problem Solving
Cost Estimating	Safety Minded

Curiosity	Skilled Crafts
Customer Focus	Supply Chain
Decision Making	Work Ethic
Dependability	Work Ready Skills
F.A.A. Certifications	

Automotive Manufacturing Sector

Representatives from automotive sector companies discussed the rapid growth of Georgia's automotive sector. Much of the conversation focused on the need for highly-skilled assembly workers, employees with specialized skills such as tool & die, and the difficulty of finding and retaining qualified technicians.

Many auto manufacturers expressed a desire for more co-op or apprenticeship programs and other public-private partnerships to close the training gap in the sector. Specific training needs included tool and die training, auto body paint training, and technical certificates in computer engineering and industrial automation. Auto manufacturers reported great success with co-op programs with USG institutions and programs offered by Quick Start.

Figure 19. High Demand Careers	
Accountant	Manufacturing Team Member
Assembly Supervisor	Materials & Planning Leader
Auto Body Painter	Mechanical Engineer
Automation Technician	Mechanic
Certified Public Accountant	Mechatronic Technician
CNC Operator	Mold Maker
Computer Programmer	Mold Technician
Control Engineer	Office Supervisor
Design Engineer	PLC Operator
Draft Engineer	Quality Control Inspector
Electrical Engineer	Quality Control Leader
Industrial Engineer	Quality Engineer
Machinist	Technician
Maintenance Mechanic	Tool and Die Maker
Maintenance Technician	Traditional Business Support
Manufacturing Engineer	Test Engineer
Manufacturing Specialist	Welder

Figure 20. High Demand Skills/Attributes /Attributes	
Ability to Read and Interpret Engineering Drawing and Sketches	Passing Drug & Background Check

Accounting	PLC
Analytical Skills	Pneumatics
C.P.A. License (with experience in manufacturing environments)	Problem Solver
Communication	Project Management
Computer-Aided Design (CAD)	Robotics
Computer Skills	SAP Consulting
Engineering and Manufacturing Systems (Auto-Simulation)	Servo Motors
Flexible Manufacturing Concepts	Soft Skills
Fully Certified Status (i.e. fully certified tool and die maker)	Statistical Process Control (SPC)
Hydraulics	Teamwork
Lean Management	Technical Writing
Math Skills	Tool & Die
Mechanical Systems	

Defense Sector

Georgia has a robust defense industry with eight of the top ten U.S. defense contractors operating in the state. Much of this sector discussion focused on the role that the state’s research institutions play in supporting the defense industry in Georgia and around the United States. Additionally, many of the workforce concerns related to the IT and manufacturing sectors. Computer programming and skilled trades were identified as particular challenges. The defense sector is frequently competing against other sectors to recruit the required talent for vacancies.

Companies emphasized how important getting students interested in STEM at an early age is for defense related industries.

Figure 21. High Demand Careers	
Aerospace Engineer	Industrial Engineer Technician
Certified Program Manager	IT Specialist
Certified Project Manager	Manufacturing Technology Engineer
Computer Engineer	Material Engineer
Computer Scientist	Mechanical Engineer
Continuous Improvement Engineer	Physicist
Cyber Security Specialist	Software Engineer
Draftsman	Systems Engineer
Electrical Engineer	Upholstery Sewer
Industrial Engineer	

Figure 22. High Demand Skills/Attributes	
3D Printing	Motivation
Adaptability	Planning & Organization
Advanced Manufacturing	Problem Solving

Energy Management	Rapid Prototyping
Finite Element Modeling	Teamwork
Fuel Systems	

Film, Television & Interactive Entertainment Sector

The film, television, and interactive entertainment sector is a robust and rapidly growing industry in Georgia. The economic impact of the sector in Georgia was \$242 million in FY07, by FY17 film and television alone had increased to \$9.5 billion. The film sector meeting revolved around one chief concern—a small pool of trained and experienced film production employees in Georgia. Additionally, many studios discussed that they only hire employees who are members of a film union or guild due to safety and training concerns. Many of the animation studios stated that none of the USG institutions teach the currently desired animation software which further limits the talent pool and reduces job opportunities for Georgians.

Figure 23. High Demand Careers	
Animator	Fork Lift Operator
Artist	Mobile Application Developer
Background Artist	Painter
Best Boy Electric	Plasterer
Best Boy Grip	Set Builder Technician
Cinematographer	Specialty Technician
Costumer Designer/Tailor	Story Boarder
Film Department Head	Stunt Team Member
Flash Animator	

Figure 24. High Demand Skills/Attributes	
Ability to Connect Different Subjects	Knowledge of Production Safety Requirements
Animation Software (Toon Boom, Adobe Creative Suite, Harmony, Life Drawing, Storyboard, FileMaker Pro)	Math
Communication	Team Work
Critical Thinking	Work Ethic
Guild/Union Membership	Writing
Intellectual Curiosity	

Healthcare & Life Sciences Sector

An increasing number of healthcare and life science companies are doing business in Georgia. Companies expressed concerns about the current talent pool and training pipeline in the state. Since the life science industry is new in Georgia, there is a smaller pool of experienced

employees at the technical level. Employers are looking for candidates with experience in a Food and Drug Administration-regulated environment and clean room environments.

Most of the open positions in the biotechnology industry require pharmaceutical/life science industry experience. One company reported that 70% of current positions require life science industry experience. Many employers in the Healthcare and Life Sciences sector are looking for certifications in addition to education. Biotech companies are working with USG and TCSG to develop additional training programs.

Figure 25. High Demand Careers	
Analytical Chemist	Medical Technician
Case Management Worker	Medicare Salesperson
Chemical Engineer	Nurse
Corporate Support Functions	Nurse (with Registered Rehabilitation Nurse Certification)
Electrical Engineer	Occupational Therapist
Electro-Mechanical Technician	Physical Therapist
Experienced Equipment Operator	Plasma Technician
Hospital Marketing/Admissions	Plasma Technologist
IT Engineer	Process Engineer
IT Specialist	Production Technician
Licenses Clinical Social Worker	Quality Assurance Associate
Manufacturing Associate	Software Engineer
Manufacturing Technician	Speech Therapist
Mechanical Engineer	

Figure 26. High Demand Skills/Attributes	
Analytical Skills	Leadership
Attention to Detail	Mobile Workforce
Current Good Manufacturing Practices Experience	Project Management
Experience in Clean Room Environment	Soft Skills
Experience in FDA Regulated Environments	Specialist in Blood Banking (SBB) Designation
Healthcare Certifications	

Information Technology Sector

The information technology sector in Georgia currently has one key concern—finding enough employees with the right skills to fill vacancies. Many companies discussed long searches to fill vacancies and employee movement between employers. Companies emphasized that Georgia needs to increase its IT talent pool, but that any initiatives should be targeted to specific needs (e.g., software developers instead of help desk technicians).

Employers expressed a desire for more communication between industry and educators (K-12 and post-secondary) to better align curriculum to needs. For example, an employer stated that frequently students are only taught the theory of the JAVA programming language and not

practical application. Employers felt that students need to be made aware of how they can apply their IT interests in promising careers based in Georgia.

Figure 27. High Demand Careers	
Application Developer	IT Security Administrator
Business and Operations Analyst	JAVA Developer
Business Consultant	Network Security Specialist
Business Support Services	Oracle Developer & DBA
Computer Programmer	Process Improvement Manager
Computer Scientist	Researcher
Cyber Security	Salesperson
Data Analyst	Software Developer
Data Scientist	Strategic & Sourcing Consultant
Electrical Engineering	Web Developer
Enrollment Consultant	Windows Developer
Field Service Engineer	Wireless Communication Engineer
Game Developer	

Figure 28. High Demand Skills/Attributes	
Ability to Get Along with Others	IT Certifications
Analytical Mindset	JAVA
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Lifelong Learner
Bilingual	Math Degrees
Block Chain	Mobile Application Development
Business Acumen	Presentation Skills
Business Intelligence	Programming Languages (C#, C++, Python)
Communication	Project Management
Critical Thinking	Spectrum & Frequency Planning
Customer Service	Statistics Degree
Data Analytics	Supply Chain
Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) Certifications	Virtual Learning

Logistics & Transportation Sector

The transportation and logistics sector highlighted a diverse set of high demand skills. Transportation companies emphasized a large need for truck drivers, diesel technicians, and sales staff. The truck driver shortage is especially acute and is predicted to grow in the years to come. There is a critical truck driver shortage in Georgia and across the nation. The American Trucking Association predicts the trucking industry will need to find 96,000 new drivers annually to keep pace with demand.

The logistics IT sector highlighted a need for more technologists. A supply chain software company reported that the only limitation on growth is headcount. Logistics IT providers are

having a difficult time filling key IT positions such as software developers and computer scientists. Other logistics providers involved in warehousing discussed the difficulties of attracting and retaining younger employees. One company said that everyone is fighting over the same programmers and software developers.

The transportation and warehousing industry has the 4th highest percentage of employees over the age of 55 of any industry. Companies asked for better coordination between industry and educational providers. For example, employers reported that practical applications of JAVA and SQL are needed at post-secondary institutions.

Figure 29. High Demand Careers	
Account Manager	Maintenance Technician
Capacity Account Manager	Office Manager
Computer Programmer	Outside Salesperson
Computer Scientist	Power Plant Operator
Customer Service Specialist	Refrigeration Specialist
Diesel Technician	Salesperson
Engineer	Shop Technician/Mechanic
Forklift Operator	Truck Driver
Industrial Technician	Warehouse Worker
Lineman	

Figure 30. High Demand Skills/Attributes	
Ability to Multitask	Presentation Skills
Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Transportation and Logistics Fields	Project Management
Business Acumen	RF Gun
Business Writing	Robotics
Certified Forklift Operator	Sales
Communication	Soft Skills
Critical Thinking	SQL
Decision Making	Teamwork
Ethics	Time Management
JAVA Programming Language	Troubleshooting
Maturity	Work Ethics

Manufacturing Sector

Representatives from the manufacturing sector discussed the difficulties in finding employees with the right skills, technical and soft, and experience to fill positions. Another common refrain from the manufacturing sector was the need to change the public's perception, especially that of students and teachers, of manufacturing. The public perceives manufacturing jobs as blue-collar and dirty, but in actuality most manufacturing jobs pay above average wages, are in clean environments, and provide significant opportunities for advancement.

Employers stated that there is a perception that technical careers are inferior to university-track careers. A study by the Manufacturing Institute found that only 35% of parents would encourage their children to pursue a manufacturing career. Manufacturers have attempted to address the negative perceptions of the industry by partnering with schools, hosting factory tours for teachers and guidance counselors, participating in programs like Trade Five and Great Promise Partnership, hosting summer STEM academies, and hiring high school students.

The supply of manufacturing workers in Georgia is not keeping up with the demand for workers, according to data presented by Hire Dynamics. The demand in Georgia’s manufacturing industry has increased 30%. Additionally, there is both a shortage of manufacturing employees in Georgia and a mismatch between where the employees live and where the positions are located. According to Career Builder data, metro Atlanta has one thousand more open manufacturing positions than manufacturing jobs seekers.

Figure 31. High Demand Careers	
Assembler/Fabricator	Manager
Chemical Engineer	Manufacturing Engineer
CNC Operator	Manufacturing Technician
Electrical Engineer	Mechanical Engineer
Electrical Maintenance Technician	Mechanical Maintenance Technician
Electronic System Maintenance Technician	Operator
Engineer	Process Engineer
Front Line Leader	Production Supervisor
Industrial Maintenance Technician	Quality Technician
Machine Operator	Supply Chain Professional
Machinist	Team Facilitator
Maintenance Mechanic	Welder
Maintenance Technician	

Figure 32. High Demand Skills/Attributes	
Blue Print Reading	Lean Principles
Business Skills	Machine Tooling
Catia Software	Math
CNC Programming	OSHA Regulations
Commitment to Success	PLCs
Communication	Print Reading & Gaging
Computer Skills	Reading
Continuous Improvement	Robotics
Controls	Safety
Drafting	Soft Skills
Engineering	Teamwork
Environmental Health & Safety Experts	Tool & Die
Fluid Power	Troubleshooting
Knowledge of Supply Chain	Welding
Leadership	Work Ethic

Online Assessment

To supplement the public meetings, a Workforce Needs Online Assessment has been developed to provide the state with greater information and data regarding the specific workforce needs of employers in the state of Georgia. The Online Assessment was distributed to businesses throughout the state. Each business is encouraged to participate in the assessment, regardless of industry, size, or the scope of needs. The results of this assessment will allow regional and local mapping of needs, which will assist regions and communities in implementing effective workforce development strategies. To access the assessment, visit Georgia.org/WorkforceAssessment.

Early Successes of the High Demand Career Initiative

Expansion of the HOPE Career Grant

The HOPE Career Grant, originally called the Strategic Industries Workforce Development Grant (SIWDG), is a financial award for TCSG students and is an extension of the HOPE Grant. It awards funds to students meeting certain criteria who are enrolled in approved programs. As a result of the findings from HDCI, the program has now been expanded to 17 program areas, in which students can receive full tuition coverage. More information about the grant can be found at <https://tcsgeu.edu/free-tuition/>

HOPE Scholarship Weighted STEM Courses - Feedback indicated students were abandoning in-demand Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) degrees due to the rigor of the courses and fear of losing their HOPE Scholarship funds because of the risk to their GPA. Coincidentally, businesses expressed a desperate need of graduates in many of the STEM fields students were abandoning. In response, the Georgia General Assembly passed and Governor Deal signed HB 801 during the 2016 legislative session. The legislation is intended to address the challenge of retaining students in high-demand STEM degrees as well as encourage new students to pursue these fields. Beginning Fall term 2017, specific degree-level STEM courses identified as leading to high demand career fields in Georgia, and completed at an eligible postsecondary institution will have an additional weight of 0.5 added to grades of B, C and D.

More information about the HOPE Scholarship Weighted STEM Courses can be found at <https://www.gafutures.org/hope-state-aid-programs/hope-zell-miller-scholarships/hope-scholarship/stem-weighted-course-directory/>

High School Computer Programming

Georgia has recognized a need to increase interest in computer programming to prevent future workforce gaps. Therefore, the Georgia Board of Education has amended its policy to allow computer programming courses to satisfy core requirements in the areas of math, science, and foreign language in high schools. Additionally, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia will now accept these computer programming courses as part of their admissions process.

University System of Georgia (USG) Cyber Security Initiative

The USG Cyber Security initiative was created in late 2014 with a mission of providing recommendations on how the USG can develop and deliver more cyber security-capable graduates. Committee members from seven of the USG institutions with cyber security education opportunities provided recommendations for a comprehensive USG plan. Topics under consideration include: creating new degree programs, revising existing degree programs, inter-institutional standardization and collaborations, prior learning assessments and creation of courses delivered by our Professional and Continuing Education programs providing graduates with certifications to meet specific industry skills needs. These efforts will be complimented by distance learning technologies and a fully integrated approach with industry and our USG career services at each institution. These efforts ultimately led to the creation of the Georgia Cyber Innovation and Training Center at Augusta University in Augusta, GA. More information about the Georgia Cyber Innovation and Training Center can be found at: <http://cyber.augusta.edu/georgia/>

Georgia Film Academy

The University System of Georgia and Technical College System of Georgia joined forces to launch the Georgia Film Academy to support the film and television industry and meet its workforce needs. The courses provide students with extensive hands-on experience on film sites across the state. Students have an opportunity to network, build resumes and learn to market themselves in order to become integrated into the film industry as entry-level workers. More information about the Georgia Film Academy can be found at <https://www.georgiafilmacademy.org/>

In response to employers consistently expressing the value of work-based learning programs and encouraging the development of more programs throughout the state, GDEcD launched a statewide work-based learning initiative, Georgia WorkSmart. The program assists participating companies in developing, implementing, and hiring for apprenticeships, internships, co-ops, and other work-based training models.

Georgia WorkSmart

Georgia WorkSmart, an initiative created by Governor Nathan Deal in 2015, promotes work-based learning training models, such as apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and internships.

The ultimate objective of Georgia WorkSmart is to utilize these work-based learning programs to address the primary workforce challenges identified by more than 80 Georgia private sector partners. These challenges stem from the following trends: a rapidly aging workforce, a lack of workplace soft skills among new employees, difficulty in recruiting new talent, and a greater demand for basic educational skills in math, reading, and writing. Georgia WorkSmart encourages the development of apprenticeship and internship programs to address these needs.

Additionally, Georgia WorkSmart acts as a liaison between private and public entities utilizing apprenticeship programs and the Georgia workforce system. In addition to maintaining the State's WIOA Registered Apprenticeship Eligible Training Provider List, Georgia WorkSmart assists each local workforce office in supporting Registered Apprenticeships with WIOA funding. Within Georgia, WIOA funding is encouraged to be used in order to add greater value and sustainably to Registered Apprenticeships in good standing with U.S. DOL Office of Apprenticeship.

(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 three of WIOA³. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups in the State and across regions identified by the State.

(i) Employment and Unemployment.

Employment and Unemployment. Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data and trends in the State.

Georgia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped from 5.5% in December 2016 to 4.4% in December 2017. The rate declined as employers continued to create jobs. The number of initial claims for unemployment insurance, declined from 32,557 in December 2016 to 26,117 in December 2017, a decrease of 19.8%.

Labor Force Demographics

Georgia continues to be one of the fastest growing states in the nation. From April 2010 to July 2017, Georgia's population grew by 7.6%, adding 740,689 residents. The current population has grown to 10,429,379, showing continuous growth since 2000 (pop. 8,186,453). Census projections show that Georgia should continue this growth over the next decade. Counties in Georgia with the highest population in 2016 were Fulton County (1,023,336), Gwinnett County (907,135), DeKalb County (740,321), Cobb County (748,150), Clayton County (279,462), Chatham County (289,082), Cherokee County (241,689), Henry County (221,768), Hall County (196,637) and Forsyth County (221,009). These counties make up the composition of the Metropolitan Atlanta Workforce Areas and the Coastal/Savannah Workforce Areas.

The 2012-2016 ACS five-year estimates indicate that Georgia's Poverty Rate at 17.8% is higher than the U.S. rate at 12.7%. Figure 33. indicates that individuals with barriers to employment comprise large segments of the population. Georgia has specifically developed service strategies to address barriers to employment for many of these population segments.

Figure 33. Populations with Barriers to

³ Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

Employment	
Total Population (7/2017)	10,429,379
Veterans	690,208
Indians	28,583
Alaska Natives	367
Native Hawaiians	4,916
Individuals with Disabilities	1,223,531
Older Individuals	1,216,966
Ex-Offenders**	17,268
Homeless	3,692
Youth Aged out of Foster Care	519
English Language Learners	523,087
Low Levels of Literacy	1,082,210
Single Parents	703,815
Persons below Poverty Level	1,763,339
Disconnected Youth *	56,000
SNAP Recipients (past 12 months)	1,800,531

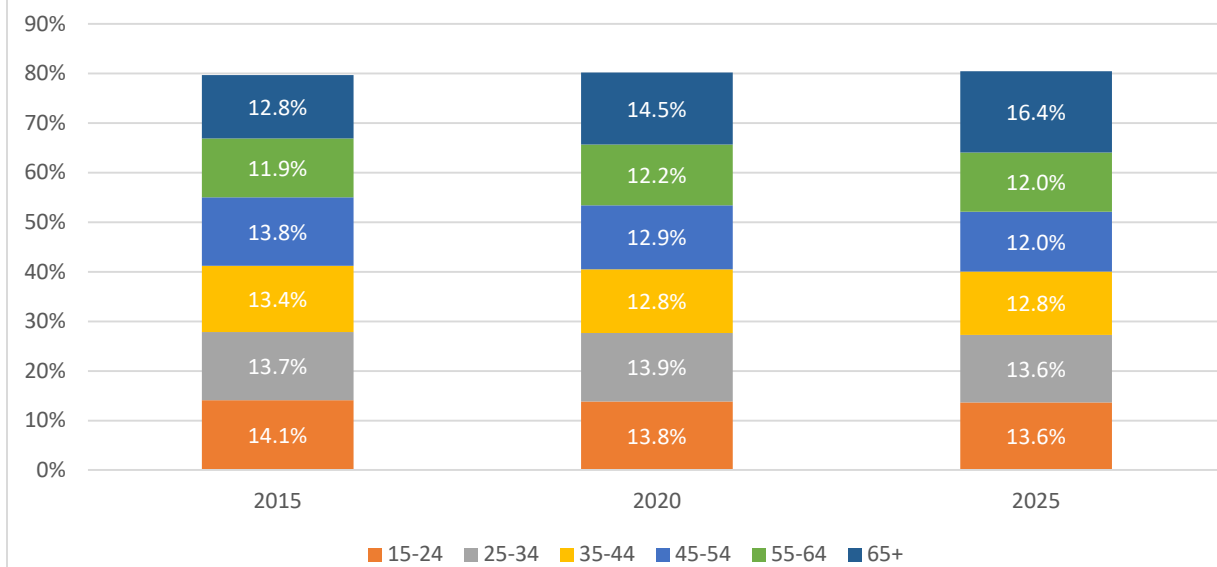
Source: ACS 2012-2016 five year Estimates

*National Kids Count Data (Teens 16-19 not in school and not working)

**DOC inmate release data for 2017

As Georgia's population grows in size, it is also aging. Figure 34. shows the projections for the percentage of Georgia's working-age population, 2015 to 2025.

Figure 34. Percentage of Population by Age Group, 15 and Older



Source: USDOL/BLS

In 2000, the median age was 31.5. Today, the median age in Georgia is 36.4. This upward trend is due to an increase in the number of older individuals. While most of the other age groups are relatively similar in size, the 25-54 age groups will continue to decrease. The increase in the percentage of the population over 65 will have significant impacts on Georgia’s economy. First, there will be an increase in demand for healthcare professionals, particularly for the elderly and aging populations. Second, it signifies a high percentage of workers on the verge of exiting the labor force, creating a need for replacement workers in addition to growth openings.

Georgia’s population has limited language barriers, with only about 2.2% of households without a member over the age of 14 who speaks English. The overall state population is predominantly Caucasian (53.4% of total population). The largest minority group is African Americans, (32% of the population). Hispanic, Asian and other minority groups make up about 16% of Georgia’s population.

One of Georgia’s most valuable labor resources is the returning military veteran population. Georgia has one of the largest veteran populations in the nation, with over 662,333 service heroes. The 2016 unemployment rate for veterans in Georgia was 3.5%. The 2016 unemployment rate for Post 9/11 veterans was 5.4%, above the state rate. Many of these military veterans possess core competencies which correlate directly to civilian occupations in Georgia’s high demand industries.

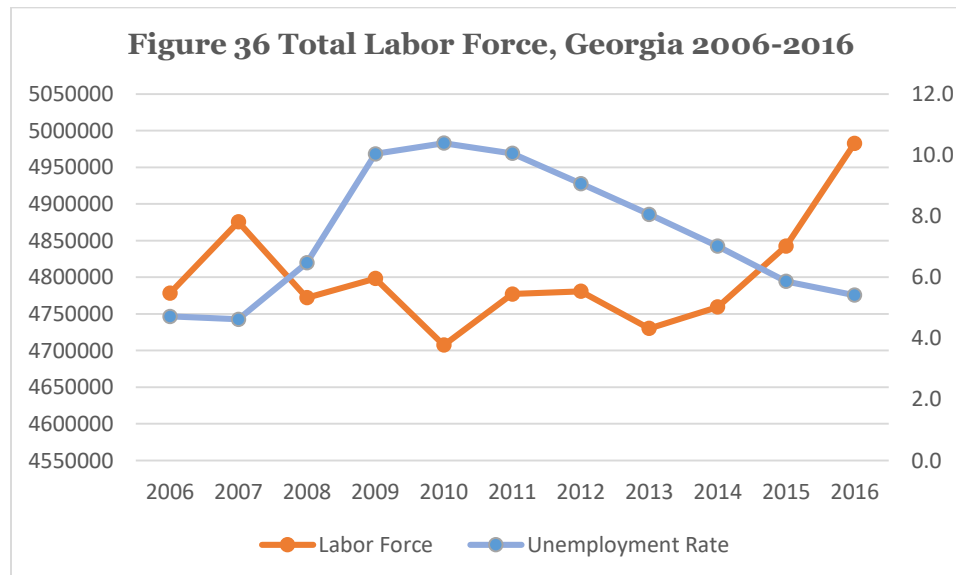
Georgia’s Economic Base

GDOL provides total employment data through 2017, with partial data through January 2018. Utilizing ten-year employment data, Georgia’s employment can be compared to U.S. Employment trends. Figure 35. compares total non-farm employment, not seasonally adjusted, from 2008 through 2018. Georgia was hit more severely than the national economy (-5.9% Georgia vs. -3.2% nationally in 2009). Georgia added 135,803 jobs in 2017, representing 3% growth versus 1.7% nationally.

Figure 35. Total Non-farm Employment 2008-2018 (partial 2018)						
Year	Nation			Georgia		
	Total Employment	Annual Change	Percent Change	Total Employment	Annual Change	Percent Change
2008	138,419,000	821,000	0.6%	4,631,205	61,994	1.4%
2009	134,055,000	-4,364,000	-3.2%	4,356,828	-274,377	-5.9%
2010	129,799,000	-4,256,000	-3.2%	4,302,220	-54,608	-1.3%
2011	130,878,000	1,079,000	0.8%	4,221,195	-81,025	-1.9%
2012	133,272,000	2,394,000	1.8%	4,321,095	99,900	2.4%
2013	135,282,000	2,010,000	1.5%	4,366,490	45,395	1.1%
2014	137,550,000	2,268,000	1.7%	4,382,689	16,199	0.4%
2015	140,592,000	3,042,000	2.2%	4,461,989	79,300	1.8%
2016	143,196,000	2,604,000	1.9%	4,586,459	124,470	2.8%
2017	145,696,000	2,500,000	1.7%	4,722,262	135,803	3.0%
2018	147,810,000	2,114,000	1.5%	4,871,100	148,838	3.2%

Source: USDOL/BLS

Figure 36. compares unemployment and the civilian labor force from 2006 to 2016. From 2007 through 2016, Georgia’s unemployment rate fluctuated between 4% and 5.2%. The total civilian labor force grew steadily during this time, adding just over 420,000 workers. The unemployment rate grew in 2009 and 2010 to 10% before experiencing a downturn. With the growth of 37,400 jobs in 2012, the unemployment rate fell for the first time in four years, to 9.8%. The December 2017 unemployment rate measured 4.4%.

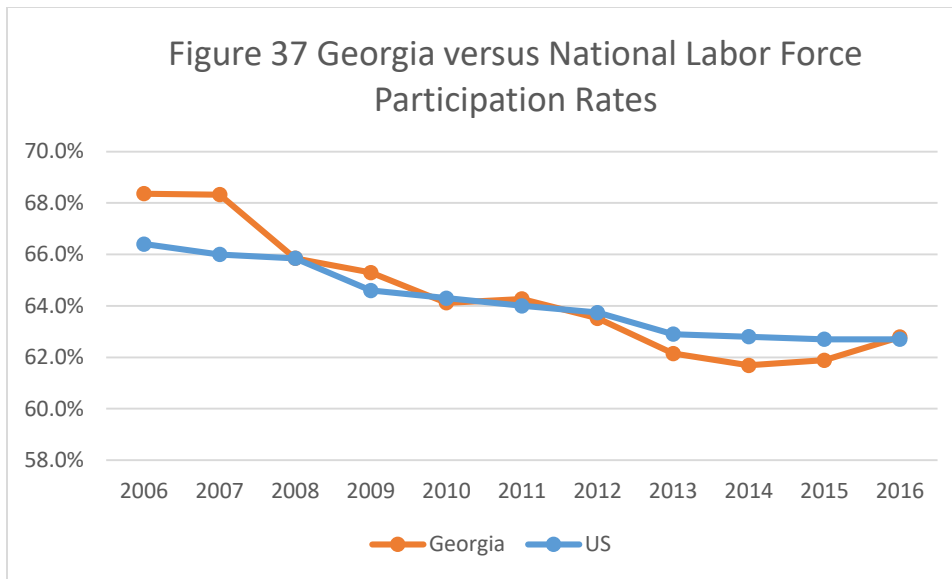


Source: GDOL

Labor Force Participation Rates

The labor force participation rate is defined as the number of persons who are employed and unemployed but looking for a job divided by the total working-age population. The labor force participation rate in Georgia increased to 62.80% in 2016 from 61.9% in 2015. The labor force participation rate in Georgia averaged 65.1% from 1998 until 2016, reaching an all-time high of 68.4 % in 2006 and a record low of 62.1 % in 2013.

In the long-term, the Georgia Labor Force Participation Rate is projected to trend around 64.63% in 2020, according to econometric models. Figure 37 compares national and state labor participation rates.



Source: USDOL/BLS

According to the Census Bureau’s 2014 population projections, the U.S. population is expected to continue to grow slowly, to grow older, and to become more racially and ethnically diverse.² During the 2012–2022 period, the growth of the labor force is anticipated to be due entirely to population growth, as the overall labor force participation rate is expected to decrease to 64.6% in 2020. A Brookings report dated February 2017 explore the national decline in the labor force participation rate. Explanations for the decline tend to focus on supply-side factors (workers are ill-fit for the jobs available) or demand-side factors (employers aren’t hiring). The Council for Economic Advisors leans more on the demand side, suggesting that trade and technology have reduced demand for less-skilled labor, principally in the manufacturing sector.” The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta update November 2017 , which wrote in September 2014 that “much – but not all – of the decline in the labor force participation rate since 2007 is structural in nature.” The 2017 update notes: “The increase in nonparticipation due to retirement has occurred only after around 2010, while nonparticipation due to disability has been steadily increasing over the past 13 years. Similarly, nonparticipation due to schooling has been steadily increasing and has been another major contributor to the secular decline in the participation rate since 2000. The number of those who did not look for a job (thus being out of the labor force) even though they wanted a job increased significantly.”

(ii) Labor Market Trends

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

Figure 38. Illustrates the total non-farm employment in Georgia, 2011-2016 by industry sector.

Figure 38. Total Non-Farm Employment (thousands) in Georgia 2011-2016

INDUSTRY	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	836,400	838,100	850,400	877,400	905,500	926,000
Government	687,400	685,800	681,600	678,200	679,300	685,900
Professional and Business Services	539,900	556,500	582,000	611,400	633,100	653,400
Education and Health Services	484,700	495,300	510,000	523,100	539,900	561,700
Leisure and Hospitality	381,700	393,800	411,400	428,100	448,100	469,400
Manufacturing	350,800	354,800	357,800	368,000	379,100	388,200
Financial Activities	223,500	226,900	229,300	231,600	234,300	238,900
Construction	145,900	141,500	145,900	156,800	166,500	176,100
Other Services	153,600	153,100	153,200	153,600	155,500	157,600
Information	97,400	99,500	102,200	107,800	111,500	111,400
Mining and Logging	9,000	8,600	8,900	9,000	9,000	9,500
Total Nonfarm:	3,900,200	3,953,700	4,032,400	4,144,900	4,261,900	4,378,000

Figure 39. indicates GDOL’s Labor Market Trends across Occupations 2005-2025. Trends indicate growth in the five top jobs: Customer Service Representatives, General and Operations Managers, Registered Nurses and Secretaries and Admin Assistants. Other occupations remain fairly constant with small increases in growth through 2025.

Figure 39. Trends across Occupations						
SOC	Job Description	2005 Jobs	2010 jobs	2015 jobs	2020 jobs	2025 jobs
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	86,907	83,460	95,628	99,374	105,520

11-1021	General and Operations Managers	78,097	73,264	83,151	84,899	89,108
29-1141	Registered Nurses	61,077	66,005	70,854	78,889	85,250
43-6014	Secretaries and Admin Assistants	70,315	68,740	75,159	78,850	83,775
53-3032	Truck Drivers	54,334	47,225	54,083	54,847	58,335
41-4012	Sales Reps, Wholesale and Mfg	55,058	49,272	55,018	55,495	57,908
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	48,062	45,745	51,217	53,518	56,911
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers	44,432	47,782	47,513	50,921	54,737
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers	46,524	44,753	48,556	49,833	52,111
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	32,588	34,186	40,175	44,167	48,041
25-1099	Post-secondary Teachers	34,708	38,170	40,991	44,425	47,529
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists	30,539	31,792	33,673	34,474	35,497
41-3099	Sales Representatives, Services	27,579	24,294	27,176	28,631	31,233
29-2061	Licensed Practical Nurses	21,117	22,937	25,203	27,403	29,108
53-3033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	26,799	24,289	27,230	27,243	28,406
13-1111	Management Analysts	21,419	22,671	25,548	26,707	28,015
15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	17,444	18,044	21,837	24,376	26,786
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	19,311	19,418	22,816	24,611	26,670
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers	22,593	23,949	22,959	24,219	25,842
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	22,244	19,759	22,691	23,327	24,650

(iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce. Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

Figure 40. represents the level of educational attainment in Georgia’s population 25 years and older. Georgians are similar to the national population in educational attainment with a High School Diploma and attainment of a Bachelor’s Degree. Slightly fewer Georgians have some college, an Associate’s Degree or Graduate Degree or higher.

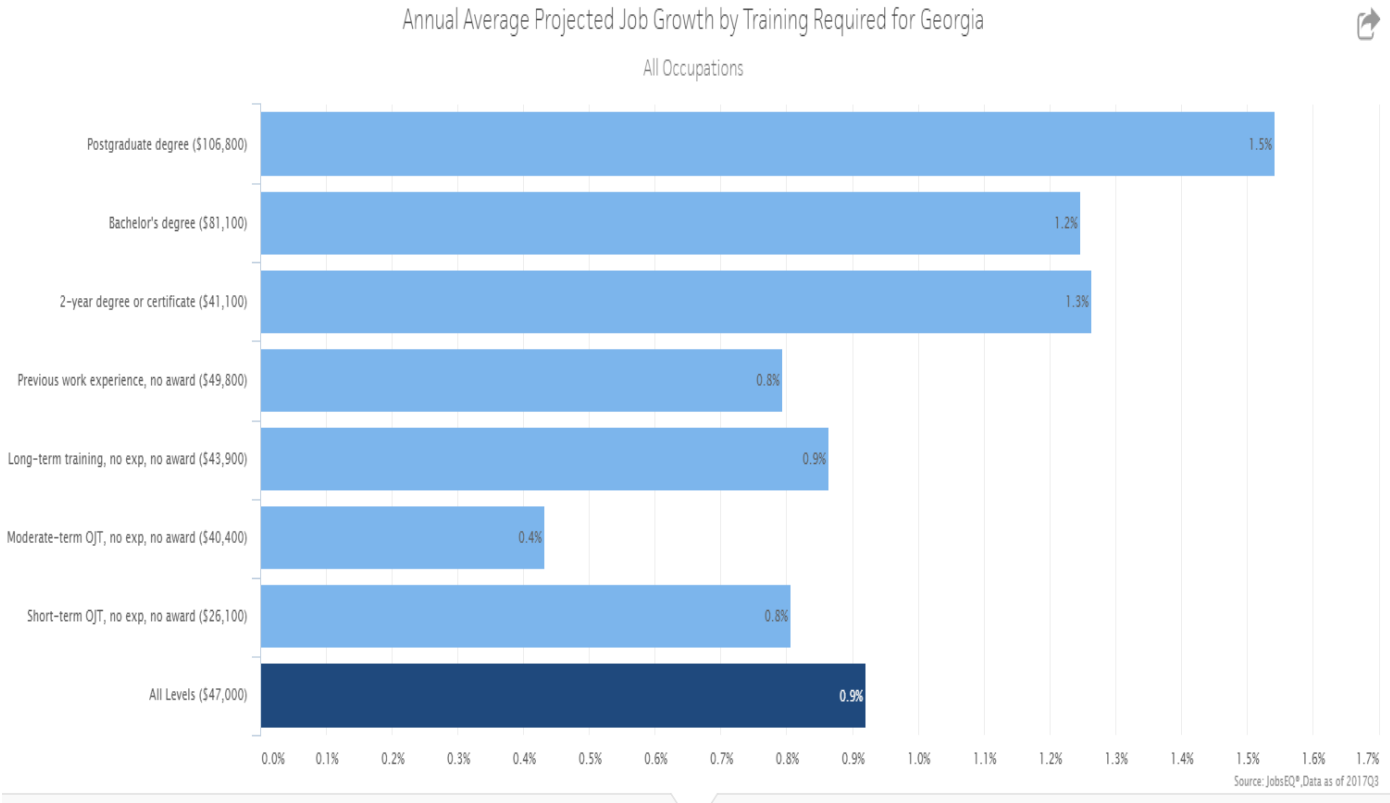
Figure 40. Education Attainment of Population 25 years and older				
Educational Attainment	2017 Nation	2017 Georgia	% of National Population	% of Georgia Population
Less Than 9th Grade	9,913,000	408,902	6%	6%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	14,545,000	637,322	8%	9%
High School Diploma	62,240,000	1,961,767	28%	28%
Some College	34,919,000	1,418,203	21%	20%

Associate's Degree	20,790,000	494,382	8%	7%
Bachelor's Degree	42,256,000	1,275,302	18%	18%
Graduate Degree and Higher	31,474,000	752,260	11%	11%
Total	216,137,000	6,948,140	100%	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2017 Annual Social and Economic Supplement

Figure 41. Average Annual Projected Job Growth by Training Required for Georgia (All Occupations)

Expected growth rates for occupations vary by the education and training required. While all employment in Georgia is projected to grow over the next ten years, occupations typically requiring a postgraduate degree are expected to grow 1.5% per year, those requiring a bachelor’s degree are forecast to grow 1.2% per year, and occupations typically needing a 2-year degree or certificate are expected to grow 1.3% per year.



Source: JobsEQ

Employment by occupation data are estimates are as of 2017Q3. Education levels of occupations are based on BLS assignments. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

(iv) Skill Gaps

To evaluate the gaps in the State’s labor force, Figure 42 shows the comparison of labor supply to the demand for all jobs based upon educational achievement and projected job growth.

Figure 42. Labor Demand, Georgia - All Industries						
	2012 Jobs	2022 Jobs	Growth	Annual Openings	Georgia Labor Supply	Future Demand
Less than High School	1,079,110	1,220,790	141,680	47,790	1,030,721	1,071,550
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	1,679,760	1,912,330	232,570	61,140	1,901,186	1,776,280
Some college, no degree	306,640	370,250	63,610	12,550	1,375,552	204,070
Associate's degree	150,180	180,060	29,880	6,030	454,433	232,280
Bachelor's degree	789,540	952,220	162,680	32,890	1,165,361	687,170
Graduate or professional degree	152,550	197,750	45,200	7,640	667,516	138,320

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 ACS

The BLS labor supply projections would seem to indicate a surplus of workers, particularly those with advanced degrees, however, growth occupations indicate that the majority of high demand growth occupations will require some form of additional education and certification/credential. Projections through 2022 illustrate that there will be a need for individuals with all levels of education.

A Georgetown University study “notes that BLS data “assigns” the minimal education and training requirements for employment. The BLS educational assignment method is based on the subjective judgment of BLS analysts in consultation with a number of external consultants to cover change in 755 occupations. The BLS recognizes that assigning a single education level to a job does not accurately reflect what skills are needed on the job as virtually every occupation in the economy comes with a variety of legitimate educational attainment levels. In addition, because it focuses on the lowest level of education required for an occupation, it is not forward-looking in an economy where entry-level skill requirements have been increasing rapidly since the 1980s.”

The study also notes “that by 2018, the economy will create 46.8 million openings—13.8 million brand-new jobs and 33 million “replacement jobs,” positions vacated by workers who have retired or permanently left their occupations. Nearly two-thirds of these 46.8 million jobs—

some 63 percent—will require workers with at least some college education. About 33 percent will require a Bachelor’s degree or better, while 30 percent will require some college or a two-year Associate’s degree. Only 36 percent will require workers with just a high school diploma or less (Figure 2.1). This growth in demand for postsecondary education dovetails with two major trends. First, the fastest-growing industries— such as computer and data processing services— require workers with disproportionately higher education levels. Second, over time, occupations as a whole are steadily requiring more education. The implications of this shift represent a sea change in American society. Essentially, postsecondary education or training has become the threshold requirement for access to middle-class status and earnings in good times and in bad. “The study also concludes that “the core mechanism at work in increasing demand for postsecondary education and training is the computer, which automates repetitive tasks and increases the value of non-repetitive functions in all jobs. Occupations with high levels of non-repetitive tasks, such as professional and managerial jobs, tend to require postsecondary education and training. These types of jobs are growing, while positions dominated by repetitive tasks that tend to require high school or less, like production jobs, are declining. The iPod is an example of a typical post-industrial product. Less than 20 percent of the value added in the manufacture of video and audio equipment from the United States comes from the blue collar production workers who manufacture it. By contrast, about 80 percent of the value added comes from the white collar office workers who design, market, finance, and manage the global production and dissemination of these products.”

Gaps between Supply and Demand

Nationally, the largest inherent gaps in the labor force result from a deficiency in the development of skills. Educational attainment is an issue both nationally and in Georgia with post-secondary degree attainment hovering around 35%. Georgia continues to develop strategies for increasing its high school graduation rate, as well as connecting out-of-school and older youth with programs to complete degree equivalency programs.

While Figure 42. illustrates the skills needed for the entire economy, it also masks important workforce needs as described in the Georgetown University study. A September 2015 report by the Federal Reserve Bank, “Identifying Opportunity Occupations”, describes an “opportunity occupation” as one that is generally considered accessible to someone without a bachelor’s degree and that pays at least the national annual median wage. The report cites that employment in opportunity occupations fell by 1.7 million nationally between 2005-2014 even as total employment rose by 4.9 million. The report notes that employers have increased their expectations for ideal candidates to include a bachelor’s degree in order to fill a position that has not required a four-year degree historically – a process called “up-credentialing”. BGLI also shows that the majority of openings require at least a college degree and 3-5 years of experience. Studies confirm that employers are substituting the attainment of a college degree with having the motivation and skills potential for employment. A college degree is now considered the educational baseline for employment in many occupations.

Figure 43. Labor Demand by Educational Attainment

	2014 Jobs	2024 Jobs	Growth	Annual Openings
Less than High School	824,340	937,110	112,770	37,470
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	768,930	908,520	139,590	30,140
Some college, no degree	180,740	223,850	43,110	7,780
Associate's degree	64,970	75,380	10,410	2,300
Bachelor's degree	277,670	348,820	71,150	12,930
Graduate or professional degree	11,570	16,250	4,680	760

Figure 43. shows labor demand by educational attainment.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 ACS

Many new job postings only require that an applicant have a high school diploma. Occupations categorized as requiring only a high school diploma in addition to certifications or licenses include advanced manufacturing and skilled trades such as truck driving, carpentry, and welding. These occupations align with in-demand occupations, growth sectors, and the Governor’s strategic industries. Through apprenticeship and other targeted training programs, Georgia citizens can be prepared to enter these promising careers.

(2) Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above.

(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.

An analysis of the State’s workforce development activities demonstrate a broad range of services offered to Georgia residents. The State’s WIOA core partners provide services that assist the State in delivering workforce, education, and training activities in a cohesive manner. An analysis of partner programs is provided below:

Employment Services

While there are several points of entry into the workforce system, UI serves as the portal for many customers. As the provider of UI and WP services, GDOL is uniquely poised to welcome customers into the workforce system and provide comprehensive and targeted referrals to the

other core partners. While a large amount of WP referrals come from UI, that system is not the only source of workforce customers. GDOL also utilizes BSU to attract customers (See [Appendix 1](#)).

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

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

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

For PY16, over 30,000 distinct individuals, including carryovers, received services. Of these, 25,255 new individuals registered using GWROPP (Geo Solutions Virtual One Stop System), with 12,633 individuals enrolling in training under WIOA in PY16.

An analysis of PY16 training provided to WIOA participants indicates that truck driving continues to be the largest training field with 711 entering training in PY16. The healthcare field continues to grow, with 1,954 individuals receiving training in the following occupations: nursing (RN, LPN, and CNA), radiography, pharmacy technicians, phlebotomy, dental hygiene, physical therapy, respiratory care, medical technologists, medical educators, etc. 659 entered training in computer operations and office support. The majority of training was classroom/web based with 943 individuals participating in employer based on-the-job training (OJT) and 4,539 participating in work experience. With the state's focus on providing business services and the merging of WFD into GDEcD, work-based learning including OJT and customized training have been expanded through further capacity building and increased collaboration with LWDA economic development entities. Many state programs, such as Fast Track and Georgia WorkSmart (see [Section VI \(b\)](#)), are employer focused.

WIOA staff-assisted services focused on providing the following: (1) comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, (2) individual employment plans to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participants to achieve employment goals, (3) group counseling, individual counseling, and career planning, (4) case management for participants seeking training services, (5) short-term prevocational services including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training for those who lack occupational credential/certification and require

short-term continuing education in order to acquire certification/credentialing required for success in growing industries.

GVRA

Education, employment, and training services provided by GVRA include a variety of individual services to persons with disabilities in preparation for employment in the competitive labor market and to employers seeking to retain valuable employees with disabilities or hire qualified individuals. Services provided to jobseekers include: counseling, assistive technology, job placement, vocational assessment, medical evaluations, work adjustments, and physical restoration services. Services focused on employer activities include: candidate identification, jobsite coaching, helping an employer identify the right solutions/ accommodations for employee to be effective on the job through onsite job assessments, and providing technical support and training on those accommodations to ensure long-term success.

VR services are provided by a skilled State rehabilitation team with representatives from the appropriate disciplines and externally from community resources as needed. The VR Program believes that cooperation and collaboration is necessary to maximize resources and address all aspects impacting individuals with disabilities in gaining or maintaining employment in Georgia. The VR Program is strongly allied with partners of the statewide workforce development system and maintains many other cooperative agreements and working partnerships with entities outside the core workforce development system. To ensure participants, employers and businesses are engaged, GVRA will continue to focus on delivering activities already occurring within the state's workforce system as well as expand current efforts in a more organized and integrated manner to better serve individuals with disabilities.

As noted in [Section IX](#), GVRA provides assistance to individuals with disabilities. GVRA's goals and priorities include service improvement across multiple disciplines and areas in the state.

TCSG (Office of Adult Education)

Through a competitive process, OAE provides funding and oversight to local eligible adult education programs throughout the state. The mission of the adult education programs is to enable adult learners in Georgia to acquire the necessary skills in reading, writing, computation, speaking, listening, and technology to compete successfully in today's global workplace, strengthen family foundations, and exercise full citizenship. The target population for adult education services is more than 1 million and includes individuals age 16 and over, without a high school diploma or its equivalency or a lack of English proficiency, and who have experienced barriers to education or employment. In FY 2017, the OAE held a statewide grant competition to allow local eligible providers to apply for federal and state funding for the provision of adult education services as defined in the WIOA statute. The grant provides funding for FY 2018, FY 2019, and FY 2020. As a result, OAE funds 22 technical colleges, 3 school districts, and 6 community-based organizations. Collectively, these 31 programs serve more than 44,000 students across Georgia's 159 counties at over 300 class locations. Services include Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, English Language Acquisition, English Literacy and Civics Education, Corrections Education, Family Literacy, and Workplace Literacy.

The TCSG Office of Adult Education provides leadership, training, professional development, technical assistance, and compliance monitoring to all of the local eligible providers. As such, all eligible adult education programs (to include community-based non-profit organizations)

benefit from the connectivity that TCSG leadership shares with the SWDB and other workforce-related partnerships.

Local Adult Education grantees partner with other state agencies such as GDOL. Additionally, under the WIOA legislation, OAE will strengthen its relationship with GVRA—to include the establishment of a comprehensive unified referral process for adult education students, as needed. Adult education programs also collaborate with LWDAs, K-12 school systems, human service agencies, libraries, business and industry, faith-based organizations, and other social service organizations, such as the Certified Literate Community Program participants (CLCP). Created in 1990 by TCSG and the Georgia Council on Adult Literacy (GCAL), CLCP asks a community to establish a non-profit collaborative to promote, support and enhance local community literacy efforts. Through the implementation of the CLCP, a network is formed to coordinate business, church, volunteer, social service, local government and schools, media and other efforts in the community to reach, influence and support those who want to improve their education. In support of each community’s efforts, OAE provides technical assistance and support to local CLCPs across the state.

[\(B\) Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities](#)

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

In order to identify and holistically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities described within section (A) above, the State developed a formal process to examine the core functions and intent of WIOA. Further, to assist the State with coordination of services and policy alignment, the State assembled four working groups to assess the State’s current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and to then develop action plans to implement specific tasks related to the State’s transition to WIOA, increased program integration, and enhanced workforce development services to Georgia’s eligible population. Working group membership included representatives from the following entities who support WIOA core partner programs:

- Georgia Department of Economic Development, Workforce Division (GDEcD);
- Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL);
- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA);
- Technical College System of Georgia (Adult Education) (TCSG); and
- Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS).

LWDA Directors and the SWDB members also participated in the working groups. The four working groups included: WIOA Data Integration, WIOA One-Stop Funding and Procurement, WIOA One-Stop Integration, and WIOA Administration and Board Structure. As part of each Working Group’s initial tasks, a governance document was developed to outline the requirements and timelines associated with the working group’s focus. The creation of these governance documents required analysis and assessment of current strengths and weaknesses in order to identify appropriate next steps. Further detail about the activities of the State working groups is contained in [Section III\(a\)\(1\)](#).

Strengths of the Georgia Workforce Development System

Over the past several years the State increased its focus on localized service delivery across the State and integration of core workforce services. The State maintains a focus on creating a unified workforce development system that connects the wide array of services available through core partners to provide an unprecedented level of services to participants.

The state has endeavored to closely align workforce services with the State's economic development needs. Key stakeholders in economic development are able to connect employers, educators, and workforce representatives on demand. Additionally, the State's workforce development system continues to utilize labor market and education data in coordination with local data to inform and guide strategic workforce development decisions. State working groups have facilitated interagency cooperation and coordination, and the new alignment with the state's workforce education system, the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), will only strengthen the future of Georgia's workforce development system. The State leveraged the previously discussed working groups to develop an enhanced workforce development system. The working groups developed milestone plans to assist with incremental movement towards workforce development system integration in full support of WIOA. The plans included co-location of workforce services, increased virtual access, and data interface processes to facilitate the sharing of key workforce data between core partners.

In addition, the State recognizes opportunities to serve several at-risk populations. Georgia has one of the largest veteran populations among States and continues to pursue programs for returning and current veterans. Specific initiatives for veterans aim to build upon existing skills and focus on seeking to match veterans with occupations leading to successful outcomes. Past methods for matching military occupations to civilian careers were not adequate and failed to holistically serve the population. The State identified this issue and has since developed the Operation: Workforce Program (see [Section III\(b\)\(7\)](#)) to help ensure this large population, eligible for State workforce development services, is connected with in-demand occupations and industries.

A growing state economy also presents opportunities for business expansion and increases the need for additional skilled workers. In order to seize the opportunities created by the State's growing industries, Georgia designed a workforce development system integrated with economic development activities to help ensure workers and employers are prepared to support and sustain Georgia's growing industries. A specific initiative that has emerged from the alignment of economic development and workforce development to strengthen growing industries is the Governor's High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI) (see section II (a)(1)(A)(iii)).

Weaknesses of the Georgia Workforce Development System

The four working groups are instrumental in identifying gaps. Specifically, they have identified the following gaps:

- Limited data integration – Core partner programs maintain separate data management systems for participants and case management tasks. There is limited integration or interface between core partners throughout the service delivery life cycle. The Data Integration working group is determining plans for how systems will increase communication and integrate reporting.
- Limited physical service integration – Under WIA, the State had a lack of physical integration (referral, case management, and training) between Title I workforce services

and other core partners. The One-Stop Integration working group addressed many of the key issues related to service integration and developed a clear plan to implement solutions regarding integration of workforce programs.

- Limited financial and administrative integration across core partner programs – Financial, technological, and governance frameworks result in variable models for administration and delivery across the state’s workforce development system. Funding mechanisms and cost allocation methods vary across agencies responsible for workforce development activities. The One-Stop Funding and Procurement working group helped identify future funding and procurement processes and opportunities. The Administration and Board Structure working group developed policy recommendations to uniformly direct and integrate workforce services provided to participants and business.

In addition to the working group input, the Deputy Commissioner of Workforce Development toured the LWDAs to ascertain issues and concerns and needs for capacity building or improvement. The tour resulted in the following suggestions for system improvement:

- Increase the visibility of the state and local workforce system. The lack of a statewide brand makes the workforce system appear disjointed and non-cohesive, with customers not knowing who provides what services. The State should provide training in effective LWDAs outreach and marketing to effectively connect to the business community.
- Identify actionable opportunities for the workforce system. Strategic efforts are needed to boost low penetration into the eligible population statewide and WFD was requested to assist LWDAs connect with low economic development partners.
- WIOA should be utilized as a catalyst to create an improved workforce system. WIOA implementation should be utilized to move Georgia beyond an era of individual state agency service to a Georgia workforce system with integrated data management.
- The State should enhance training for local boards to ensure a unified statewide message.
- The State should increase technical assistance to LWDAs and build on the team approach and improve local programming. The State could assist LWDAs with implementing short-term training that provide soft skills, replicating the Fast Track model in other LWDAs, implementing statewide sector strategies, identifying and recruiting out-of-school youth, professional, effective delivery of business services and expanding on-the-job training opportunities.
- The State should improve and expand communications across the workforce system through showcasing LWDA best practices at SWDB meetings, identifying out-of-state best practices and broadcasting success stories through media outlets.
- The State must set the tone for interagency collaboration. LWDAs depend on the state to drive interagency cooperation and joint initiatives offer a way to boost collaboration.

Threats to the Georgia Workforce Development System

As Georgia continues to become a destination for employers, businesses and industry growth, the State needs to be proactive about potential threats and challenges as a result of this growth. Many of Georgia’s immediate employer needs and opportunities center on growth within the high demand occupations such as health care, advanced skilled trade professions and the need for an educated workforce.

With only 35% of Georgians obtaining a post-secondary degree, Georgia is developing strategies for increasing its high school graduation rate, as well as connecting out-of-school and older youth with programs to complete degree equivalency programs. Furthermore, Georgia must align its educational systems to produce students armed with the tools to be college and career ready.

Moving forward, the State needs to be more proactive about enabling employers to train and hire workers through programs such as Georgia WorkSmart in order to fill rapidly expanding openings across the state. Appropriate resources and training plans need to be leveraged to help fill the skills gap across the state.

Moving Forward

In order to fulfill the Governor's vision, build upon strengths, and address the weaknesses, opportunities, and threats identified above, the State has utilized its working groups and is focusing on targeted objectives and milestones. Furthermore, the State utilized the working groups' individual timelines and milestone documents to ensure identified opportunities are capitalized on as the State integrates workforce services in support of WIOA.

The improving economy and rise of key industry sectors require the State's workforce development system to adapt to growing workforce needs. The State will maximize its capacity to provide services that connect employers and skilled workers. To that end, the State has already taken several steps towards continuing to meet current capacity needs and is increasing service integration in order to meet future capacity needs.

[\(C\) State Workforce Development Capacity](#)

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

With the support of the SWDB and the four WIOA working groups, the State focused on system capacity building and helping to ensure the current and future system can meet the needs of eligible participants through: developing strategies to support staff training and awareness; disseminating best practices; developing and continuously improving the one-stop delivery system; and supporting effective local boards. WFD worked with the core partners to host the second annual state-wide WorkSource Georgia WIOA Convening that was modeled after the national WIOA Convening. This event took place at the Infinite Energy Center on July 19-20, 2017. The focus of the convening was "Delivering Superior Services to Georgia's Demand-Driven Workforce System." Some of the most valuable training topics included the following:

- The Fundamentals of Work-Based Learning
- Leadership Through Change
- Partner Co-Location: How to Go from Can't Live with, to Can't Live Without
- Financial Literacy for Youth
- Measuring Performance: Mastering WIOA Reporting
- Georgia's Data Integration Strategy
- Coordinating Services for Georgia's Veterans
- Effective Youth Service Strategies
- 2 GEN: A Dual Approach to Workforce Development
- Registered Apprenticeships in the Workforce System

Based on the availability of funds, the State plans to continue to host this event annually, with planning having already started for the 2018 WorkSource Georgia Convening, to be held in Athens, Georgia from August 13-15, 2018.

The convenings featured state, local and national speakers from all partner programs that spoke on a myriad of topics concerning WIOA and the state's workforce system. Several of the sessions during the convening were recorded and will be utilized in the creation of a state-wide training library for local staff. Plans for a statewide training institute have been underway for the past 12 months. LWDA's have been surveyed as to the priority training needs as well as long term training needs.

The **WorkSource Georgia Training Institute (WGTI)** was established in 2018 to provide demand-driven content based on the needs of the 19 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs). The Training Institute provides resources to allow the workforce development professionals in the WorkSource Georgia system to be more productive and successful. Beginning in 2018, The WGTI has coordinated the following roundtable sessions.

- WIOA Financial Management,
- Effective Youth Services,
- WIOA Eligibility,
- Effective Adult Services,
- Common Monitoring Findings,
- Implementing the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of WIOA,
- Effective Business Services, and
- OJT and Incumbent Worker Training

Plans are underway to work closely with the LWDAs to provide additional relevant training content in response to local area needs. A WGTI website will feature technical assistance resources, events, contacts and a resource library. A WGTI Google Group will provide a place for professionals with similar interests to share content, find answers, and make contacts.

Over the past several years, the State has taken steps to help ensure that adequate resources and capacity exist to meet Georgia's growing employer and industry needs. The state-designated 19 LWDAs are now equipped with at least one comprehensive one-stop center in each area (see [Section VI\(a\)\(1\)](#)). This structure allows both rural and urban counties to leverage State resources and local LWDBs to deliver key services to participants.

With current economic conditions on the rise, LWDA staff continue to help customers identify in-demand jobs. Employers look to quickly hire and on-ramp certain positions, thus LWDAs have identified shorter-term ITAs or work-based learning training options. LWDAs also continue to work with TCSG and USG, as well as other qualified training providers, to ensure that customers have a wide variety of training options. For instance, offering night and weekend, flexible, condensed, and online classes enables those currently working to enroll in WIOA training services. The State also works to ensure that LWDAs have the community contacts needed to provide current work-based learning opportunities with growing employers. As technology needs grow, many companies want to be able to train in house. The State is working

with the LWDAs to create more on-the-job and customized training opportunities and to work in conjunction with Georgia WorkSmart (see [Section VI\(b\)\(2\)](#)).

To further enable the alignment of workforce development programs with economic development priorities, industry workforce needs and education and training programs in the state and its regions, HDCI seeks to identify the in-demand talent needs of business and align the education and training programs offered by the state partners to meet those needs.

During the first two years of HDCI, the primary focus of the initiative was to engage the private sector by collecting information about present and future workforce needs. Through 17 public meetings across the state, which included more than 120 employers, and an online assessment, a range of in-demand and difficult-to-fill positions were identified, along with essential workforce skills that are difficult to find in potential employees. Through those discussions, the data and information collected has allowed the HDCI team ([See section II \(a\)\(1\)\(A\)\(iii\) – High Demand Career Initiative](#)) to provide a clear depiction of statewide workforce needs that has helped influence statewide policy and programming. Although this data is sufficient in describing the workforce needs of Georgia employers on a global basis, it lacks the ability to provide adequate details for implementing solutions at the local and regional levels.

WFD extended a grant opportunity to LWDAs to integrate WIOA and HDCI objectives by engaging economic development regions across the state in forming sector partnerships. Sector partnerships are required in local WIOA plans. To help local boards implement sector partnerships, WFD held regional sector strategy training in March 2016 based on the Aspen Institute model and more in-depth sector partnership workshops in each region in Fall 2016. These sessions promoted regional, employer-driven partnerships of industry, education and training, and other stakeholders that focus on the workforce needs of key industries in a regional labor market. LWDAs were given "homework" which included a mandate to hold additional meetings and invite additional partners. WFD also supplemented the training curriculum with a sector partnerships development guide and webinars on labor market information and work-based learning. LWDAs presented their sector partnership work at the Georgia WIOA Convening in August 2016, and LWDAs will provide details in the local plans. This grant is designed help support and implement sector strategies going forward.

The purpose of this grant is twofold. First, the grant will invest in the creation of sector partnerships. Second, the grant will encourage LWDAs to be catalysts in their region in forming and sustaining sector partnerships. These partnerships will then help to align the talent acquisition and development needs of employers in a given industry sector with the training and education programs in the region. This grant is intended to provide sufficient funding to support a regional convener (either full-time employee(s) or consulting team) to assist with the regional collaboration.

With the transition to WIOA, the State is well positioned to further expand the State's innovative programmatic offerings and overall workforce system capacity. In order to increase capacity, the WFD is making available Governor's Reserve funds to produce sector partnerships. Preference will be given to grant applications that connect to and leverage existing state initiatives and regional industry, education, and economic development partners. As part of the grant application, regions discuss how WIOA defined special populations may be served as part of the grant effort.

GDOL

Consistent and strategic investment in staff development reflects Georgia's commitment to integrated workforce services. Employment services staff of GDOL are trained in both employment services and UI programs, enabling customers to receive seamless services geared to facilitate their return to employment.

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

Additional staff training is provided in the following areas: strategies for business recruitment events, as well as multiple methodologies to connect qualified jobseekers with employers, providing workforce statistics and prevailing industry wages, guidance on employment laws as it relates to the workplace, UI, FB, the WOTC, and other workforce services. Staff also have access to customer service training to enhance services to jobseekers and businesses.

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

Other GDOL staff development activities are listed in Wagner-Peyser Act Program section ([See Section VII](#)).

GVRA

GVRA has a strong statewide presence with offices located in urban and rural areas to provide vocational rehabilitation services to assist in the workforce development of individuals with disabilities. GVRA intends to focus on both youth with disabilities and students with disabilities to better prepare them to become an integral part of Georgia's workforce. GVRA plans to offer an array of transition services to every public school district in the state with these services focused on assisting students with disabilities to either continue on to a post-secondary education or into a career pathway that is based on the specific skill requirements of Georgia's employers. GVRA plans to conduct outreach activities to identify and attract those youth with disabilities who are not in school to participate in community-based alternative career pathways that are also based on the specific skill requirements of Georgia's employers; or if appropriate, assist these youth in returning to school, either secondary or post-secondary.

GVRA will engage employers statewide to 1) educate employers on the value and benefits of hiring an individual with a disability, and 2) to identify the specific skill requirements of each employer in order to incorporate those into the career pathway curricula. GVRA will focus on Georgia employers who are either federal contractors or subcontractors to assist them in meeting their hiring requirements in regards to hiring seven percent of their workforce as individuals with disabilities.

As GVRA relies on a large provider community to offer specific vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities, GVRA will work with its existing providers to assist them in the development of vocational rehabilitation services that are directly focused on employment outcomes. These services may include the development of customized skill training to meet the demand requirements of Georgia's employers, support services to keep the individual with a disability engaged in school and moving toward a post-secondary education or a career, and/or the development of a fast-track skill training to meet the specific demands of a new employer in the state.

TCSG (Office of Adult Education)

The Office of Adult Education is the State's Eligible Agency for Adult Education. In this role, OAE is responsible for administering and monitoring federal and state grant funds to Local Eligible providers, developing policy and oversight to govern Adult Education programmatic efforts, providing technical assistance to grantees, as well as maintaining compliance with federal performance reporting. To meet this goal, the OAE awards grants to Local Eligible Providers in service delivery areas located throughout the state. Further, the OAE is equipped with the experience, staffing, infrastructure, and technology to provide funding, technical assistance, professional development, programmatic oversight, and monitoring to local providers. The staff structure provides support to grantees specifically in the areas of grant monitoring and accountability, technical assistance for compliance, professional development for leadership and instructional staff, and community engagement.

The OAE awards multi-year grants through a competitive process, and ensures that adult education is available in every county of the state. Once awarded, grantees are provided technical assistance in the areas of: curriculum development, orientation and enrollment, data and reporting, instructional practices, and performance evaluation. Additionally, the OAE delivers high quality Professional Development to program administrators and instructors, to improve programs' ability to meet or exceed national norms and performance standards. Professional Development will enable local providers to structure curriculum in alignment with College and Career Readiness Standards, incorporate best practices in instruction, and maintain a system of continuous improvement for teachers in the areas of reading and mathematics. Professional Development is offered for mixed audiences (i.e. program administrators and teachers) as well as focused, subject-specific groups.

The effectiveness of local providers is reliant on the ability of the OAE to remain knowledgeable of local and regional workforce development area Plan(s). The OAE must also have knowledge of how Adult Education local providers are offering services to fulfill their role(s) in the local and regional Plan(s). The OAE closely monitors programs' effort to maintain operational compliance in addition to meeting performance goals. The OAE provides oversight and feedback to programs based on quantifiable data, performance trends, as well as on-site review. Program data is managed with the Georgia Adult Learners Information System (GALIS), maintained by the OAE.

The OAE works to ensure that all adult learners have, or are equipped to acquire, the basic skills and credentials necessary to compete in the workplace. The OAE maintains an effort to improve ongoing effectiveness by engaging peer leaders at national forums such as the National Adult

Education Professional Development Consortium (NAEPDC) and the Council on Adult Basic Education (COABE).

(b) WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

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.

(1) Governor's Vision

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

Mission: Georgia's workforce development system is focused on connecting talent with opportunity through the provision of career services, education and training. Through strong interagency collaboration and a focus on excellent customer service, Georgia's employer-driven workforce system supports and stimulates the State's economic growth.

To further this mission Governor Nathan Deal, in his January 11, 2018 State of the State Address, announced that the state administration of the WIOA grant would be moving from the Georgia Department of Economic Development to the Technical College System of Georgia effective July 1, 2018. The Technical College System is the current administrator of State's Adult Education and Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act grant funding. Governor Deal saw the need to better coordinate between partner agencies and programs to enable the seamless flow of customers between programs and areas of the state. This strategic move will enable Georgia to further align WIOA funding with federal partner programs.

After the July 1, 2018 effective date, staff will begin to coordinate programs, staffing structure and service delivery. While this planning document accurately reflects the Governor's vision and goals for the system, the methods for accomplishing those goals will become more concrete in the next year. Georgia looks forward to future planning documents in which the State will be able to clearly show the progress this move and reorganization support.

(2) Governor's Goals for Workforce Development

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include - (A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations. (B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

1. Create a unified workforce system that connects the wide array of services available through core partners to provide an unprecedented level of valuable services to customers.
2. Utilize labor market and educational data and technology, in coordination with local data, to inform and guide strategic workforce development decisions.
3. Increase the value of the workforce system as a tool for employers by emphasizing business services.
4. Increase the participation and utilization of the workforce system by both employers and individuals.

5. Increase regional awareness and planning among Local Areas in order to provide better customer service to Georgia's citizens and businesses.

Create a Unified Workforce System

In 2011, Governor Deal's Competitiveness Initiative engaged businesses across the state in an ongoing dialogue between the public and private sectors. The Competitiveness Initiative identified opportunities for the State to provide the resources necessary for employers to grow and succeed. One of the key opportunities identified through this dialogue was the need for a skilled workforce ready and able to work.

Throughout Governor Deal's two terms, increasing services to employers has shown concrete results. Georgia has been named one of the best states in which to do business five years in a row. The proof of this success lies in the data, with Georgia's job growth continuing to exceed that of the national average (see Figure 35. Total Non-farm Employment). A key to this recognition has been the State's investment in improving the workforce system. This investment began with a concerted effort among the partner agencies to close the gap between employers and the labor force. The coordination of economic development and workforce development has been, and will continue to be, critical in making informed decisions based on the needs of employers throughout the state. Through WIOA implementation, the State increased interagency cooperation among core partners and enhanced service delivery to Georgians by concentrating on co-location and unified data systems.

Utilize Labor Market Information to Inform Workforce Decisions

The Competitiveness Initiative, and now HDCl, are prime examples of gathering and analyzing data to help guide strategic decisions in workforce development. Governor Deal has continued to stress the value of pairing available labor market analysis with data collected directly from employers.

WFD has expanded the number of tools available to decision makers. In addition to data made available through the Census Bureau and BLS, WFD works with GDOL's Workforce Statistics and Economic Research Division to provide resources needed by state and local administrators. This allows the state workforce system to explore in-demand occupations, economic forecasts, and demographics of service areas. The State hopes to continue to expand the resources offered to state agencies, LWDAs, and other partners. During the period covered by this Unified State Plan, the state obtained Burning Glass Labor Insight to support local data needs.

Emphasize Business Services

Georgia has consistently been recognized as one of the best states to do business. This is due in large part to the state's ability to attract employers and provide flexible solutions to meet their needs. The ongoing relationships with businesses continue to point to workforce demands and finding innovative solutions to meet those demands.

Now, aided by the vision of WIOA, the State has expanded its capacity by enhancing the number of tools available to employers, including work-based learning strategies, on-the-job training, and customized training. The options help employers identify and train a workforce, but also provide opportunities for workers to develop their skills and advance along identified career pathways. Some of the strategies the State utilized in supporting this goal include an emphasis

on business services during the 2017 WorkSource Georgia Convening, the development of contract templates for OJT and IWT, increased resources and focus on capacity building at the local level, and the emphasis on sector partnerships through the HDCI Sector Partnership grants.

Increase Participation in the Workforce System

The State's goal is to increase the opportunities and access points for individuals and businesses. The State is working on ways to improve the number of individuals moving from under- and unemployment into education and employment opportunities.

One identified need has been driven by the LWDAs. Responding to their requests, the state embarked upon a new branding campaign to align all 19 LWDAs under one name, identity, and brand. This brand promotes a unified appearance across the one-stop system, and helps connect each LWDA with WFD. The new brand coincided with a marketing effort to promote the resources available from the core partners and launched at the beginning of PY 16 as WorkSource Georgia.

The State continues to work to promote resources among targeted populations. With eight military installations, Georgia is home to a tremendous number of active duty and veteran service members. Through programs such as Operation: Workforce, the state has made a dedicated effort to connect our veterans with transition resources and with employers who are eager to provide employment opportunities. The Georgia Department of Labor has a number of dedicated specialists specifically focused on serving the needs of Georgia's veteran population, including DVOPs and LVERs in the local one-stop system, and a dedicated Customized Recruitment specialist focusing solely on the demand for veteran employment.

One of Governor Deal's greatest priorities while in office has been a reform of the criminal justice system. Georgia has become a model for the nation in rethinking the approach to incarceration through education and rehabilitation. Governor Deal fundamentally believes that employment is the best way to reduce recidivism. To that end, the workforce system is a vital partner to make sure that Georgia citizens return to society as better individuals, with marketable skills, and with opportunities to succeed. SWDB has tasked the State with producing dedicated resources that enable ex-offenders to connect with the workforce system immediately upon release. As a result, the workforce system has partnered with state agencies such as the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Department of Community Supervision in exploring workforce needs as individuals transition back into civilian life. Additionally, the Re-Employment Services Committee has participated in conversations with the Georgia Justice Project to discuss ways in which job training can support a successful return for ex-offenders and limit recidivism.

A key component of achieving the goal of increased participation in the workforce system is ensuring that the one-stop system provides services to individuals with barriers to employment. Each of Georgia's core partners are working to reduce barriers to employment among the workforce population in support of this goal. Through their involvement in the WIOA implementation working groups, each partner has contributed to the conversation to ensure that the workforce system provides easy access for these targeted populations, and ensures that all services are available to help remove barriers to employment. Additionally, these partners have been integral in the development of sector partnerships in each of the twelve planning regions,

contributing to the discussions as they develop pathways into high demand careers. One of the key issues that the sector partnerships will address is ensuring that the career pathways are accessible to individuals with barriers. In order to receive grant funding, regions were required to specifically address this issue. The Disability Employment Initiative is currently being piloted in two LWDAs to customize employment offerings to individuals with disabilities. The state has already begun to collect and distribute best practices from this initiative to other LWDAs. In addition to efforts such as Operation: Workforce, the State has also made available strategic grants to serve transitioning services members and their families, ex-offenders, and at-risk youth. These grants enable LWDAs to implement unique programming that will serve as models throughout the rest of the state. The complete integration of all core partners and targeted outreach efforts will focus on ensuring that service to individuals with barriers to employment remains a vital strategy for increasing participation in the workforce system.

Increase Regional Awareness and Planning Among Local Areas

Four of Georgia's twelve WIOA Regions have multiple local areas located within. WIOA's focus on regional planning has given the state the unique opportunity to enhance the customer service provided to individuals and businesses attempting to navigate the service structure across Local Area lines. Georgia will continue to provide enhanced resources and guidance to the affected local areas in order to accomplish seamless service delivery. Examples of this include coordinated participant intake and eligibility as well as common business service forms and processes.

(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.) (1) Describe the strategies the State will implement, including sector strategies and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). (2) Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, mandatory 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 gaps identified in the State's workforce analysis.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Effectiveness in Serving Employers- Measures the state workforce system's effectiveness in serving employers by evaluating the employee retention, employer penetration and repeat business customer rates.

Georgia's expected performance levels are found in [Appendix 2](#).

(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.

The State of Georgia makes use of many activities to assess the successful provision of workforce services and the delivery of the Governor's strategic vision and goals. The activities discussed below all play a role in ensuring that the state is able to make continuous and quality improvements in terms of adhering to federal and state regulations, providing quality services to the workforce system customer, and meeting federal and state outcome expectations. WFD will place special emphasis on assessment and monitoring of LWDA's for WIOA integration and WIOA compliance to ensure that timely progress is being met in local area systems change and one stop integration. If WFD determines areas of weakness in WIOA implementation, appropriate and timely technical assistance will be provided.

Adherence to State and Federal Regulations. The first way in which the State ensures the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system is through conducting yearly, onsite monitoring. For one week every year, each LWDA hosts a team of three WFD staff members which includes one individual from the compliance, grants administration, and programs teams. This team of three conducts comprehensive monitoring. The primary goal of this monitoring is to ensure adherence to federal and state regulations. The team uses a risk assessment to determine the number of samples for each subject area that need to be reviewed and the team evaluates those samples using customized monitoring tools developed and maintained by WFD management. Interviews are also conducted to ensure understanding of regulations and the cohesiveness of local processes.

If the monitoring team identifies exceptions, the LWDA is given a list of corrective action tasks to complete. WFD staff work with local staff to ensure that these corrective action tasks are completed and that overall process improvement takes place. WFD will also give observations to LWDA's. Observations are indicative of items that could be improved upon, but do not rise to the level of an exception. Finally, WFD staff identify notable practices in LWDA's in an attempt to highlight local successes and disseminate best practices. The yearly monitoring process ensures that all customers are able to receive the services they need in the most efficient manner

possible. The State also ensures that entities receiving WIOA funds are following the basic principles outlined by USDOL for the expenditure of the funds.

The onsite monitoring of LWDA's actively promotes continuous system improvement. As federal, state, and local guidance is released constantly, onsite monitoring ensures that LWDA's maintain up-to-date, compliant service delivery structures. Onsite monitoring consists of policy and system reviews which determine LWDA's compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies. Onsite monitoring also provides LWDA's an opportunity to detail unique programs, policies, and/or practices which are unique to their LWDA. WFD's identification and dissemination of these best practices can lead to improvements across the entire state's workforce system. Separately, through the corrective action process, LWDA's receive additional assistance from WFD which assists them in updating and modifying their service delivery to comply with the applicable federal and state guidance.

Additionally, the SWDB is annually presented a final monitoring report which details the results of the annual onsite monitoring of Georgia's nineteen LWDA's. This report highlights areas where further guidance or assistance may be necessary and informs the SWDB of unique service delivery processes that may be beneficial to other LWDA's in the state. Many policies, guidance letters, and technical assistance efforts result from the issues and best practices identified during annual onsite monitoring and directly contribute to Georgia's consistent, continuous improvement of its workforce system.

WFD programmatic staff also conduct LWDB certification every two years. During this period, programmatic staff ensure that the LWDB roster satisfies federal criteria. Staff also read meeting minutes to ensure that LWDBs are following state and federal open meeting requirements. Finally, LWDB bylaws are examined for compliance with relevant state law and rule provisions. If exceptions are identified, LWDA's are given a list of corrective action tasks to complete. Programmatic staff work with the LWDA's to complete these corrective action items, and if necessary identify individuals to fill vacant board seats. Ensuring that each board meets composition requirements and that meetings are being conducted correctly, provides consistency across all LWDA's. This consistency ensures that each LWDB is able to carry out the Governor's vision in the most effective manner.

Beginning with the review of PY16 activities, WFD introduced several tools to ensure compliance with guidance issued at the federal and state level for WIOA implementation. These additional tools reviewed one-stop certification, one-stop operator selection, one-stop MOUs, and infrastructure cost sharing agreement.

Provision of Quality Services to the Workforce System Customer. The second way in which the State ensures effectiveness is through the yearly customer satisfaction survey. WFD data and information team prepare and facilitate a survey of at least 500 past participants. Once the data is collected the results are detailed in the USDOL Annual Report. The data and information team also examines the data to identify areas in which the workforce system can improve the customer experience and outcomes. If needed, those recommendations are distributed to LWDA's. By focusing on customer experience, workforce staff ensure positive outcomes and word-of-mouth referrals to the workforce system. This type of testimonial is necessary to ensure that customers continue to seek services.

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

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

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

GDOL

Financial Assessments

In addition to annual audits, GDOL submits regular reports to the federal agencies responsible for oversight of the grants received by GDOL on expenditures and drawdowns. Regular reports are also submitted to the state Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) and the State Accounting Office (SAO). Financial program managers are also responsible for day-to-day management of grant expenditures for their respective programs to ensure compliance with specific grant guidelines and the advancement of the agency mission.

STAR Review Team

The GDOL Staff Technical Assistance Review (STAR) process is a four-day review conducted in two phases, which includes a desk top review and on-site review. Technical assistance teams consisting of subject matter experts, are responsible for conducting the reviews and provide immediate technical assistance training directly to staff in the career centers. The team evaluates direct service delivery while on site and analyzes documented services in our electronic system remotely, prior to the Career Center visit. The immediate onsite training provides an opportunity for the STAR team to identify programmatic misunderstandings quickly and allows them to immediately address the issue through training while on the premises. The STAR team meets with the management team throughout the process, and during the exit conference to discuss

feedback reports and to develop a technical assistance plan to correct or improve any process or programmatic deficiencies. The STAR team subject matter experts conduct random follow up during the six months immediately after the technical assistance review to ensure quality improvements are implemented. This process also allows for the team to document best practices across the state which is utilized in developing new service delivery processes for the agency.

GVRA

GVRA will monitor not only the performance of all internal services, but also those of its providers, to ensure that the services provided to vocational rehabilitation clients lead to employment outcomes. GVRA will also monitor employer satisfaction, both on a real-time basis and on an annual satisfaction evaluation, to ensure that individuals with disabilities obtaining employment meet the skill requirements of the employer and that the services provided through GVRA are aligned realistically with the needs of Georgia's employers.

Through the support of State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), two annual customer satisfaction surveys were facilitated by a third party provider during FY 2016 and 2017. The customer satisfaction survey conducted in FY 2017, expanded survey inquiries to include the analysis of counselor and provider satisfaction. Based on customer-centered strategic planning with the office of Strategy and Innovation Unit, the Vocational Rehabilitation program shall engage in a technical assistance agreement with Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to ensure establishment of a performance management and quality assurance system is in place for further continuous improvement with client satisfaction and effectiveness of program services.

A Program Evaluator has been hired FY18 for performance management to track and analyze all of the necessary identified data for continuous improvement. As a component of program evaluation, a quality assurance function will be established to:

- Monitor program effectiveness of policy/procedure processes
- Track internal controls with case management and
- Mitigate risks by ensuring consistency of vocation rehabilitation services beginning with pre-employment transition services and moving into the application process through eligibility, plan development and skill gain services

TCSG (Office of Adult Education)

The Office of Adult Education (OAE) will maintain a system of continuous improvement and effectiveness as a core partner in Georgia's workforce system. The OAE will continue to work closely with other partners in the WorkSource Georgia network to monitor the State's effectiveness in meeting the literacy needs of citizens. Further, the OAE will ensure that existing and future monitoring efforts specifically assess a program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of citizens with barriers to employment, providing assistive service to participants with disabilities, and offering integrated education and training to WorkSource Georgia participants who lack a high school credential. Specifically, the OAE will provide oversight to local Adult Education providers, to ensure that local providers are implementing services in alignment with local workforce plans, and that they are fully engaged in One Stop Center(s). Each grantee will be monitored in the following ways:

Performance and Program Review(s)

Performance outcomes for each provider should meet or exceed the levels of performance for each of the established National Reporting System (NRS) benchmarks. OAE will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities through data reviews, monitoring visits, performance reports, and on-site program reviews. If a program fails to meet performance goals or other programmatic requirements, specific actions will be taken to improve the quality of the program. OAE uses the following plans to take action to improve the quality of the adult education and literacy activities.

1. Corrective Action Plan (CAP) - A CAP will be implemented with programs that are out of compliance with State and/or federal policies. OAE will provide technical assistance throughout the corrective process, and by the end of a designated timeframe, programs should be able to correct the identified issues and end their respective CAP. Failure to improve may result in increased monitoring, grant reduction, or funding removal.
2. Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) - A PIP will be required for programs which are identified as low-performing when compared to the State performance on federal or State benchmarks. The PIP will include specific action steps, such as student retention, post-testing and assessment, data analysis, training, and professional development which will be designed to improve program performance. Failure to improve may result in increased monitoring, grant reduction, or funding removal.
3. Desktop Monitoring- The OAE's Grant Program Support Coordinators (GPSCs) conduct on-going monitoring of program data to assess each program's progress toward meeting established performance benchmarks. Areas deemed in need of improvement are noted, and programs are provided technical assistance. Failure to improve may result in increased monitoring, grant reduction, or funding removal.
4. Self-Assessment and Mid-Year Performance Comparison Reporting- Each grantee is required to conduct and submit an annual self-assessment to report progress toward performance measures, and to identify areas in need of improvement. Additionally, programs are required to submit a mid-year report to benchmark progress toward established goals. Failure to improve may result in increased monitoring, grant reduction, or funding removal.

As a part of these efforts, OAE will provide ongoing technical assistance, professional development, and other support until the required steps of the plans are completed. The type of technical assistance, professional development, and other support will be based upon the specific area(s) of deficiency or need at an individual program.

WIOA Alignment

Each program will be assessed on its alignment with local WIOA Plans. Each Local Provider will submit an annual summary of WIOA partnership activities, to include:

- Activities/services offered concurrent to other WIOA services;
- Participation in One-Stop Center(s);
- Alignment of curricula to local and/or regional strategic industries;
- Partnerships or MOUs with key service providers (e.g. childcare providers, transportation services)
- Referrals to and from other WIOA partners

Risk Assessment

Each grantee will submit specific documentation, to be used by the OAE to assess the level (or absence) of risk associated with the program's fiduciary responsibilities. Documentation will focus on the program's structure, and management of funds. The risk instrument will be fully developed by the OAE by March 2017, and may include (but will not be limited to) the following:

- The size of the grant award (This information is maintained by the OAE.);
- Current organizational chart, and changes in leadership or reporting structure;
- Most recent progress performance monitoring (described above);
- Review of fiscal policies and procedures; and
- The program non-appearance on the federal debarment list, and non-suspension of federal funding.

(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 Section (a).

Create a Unified Workforce System: The State is looking to close the distance between the core partners to extend the reach of the workforce system. The leadership of the required partners have convened to take advantage of an opportunity to reform Georgia's workforce system. As discussed previously, the State formed a set of working groups to address key WIOA implementation issues. Regardless of how a customer accesses the system, the new workforce system provides a much more integrated, seamless, and consistent provision of services. The Unified State Plan provides the strategy and means by which Georgia continues to achieve this goal of a unified workforce system. (See State Strategy Implementation [Section III \(a\)\(2\)\(A\)](#)).

Each working group was comprised of various members of the workforce system including WFD, GDOL, TCSG, GVRA, and TANF. Additionally, each group consisted of representation from the state's local workforce development areas, and business representation through members of SWDB. These groups provided the foundation for guidance in implementing WIOA, and were instrumental in drafting the state plan. Finally, the groups provided guidance and technical assistance to stakeholders on co-location, procurement of one-stop operators, and performance reporting. The working groups were discussed at length in [Section III. \(a\)\(2\)](#).

On August 1, 2016, WFD launched WorkSource Georgia, a new statewide unified brand created to align core partners and the resources of Georgia's workforce system, in order to more effectively connect job seekers with careers in the state's leading industries. WorkSource Georgia targets businesses, job seekers, workforce development practitioners, education leaders, and citizens at large. The brand's tagline "Connecting Talent with Opportunity" broadly promotes the state's workforce development efforts. The statewide brand also features unique brands to represent each of the state's nineteen Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs), the state's twelve workforce regions, and other regional groups composed primarily of LWDAs. On August 17, 2016, WFD issued guidelines to LWDAs for using the WorkSource Georgia Brand, available under WIG PS-16-002 <http://www.georgia.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/WIG-PS-16-002-WORKSOURCE-GEORGIA-UNIFIED-BRANDING-STANDARDS.pdf>).

Alignment of Core Programs: The State’s strategy continues its focus on supporting a unified workforce system (above) that involves the coordinated services and resources of all core program partners. Each of the working groups identified deliverables to align core programs at the state and local levels. As a direct result of those efforts, full alignment of core partners were primarily achieved by July 1, 2017. Key action items for the working groups have included:

The One-Stop Implementation Working Group developed a one stop self-assessment instrument for local areas and core partners to review current one stop locations for continued feasibility as well as service delivery accessibility. The groups developed a template for each LWDB to conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether to utilize or expand an existing location, or select a brand new location. In conducting the cost-benefit analysis, the LWDB considered such factors as cost, location, public accessibility, potential for expansion, the length of the lease, and any other applicable or relevant factors.

With the results of the assessments, WFD, in conjunction with the working group, developed tailored guidance letters for each local area which addressed firewalls, market research, and procurement best practices. The guidance was tailored to factors such as: whether the area intended to relocate the one-stop, who was bidding to be the operator, and the areas’ current structure. A summary of one local area’s guidance follows: “Middle Georgia LWDA had a GDOL Career Center and a building owned by the Middle Georgia Consortium. This owned space is adequate to meet all the partner’s needs and Middle Georgia did not search for a new location. Middle Georgia Consortium was interested in bidding on the procurement of the one-stop operator. This area’s procurement was most similar to Cobb County – in that the entity seeking the operator bid is separate from the fiscal agent (Baldwin County). As such, firewalls had to be instituted between the two entities to ensure a fair procurement.”

Furthermore, the working group developed guidance on the definitions of access and physical presence for local areas. The definition aligned with the Final Rule. Physical presence is still preferred when possible, but when it is not possible, direct linkage is acceptable. The Final Rule requires that an individual can directly connect with a person who can guide them through the services.

The One-Stop Funding and Procurement Working Group identified several items that LWDBs were required to achieve prior to June 30, 2016, in order to meet the state’s requirement of documenting adequate progress towards competitive procurement of a one-stop operator.

Required Actions Included: 1) All LWDBs conducted an in-person meeting with all of the required one-stop partners. This included Wagner-Peyser (GDOL), Vocational Rehabilitation (GVRA), Adult Education (TCSG-OAE), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (GDHS). LWDBs could also include non-required partners, but a majority (50% + 1) of the required partners were required to be present in order for quorum to be established at this meeting. At a minimum, the LWDB Chairman was required to be present as a representative of the LWDB. Minutes from this meeting were required to be submitted to WFD. Topics covered at LWDB meetings included: a) Identification of viable locations for the comprehensive one-stop. b) Review and approval of MOU for current one-stop operations. c) Competitive procurement of the comprehensive one-stop operator. The meeting between the LWDB and all required one-stop partners identified any potential conflicts of interest that existed with respect to the current

operation of the LWDB and addressed the requirements for competitive procurement of the one-stop operator, to ensure that all mandatory partners were engaged in the process. During this meeting, any mandatory partner, as well as the LWDA fiscal agent and/or administrative entity, announced their interest in responding to the competitive proposal request. A firewall adequately separated any interested party from both the development and evaluation of the responses to the procurement.

Core Services provided in one-stops: As a part of the self-assessment (above), each LWDA identified core services and partners currently located or accessible in one-stops and began discussions regarding the flow of customer services in an integrated system. Depending on the site configuration and needs of customers, the flow of services may include registration in Wagner Peyser and use of the Employ Georgia portal as a first step. This initial step may include resume preparation and job matching, labor market information and research on in demand occupations, training services, support assistance including TANF and disability assistance, among other resources. Each LWDA was responsible for development of an MOU with core partners no later than June 30, 2017.

The Data Integration Working Group contracted with Georgia Tech Research Institute to work with each state agency, determine needs and privacy issues and present potential solutions to the sharing of data as well as full data integration. As a result of this work, data integration will be asserted in a phased approach over several different stages. The initial sharing of data took place on October 10, 2017 for the development of the November 2017 quarterly report to USDOL ETA.

Additionally, the Technical College System of Georgia Office of Adult Education (TCSG OAE) continues its commitment to maintain alignment with other WIOA core partners (and other key service providers) within the state. Recognizing that a successful WIOA-participant is one that receives services that address his/her needs comprehensively, the OAE implemented measures that ensured that Adult Education students were fully engaged in the WorkSource Georgia system. The OAE ensured alignment with WIOA partners in four ways.

- State Workforce Development Board (SWDB). Georgia's intent is that the Governor's Office will continue to select representation for Adult Education on the State Workforce Development Board. As the governing body for the State's workforce system, the Board establishes policies to facilitate collaboration from each core partner. The Board will continue to ensure that the state's leadership and key workforce bodies are cognizant of the needs, perspectives, and activities of the OAE, the Adult Education Local Eligible Providers, as well as the students served by these bodies. Continued inclusion on the SWDB positions TCSG OAE to funnel information directly to local providers to ensure their alignment to sector strategies and focus areas identified by key industry partners.
- WIOA Working Groups. The OAE was a critical member of the WIOA working groups designed to facilitate the sharing of data, the creation and revision of processes related to collaboration, and the dissemination of best practices. Through approximately June 30, 2017, the focus continued in the areas of: Data Integration; Administration and Board Structure; One-Stop Integration; One-Stop Funding and Procurement. Through these mechanisms, OAE staff worked alongside other partners to ensure that program

participants were knowledgeable of the myriad of services offered through each core partner and affiliated agencies.

Local Workforce Development Boards. Local Eligible Providers in the Adult Education network were represented on Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). This representation enabled regional and local leaders to establish systems (e.g. referral, communications) to ensure that needs of participants were met comprehensively. The OAE provided multi-faceted technical assistance and professional development to local providers to ensure that they were fully versed in the expectations of WIOA and were prepared to support One-Stop centers and other initiatives established at the local level. Adult Education providers incorporated skills into curricula that were prioritized and applicable to the strategic industries identified in each region.

One-Stop Center Participation. Local Adult Education providers are requisite components of One-Stop Centers, located throughout the state. Center participants now have the opportunity to access adult education services (e.g. enrollment and advisement) concurrently with other WIOA services. WIOA participants who have a literacy deficiency, or who lack a secondary credential (or its equivalent) are able to receive the education necessary to increase skills and/or obtain a credential. As a partner in the One-Stop Center, Adult Education has aligned itself with the operationalization of the local workforce development plan.

Utilize Labor Market Information to Inform Workforce Decisions: In addition to the LMI tools already discussed, there are other tools available which provides the most current and robust snapshot of regional economic statistics. WFD continues to use EMSI, Inc. to supplement survey-method labor market data available through the BLS. WFD purchased access to BGLI real-time labor market information to address a need for real time data on actual, current job openings. Together with other LMI resources, such as GDOL's Georgia Labor Market Explorer, which provides online resources to employers, job seekers and workforce professionals, the State's workforce system can provide information on short- and long-term demands for skilled labor at the local and state levels.

Relatedly, in an effort to maximize capacity around the use of these LMI tools, WFD has been proactive in supporting related training for state and local staff. WFD's aggressive approach in this area ensures that workforce team members exploit the LMI tools to its fullest capabilities, using it robustly to understand employment dynamics throughout the state.

Emphasizing Business Services:

The State's third strategy looks to build upon Georgia's recognition as one of the best states for business. In November 2017 and for the 5th year in a row, the State received the designation as the "No. 1 place to do business" nationwide by Site Selection magazine. The State's success has been due in part to the State's ability to attract employers by meeting their skill needs through close coordination between workforce development and economic development as well as programs/initiatives such as Rapid Response, GeorgiaBEST, and WorkSmart. (See details in State Strategy Implementation [Section III \(a\)\(2\)\(A\)](#)).

Sector Strategies. Georgia has a history of participating in sector strategy initiatives, and several of the LWDBAs have experience in sector partnership development and implementation. In 2007, the National Governors Association (NGA) partnered with the National Network of Sector

Partners and the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce to launch a project on Accelerating State Adoption of Sector Strategies. A year-long Policy Academy provided participating states with the opportunity to learn about relevant research, promising practices, and state policy options for establishing sector strategies. Georgia was selected by the NGA to develop and implement two Sector Strategies, Advanced Manufacturing and Biotechnology, as both were at critical junctures of economic growth within the state. From 2007 to 2011, the State awarded 18 Industry Sector Grants focusing on additional sectors, such as Logistics, Energy, Aerospace, and Digital Media. With the transition of Governors and WIA funding cuts, further state funding for those initiatives were no longer available. In some instances, the partnerships and initiatives that were developed with those grant funds continued as local and regional initiatives.

Georgia was selected and participated in the Aspen Institute's Sector Skills Academy, which enabled the State to better equip the LWDAs and their partners to create lasting sector partnerships in conjunction with the full implementation of WIOA. As a direct result, WFD bolstered the development of Sector Partnerships through a variety of key initiatives, including regional planning meetings, development of a guidebook on Sector Partnerships for LWDAs, grants for up to \$250,000 to support increased capacity, and enhanced technical assistance.

The development of the Georgia Skills Sector Academy is discussed in full in State Strategy Implementation of Sector Strategies in Section III(a)(2)(A).

Work-Based Learning. To increase the provision of work-based learning services, the state also offered grants to LWDAs who have not provided a wide array of business services in the past. Similar to the strategy utilized with special populations, these grants enabled those LWDAs to develop services strategies and eventually integrate work-based learning into their formula-funded services delivery. Statewide LWDA Capacity building and training continues to assist in facilitating relationships with business and industry. The State also facilitates the sharing of best practices among areas that have utilized work-based services in the past. The State continues to encourage LWDAs to work within the established regions to better provide these services to business and industry. An example of this strategy would be the creation of region-wide OJT contracts and templates. See details on implementation of Work-based learning strategies in [Section III\(a\)\(2\)\(A\)](#).

GDOL's Business Services Unit. The Business Services Unit (BSU) of the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) reflects a new direction and emphasis on employer-driven service delivery, and access to a market driven staff dedicated to fulfilling the needs of Georgia employers. The continued realignment of vision and purpose has positioned GDOL to refocus on its commitment to the business community and provide a venue for a more proactive and employer friendly partnership. In addition to the Regional Coordinator Program and the Business Services Recruiters, BSU manages the Job Readiness Program (SWAT), Career Expos, Customized Recruitment Services, GeorgiaBEST for Students, GeorgiaBEST for Employers, Regional Summits, and the Employer Committee.

The Regional Coordinator Program has partnered with economic developers, locally, regionally and statewide by executing prompt turn-around data and customized solutions to workforce issues. Located in the twelve service-delivery regions in the state, Regional Coordinators have helped economic developers identify data critical for the successful location and expansion of industry.

The Business Services Recruiters continue to devote their efforts towards developing and maintaining relationships with employers regionally- identifying talent pools for target industries; identifying employer talent requirements and matching the talent with the hiring needs.

The SWAT (Special Workforce Assistance Team) team currently has fifty plus expert staff prepared to assist job seekers with résumé assistance and the marketing tools necessary to impress hiring managers. The team works closely with Chambers of Commerce, Industrial Authorities and economic developers to fill the gaps and barriers to employment many veterans and job seekers face. SWAT – Job Readiness events continue to feature workshops on a plethora of topics, such as improving interviewing skills, networking skills, using social media in job search, finding a job after 40, and career expo success. Computer stations are set up at the events and hands on training and assistance are offered to job seekers to create social media profiles, develop business cards, creating their personal elevator pitch and résumé development.

BSU have managed Regional Career Expos that are tailored to targeted industries, job seekers, and skill requirements. They have also produced general and community events where business and job seekers from all industries attended and encountered opportunities of potential job matches between employers and job seekers. Regional Career Expos can typically include up to 90+ vendors and may host up to and over 2,000 job seekers at one event.

Georgia Department of Labor's Customized Recruitment (CR) is a specialized resource offered to eligible businesses (new to Georgia) aimed towards the streamlining of the company's candidate search and recruitment process by utilizing a team of highly successful GDOL recruiters, working on behalf of the employer. The CR team continues to utilize both traditional GDOL methods as well as current and innovative industry methods of recruitment to identify the most qualified candidates for an employer. The CR team is experienced in recognizing skills, critiquing résumés, and organizing large recruitment events allowing them to effectively leverage resources to draw on the talent pool. Candidates go through multiple steps of established CR checks and balances, ensuring their qualifications, applications or résumés are then referred to the employer for established next steps. CR events allow the option for GDOL and/or the employer to collect hundreds of candidate applications, conduct a pre-screen interview for qualifications, and potentially interview all in one day. The CR team, as requested, provides the employer with all candidates or sorted by qualification level or those that meet the highest levels of qualifications. With this proactive approach to filling desired positions quickly, the CR team partners with economic developers, and project managers to ease the recruitment piece by offering to alleviate direct applicant contact to the employer and providing screening assistance.

The Employer Committee has provided a critical link between GDOL and the business community. Employers are provided a venue to address common issues. Employer Committees are groups of local business representatives who establish and maintain a working relationship between the employer community and the GDOL. The committees provide input and guidance in the development of policy and legislation by the Department of Labor as it impacts Georgia employers and employees. They promote GDOL services among the employment community and have identified and recommended ways to meet local and state employment related needs.

Regional Summits are designed to help business owners, managers, hiring professionals, and others better understand and conquer compliance challenges in the workplace. “Employers In the Know” attendees have met and heard from Commissioner of Labor, Mark Butler, as he has shared valuable information on the most recent GDOL initiatives and programs. The Regional Summits have also provided information from Labor Law experts about federal policies and legislation that helped to ensure businesses are compliant and profitable in the upcoming years. Employers have also learned about what some of Georgia’s most important state agencies are doing to encourage job growth and economic development. Furthermore, this program is approved for 3.75 recertification credits through the Human Resources Certification Institute (HRCI).

Increase Participation in the Workforce System:

In conjunction with providing a unified workforce development system, the State’s goal is to increase the access points available to individuals, including those with barriers to employment, individuals located in remote areas and businesses in the workforce system. Several of Georgia’s workforce areas include sparsely populated counties in remote areas. These areas are employing a myriad of resources to provide services, including mobile units in conjunction with public libraries or other service agencies.

Career Pathways. WIOA places an increased emphasis on the development and use of career pathways. Every youth is required to have an objective assessment conducted in order to identify appropriate services and career pathways for the participant. Following the objective assessment, WIOA-eligible youth work in tandem with their case manager to develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS), which heavily stresses career pathways. Youth are strongly encouraged to pursue credentials that will lead them into a sustainable, rewarding career. Additionally, WFD and the GaDOE continue to work closely to ensure that K-12 schools are connected with local industry representatives. Georgia is committed to providing educational opportunities through career pathways that will ultimately optimize the progress and success of individuals with varying levels of abilities and needs. Through the development and use of career pathways, Georgia’s youth will be equipped to enter the working world with marketable credentials and valuable skills. Georgia WorkSmart, an initiative created by Governor Nathan Deal in 2015, promotes work-based learning training models, such as apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships and internships as critical elements to support Career Pathways. Georgia WorkSmart assists companies in developing these customized training programs to meet their specific and unique workforce needs by incorporating on-the-job learning with related classroom instruction. (See details on Implementation of State Strategies for Career Pathways in [Section III\(a\)\(2\)\(A\)](#)).

The state has determined that one of the most effective strategies for serving Georgia’s special populations is through the provision of targeted grants using Governor’s reserve funding. The grants enabled LWDAs to conduct pilot programs without using local formula funds. If service strategies for special populations were found to be successful, LWDAs were then able to integrate those strategies into their formula funded services. This strategy alleviated much of the risk of building new programs, while still promoting innovation. An example of this strategy was the state’s Ex-Offenders Pilot Program. Through this pilot, the State made a grant opportunity available to every LWDA that had a transition center within its geographic boundaries. To be awarded the grant, the LWDAs had to propose effective strategies that would be utilized to train

individuals that resided within transition centers. The LWDA's had to choose training programs for occupations that were in-demand, paid a livable wage in the region, and were appropriate for an individual who did not have a clean background. The state assessed the proposals and awarded funds to the LWDA's with the most innovative plans. The pilots were highly successful and enabled LWDA's to enhance relationships with community partners and better serve ex-offenders. Beginning in calendar year 2016, the state expanded upon the successes of this grant, by awarding five special populations grants. Furthermore, in November 2017, in an effort to support innovation around serving the Out of School Youth (OSY) population, the state offered a request for grant applications from LWDA's, which were reviewed for funding. The subject of the grants will coincide with the specified populations in the Governor's vision. The state will work with the LWDA's to ensure consistent and innovative services are delivered through grants.

GVRA has set an overall organizational goal to dramatically increase the number of individuals with disabilities served annually, as well as the number of individuals with disabilities who achieve competitive and integrated employment annually.

In order to accomplish these major organizational goals, GVRA is implementing an organizational transformation that impacts the entire agency. The intent of this agency transformation is twofold.

GVRA has improved its business process by which individual with disabilities are served. The new business process for serving clients is much more efficient and effective, allowing an increase in service capacity in all phases of the process. The process includes client intake, client capability development and employment services. Employment services includes a business strategy and is client focused on securing competitive integrated employment. GVRA has aligned its resources (personnel, budget, etc.) with the strategic objectives to achieve the organizations overall goals. Specifically, this includes a restructuring of the organization's departments and functions, as well as implementing new ways of managing client cases and adding new professional staff positions, both intended to increase capacity. For example, GVRA has partnered with Mercer University to create a post-bachelor's degree advanced rehabilitation certificate. This will allow GVRA to recruit bachelor's level rehabilitation professionals to provide transition services to both youth with disabilities and students with disabilities across the state. Heretofore, this would have been difficult due to the paucity of master's level certified rehabilitation counselors. In addition, GVRA is reorganizing its vocational rehabilitation field staff to a "team" model, which will reduce the capacity limitations caused by caseload size.

A major focus of GVRA is to increase its capacity for special population services and to continue to expand its collaborative partnership with other state agencies that serve these populations. Special Populations include services to individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Blind and Visually Impaired, Deaf Blind, Older Blind (Project Independence), Mentally Ill (IPS), Developmentally Disabled (DD) and Veterans (Team 26) and provide Selective Supports within their purview.

One example is the current partnership between GVRA and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD). This focus is to expand the capacity of GVRA, in partnership with DBHDD, to provide employment services to individuals with significant Behavioral Health and or Developmental Disabilities. Similarly, GVRA is pursuing additional

partnerships with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Compensated Work Therapy Program to better serve Veterans with disabilities.

The focus of the collaboration with the Division of Developmental Disabilities is to increase the number of individuals obtaining integrated competitive employment and increasing their independence. This work focuses on streamlining the collaboration of client facing staff of both agencies so as to align efforts and eliminate duplicate or redundant costs. Coupled with this work is the adoption of best practice services such as Supported Employment and Customized Supported Employment.

The focus of the DBHDD Behavioral Health Collaboration is to increase the number of individuals obtaining integrated competitive employment and increasing their independence. This work focuses on streamlining collaborative work with shared clients and eliminating duplicate or redundant costs. Coupled with this work is the adoption of best practice services such as Individual Placement and Supports or I.P.S. Supported Employment.

The focus of the VA Community Work Therapy collaboration is to increase the number of Veterans obtaining competitive employment and independence. This work focuses on connecting veterans with services and being responsive to the unique needs of the Veteran population.

GVRA has also systematically identified and integrated specialty training to dedicated and designated staff in order to address the unique service needs of individuals with sensory loss. Interdisciplinary Team meetings allow staff to understand and collaborate on a course of action to ensure comprehensive services. New Leadership with Sensory loss have been promoted into positions which will allow insight into the everyday struggles faced by individuals with sensory loss. Leadership is looking towards increasing service providers, interpreters, technology, dedicated staff with sensory loss and agency wide training. To that end, the ultimate goal is to increase GVRA's overall understanding and position the agency as a premier repository for statewide sensory resources. Finally, GVRA has collaborated with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to meet the goals of Georgia's Career Pathways to Work: Explore, Engage and Employ (E3), a federal demonstration grants expanding transition services to students with disabilities and out-of-school youth that lead to real jobs in their communities. Collaboration is ongoing with the Division for Special Education Services and Supports, Career, Technical, Agricultural Education Division, and Information Technology to enhance services for students with disabilities effectively and without duplication.

Increase Regional Awareness and Planning Among Local Areas

The Governor's goal is to continually better serve Georgians. Each core partner has a role in ensuring that Georgia's workforce meets the needs of the State's participants and employers. An increased emphasis on regional work will enable the state to locate and address the gaps in current service delivery across Local Areas. (See [Section II\(a\)\(1\)](#))

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENT

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

(a) State Strategy Implementation

(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).

The active collaboration between SWDB, WFD, and the State's one-stop delivery system is the key component of workforce development in Georgia. This collaboration begins with the Governor, who is responsible for the appointment of the SWDB members. SWDB's duties include the development of a statewide strategic plan, which establishes the four-year strategy for the Statewide Workforce Development System. SWDB is also responsible for assisting the Governor with additional functions designated by WIOA which are listed below:

- Strategic Functions
 - Developing and implementing the state plan and performance measures
 - Developing career pathways strategies
 - Developing/expanding strategies for partnerships in in-demand sectors/occupations
 - Developing and aligning policies
- System Capacity Building
 - Developing strategies to support staff training and awareness
 - Disseminating best practices
 - Developing and continuously improving the one-stop delivery system
 - Supporting effective local boards
- System Alignment and Effective Operations
 - Developing strategies for aligning technology and data systems
 - Developing LWDA allocation formulas
 - Developing a statewide LMI system
 - Developing policies and guidance on one-stop partner roles and resource contributions

SWDB is required to comply with federal and state conflict of interest policies and sunshine provisions. The federal conflict of interest policy states that a member of SWDB may not vote on a matter regarding the provision of services by such member or a measures that would provide financial benefit to such a member or his/her immediate family. A state board member may not engage in any other activities determined by the Governor to constitute a conflict of interest as specified in the SWDB bylaws, and must sign the SWDB bylaws to satisfy the State's conflict of interest policy. SWDB must also comply with federal and state sunshine provisions. These federal and state regulations require SWDB to make available to the public, at regular intervals, all information regarding their activities.

To assist SWDB with coordination of services and policy alignment, the State created four working groups that are tasked with supporting the State's transition to WIOA and system integration. Working group membership is made up of the following:

- WFD staff;
- GDOL staff;

- GVRA staff;
- TCSG, OAE staff;
- DHS staff;
- LWDA staff; and
- SWDB members.

The diverse and comprehensive membership of the working groups has enabled the State to more effectively transition into WIOA. The working groups assisted in the creation of the state plan and will continue to meet after the submission of the state plan to ensure that all parties are working towards creating a more unified system. Each of the following four working groups are focused on a unique challenge in implementing WIOA:

- WIOA Data Integration Working Group;
- WIOA One-Stop Funding and Procurement Working Group;
- WIOA One-Stop Integration Working Group; and
- WIOA Administration and Board Structure Working Group.

WIOA Data Integration Working Group

WIOA provides high-level requirements and expectations for the exchange of data between and reporting of data from core WIOA partner organizations. The Data Integration Working Group was tasked with determining how current data systems can communicate and handle co-enrollment under WIOA, determining how data reporting can be handled by the various state agencies under WIOA, and addressing what data sharing agreements were needed to best facilitate an integrated data system. The working group then acquired the service of the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) to assist in the aforementioned tasks. After identifying potential solutions, GTRI and the working group developed a multi-phased approach to data integration. Phase 1 focuses on the implementation of Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) to support the movement of data and administrative web-based capabilities. Phase 2 and Phase 3 involve the development of enhanced web-based capabilities and robust vendor integration capabilities. As of late 2017, GTRI and the working group are in the middle of Phase 1.

WIOA One-Stop Funding and Procurement Working Group

WIOA provided high-level requirements and expectations for the funding and procurement for services under WIOA. The One-Stop Funding and Procurement Working Group provided more tailored guidance about the process of procuring of One-Stop center operators. This included Competitive Procurement guidance that identified required elements of the RFP and required evaluation criteria. The WIOA One-Stop Funding and Procurement Working Group also collaborated with the One-Stop Integration Working Group to develop customized guidance for each LWDA, discussing their proposed one-stop structure, potential firewall/conflict of interest issues that may arise, and potential best practices to avoid creating conflicts of interest. This guidance was distributed to each LWDA with additional technical assistance provided as needed.

The working group also made recommendations and proposed policies which governed the funding allocation of one-stop centers under WIOA. This involved developing funding mechanisms that would fairly appropriate costs associated with operating a one-stop center. The attachment labeled Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Service Delivery

Guidelines was sent to the LWDA's to guide them in their MOU negotiations with partner programs outlining how infrastructure funding agreements should have been created by the LWDA's. The guidance was based on federal guidance such as Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGL) 16 – 16 and 17 – 16.

WIOA One-Stop Integration Working Group

WIOA provides high-level requirements and expectations for the integration and delivery of services in WIOA's one-stop delivery system. The One-Stop Integration Working Group was tasked with addressing many of the key issues related to WIOA's goal to further integrate service delivery of federal skills development and employment services programs. The working group's goal was to develop clear implementation solutions regarding the integration of workforce programs, including co-location, physical presence challenges, and one-stop certification; and to present those solutions to SWDB.

WIOA Administration and Board Structure Working Groups

WIOA provided high level requirements and expectations for administration and oversight under WIOA. The Administration and Board Structure Working Group was tasked with formulating policies affecting direct workforce services provided to participants and businesses. The Administration and Board Structure Working Group's goal was to focus on governance and local administration activities designed to support the State's implementation of an integrated, WIOA-compliant service delivery system that includes and involves all the core partner programs. The working group identified policy changes necessary to promote effective and consistent service delivery, addressed performance accountability measures, and ensured governing bodies were certified in order to continue serving the community going forward.

All board action items that were approved by the working groups were sent to the SWDB committees. There are currently four subject matter committees. SWDB members are assigned by the chairperson to serve on the following committees: Re-Employment Services Committee, LWDA Guidance Committee, Youth Committee, and Performance Accountability Committee. Each of these committees also have two or more LWDA directors who serve as advisors and a WFD staff person who coordinates the meetings and performs tasks related to research.

- Re-Employment Services Committee: The Re-Employment Services Committee is charged with the development of policy and programs that benefit the State's Adult and Dislocated Worker population. The committee is chaired by SWDB member Mel Stowers and this committee has taken a specific interest in Veterans and ex-offenders.
- LWDA Guidance Committee: The LWDA Guidance Committee is charged with the development of policy and provision of guidance as it pertains to LWDA administration and LWDB structure. The committee is chaired by SWDB member Ames Barnett.
- Youth Committee: The Youth Committee is charged with the development of policy and programs that benefit the Georgia's youth population. The committee is chaired by SWDB member Ann Cramer and has taken a specific interest in at-risk, incarcerated, and returning youth.
- Performance Accountability Committee: The Performance Accountability Committee is charged with utilizing performance data to help drive the decisions before the SWDB, and to identify existing gaps and opportunities in board engagement. The committee is chaired by SWDB member Brian Anderson.

There is also a SWDB Executive Committee. This committee’s membership is made up of the chairperson, vice-chairperson, and the committee heads. The executive committee can act on behalf of SWDB when necessary.

The chairperson and vice-chairperson of SWDB are appointed by the Governor based upon recommendations from individuals in the business community. Other officers are selected as determined by the Governor. The members of the board serve such terms as established by the Governor, and the members continue to serve at the discretion of the Governor, except for the member of the House of Representative and the member of the Senate, who continue to serve at the discretions of the Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor, respectively. SWDB adopts bylaws to guide its proceedings. Each member of SWDB, who is not otherwise a state officer or employee, is authorized to receive reimbursement for reasonable, necessary travel expenses incurred in the performance of his or her duties as a member of the board, provided that such funds are available and such reimbursements are allowable under federal law. Should funds not be available or allowable for this purpose, such members will serve without reimbursement.

The governance structure is referenced in Figure 44: State’s Governance System ([See Section III\(b\)\(3\)\(A\)](#)); and the SWDB membership, which is fully compliant with WIOA standards, is listed below:

Name:	Entity:	WIOA Requirement:
Nathan Deal	Governor, State of Georgia	
Mark Butler	Commissioner, GDOL	Wagner-Peyser
Matt Arthur	Commissioner, TCSG	WIOA
Beverly Smith	Asst. Commissioner, Adult Edu	Adult Education
Mike Roby	Commissioner, GDVS	
Sean Casey	Executive Director, GVRA	Vocational Rehabilitation
Robyn Crittenden	Commissioner, DHS	
Wendell Dallas, Chairman	Atlanta Gas Light	Business Representative
Brian Anderson	Columbus Chamber	Business Representative
Jay Cunningham	Superior Plumbing	Business Representative
Phil Sutton	Kubota	Business Representative
Chuck Newnan	Batson Cook	Business Representative
Stuart Countess	Kia	Business Representative
Mike Dudgeon	Hirez	Business Representative
Chris Acree	Well Star	Business Representative
Theresa Fisher	Southwire Company	Business Representative
Ben Copeland	Patten Seed Company	Business Representative
Joe McDermott	Delta	Business Representative
Cade Joiner	Shred-X	Business Representative
Dell Keith	Wayne County Chamber	Business Representative
Shan Cooper	Westrock	Business Representative

Joe Yarbrough	Carpet and Rug Institute	Business Representative
Kevin Jackson	Enviro Vac	Business Representative
Ayanna Howard	Zyrobotics	Business Representative
Jerald Mitchell	Atlanta Beltline	Business Representative
Marcia Dixon	Flaxsteel Industries	Business Representative
Karen Viera	Church's Chicken	Business Representative
Eric Hughes	Colony Bank	Business Representative
Mark Wilson	Langdale Industries	Business Representative
Alan Schuetze	Carroll Daniel Construction Company	Business Representative
Bart Gobeil	Georgia Ports Authority	Business Representative
Evelyn Olenick	Phoebe-Putney Memorial Hospital	Business Representative
Susan Andrews	Harris County Commissioners	Local Government
Ames Barnett	City of Washington	Local Government
Randy Toms	City of Warner Robins	Local Government
Avery Niles	Commissioner, DJJ	Youth Representative
Kellie Brownlow	Alliance Board, Boys and Girls Club	Youth Representative
Sam Dasher	Jefferson County School System	Youth Representative
Mike Long	Georgia Board of Education	Youth Representative
Pending	AFL-CIO	Labor Representative
Randy Beall	Atlanta & North GA Building Trades	Labor Representative
Chuck Little	Atlanta Electrical Contractors Association	Apprenticeship
James Wilburn	VET ²	CBO
Tom Cook	New Hope Enterprises	CBO
Stanley Cartwright	Perdido Bay Tribe Foundation	CBO
Frank Ginn	Georgia Senate, District 47	State Senate
Buddy Harden	Georgia House, District 147	State House

(See [Appendix 6: Working Group Benchmarks](#))

(2) Implementation of State Strategies

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

(A) Core Program Activities to Implement the State Strategy

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

Georgia's strategy for workforce development aims to support the State's core mission to meet the needs of Georgia's growing economy and align programs and resources to create an effective and efficient method of workforce development. The State's strategy is focused on supporting a unified workforce system that involves the coordinated services and resources of all core program partners.

The state will support the following activities to implement the State's five key strategies:

Create a Unified Workforce System

The State aims to increase the opportunities the workforce system provides, both to individuals and to businesses. Georgia designed collaborative forums through the four working groups to find innovative and practical solutions that aim toward thorough integration. Georgia is also embarking on efforts to analyze and improve the referral process and case management systems to further unify activities at the participant level.

Each working group contained members of core partner agencies, LWDA representatives, and representatives from SWDB. Through inclusion of these parties, the State is enabling continuous dialogue among each critical player in the workforce system to help ensure Georgia develops a single, unified system. The working groups collaborate to identify opportunities for Georgia to create a comprehensive workforce system where, regardless of how a customer accesses the system, Georgia's workforce system will provide that customer with a seamless, integrated, and consistent provision of services.

The State is also analyzing referrals among partner programs to identify opportunities to improve the number of individuals moving from under- or unemployment into education or employment opportunities through the workforce development system.

Finally, state and local core program partners are collaborating with DFCS which was recently awarded a USDA grant to develop a multiagency assessment and case management delivery system. This collaboration will enable staff delivering Wagner-Peyser services and related partner programs to provide intensive customized reemployment services to a broad segment of Georgians in need. Career advisors will be able to continuously share information and insights via a centralized MIS system. Similarly, all necessary participant tracking and reporting will be accomplished within a single system.

Utilize Labor Market Information to Inform Workforce Systems

The State plans to leverage all core partner agencies to ensure data and data analytics are at the forefront of the workforce development system. The State has several tools at its disposal to support this strategy including the BGLI.

BGLI provides real-time LMI for the state and LWDAs to utilize in the development of sector strategies, career pathways, and skills training to address employer needs. State partners also assist with identifying and analyzing state workforce trends, employer needs, and training opportunities. Finally, the State continually leverages data made available through the Census Bureau and USDOL/BLS.

Further, in 2015, as part of the State's HDCI, Georgia circulated an assessment which asked employers to identify the most needed skills and occupations in the next five years. This assessment will give the state quantitative data on the exact positions which employers are

seeking to fill, standardized across O*Net and NAICS codes. The results of the assessment will allow the state to further define local workforce needs and use the data to develop integrated workforce strategies statewide.

GDOL's Georgia Labor Market Explorer is another tool available to assist core partners. Using this online resource, workforce professionals have the ability to create reports such as Area Labor Profiles and create customized reports for economic development activities. Also available are reports to identify workforce trends and occupations for which growth is projected.

Emphasizing Business Services

As noted under State Strategies, Georgia's coordination between workforce development, economic development, and programs such as GeorgiaBEST, Rapid Response, and Georgia WorkSmart have further enhanced Georgia as a destination for business and led Georgia to the forefront in attracting business to the State. Partner agencies each have a role in assisting business with skilled workforce needs.

The BSU, housed within GDOL, emphasizes employer-driven service delivery, and access to a market driven staff that is dedicated to fulfilling the needs of Georgia's employers. BSU partners with economic developers, employers, and businesses to identify talent pools for target industries, customize solutions for workforce issues, and assist with critical industry expansion needs. BSU also manages the Job Readiness Program, Career Expos, Customized Recruitment Services, GeorgiaBEST for Students, GeorgiaBEST for Employers, Regional Summits, and the Employer Committee. The State also makes labor market information available to employers through self-access and web subscription services to help promote the workforce system as a tool for employers to meet their needs. Georgia has taken steps to educate employers on the resources available through presentations, various marketing materials, and outreach services.

In PY14 Georgia was awarded a Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant to provide enhanced career services to Dislocated Workers. The State's strategy is to coordinate business services among multiple system partners. Leveraging Georgia's Rapid Response Team, GDOL's BSU, GDEcD's Global Commerce team, and LWDA staff, the State has created a model which can be replicated throughout Georgia to provide employers with uniform access to the workforce system.

In conjunction with the efforts mentioned above, the State has molded its Rapid Response program into a proactive tool that now offers workforce services to employers throughout the business lifecycle, in addition to during layoffs and other large events. Rapid Response leverages the relationships and knowledge of LWDAs to help provide services to employers and workers. This integrated approach allows the State to not only assist with mass layoffs and employment needs, but to assist LWDAs and local employers as they seek to identify key next steps. Throughout this process, key stakeholders communicate regularly with UI and TAA to help ensure the full range of services is available to both employers and employees.

As in-demand occupations grow and the skills gap widens, employers have an increased need for skilled positions and training programs. To that end, the State has also developed long-term work based learning strategies such as those delivered through Georgia WorkSmart (see [Section VI\(b\)\(2\)](#)).

Sector Strategies: The Georgia Sector Skills Academy described in State Strategies (see [Section II \(c\)](#)) will build partnerships with employers, training providers, community organizations, and other key stakeholders around specific industries to address the workforce needs of employers and the training, employment, and career advancement needs of workers. The defining elements of state sector initiatives include a focus on customized solutions for a specific industry/industries at a regional level, bringing the industry partnerships together, and promoting the competitiveness of industries in the region.

Atlanta Career Rise, a sector-based funders collaborative affiliated with the National Fund for Workforce Solutions, has been instrumental in the development of sector partnerships which focus on frontline employee training and development. Atlanta Career Rise is a partner in the planning and funding of the Metro Atlanta initiatives. The Georgia Workforce Leadership Association, which consists of the Chairs of the LWDA's with support from the LWDA Directors, will also partner in these efforts.

The goal of WFD is to use the Aspen Institutes' Sector Skills Academy as a cornerstone in the state's WIOA Sectors Partnership development. The skills learned through the train-the-trainer program have enabled WFD to better prepare LWDA staff and their partners to serve business needs of the local and regional areas. Goals include new or expanded business-driven sector training collaborations, new regional partnerships formed or strengthened, local or state policy changes, and new employer engagement strategies.

In an effort to comply with WIOA requirements, all of the 19 LWDA's have been organized in 12 state regions. Those 12 regions will be charged with developing regional partnerships and sector strategies and participating in the Georgia Sector Skills Academy sessions. WFD hosted four sector strategy sessions: North Georgia, Metro Atlanta, Middle Georgia and South and Coastal Georgia. LWDA's/Regions were required to invite and ensure attendance of core partners, training/service providers, non-profit leaders, and industry leaders and ensure that all key stakeholders participate. During these sessions, WFD, in partnership with the Aspen Institute, worked to establish lasting relationships that will serve as the base for WIOA Sector Strategies. Some LWDA's/Regions came to the table with existing partnerships, and others were at the initial phase of development. These sessions were versatile enough to benefit sector partnerships at all stages of development. The meetings served as the basis for the development of local plans.

WFD hosted webinars after the sector strategy sessions and before the statewide symposium described below. These webinars focused on topics that complement the training received at the session and continued to prepare LWDA's to submit their local plans. Two examples of webinar topics: WIOA Business and WBL services and How to Utilize Real-time and Traditional Data Collection Systems.

WFD hosted the 2016 WorkSource Georgia Convening at the conclusion of PY15. While the sector training was not the sole purpose of this convening, LWDA's sent representatives to report on the sector training sessions and provide updates on the successes and challenges both locally and regionally. All of the regional and statewide sessions were recorded and added to the state's training library.

Work Based Learning. In addition to developing strategies to utilize work-based learning including OJT and customized training in the LWDA's through statewide capacity building, the

State has also developed long-term work-based learning strategies. The State launched Georgia WorkSmart in partnership with the Office of Apprenticeship to provide more access to the Registered Apprenticeship program. Georgia WorkSmart is another tool to provide to employers looking to train in place. Another resource Georgia has developed is Fast Track training. Two industries in Georgia experiencing demand include the carpet industry in northwest Georgia and the logistics industry in the coastal region. To help meet this need, WFD convened employers and partnered with the local technical colleges to condense needed subject matter into a short program. The combination of a shortened timeline, employer engagement, and use of classroom and on-the-job training has created a successful model for providing entry into growing industries. The state is working to expand upon these services, providing added resources and technical assistance to aid local workforce development areas expand their offerings. (see [Section VI\(b\)\(2\)](#)) for details on Georgia WorkSmart and Fast Track)

Increase Participation in the Workforce System

Career Pathways: The core partner agencies (WFD, GDOL, GVRA, and TCSG) have recently joined other state agencies and offices on a statewide Career Pathways initiative. The state is partnering with Jobs for the Future (JFF), a Boston-based nonprofit that manages the Pathways to Prosperity Network. The Pathways to Prosperity Network is a collaboration of member states that seeks to ensure that an increased number of young people complete high school and attain post-secondary credentials that translate to value in the labor market. Each participating state is engaging educators and employers in building a system of career pathways that launches young people into promising careers.

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

The GaDOE also recently launched their new “Partner’s Educating Georgia’s Future Workforce” initiative, which is facilitated by their Career, Technical, and Agriculture Education Division. The meetings are hosted in the 12 economic development regions throughout the state, and each meeting features regional partners representing business, education, community, and civic leaders. The purpose of the meetings is to consider regional workforce needs and determine how the partners can work together to ensure needs are met for Georgia’s future workforce utilizing the K-12 education structure.

WFD and GDOL representatives were in attendance at each of the 12 meetings to present on the statewide workforce needs. These representatives provided facts and data regarding overall workforce trends and some specific needs of industries throughout the state. Additionally, representatives from the Local Workforce Development Areas were in attendance to offer their insight in regards to local and regional workforce needs and to discuss potential workforce solutions. The local relationships created at these meetings will foster future collaboration between the education and workforce communities especially in the K-12 arena.

Adult Education will play a key role in the workforce system. The Office of Adult Education (OAE) recognizes that a skilled and properly-trained workforce is precipitated by the foundation of literacy, and often requires a secondary credential (or equivalent). The OAE will provide multi-year grants to local eligible providers to offer Adult Education services to eligible participants. Priority is given to individuals with barriers to employment as well as individuals with disabilities. An eligible provider may apply for funding for one or more services specified by the WIOA statute. Specifically, the OAE provides (through a competitive grant process) funding (described further in section III.b.5.B.i) for the following activities:

Adult Education;
Literacy;
Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities;
Family Literacy Activities;
English Language Acquisition Activities;
Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education;
Workforce Preparation Activities; or
Integrated Education and Training.

Consistent with the statute, grant awardees are encouraged to offer Adult Education services concurrently with programs provided by other WIOA core partners, and key service providers. Specifically, grantees are required to develop and implement integrated education and contextualized training curricula to blend Adult Basic/Secondary Education with essential workplace skills for high demand occupations in the sector.

The OAE has aligned Adult Education content standards with the state's K-12 Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE). Local Eligible Providers are required to incorporate career-readiness content into the curricula, and to prioritize career readiness as a goal for program participants. The OAE will outline and communicate a two-year timeframe for the full implementation of the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS).

Further, to remain consistent with the intent of the statute, the Office of Adult Education require the implementation of measures to prioritize transition services, including entry to the workplace, enrollment in postsecondary education, apprenticeship programs, and other training programs that support student transition into the workforce.

Additionally, the Office of Adult Education received funding to implement Accelerating Opportunity (AO)—an evidence-based, integrated career pathways model. AO is a collaboration between the Adult Education program and the Technical Education (credit) program at several of Georgia's technical colleges. In this program, adult education students are dually enrolled in classes to prepare for the GED® test and credit classes that lead to an industry-recognized credential. Students who successfully complete the program earn a GED® credential and at least one stackable credential from an identified career-technical career pathway. Completers may opt to enter the workforce, or continue in postsecondary education. The program has proven to be an innovative model and partnership with multiple workforce partners and has been expanded beyond the pilot in order to provide this opportunity to additional adult education students.

The Office of Adult Education will continue to coordinate efforts with other WIOA service providers to develop additional (and strengthen existing) career pathway opportunities for

students. OAE will employ program monitoring mechanisms (described in detail in section II.b.4) and will specifically assess a program's local activities for alignment with sector strategies.

OAE incorporated a focus on career pathways into the RFA process. Applicants were asked to provide details regarding their ability to foster career pathways that will offer a combination of rigorous, high-quality education, training, and supportive services that lead to employment in key industries. A robust career pathway system will enable participants to obtain the requisite credentials, training, and workforce exposure to equip them for sustainable employment. Collaboration may include referral processes, literacy education, workforce training, and other resources. Moving forward, the OAE will assess local program implementation of career pathways, through its annual grant renewal process.

To ensure that local Adult Education programs adequately address the priorities of Georgia's WIOA partners and key service providers, the Technical College System of Georgia (as a representative of the Office of Adult Education) and local Adult Education programs will have representation on the State Workforce Development Board and Local Workforce Development Boards, respectively. This will enable local Adult Education leaders and practitioners to remain connected to the workforce initiatives and partnership policies.

Special Populations. Georgia also recognizes that in order to reach the broadest possible range of individuals, efforts must focus on developing a unified system. Georgia has crafted programs focused on enhancing services to veterans and individuals within the criminal justice system. With eight military installations, Georgia is home to a tremendous number of active duty and veteran service members. For example, programs like Operation: Workforce have been designed to meet the unique needs of this special population (see [Section III\(b\)\(7\)](#)).

Georgia has become a model for the nation in rethinking the approach to incarceration through education and rehabilitation. The workforce system is a vital partner to ensure that Georgia rehabilitates ex-offenders and provides them with marketable skills and opportunities to succeed. Georgia's goal is to continue to partner with the criminal justice system to remove barriers to employment and provide the resources needed to affect successful transitions into the workforce.

GVRA currently funds transition services for select school districts within the state of Georgia, primarily focused on high school students with disabilities. As of July 1, 2016, GVRA intends to expand its funding of transition services by providing transition services to all school districts within the state of Georgia and providing new transition services to both middle school students with disabilities, as well as high school students with disabilities. Part of this enlarged funding will include expansion of both GVRA-direct services, as well as services provided through GVRA's provider community across the state, and even new services sourced through new and additional providers. This may be especially true in parts of the state where there is a paucity of service providers. In addition, GVRA will continue and increase funding to specialty services currently offered, such as Project Search and High School High Tech.

GVRA intends to shift its funding resources away from those services that have not been shown to produce employment outcomes to either existing services or new services that have been shown to produce effective employment outcomes. The intent is to maximize the outcomes for the funding provided.

GVRA has established a provider management function within the agency that will identify best practices, negotiate effective rates with providers, audit providers on both quantitative and qualitative measures, and conduct both provider and service sourcing to ensure effective service capacity in all parts of the state of Georgia.

Of course, GVRA will work collaboratively with all the core programs, as well as other state agencies, to both integrate and embed vocational rehabilitation services as efficiently and effectively as possible. This will include services at the one-stops, cross-training, shared services, and where possible, braided or blended funding to maximize the resources available.

Additional services to individuals with barriers to employment are addressed in [Section III\(a\)\(2\)\(C\)](#).

Increasing Employer participation. The State provides a variety of customized services to employers in various formats. For example, labor market information can be self-accessed by employers or acquired with varying levels of staff assistance. For example, Web subscription-based Business Wise can also be made available with staff assistance. Employer centers in one-stop locations are used by employers in a self-service mode for recruitment and interviewing or with staff-assisted screening and testing.

Various marketing materials are also available and used to educate employers and facilitate employer involvement through BSU. BSU also markets to employers consistently by providing information related to agricultural employment, unemployment and partial unemployment benefits, tax and wage reports and payments, employing individuals with disabilities, employer committees, layoff information and resources, child labor info, labor market info, tax credits and incentives, workforce and business development services and resources, employment law issues, and recruiting new employee services.

WFD is also working proactively to advertise workforce development services provided by other State agencies. Georgia's citizens access state services through a wide variety of avenues and the State is actively working to educate each agency on what is offered through a unified workforce system to ensure each eligible participant is reached.

Employer involvement and participation in HDCI is also an example of increased employer involvement in the workforce system (see [Section II\(a\)\(1\)](#)).

Increase Regional Awareness and Planning Among Local Areas

The State will actively work with the SWDB through policy development, and local workforce boards through planning process, to increase regional coordination. The State also intends to increase the amount of training and technical assistance available to Local Areas in order to better serve them and enable them to better serve their participants.

[\(B\) 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.

In supporting the activities identified in (A) to help accomplish the State's strategies and goals for WIOA, Georgia will also leverage the services and coordination efforts of programs outside the Unified Plan including, but not limited to, SNAP, TANF, TAA, and other state programs providing employment-related services.

Alignment of Workforce Services to Human Services

Georgia's core partner programs are working closely with the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) to increase alignment of workforce development activities with overall human services activities. Recognizing that WIOA programs, TANF Welfare to Work, and SNAP E&T share similar goals, the State is looking to increase coordination. Moving forward, TANF may co-locate staff at the one-stop delivery system to enable better service delivery and communication, and staff may be increased as needed to enable this expanded presence. Additionally, TANF and SNAP have coordinated with other core partner agencies to provide support services to assist participants. This included variations of providing shared assessments, sharing case management systems, cross-training program staff, and implementing family-oriented policies. Currently, with subsidized employment and work experience, TANF already provides work-based training strategies for adults and youth with barriers to employment.

Additionally, TANF Welfare to Work and SNAP E&T promote the development and maintenance of community connections and resources that address basic skill deficiencies and identify employment barriers. These local collaborations include the current core partners of WIOA, providing a platform to further enhance the referral process for TANF and SNAP customers eligible for WIOA services.

Alignment of Programs Serving Migrant Workers

Agricultural outreach is another opportunity for the State to coordinate with agencies and programs outside of the core partners included in the Unified Plan. As part of the State's agricultural outreach efforts, staff develop partnerships and provide available resources to local organizations serving MSFWs. Resources include, but are not limited to: TANF, SNAP, the Georgia Farmworker Health Program, the Georgia Association for Primary Health Care, Inc., the Georgia Free Clinic Network, Telamon Corporation, Georgia Migrant Education, community food banks, the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and entities that provide Adult Literacy, ESL, and GED® services to MSFWs.

Alignment of Veterans Programs

One of the most effective ways the workforce system coordinates and aligns services across programs and partners, specifically those not defined within the Unified Plan, is through work with the State's veteran population. Georgia provides priority of service for USDOL-funded workforce programs as outlined in 38 U.S.C. § 42 and the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (see [Section III\(b\)\(7\)](#)). Covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses) are identified at the initial point of contact within the one-stop offices so that priority of service can be provided to veterans for the delivery of employment, training, job placement and related services as stated in the Jobs for Veterans Act (P.L. 107-288). LVER and DVOP staff are available for intensive employment and employability development. The roles of LVER and DVOP staff are distinct from one another. LVERs provide outreach and discuss the benefits of hiring veterans with employers,

while DVOPs provide individual services to veterans and assist them in overcoming barriers to employment through intensive services and case management.

Georgia has a strong reemployment service delivery strategy that links a network of organizations and programs serving veterans which include GDEcD, GDOL, TCSG, SDVS, Georgia National Guard and Reserve, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, GVRA, and the Georgia Chamber of Commerce.

Alignment with the Criminal Justice System

To further enable a unified workforce system, the core partner agencies have worked to coordinate and better align services with the state's prison and ex-offender programs. The workforce system is a vital partner to ensure that the Georgia criminal justice system returns ex-offenders to society with marketable skills and opportunities to succeed. The main focus of this effort is to decrease the Georgia prison population. The State will collaborate and leverage alignment of services from GDOL, CJCC, DJJ, DCA, and DOC to create a viable pathway to employment while decreasing the recidivism rate.

Alignment with Registered Apprenticeship

Georgia recognizes Registered Apprenticeship as an important workforce development strategy that is flexible and proven to benefit both the employer and the job seeker. Registered Apprenticeship is a model of job preparation that combines paid-on-the-job learning and related instruction to progressively increase a worker's skill level and wages. In Georgia, all Registered Apprenticeship programs are regulated per the National Apprenticeship Act, which is administered by the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship (OA). Georgia WorkSmart, a state initiative within WFD, acts as the primary liaison between OA and the state's local workforce system.

Local WIOA formula funds are encouraged to be used in support of apprentices and employers participating in Registered Apprenticeship programs. Registered Apprenticeship can help the workforce system achieve quality performance outcomes. Given the unique structure of Registered Apprenticeship programs, there are several ways in which WIOA training services may be used in conjunction with the programs. Primarily, the use of ITAs, OJT contracts, and Supportive Services are the most common method in which a LWDA can serve programs in their area. However, the use of Incumbent Worker Training, Work Experience, and Customized Training are also encouraged as valid apprenticeship training support. For these WIOA services, each local workforce area has been encouraged to develop policy and procedures dedicated to the appropriate use of WIOA funds toward Registered Apprenticeship. The purpose of dedicated local apprenticeship policy is to ensure LWDA's WIOA service delivery is adequately prepared to be applied to these long-term training programs. In addition to local policy development, the State has also created a Registered Apprenticeship-specific Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) procedure. Per WIOA, all Registered Apprenticeship sponsors in good standing with OA are automatically eligible to be included onto the State ETPL. WFD has been obtaining periodic listings of all Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors in Georgia from the OA State Director and have provided each sponsor with a notifying letter informing them of their voluntary inclusion onto the ETPL. Once the sponsor has confirmed their desire to be included on the ETPL, their program's training program is made available state-wide. This allows eligible participants to receive WIOA ITA funding toward apprenticeship training costs. This procedure has allowed

apprenticeship sponsors to obtain new pathways to find individuals wishing to join an apprenticeship.

The combination of State-guided technical assistance, development of local WIOA apprenticeship policy, and the creation of the State-run Apprenticeship ETPL process has led to a workforce system that is actively serving all types of apprenticeship programs. More so than ever, sponsors of apprenticeship programs and LWDA's are developing stronger connections that are benefiting all parties. Apprenticeship sponsors have gained new opportunities for business services and a means to find new apprentices, while WIOA eligible participants are learning about apprenticeship program openings and receiving funding toward their training costs. Lastly, these alignments have allowed each LWDA to better learn about and engage the approved programs operating within their area. This knowledge has increased communication and funding support toward Registered Apprenticeship.

Georgia WorkSmart is the State's recipient of USDOL's American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) grant. This nationally awarded grant encourages Georgia WorkSmart and its partner agencies to promote the development of Registered Apprenticeship programs within the Advanced Manufacturing Industry. Awarded in 2015, the AAI grant provides funding toward the training costs of an apprentice entering one of the allowable manufacturing occupations. This grant allows the State greater resources to promote the benefits of apprenticeship and expand the inclusion of underserved populations within these training programs.

Alignment with Early Education

In 2016, Georgia was awarded a grant by the National Governor's Association and the Center for Law and Social Policy to support the development of two generational strategies (2GEN) for workforce development. The grant is administered by Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and is comprised of a core team of agencies including DECAL, TCSG, USG, GDOL, and WFD. Additional partners include DFCS, DHS, and local workforce areas and non-profits.

Through the 2GEN work, the state has been working to better understand and find opportunities for alignment of programs that support workforce development in the state. The work has generated conversations about data and resource alignment to enhance the ability to refer common participants or potential participants into available opportunities. Additionally, the grant is developing the capacity for state partners to identify strategies for providing an enhanced level of service, including wrap-around or supportive services, using braided funding from programs outside of WIOA. An example of this alignment to support multi-generational strategies include locating information about quality rated and affordable child care at the one-stop or technical college campus in order to remove a potential barrier to an individual completing or participating in workforce training.

(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, 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.

Overview of Services to Individuals

Georgia has long supported the provision of coordinated and comprehensive workforce services to a universal population through Georgia's one-stop delivery system. The one-stop delivery system is responsible for administering the State's core program activities. The one-stop operator is the administrative entity responsible for accomplishing this in a seamless and fully integrated fashion so as to provide better access to the various core program services and to improve long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance. One-stop staff serve customers regardless of their barriers to employment, level of need, or degree of career development. Services are accessible to the "universal customer" at all of the one-stop centers throughout the state. The requirement to make services available to all customers is included in the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the heads of the state agencies that provide core program workforce services. Services are generally available to individuals based on need and the availability of funding. In addition, a variety of labor market information and career development tools are available to the universal population at all centers.

The career and training services provided through the one-stop centers are comprised of WIOA Title I and Title III Wagner-Peyser-funded services that must be provided for the universal population in all designated one-stop centers. Through the established WIOA working groups, WFD continues to coordinate with partners to increase flexibility of one-stop services to ensure customers receive direct access to the services which best fit identified needs. The State has created policy to establish two levels of services for adults and dislocated workers: career services and training services. These career and training services, coordinated by LWDAs through the one-stop system are listed below:

Career services for adults and dislocated workers includes three types of career services, as identified in CFR §678.430: Basic career services; Individualized career services; and Follow-up services.

- A. **Basic career services** must be made available and, at a minimum, must include the following services, as consistent with allowable program activities and federal cost principles:
 - a. Determination of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs;
 - b. Outreach, intake, and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop system;
 - c. Initial assessment of skills levels, including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and support service needs;
 - d. Labor exchange services, including:

- i. job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including the provision of information regarding in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
 - ii. appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including information and referrals to specialized business services not traditionally offered through the one-stop system;
 - e. Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the one-stop system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs;
 - f. Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including:
 - i. job vacancy listings in labor market areas;
 - ii. information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and
 - iii. information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skills requirements, and opportunities for advancement in those jobs;
 - g. Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and provider type;
 - h. Provision of information on how the LWDA is performing on federal performance measures;
 - i. Provision of information on the availability of support services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including:
 - i. child care;
 - ii. child support;
 - iii. medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program
 - iv. benefits under SNAP;
 - v. assistance through the earned income tax credit;
 - vi. housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through US HUD; and
 - vii. assistance under a state program for TANF, and other support services and transportation provided through that program;
 - j. Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation, by which the LWDA must provide assistance to individuals seeking such assistance.
 - k. Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA, including HOPE and PELL.
- B. Individualized career services** must be made available if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. In accordance with TEGL 19-16, individuals must be declared eligible to receive these services. These include the following services, as consistent with WIOA requirements and federal cost principles:
- a. Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skills levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include:

- i. diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
 - ii. in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
 - b. Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information regarding the ETPL;
 - c. Group counseling;
 - d. Individual counseling and mentoring;
 - e. Career planning;
 - f. Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;
 - g. Internships and work experience that are linked to careers;
 - h. Workforce preparation activities;
 - i. Financial literacy services;
 - j. Out-of-area job search and relocation assistance; and
 - k. English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.
- C. **Follow-up services** must be made available, as appropriate, and include counseling regarding the workplace for adult and dislocated worker participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment. These services must be provided at a minimum of 12 months from the first day of employment.

Georgia has also added an innovative enhancement to its reemployment initiatives for Georgia's job seekers and employers. The EG Focus Career Explorer is a state-of-the-art software application that offers job seekers a self-service tool to manage their career path and interact with Wagner-Peyser staff and services online to support successful career placement. It is a user-friendly system with real-time data to support a successful career search that also allows participants to upload, paste, or create up to five résumés and evaluate them to identify gaps in skills, experience, and education.

Training Services are provided to equip individuals to enter the workforce and retain employment. Examples of training services include:

- A. Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
- B. On-the-job training;
- C. Incumbent worker training;
- D. Workplace training and cooperative education programs;
- E. Private sector training programs;
- F. Skills upgrading and retraining;
- G. Entrepreneurial training;
- H. Apprenticeship;
- I. Transitional jobs;
- J. Job readiness training provided in combination with other training described above;

- K. Adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, in combination with training; and
- L. Customized training.

To complement and enhance the delivery of career and training services through the one-stop centers, the State is further integrating programs for targeted populations into the one-stop system to ensure access to services by the most vulnerable. The following pages highlight some key Georgia programs for targeted populations.

Low-Income Individuals

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

Through this initiative, Georgia will develop and utilize a coordinated, multiagency assessment and case management delivery system. Rather than merely “handing off” or “passing along” participants from one entity to another, an integrated case management system will be employed. Primary case managers will work closely with secondary case managers (i.e., specialists in partner organizations), continuously sharing information and insights via a centralized MIS system. Similarly, all necessary participant tracking and reporting will be accomplished within a single system.

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

Individuals with Disabilities

As the lead agency in serving individuals with disabilities, GVRA supports core partner programs in serving individuals with disabilities. Specific methods of service delivery can be found in [Section IX\(o\)](#).

Youth with Disabilities

Georgia’s one-stop system engages youth in customized career pathways and SES through collaborative partnerships between VR and other core partner programs in the one-stop system. Georgia recently developed a strategic initiative to expand and improve VR services for youth with disabilities who are either in-school or out-of-school. The purpose of this initiative is to braid existing and new resources to offer a robust, comprehensive array of VR services to all schools. Current VR program policies and procedures are being reviewed and amended to reflect

this new way of doing business. The plan includes the provision of pre-employment transition services and timely development and approval of an individualized plan for employment for each youth served. One subset of the proposed plan to expand and improve VR services is a newly awarded, five-year demonstration project entitled “Georgia Pathways to Work” funded through the US Department of Education’s Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The proposed Georgia Pathways to Work program aims to significantly change the way GVRA does business statewide in transitioning students and youth with disabilities in partnership with the core program partners, GaDOE, as well as local employers. This will be accomplished by working with statewide initiatives such as HDCI to ensure responsiveness to the known workforce demands in Georgia, as well as supporting their efforts to better engage those with disabilities. The overall goal of the Georgia Pathways to Work program is to increase the number of youth who achieve competitive integrated employment through improving the 18 existing career pathways for students with disabilities, and creating community-based alternative career pathways for out-of-school youth. This will be achieved by tailoring the career pathways to a variety of work opportunities available in the communities. The program will also engage employers in the model design and employ social media strategies to connect youth across the nation. Additionally, a result of the program will be to increase the average weekly wage and employer benefits of participants in each occupational cluster through successful completion of career pathways.

Ex-Offenders

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

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

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

Georgia also helps to reduce recidivism through The Offender Parolee Probationer State Training Employment Program, or TOPPSTEP, operated by GDOL and DCS. GDOL delivers

workshops and staffs a TOPPSTEP coordinator in over 40 centers across the state to help returning citizens find and keep a job. Additionally, GDOL staff provide assistance to businesses and job seekers on the use of criminal records and background checks in the application process.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

Specific details on the State's efforts to reduce barriers to employment for the Agricultural Industry are part of service delivery through GDOL career centers as detailed in [Section VII\(e\)\(4\)](#).

TANF

Through the TANF Family Service Plan (TFSP) and TANF work activities, these individuals with barriers to employment are served as detailed in [Section X](#).

Long-Term Unemployed

The State has many strategies to reduce the number of weeks an individual spends separated from the workforce, with a particular focus on reconnecting the long-term unemployed. Strategies including assessing the risk of benefit exhaustion and intervention for non-performance of job search can be found in [Section VII\(b\)-\(c\)](#).

Workforce Services for Veterans

Georgia's unemployment rate for post 9/11 veterans is significantly higher than the national average. Services to veterans are provided by LVERs and DVOPs specialists located in one-stop centers across the state.

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

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

(D) Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers

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

To realize the Governor's vision and goals for the State's one-stop workforce system, Georgia's required partners have elevated business services to the forefront of workforce strategies. While most partners have created independent business services units, these teams communicate and coordinate with one another to present a unified array of services to businesses.

Each core partner brings unique programs and strategies to employers which can be leveraged in partnership with one or more of the other state partners. For example, GDOL's BSU routinely partners with WFD to work with employers seeking to quickly fill in-demand positions. GDOL may provide Customized Recruitment to identify the unique skills and experience required for the positions. Working with the Rapid Response Team and LWDA participant enrollments, GDOL can leverage UI claimants to quickly create a pool of qualified candidates. If the employer is looking for training to train these new hires in place, WFD can also coordinate with BSU to funnel selected applicants through work-based learning. This coordination is currently in place as part of the State's Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant as detailed in [Section III\(a\)\(2\)\(A\) - Emphasizing Business Services](#).

Examples of the high-quality services provided to employers by each of the core partners are provided below.

Employer Services

Placement of GDOL's BSU Regional Coordinators across the state one-stop system reflects an emphasis on employer-driven service delivery, and access to a market-driven staff dedicated to fulfilling the needs of Georgia employers. Regional Coordinators manage the Job Readiness Program (SWAT), Career Expos, Customized Recruitment Services, GeorgiaBEST for Students, GeorgiaBEST for Employers, Regional Summits, the Employer Committee, and coordinate with other programs administered through the Georgia one-stop system.

Other BSU staff also devote their efforts towards developing and maintaining relationships with employers, regionally-identifying talent pools for target industries, identifying employer talent requirements and matching the talent with hiring needs. More information on GDOL's BSU, including a list of services provided can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

WIOA

WFD offers a number of programs aimed at connecting with and providing workforce solutions to employers. State initiatives such as Trade Five (See [Section VI.\(c\)\(2\)](#)), Georgia WorkSmart (See [Section VI.\(b\)\(2\)](#)), HDCI (See [Section II.\(a\)\(2\)](#)), and Operation: Workforce (See [Section III.\(b\)\(7\)](#)) are designed to connect with employers, engage them in a dialogue concerning their future workforce needs, and deliver solutions appropriate to those specific needs.

Through these statewide initiatives, WFD may be able to leverage one or more of the core programs authorized under Title IB of WIOA including work-based learning strategies such as

OJT, IWT, apprenticeships, or WEx (See [Section VI.\(b\)\(1\)](#) and [VI.\(b\)\(2\)](#)). WFD connects with employers through the Rapid Response Team, GDEcD Global Commerce Team, and coordinated efforts with other core partners.

GVRA

GVRA recently established a “Business Division” to create a single focused approach and strategy to engage employers in the most meaningful way. Under the GVRA business division, all agency efforts of engaging, contacting and relating to local businesses and corporate entities will be coordinated into a unified approach. The agency has hired a Director of the Business Division and all VR program staff will be supervised through this division. The overall goal of the GVRA business division will be to interface with employers to identify specific employer job and workforce needs and to provide the employers with qualified candidates to meet the employers’ needs through outreach, employer-based training education opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and connecting employers with resources for hiring individuals with disabilities.

In addition, the GVRA Business Division will also serve to provide education and training to VR program staff regarding the unique needs of specific employers statewide, in order to work hand-in-hand with the VR field staff to more effectively place individuals with disabilities in jobs and careers. More information on how GVRA engages employers is available in [Section IX\(g\)](#).

TCSG

Georgia’s technical college system is a regular partner in the State’s efforts to recruit and train skilled talent for employers. This partnership is often leveraged by providing business services through the nationally renowned QuickStart program. QuickStart offers customized training to eligible companies who are seeking to rapidly train a large group of employees in the Biotech/Healthcare, Warehousing/Distribution, Automotive, Advanced Manufacturing, Food/Agribusiness, or Services Industries. The staff at QuickStart are able to work with the company to develop proprietary curriculum and administer the training based on the employer’s preferences. Training can be offered in classrooms, mobile labs or directly on the plant floor. The QuickStart program is a unique opportunity which is leveraged alongside other business services from core partners.

[\(E\) 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).

Another critical factor for Georgia’s success under WIOA will be partnerships and collaboration with educational institutions. The State is currently expanding access points for adults, youth, and individuals with disabilities at secondary and post-secondary institutions.

Engagement of Adult Services with Educational Institutions

The State’s primary mechanism for creating a job-driven education and training system is through TCSG. TCSG’s OAE will work collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to provide comprehensive, wraparound services to program participants. One-stop centers provide a place for connecting customers with OAE through intake/orientation for Adult

Education services, transition resources, referral processes, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships.

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

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

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

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

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

OAE enhanced adult education content through the adoption and ongoing execution of CCR Standards for Adult Education that were disseminated through the OCTAE. Eligible Providers are required to adhere to these standards in order to maximize the effectiveness of curricula and instruction, and to prepare students for transition to post-secondary education and/or the workforce. In order to ensure that all instructors are knowledgeable on CCR standards and that they understand how to use them effectively to guide classroom instruction, OAE provides significant levels of professional development to all instructional staff in currently funded programs and to any future adult education grantees.

Engagement of WIOA Services with Educational Institutions

The one-stop delivery system works closely with TCSG and USG education providers. This partnership enables each LWDA to provide customers with a large amount of educational offerings, satisfying the USDOL mandate of customer choice. All education providers are listed on the State's ETPL. The ETPL is hosted on the state's case management website that all potential customers as well as LWDA staff are able to view. The state actively maintains the ETPL as discussed in [Section VI\(b\)\(3\)](#).

As the unified provider of technical education, adult education, and customized business and industry training, TCSG is the largest provider of ITAs to the workforce system customer. The commissioner of TCSG is a member of SWDB, and provides thoughtful commentary on all training-related discussions. TCSG encourages an open dialogue between itself and system users. This enables WIOA staff and the business community to make recommendations for changes in curriculum and course structure that benefit the participant. A successful example of this is the Fast Track program (see [Section VI\(b\)\(1\)](#)). Another successful example is the Workplace Fundamentals program, which was created and piloted in LWDA 9. LWDA staff were concerned that GED® coursework did not take place during the typical 9-to-5 working hours. When participants completed their GED® coursework, they were not prepared for regular work hours or culture. To enhance the customer experience, the technical college worked with LWDA staff to develop a program in which GED® instruction, soft skills training, and WEx were united to form a 9-to-5, Monday-Friday course. Participants who complete this course, gain a GED, real-life work experience, and are better prepared for the world of work. TCSG also has a 100% employer guarantee, meaning that if a TCSG graduate was educated under a standard program and his/her employer finds that the graduate is deficient in one or more competencies as defined in the standards, the technical college will re-train the employee at no instructional cost to the employee or the employer.

Engagement of Vocational Rehabilitation Services with Educational Institutions

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

(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.

WFD constantly seeks to add new providers to the ETPL in order to increase the offerings for participants across the state. One of the ways that this is accomplished is through the identification of non-traditional education providers including non-profit and for-profit offerings. LWDA's are charged with identifying providers and presenting their applications to the ETPL; however, WFD also assists with the identification process. When WFD finds potential new offerings, the offerings are proposed to the LWDA's through many different venues including monthly calls, webinars, conferences, and meetings.

WFD also endeavors to avoid unnecessary policy hurdles that would prevent LWDA's from adding providers to the ETPL. The application process has been streamlined, and the application is posted on the WFD website. The ETPL is hosted on the state's case management

website that all potential customers, as well as LWDA staff, can view. The state actively maintains the ETPL as discussed in Section VI(b)(3).

(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 will leverage OAE through its role in the one-stop system to provide technical assistance to educational institutions and customers. OAE will work with EPLs to enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established performance standards, and enhance access to other educational institutions. The OAE will also help connect customer needs with financial resources such as the Georgia HOPE scholarship and the Carl Perkins Act program.

Enhanced Training Resources

The OAE provides professional development/technical assistance via phone, webinar, teleconference, on-site training, and seminars. To ensure that local training providers are adequately equipped to foster continuous improvement and maintain an ability to meet the needs of Georgia's workforce, OAE will continue to:

- Deliver technical assistance to increase the ability of instructors to provide impactful instruction and obtain desired results in key areas. Technical assistance will incorporate techniques gleaned from contemporary research and resources related to best practices in andragogy. Topics may include integrated education and training, and CCR standards.
- Provide information regarding the role of adult education as a key component in the delivery of one-stop center services. Training will include resources to enable a local provider to establish, build upon, or maintain effective relationships with other core providers.
- Provide training related to the use of technology to improve classroom effectiveness and program outcomes. Training may focus on NRS processes and the effective use of the statewide data system in order to maintain accurate student data. The OAE may also provide technical assistance to prepare instructors and program administrators to identify and utilize technology to enhance classroom experiences.

Increased Access to Financial Resources

Many scholarship programs in Georgia can be used in conjunction with WIOA funding to make post-secondary degree attainment a reality for Georgia students with financial needs. Georgia's HOPE Scholarship is available to Georgia residents who have demonstrated high academic achievement. The scholarship provides money to assist students with the educational costs of attending a HOPE eligible college in Georgia.

In addition to the HOPE scholarship, Carl Perkins Act funds are used within Georgia to fund vocational-technical education. The Perkins Act defines career-technical education as organized educational programs offering sequences of courses directly related to preparing individuals for paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations that don't require a baccalaureate or advanced degree. Programs include competency-based applied learning which contributes to an individual's academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning, problem solving

skills, and the occupational-specific skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society. Carl Perkins Act funds are allotted between GaDOE, as the secondary-level recipient, and TCSG, as the post-secondary recipient.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[\(H\) 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.

As described in [Section III.\(a\)\(2\)\(E\)](#), the State works closely with education providers to ensure participant access to post-secondary credentials in for-credit diplomas, certificates, and degrees. However, both TCSG and USG also have continuing education programs which provide access to non-credit industry credentials. In some cases diploma, certificate and degree earning programs also incorporate industry credentials. For instance, a technical college warehousing certificate may incorporate a fork-lift certification. These types of stackable credentials enable participants to learn the specific skills needed to gain employment in in-demand occupations. Stackable

credentials also enable participants to continue earning additional credentials at a later point. Georgia's two-year and four-year institutions have done extensive work to ensure that credits seamlessly transfer between institutions. This work enables LWDAs to better create career pathways for participants.

An example of this success is the Accelerating Opportunity Program. In this program, individuals without a GED® diploma are dually enrolled in adult education classes and designated career-technical programs of study. In the program, students are coached in basic skill attainment and provided GED® instruction while being enrolled in postsecondary credit-bearing classes, where they are able to earn at least one industry-recognized credential. Completion of the program allows students to continue in credential-granting programs at a technical college, or immediately to join the workforce in that particular occupation.

The State's apprenticeship program, Georgia WorkSmart, more fully discussed in [Section VI\(b\)\(2\)](#), has utilized the services of both TCSG and USG to provide the mandated classroom component of apprenticeship training. Both of these institutions have provided flexibility to apprenticeship employers when creating the classroom component. Depending on the needs of the employer and the length of the apprenticeship, apprentices are able to enroll in for-credit diplomas, certificates, and degrees, or industry recognized credentials.

(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.

A focus on effective economic development strategies is central to the Governor's vision for the State of Georgia. Coordination between Economic Development and Georgia's Title I programs has created frontline access and collaboration within the State's economic development initiatives. This access has resulted in highly successful programs like Georgia WorkSmart and HDCl, which will continue to be developed and improved under the Technical College System of Georgia's management.

Furthermore, Georgia is focused on empowering front-line employees in the one-stop system with the leadership and tools necessary to proactively engage with local economic developers. For example, GDOL Regional Coordinators are focused on partnering with economic developers, locally, regionally, and statewide by executing customized solutions to workforce issues. Located in the 12 service-delivery regions in the State, Regional Coordinators can help economic developers identify data critical for the successful location and expansion of industry.

(b) State Operating Systems Policy and Procedure

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.

(1) The State operating systems that will support the implementation of the State's strategies

(A) Coordinated Implementation

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.).

The State's core partners currently utilize independent systems for their program's case management and reporting activities. Through the direction of the data integration working group, the core partners are developing a plan to integrate their current, independent systems.

WIOA

The Georgia Work Ready Online Participant Portal (GWROPP) is an online system used by WFD and LWDA staff for WIOA participant registration, case management, and reporting. GWROPP can also be used to provide participants with labor market information. System reports enable state staff to make informed decisions when developing policies and procedures. For example, staff can use the system's LMI capabilities to identify emerging industries in a LWDA and then run a report to see if the workforce needs for occupations in that industry are being addressed by current participants in the same LWDA. The system is also able to track participants for non-WIOA grants.

Employment Services

The State has an abundance of operating systems that collect and compile data to inform Georgia's state plan. Primary, among these data collections and reporting systems are the GWS and EG. GWS and EG have a variety of data elements that allow for unique tracking of all participants including information related to demographics, employment status, customer service plans, barriers to employment, employer-searchable resumes, etc. These systems capture all data and outcomes necessary to achieve progress to those stated State strategies. Items including, but not limited to, project assignment, participation dates, incremental employability goals, education and training completion with credential information, employment details and outcomes, and other public benefits are among the data collected within these systems to support the State plan.

In addition to these systems, the ITW system allows for a centralized, electronic collection of UI tax data that assists in outcome reporting. Both state and national wage information is updated quarterly to provide earning records and other employment information such as Industry type.

GDOL collects, analyzes, and publishes a wide array of information about the state's labor market. This information provides a snapshot of Georgia's economy, job market, businesses, and its workforce. Data on jobs and workers, including labor force, employment and unemployment, industrial growth, occupational trends, and wage rates, are increasingly important to remaining competitive in the global marketplace. This data is available at the State and local workforce area level via the Georgia Labor Market Explorer at:

<https://explorer.gdol.ga.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>.

GVRA

GVRA currently utilizes state operating systems that are consistent with other state agencies. Specifically, all human resource and financial information is maintained through the PeopleSoft system, which serves as the primary operating and data system for GVRA. In addition, GDOL currently provides all information technology support to GVRA, while GVRA is in the process of building out its own infrastructure. GVRA owns all of its hardware and software licenses; however, GDOL provides all server and mainframe support, as well as hosting the GVRA domain name and all of GVRA's electronic communication, such as its email. GVRA recently transitioned to the Libera case management system from an outdated system called GROW.

However, the Libera system is not yet fully implemented. GVRA's VR program accesses both wage and benefit data through the GDOL CICS system.

Adult Education

The Adult Education Program will support the implementation of the State's strategies via the TCSG official statewide MIS, which is called GALIS, the Georgia Adult Learners Information System. GALIS is a web-based, real-time data system that is being updated to collect the required elements of WIOA. Beginning in FY2019 (PY2018) the system will have a new interface for users, and will also contain all the data elements essential to collection and reporting performance outcomes as required by WIOA.

Grant-funded local adult education providers are required to enter all programmatic data into the system including: student information, demographic elements, assessments, attendance hours, and goals; programmatic data, such as class sites and course offerings; and personnel data, such as staff demographics and professional development attendance.

The OAE Policy and Procedure Manual has written policies pertaining to all aspects of the data system, including the type of data that must be collected on every participant, the importance of data quality, and data entry deadlines. User privileges are tiered to restrict access of certain features, such as entering attendance hours or assessment results. A robust GALIS User Manual is maintained by OAE staff members. Training for the system is offered by local programs and the state office. In addition, each local program has a designated data manager, who supports local users with training and technical assistance related to GALIS and overall data management.

[\(B\) Data Collection and Reporting](#)

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

WIOA

All participant information is collected using the GWROPP system. System logic enables participant eligibility to be accurately determined and verified. Case managers are also able to track services provided throughout participation and outcomes are identified at the culmination of participation. With a plethora of canned and ad-hoc reports, local and state staff can note participant characteristics, monitor program progress, and stay on top of performance outcomes.

WFD and GDOL have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate the sharing of information on several levels, such as:

1. Matching Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Wage Record Information System (WRIS) wage data of participants enrolled in the GWROPP system. WFD provides GDOL with a wage match file, which GDOL returns populated with wage information. WFD then prepares and transmits a quarterly WIASRD file to GDOL, who runs the file through the USDOL/ETA E-DRVS on behalf of WFD to check for possible errors and required edits, and provides WFD with the detailed results. WFD corrects any edits as required, returns the file to GDOL, who submits and certifies the file through the USDOL/ETA EBSS on WFD's behalf.

2. Matching Wagner Peyser and Trade services received by WFD participants. Using the same wage match file provided by WFD as described above, GDOL provides WFD with a file identifying any Wagner Peyser and Trade services received by WFD participants within a quarter, inclusive of the date(s) of service.
3. GDOL provides LWDAs with limited transactional access to the GWS system, for direct inquiry related to Wagner Peyser, Trade Services activities, and Georgia wage data, etc.

The State is working toward an integrated data management system through the efforts of the Data Management Working Group (See [Section III\(a\)\(1\)](#)). It is realized that the processes for integration will be implemented overtime. The Data Integration Working Group worked with Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) to identify existing data system linkages between core partners, assessed each core partner system in order to develop an architecture to allow for system integration, identified the options for integration from that system evaluation, then as a group determined the best route to take for integration. The group and GTRI are currently in the process of implementing Phase 1 of the data integration project.

Employment Services

GDOL utilizes a robust, centralized data collection system and has extensive experience with Federal Grant reporting.

Georgia's EG and mainframe GWS systems are designed to meet all federal reporting requirements as well as to track each Wagner Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, Trade, Veterans, and Agricultural participants through all service components. Integration of the systems also provides the ability to combine data with the full array of programs noted above, providing an opportunity to share and analyze data on common participants.

EG and GWS have thousands of individual data elements allowing for unique tracking of all participants, including information related to demographics, employment status, customer service plans, barriers to employment, employer-searchable résumés, services rendered, etc. These systems provide the ability to track participants from initial assessment through the employment follow-up period.

Through the use of the above, GDOL has successfully submitted all federally-required USDOL-ETA Wagner Peyser, Veterans, Trade and Agriculture reports over the past two decades. GDOL has also successfully completed all related, federally-required data validation and report validation since USDOL began requiring such actions in 2003. The EG and GWS systems allow for immediate validation of all data validation elements where GDOL's systems serve as a data source, as outlined by USDOL-ETA each year. These systems are frequently reviewed to ensure they meet all compliance standards for data and report validation.

GVRA

Currently the primary data collection and report system used by GVRA through the VR Program is Libera System 7 electronic case management system, and the data collected is specific to individuals served through the VR Program. At the current time, neither the Libera System 7 case management system, nor its data, is integrated with all the programs and activities present in the one-stop centers. GVRA and the VR Program are in the process of moving to a new client information system. GVRA is working with Alliance Corporation for the implementation of the new AWARE client information system set to "go live" April 30, 2018.

Adult Education

The data-collection and reporting processes used in the Adult Education Program will support the implementation of the State's strategies by providing an efficient and stable system for data collection and reporting of adult education program activity and outcomes. Since grant-funded local programs are required to enter all programmatic data into the system, GALIS is an electronic record of students' activities and accomplishments in the program. The system is able to produce a number of reports related to students including: demographic elements, assessments, educational gain achievements, and outcomes, such as GED® credential, employment, or post-secondary education attainment. Its reports module can produce the statewide data tables necessary to satisfy federal reporting requirements and also produce local reports that inform program management and decision making. GALIS successfully integrates data matches from GED® Navigator, the National Student Clearinghouse, and the Georgia Unemployment Insurance database on an ongoing basis.

(2) State Policies

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.

WFD, in coordination with SWDB, worked with the Working Group partners to better align state polices. Working Group members met throughout 2015 and provided regular policy updates to the State agencies responsible for administering WIOA's core programs. This allowed agency partners to better coordinate their resources and communicate agency decision points during the policy making process. Additionally, the working groups ensured the message and guidance sent to local stakeholders was consistent and aligned. The circulation of Working Group meeting minutes and quarterly reports also enabled local stakeholders to stay abreast of implementation developments and provide feedback as necessary through the local representatives that were members of all of the Working Groups.

With the release of the Final Rule, the working groups were able to finalize guidance and recommended policy updates to the SWDB. Since the conclusion of working groups, WFD has coordinated with the SWDB to develop and implement WIOA-related policies and procedures. The SWDB has created strong policies to support the implementation of WIOA, which include the following updated policies: participant eligibility, service provider eligibility, and requirements for new and existing services. The State has also created and implemented one-stop certification procedures, co-enrollment policies, and participant intake procedures based upon the release of the final rule and TEGL 15-16 and TEGL 16-16

Georgia utilized the WIOA One-Stop Funding and Procurement Working Group to develop guidance on local methodologies for infrastructure funding. This guidance, labeled Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Service Delivery Guidelines, is available on the state's Technical Assistance website (<http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce->

division/worksource-georgia/resources/technical-assistance/). The guidance included identification of appropriate example methodologies, required benchmarks and deadlines for completing methodology development, and deadlines for notifying the state if the local area is unable to come to an agreement surrounding methodology. This working group ensured that input was received from all partner agencies, as well as SWDB members and LWDA staff in the development of all guidance. This working group also recommended guidelines to SWDB for developing the State-administered one-stop partner program contribution. These guidelines, along with other technical assistance and guidance, were administered throughout PY15 and throughout PY16 so that full compliance with all required partner program contributions and updates to MOUs or Resource-Sharing Agreements (RSAs) were put in place by June 30, 2017, to coincide with the required deadline to have in place the competitively procured One-Stop Operator.

(3) State Program and Board Overview

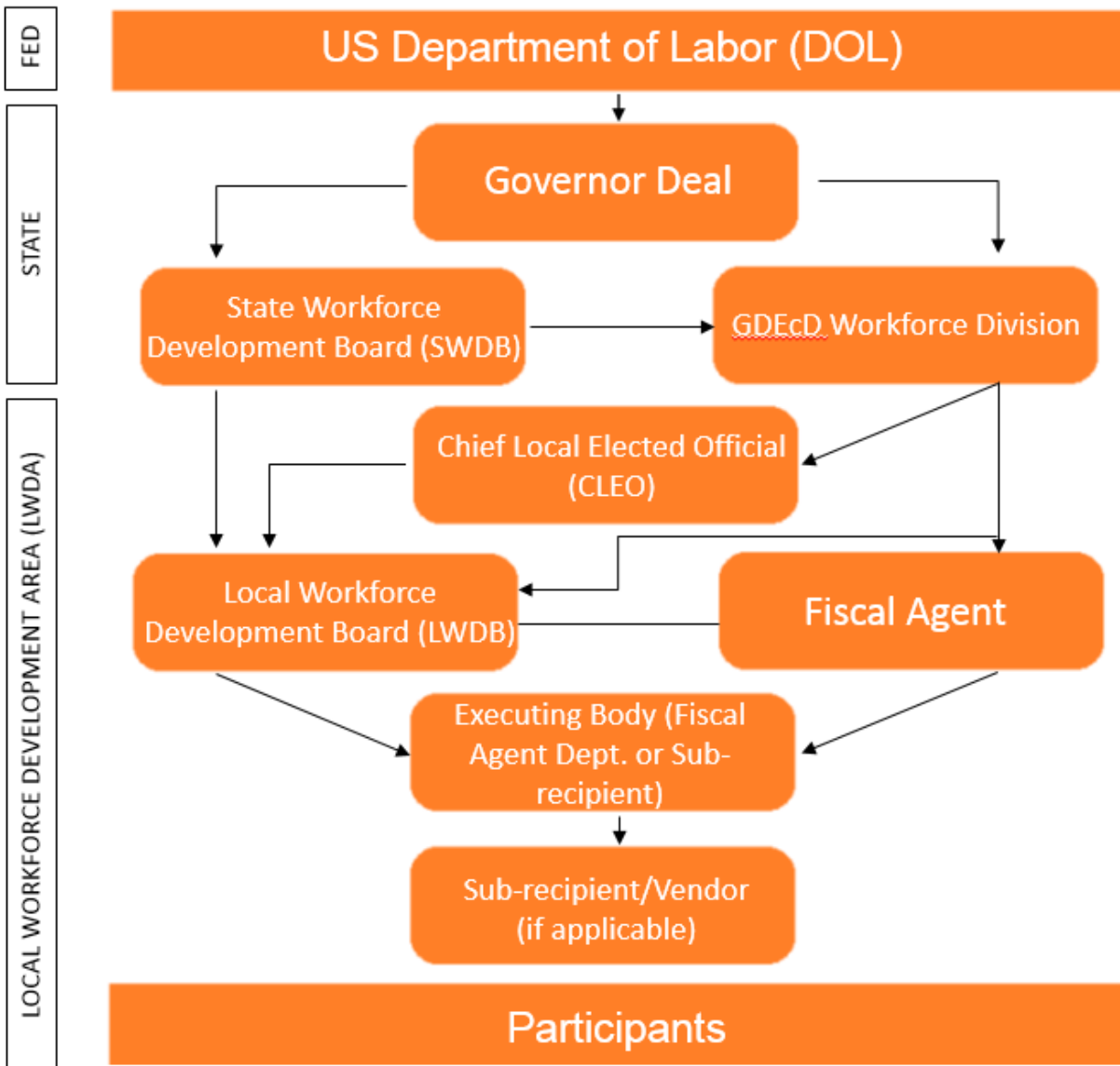
(A) State Agency Organization

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

(In response to USDOL's request for modifications to the Unified State Plan: On July 1, 2012, the Governor transferred the fiscal and administrative responsibility of WIA Title I from the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) to the Governor's Office of Workforce Development; responsibilities were then transferred to the Georgia Department of Economic Development on July 1, 2014. As such GDOL ceased to be the fiscal recipient or administrative agent; GDOL is, however, represented on the State Workforce Development Board and is an integral core partner.)

WFD serves as the WIOA fiscal recipient and also provides support, information, and guidance to both the Governor and SWDB. These tasks allow the Governor and SWDB to make informed and knowledgeable policy decisions regarding WIOA implementation. The Deputy Commissioner of WFD is appointed by the Governor. WFD's staff serves as staff to SWDB by providing detailed research that enables SWDB to make informed policy decisions. The State is divided into 19 LWDAs. LEOs in those LWDAs come together to elect a CLEO, in accordance with their LEO bylaws. The CLEOs are responsible for choosing the fiscal agent, which can be a city government, county government, or regional commission, in accordance with state policy. The CLEOs are also responsible for appointing the LWDB, in accordance with WIOA and WFD regulations. The State's governance system is represented in Figure 44 (below):

Figure 44: State's Governance System



(B) State Board

Provide a description of the State Board, including (i) Membership Roster. Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations. (ii) Board Activities. Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

The active collaboration between SWDB, WFD, and the State's one-stop delivery system is the key component of workforce development in Georgia. This collaboration begins with the Governor, who is responsible for the appointment of the SWDB members. SWDB's duties include the development of a statewide strategic plan, which establishes the four-year strategy for the Statewide Workforce Development System. SWDB is also responsible for assisting the Governor with additional functions designated by WIOA which are listed below:

- Strategic Functions
 - Developing and implementing the state plan and performance measures
 - Developing career pathways strategies

- Developing/expanding strategies for partnerships in in-demand sectors/occupations
- Developing and aligning policies
- System Capacity Building
 - Developing strategies to support staff training and awareness
 - Disseminating best practices
 - Developing and continuously improving the one-stop delivery system
 - Supporting effective local boards
- System Alignment and Effective Operations
 - Developing strategies for aligning technology and data systems
 - Developing LWDA allocation formulas
 - Developing a statewide LMI system
 - Developing policies and guidance on one-stop partner roles and resource contributions

SWDB is required to comply with federal and state conflict of interest policies and sunshine provisions. The federal conflict of interest policy states that a member of SWDB may not vote on a matter regarding the provision of services by such member or a measure that would provide financial benefit to such a member or his/her immediate family. A state board member may not engage in any other activities determined by the Governor to constitute a conflict of interest as specified in the SWDB bylaws, and must sign the SWDB bylaws to satisfy the State's conflict of interest policy. SWDB must also comply with federal and state sunshine provisions. These federal and state regulations require SWDB to make available to the public, at regular intervals, all information regarding their activities.

To assist SWDB with coordination of services and policy alignment, the State created four working groups that are tasked with supporting the State's transition to WIOA and system integration. Working group membership is made up of the following:

- WFD staff;
- GDOL staff;
- GVRA staff;
- TCSG, OAE staff;
- DHS staff;
- LWDA staff; and
- SWDB members.

The diverse and comprehensive membership of the working groups enabled the State to more effectively transition into WIOA, and assisted in the creation of the state plan (See [Section III\(a\)\(1\)](#)).

SWDB meets at least quarterly and at such other times as the chairperson determines or as provided by the rules of the board. A member of the board can designate another person to attend meetings of the board on such person's behalf. Such designee may participate in the activities and discussions of the board, but cannot have a vote in matters before SWDB. The chairperson of the board may appoint subcommittees consisting of members of the board for any purpose consistent with the duties and responsibilities outlined in the SWDB Bylaws. There are currently four subject matter committees. SWDB members are assigned by the chairperson

to serve on the following committees: Re-employment Services Committee, LWDA Guidance Committee, Youth Committee, and Performance Accountability Committee. Each of these committees also have two or more LWDA directors who serve as advisors and a WFD staff person who coordinates the meetings and performs tasks related to research.

- Re-employment Services Committee: The Re-Employment Services Committee is charged with the development of policy and programs that benefit the State's Adult and Dislocated Worker population. The committee is chaired by SWDB member Mel Stowers and this committee has taken a specific interest in Veterans and ex-offenders.
- LWDA Guidance Committee: The LWDA Guidance Committee is charged with the development of policy and provision of guidance as it pertains to LWDA administration and LWDB structure. The committee is chaired by SWDB member Ames Barnett.
- Youth Committee: The Youth Committee is charged with the development of policy and programs that benefit the Georgia's youth population. The committee is chaired by SWDB member Ann Cramer and has taken a specific interest in at-risk, incarcerated, and returning youth.
- Performance Accountability Committee: The Performance Accountability Committee is charged with utilizing performance data to help drive the decisions before the SWDB, and to identify existing gaps and opportunities in board engagement. The committee is chaired by SWDB member Brian Anderson.

There is also a SWDB Executive Committee. This committee's membership is made up of the chairperson, vice-chairperson, and the committee heads. The executive committee can act on behalf of SWDB when necessary.

SWDB works to coordinate policies and resources with other state agencies and LWDBs. The inclusion of key stakeholders in the membership of SWDB allows for the governing body to align such policies and resources across the state. The following state agencies have permanent memberships on SWDB: GDOL, GDEcD, DCA, TCSG, GVRA, and GDVS. The representatives from these organizations give valuable insight into state programs, initiatives, and the writing of the state plan. Two members of the Georgia Legislature also sit on SWDB. They give valuable insight into the direction of the legislature and keep the board up to date in key areas of interest. SWDB also offers an open invitation to all LWDA's who wish to attend and comment on proceedings. Furthermore, to remove barriers to attendance, WFD recently announced that trips to state board meetings would be reimbursed for LWDA's attending.

The chairperson and vice-chairperson of SWDB are appointed by the Governor based upon recommendations from individuals in the business community. Other officers are selected as determined by the Governor. The members of the board serve such terms as established by the Governor, and the members continue to serve at the discretion of the Governor, except for the member of the House of Representative and the member of the Senate, who continue to serve at the discretion of the Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor, respectively. SWDB adopts bylaws to guide its proceedings. Each member of SWDB, who is not otherwise a state officer or employee, is authorized to receive reimbursement for reasonable, necessary travel expenses incurred in the performance of his or her duties as a member of the board, provided that such funds are available and such reimbursements are allowable under federal law. Should

funds not be available or allowable for this purpose, such members will serve without reimbursement.

The SWDB membership is fully compliant with WIOA standards and is listed below:

Name:	Entity:	WIOA Requirement:
Nathan Deal	Governor, State of Georgia	
Mark Butler	Commissioner, GDOL	Wagner-Peyser
Matt Arthur	Commissioner, TCSG	WIOA
Beverly Smith	Asst. Commissioner, Adult Edu	Adult Education
Mike Roby	Commissioner, GDVS	
Sean Casey	Executive Director, GVRA	Vocational Rehabilitation
Robyn Crittenden	Commissioner, DHS	
Wendell Dallas, Chairman	Atlanta Gas Light	Business Representative
Brian Anderson	Columbus Chamber	Business Representative
Jay Cunningham	Superior Plumbing	Business Representative
Phil Sutton	Kubota	Business Representative
Chuck Newnan	Batson Cook	Business Representative
Stuart Countess	Kia	Business Representative
Mike Dudgeon	Hirez	Business Representative
Chris Acree	Well Star	Business Representative
Theresa Fisher	Southwire Company	Business Representative
Ben Copeland	Patten Seed Company	Business Representative
Joe McDermott	Delta	Business Representative
Cade Joiner	Shred-X	Business Representative
Dell Keith	Wayne County Chamber	Business Representative
Shan Cooper	Westrock	Business Representative
Joe Yarbrough	Carpet and Rug Institute	Business Representative
Kevin Jackson	Enviro Vac	Business Representative
Ayanna Howard	Zyrobotics	Business Representative
Jerald Mitchell	Atlanta Beltline	Business Representative
Marcia Dixon	Flaxsteel Industries	Business Representative
Karen Viera	Church's Chicken	Business Representative
Eric Hughes	Colony Bank	Business Representative
Mark Wilson	Langdale Industries	Business Representative
Alan Schuetze	Carroll Daniel Construction Company	Business Representative
Bart Gobeil	Georgia Ports Authority	Business Representative
Evelyn Olenick	Phoebe-Putney Memorial Hospital	Business Representative
Susan Andrews	Harris County Commissioners	Local Government
Ames Barnett	City of Washington	Local Government
Randy Toms	City of Warner Robins	Local Government

Avery Niles	Commissioner, DJJ	Youth Representative
Kellie Brownlow	Alliance Board, Boys and Girls Club	Youth Representative
Sam Dasher	Jefferson County School System	Youth Representative
Mike Long	Georgia Board of Education	Youth Representative
Pending	AFL-CIO	Labor Representative
Randy Beall	Atlanta & North GA Building Trades	Labor Representative
Chuck Little	Atlanta Electrical Contractors Association	Apprenticeship
James Wilburn	VET ²	CBO
Tom Cook	New Hope Enterprises	CBO
Stanley Cartwright	Perdido Bay Tribe Foundation	CBO
Frank Ginn	Georgia Senate, District 47	State Senate
Buddy Harden	Georgia House, District 147	State House

(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.

Georgia assesses the effectiveness of Core Program service delivery and administration through WFD's onsite monitoring and data performance evaluation. The onsite monitoring team consists of a three-pronged team consisting of a Grants Administration Specialist, a Programs Specialist, and a Compliance Specialist. The Grants Management team assesses the financial management of the grant, including but not limited to; contracting, purchasing, disbursements, One-Stop operator procurement, salary and cost allocation, and cash management with revenue reconciliation. The Compliance team looks at the internal controls, Local elected official board composition and bylaws, if applicable, the local workforce board composition and bylaws, equal opportunity compliance, corrective actions to resolve the previous year's findings, and the Memorandum of Understanding. The Programs team addresses programmatic administration, conducts interviews with on-site staff, and reviews the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth files for proper documentation and correct file management.

There is a period of file review that is conducted prior to the onsite visit of the monitoring team. The on-site visit consists of the major testing, interviews and a presentation of any findings and observations found at the end of testing. At the end of the one-week monitoring period, WFD's monitoring team provides the LWDA's leadership with the Notice of Findings and Required Actions, which outlines necessary corrective actions that must be made in order for the LWDA to be in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. The LWDA will then submit a plan of how they will resolve the issues found during the testing period, and WFD will have to approve the plan and ensures it was accurately executed. The following monitoring year, the team will make sure that the local area carried out the submitted plan to WFD.

The core partners have provided all data required for WIOA federal reporting. In the near-term, and in alignment with the ICR guidance, core partners will continue to utilize their existing reporting structures to submit their federal reports until the completion of the final stage of a phased-in and fully integrated data system has been achieved. The performance measures that will be used to assess the core programs are as follows:

- Percent of adult and dislocated worker participants employed in the 2nd quarter after exit;
- Percent of youth placed in employment or education in the 2nd quarter after exit;
- Percent of adult and dislocated worker participants employed in the 4th quarter after exit;
- Percent of youth placed in employment or education in the 4th quarter after exit;
- Median earnings of all participants in the 2nd quarter after exit;
- Credential attainment rate for all participants up to one year after exit;
- Measureable skill gains for all participants; and
- Effectiveness in serving employers.

[\(B\) Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs](#)

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

The assessment of One-Stop partner programs will be strongly guided by the goals and priorities of the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB), the WIOA Local Plan, and sector strategies and agreements between partners. To this end, the alignment to the Regional and Local Plans continue to be key factors in determining the overall effectiveness of One-Stop partner programs.

WIOA

In addition to the assessments of the workforce system described in Section II.b.4, WIOA LWDAs as well as regional planning areas were assessed utilizing factors identified and described in their local and regional plans as well as assessments utilizing core performance indicators and data validation. The assessments were included as a portion of the One-Stop Certification process and will continue to be employed on a yearly basis.

The factors to be assessed included, without limitation, the following:

- a. Whether or not the LWDA successfully executed Memoranda of Understanding with all core partner programs and are the programs aligned in providing seamless services to customers?
- b. Whether or not the LWDA engaged employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations?
- c. Whether or not business and organized labor representatives on the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) contributed to the development of business needs strategies and partnerships?
- d. Whether or not the LWDA strengthened/coordinated workforce development programs and economic development?

- e. Whether or not the LWDA facilitated access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means?
- f. Whether or not the LWDA, working with core partners, expanded access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment?
- g. Whether or not the LWDA, working with core partners, facilitated the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs?
- h. Whether or not the LWDA procured or provided successful models for youth workforce development activities, including activities for youth with disabilities?
- i. Whether or not the LWDA implemented initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the business service strategy?

TCSG (Office of Adult Education)

Specific to Adult Education, local providers are assessed using clearly identified and documentable/measurable factors, to include (but not limited to):

- The alignment of the Adult Education provider’s goals to the goals of the One-Stop Center;
- The execution of Adult Education services with a Regional Comprehensive One-Stop Center, to include, but not limited to: concurrent enrollment of participants with another program; recruitment and enrollment into Adult Education programs; and reciprocal referral systems with other core partners and key service providers.
- Execution of fiduciary duties, as required in the local Plan; documented real and in-kind resources to the One-Stop Center;
- The existence of formal MOUs with entities that provide supportive services, apprenticeship/education/training opportunities, or job opportunities;

GVRA

GVRA submitted VR Employment Goals through 2020 based upon trend analysis and the steady growth that is projected. GVRA has also created internal targets based upon the current and future provision of services to align with W.I.O.A. Finally, GVRA uses the RSA reporting mechanisms such as the RSA 911 and RSA 113 to report our current agreed upon standards and indicators.

In December 2016, the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education (ED) issued a Technical Assistance Circular on the Performance Accountability system under W.I.O.A. for the VR Program. There was an update to the information issued in August 2017. At that time, GVRA continued to track its performance using these indicators.

GDOL

GDOL will use the negotiated performance goals (See [Section II\(b\)\(3\)](#)) for assessment, and has not developed any additional performance measures.

GDOL assessment will evaluate programmatic activities based on WIOA negotiated performance goals. Monitoring will appraise Entered Employment Rates, Retention, and

Median Earnings of participants served in the workforce system. In addition, program evaluations will measure the effectiveness of:

- Programmatic service delivery
- Priority of Service delivered to customers with barriers to employment
- Services to customer with disabilities and language barriers
- Case Management effectiveness
- Customer referrals to local workforce areas for training
- Customer satisfaction (Employer & Participant)
- Quality of referrals to employers
- Accessibility plans
- Services provided to customers through the electronic labor exchange systems
- Resource sharing partnerships/agreements
- Overall evaluation of services delivered in the Career Center and One-Stops

[\(C\) 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.

WIOA

PY15

		Actual	Negotiated Rate
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	79.7%	73.1%
	Dislocated Workers	84.4%	76.5%
Retention Rate	Adults	88.63%	85.0%
	Dislocated Workers	92.5%	90.0%
Average Earnings	Adults	\$13,901	\$12,800
	Dislocated Workers	\$17,168	\$17,062
Placement in Employment or Education	Youth (14-21)	71.0%	66.0%
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14-21)	68.3%	73.0%
Literacy or Numeracy Gains	Youth (14-21)	43.9%	41.0%

PY16

		Actual
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	76.5%
	Dislocated Workers	81.4%
Retention Rate	Adults	86.7%
	Dislocated Workers	91.4%
Average Earnings	Adults	\$14,114
	Dislocated Workers	\$18,698
Placement in Employment or Education	Youth (14-21)	63.8%
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14-21)	67.0%

** PY16 was the first program year under new WIOA performance measures. Since the new measures only apply to participants who were active from 07/01/2016 forward and these measures have an inherent lag depending on the measure as well as a lag due to the collection and reporting of the outcomes, we were unable to provide PY16 performance results to the specifications of WIOA. We are able to provide performance for participants as if the changes never took place.*

Employment Services

Georgia’s economy has expanded over the past two plus years, so too has GDOL’s Labor Exchange system. The EmployGeorgia (EG) web-based labor exchange system was significantly enhanced over the year alone, and added over 250,000 job seeker accounts in 2017. This has also led to well over 250,000 resumes developed through the system, which can be displayed for employers to review as they are seeking skilled workers to expand their workforce. The enhanced web-based self-service job order and job referral system for employers has resulted in nearly 6,000 active employer accounts created in 2017, with over 9,000 employers having posted 410,000 plus job openings.

The State has continued to increase its employment-based Wagner-Peyser performance targets over the past four program years, exceeding USDOL predicted and negotiated performance expectations. Georgia looks to build upon this success and strive for continual improvement.

GDOL has made an effort to expand reemployment activities and to expand the reach of new employment services strategies, thereby increasing job seekers’ abilities to reconnect to the workforce. Collaborating with UI to offer customized reemployment services through the RESEA strategies, GDOL provides a structured plan of employability to long-term unemployed job seekers and has shown to significantly increase their ability to get a job. These efforts target those most likely to exhaust their benefits as well as all transitioning veterans receiving unemployment compensation, as Georgia has identified these populations as having more barriers to reemployment. In 2017, over 20,000 UI claimants were referred to the RESEA program and of these, over 17,000 completed this program (84.7% completion rate).

Georgia has achieved the lowest average UI duration average in the nation for the seventeenth consecutive quarter (8.4 weeks through CY17 Q3).

Georgia Department of Labor 's PY17 Wagner Peyser Performance Targets Approved by USDOL/ETA				
Measures (Under WIOA)	USDOL Target Outcome	USDOL Predicted Outcome	USDOL Approved Goal Outcome - PY17	PY17 Actual Performance (Through Q2)

Employment in 2 nd Qtr. After Exit	67.0%	60.3%	65.6%	69.1%
Employment in 4 th Qtr. After Exit	68.5%	61.4%	66.6%	N/A
Median Earnings in 2 nd Qtr. After Exit	\$4,105	\$4,206	\$4,259	\$4,578

GVRA

The VR program is assessed primarily on its ability to meet or exceed the performance levels negotiated with the RSA for each fiscal year. GVRA has implemented many changes to the VR program over the last year and the improvements are demonstrated in the increase of most VR performance indicators across the most recent 2-year period. The most recent 2-year period with complete data is FFY2014 and FFY2015, which are shown below.

Performance Indicator	Performance Level	FFY2014	FFY2015
The number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current performance period compared to the number of individuals who exit the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the previous performance period.	Equal or exceed previous performance period	-2038	256
Of all individuals who exit the VR program after receiving services, the percentage who are determined to have achieved an employment outcome.	55.80%	64.81%	78.69%
Of all individuals determined to have achieved an employment outcome, the percentage who exit the VR program in competitive, self, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.	72.60%	92.13%	97.87%
Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the percentage who are individuals with significant disabilities.	62.40%	51.68%	91.07%

Performance Indicator	Performance Level	FFY2014	FFY2015
The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the State's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the State who are employed (as derived from the BLS report "State Average Annual Pay" for the most recent available year).	0.520 (ratio)	0.476	0.460
Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the difference between the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of economic support at the time they exit the VR program and the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of support at the time they apply for VR services.	53.000 (math difference)	76.400	79.700
The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minority individuals with disabilities.	0.800 (ratio)	0.900	0.990

Adult Education

The Adult Education program is assessed primarily on its ability to meet or exceed the federal benchmarks negotiated with the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education before the start of each fiscal year. Each of the 11 categories has a target percentage that is based upon prior program performance. The percentages represent the portion of students that must meet the stated goal in each category. The most recent two-year period with complete data is FY2016 and FY2017, which are shown below. In summary, the Adult Education Program exceeded the negotiated goal in 20 out of 22 categories during the two-year period.

Adult Basic and Secondary Educational Functioning Levels	FY 2016 Negotiated	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2016 Outcome	FY 2017 Negotiated	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2017 Outcome
Beginning ABE Literacy	58%	59%	Exceeded	57%	58%	Exceeded
Beginning Basic Education	53%	53%	Met	54%	53%	Not Met
Low Intermediate Basic Education	53%	52%	Not Met	51%	51%	Met
High Intermediate Basic Education	47%	49%	Exceeded	47%	53%	Exceeded
Low Adult Secondary Education	52%	57%	Exceeded	56%	66%	Exceeded

English as a Second Language	FY 2016	FY 2016	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2017	FY 2017

Educational Functioning Levels	Negotiated	Actual	Outcome	Negotiated	Actual	Outcome
Beginning ESL Literacy	52%	56%	Exceeded	52%	59%	Exceeded
Low Beginning ESL	56%	60%	Exceeded	58%	61%	Exceeded
High Beginning ESL	57%	64%	Exceeded	60%	62%	Exceeded
Low Intermediate ESL	57%	61%	Exceeded	57%	60%	Exceeded
High Intermediate ESL	50%	56%	Exceeded	50%	55%	Exceeded
Advanced ESL	50%	57%	Exceeded	53%	56%	Exceeded

(D) Assessment of Activities under WIOA Core Programs.

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.

Utilizing the working groups, the State will formulate a process for a longitudinal evaluation of core programs. With WIOA setting common performance measures across the core partner programs, there is a greater opportunity for a seamless evaluation of program outcome data. This evaluation will enable partners to identify achievements and shortcomings across the workforce system and enable the state to be responsive to the needs of the labor market and participants.

(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) Title I Workforce

For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for— (i) Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3), (ii) Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3), (iii) Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA

Adult Funds- The standard allocation formula gives equal weight to the following three formula factors:

- 33.3% - Relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each LWDA, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the State;
- 33.3% - Relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each LWDA, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the State; and
- 33.3% - Relative number of disadvantaged adults in each LWDA, compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults in the State.

Note: If LWDA composition remains the same, the LWDA is guaranteed to receive an allotment percentage that is not less than 90% of the average allocation percentage for the prior two years.

Youth Funds- The standard allocation formula gives equal weight to the following three formula factors:

- 33.3% - Relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each LWDA, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in all areas of substantial unemployment in the State;
- 33.3% - Relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each LWDA, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the State; and
- 33.3% - Relative number of disadvantaged youth in each LWDA, compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth in the State.

Note: Georgia has no LWDA with rural concentrated employment program grants.

Note: If LWDA composition remains the same, the LWDA is guaranteed to receive an allotment percentage that is not less than 90% of the average allocation percentage for the prior two years.

Dislocated Worker Funds- Funds are allocated according to the six federally mandated factors, and three additional state-developed factors. The factors and their weights are as follows:

- 40% - Number of individuals who received unemployment insurance with earnings, for the most recent 24-month period;
- 5% - Number of unemployed individuals in excess of 6.5% of the civilian labor force for the most recent 24 months;
- 10% - Number of individuals who received unemployment insurance who were from firms that were part of the Mass Layoff Statistics data for the latest two years;
- 10% - Number of individuals employed in industries that have experienced a decline in employment of 5% or greater over the last two years;
- 2.5% - Number of individuals employed as farmers or ranchers according to the most recently available census data;
- 2.5% - Number of individuals who collected unemployment for 15 weeks or more for the last 18-month period;
- 10% - Number of individuals employed in manufacturing for the last 18-month period;
- 10% - Number of individuals employed in retail and wholesale trade for the last 18-month period; and
- 10% - Number of individuals enrolled in WIA dislocated worker training services during the prior program year.

Note: If LWDA composition remains the same, the LWDA is guaranteed to receive an allotment percentage that is not less than 90% of the average allocation percentage for the prior two years.

(B) For Title II Adult Education

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

In FY2018, OAE provided funding to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive RFA process. Through this process, OAE awarded multi-year grants to eligible providers throughout the state. An eligible provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include: a local education agency; a community-based or faith-based organization; a volunteer literacy organization; an institution of higher education; a public or private nonprofit agency; a library; a public housing authority; a nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services; a consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and a partnership between an employer and an entity described above. OAE awarded 31 grants to 22 technical colleges, 3 school systems, and 6 community-based organizations.

Awards were based on the ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs of the area, the ability to comply with WIOA expectations, the ability to provide services to individuals with a disability, the past performance of the entity in providing literacy instruction and meeting programmatic goals, and the overall qualifications and expertise of the provider's personnel.

The Technical College System of Georgia Office of Adult Education (TCSG OAE) is the State's Eligible Agency for administering funds to Local Eligible Providers for the purpose of delivering Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), Corrections Education, and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE). As such, the agency maintains full fiduciary responsibility for grant funds.

RFA Competition Grant Application

The Office of Adult Education executed an RFA competition during FY 2017 for all AEFLA funds for AEFLA funding for FY2018, FY 2019, and FY 2020. Funds were allocated by county, to ensure coverage in each area of the state. Funds were distributed using a needs-based funding formula at its core. The needs data were obtained from a variety of sources.

For ABE, ASE, Corrections and ELA funds, the Office of Adult Education will utilize data from The American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, published by the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Service Office (B15001: Sex by Age by Educational Attainment for the Population 18 Years and Over)

For IELCE awards, funds were allocated using data regarding the number of immigrants admitted for legal residence by county, and the growth in immigrant population by county. Data were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's "American Community Survey 1-year Estimate," and The U.S. Census Bureau's "Estimates of the Components Resident Change" for Georgia.

The RFA competitive process was purposed to:

- Assess whether an applicant meets the criteria of an Eligible Provider;
- Evaluate an applicant's evidence of Demonstrated Effectiveness;
- Assess an applicant's proposed plan to offer ABE, ASE, Corrections, or IELCE services as prescribed in WIOA; and
- Appraise an applicant's proposal for alignment with the local workforce system and sector strategy (ies).

The competitive RFA grant process included the following primary practices:

Direct and Equitable Access (Advertisement and Distribution): The OAE made available grant applications to all eligible providers throughout the state. An eligible provider is defined as an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals, and may include:

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

The grant competition was publicized through a variety of print and electronic media outlets throughout the state. A grant notification was published via the official legal organ within each county. Additionally, the information was shared via the TCSG Office of Communications in the form of a formal press release, a posting on the TCSG website, social media outlets, and other means of available communication. In addition, communications regarding grant availability were targeted specifically to agencies that serve Corrections and English Language Learner populations. Further, the OAE offered technical assistance grant writing workshops, and maintain a Q&A page on the RFA website. Both the workshops and the Q&A page were accessible to any interested party, and will provide useful information pertaining to the grant procurement process.

Equitable Evaluation and Program Assessment:

Each grant application received a fair and equitable evaluation by a review team comprised of external reviewers/subject matter experts. This impartial review process was supported by state staff.

The evaluation and scoring of applications considered the following:

- a) Program Description. An applicant must indicate how it will provide services consistent with the WIOA statute, and designed to meet the needs of eligible individuals.
- b) Demonstrated Effectiveness. An applicant must provide information and data to support its ability to improve the literacy skills of eligible participants, with particular emphasis on individuals with low levels of literacy, as well as individuals with disabilities. Applicants must submit data to demonstrate prior performance toward meeting state-established performance measures. The assessment of prior performance may include (but will not be limited to) the following:
 - description of applicant’s experience with the provision of adult education;
 - description of applicant’s experience with similar funding;
 - financial audit report (2 prior years);
 - description applicant’s data management system.

- c) WIOA Partnerships, Sector Alignment, and Cooperative Arrangements. An applicant must describe existing partnership(s) with local WIOA partners, key service providers, and industry entities; supporting documentation should include existing collaborative agreements (e.g. MOUs and/or MOAs). Collaboration agreements should target service to eligible WIOA participants, with priority given to individuals with barriers to employment. Applicants must also demonstrate alignment with sector strategies. Additionally, an applicant must indicate how it will provide supportive services (or referrals for supportive services) to participants, to assist with eliminating barriers to enrollment and persistence in the Adult Education program.
- d) Adjusted Levels of Performance. An applicant must describe how it will meet performance measures established by the state, and provide details of its data collection and reporting procedures.
- e) Integrated Education and Training, and Workforce Preparation. An applicant must provide details to support how it will offer integrated education and training. Specifically, it must describe how it will incorporate workforce readiness into its curricula, and execute career pathways that lead to employment or post-secondary education.
- f) Cost Per Student. An applicant must clearly indicate the program's cost per student. Consideration was given to the efficient use of grant dollars.
- g) Risk Analysis. An applicant must be solvent and must not be on the debarment list.
- h) 13 Considerations for Award. An applicant must provide information to address how it will meet the 13 Considerations outlined in section 231 of the statute.

Local Board Review:

Each application was reviewed by the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB). The LWDB was provided an opportunity to review and acknowledge the applicant's alignment with local workforce priorities and initiatives.

Publication of Grant Awards:

The OAE publicized the grant award decisions by/using the TCSG website. Additionally, grantees received award letters and grantee packages. Grant award packages will contain:

- Grant award amount per project
- Assurances and Grant Acceptance Page (Terms and conditions)
- Professional Development funding

RFA Continuation Grant Application

Following the initial award, each grantee will submit an RFA continuation grant application for one-year renewal, for the life of the grant. The decision on the amount of continued funding will be based on:

- Census of need;
- Program's prior performance (during the previous grant year) for each grant area;
- Continued financial solvency; and
- Program not appearing on the federal debarment list.

The annual continuation grant application will also require local providers to describe how the program will comply with the tenets of the General Education Provisions Act. The program must

specify how it will ensure access to, and participation in, its program—for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

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

OAE ensured that all eligible providers had direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The RFA announcement was shared via the TCSG Office of Communications and Public Relations in the form of a formal press release, an announcement on the TCSG website, postings on social media, and the use of other means of available communication in order to ensure that all prospective eligible providers had access to the same standardized information. Grant application procedures were the same for all eligible providers.

(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.

N/A

(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. (i) Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation. (ii) Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan. (iii) Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals. (iv) Describe the State's plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).

Development of Georgia's data integration project is organized into 3 phases of work. Phase 1 focused on the implementation of Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) to support the movement of data and administrative web-based capabilities described below. Phase 2 and Phase 3 involve the creation of enhanced web-based capabilities and robust vendor integration capabilities, the details of which are still under development.

Phase 1 of the data integration project focuses on providing the agencies the capability to develop their WIOA performance reports and administrative web-based capabilities. Phase 1 also involved setting up the initial secure environment in accordance with the Data Usage Agreement. The Phase 1 work is organized according to three use cases defined by the data requirements and data transport needs.

- o Use Case 1 - PII, Enrollment, and Employer data sent to GTRI
- o Use Case 2 - Reporting sub elements sent to the agencies
- o Use Case 3 - Web based access of PII data to agencies

Use Case 1 requires agencies to transfer PII, Enrollment, and Employer data to the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) via bulk transfer, via SFTP. The transfer of PII data along with program specific data such as enrollment start and end dates gives GTRI the ability to identify which participants are enrolled in multiple programs across the agencies. The bulk transfers follow the DUA file formats. Participant matching is accomplished by applying entity resolution algorithms. These algorithms match Social Security Numbers, and then incrementally match other PII properties such as first name, last name, date of birth plus any other PII property that provides the best matching results. When finished, GTRI identifies the corresponding Code Value per participant for the WIOA Joint PIRL or RSA-911 and the enrollment value required by the WIOA Statewide Report.

There are three types of employer measure calculations defined by WIOA, Georgia selected employer measures 1 and 3. GTRI receives the required Employer data to calculate employer measure 1 and 3 from the agencies via SFTP. GTRI then performs the necessary matching on employers across the agencies and develop the necessary numerators and denominators.

Use Case 2 involves sending co-enrollment and employer measures calculated data during Use Case 1 back to the agencies. The data being sent back to the agencies is sent via SFTP. There are two bulk transfers required - enrollment data and employer measures data. Enrollment data consists of an agency specific participant ID's along with the corresponding code values. For example, an agency ID, program name, enrollment data, the corresponding code values from the WIOA Joint PIRL and RSA 911. Each agency receives their own participant ID's and corresponding code values back. Each agency then populates their reports with the updated enrollment data. GTRI works with each agency not only in sending data to GTRI under Use Case 1, but also in receiving data back from GTRI and assisting with extracting the resulting data and inserting in the appropriate reports.

Use Case 3 involves developing an administrative web-site for agencies to assist in matching participants. Matching algorithms will only correctly match a certain percentage of participants based on existing matching criteria. Any unmatched participants require human review to determine matches. The web-site allows agencies to see a list of possible matches of their participants to another participant from a different agency. The user can then link the two participants if they believe it is a match or they can confirm that it is not a match. The website has a limited set of users from each agency responsible for reviewing the list of agency specific participants that may match a participant from another agency. GTRI provides e-mail notifications to the agencies informing them that there are participants from their agency with possible matches to other agencies that require review.

GTRI works with each agency to help them automate data transfers to GTRI on a regular basis. GTRI will then automate the process of receiving data and running appropriate algorithms on the data. The software will generate automated e-mail notifications to agencies when reporting data is available for them to download via SFTP and import into their supporting IT system(s) and/or reports. Send and receive file formats have been defined in the DUA; however, GTRI will work with each agency to ensure their systems can export and import data needed for reporting

The State Workforce Development Board works with the governor to align technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs through utilization of board member's professional experience and involvement with local area and statewide Georgia workforce. Alignment with the State Workforce Development Board improves service delivery individuals because local area and state staff can reevaluate services offered and work to better align them with the needs of the workforce.

[\(B\) 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.

Georgia carefully monitored state and local performance on the nine common measures under WIA and will continue to do so with the new performance measures under WIOA. In addition to quarterly reports distributed to LWDAs, WFD staff work with LWDA staff throughout the year to ensure success, identifying and addressing any areas where performance is not meeting expectations. While Georgia has not established any state-specific performance measures to date, data on performance is shared constantly with the state and local workforce boards and any recommendations on performance measures identified through these venues will be taken into account.

[\(C\) 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.)

Through EG and GWS data collection and wage matching, GDOL provides quarterly reports to local career centers on their progress toward achieving negotiated performance goals on common measures. Through contractual agreement with WFD, GDOL also provides federal reporting services for the latter. This reporting capability also extends to grant and/or partner sub-levels, either by canned or ad hoc reporting generated by the State or authorized partner staff.

GDOL currently manages the state UI program and makes UI wage information available to state partners, as the law allows, for employment and wage-related outcome identification for

federal performance standards. Under WIOA, this information will be made available, as the law allows, to the core partners so that performance can be captured.

(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.

All core partners that will provide and/or share data in order to execute federal program requirements will do so under a signed MOU to ensure the security of sensitive information. All core partners will agree to follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws pertaining to confidential information. Each partner will ensure that the collection and use of any information that contains personally identifiable information will be limited to purposes that support the programs and activities described by the relevant MOU's.

As a core partner, GVRA will follow all applicable federal, state and local laws as well as any signed MOUs. GVRA also has written policies and procedures to safeguard the confidentiality of all personal information by following the requirements of CFR 34: 361.38. These policies and procedures include the following:

- All information regarding applicants and clients developed or purchased by the Program shall be held confidential;
- Confidential information is only released in accordance with state law, federal law or GVRA policy and is exempt from the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. 50-18-76) and from third party discovery in litigation (O.C.G.A. 9-11-34);
- Information shall be used only for purposes directly related with the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program;
- All applicants and clients are informed of their right to request removal or amendment of misleading or inaccurate information from their case file;
- Each applicant/client file shall be clearly labeled as CONFIDENTIAL
- All applicants/clients and/or their representatives shall be informed of these policies and procedures in their mode of communication, including the need to collect personal information and the policies governing the use of the information;
- Any medical, psychological or other information deemed harmful to the client shall not be released directly to the applicant/client;
- Third party information shall never be released unless a third party release has been obtained;
- Any information released shall be stamped with a property and confidentiality stamp;
- Information may be available to the applicant/client with the written consent of the applicant/client;
- Information may be released to another program or authority for its program uses with the written consent of the client; however, if the information is deemed harmful to the

client, it shall only be released when assurance is received that the information will not further be released to the applicant/client;

- Information may be released without the written consent of the applicant/client in an emergency situation to protect the applicant/client or others when the applicant/client poses a threat to his/her safety or the safety of others;
- Information may be released without the written consent of the applicant/client in response to investigations involving law enforcement except when expressly prohibited by federal or state laws;
- Information may be released without the written consent of the applicant/client as mandated by judicial order;
- Information may be released for an approved audit, evaluation or research only for purposes directly connected with the administration of the program or for purposes which would significantly improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities and only when confidential assurances have been met.

(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.

Georgia has a large military presence with eight military installations and more than 752,800 veterans. In PY12 Operation: Workforce was launched to help Georgia's returning veterans re-enter the civilian workforce by connecting veterans and employers. Through Operation: Workforce, WFD is an active participant on Georgia's Returning Veterans Taskforce, comprised of GDOL, Georgia Department of Veterans Services (GDVS), Georgia National Guard and Reserve, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, GVRA, TCSG, and USG.

Since PY12, Operation: Workforce's web presence (operationworkforce.com) has served as a platform for veterans and employers to connect. The site allows veterans to create a profile, upload a résumé, and search and apply for job openings within the state of Georgia. It also allows Georgia employers to create profiles, post job listings, review job applicants, and search the site for qualified candidates. Employers are able to sign a pledge of commitment to give enhanced hiring opportunities to Georgia's veterans, and veterans are able to find veteran-friendly employers across the state. Operation: Workforce also serves veterans by translating their military occupational classifications into civilian occupations that best align with their skill set and training. In PY13, Operation: Workforce launched its Employers' Summit. In order to educate employers on improving current recruitment and hiring processes to better find and hire veterans. In PY14, the Employers' Summits were utilized to connect returning service members with employers.

The Operation: Workforce site is also utilized to make referrals to core partner programs. The site provides resource pages that directly link to services provided by WFD, GDOL, GDVS,

GVRA and non-profit providers. The provision of this information enables a more seamless referral system between the partners and other applicable services. The site also hosts an interactive map of all the one-stop and GDVS locations. Additionally, the site is staffed by an Operation: Workforce Program Manager that will provide referrals to necessary programming.

In accordance with federal regulations, SWDB established a priority of service policy. Veterans receive priority of service as described in the Jobs for Veterans Act (38 U.S.C. 4215 (2)). Veterans and eligible spouses of veterans who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for adult programs must receive the highest priority for services. Priority applies regardless of funding levels. According to state policy, priority must be provided in the following order:

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, are low- income individuals, or who are basic skills deficient. Military earnings are not to be included as income for veterans and transitioning service members.
- Second, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses who meet WIOA priority criteria.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- Last, to individuals outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

Furthermore, Georgia has adopted a policy that allows active duty military personnel within 12 months of separation to be classified as dislocated workers, eligible to receive services.

During the annual monitoring period, WFD program staff monitor LWDAs for compliance regarding priority of service for veterans. LWDAs are required to establish local policies that ensure eligible veterans and/or spouses are given priority, and WFD program staff review these policies as part of annual monitoring. To ensure that LWDAs are following federal, state, and local priority of service policies, WFD staff test participant case files containing eligibility documentation for compliance.

GDOL Priority of Service for Veterans

GDOL staff informs veterans of priority of service at initial contact and provides informational pamphlets detailing priority of service and the range of workforce services available to them.

If the customer is eligible, veterans and spouses are entitled to take advantage of the priority throughout the full array of employment, training, placement, and other services provided. Once POS is provided, staff review the GDOL- 3404 form with the veteran to determine if they have a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE) per VPL 3-14 and subsequent amendments. Wagner Peyser (WP) staff will refer veteran customers who do not identify a SBE to GDOL WP Service Specialists, or GDOL DVOP staff will provide case management services if the veteran meets one of the following SBE criteria:

- A special disabled or disabled veteran, as those terms are defined in 38U.S.C § 4211(1) and (3); Special disabled and disabled veterans are those: who are entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs; or, were discharged or released from active;

- Homeless, as defined in Section 103(a) of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302(a));
- A recently-separated service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(6), who at any point in the previous 12 months has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks;
- An offender, as defined by WIA Section 101(27), who has been released from incarceration within the last 12 months;
- Lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate; or
- Low-income (as defined by WIA at Section 101(25)(B)).
- DVOP services to veterans aged 18-24 as approved by the Secretary of Labor.

Veterans also receive reemployment services from GDOL through the UI Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. RESEA provides customized workforce services, including reemployment orientation, individualized career assessment, and job search assistance.

In addition, GDOL's EG system, described throughout the plan, provides specialized services to job seekers who are veterans. Conventional approaches to veterans' job placement are normally based on USDOL's Military Occupational Classification-Standard Occupational Classification (MOC-SOC) crosswalk which maps each military occupation to its civilian equivalent. However, these mappings are very literal, do not account for market demand, and fail the majority of service members whose combat occupations have no civilian equivalents. EG's Focus Career Explorer uses a proprietary crosswalk of military and civilian occupations to ensure that every veteran receives matches for in-demand civilian jobs, including those whose military occupations do not have civilian equivalents (e.g., infantry). EG has undertaken a detailed review of each of the nearly 10,000 MOC's to identify matches based on corresponding high-demand careers at a variety of levels – for each specific MOC, for similar MOC's, and overall.

EG's crosswalk will provide veterans with matches at three levels of relevance:

- The first level are matches where the service member's rank and MOC functional subgroup aligns directly with civilian occupations. For example, a Journeyman Network Warfare Operator whose duties include operating network and computer-based detection and deception systems and performing technical analysis of networks and systems, would be matched to jobs as a network administrator.
- The second level includes jobs that leverage the skills developed by the service member but do not directly correspond with the service member's military skills.
- The third level includes jobs which have high soft-skill requirements and low technical-skill requirements such as retail supervisors, customer service, and sales opportunities. All veterans will be matched to these jobs, thereby ensuring that even those service members whose MOC's do not have a direct civilian equivalent are shown in-demand jobs for which they are qualified by virtue of the leadership, communication, and problem solving skills emphasized in the military. Additionally, where possible, the system application will interview veterans about their specific military experiences and translate them into language aligned with employer job postings. This will assist returning veterans in adapting to the specific terminology of the civilian workforce. The system will also provide them with feedback on their specific skill gaps and apprises

them of funded training opportunities which can address those gaps and increase their competitiveness in the workforce.

(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 onestop 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.

Georgia's One-Stop delivery system is focused on ensuring universal access across its workforce system. The State and its local partners, maintain compliance with the provisions of WIOA Section 188 which require programmatic and physical accessibility. Through monitoring performed at both the state and local level, Georgia ensures that all One-Stops are in compliance with Section 188 of WIOA, the ADA, and other applicable regulations. Individuals who seek to utilize Georgia's workforce system can expect facilities, whether physical or virtual, to meet federally-mandated accessibility standards. In addition, the State maintains a Methods of Administration which details how compliance with WIOA Section 188 will be maintained. The Methods of Administration is a "living" document which ensures current federal regulations and directives are implemented at the state and local level as quickly as possible.

Each of the State's core program administrators monitor for compliance independently. WFD, acting as the administrator of Title I-B, monitors for WIOA Section 188 compliance across Georgia's nineteen LWDA's. GVRA, the administrator of VR, ensures physical accessibility across the service delivery system through its "ADA Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal", and the "Checklist for Existing Facilities." GDOL, the Wagner-Peyser administrator, provides services from its career centers and monitors them for ADA compliance through their "Checklist for Facility Maintenance Responsibilities under the ADA." Generally, local Equal Opportunity Officers are responsible for resolving any discrepancies found during monitoring.

Per federal law, each LWDA must appoint a local Equal Opportunity Officer who is responsible for ensuring local WIOA Section 188 compliance. Local Equal Opportunity Officers are responsible for informing senior staff of applicable federal regulations and ensuring all programs and activities are implemented in compliance. Additionally, local Equal Opportunity Officers collect and resolve local grievances and complaints as needed. Local Equal Opportunity Officers actively liaises with the State's Title I-B Equal Opportunity Officer 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.

Separately, as a component of one-stop certification, the State collects a business plan from each LWDA which details how a new one-stop will satisfy accessibility requirements and the provisions of WIOA Section 188. In order to be certified, each comprehensive one-stop must satisfy the requisite federal criteria. This process ensures universal access to programmatic services and facilities are maintained across the state.

Moreover, the One-Stop Integration Working Group is identifying additional criteria which will be assessed during the one-stop certification process. This may lead to additional accessibility requirements being incorporated into the one-stop certification process. Through the One-Stop Integration Working Group, the State continues to prioritize programmatic and physical accessibility in the one-stop certification process. The One-Stop Integration Working Group will provide guidance and technical assistance to LWDBs prior to the completion of LWDB certification, prior to July 1, 2017.

(9) Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency.

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including onestop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each onestop center is able to meet the needs of limited English proficient individuals, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

Any entity administering WIOA Title I- financially assisted programs and activities shall ensure that no individual is discriminated against on the basis of national origin. The proposed regulations governing the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA consider discrimination on grounds of national origin to include treating an individual “adversely because they (or their families or ancestors) are from a particular country or part of the world, because of ethnicity or accent (including physical, linguistic, and cultural characteristics closely associated with a national origin group), or because the recipient perceives the individual to be of a certain national origin, even if they are not”.⁴ Further, recipients shall take reasonable steps to ensure that each limited English proficient (LEP) individual served or encountered is effectively informed about the services available to them and able to participate in the program or activity.⁵ Georgia’s agencies responsible for administering the programs funded under WIOA continue to ensure that LEP individuals are provided with the same quality services that any other individual receives.

Georgia’s one-stop center operators and one-stop delivery system partners comply with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA and continue to provide programmatic accessibility to all individuals, including those with LEP. All one-stops shall provide notice to LEP individuals that interpretation and translation services are available upon request. At the initial point of contact, LEP individuals will be provided timely language assistance free of charge and vital documentation will be translated to his or her native language if required.⁶ In some local area’s one-stops, where a significant proportion of LEP individuals seek services, language identification cards may be used to assist LEP individuals in identifying their primary language. If an LEP individual is determined eligible for services, staff is instructed to document in the Georgia Work Ready Online Portal and the State’s tracking system what language assistance was provided and may be necessary for that participants continued participation. The information stored in the Georgia Work Ready Online Portal and the State tracking system are secure and the participant’s LEP remains confidential.

⁴ Proposed Regulation 29 C.F.R. § 38.9(a)

⁵ Proposed Regulation 29 C.F.R. § 38.9(b)

⁶ [Georgia 2014 Methods of Administration](#)

More robust LEP services are routinely provided in local areas which serve significant LEP populations. Bi-lingual staff proficient in speaking and interpreting the most commonly identified non-English languages are typically accessible onsite and are utilized to communicate with LEP customers and assist them in getting the services they need. If bi-lingual staff is unavailable on-site, GDOL staff is instructed to utilize the Georgia Department of Labor's Multi-Lingual Directory. The Multi-Lingual Directory personnel are then able to immediately assist the LEP individual in accessing services. In addition, the GDOL contracts with the Language Line, which provides interpreter services in over one-hundred languages to assist LEP customers. Another resource available to staff is the Absolute Interpreting Service Inc.⁷ or Latin Americans Translators Network (LATN) which provide sign language assistance.

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.

The State created a set of working groups to plan and coordinate the writing of the State Plan. Each working group was comprised of different members of the workforce system, including WFD, GDOL, TCSG, GVRA, and TANF. Additionally, the groups had members from the state's local workforce development areas and business representatives through members of SWDB. Additional detail on the working groups can be found in Section III. (a)(2).

Upon release of the Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements, the working groups met to discuss which type of plan to submit. A Unified State Plan was decided upon and recommended to the Governor. Each group was then tasked with writing and developing various sections of the plan. During the writing process, WFD staff assisted each agency partner with writing, formatting, and editing support. Once complete, each group submitted their sections, which were then combined to create the first version of the Unified State Plan. This version went before the State Workforce Development Board, and the board approved it on November 18, 2015.

Upon SWDB approval, the plan went out for public comment on November 23, 2015, on the WFD site for 30 consecutive days. After the 30-day period, the plan came down, and submitted comments were organized into sections and taken to the working groups for review. Each working group discussed their relevant comments and determined whether the comments warranted a change in the State Plan, or if they should be responded to individually. Once the groups made changes, the responses were compiled and re-written into a new version of the State Plan. These changes were submitted to the State Workforce Development Board for final approval on February 25, 2016.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES

⁷ [Georgia Interpreting Services Network](#)

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified State Plan Assurances

The State of Georgia hereby certifies the following: *Common Assurances* (for all Core Programs):

1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public;

(b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;

- 8.** The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;
- 9.** The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;
- 10.** The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);
- 11.** Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and
- 12.** Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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.

(a) General Requirements

(1) Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas

(A) Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State. (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. (C) Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas. (D) Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.

Local Workforce Development Area Designation

Each existing LWDA was required to reapply for LWDA designation status. WFD began LWDA designation in May 2015. WIOA sets forth specific requirements for initial LWDA designation. In order to meet the requirements, the LWDA must represent an area which was, for the purposes of the Workforce Investment Act, recognized as a LWIA and for the two-year period preceding the date of enactment of WIOA, performed successfully, and sustained fiscal integrity. The criterion “Performed successfully” means that an LWDA met or exceeded the common measure levels of performance for the last two consecutive program years. The criterion “Sustained fiscal integrity” means that the USDOL Secretary has not made a formal determination that the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the LWDA mis-expended funds during the last two program years. Any LWIA, which applied for LWDA designation and satisfied those three requirements will be officially recognized as an LWDA for the first two program years of WIOA. Some LWDA did not satisfy the three required elements and, therefore, completed a modified application. All LWDA filled out the required documentation and were approved by SWDB on April 30, 2015. The current LWDA structure is represented in [Appendix 3](#).

Region Designation

As part of Georgia’s plan for implementing WIOA provisions, the State developed a policy for assigning LWDA to designated regions. The newly designated regions will not replace the existing LWDA structure, but will provide additional coordination and oversight to help align service delivery under WIOA. USDOL has identified several primary factors for states to consider during the regional designation process, including population centers, occupation and industrial composition and employment location quotients, geographic boundaries, commuting patterns, education levels, and labor force conditions.

In 1998, the Georgia General Assembly (O.C.G.A. § 50-4-7) formally established 12 State Service Delivery Regions for delivering state services to local units of government and citizens and for the purpose of establishing common state agency regional boundaries (excluding health and mental health districts). The current 12 State Service Delivery Regions are divided in a manner that takes into account population centers, occupation & industrial composition, employment

location quotients, geographical boundaries, commuting patterns, economic trends, and industrial needs across counties. The 12 State Service Delivery Region model is leveraged by several state agencies, including GDEcD, GDOL, and Regional Commissions, each of which are key partners under WIOA. Other state agencies have developed different regional designation models to fit their respective service delivery activities.

A primary objective of LWDBs and WIOA programs is engaging with citizens who require access to one-stop centers and other resources during the employment process. As a result, geography becomes a critical factor in ensuring participants and key stakeholders have access to needed services. WIOA regions need to be sized appropriately to help ensure accessible travel for participants to workforce services, local seminars, career centers, job fairs, and other events geared at promoting economic development in the community. Regional designations must support the efficient and economical delivery of employment services. Regions also need to be large enough to support the natural flow of people and resources across county lines. According to the 2000 Census Data, in 140 out of 159 Georgia counties, more than 20% of residents commute to work outside of their home county. Therefore, WFD consulted CLEOs and LWDB members to ensure proposed region designations suited local and regional service delivery needs.

To facilitate an informed, robust discussion, WFD distributed guidance to CLEOs and LWDB members regarding proposed region designations and requested time to speak with interested parties. In the guidance, WFD reiterated WIOA's region composition restrictions and the need to create regions from LWDAAs that share labor markets and have similar service delivery profiles. Citing the factors provided in the NPRM for determining region boundaries, such as population centers, commuting patterns, and labor force conditions, WFD proposed utilizing the 12 State Service Delivery Region model as the Workforce Region model. As the 12 State Service Delivery Region model is utilized by other state agencies and is supported by data that mirrors the 20 CFR factors, it was logical to propose the pre-existing regions be designated as workforce regions in a further effort to integrate and streamline service delivery under WIOA.

Due to the new duties and responsibilities assigned to regions, the guidance further detailed the state's expectations moving forward. The expectations for an increased regional service delivery focus between LWDAAs within the same region and further engagement between workforce system partners within regions were detailed. Additionally, the need to establish regional plans was mentioned and the anticipated contents of those plans were broadly defined. Subsequent discussions with CLEOs and LWDB members resulted in WFD providing further clarity on the designation process and future expectations regarding regions. As the consultation period closed, additional analysis and research were performed to ensure the region designation process satisfied all additional WIOA requirements.

To meet the additional WIOA regional designation requirements, WFD performed an analysis to determine the appropriate regional designation model using key data factors including population centers, occupation & industrial composition, employment location quotients, and geographic boundaries. The analysis compared key data factors for the 19 LWDA structures to the existing 12 State Service Delivery regions defined by the Georgia General Assembly, and additional factors such as commuting patterns, education levels, and labor force conditions were also considered. The analysis of key data factors is included in [Appendix 4](#).

The map in [Appendix 5](#) overlays the existing 19 FY2014 LWDA (denoted numerically) with the existing 12 State Service Delivery Regions (denoted by color). Figure 45. further displays how the existing 19 LWDA align with the existing 12 State Service Delivery Regions:

Figure 45: State Alignment

LWDA	State Service Delivery Region
1	1
2	2
3, 4, 5, 6, 7	3
8	4
9	5
10, 11	6
12, 13	7
14, 15	8
16	9
17	10
18*	11
20	12

Delivery Region

*LWDAs 18 and 19 merged in 2013 to become LWDA 18.

LWDAs mirror State Service Delivery Regions with the exception of these four regions: 3, 6, 7, and 8. These four regions align with groups of LWDAs that exist within shared geographic regions of the State. As a result, the alignment of LWDAs to State Service Delivery Regions, in response to WIOA regional designation requirements, further supports alignment of service delivery to citizen needs as represented by regional economic trends and characteristics. Alignment of the 19 LWIAs to the 12 State Service Delivery Regions will allow the State to leverage existing service delivery models for employment services across the state.

The data analysis contained in [Appendix 4](#) also highlights commonalities in LWDA employment data, occupation and industrial needs, and education levels when grouped by State Service Delivery Region. For example, the data analysis illustrates that each regional grouping of LWDAs has specific industries that are in high- or low-demand when compared to state averages. In reviewing deviations from state averages, all regions, except regions three and 4,

employ fewer than the state average in professional and business services. Most regions employ manufacturing or government sectors at a rate above the state average.

Notably, some regions deviate from the common trend found in other regions. Region four employs a lower percentage of citizens in education and healthcare services, relative to other service delivery regions. Region 12 employs a higher percentage of citizens in government and leisure/hospitality services, relative to other service delivery regions. Further detail of the data identifying State Service Delivery Region economic trends and characteristics is provided in [Appendix 4](#).

Based on the background information summarized above, as well as the data analysis in [Appendix 4](#), aligning the 19 LWIAs to the existing 12 State Service Delivery Regions allows the State to fulfill WIOA requirements while supporting continued alignment of service delivery to regional need. This regional alignment will assist the State in enhancing the coordination and delivery of services that support the overall economic development of the State.

Area Designation Appeals Process

WFD designated all LWDAAs that requested designation. Future areas seeking to be designated or re-designated as an LWDA may follow the appeals process below if their request is denied.

1. An appeal must be delivered via electronic or certified mail to the WFD SWDB liaison within 15 days after notification of the decision.
2. The appeal must be in writing and contain specific grounds upon which the appeal is sought.
3. The Executive Committee of SWDB has 60 days to review the appeal. Once the members have reviewed the appeal, the chairperson may call a vote on the merits of the appeal.
4. The SWDB Executive Committee vote is final unless the Governor vetoes the decision.

Infrastructure Funding Appeals Process

The State of Georgia developed and issued detailed one-stop negotiation guidance which included a section on appeals. The appeals process for the application of the State Infrastructure Mechanism can be found in detail in the document titled “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Local Service Delivery Guidelines” on the Technical Assistance website (<http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce-division/worksource-georgia/resources/technical-assistance/>). It outlines the possible grounds on which a required partner program may make an appeal, as defined by federal regulation.

[\(2\) Statewide Activities](#)

[\(A\) Provide State Policies and Guidance](#)

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

WFD, in coordination with SWDB, develops and maintains the WFD Policies and Procedures Guide. This document is hosted on the WFD website (workforce.georgia.org). All substantial changes made to the guide are reviewed and approved by SWDB. In order to inform LWDAAs of

changes made to the document and other announcements, WFD conducts a bi-monthly call with LWDA Directors and other staff, and the minutes for these calls are distributed to the LWDAs.

In order to better disseminate information relating to the WIOA transition, WFD created the WIGs. WIGs were designed to replicate USDOL TEGs. WIGs are created by WFD staff and enable staff to provide standardized technical assistance to LWDAs on Federal and State laws, regulations, and policies. The WIGs are distributed via an electronic mailing list and are hosted on the WFD website.

At the direction of SWDB, WFD is constantly striving to improve the quality and accessibility of technical assistance. Each LWDA, has two assigned technical assistance representatives from WFD, a programmatic and financial technical assistance representative. The programmatic technical assistance representative is available for questions concerning policy, program design, board structure, and participant recruitment strategies, and a financial representative is available for questions concerning drawdowns, procurement, and cost allocation plans.

It is the goal of WFD to facilitate a robust technical assistance and training environment for the 19 LWDAs transitioning to WIOA. Already, WFD has conducted webinars and hosted in-person trainings on a variety of topics. The State is working to develop a mechanism to record and catalogue these and future trainings via an online resource library providing LWDA staff and LWDB members ongoing access to these resources. This resource library would also enable the State to provide resources for the training of new staff and board members.

Since the most recent issuance of federal regulations and TEGs by USDOL, WFD, in conjunction with the SWDB, has updated and implemented the following state policies, procedures and guidance documents for LWDA administration.

State Workforce Policies and Procedures Updates and Implementations

1. Supportive Service Policy revision (P&P, Section 3.4.4)
2. Customized Training Policy revision (P&P, Section 3.4.1.3)
3. Registered Apprenticeships Policy revision (P&P, Section 3.4.1.6)
4. WIOA Eligible Training Providers and Programs List Procedures Policy revision (P&P, Section 4.4)
5. Services to Employers Policy revision (P&P, Section 5.4)
6. Disaster Response Plan Policy addition (P&P, Section 5.9)
7. Incumbent Worker Training Policy revision (P&P, Section 3.4.1.4)
8. Initial Eligibility for New Training Providers or Providers Submitting New Programs Policy revision (P&P, Section 4.4.4)
9. Expenditure Reporting to WFD Policy revision (P&P, Section 2.2.13)
10. Quarterly Reporting Policy revision (P&P, Section 2.2.14)
11. Out-of-State Training Providers Policy revision (P&P, Section 4.4.10)
12. Governor's Reserve Fund Policy revision (P&P, Section 2.2.7)
13. Follow-up Services Policy revision (P&P, Section 3.4 (III))

14. Local Board Vacancies Policy revision (P&P, Section 1.7.5)
15. One-Stop Certification Policy revision (P&P, Section 3.1)
16. Adult and Dislocated Worker Participant Eligibility for WIOA and Priority of Service Policy revision (P&P, Section 3.2.5)
17. Selective Service Registration Requirements Policy revision (P&P, Section 3.2.4)

State Guidance Documents Implemented

1. WIG GA-16-001 Comprehensive One-Stop Operator Procurement Guidance
2. WIG GA-16-002 Outreach Material Guidance
3. WIG LS-16-001 Religious Affiliation
4. WIG LS-16-002 Accessibility
5. WIG LS-16-003 Standing Committee
6. WIG GA-16-003 PY15 Youth Grant Closeout
7. WIG PS-16-004 Youth Work Experience
8. WIG LS-16-004 Affiliate One-Stop
9. WIG PS-16-005 Incumbent Worker Training
10. WIG PS-16-006 Unlikely to Return
11. WIG PS-16-007 WIOA Eligibility Income
12. WIG PS-16-008 Disaster Response Plan
13. WIG PS-17-001 Youth Incentives
14. WIOA Local Service Delivery Guidelines

All State Policies and Procedures and Workforce Implementation Guidance (WIG) can be found on the Georgia Department of Economic Development's [website](http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce-division/worksource-georgia/resources/technical-assistance/), under *Technical Assistance* (<http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce-division/worksource-georgia/resources/technical-assistance/>).

(B) Governor's Reserve and Rapid Response

Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers

Governor's Reserve

WIOA funds reserved by the State as a part of the Governor's set aside are managed by WFD. These funds are largely utilized for the statewide administration and oversight of WIOA

activities, and to achieve the Governor's goal that WFD serve as a convener of partners, working to meet the workforce needs of Georgia employers.

In addition, the State has leveraged a portion of the Governor's set aside to gather information to inform the direction of the workforce system and create career pathways. For example, the State utilized some of these funds to obtain current job openings and real-time labor market information to assist the state and LWDAs in aligning the available labor force with short-term and long-term demand occupations.

Georgia also promoted innovative programs and supports strategies which provided opportunities for targeted populations. For instance, Operation: Workforce and the Georgia WorkSmart programs were supported through the Governor's set aside. These programs utilized proven practices to connect individuals with the workforce system. State programs also coordinated with one another to enhance the value of the entire system. For example, the State's skilled trade initiative, Trade Five, leverages the value of the apprenticeship model in growing industries.

Finally, state set aside funds support required activities, such as annual evaluations of the workforce system and Rapid Response activities. In support of the Governor's Vision to enhance the quality of services to businesses, the State has transformed its Rapid Response model and placed greater emphasis on early detection and layoff aversion strategies. The key to this structure has been the development of strategic relationships and partnerships within each LWDA and across planning regions that can provide timely intelligence on opportunities with employers.

Rapid Response

Georgia's Rapid Response structure begins with WFD as the State Dislocated Worker Unit. This team is responsible for receiving all WARN notifications and distributing them to other partners as necessary. The State serves as the convener of these partners and helps coordinate the response activities for all separation events. Additionally, the State records the separation details in the online case management system so that dislocated workers can be identified by their separation event and tracked as they receive workforce services. This allows the State to quickly identify opportunities for employers looking for specific skill sets or occupations by referencing previous events with individuals who have transferable skills.

While the State is responsible for convening the appropriate partners for each event, the LWDAs play a pivotal role in responding quickly and effectively. Regardless of how the notice arrives to the state Rapid Response Team, once it has been entered into the case management system, the notice is forwarded to a local Rapid Response representative and the response activities begin. The state and local coordinators will contact the employer and schedule a time to explain all available workforce services. The state Rapid Response Coordinator will then help convene partners to meet with the employer and create a plan of services to meet both the employers' and separating employees' needs. Through discussion with the employer, the State may offer strategies which include:

- Shared work/short-term compensation
- Assistance with filing Unemployment Compensation
- Assistance with filing Trade petitions, if applicable

- Information on retraining/upskilling opportunities
- Job search workshops
- Financial literacy and planning workshops

The team of partners work with the employer throughout the process and provide follow up at the conclusion to determine if any further intervention is necessary.

Most of these services made available to employer are in response to an immediate separation event. Additional opportunities may be discussed with employers when there is adequate time and opportunity for layoff aversion efforts. The foundation of Georgia's layoff aversion strategy are activities which gather information and build partnerships. The State focuses on exploring and sharing labor market information which may predict opportunities for intervention in the workforce system. It then utilizes this information to engage in outreach through multiple partners, such as GDOL's BSU and GDEcD, to engage businesses in workforce discussions. These conversations reveal opportunities for the State and LWDAs to intervene in offering strategies such as IWT to help businesses upskill workers to become more productive or to learn on new technologies. Georgia has also had success leveraging upcoming separation events as a talent base to fill job openings with other businesses seeking skilled talent by hosting job fairs and recruitment events in coordination with the employer of separation.

(C) Rapid Response: Responding to Disasters

In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

While growing successful partnerships are at the center of Rapid Response's layoff aversion strategy, these same relationships and connections provide the foundation for a successful response when disaster strikes. Unforeseen and unpredictable, natural disasters can become extraordinarily damaging in the long run if there is no plan in place to respond to the loss of jobs or industry in the affected region. Partnerships and planning are vital to identify how the workforce system can continue to function and provide key resources to the recovery of an affected region.

In the event of natural disasters, the Rapid Response team leverages its flexibility and mobility to assist in recovery efforts. The State prepares for natural disasters by following the direction and warnings of the State's emergency management officials, the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMHSA). The State relies on advanced planning and communication so that all resources are immediately available upon declaration of an emergency situation. These plans may be enacted when the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), or GEMHSA issue an emergency declaration resulting from natural disasters. When this declaration is made, WFD serves as the initial point of contact to coordinate emergency workforce services for the affected region. The State may provide a number of services in support of temporary Disaster Recovery Centers including, but not limited to, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, WIOA training, or temporary work in recovery efforts.

The Rapid Response team maintains a list of emergency contacts for state and federal partners, including FEMA, to connect the workforce system with overall recovery efforts. As the initial point of contact, the Rapid Response team will coordinate with local workforce development areas, core partners, and state and local staff which may assist in working with dislocated workers to find temporary or full-time employment during recovery efforts.

Each LWDA has operating plans in place to continue activities in the event of natural disasters, including operational plans to function without the use of technology. State partners have similar contingency plans in place to resume normal services as quickly as possible, such as the filing and processing of unemployment compensation. WFD has established relationships with the Regional ETA office and continues to serve as the designated signatory to complete and file National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) in the event that additional assistance would be required to serve a significant number of dislocated individuals. Finally, WFD can leverage mobile units from other regions of the State to set up temporary offices in the affected region in order to provide improved access and services to individuals whose employment has been impacted by natural disasters.

Most recently, in response to Hurricane Irma, the State applied for and was awarded a NDWG that will expire in September 2018. During the grant development, and throughout the disaster recovery process, the State leveraged all the resources mentioned above. Moreover, as a result of this experience, WFD will continue to build on identified best practices around disaster planning. The State continues to look for ways to support enhanced State and local policies around disaster planning by expanding its network of partners, organizing an annual Rapid Response summit along with quarterly roundtables for the dissemination of best practices, among other goals. Additionally, the State is proactively working with LWDA's to explore investments to enhance their individual plans in areas of need that were realized under Hurricane Irma, such as the purchasing of back-up generators.

[\(D\) Rapid Response: Trade Adjustment Assistance](#)

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.

GDOL works closely with GDEcD when layoffs and business closings occur, including those with a foreign trade impact, for which Trade petitions are submitted to USDOL. GDOL TAA staff promote a seamless array of activities from the initial phase of a Trade-certified layoff through ongoing services provided to Trade customers. All Trade customers are entitled to Rapid Response and employment services, which are provided consistent with the process for all layoff notifications.

Based on the nature of the layoff, early-intervention services provided by Rapid Response may include discussions with employers about TAA before a petition is filed.

Once a petition is filed, TAA staff notify partners such as the LWDA's and Career Centers that the petition has been filed. If USDOL certifies the petition, TAA secures an affected worker list from the employer and notifies the workers and partners who provide services to dislocated workers.

TAA coordinates and facilitates worker orientations to inform the workers about the benefits and services they may receive as well as the eligibility requirements associated with each benefit, including co-enrolling with those programs. The worker orientations often include LWDA

representatives to provide guidance on demand occupations and available training in the LWDA. DOL staff assist workers with TAA registration and filing UI claims.

If the number of affected workers is small, or if there are workers who are unable to attend the group orientation, they can visit a nearby DOL Career Center to be served.

All participants are offered Trade case management services and information and access to the full array of Trade services including:

- Training, including remediation, occupational, OJT, customized and apprenticeships
- Income Support
- Wage supplements
- Health Coverage Tax Credit (to help pay health insurance premiums)
- Job search assistance
- Relocation allowances
- Comprehensive and specialized skills assessments
- Individual service plans to set employment goals and strategies
- Career Counseling
- Labor market and financial aid information
- Other services customized for harder-to-serve dislocated workers

Participants register in EG, the GDOL online registration system, which provides them the opportunity to develop a resume and access thousands of job opportunities listed by employers. Trade services are tracked in GDOL's GWS and reported quarterly to USDOL.

Beyond responding to individual petitions, the State has taken a proactive approach to advancing TAA in all aspects. To this end, WFD obtains, reviews and disseminates the list of Trade filings and the status of certifications to all LWDA's on a monthly basis. WFD staff participated on USDOL technical assistance calls and continues to participate on a TAA regional work-group to best utilize Trade data and information as a tool for bolstering service delivery to dislocated workers. Lastly, WFD have specifically included TAA staff as a central element within its State's capacity building objectives, including during the quarterly roundtables as well as the Rapid Response summit.

(b) Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements

(1) Work-Based Training Models

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

Georgia offers a variety of work-based learning services, which provide employers an opportunity to customize the training offered to future employees based on the tasks and functions required for the job. Work-based learning also enables participants to learn transferable skills that will lead to employment and future advancement.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) is perhaps the most involved service that an LWDA can offer an employer. Georgia's LWDA's work with local business leaders to determine where there may be a

need for OJT. Georgia LWDA's strive to make this process as streamlined and hassle free as possible for participating employers. OJT assists the employer by paying for a portion of an employee's training costs and wages while that employee is in the training period. Employers are then able to use resources in other ways, while not compromising on the quality of training that their new hires are receiving. OJT can support large scale hiring while ensuring that a company is able to train their employees correctly.

Through the State's Rapid Response team, WFD has established a layoff aversion strategy, which emphasizes developing relationships with employers prior to the announcement of a layoff, potentially enabling strategic interventions to prevent the layoffs under consideration. One of those strategies which the State has successfully implemented is Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). In partnership with LWDA's, Georgia uses IWT to upskill workers who would have been laid-off had they not received the appropriate training. The State will continue to expand this network and the resources available to struggling employers.

The State also plans to utilize IWT more proactively as WIOA allows for this strategy to be utilized independent of layoff aversion criteria outlined by the State. This will allow the State to make this training opportunity available to employers who are seeking to upskill their current workforce. Incumbent workers will receive training leading to new skills, better positions, and higher salaries. LWDA's will be able to utilize a portion of their Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to provide this training and, in many cases, they will also be able to serve unemployed individuals by backfilling the entry- or lower-level positions vacated by the incumbent workers.

Customized Skills Training (CT) is designed to meet the special requirements of an employer or group of employers by allowing them to tailor and design work-based skills training. For each participant, the employer develops a training plan and measurable goals that determine the method by which the training is provided. Proficiency levels should be based on local business or industry skills standards. The training activity may take place at the worksite or in a classroom setting, which may be provided by the employer or an intermediary.

Work Experience (WEx) activities continue to play a vital role in state youth program offerings, providing enrolled youth an up-close look into the world of employment. Participants learn skills specific to the jobs that they are working in as well as soft skills that can be applied everywhere. WEx services also allow adults to gain valuable on-the-job experience. A WEx activity can be utilized for adults that have little to no work experience or who have not been gainfully employed for a long period of time. The WEx activity allows these participants to learn valuable skills and fill their resume with current employment experience which enables them to better market themselves to future employers.

WFD also promoted the use of the Fast Track program, which is an employer-driven training program unique to the State of Georgia. Fast Track leveraged quantitative and qualitative data provided through available labor market information and HDCI to identify common workforce needs of multiple employers within a similar industry and region to develop a customized workforce training solution. WFD worked with the employers to identify the specific staffing needs, which allowed the employers to provide feedback on the specific training elements that were needed or were generally lacking in traditional offerings. WFD and LWDA's then worked with training providers to develop condensed training programs that meet the needs outlined by the employers and lead to industry-recognized credentials.

LWDAs recruited a pool of eligible participants based on criteria set by the employers, from which the employers were able to choose the members of the training class. The training was paid for utilizing an ITA. Participants who successfully completed the program were guaranteed an interview with at least two of the employers in the group. Fast Track was piloted in Northwest and Coastal Georgia.

(2) Registered Apprenticeship

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy and services.

Georgia WorkSmart is a work-based learning initiative operated by WFD. The initiative promotes Registered Apprenticeship programs as a workforce development tool and assists Georgia companies in developing and implementing customized programs to meet their specific hiring and training needs. Using the Registered Apprentice model can help businesses grow their own talent and build a motivated and qualified workforce. Employers use Registered Apprenticeship to recruit and train new employees and to upskill their current workforce.

In Georgia, all Registered Apprenticeship programs are approved and overseen by the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship (OA). Georgia WorkSmart acts as the primary liaison between OA and the State's WIOA system. Georgia WorkSmart works to increase the total number of Registered Apprenticeship programs approved by OA. These approved Registered Apprenticeships are a proven, long-term training model that combines formal Related Technical Instruction with on-site, occupation-related training. Apprentices typically work 30-40 hours per week and receive classroom training through part-time attendance at a technical college, university, or from other approved training providers. Through partnerships with OA, TCSG, and other agency partners, Georgia WorkSmart helps organizations develop apprenticeship programs that include the requisite curriculum and classroom instruction needed to qualify as a Registered Apprenticeship. Similarly, WFD partners with OA to assist companies with national apprenticeship registration. A close working relationship has been established with OA, which has led to increased communication with apprenticeship sponsors as well as increased WIOA funding toward programs.

Registered Apprenticeship is fully aligned with the employer-focused, work-based training that WIOA envisions. Georgia WorkSmart coordinates with Georgia's nineteen LWDAs to support Registered Apprenticeship programs through WIOA service delivery. Specifically, Georgia WorkSmart encourages the use of ITAs to fund the Related Classroom Instruction component of an apprentice's training program. For an individual apprentice to receive an ITA, their respective apprenticeship program must be listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). As required by WIOA, Georgia WorkSmart has developed a mechanism to notify all approved Registered Apprenticeship Sponsors of their automatic eligibility to be included on the state-wide ETPL. Seeing that all approved Registered Apprenticeship sponsors have been vetted by OA, Georgia has developed a form to collect basic training program details of any approved sponsor who chooses to be included on the ETPL. This process has helped to better align Registered Apprenticeship sponsors with their local workforce representatives as well as helped to increase WIOA support toward individual apprentices training costs.

OJT contracts are encouraged to be developed between the employer of a Registered Apprenticeship program and their LWDA to support the on-the-job component of the training.

These OJT contracts can help a business offset training costs by reimbursing a portion of an apprentice's wages during training. In combination with these services, WorkSmart also encourages LWDAs to provide Supportive Services to eligible apprentices. An apprentice's need of supportive services typically include transportation to training, child care, uniforms, and tools. Georgia WorkSmart also provided technical assistance and guidance to all nineteen LWDAs on the use of Incumbent Worker Training, Customized Training, and Work Experience toward eligible Registered Apprenticeship programs.

By design, serving Registered Apprenticeship programs and individual apprentices can contribute to positive outcomes for each WIOA performance indicators. Participants who complete these programs are exited with in-demand jobs, secure competitive wages, gain certificates, degrees, and other recognized credentials such as the USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion. These earned credentials are transferable and can be built upon. A primary role of Georgia WorkSmart is to educate LWDAs on the close alignment of Registered Apprenticeship and the WIOA performance indicators. These technical assistance opportunities are used to encourage each LWDA to develop policy regarding the use of their current WIOA services to be applied to Registered Apprenticeships in their respective areas.

(3) Training Provider Eligibility

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

WIOA requires the Governor, through the Georgia Department of Economic Development's Workforce Division (WFD), to establish criteria, information requirements and procedures regarding the eligibility of providers of training services to receive funds under Section 122(b) of WIOA.

WIOA emphasizes informed customer choice, job-driven training, program performance and continuous improvement. The quality and selection of training programs is vital to achieving these core principles. The State Eligible Training Provider/Program List (ETPL), including performance and cost information, is publicly available online through WFD's website with a searchable database to serve all significant populations groups.

WFD's responsibilities include:

- Establishing eligibility criteria, information requirements and procedures which identify the roles of the State and LWDAs in determining the eligibility of providers and programs to receive funds through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs);
- Developing and maintaining the State ETPL including initial and continued eligibility and performance and cost information reporting;
- Ensuring programs meet eligibility criteria and performance levels, including accuracy of the information;
- Removing programs that do not meet State established criteria or performance levels;
- Taking appropriate enforcement actions against providers that intentionally provide inaccurate information or substantially violate WIOA requirements; and
- Disseminating the State ETPL, including performance and cost information, to the general public and the LWDAs throughout the State.

LWDBs responsibilities include:

- Determining initial eligibility of entities providing training programs and considering the possible termination of providers due to submission of inaccurate eligibility and performance information or a substantial violation of WIOA requirements;
- Working with WFD to ensure sufficient numbers and types of providers of training services exist, including providers with expertise in assisting adults in need of adult education and literacy activities;
- Ensuring the dissemination and use of the State ETPL, including formats accessible to individuals with disabilities;
- Requiring additional criteria and information from providers to become eligible in that local area, if desirable; and
- Setting higher levels of performance than those required by WFD as criteria for local programs to become or remain eligible to provide services in the local area, if desirable.

Training Providers and Programs subject to ETP Requirements

Eligible Training Providers (ETP) are entities that make available programs which are eligible to receive WIOA funds for adults and dislocated worker participants who enroll in training programs through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). ITAs may also be utilized for WIOA youth funds to provide training for older, out-of-school youth ages 18-24. To be eligible to receive training funds, the ETP shall be one of the following:

- Post-secondary education institutions that provide a program which leads to a postsecondary credential;
- Entities that carry out programs registered through the National Apprenticeship Act (Registered Apprenticeship programs);
- Other public or private training providers, which may include: community-based organizations, joint labor-management organizations, pre-apprenticeship programs and occupational/technical training;
- Eligible providers of adult education and literary activities, if combined with skills training; or
- Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), if they meet the conditions of WIOA sec. 107(g)(1).

Eligible Programs of Training Services

A training services program is defined as one or more courses or classes or a structured regimen that leads to an industry recognized certificate or credential, a certificate of completion of a registered apprenticeship, a license recognized by the state or federal government, an associate or baccalaureate degree, a secondary school diploma or its equivalent, employment or measureable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.

Not all allowable types of training services are subject to the requirements of the training provider provisions. Contracts for services may be utilized instead of ITAs only when one or more of the following five exceptions apply and the LWDB has fulfilled the consumer choice requirements of 20 C.F.R. § 680.340:

- When the services provided are on-the-job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, transitional employment, internships, paid or unpaid work experience;
- When the LWDB determines that there is an insufficient number of eligible providers in the local area to accomplish the purposes of a system of ITAs. The determination process must include a 30-day public comment period and be described in the local plan;
- When the LWDB determines that there is a training program of demonstrated effectiveness offered in the area by a community-based organization or another private organization to serve individuals with barriers to employment. The LWDB must develop criteria (as noted in 20 C.F.R. § 680.320) to be used in determining demonstrated effectiveness, particularly as it applies to individuals with barriers to employment;
- When the LWDB determines that it would be most appropriate to contract with an institution of higher education or other eligible provider of training services in order to facilitate the training of multiple individuals in in-demand industry sectors or occupations, provided that the contract does not limit customer choice;
- When the LWDB is considering entering into a pay-for-performance contract and the Local WDB ensures that the contract is consistent with § 683.510 of this chapter or
- When an LWDB may provide training services only if it submits a request to the State for a waiver. The proposed request should be made available to eligible training providers and the general public for public comment no less than 30 days. Public comments must be included with the request. The request will include: evidence that there are an insufficient number of eligible provider of such a program of training services to meet local demand, information that the board meets the requirements for an eligible training provider under WIOA Section 122, and information that training will prepare participants for an in-demand industry sector or occupation in the local area.

Training Providers eligible before the WIOA transition period

Per TEGL 41-14 Change 1, USDOL extended the period for WIA ETPs to remain eligible under WIOA. ETPs currently eligible to provide training services under WIA continue to be eligible to provide such services until June 30, 2016. Continuing eligibility determinations for current ETPs was completed prior to June 30, 2016.

NOTE: Automatic approval of higher education institutions (TCSG and USG institutions) or NFJP grantees is not permitted under WIOA. Current ETP programs offered by TCSG and USG continued to be eligible through June 30, 2016. TCSG and USG providers were assessed for continued eligibility on June 30, 2016 and will be assessed biennially under WIOA.

Initial Eligibility for New Training Providers or Providers submitting New Programs

a. New Training Providers/Programs

All ETPs that were not previously approved as eligible under WIA (except Registered Apprenticeship programs) must submit the required information to be considered

for initial eligibility under WIOA. Under WIOA, ETPs may receive initial eligibility for only one year for an ETP-specific program. For potential ETPs seeking initial eligibility, verifiable program-specific performance information must be provided.

WIOA requires that programs, not ETPs, be approved for ITAs. Therefore, potential ETPs must submit an application for each course of study or program.

Potential ETPs submitting initial eligibility applications should submit training program applications directly to a LWDB. Training program applications will be reviewed and evaluated by an LWDB. If the program application is approved by an LWDB, the program is submitted to WFD for review, approval and placement on the State ETPL.

Program applications need only be made with one LWDB for possible inclusion on the State ETPL. Once approved for placement on the State ETPL, an approved program is available to all Georgia LWDBs and cooperative States.

A generic application and instructions can be accessed at www.workreadyga.org. Information regarding LWDBs is also available on the website. Additionally, some LWDA's have additional, more stringent eligibility requirements. If a potential ETP is within that LWDA, the potential ETP must meet the LWDA's more stringent eligibility requirements. Potential ETPs should check with their LWDB to ascertain application requirements for information specific to that LWDA.

The current State ETPL can be accessed at: www.workreadyga.org.

An Applicant must provide the following:

- i. A detailed description of each training program – Provide information that the program is a high quality program, which can include information related to training services that lead to a recognized post-secondary credential, or a wage more than 150% of the Georgia self-sufficiency wage (\$10.88), or successful outcomes across all population groups;
- ii. Performance information for each training program will include:
 - Median earnings;
 - Average wage at placement;
 - Attainment of post-secondary credential;
 - Completion rate;
 - Employment rate; and
 - Training-related employment rate.
- iii. Describe in detail applicant's partnerships with business;
- iv. Describe the recognized post-secondary credential attained after training completion;
- v. Describe how the training program(s) aligns with in-demand industries and occupations;
- vi. Applicant must also comply with the following to be considered for inclusion on the State ETPL:

- a) Applicant must have been in business for at least six months prior to the initial application and must have a current business license or proof of active compliance with the Secretary of State Corporations Division;
- b) Training programs must be available to the general public, have published catalog price structures;
- c) Each training program must have proven outcomes and have successful program completions and training-related employment for at least five students per program;
- d) Applicant must be current on all federal and State taxes (Must supply certification from accounting/tax firm of current tax standing regarding federal and State taxes, including Unemployment Insurance taxes);
- e) Applicant must be in statutory compliance with the laws of the State related to operation as a training education institution. Proprietary colleges or schools operating in Georgia are required by the Nonpublic Post-Secondary Educational Institution Act of 1990 to have a certificate of authorization from the NPEC before beginning operation or advertising in the state;
- f) Applicant must provide documentation of current accreditation/authorization;
- g) Applicant must not have been found at fault in criminal, civil or administrative proceeding related to its performance as a training or educational institution. Must disclose any pending criminal, civil or administrative proceeding as either a defendant or a respondent;
- h) Applicant must disclose any and all conflicts of interest with State or LWDB staff or board members including, but not limited to family ties (spouse, child, and parent), fiduciary roles, and employment or ownership interests in common; and
- i) All applications must include a current federal tax identification number.

<u>STUDENTS PAST PERFORMANCE INFORMATION – past 12 months period</u>	<u>Minimum Standard</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Must pass two of six measures		
Median Earnings	<u>\$11.50</u>	The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program
Average Wage at Placement	<u>\$10.70</u>	Average wage at placement of completers obtaining employment
Attainment of Post-Secondary Credential	<u>60%</u>	The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school

		diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within one year after exit from the program
Completion Rate	<u>70%</u>	Program completion rate for students completing all coursework and exams
Employment Rate	<u>70%</u>	Employment Rate for all students completing the program coursework
Training-Related Employment Rate	<u>70%</u>	Percent of completers exiting the program who have obtained training-related employment

Local Workforce Development Boards may require additional information or may set additional standards which may be higher than the State standards.

b. Currently approved ETPs proposing new training programs

Approved Training Providers proposing new training programs shall follow the following procedure in order to qualify for one year of initial eligibility.

Approved Training Providers seeking initial eligibility for a new program shall provide the LWDB a narrative application, which must include the following verifiable program specific performance information:

1. Provide information on a substantially similar training programs (in the same industry) indicating whether that program satisfied the following indicators of performance:
 - a. unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit,
 - b. unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit
 - c. median earnings,
 - d. credential attainment,
 - e. average wage at placement, and
 - f. training related employment rate;
2. A descriptive narrative with information on the proposed training program's ability to satisfy the following indicators of performance:
 - a. unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit,
 - b. unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit,
 - c. median earnings,
 - d. credentials attainment,
 - e. average wage at placement, and
 - f. training related employment;
3. Information concerning whether the provider is in a partnership with business. This could include information about the quality and quantity of employer partnerships;
4. Information that addresses alignment of the training services with in-demand industry sectors and occupations, to the extent possible.
5. LWDBAs must re-verify that the Approved Training Provider's proposed new program complies with the following to be considered for one-year inclusion on the State

- ETPL: a. Approved Training Provider must have been in business for at least six months prior to the initial application and must have a current business license or proof of active compliance with the Secretary of State Corporations Division;
- b. Training programs must be available to the general public and have published catalog price structures;
- c. Training facilities must comply with ADA requirements for accessibility and reasonable accommodation;
- d. Approved Training Provider must be current on all federal and State taxes (Must supply certification from accounting/tax firm of current tax standing regarding federal and State taxes, including Unemployment Insurance taxes);
- e. Approved Training Provider must be in statutory compliance with the laws of the State related to operation as a training education institution. Proprietary colleges or schools operating in Georgia are required by the Nonpublic Post-Secondary Educational Institution Act of 1990 to have a certificate of authorization from the NPEC before beginning operation or advertising in the state;
- f. Approved Training Provider must provide documentation of current accreditation/authorization;
- g. Approved Training Provider must not have been found at fault in criminal, civil or administrative proceeding related to its performance as a training or educational institution and must disclose any pending criminal, civil or administrative proceeding as either a defendant or a respondent;
- h. Approved Training Provider must disclose any and all conflicts of interest with State or LWDB staff or board members including, but not limited to family ties (spouse, child, and parent), fiduciary roles, and employment or ownership interests in common; and
- i. All applications must include a current federal tax identification number.

All information detailed above shall be reviewed and verified by the Local Workforce Development Board, in a manner detailed in a local policy, to determine whether or not the proposed program shall be granted initial, one-year eligibility.

At the conclusion of the initial year, the program shall provide such required data as outlined and detailed below for the State to determine whether the program shall remain on the ETPL or be removed.

Each required measure's data shall be collected and submitted by the Local Workforce Development Area. The Approved Training Provider may continue enrolling WIOA-funded students into the initially approved program until such time as the State issues a determination regarding continued eligibility and subsequent placement on the ETPL.

After receiving the program's data from the Local Workforce Development Area, the State shall perform its review of the program. If the necessary data is not received by the State in a timely manner, the Program shall not receive continued eligibility or be placed on the ETPL.

The program must satisfy the following factors in order to be determined eligible for placement on the ETPL:

1. The program must enroll at least ten (10) students during the twelve-month initial eligibility period, and;
2. The program must satisfy two or more of the six factors identified in the table below. If the program fails to satisfy either of the two requirements listed above, the Approved Training Provider's program under review will be removed in accordance to section 4.4.7 (II).

<u>STUDENTS PAST PERFORMANCE INFORMATION – past 12 months period</u>	<u>Minimum Standard</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Must pass two of six measures		
Median Earnings	<u>\$11.50</u>	The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program
Average Wage at Placement	<u>\$10.70</u>	Average wage at placement of completers obtaining employment
Attainment of Post-Secondary Credential	<u>60%</u>	The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within one year after exit from the program
Completion Rate	<u>70%</u>	Program completion rate for students completing all coursework and exams
Employment Rate	<u>70%</u>	Employment Rate for all students completing the program coursework
Training-Related Employment Rate	<u>70%</u>	Percent of completers exiting the program who have obtained training-related employment

Registered Apprenticeship Programs

a. Automatic Eligibility

Under WIOA, all Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs that are registered with the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship (OA) are automatically eligible to be included on the State ETPL. RA programs are not subject to the same application and performance information requirements nor subject to a period of initial eligibility as other ETPs because they go through a detailed application and vetting procedure to become a registered apprenticeship program sponsor with USDOL/OA.

All RA programs are informed of their automatic eligibility of inclusion on the State ETPL and will be provided an opportunity to consent to inclusion, before being placed on the State ETPL. In collaboration with the Georgia OA Director, the State has implemented a mechanism to contact all RA programs within the State regarding inclusion on the State ETPL. Based on the RA program listing provided by OA, a letter is sent from the State notifying the RA sponsor of their eligibility of inclusion on the State ETPL. WFD works with Georgia OA Director, on a semi-annual basis to collect information (to populate the State ETPL) on newly OA Registered Apprenticeship programs. Information required to populate the State ETPL includes: occupations; name/address of program sponsor; name/address of instructional provider if different from the sponsor; and method and length of instruction.

b. Performance

There are no WIOA performance requirements for RA programs and RA programs are not required to provide ongoing reports to the State or LWDBs. WFD works in concert with the OA to encourage voluntary reporting of performance information.

RA programs must remain registered and in good standing with the OA to remain on the State ETPL. WFD will work in concert with the OA to verify registration status.

LWDAs may not impose additional criteria, information or reporting requirements on RA programs. Additionally, if an LWDA has a local ETPL, RA programs should be included and should be noted as ‘in-demand occupations’. If an issue arises, LWDAs should contact WFD’s WorkSmart Team for assistance.

c. Continued Eligibility

RA programs must remain registered and in good standing with the OA to remain on the ETPL. RA program sponsors appearing on the State ETPL will remain there as long as the program is registered or until the program sponsor notifies the WFD that it no longer wants to be included on the State ETPL, however, RAs may be removed if determined to have intentionally supplied inaccurate information or to have substantially violated any provision of Title I of WIOA (e.g., civil rights of discrimination violations), or the WIOA regulations, including 29 C.F.R. part 38. An RA program whose eligibility is terminated due to intentionally supplying inaccurate information or substantially violating WIOA provisions will be terminated for not less than 2 years and is liable to repay all youth, adult, and dislocated worker training funds, if received during the period of noncompliance.

If instances of substantial violation are reported to WFD, WFD will work in concert with the OA to make the determination of ineligibility. The opportunity for an appeal and hearing is described in the ETPL Appeal Procedures.

Semi-annual review includes verification of the registration status of RA programs and removal of any RA programs that are not currently registered or do not wish to continue as ETPs. Although RA programs are not required to provide ETP Performance reports, voluntary reporting of performance information is encouraged

under WIOA regulations and outcomes for WIOA participants in WIOA funded RA programs must be included in the State’s annual performance report. WIOA § 116 (d)(2)

Continued Eligibility Procedures

This section addresses procedures for continuing eligibility for ETPs previously approved under WIA that are transitioning into WIOA and newly ETPs under WIOA. ETPs previously approved under WIA are subject to the application procedures for continued eligibility as of June 30, 2016.

New ETPs that were determined to be initially eligible under WIOA will be subject to the application procedure for continued eligibility after their initial year of eligibility expires.

WIOA Sections 116 and 122 and 20 C.F.R. § 680 detail the continuing eligibility criteria that States must take into account. However, until data from the conclusion of each WIOA performance indicator’s first data cycle is available, the State has set minimum performance criteria. Once ETPs have two years of performance outcomes using the WIOA performance indicators specified in WIOA Section 116, the State will utilize the WIOA performance indicators for continuing eligibility.

- a. Review of Minimum Performance Outcomes Required for Continued Eligibility (to be utilized until WIOA performance data is available).

For the Transition Year, ETPs were not required to complete a Continued Eligibility Application. For a program to remain eligible to receive ITA funds for new enrollments after June 30, 2016, the State utilized data available through the Georgia Work Ready Online Participant Portal (GWROPP) to compare program level performance outcomes against established minimum State standards, covering the preceding program year. Programs with an enrollment of at least 10 students were evaluated for continuing eligibility.

In addition to the evaluation of performance information for the past program year, for those programs not meeting performance for the past program year, an additional evaluation reviewed performance for the previous two program years to ascertain if failing to meet performance standards occurred in the past.

If approved, a program’s continuing eligibility will extend until the biennial WIOA performance measurement review. If not approved, an ETP will be notified by WFD that the program will be removed from the State ETPL. The LWDA in which the program resides will also be notified.

<u>ALL WIOA STUDENTS PAST PERFORMANCE INFORMATION – Preceding program year</u>	<u>Minimum Standard</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Must pass three of six		

measures		
Median Earnings	<u>\$11.50</u>	The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program
Average Wage at Placement	<u>\$10.70</u>	Average wage at placement of completers obtaining employment
Attainment of Post-Secondary Credential	<u>60%</u>	The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within one year after exit from the program
Completion Rate	<u>70%</u>	Program completion rate for students completing all coursework and exams
Employment Rate	<u>70%</u>	Employment rate for all students completing the program
Training-Related Employment Rate	<u>70%</u>	Percent of completers exiting the program who have obtained training-related employment

Local Workforce Development Boards may set additional standards which are higher than the state standards. An LWDB may remove a program of training services from the local ETPL (Not the State ETPL) for failure to meet those higher, local standards.

Performance data is tracked through WFD's data management system; however, ETPs may be asked to provide additional continuing eligibility information.

b. Use of Quarterly Wage Records

WIOA requires the use of quarterly wage record information in measuring the progress of State adjusted levels of performance. The use of participants' social security numbers and other sensitive information necessary to measure the participants' through quarterly wage record information is authorized by WIOA. WFD reserves the right to request participants' information from the ETP, if necessary. WFD assures ETPs that any participants' social security number transmitted and resulting UI Wage File data will be: used only to prepare aggregate program performance reports as required under WIOA; not disclosed in any personally identifiable form; safeguarded while WFD is in possession of the same; and destroyed when no longer needed for the purposes of complying with WIOA. In addition, disclosure of personally identifiable information from an education record must be carried out in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, including the circumstances related to prior written consent.

Per Training and Employment Guidance Letter Number 39-11, "personally identifiable information and other sensitive information are required to be protected. Therefore, any

transmission of such information shall be encrypted using a Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 140-2 compliant and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) validated cryptographic module. For further information, reference FIPS PUB 140-2.”

Notice of Denial of Eligibility or Removal

WFD will be responsible for making ETP removal determinations for ETPs on the State ETPL under the following conditions:

- a. Supplying inaccurate information (If inaccurate information regarding a program is intentionally supplied to a LWDB or WFD.)
 1. If instances of intentionally supplying inaccurate information are reported to WFD, WFD will work in concert with the LWDB to make the ineligibility determination.
 2. The ETP may be excused if the inaccurate information was supplied unintentionally, but the burden for proving the inaccurate information supplied was unintentional rests with the ETP.
 3. If warranted, a termination of eligibility will occur and will remain in effect for a minimum of two years.
- b. Substantial violation
 1. If a LWDB or WFD determines that an ETP has substantially violated any requirements under WIOA (e.g., civil rights or discrimination violations), including failure to provide timely and accurate information for the ETP report and for initial and continued eligibility, or other State or federal laws, regulations or requirements.
 2. If instances of substantial violation are reported to WFD or the ETP fails to provide timely and accurate information for the ETP report, WFD will work in concert with the LWDB to make the determination of ineligibility.
 3. Repeated failures to submit information and a failure to cooperate with WFD will be considered in the State determining whether a “substantial violation” occurred. “Substantial violation” may be construed to be one or more egregious violations in a short period of time or numerous minor violations over a longer period of time.
 4. With regard to a violation of the submittal of timely and accurate information for the ETP as well as initial and continued eligibility, WFD will take into account exceptional circumstances beyond the ETP’s control, such as natural disasters, unexpected personnel transitions, and unexpected technology related issues.
 5. A termination of eligibility will occur and will remain in effect for a minimum of two years for all substantial violations.
- c. Removal for failure to meet performance standards
 1. If an ETP’s program fails to meet minimum established State established performance levels set for continued eligibility, the program must be removed from the State ETPL.
 2. An ETP/ ETP program may reapply under the initial eligibility criteria if they can provide documentation of successful performance attainment with all students prior to the next program year. During that time the former ETP should

take the opportunity to evaluate program design performance of non-WIOA students.

3. Reapplication procedures may begin with a LWDB no earlier than 90 days preceding the beginning of the one-year exclusion period.
 4. If the LWDB program evaluation indicates that there have been successful performance outcomes of all students, the program may be added to the State ETPL no earlier than one year from the date of removal.
- d. Other Removals
1. If an ETP loses its license or accreditation of its accrediting body.
 2. If an ETP's program is inactive (no activity within three program years), the ETP's program will be automatically removed and the provider (program) will have to re-apply using initial eligibility procedures.
- e. Repayment

An ETP's program whose eligibility is terminated under the above conditions shall be liable for repayment of funds received during the period of noncompliance.

If an ETP's program is terminated or removed from the State ETPL, the LWDA should assure timely assistance to participants who may be affected. Depending on the nature of the violation, WIOA participants may be allowed to complete the programs, or may transfer and enroll in other training programs.

If it is deemed by a LWDB that training received by a WIOA customer did not adhere to program information as marketed by the ETP, consequences levied upon the ETP may include: (1) additional training to the aggrieved customer at no cost; and/or (2) a refund to the fiscal agent of amounts paid; and/or (3) debarment from the State ETPL.

Continued Eligibility – Biennial Review

All ETPs (excluding RAs) are subject to review and renewal of eligibility at least every two years. WFD will review the performance of providers to ensure they are meeting minimum levels of performance. Biennial review will also include verification of the registration status of RA programs. The following factors will be utilized to determine continued eligibility:

- A. The performance of training providers on WIOA standards (See section on Required Provider Outcomes). The performance should be disaggregated by the LWDA being served.
- B. The biennial review may include other factors such as:
 - i. The degree to which training programs are in-demand industries sectors and occupations
 - ii. State licensure requirements;
 - iii. Use of industry recognized certificates and credentials;
 - iv. Whether the programs lead to post-secondary credentials;
 - v. The ability of the ETP to provide training services that are physically and programmatically accessible for individuals who are employed and individuals with barrier to employment, including individuals with disabilities;

- vi. The ability of the ETP to partner with employers and provide job placement services;
- vii. The dropout rate of the ETP; and
- viii. The student loan default rate of the ETP.

ETPs will be responsible for collection of performance data, which is not available through the state data management system, and transmittal to WFD. Actual performance measures for biennial review will be issued in 2017 after state performance negotiations.

ETPL Appeal Procedure

Appeal procedures are designed to provide guidelines for filing and resolving Appeals made by an ETP or a prospective ETP. In the event that an ETP seeks to file an Appeal, it must do with the entity whose action the ETP disputes. For example, in the event that an ETP is removed from a Local ETPL, the ETP must file an Appeal with the LWDA in accordance with LWDA's policies. Once an ETP has filed an Appeal with a LWDA, received a written resolution, and is dissatisfied with the LWDA's resolution, the ETP may file second level appeal with the State. Conversely, in the event that an entity is denied designation on the State ETPL, or if the ETP or is removed from the State ETPL, the ETP may file an Appeal directly with WFD. The full ETPL Appeal Procedure may be found on the WFD website.

(4) Priority for Public Assistance

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to individualized career services and training services funded by the Adult Formula program.

The State put in place the below policy that governs priority of service for LWDA's. WFD conducts yearly programmatic monitoring for each LWDA. During monitoring, WFD staff ensure that priority or service was correctly implemented for each participant that is pulled in the monitoring sample. The monitoring sample size varies depending on each LWDA's risk assessment. Risk assessment factors include the number of participants, previous year findings, etc. If an LWDA did not correctly implement priority of service for a participant, that LWDA will be issued a finding and could face disallowed costs. WFD will also ensure through the corrective action period that the LWDA has correct policies and staff procedure for correctly administering priority of service in the future.

Priority for adult services must be given to recipients of public assistance or other low-income individuals, with added priority for individuals who are basic skills deficient. Priority applies regardless of funding levels. Individualized career services and training services must be given on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels, to:

- A. Public assistance recipients and other low-income adults; and
- B. Individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Veterans under WIOA § 3 (63)(A) receive priority of service as described in the Jobs for Veterans Act (38 U.S.C. 4215 (2)). Veterans and eligible spouses of veterans who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for adult programs must receive the highest priority for services.

TEGL 3-15 references TEGL 10-09 regarding order of priority for veterans and eligible spouses. Priority must be provided in the following order: 3.2.5-3

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, are low-income individuals, or who are basic skills deficient. Military earnings are not to be included as income for veterans and transitioning service members.
- Second, to individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses who meet WIOA priority criteria.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- Last, to individuals outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

While Veterans receive priority through WIOA services, LWDA's and applicable services providers must have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program to ensure the most effective provision of services.

(5) Transfer of Funds

Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

Under WIOA, Georgia allows local workforce development areas to transfer up to 100% of their funding between the dislocated worker and adult funding streams. For consideration of transfers, all LWDA's must submit a written request to WFD. The LWDA Director and an authorized signatory of the fiscal agent must both sign all requests. For all requests in excess of 50% of original fund stream being transferred, the LWDB Chair's signature is also required. All requests must contain a narrative section providing an explanation for the need to transfer the funds. Additionally, WFD Grants Administration staff review the most recently submitted monthly Financial Status Report (FSR) to ensure that the recipient funding stream demonstrates a high level of expenditure and/or obligation. The Grants Administration team provides a copy of the request as well as additional expenditure and obligation data to the WFD Deputy Commissioner and WIOA Services Director for final discussion and determination.

All LWDA's who receive approval to transfer funds under WIOA must also submit a transfer effectiveness report as part of the grant closeout package. This report requires LWDA's to provide the estimated impact that the transferred funds had on the LWDA. Current requirements include estimated number of participants impacted by the transferred funds, estimated services provided with the transferred funds, and estimated impact that the funds have on performance measures.

(c) Youth Program Requirements

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA

(1) State Developed Criteria for Awarding Youth Contracts

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.*⁸

WFD issued WIG PS 15-009 to the LWDA on WIOA Youth Provider Selection Criteria on November 25, 2015, which included the State developed criteria and checklist for awarding youth contracts in compliance with WIOA sec. 123 (<http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce-division/worksource-georgia/resources/technical-assistance/workforce-implementation-guidance-wig/>). The LWDB must identify eligible providers of youth workforce development activities in the LWDA by awarding grants or contracts on a competitive basis based on the recommendation of the youth standing committee, if they choose to establish a standing youth committee and assign it that function. If such a committee is not established for the LWDA, this responsibility falls to the LWDB.

- LWDA must include the state plan criteria used to identify youth providers, taking into consideration, the ability of the provider to meet the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for youth programs.
- LWDA must conduct a full and open competition to secure youth service providers according to the federal procurement guidelines in 2 CFR parts 200 and 2900, in addition to applicable state and local procurement laws.
- Where the Local Board determines there is an insufficient number of eligible providers of youth workforce development activities in the LWDA, such as may be the case in a rural area, the Local Board may award grants or contracts on a sole source basis (WIOA sec. 123(b)).

The requirement in WIOA sec. 123 that eligible providers of youth services be selected by awarding a grant or contract on a competitive basis does not apply to the design framework services when these services are more appropriately provided by the grant recipient/fiscal agent. Design framework services include intake, objective assessments, and the development of individual service strategy, case management, and follow-up services. The local plan must describe the design framework for youth programs in the LWDA and how the 14 program elements required in WIOA CFR sec. 681.460 are to be made available within that framework.

Local youth programs must be designed to do the following:

- Provide for an objective assessment of each youth participant that meets the requirements of WIOA sec. 129(c)(1)(A), and includes a review of the academic and occupational skill levels, as well as the service needs, of each youth for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants and informing the individual service strategy;
- Develop, and update as needed, an individual service strategy for each youth participant that is directly linked to one or more indicator(s) of performance described in WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(ii). This strategy must identify appropriate career pathways that include education and employment goals, considers career planning and the results of the objective assessment, and prescribe achievement objectives and services for the participant; and
- Provide case management of youth participants, including follow-up services.

⁸ Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

LWDBs must ensure appropriate links to entities that will foster the participation of eligible LWDA youth. Such links may include connections to:

- LWDA justice and law enforcement officials;
- Local public housing authorities;
- Local education agencies;
- Local human service agencies;
- WIOA Title II adult education providers;
- Local disability-serving agencies and providers as well as health and mental health providers;
- Job Corps representatives; and
- Representatives of other area youth initiatives, including those that serve homeless youth and other public and private youth initiatives (e.g., YouthBuild).

LWDBs must ensure that WIOA youth service providers meet the referral requirements in WIOA sec. 129(c)(3)(A) for all youth participants, including:

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

According to WIOA sec. 129(c)(2), LWDBs must make each of the required 14 youth elements described in the section below available to youth participants. According to WIOA sec. 129(c)(3)(C), LWDBs must ensure that parents, youth participants, and other members of the community with experience relating to youth programs are actively involved in both the design and implementation of its youth programs. A minimum of 75% of state and local youth funding is to be used by LWDBs for out-of-school youth. At least 20% of local Youth formula funds must be used for work experiences, such as summer and year round employment, pre-apprenticeship, OJT, or internships and job shadowing

Youth Program Proposers must provide the following:

- A detailed description of each program element.
- Past youth performance information (for WIA/WIOA youth providers). Performance information for each training program will include a detailed description of provider partnerships with business partners, and a provider must also:
 - Be in business for at least six months prior to the initial application and have a current business license or proof of active compliance with the Secretary of State Corporations Division;
 - Be current on all federal and state taxes (Must supply certification from accounting/tax firm of current tax standing regarding federal and state taxes, including Unemployment Insurance taxes);
 - Be in good standing with the Better Business Bureau with no outstanding complaints;
 - Not be found in fault in criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding related to its performance as a training or educational institution. Must disclose any pending

- criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding as either a defendant or a respondent;
- Disclose any and all conflicts of interest with state or local LWDB staff or board members including, but not limited to, family ties (spouse, child, parent), fiduciary roles, employment or ownership interests in common;
- Assure that the proposed facility is accessible and that reasonable accommodations are made for provision of services to disabled individuals;
- Include a current federal tax ID number; and
- Not appear on current federal, state, or local debarment and suspension lists.

Aside from the narrative provided above, WFD created a Youth Contractor Checklist that was distributed to all LWDA's and is documented below.

Youth Contractor Checklist *(if provided through competitive procurement or provided as part of the design framework provided by the LWDA)*

- Provide an objective assessment for each youth participant that includes academic levels, skill levels, and service needs, for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants and informing the individual service strategy; Assessment shall include a review of the following: basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes (including interests and aptitudes for nontraditional jobs), supportive service needs, and development needs of each participant.
- Develop, and update as needed, an individual service strategy for each youth participant that is directly linked to one or more indicator(s) of WIOA performance. The strategy must identify appropriate career pathways that include education and employment goals, considers career planning and the results of the objective assessment, and prescribe achievement objectives and services for the participant.
- Provide case management of youth participants, including follow-up services.
- Provide referral services for all youth participants, including: providing participants with information about the full array of applicable or appropriate services available through the LWDA, other eligible providers, or one-stop partners; and referring participants to appropriate training and educational programs that have the capacity to serve them either on a sequential or concurrent basis.

WIOA and 20 CFR 681.460 require 14 youth elements, either provided by or through contractors or the LWDA:

- (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;
- (14) Follow-up Services.

Youth Program Proposers must provide the following:

- A detailed description of each program element;
- Past youth performance information (for WIA/WIOA youth providers);
- A detailed description of provider partnerships with business partners;
- Provider must be in business for at least six months prior to the initial application and have a current business license or proof of active compliance with the Secretary of State Corporations Division;
- Provider must be current on all federal and state taxes (Must supply certification from accounting/tax firm of current tax standing regarding federal and state taxes, including Unemployment Insurance taxes);
- Provider must be in good standing with the Better Business Bureau with no outstanding complaints;
- Provider must not be found in fault in criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding related to its performance as a training or educational institution. Must disclose any pending criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding as either a defendant or a respondent;
- Provider must disclose any and all conflicts of interest with state or local LWDB staff or board members including, but not limited to, family ties (spouse, child, parent), fiduciary roles, employment or ownership interests in common;
- Provider must assure that the proposed facility is accessible and that reasonable accommodations are made for provision of services to disabled individuals;

- Provider must include a current federal tax ID number; and
- Provider must not appear on current federal, state, or local debarment and suspension lists.

(2) Strategies to Serve Out-of-School Youth

Describe the strategies the State will use to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth as described in 129(a)(1)(B), including how it will leverage and align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available.

The importance of youth and adults gaining strong foundation skills, completing high school equivalence, and earning industry-recognized certificates and degrees in order to gain economic stability and self-sufficiency cannot be understated. WIOA requires that local areas allocate at least 75% of their youth expenditures to serve out-of-school youth. All LWDA in the state have begun this funding transition. WFD issued WIG GA 16-003 on April 20, 2017, which provided guidance on PY15 Youth Grant Closeout to assist LWDA with this funding transition (<http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce-division/worksource-georgia/resources/technical-assistance/workforce-implementation-guidance-wig/>). Under the transitional authority of WIOA, USDOL authorized via TEGL 23-14 the opportunity for LWDA to have a reduced OSY program expenditure rate for PY15 Youth funds. LWDA were required to spend a minimum of 10-percentage points more than their PY14 youth OSY expenditure rate and no lower than a 50 percent OSY expenditure rate. If an LWDA could not meet the 75 percent OSY expenditure rate, the LWDA drafted an Outreach and Performance Plan to describe how they would achieve the 75 percent rate with PY16 funds. WFD reviewed these plans and provided technical assistance to LWDA to ensure the LWDA was on track to meet the expenditure requirements with PY16 funds. The State continues to provide technical assistance by expanding the programming available to LWDA to serve out-of-school youth and informing LWDA of existing programming. One of the ways in which this has been accomplished is through a close relationship with TCSG and the Adult Education providers.

The State is working to build a better educated and more employable workforce by enrolling and graduating a greater number of Georgians in Adult Education programs. In order to achieve this, WFD will work to increase the number of GED completers annually while working to highlight the advantages of Adult Education to the public. It is also the goal of WFD to increase the number of participants taking part in Adult Basic and Secondary Education, GED preparation and testing, and English as a Second Language programs.

Local areas have worked and will continue to work with Adult Education providers to ensure that programming is innovative and responsive to the needs of participants. One of the ways in which they have done this, is through the pairing of GED services with Work Experience or OJT services. This unique combination allows a participant to receive wages during their GED services and it also allows them to gain valuable experience in the workplace prior to the completion of their training. WFD issued WIG PS 16-004 on May 2, 2017, which provided guidance on Youth Work Experience and required LWDA to review their policies and procedures and include work experience programs for ISY and OSY, including the local definition for academic components (<http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce-division/worksource-georgia/resources/technical-assistance/workforce->

[implementation-guidance-wig/](http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce-division/worksource-georgia/resources/technical-assistance/workforce-implementation-guidance-wig/)). Local areas have also worked with providers to include soft skills and workplace training within the classroom component of GED offerings. All of these program modifications ensure that the participant will be a more attractive future employee upon receipt of their GED. Additionally, WFD issued WIG PS 17-001 on January 29, 2018 on Youth Incentives, which provided guidance for payments to WIOA youth participants for recognition and achievement tied to training activities and work experience (<http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce-division/worksource-georgia/resources/technical-assistance/workforce-implementation-guidance-wig/>). WFD required LWDA's to review their local policies and procedures in order to ensure compliance with federal regulations; and, LWDA's were encouraged to design a comprehensive youth incentives policy and incorporate the policy guidance into the local policy.

In Georgia's previous state plan, WFD outlined a heightened focus on the 18-24 year old population. Due to the economic conditions during that time, Georgia's young adult population had experienced heightened levels of unemployment. During this time of recession young adults in the state experienced above average rates of job loss and reduced access to highly-skilled positions. As more and more Georgians found themselves unemployed, young adults, especially those with little work experience and other challenges, were competing against more qualified workers for fewer available entry-level positions.

By creating multiple points of entry into the state workforce system for this population, the state was able to direct individuals to opportunities that best fit their needs with a focus on Georgia's high demand occupations. However, WFD will continue to collaborate with business stakeholders throughout the state, and assist local areas in building collaborations to serve this at-risk population. Post-program follow-up services and post-employment services for these individuals after exiting a program are crucial as they continue to develop early in their career. Although WFD recognizes that securing employment is a crucial first step, some young adults require continued follow-up to assess the need for additional services to increase their chances of staying employed and progressing in their chosen career path. Training for one-stop center case managers and staff in the areas of career coaching, mentoring, and employability skills will ensure the continued improvement of the services offered to the young professionals in our state.

The State will also focus on reaching youth with barriers to employment directly after high school graduation in order to assist with post-secondary attainment within high-demand occupations. In order for this to be successful, local areas will need to partner with community organizations to identify and engage these youth. WFD will encourage partnerships with CBOs and other non-profit organizations, especially those who engage with youth with disabilities, foster youth, and youth who are English language learners. These partnerships will ensure that these youth are provided with the resources to ensure their successful entry into the workplace. The training provided to the youth will focus on the use of career pathways and stackable credentials to promote lifelong learning and upward mobility.

Through the workforce system, the State will provide youth participants the opportunity to become involved in 14 required youth elements which are listed in the Youth program elements section: (1) Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction and Evidence Based Dropout Prevention and Recovery Strategies can allow a participant to attain their secondary school diploma or a recognized equivalent. (2) Alternative Secondary School Services or Dropout Recovery Services

show students alternative learning environments that focus on their skills, abilities, and learning style to prevent them from dropping out of school. (3) Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences are structured learning programs that take place for a specific period. (4) Occupational Skills Training allows participants to become proficient in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at all different levels. (5) Education Offered Concurrently with and in the same context as Workforce Preparation integrates training and education. (6) Leadership Development includes the development of positive social and civic behaviors. (7) Supportive Services are in place to allow youth participants to partake in WIOA activities. (8) Adult Mentoring is a 12-month program that matches a youth participant with an adult that will guide the mentee. (9) Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling gives youth participants the opportunity to meet with counselors for career and academic counseling. (10) Financial Literacy Education informs participants of smart financial decisions and habits. (11) Entrepreneurial Skills Training educates youth participants on the skills needed to start and maintain a small business. (12) Labor Market and Employment Information Services provide information about in-demand industry sectors. (13) Activities that Prepare for Transition to Postsecondary Education and Training allows for career exploration and research. (14) Follow-up Services are available to youth participants once they have exited the program.

As participants are deemed eligible and receive orientation services, they will be informed of the services accessible through the one-stop system. For youth participants, this includes the 14 required youth elements listed above. LWDAs will offer these elements to eligible youth participants through the available Youth Training Provider services. The process to offer Youth Training Provider services occurs through a competitive bidding process in which locally-procured youth contracts are awarded.

WFD has strong partnerships with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. WFD and local areas work with youth correctional facilities across the state to ensure that out-of-school youth leaving facilities are given a “warm hand-off” to education and training opportunities. Case managers work with these youths to enroll them in training options and assess their need for additional services. Local areas have worked with facilities, courts systems, transitions centers, and parole officers to ensure that these youths are given the opportunity to successfully connect to the workforce system.

To further increase services to Georgia’s Out-of-School Youth, WFD will begin the development of a high school equivalency diploma. The goal is to enable youth ages 16 to 24 years to earn an equivalent high school diploma rather than earning a General Education Diploma (GED). While the State is continually improving the Adult Education program for citizens to earn a GED, WFD believes a high school equivalency diploma, embedding general education with technical education, would greatly increase Georgia’s ability to reduce the numbers of citizens in the state without a high school diploma, GED, or other equivalent credential. This service would also enable at-risk students to identify gaps in previous education attainment and quickly move towards a recognized high school credential. The speed and efficacy of this process will decrease the number of years spent outside of the workforce, or in jobs that pay minimum wage, and will afford more of Georgia’s citizens both a credential and skill that will open doors to jobs that pay a living wage.

It is currently difficult to document the total number of youth between the ages of 16 to 24 years of age who have dropped out of high school and are not currently pursuing any educational goals, or who are at high risk of dropping out. However, in an effort to locate and assist these

youth, the state will gather this data as part of the development plan for a high school equivalency diploma.

(3) Youth Program Elements

Describe how the State will ensure that all 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented.

WIOA-eligible youth are individuals between the ages of 14 and 24, that are either OSY or ISY as defined by WIOA Section 129(GDOLa)(1), and meet one of the following additional conditions: Basic skills deficient; English language learner; an offender; homeless, runaway, in foster care or aged out of the foster care system; pregnant or parenting; an individual with a disability; or a person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. In accordance with WIOA Section 129 (a)(4), Georgia is committed to shifting its target youth audience from ISY to OSY.

Services are provided to eligible youth participants through a network of youth service providers, which are competitively procured by Georgia's 19 LWDAs. Georgia is committed to providing, through LWDAs, the following required youth 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.

Georgia WorkSmart, WFD's internal initiative designed to promote various apprenticeship models, promotes and strongly encourages the development of pre-apprenticeship programs. Pre-Apprenticeships are designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship program and are considered to be strong WIOA programs that lead to quality youth performance measures. Pre-apprenticeships are comprised of training and curriculum based on industry practices and provide valuable work experience. Georgia WorkSmart encourages formalized agreements to be executed between the training provider and the Registered Apprenticeship sponsor. This articulation should state the details of the training, including prerequisites, training length, provided credentials, etc. Unlike Registered Apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeships are not certified or approved by the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship.

Lastly, Georgia WorkSmart considers YouthBuild and JobCorp as essential partners to the workforce system when creating pre-apprenticeships. These programs provide specific knowledge and resources invaluable to successful youth-focused training programs. Connecting these partner programs to Registered Apprenticeships sponsors builds stronger pathways for youth populations, while simultaneously addressing the growing employer pipeline needs.

In order to become an eligible Youth Training Provider, the entity must first contact the LWDA to apply. LWDAs conduct a competitive bidding process to award locally-procured youth contracts. The statewide youth eligible provider list is comprehensive list of those locally-procured youth contracts. Once the entity has successfully completed the application process dictated by LWDB policy, the application is then referred to WFD to be included on the

statewide youth provider list. The youth training provider list can be found at <https://www.workreadyga.org>.

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

(4) Require Additional Assistance

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 sections 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).

State policy defers to local policies on the definition of “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” for both in-school and out-of-school youth. Local policies and procedures are reviewed during annual on-site monitoring to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local requirements. The WFD programmatic team will continue to monitor local policies to ensure adherence to this criterion.

(5) Attending and Not Attending School

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.

“Attending school” is defined under state law as a public, private, or home study program that meets the requirements found in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690. Georgia compulsory education laws require children between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) to attend school. However, for purposes of WIOA, WFD does not consider providers of Adult Education under title II of WIOA, YouthBuild programs, and Job Corps programs to be schools. Therefore, WIOA youth programs may consider a youth to be “not attending school” for purposes of WIOA youth program eligibility if he/she is attending Adult Education provided under title II of WIOA, YouthBuild, or Job Corps. It is the policy of WFD that student attendance at a post-secondary institution qualifies as “attending school.” WFD issued WIG PS 15-002 on July 8, 2015 on Youth Eligibility and Definitions, which provided guidance for youth eligibility policy creation on the definitions of in-school and out-of-school youth.

(6) Basic Skills Deficient

If utilizing the portion of the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the specific State definition.

Georgia is using the basic skills deficient definition as contained in WIOA Sec. 3(5). The term “basic skills deficient” means a youth that: has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the

individual's family, or in society. In assessing basic skills, LWDBs must use assessment instruments that are valid and appropriate for the target population and must provide reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for individuals with disabilities.

(d) Single-area State requirements – N/A

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)).

(e) Waiver Request (optional) – N/A

States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

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

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;
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;
3. The State has established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);

- 8.** The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;
- 9.** If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner Peysner services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;
- 10.** The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.
- 11.** The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);

VII. WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM (Employment Services)

(a) Employment Service Professional Staff Development.

(1) Utilization of professional development activities for Employment Service staff

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.

Consistent and strategic investment in staff development reflects Georgia's commitment to integrated workforce services. Employment Services staff of GDOL are trained in both employment services and UI programs, enabling customers to receive seamless services geared to facilitate their return to employment.

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

Additional staff training is provided in the following areas: strategies for business recruitment events, as well as multiple methodologies to connect qualified jobseekers with employers, providing workforce statistics and prevailing industry wages, guidance on employment laws as it relates to the workplace, UI, FB, the WOTC, and other workforce services. Staff also have access to customer service training to enhance services to jobseekers and businesses.

Other staff development activities include:

- Comprehensive online resources on GDOL's website at www.dol.georgia.gov;
- Comprehensive internal online resources at www.theSource.gdol.ga.gov;
- Job shadowing for new staff at State and local offices;

- Active participation in IAWP (hosting the international conference in 2015);
- Active participation in NASWA;
- Active participation in SETA;
- Departmental leadership training program through EXCEL, offered through the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia;
- Ongoing assessment of GDOL and partner staff training needs by local GDOL career center managers;
- Participation on LWDBs to keep abreast of information on local, State, and national issues; and
- Regular reviews by the STAR team, delivering on-site extensive technical assistance and staff training during site visits, and identifying training needs based on policy changes, new initiatives, etc.

(2) Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the UI program and the training provided for ES and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues.

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

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

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

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

(b) State provision of information and meaningful assistance

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.

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

- UI orientation provided to every new claimant explaining the full range of workforce services available to help them return to work;
- Online access via www.dol.georgia.gov where customers can file electronically from career centers, home, libraries or any other Internet portal;
- Dedicated, experienced staff at every one-stop;
- Fully staffed resource centers at all career centers, including Internet access, copies, phones, fax and resource libraries;
- A dedicated toll-free number for customers filing for UI at one-stops;
- Access points at over 40 one-stops and career centers across the state;
- An opportunity for each claimant to access in-person reemployment services as they come to career centers and one-stops to complete the UI filing process;
- The use of state-of-the-art EG résumé and job matching service as a requirement for ES registration for claimants;
- The availability of staff, technology, language translation services, and written materials in a variety of languages to meet the needs of all customers;
- Fully accessible services, online and in person, to serve any customer with a disability;
- Joint participation of UI staff with other workforce partners in large layoff events; and
- Daily referrals of customers from workforce partners to UI specialists to ensure that customers have access to all benefits to which they are entitled.

(c) Describe the State’s strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals.

All Customers

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

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

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

Profiling is a federally-mandated program designed to assist UI claimants who may be unlikely to find employment before their benefits are exhausted. The UI claim process links information from intake records and employers' files to assess each claimant's likelihood of finding another job within the period of UI eligibility. Those UI claimants who are least likely to find work quickly will receive structured job search services.

The claimant's occupation, job tenure, education, last employer's industry, and the area's unemployment rate are factors used in calculating a percentile score. The higher the score, the more likely a claimant will exhaust benefits before finding work. For workload management purposes, career center managers monitor the number of profiled claimants served each week, and, if necessary, adjust their career center's threshold (minimum score) to ensure that workshops are neither over- nor under-utilized, and that services can be delivered.

All claimants who are identified by the system as meeting or exceeding the career center's threshold and are mandated to participate in required services must complete either a Service Needs Evaluation/Assessment or a Quick Initial Assessment.

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

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

RESEA Program

Recently, GDOL operated a REA targeting UI claimants in five GDOL career centers. As Georgia worked with the REA customer population, it became apparent that there were thousands of customers in other areas of the State in need of intensive reemployment services. Many of the customers are in areas of the State where there are military bases, resulting in a high number of UCX claimants. As a result of these direct customer needs, Georgia redesigned its REA program to target UI claimants who are profiled and are most likely to exhaust their weekly benefits. This redesign will increase the number of GDOL career centers delivering RESEA services across the state to nine, including four new offices with the highest UCX claimant population in the State.

Georgia's REA program will provide RESEA intensive services to a large percentage of traditionally underserved UI claimants with low education levels, language barriers, limited skill sets, and/or who are homeless veterans, justice-involved individuals, and seniors. This population includes a large percentage of food service workers and other workers in low-paying

service jobs who cycle through the UI system regularly. They experience multiple layoffs and move laterally from one low-paying job to another, never developing the skills or solid work history needed to advance to a more stable position in the workforce. The expansion of the RESEA program over its REA predecessor allows it to serve more customers across a larger area of the State, and allows the State to evaluate the impact of delivering the intensive reemployment services to a significant number of veterans with workforce challenges.

The RESEA service delivery strategy focuses on UI claimants who are profiled and identified as most likely to exhaust all UI benefits. Customers are identified upon being determined eligible for UI benefits, and are advised of RESEA's mandatory participation requirements immediately upon being notified of their selection to participate.

RESEA intensive customer services begin with an orientation to services, individual review and discussion of O*Net My Next Move assessment results, and development of a reemployment plan. Staff provides referrals to in-house workshops (e.g., résumé development, job search, and financial management), training, and other community workforce and supportive services as needed. Customers receive relevant labor market information and learn about helpful web sites which could enrich their job search. Work history evaluation is conducted and job matches are identified in the EG system.

Georgia's robust and intensive approaches to facilitating the reemployment of UI recipients, including initiatives such as the former REA and emerging RESEA programs, has directly contributed to the lowest average UI duration average.

[\(d\) The State's use of WP funds to support UI claimants](#)

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 W-P Act;

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

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

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

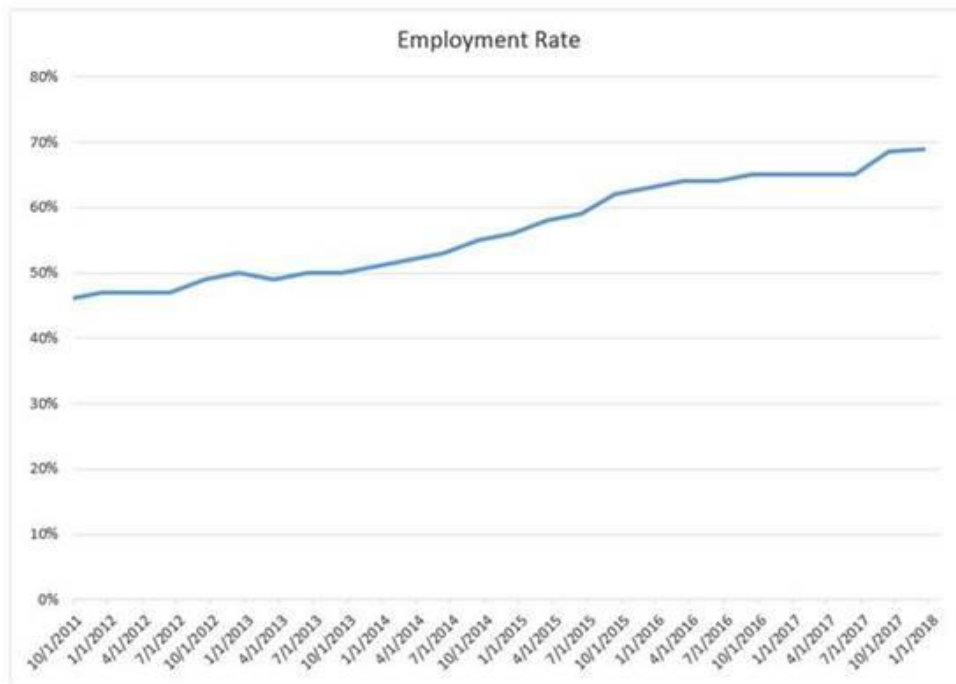
Services routinely provided to ES job seeker customers (including UI claimants) throughout the State include:

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

Over 430,000 different job seekers received employment related services from in 2017, at GDOL career centers and via its upgraded online systems. Of these in 2017, GDOL staff provided workforce services to over 26,000 Georgia veterans resulting in a JVSG Employment Rate of 56.2%, and referred over 20,000 UI claimants to the RESEA program resulting in a completion rate of 84.7%.

To meet the employment needs of these job seekers, Georgia businesses listed approximately 150,000 available jobs on a daily basis through GDOL's Employ Georgia system. These posted job openings are a result of the continued growth in the local economy and the strengthening of employer relationships with the workforce system. As a result of the focused reemployment strategies of connecting job seekers to meaningful job opportunities, Georgia's Entered Employment Rate has shown steady recovery and surpassed pre-recession rates. The chart below shows a continuous increase in the number of job seekers who entered employment each program year.

Georgia's 'Employment Services' Employment Rate (Through 12/31/17)



(2) Registration of UI claimants with the State’s employment service if required by State law.

Georgia law requires that UI claimants register with the State’s ES. This process is fully integrated into the claims application process. Claimants are given up to 10 days after the issuance of their first benefit payment to complete the ES registration process. A letter is mailed to the claimant and a payment stop is placed on the claim if the claimant fails to register by the deadline. The claimant is then given 7 additional days to register before being disqualified for benefits.

Once Georgia UI claimants are approved for their first UI payment, they are required to create an account and at least one searchable résumé in the EG system described previously. WP and UI staff, in addition to the job seeker, are able to manage and track job match alerts and job search activities.

Georgia maintains an active ERP through which UI customers are evaluated, typically at the 5th, 9th, and 14th weeks of their claim. At each of these dates, they receive additional guidance and resources for effective reemployment. Centers also offer workshops during these visits, on topics including interviewing techniques, networking, and dressing for success. These strategies contribute to the State’s unmatched low average duration of UI claims noted above.

(3) Administration of the work test for the State UI system, making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants;

Individuals receiving unemployment benefits in Georgia must be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking full-time work. Individuals who earned the majority of wages in the

base period used to establish the claim doing part-time work are allowed to restrict their work search to part-time work. The only exceptions to the work search requirements are:

- Individuals with a job attachment. This includes individuals for whom their employer filed a “partial” unemployment claim or individuals with a definite recall to work within six (6) weeks of their last day worked.
- Union members in good standing.
- Individuals who are approved and enrolled in a Commissioner-approved training program.

In Georgia’s automated workforce system, customers enter work search information weekly. Staff have access to that information 24/7 and can contact a customer should questions arise or concerns be raised. In addition, EG captures a customer’s résumé, job referrals and information regarding a customer’s response to an employer’s request. Should an employer contact GDOL that a job candidate did not respond to a request for an interview, that claimant can be contacted to determine if compliance with the required work test occurred. To ensure accessibility to the automated system, staff are always on hand to assist claimants with the use of the labor market exchange. In addition, if the customer does not have a résumé, EG will build one for them. All claimants are subject to a work search audit and can be called into the office should questions arise.

During the initial claims filing application, individuals are asked questions regarding their availability. Negative responses require adjudication of the potential availability issue by GDOL claims examiners or services specialists.

Individuals referred to the UI RESEA program must report to their initial RESEA appointment, and must participate in all subsequent in-person and telephone appointments. During the in-person appointments, UI ERPs are performed, and staff question the individual about availability for work and any barriers to work they may be facing during all contacts. During all eligibility reviews (i.e., UI, RESEA, and REU) staff review the individual’s work search, discuss the individual’s availability, and any barriers to work.

Weekly UI benefit certification includes a question about whether the individuals is able, available, and actively seeking employment. A negative response places an issue on the certification which cannot be removed until a statement is obtained regarding availability. If an issue is determined, a benefits eligibility review is performed by the GDOL services specialist or claims examiner and a determination released, if in order.

Employers and anonymous individuals can report suspected UI fraud on the GDOL web site. This can include employers reporting individuals who do not report for interviews, individuals who are incarcerated, or are otherwise not able, available, and/or actively seeking work.

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

(4) Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

The coordination of service delivery is a primary principle of WIOA, which brings together the core programs of Federal investment in skill development.

GDOL embraces WIOA's primary goal of service delivery integration to provide a seamless experience for participants in federal skills development and employment services programs, by providing:

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

(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.

Georgia has 3.6 ~~4.5~~ million acres of cropland, generating a market value of products sold at \$9.26 billion. Agribusiness is Georgia's oldest and largest industry and is expected to remain a significant economic driver in most of Georgia's regions. One in seven Georgians works in agriculture, forestry, or related fields – resulting in more than 410,800 jobs. *(Data Source: 2017-5 Ag Snapshots – UGA, Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development)*

Although Georgia will likely always be known as the "Peach State" - according to the USDA, the highest producing crops are blueberry, pecans, seasonal onions, and peanuts. In fact, in recent years Georgia's blueberry and peanut crops were more than three times as valuable as the peach crop. Georgia continues to produce nearly half of the nation's peanuts. Georgia had the nation's second highest acreage in onions, cotton, and watermelons, in addition to blueberries. Georgia continues to be the top State in the nation in the production of peanuts, pecans, broiler chickens, and blueberries.

In fact, Georgia has become a state, which produces high volumes of blueberries. Georgia farmers have embraced this booming crop; however, the challenge for farmers is that Blueberries are typically harvested during the same time of year as another one of Georgia's leading crops, Vidalia Onions. With a decreased number of available MSFW's each harvesting season, Georgia farmers are struggling to identify qualified workers in large numbers. GDOL agricultural staff work with these employers to encourage early recruiting of workers to assist in meeting their workforce needs. Once additional qualified workers are identified, agricultural

employers are faced with the problem of housing accommodations for the increased number of staff. Many Georgia growers are forced to lease housing for their workers, creating a new challenge for them because they are often unfamiliar with State and federal regulations pertaining to leased housing. The State has been working with partners such as USDOL Wage and Hour to provide information on leased housing requirements, and trying to assist farmers with recruiting more domestic workers to meet these changing business needs. The H-2A program continues to expand in response to employers' requests.

The Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development reports that Georgia has 42,257 farms totaling 9,620,836 acres, with the average size of a farm coming in at 228 acres. The total harvested cropland in Georgia is 3,609,788 acres. Through the collaborative activities of the one-stop system, career centers, Telamon Corporation (the State's NFJP grantee) and various local workforce partners, the workforce system has made every effort to meet growers' and workers' increasing needs.

Agritourism, a relatively new area of agricultural activity in Georgia, continues to expand and provide unique experiences combining traditional agriculture with tourism. Agritourism, which includes visits to working farms, orchards, ranches, wineries, and other agricultural operations, supports and sustains Georgia's farmlands, while providing tourists with educational, family-friendly outdoor adventures. Dining and food shopping experiences are also often part of agritourism opportunities as agricultural operators continue to update their operations to incorporate new activities and events for the public.

(A) An assessment of agricultural activity in the State means:

1) Identifying the top five labor intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of the prime activity.

Most of Georgia's crops are concentrated in the south and south central regions of the State, but nursery products, vegetable growers, and agritourism are found in the north and central parts of the State as well.

The following crops produced in Georgia involve a significant number of MSFWs: beans, blueberries, cabbage, cantaloupe, cucumbers, eggplant, greens, nurseries, Vidalia onions, peaches, pecans, peppers, strawberries, squash, sweet corn, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and watermelons. While major crop activity is also seen in harvesting cotton, peanuts, wheat, field corn and pecans, the activity is mechanized and requires minimal workers for production. Table 1 provides the major crops and dates for which labor is typically needed.

Table 1

**Significant Levels of Agricultural Activity Requiring Seasonal Labor
Top 5 Georgia Crops**

Crop	Months of Peak Labor Needs
1. Blueberries (Harvest/Pack)	May-June
2. Pecans	August-December
3. Watermelons (Plant/Harvest)	February-April, June-July
4. Onions (Harvest)	April-June

5. Cucumbers (Plant/Harvest)	March-November
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Other Significant Georgia Crops

Crop	Months of Peak Labor Needs
Beans and Peas (Plant/Harvest)	March-October
Blackberries (Harvest/Pack)	May-July
Broccoli (Harvest/Pack)	January-March, June-December
Cabbage (Plant/Harvest)	Year Round
Cantaloupes (Plant/Harvest)	February-April, May-August
Carrots	December-May
Corn (Sweet)	May-July, October-December
Cotton (Ginning)	August-January
Eggplants (Plant/Harvest)	March-November
Greens (Plant/Harvest)	January-June, August-December
Muscadine Grapes (Harvest)	April-November
Okra (Plant/Harvest)	March-December
Peaches (Prune/Thin/Harvest)	January-August
Peanuts (Ginning)	September-December
Peppers (Plant/Harvest)	March-December
Squash (Plant/Harvest)	March-November
Strawberries (Plant/Harvest)	October-February, March-June
Sweet Potatoes (Plant/Harvest)	April-September
Tobacco (Plant/Harvest)	March-September
Tomatoes (Plant/Harvest)	March-December
Vidalia Onions (Harvest)	March-July
Vidalia Onions (Plant)	November-December

2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they primarily hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce);

Georgia ranks as one of the leading States in providing employment services to MSFWs, according to USDOL. Due to the decrease in MSFW's migrating into the State, Georgia growers have had to put new strategies into practice. Some of the factors include:

- Substantial increases in the number of H-2A orders;
- Increase in number of farms and acreage; and
- Expansion of crops into new areas and methods of harvesting.

Specific employer needs include information regarding:

- State and federal rules and regulations pertaining to agricultural farming
 - Including required state and federal posters
- Housing, transportation and field site compliance

- The H2A program

3) Identifying an economic, natural or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State.

Weather conditions and/or diseases can cause a delay of the harvest or destruction of the whole crop. Weather conditions caused Pecans, Peaches, Blueberries and a majority of Georgia's other crops to in 2017 resulting in damages to over 30% of these crops.

(B) An assessment of the unique needs of the farmworkers

An assessment of the unique needs of the farmworkers means summarizing MSFW characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, which language they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs 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. Dept. of Labor Employment and Training Administration

Agricultural workers in Georgia are a combination of migrant and seasonal workers, with more seasonal than migrant workers. GDOL does not keep data on the country of origin for the agricultural workers served. The predominant language for these workers is Spanish.

(2) Outreach Activities.

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

(A) Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

Each outreach staff person establishes a list of available resources and develops partnerships with local organizations serving MSFWs. Resources include, but are not limited to: Georgia Department of Human Services, Georgia Farmworker Health Program, the Georgia Association for Primary Health Care, Inc., Georgia Free Clinic Network, Telamon Corporation, Georgia Migrant Education, community food banks, Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and entities that provide Adult Literacy, ESL and GED® services to MSFWs. GDOL career centers collaborate with LWDBs to ensure MSFWs have training opportunities for jobs in demand in the area.

Outreach staff participate in local clinics and fairs targeted to MSFWs and their families and, where possible, assists local health departments to educate migrant workers on health issues. Staff partner with other one-stop centers/ career centers in their area to provide services at the locations most convenient for the migrant worker, regardless of the counties each office typically serves.

Staff conducting outreach refer MSFWs to both seasonal agricultural employment and non-agricultural employment. This provides additional career opportunities and lengthens the period of employment for MSFW workers. With the diverse range of crops grown in Georgia, MSFWs have the opportunity for agricultural employment for nine to ten months of the year.

(B) Providing technical assistance to outreach workers.

Technical assistance must include training, 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 services complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

Agricultural staff contacts growers prior to planting and harvesting seasons to plan for upcoming labor needs. Staff coordinates with the growers and with other GDOL career centers to match the labor needs of employers with workers qualified to fill the jobs. In line with GDOL's renewed focus on services to business, state staff provides outreach staff with comprehensive listings of area growers to aid in scheduling visits throughout the agricultural community. GDOL also collaborates with the Georgia Department of Agriculture to ensure all resources for growers and agricultural workers are coordinated in a seamless fashion. Additionally, GDOL has a strong relationship with the University of Georgia County Extension Service/Department of Agriculture field staff to collaborate and improve services to Ag employers and MSFW's.

The State Monitor Advocate provides technical assistance and support on outreach to MSFWs and related functions, including onsite reviews of local services provided to MSFWs. The full time Monitor Advocate also works with local workforce system staff to educate them on the needs of migrant workers, and ensures that available resources are coordinated to promote a seamless service delivery process across the workforce community. Additional state staff assist local specialists with agricultural employment issues. Further, the State Monitor Advocate and GDOL employment services staff train local staff and provide technical assistance to enhance services to MSFWs (e.g., conducting workshops in Spanish, introducing migrants and other customers to office technology, and offering translation assistance within local communities).

Additionally, the State Monitor Advocate performs the following required activities:

- Conducts annual state-level reviews of GDOL career center services and protections provided to MSFWs
- Consults with state and local staff to ensure accurate reporting of MSFW-related information
- Compiles and reports on all statistical and other MSFW-related data reported by agricultural offices quarterly
- Reviews proposed state directives, manuals and operating instructions that pertain to MSFWs
- Participates in federal monitoring reviews
- Prepares an annual summary report of statewide services

(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.

GDOL will provide outreach worker training and awareness as described in WP Section VII (a)(2).

(D) Providing state merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both job seekers and employers.

GDOL has a strong dual commitment to serve growers and workers in the agricultural community. The employment-related needs of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) are an important focus for the following nine agriculturally-significant GDOL career centers:

GDOL Career Center	Counties Served
Americus	Marion, Schley, Sumter, Taylor, Webster, Crisp, Dooly, Macon
Bainbridge	Decatur, Early, Miller, Seminole
Douglas	Atkinson, Coffee, Bacon
Dublin	Emanuel, Johnson, Laurens, Treutlen, Wheeler, Dodge, Bleckley, Telfair, Wilcox
Moultrie	Baker, Colquitt, Mitchell
Tifton	Ben Hill, Berrien, Irwin, Tift, Turner
Valdosta	Lowndes, Cook, Lanier, Echols, Brooks
Vidalia	Candler, Evans, Jeff Davis, Tattnall, Toombs, Montgomery, Long
Waycross	Appling, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Pierce, Ware, Wayne

GDOL currently has 12 (state) staff members in these Career Centers serving both MSFWs and Agriculture Businesses/Employers. Each of these offices has knowledgeable, designated staff prior to and during peak season to assist growers and MSFWs through outreach activities. Wagner- A description of the professional development activities GDOL provides for all staff, including the staff serving MSFWs and Agricultural Businesses/Employers is found in WP Section VII(a)(1). Peyser funded positions are used for MSFW outreach and agricultural employers in these offices.

(E) Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

Telemon, the NFJP grantee for the State of Georgia, provides core, intensive and training services and related assistance for MSFWs. The cooperative agreement between GDOL and Telamon was developed to coordinate and enhance service delivery to MSFWs. This partnership provides for the sharing of labor market information, training, supportive services and job-related resources available to MSFWs, GDOL and Telamon share reports on the staff hours spent performing MSFW outreach activity. In several parts of the state, Telamon staff is co-located in the area’s comprehensive One-Stop Center. Telamon provided outreach contacts to 1,279 customers in PY20164. It is anticipated that perhaps half this number choose to receive workforce services such as job readiness, classroom or on-the-job training, work experience, referral to ESL services, or emergency assistance. Telamon’s contacts will focus on the following cities and surrounding areas:

- Dublin
- Douglas
- Vidalia/Lyons

- Moultrie
- Tifton
- Valdosta
- Waycross

Outreach contacts with MSFWs are made primarily during peak agricultural activity periods, which vary for different crops. Using available resources, contacts are made at locations where MSFWs live and congregate. Written and oral presentations are provided in the language(s) readily understood by workers. The typical menu of services includes the following:

- Referral to agricultural, H-2A orders and non-agricultural employment
- Referral to training
- Referral to supportive services
- Career counseling
- Job development
- Information on the GDOL complaint system
- Summaries of farm worker rights (terms and conditions of employment)

Staff obtains permission from the grower prior to entering the property to conduct outreach, and obtains permission from the workers prior to entering their living areas. After describing services, outreach staff encourages MSFWs to visit the nearest GDOL career center for the full range of workforce services. However, in the event MSFWs cannot or do not wish to visit a career center, outreach staff help the customers complete an application for Employment Services, provide referrals to employment opportunities for which the individuals are qualified, assist them in preparing complaints, or make appointments for needed services. As appropriate, outreach staff carries out follow-up contacts with MSFW customers.

The State Monitor Advocate also performs a variety of advocacy activities, including but not limited to: overseeing the operation and performance of the MSFW complaint system; contributing to the state Agricultural Outreach Plan and reviewing the daily reports of outreach workers; participating in public meetings throughout the state; and meeting with farm worker groups and employers to promote the use of GDOL services. In addition to these activities, the State Monitor Advocate conducts field visits to the working and living areas of MSFWs to offer and verify job services. He also meets and works with other workforce agencies to coordinate services to MSFWs. The State Monitor Advocate raises issues, as appropriate, to ensure that the development of new systems and strategies for service delivery will address the needs of MSFW customers.

The State Monitor Advocate conducts onsite reviews at local GDOL career centers, ensuring local workforce systems are in compliance with the designated equity indicators and minimum service levels for MSFWs. The State Monitor Advocate also provides training and technical assistance, as needed, to staff of partner agencies regarding outreach and services to MSFWs and the Employment Service 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.

GDOL's web site contains a broad array of employment resources for job seekers and businesses, as well as information about other community resources and an extensive bank of available jobs. The website is user friendly and has features to translate the site content into seven languages, including Spanish. GDOL also continues its efforts to assist customers with limited English proficiency. Information on department services, including how to register for services, is available in Spanish and in other languages, ensuring that Spanish-speaking farmworkers have the full range of services available in their native tongue, whether services are received in the field or one-stop centers/career centers. Bilingual staff are also made available to assist customers. The GDOL web site address is: <http://dol.georgia.gov>.

GDOL has added an innovative enhancement to its reemployment initiatives for Georgia's job seekers and employers. EG Focus Career Explorer is a state-of-the-art, user-friendly software application that offers job seekers a self-service tool to support successful career placement. The system extends sensitivity to specific job seeker target groups, including job seekers with limited English proficiency. EG includes on-screen translation facilities that enable a job seeker to build an English language résumé by answering questions about their experiences and skills in their native language. The résumé is then used to identify English language job postings which are also viewable in the job seeker's native language, constituting a major advance in mainstreaming non-native job seeker communities.

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

Agricultural employers are encouraged to use career centers for business service needs and to interview job applicants. Worker recruitment, provision of forms for farm labor contractor registration, and assistance with the H-2A temporary agricultural program are other resources available to agricultural employers

GDOL continues to assist farmers with interstate clearance orders upon request. Employers can expand job opportunities to workers in other States by listing interstate clearance orders with GDOL to obtain domestic referrals. GDOL contacts States with large farmworker populations and available workers potentially interested in the employment opportunities are identified.

(B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

The State Monitor Advocate also performs a variety of advocacy activities, including but not limited to overseeing the operation and performance of the MSFW complaint system. While conducting outreach, GDOL locates agricultural workers and explains their rights and all available services through GDOL and partner agencies, provides the DOL-543, the Employment Services for customers and DOL-1693, Equal Opportunity is the Law. GDOL also invites partner

agencies to attend outreach activities and partner's meetings and conferences to understand how GDOL handles complaints for MSFWs.

(C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

As previously indicated, agricultural employers are encouraged to use GDOL career centers for business service needs and to interview job applicants. Worker recruitment, provision of forms for farm labor contractor registration, and assistance with the H-2A temporary agricultural program are other resources available to agricultural employers. Additionally, GDOL has a strong relationship with the University of Georgia Extension Service/Department of Agriculture field staff to collaborate with agricultural employers.

(4) Other Requirements.

(A) Collaboration.

Describe any collaborative agreements the SWA has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

The cooperative agreement between GDOL and Telamon was developed to coordinate and enhance service delivery to MSFWs. This partnership provides for the sharing of labor market information, training, supportive services and job-related resources available to MSFWs, GDOL and Telamon share reports on the staff hours spent performing MSFW outreach activity. In several parts of the state, Telamon staff is co-located in the area's comprehensive One-Stop Center.

The Telamon Corporation also has Memoranda of Understanding with local Workforce Development Boards and other community partners that focus on integrated service strategies and resource sharing. Collaborative approaches reduce duplication of effort and ensure that resources are used effectively for the benefit of customers.

Additionally, Telamon serves as a delegate agency for the East Coast Migrant Head Start Program. This program has a long tradition of delivering comprehensive and high-quality services to foster healthy development in low-income children aged six weeks to five years. The Migrant Head Start program provides a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development, including medical, dental and mental health; nutrition; and parent involvement. In addition, the entire range of Migrant Head Start services is responsive to the developmental, ethnic, cultural and linguistic heritage and experience of each child and family. GDOL outreach workers partner with Telamon to identify parents with youth that could benefit from these services.

The Telamon Corporation is also the NFJP housing grantee for the state of Georgia, and provides housing support services to MSFWs through rental and utility assistance. The State Monitor Advocate and GDOL outreach workers coordinate with Telamon staff in their efforts to assist growers in providing safer and affordable housing for farmworkers

(B) Review and Public Comment.

The plan must provide information indicating that WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other appropriate farmworker groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations, have been given an opportunity to comment on the State AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

GDOL provided the opportunity for all interested parties to review and comment on the draft AOP for 30 days on with the comment period closing on April 5, 2017. The organizations listed below were sent the draft AOP and invited to comment, however, no comments were received. As the program year progresses and the needs of the agribusiness community evolves, GDOL will continue to work with partners of the farming community to explore new approaches to meeting the demands of Georgia's expanding agricultural industry. The following organizations received the draft AOP:

- Consul General de Mexico;
- Consulate, Guatemala;
- Consulate, Honduras;
- Consulate, Salvador;
- East Georgia Healthcare Center;
- Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials (GALEO);
- Georgia Farmworker Health Program;
- Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce;
- Georgia Legal Services/Farmworker Division;
- Latin American Association;
- Latin America Chamber of Commerce;
- South Georgia Farmworker Health Project;
- Telamon Corporation
- USDOL Wage and Hour Division
- League of United Latin American Citizens
- Georgia Department of Agriculture
- Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association
- Georgia Farm Bureau
- University of Georgia, Center for Agribusiness and Econ Development (CAED)
- University of Georgia, Extension County Operations

(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 proportionately services 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 the provision of services in order to meet such goals.

GDOL's agricultural career centers are evaluated during the months of July and October to evaluate the previous year's performance. Field checks are conducted on 25% of the job orders where workers were referred by GDOL and hired by employers. Staff also provides ongoing

technical assistance to the nine agriculturally-significant GDOL career centers regarding seasonal labor, labor exchange activity and other areas of concern. Table 2 illustrates job order activity for PY2016.

Table 2
Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Job Orders and Job Order Activity
Program Year 20164

Type of Job Order	Number of Job Orders	Number of Referrals Requested
Agricultural Job Orders (including H-2A)	701	1,444
Non-Agricultural Job Orders	130,200	1,869,348

GDOL has consistently met equity targets for the past 15 years.

Non -MSFW Customers in 2014	% of Total Applicants		MSFW Customers in 2014	% of Total Applicants		Equity Targets	Goal Met
Total Applicants	307,762	809					
Referred to Jobs Provided	52,804	17.2	711	87.9	17.2	Yes	
Some Services	41,530	13.5	809	100	13.5	Yes	
Referred to Supportive Services	5,101	1.7	674	83.3	1.7	Yes	
Counseled	41,530	13.5	623	77	13.5	Yes	
Job Development	97,421	31.7	577	71.3	31.7	Yes	

(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.

In PY2016, GDOL referred 711 MSFW's to jobs and registered. 809 MSFW applicants for Employment Services during the program year. While field staff provided 1,165 days 9,320 hours of outreach activity to this population of customers.

Outreach activities are documented on the Log of Daily Outreach Activities, and the logs are maintained for two years. The monthly report of Services to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

is compiled for quarterly reporting on the ETA-5148 report. All prescribed policies and procedures regarding documentation and reporting as outlined by USDOL are followed.

(E) State Monitor Advocate.

The plan must contain a statement that indicates that the State Monitor Advocate has been afforded the opportunity to review and approve the AOP.

The State Monitor Advocate, State agricultural staff, and agricultural outreach staff work together to provide feedback needed in the development of the State Ag Plan. This ensures the team has the opportunity to discuss any service delivery strategy changes needed for the upcoming planning year. The State Monitor Advocate, is directly involved in the development of the plan and approved the plan as drafted.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

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

- 1.** The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3));
- 2.** The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers;
- 3.** If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and
- 4.** State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.

VIII. ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under title II, the AEFLA.

(a) Aligning of Content Standards.

Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The TCSG Office of Adult Education (TCSG OAE) has adopted the OCTAE College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), effective July 1, 2016. TCSG OAE has aligned adult education content standards with the State-adopted K-12 Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE).

Review and Implementation of Georgia's Adult Education Standards

- A) Beginning in 2011, TCSG OAE began the process of introducing standards based instruction into the adult education classroom by participating in OCTAE's Standards in Action (SIA). In 2012 the OAE inculcated critical aspects of the SIA training into the Master Series PD offerings which targeted instructional leaders across the state. This focus was continued with a special standards based track being offered to program leaders at the 2013 Fall Adult Education conference. Additionally, at the Fall conferences 2013-2015, sessions were designed to include and stress the importance and role of standards based education in the adult education classroom. Standards based awareness and skill building expanded with participation in OCTAE's SIA implementation institutes which occurred in March through June of 2016. The institutes provided strategies and models for the assessment and integration of standards into the adult education classroom.
- B) The OAE led an exhaustive review process to ensure that these standards aligned with the GSE. Review of CCRS and related research (January 2016- March 2016). The first phase of the review process involved an in-depth review of the CCRS provided by OCTAE, and research related to common core curricula, integrated education, and instructional techniques for adult learners. The purpose of the review was to familiarize state staff with the scope of the CCRS, and the expectations for delivery of related content.
- C) Review of the GSE (April 2016-May 2016). The OAE Professional Development and Transition Resources (PDTR) staff conducted a thorough review of the content standards published by the Georgia Department of Education's Division of Curriculum and Instruction to ensure alignment between CCRS and GSE. (Examples provided later in the text.)
- D) Eligible providers will be required to implement these standards to maximize the effectiveness of curricula and instruction, and to prepare students for transition to post-secondary education and/or the workforce. Programs will begin to implement

the CCRS as of July 1, 2016; In order to ensure that all instructors are knowledgeable of CCRS, and that they understand how to use them effectively to guide classroom instruction, OAE will provide rigorous professional development to all instructional staff in currently funded programs, and to any future adult education grantees. The professional development sessions will be presented by experts in the field of content standards, and will have the intensity and duration to ensure the successful transfer of understanding and skills. This standards-specific Professional Development will take place in various sessions between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2018.

Curriculum Alignment Review Examples:

Georgia Standards

Standard 2014 – 2015 Revised to Standard 2015 – 2016

Example:

Area: Reading Information

Georgia Standard: ELACC11-12RI9:

Analyze foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (including The Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address) for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features. For British Literature, American Literature, and Multicultural Literature use comparable documents of historical significance.

OCTAE CCRS

CCR Anchor 9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. (Apply this standard to texts of appropriate complexity as outlined by Standard 10.)

Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington’s Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms speech, King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”), including how they address related themes and concepts. (RI.9-10.9)

Analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (including The Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address) for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features. (RI.11-12.9)

Compare and contrast findings presented in a text to those from other sources (including their own experiments), noting when the findings support or contradict previous explanations or accounts. (RST.9-10.9)

Georgia Standards

Grade: 9 – 10

Area: Writing (W)

Georgia Standard: ELACC9-10W1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- a. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
- c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- d. Establish and maintain an appropriate style and objective tone.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

OCTAE CCRS

CCR Anchor 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
- d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented. (W.7.1)

Georgia Standards

Reading Information (RI)

ELACC9-10RI9

Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington's Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech, King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail", Nelson Mandela's Nobel Peace Prize Speech, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights), including how they address related themes and concepts.

OCTAE CCRS for English Language Arts and Literacy

Reading Standards

CCR Anchor 9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. (*Apply this standard to texts of appropriate complexity as outlined by Standard 10.*)

RI.9-10.9

Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington’s Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms speech, King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”), including how they address related themes and concepts.

(b) Local Activities.

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

Adult Education Funding

The Technical College System of Georgia Office of Adult Education (TCSG, OAE) is the State’s Eligible Agency for Adult Education. OAE is responsible for administering funds to eligible providers, and providing program/performance oversight to grantees. OAE provides funding to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive Request for Application (RFA) process. The RFA is the mechanism through which OAE identifies, assesses, and awards multi-year grants to eligible providers throughout the state. An eligible provider is an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals and may include:

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

Eligible individual means an individual who has attained 16 years of age; who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and who is basic skills deficient; does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or is an English language learner.

The OAE hosted a grant competition in FY2017. Local eligible providers applied for multi-year funding for the provision of adult education in local areas. The grant competition was publicized through a variety of print and electronic media outlets throughout the state. A grant notification was published via the official legal organ within each county. Additionally, the information was shared via the TCSG Office of Communications in the form of a formal press release, a posting on the TCSG website, social media outlets, and other means of available communication. In addition, communications regarding grant availability was targeted specifically to agencies that serve Corrections and English Language Learner populations. Further, the OAE offered

technical assistance grant writing workshops, and maintain a Q&A page on the RFA website. Both the workshops and the Q&A page were accessible to any interested party, and will provide useful information pertaining to the grant procurement process.

The OAE awarded funds to 31 eligible providers for the delivery of adult education services, which are academic instruction and education services below the post-secondary level that increase an individual's ability to:

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

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

- adult education;
- literacy;
- workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- family literacy activities;
- English language and acquisition activities;
- integrated English literacy and civics education;
- workforce preparation activities; or
- integrated education and training.
 1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
 2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Federal Definitions

Adult education means academic instruction and education services below the post-secondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; transition to post-secondary education and training; and obtain employment.

Literacy means an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

Workplace adult education and literacy activities means adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce.

Family literacy activities means activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family, and that better enable parents

or family members to support their children's learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities: (A) Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for post-secondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency. (B) Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children. (C) Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children. (D) An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences. OAE encourages local Adult Education programs to partner in the joint implementation of GDOL's GeorgiaBEST (Business Ethics Student Training) program. This program concentrates on teaching students the soft skills required to be successful in the workforce, and includes modules focused on Discipline and Character, Self- Management, and Responsibility. Students earn GeorgiaBEST certification that serves as validation to employers that students have displayed strong work habits and are ready for the workforce. OAE supports GeorgiaBEST implementation through professional development and technical assistance. See Special Rule for Family Literacy.

Special Rule for Literacy

The OAE will 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 the 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, the OAE will 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.

English language acquisition program means a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that leads to attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and transition to post-secondary education and training; or employment.

Integrated education and training means a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Integrated English literacy and civics education means education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

Workforce preparation activities means activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for

successful transition into and completion of post-secondary education or training, or employment.

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

Request for Application

The OAE administered a competitive procurement process for three-year federal and state grant funding for Adult Education, in accordance with the RFA process described in section III.b.5.B.i. The OAE ensured that all geographical regions of the State have adequate coverage, and that local providers are sufficiently equipped to meet the needs identified for each area. Further, eligible providers were required to specify how the organization will collaborate with other social services and employment-related providers in the area in order to provide concurrent or supportive services for eligible recipients.

The competitive grant application collected basic information regarding an eligible provider (e.g. location, service area, the scope of the program, demographics served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history). Additionally, each applicant was required to submit a proposed budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements. Questions were structured to require applicants to respond to their capacity and readiness to meet the 13 Considerations for Funding and other expectations as outlined in the statute and regulations. For example:

1. How does the Adult Education program fit into the strategies identified in the Local Workforce Development Plan? How will program provide services to meet the local and/or regional workforce needs?
2. Describe how the program will align its services with, and contribute to, the local One-Stop Center to meet the goals identified in the Local Workforce Development Board's Plan(s).
3. How will the program foster Integrated Education and Training (IET) opportunities for students? Provide specific details.

Following the initial award, each grantee will submit an annual RFA continuation grant application for one-year renewal, for the life of the grant. The renewal application will require grantees to provide an update on the program's services, and its implementation of grant requirements. It will also require programs to provide details regarding its compliance with the tenets of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA). The renewal application must specify how it will ensure access to, and participation in, its program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.

The decision on the amount of continued funding will be based on:

- Census of need;
- Program's prior performance (during the previous grant year) for each grant area;
- Continued financial solvency; and
- Program not appearing on the federal debarment list.

Assessing the RFA

The assessment of each competitive grant application will involve an intense evaluation of the ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs of the area, and to comply with the expectations and statutes described within WIOA. At minimum, the review process and scoring rubric will consider the following:

- The ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs and English language needs identified for the population in the area. Particular emphasis will be given to the provider's ability to provide targeted service to individuals with barriers to employment—including low literacy skills and an English language barrier;
- The eligible provider's ability to provide service to individuals with a (physical or learning) disability;
- The eligible provider's demonstrated effectiveness in providing literacy instruction, including its ability to meet State-adjusted levels of performance and improve the literacy levels of eligible individuals;
- The eligible provider's alignment with WIOA Local Plan;
- The depth, intensity, and rigor of the programs and activities offered by the eligible provider. The proposed program must incorporate the basic tenets of reading instruction. Attention will be given to the extent to which the eligible provider incorporates stringent research in the grant proposal submission and the development of the literacy program itself;
- The extent to which the eligible provider's program is based on intense research and best practices;
- The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates the effective use of technology for instruction, to include distance education, toward students' improved performance;
- The eligible provider's demonstrated integration of contextualized instruction, to blend literacy skills, and preparation for transition to post-secondary education or entry into the workplace. Particular attention will be given to implementation of a career pathways system, activities that promote and lead to economic self-sufficiency, and the ability to exercise the full rights of citizenship;
- The qualifications and expertise of the eligible provider's instructors, counselors, and administrative staff. All instructors must hold (at minimum) a Bachelor's degree. The eligible provider must also demonstrate its ability and intent to provide high-quality professional development to instructors and staff, toward the improvement of student performance;
- The eligible provider's collaboration with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community. Particularly, the eligible provider should have (or have the means to establish) meaningful partnerships with elementary schools, secondary schools, post-secondary institutions, industry partners, and workforce boards;

- The flexibility of program scheduling offered by the eligible provider, including coordination (when available) with Federal, State, and local support services such as child care, transportation, and mental health services;
- The eligible provider's information management system; the expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the State-administered designated MIS for all grant-related data collection and reporting; and
- The demonstrated need within the area occupied by the eligible provider for English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

(c) Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals.

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

*Adult education and literacy activities;
 Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
 Secondary school credit;
 Integrated education and training;
 Career pathways;
 Concurrent enrollment;
 Peer tutoring; and
 Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.*

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 five years of participation in the program.

From funds made available under section 222(a)(1), OAE will carry out corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals within correctional institutions by offering grant to local programs throughout the state. In FY2017, the OAE held a competitive, three-year Request for Application (RFA) process specifically for Corrections Education funding as described in Section III.5.B.i. Specific consideration was given to grantees that prioritize service to individuals who are likely to exit the correctional institution within five years of participation in the Adult Education program. As a result, OAE provided grants to 25 local providers for the provision of Corrections Education.

OAE will not use more than 20% of the available instruction funds used to award grants and contracts under section 231 for activities under section 225. Monies are allocated to fund Adult Education services within correctional settings throughout the state, based upon identified needs specified in the RFA. The OAE will widely advertise the availability of grant funding, and ensure that all eligible providers have access to grant application material and information.

A correctional institution includes any prison; jail; reformatory; work farm; detention center; or halfway house, community-based rehabilitation center, or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders. A criminal offender is any individual who is charged with or convicted of any criminal offense.

The funds shall be used for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions, and for other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs for—

- (1) adult education and literacy activities;
- (2) special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- (3) secondary school credit;
- (4) integrated education and training;
- (5) career pathways;
- (6) concurrent enrollment;
- (7) peer tutoring; and
- (8) transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible provider that receives funds provided under section 225 to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution shall give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program

(d) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program.

Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

Describe how the program is 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.

Under Section 211(a)(2)(b), OAE will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs throughout the state. In FY2017, the OAE held a competitive, three-year Request for Application (RFA) process specifically for IELCE funding. in accordance with the process detailed in section III.b.5.B.i. The purpose of this program is to assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship. English language learners who hold degrees and credentials in their native countries are eligible to access all services provided by section 243.

In the application for funds, OAE considered whether an eligible provider has demonstrated the need for these types of services in a designated service delivery area. Data sources could include tables from the U.S. Census Bureau, reports from the Office of Immigration Services, documentation of prior participation in these types of services, or other data.

The term “integrated English literacy and civics education” means education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

Eligible providers were required to demonstrate in their application for funds the manner in which the program would be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities, directly or through collaboration with partners identified in the law or other community-based organizations.

Grantees deliver the activities under WIOA including the integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers. Further, grantees must prepare English language learners for unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency, and how they will integrate the program with the local workforce development system to carry out the activities of the program.

[\(e\) State Leadership.](#)

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA.

Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable.

The OAE will use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for the following adult education and literacy activities to develop or enhance the adult education system of the State. Not more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out State leadership activities under section 223.

- A) *The alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other core programs and one-stop partners, including eligible providers, including the development of career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities.*

OAE will work collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to provide comprehensive and wraparound services to program participants. State-level policy and planning bodies provide an opportunity for Adult Education to work with WFD, GDOL, GVRA and other key agencies defined in the law. Adult Education will provide resources and services through One-Stop Centers (including intake/orientation for Adult Education services, and transition resources), referral processes, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships.

B) The establishment and operation of high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to required local activities, including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, instruction provided by volunteers or by personnel, and dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to such programs.

OAE will provide targeted professional development based upon a statewide needs assessment, research regarding best practices, and federal recommendations. OAE will survey local providers to ascertain areas in which there may be a gap in knowledge or a need for improvement. From these results, OAE will coordinate and execute broad-based training through a variety of modalities to assist program leaders and teachers in areas such as program improvement, instructional techniques, integrated education and training, CCR standards, transition to post-secondary education and employment, and the infusion of technology into instruction. Professional Development may include:

- An annual operations meeting, wherein local program administrators are given an overview of changes in policy and related practices, budget management, and reporting requirements;
- An annual statewide professional development conference for a variety of adult education personnel;
- Regional institutes to address instructional needs in the areas of adult education and literacy, ELA, EL/Civics; and
- Webinars/Teleconferences.

C) The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funds under this title, including—

- 1. The development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training;*
- 2. The role of eligible providers as a one-stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services; and*
- 3. Assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies.*

OAE will deliver technical assistance to eligible providers to enhance program effectiveness, increase the ability of providers to meet established performance standards, and fulfill obligations associated with being a one-stop partner. OAE will provide professional development/technical assistance via phone, webinar, teleconference, on-site training, and seminars. Targeted technical assistance will focus on areas of national interest such as recruitment and intake, student engagement, data management and reporting, testing procedures, and transition to post-secondary education and employment. Particular emphasis will be given to the establishment and implementation of targeted career pathway programs, to provide students with

contextualized instruction, workforce training, and career explorative services to prepare for sustainable employment. To ensure that local providers are adequately equipped to foster continuous improvement and maintain an ability to meet the needs of Georgia's workforce, OAE will:

- a. Deliver technical assistance to increase the ability of instructors to provide impactful instruction and obtain desired results in key areas—including reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, and distance education. Technical assistance will incorporate techniques gleaned from contemporary research and resources related to best practices in andragogy. Topics may include integrated education and training, and college and career readiness standards.
- b. Provide State and local level information regarding the role of adult education as a key component in the delivery of one-stop center services. Training will include resources to enable a local provider to establish, build upon, or maintain effective relationships with other core providers within the LWDA. Topics may include referral systems, data sharing/reporting, integrating education with occupational training, and transition strategies for post-secondary enrollment or employment.
- c. Provide training related to the use of technology to improve classroom effectiveness and program outcomes. Training may focus on NRS processes and the effective use of the statewide data system in order to maintain accurate student data. The OAE may also provide technical assistance to prepare instructors and program administrators to identify and utilize technology to enhance classroom experiences.

D) The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State.

OAE will engage in statewide program monitoring procedures to maintain sufficient knowledge and oversight of local adult education providers. Oversight will include continuous data monitoring, in addition to site visits and on-site reviews. Specific attention will be given to programs with low performance. OAE will develop targeted technical assistance to meet the specific needs of the program in need of improvement.

OAE will employ at least four methods to monitor programs and evaluate program improvement measures:

1. Data Reviews – OAE-designated regional coordinators will conduct frequent and ongoing data reviews using the designated statewide MIS. Areas of review include overall performance and outcomes, assessment data, attendance, and compliance.
2. Monitoring Visits – OAE will establish a monitoring schedule for all programs. Lower-performing programs are more likely to experience a visitation from their designated regional coordinator. While making site-visits, team members will meet with program administrators and/or staff, observe classroom instruction, tour facilities, and meet with stakeholders. Areas of concern will be addressed with the program administrator either through informal feedback or, in some cases, a formal plan.

3. On-Site Program Reviews – OAE will partner with a public university that will provide logistical support and facilitation of the On-Site Program Review process. Programs identified for review will be evaluated on the quality of instruction, adherence to policies and procedures, and the overall quality of program administration. A formal written report will be provided, and each program will be asked to respond to areas that need improvement.
4. Mid-Year Performance and Comparison Report – OAE will provide a Mid-Year Performance and Comparison Report to each local program halfway through the fiscal year. The report will include year-to-date performance for each of the WIOA performance outcomes. Comparisons to the prior year will be given for enrollment and number of students with a post-test. Local programs are asked to develop written action plans to address areas in need of improvement.
5. Self-Assessment – Each year local program administrators complete a self-assessment of program functions and performance, rating their program against standards of performance in a variety of categories. Self-assessment data is analyzed for commonalities across regions and the State. Deficiencies are remediated through technical assistance, or professional development. The self-assessment corresponds to the areas on the On-Site Program Review.

Any time a program is asked to correct or improve in a particular area, OAE personnel will provide technical assistance, professional development, and other support until it is no longer needed.

The dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State will be accomplished through a variety of avenues. The primary method will be through the delivery of technical assistance by OAE regional coordinators, who meet regularly with local program administrators to answer questions, provide guidance, and share the proven practices observed in other adult education programs. Another method will be through training sessions with OAE staff members, who understand the key practices that are necessary to build and manage a high-performing adult education program. Topics could include: recruitment and retention, local program classroom observations and monitoring, records management, student assessment, and data management. Further dissemination will occur during adult education State activities, such as program administrator meetings, the pairing of new program administrators with experienced ones, new program administrator training, and State-organized webinar and teleconference sessions where local personnel share best practices with their peer groups on a particular topic.

OAE reserves the right to use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for the permissible State leadership activities outlined in section 223 (such as the support of State or regional networks of literacy resource centers; the development and implementation of technology applications; or the development and dissemination of curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction). Not more than 12.5% of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out these adult education and literacy activities to develop or enhance the adult education system of the State.

(f) Assessing Quality.

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

Local eligible providers are responsible to meet all programmatic goals and outcomes that are required in their approved Request for Application (RFA). Performance outcomes expectations for each provider will be to meet or exceed the levels of performance for each of the established NRS benchmarks. Office of Adult Education (OAE) will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities through:

1. Desktop Monitoring- The Office of Adult Education's Grant Program Support Coordinators (GPSCs) conduct on-going monitoring of program data to assess each program's progress toward meeting established performance benchmarks. Areas deemed in need of improvement are noted, and programs are provided technical assistance and training.
2. Self-Assessment and Mid-Year Performance Comparison Reporting- Each grantee is required to conduct and submit an Annual Self-assessment to report progress toward performance measures, and to identify areas in need of improvement. Additionally, programs are sent a Mid-year Performance and Comparison Report to benchmark progress toward established goals; programs are required to respond in writing to detail planned activities to meet performance benchmarks.
3. On-site Program Review- Each year, five programs are selected to receive an On-site Program Review. During this review, programs are evaluated on the quality of instruction, adherence to policies and procedures, and the overall quality of program administration. The Office of Adult Education contracts with the University of Georgia to provide logistical support and coordination for On-Site Program Review procedures. Each program reviewed receives a summary report that details any commendations, required actions, and recommended actions.
4. Financial Review- All programs undergo a Financial Review each fiscal year. Four to five programs are selected for a detailed review that provides commendations, required actions, and recommended actions. The remaining programs are required to complete a Financial Checklist Activity with their assigned Grant Program Support Coordinator.

OAE uses the following two plans to take action to improve the quality of the adult education and literacy activities.

1. Corrective Action Plan (CAP) - A CAP will be implemented with programs that are out of compliance with State and/or federal policies. OAE will provide technical assistance throughout the corrective process, and by the end of a designated timeframe, programs should be able to correct the identified issues and end their respective CAP. Failure to improve may result in increased monitoring, grant reduction, or funding removal.
2. Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) - A PIP will be required for programs which are identified as low-performing when compared to the State performance on federal or State benchmarks. The PIP will include specific action steps, such as student retention,

post-testing and assessment, data analysis, training, and professional development which will be designed to improve program performance. Failure to improve may result in increased monitoring, grant reduction, or funding removal.

As a part of OAE's ongoing assessment efforts, OAE will provide ongoing technical assistance, professional development, and other support until the required steps of the plans are completed. The type of technical assistance, professional development, and other support will be based upon the specific area(s) of deficiency or need at an individual program. To ensure that the OAE is providing high-quality, intensive professional development to meet the specific needs of grantees throughout the state, state staff will conduct on-going and prescriptive assessment of its professional development services. Georgia uses a multi-tiered approach to evaluate professional development based upon Gusky's 5 critical levels of professional development evaluation. The following methods are employed for PD assessment.

(1) Participant Reactions and (2) Learning: Presenter Rating and Participant Feedback Forms

Data is collected from event attendees through the use of Presenter Rating and Participant Feedback evaluation forms that are completed at the event. This establishes a baseline for evaluating the professional development content and for collecting participant reaction feedback. These evaluations help to inform the OAE about the need for ongoing PD on a given topic and provide data that gauge the learning that occurred and help to identify areas where additional support is needed.

(3) Organization Support and Change

Program leaders are encouraged to attend professional development events with their educators and program staff. This way, program leaders are aware of, and receive firsthand, the professional development provided to their faculty and staff. Program leaders are provided with professional development updates at quarterly leadership meetings to include copies of materials and resources provided, overview of the offerings, summary of knowledge/skill objectives addressed, and program participation reports.

(4) Participant Use of New Knowledge and Skills: Post-Event Assignments and Surveys

Participants receive assignments that are completed and returned to the OAE for evaluation, once they return to their local programs. This directly assesses their ability to apply those learnings back into the classroom. The results help establish if learning objectives were achieved, and what additional PD is required.

(5) Student Learning Outcomes

Variables are collected and assessed to gauge if professional development offered had an impact. While student test scores is an obvious outcome to monitor, the list of variables also includes data available in GALIS (Georgia Adult Learners Information System) such as student retention and student level completions. Other factors include student engagement, student morale, and attitude.

Georgia's Office of Adult Education recognizes the importance of providing professional development to not only those who instruct students, but also to program leaders, program staff and program volunteers. Throughout the year, the state provides professional development for

all positions within an adult education program through the events listed below that it organizes and offers.

- Technically Speaking - A quarterly webinar series for each of the following groups - program leaders, ABE/ASE instructors, ELL and EL/Civics instructors, and data managers. During the webinars, topics planned in advanced are discussed and programs present best practices.
- Conference Calls - Regional conference calls are conducted quarterly with Transition Specialists to provide assistance, resources, and discuss topics relevant to supporting and helping students.
- Transition Specialist Summit – Two-day summits are organized by the state and include up-to-date resources and transition models for use in the programs, as well guest presenters, and time for programs to share some of their best practices. These occur twice throughout the year.
- ELL and EL/Civics Summits - Two day summits are organized by the state and include guest presenters, round table discussions, best practices from programs, and up-to-date resources, instructional methodologies, and models. These occur twice throughout the year.
- Adult Educator Institutes – Two-day institutes are organized by the state and offered to ABE/ASE instructors approximately twelve times, regionally, throughout the year. These deep-dive professional development opportunities offer educators and volunteers a chance to immerse themselves with the content of the institute, which is designed around core content topics, such as reading and writing.
- Adult Education Fall Conference – A three-day, state-wide conference where over fifteen subject-matter-experts provide over thirty sessions on instructional methods, core subject-matter content knowledge, classroom activities, classroom management, and program leadership.
- Online Modules - The state promotes and organizes registration for program leaders, instructors, program staff, and volunteers to participant as a cohort in online modules on a variety of topics.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

The State of Georgia hereby certifies the following: *Certifications:*

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;

5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;

And the State of Georgia hereby certifies the following: Common Assurances:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions);
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;
4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities;
5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and
6. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.
7. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303)

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about the following provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

To Whom Does This Provision Apply?

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

What Does This Provision Require?

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

The Georgia Office of Adult Education prioritizes the need to ensure that all persons are afforded accessibility and participation in Adult Education programs and services throughout the state. As such, the OAE will take the following measures to fully comply with the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA).

1. Adherence to the governing policy related to equity and non-discrimination. The Office of Adult Education maintains compliance with the TCSG non-discrimination policy. (Excerpt below).
2. The Technical College System of Georgia and its constituent technical colleges do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, gender, religion, disability, age, political affiliation or belief, genetic information, disabled veteran, veteran of the Vietnam Era, or citizenship status (except in those special

circumstances permitted or mandated by law). This nondiscrimination policy encompasses the operation of all TCSG and technical college administered programs, federally financed programs, educational programs and activities involving admissions, scholarships and loans, student life and athletics. It also applies to the recruitment and employment of personnel and the contracting for goods and services. Accommodations and Assistance for Grantees and Grant Partners. The Office of Adult Education makes every effort to proactively identify and eliminate barriers to service and participation in Adult Education activities. Efforts include (but are not limited to) the following: Website and Publication Accessibility. The OAE makes every effort to ensure that its website and published documents meet accessibility standards.

Professional Development Accommodations. OAE delivers training using a variety of modalities to support the various needs of the end-users. Additionally, the OAE adjusts training in response to specific requests of attendees. All professional development activities are also followed by evaluations for continuous improvement.

3. Grantee Oversight. Local Adult Education providers must comply with OAE Policies and Procedures, including policies that stipulate compliance with GEPA, ADA, and similar statutes. As a part of the grant competition process, Grantees were required to describe how the organization complies with ADA requirements. As a part of the renewal application, and future competitive applications, grantees will be required to specifically address GEPA compliance—both within the body of the application responses, and in the grant Assurances. As an example, Grantees are required to submit a Recruitment and Retention Plan that demonstrates that they are providing outreach to all target populations within the service delivery area. Further, Grantees are required to demonstrate collaboration with local WIOA core partners and service providers who serve various populations within the targeted community. Additionally, accessibility and inclusion compliance are included in program monitoring measures.

SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs

(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying

(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable)

(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

IX. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

(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;

Since its inception in 2012, GVRA has worked to strengthen its collaborative relationship with the SRC. In order for this to be accomplished the following has been implemented to ensure that SRC's input is integrated into the ongoing work of GRVA: on-going technical support for the meetings and membership development; SRC members are invited to present regularly at GVRA Board meetings; staff members of GVRA and VR services representatives present updates at the quarterly SRC meetings; and, SRC members work in concert with GVRA and VR services to address opportunities for improvement of service delivery. Georgia spent \$10,026 of Innovation and Expansion funds in FY15 to support these SRC activities. These funds provided for travel to SRC meetings and public hearings, meeting rooms, meals, interpreters, publications such as the annual report and brochures, conference registration fees, and supplies.

Specifically in regards to WIOA, GVRA presented information about WIOA to the SRC in April 2015, and assisted in the review of the WIOA NPRM. SRC did submit official comments to the proposed regulations in June 2015, as well as notifying GVRA of its comments. The SRC comments were as follows:

- i. The Georgia SRC strongly supports the proposed changes in 361.20 clarifying when designated State agencies must conduct public hearings to obtain comment on substantive changes to policies and procedures governing the VR program. This includes requirements under current 361.20 pertaining to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan giving descriptive examples of the distinctions for when public hearings are required.
- ii. The Georgia SRC strongly supports the proposal to amend current 361.42(a)(1)(iii) to clarify that an applicant who meets all other eligibility criteria may be determined eligible if he or she requires VR services to advance in employment.
- iii. The Georgia SRC does not support the proposal to delete paragraph (f) from current 361.42. Instead, it recommends that extended evaluations be further defined. The purpose is that these evaluations have proven to be valuable for VR counselors and their clients.
- iv. The Georgia SRC supports the proposal to require the individualized plan for employment of each individual be developed within 90 days following the determination of eligibility unless the DSU and the individual agree to a specific extension of that timeframe.

- v. The Georgia SRC supports the revision of the definition for SES, extending the allowable timeframe for the provision of these services from 18 months to 24 months.
- vi. The Georgia SRC supports the proposed change to give State VR Agencies, operating under an Order of Selection, the option to serve eligible individuals with disabilities outside that order who have an immediate need for equipment or services to maintain employment as indicated in its portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan.
- vii. The Georgia SRC does not support eliminating uncompensated outcomes including homemakers and unpaid family workers. This change will have a disproportionate and negative impact on individuals who are blind. When a working age adult loses his or her vision, the entire family unit is affected and must make adjustments to adequately support the individual. That often includes temporarily changing roles within the family (i.e., the breadwinner who is coping with vision loss may need to manage the household while the spouse works outside of the home). Furthermore, unlike other disabilities, the medical/healthcare system does not provide training in compensatory skills to help adults with visual impairments become independent and self-sufficient.

While the RSA gives instructions on how to refer these individuals to other government or community service providers, rehabilitation funding is generally not available through these other sources for training in critical skills; including but not limited to, Activities of Daily Living, Orientation, Mobility, Assistive Technology and Braille. The Georgia SRC strongly recommends striking this revision. If not, then further guidance is required to assure these individuals will not be denied the vital rehabilitation services they need to regain their independence and self-confidence. These services are required long before they can realize employment, which is the end goal.

- viii. The Georgia SRC supports the proposal to clarify 361.5(c)(9)(i)(C) to state that self-employed individuals with disabilities are considered for receiving competitive compensation for their income as to be comparable to that of individuals without disabilities in similar occupations or performing similar tasks who possess the same level of training, experience and skills.
- ix. The Georgia SRC supports the proposal to amend 361.24 to include the additional agencies and entities with which the DSU must coordinate its activities with under the VR program.
- x. The Georgia SRC strongly supports amending current 361.45(c)(2) by adding a new paragraph (v) that would require a DSU to provide eligible individuals who are entitled to Social Security benefits under titles II or XVI of the Social Security Act, information on available assistance and supports available to them when entering the workforce (i.e., benefits planning and financial supports).
- xi. The Georgia SRC supports RSA in providing additional clarification in proposed 361.22(c) regarding which entity, the local educational agency or DSU, is responsible for providing transition services to students with disabilities (who are also VR consumers) when such services fall under the purview of both entities. Also, the Georgia SRC believes it would be helpful to the entities involved for RSA to provide further clarification or directives that assist in decisions related to which entity will be responsible for providing

transition or pre- employment transition services that can be considered both a special education or VR service. Additionally, for RSA to clarify if it will allow those decisions to be made at the State and local level as part of the collaboration between the VR agencies, State educational agencies, and local educational agencies.

- xii. The Georgia SRC comments below are for the proposed changes to section 106 of the Act made by WIOA that replaces the current standards and indicators used to assess the performance of the VR program with a cross-reference to the joint regulations of 677.155. This action will establish for the common performance accountability measures for the core programs in the workforce development system.

As those measures are being developed, the Georgia SRC is concerned that the joint regulations do not consider the unique needs of individuals with disabilities. For example, successful closures in VR are only after 90 days in employment. It is important for extra time to follow the individual ensuring appropriate job placement and satisfaction of both the employer and the client. Individuals with disabilities are in VR services an average of 3+ years and may take longer than others to achieve employment. The VR effectiveness standard of 55.8% ratio of successful to total closures recognizes that states must provide services that give opportunities to persons with the most significant disabilities who may not achieve employment even after those services. If common measures result in a performance standard employment rate that is much higher, how can VR meet that measure and will it be a disincentive to serve individuals with the most significant disabilities?

- i. As a result of the 2017 GVRA/VR Consumer Satisfaction Survey conducted by the Georgia SRC, the Council recommends:
 - o More services and resources to be allocated to serve veterans with disabilities. According to the Survey, only 4% of the total consumers sampled were veterans.
 - o Expansion of available employment services. Several times consumers surveyed expressed their desire for more customized and “hands on” employment services, specifically job development and placement. Employment was the number one service sought by consumers of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services.
 - o Maintaining constant and consistent communication with program participants was the number one survey result that was highlighted by current VR clients and those whose cases were closed. Therefore, the Council recommends that the VR Program identify and implement ways in which the staff providing direct services can continuously and effectively communicate with clients on an on-going basis.

(2) the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations;

Overall, GVRA is supportive of SRC's input, comments, and recommendations for the WIOA NPRM, and the VR component of the SUP. The majority of the SRC's comments and

recommendations are aligned with GVRA's plan and are viewed as being specific on how to provide the best benefit to each individual served.

(3) the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

GVRA has not rejected any SRC input regarding the VR portion of the State Unified Plan. However, with respect to the SRC's comments on the WIOA NPRM, GVRA does reject one of SRC's NPRM comment: "vii. The Georgia SRC does not support eliminating uncompensated outcomes including homemakers and unpaid family workers." Although GVRA understands the rationale behind the SRC's recommendation, GVRA rejects the recommendation that the homemaker and/or unpaid family worker outcome should be included in future performance metrics. This outcome has been used historically to justify the lack of competitive employment in an integrated setting. GVRA continues to demonstrate a commitment to focus on competitive employment in an integrated setting.

(b) Request for Waiver of Statewideness.

When requesting a waiver of the Statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-Statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

(1) A local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request

(2) The designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect

Not Applicable.

(3) Requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency will adhere to all of the requirements of the VR services portion of Georgia's Unified State Plan.

(c) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities under the Statewide Workforce Development System.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the Statewide workforce development system with respect to:

GVRA believes that cooperation and collaboration is necessary to maximize resources and address all aspects impacting individuals with disabilities in gaining or maintaining employment in Georgia. VR is strongly allied with SWIS and maintains cooperative agreements and working partnerships with strategic agencies and entities outside the workforce investment system. These partnerships are described in the following paragraphs.

(1) Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;

GVRA has interagency cooperation with the following federal, state, and local agencies and programs:

- i. Memorandum of Agreements have been developed with the following Local Education Agencies (LEA's) to fulfill the goals of the Georgia Career Pathways Grant: Explore, Engage, Employ (E3): Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Georgia School for the Deaf, Georgia Academy for the Blind, Troup County, Paulding County, Decatur County, and Hall County. A Memorandum of Understanding with GVRA and GaDOE has been implemented to support a capacity building pilot providing two GVRA employees housed at GaDOE in the Division for Special Education Services and Supports, and Career, Technical, Agricultural Education Division to provide instruction and direction to VR transition staff in Pre-Employment Transition Services. Since its inception, VR has maintained a cooperative relationship with Muskogee Vocational Rehabilitation (MVR) program. MVR works to empower American Indians with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society. Through this partnership with the Lower Muskogee Creek Indian Tribe, VR services provides disability assessment, evaluation, and referral services that assist in eligibility determinations and the development of individualized plans for employment.

VR also includes MVR staff in statewide training programs. Through this agreement, MVR provides VR staff training on the Indian culture and its relationship to disability and work to ensure responsiveness to cultural needs. VR staff participate in the Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation and represent the organization at annual Native American summits and conferences. VR has a representative on the MVR Advisory Council and the MVR Director is a SRC member.

- ii. VR collaborates with the Albany Advocacy Resource Center's EmployAbility Program to train and place persons with disabilities to work. The program has three steps: (1) Assessment, work adjustment and job readiness training; (2) Job development; and, (3) Job retention and follow-up. The goal of the program is to assist clients who have barriers to obtaining gainful employment by opening the doors to opportunities that have not traditionally been available for VR clients in southwest Georgia.
- iii. GVRA has a MOU with DBHDD to implement Customized Supported Employment. This partnership allows for a better-coordinated effort to serve those with the most significant disabilities, specifically in the provision of supported employment. One of the primary goals of this agreement is to identify funding that will supplement the VR milestone payments, particularly for extended services.
- iv. SILC has chosen GVRA as the "hosting agency" for their services. SILC consults with VR to develop the State Plan for Independent Living that addresses the long-term goals and recommendations for the need for independent living services and programs in the State of Georgia. VR continues to provide funding for the CILs. The goal is to develop a network of CILs, private, nonprofit, and community-based corporations that assist people with significant disabilities to live more independently and reach their personal goals relating to independence.

During FY15, Georgia also used Innovation & Expansion funds for SILC and expended \$253,350 in support of SILC operations and activities such as quarterly meetings and public hearings.

(2) State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

Georgia VR does not currently have any cooperative agreements with State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. However, VR does work closely with the Georgia Assistive Technology Act Program. Currently, Tools for Life loans equipment for clients to try prior to purchasing the equipment. Additionally, GVRA is one of the pilot sites for Tools for Life and the State ADA office to test equipment that is under consideration for purchase by the State. Tools for Life provides training to VR's Assistive Work Technology team. Georgia VR is working with Georgia Tech's AMAC/Tools for life in development of a MOU to support an Assistive Technology lending library. Tools for life has entered into a vendor agreement with VR to provide assessment services for our clients.

(3) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;

VR partners with UGA's AgrAbility Program, assisting agricultural workers who have disabilities or chronic health conditions that interfere with their ability to work, overcome these barriers to maintain their farm business. The VR program provides time-limited services such as medical management, assistive technology, work site modifications and accommodations, self-employment start-up costs, guidance and counseling, and home modifications. AgrAbility and VR services continue to collaborate in developing joint training courses that will improve services for mutual clients.

(4) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;

VR does not have cooperative agreements with non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth. GVRA has partnered with DJJ to pilot a program with the YDC in Augusta. Through this pilot, GVRA worked with the mental health unit to develop an effective and efficient process for transitioning youth out of the facility and into employment or training opportunities upon their release. Additionally, the agency is finalizing a referral process by which the YDC will refer all youth whom they believe has a disability and may be appropriate for VR services.

GVRA has an established referral process with contracted service providers and strongly encourages them to refer out-of-school youth. The agency partners with Parent to Parent of Georgia, a non-profit organization that provides advocacy and training for families of children and youth with disabilities. GVRA has partnered with the Technical College System of Georgia Adult Education program and held a statewide meeting with Adult Education Program Staff and VR Field Services leadership and field staff to educate on the respective programs and referral process for out of school youth.

(5) State use contracting programs.

The Georgia State Use Council and DOAS administers the State Use law through the non-profit GEPS. Some of Georgia's CRPs and nonprofit partners are in GEPS. Some VR clients do receive

services from those CRPS when deemed appropriate based on their individualized plans for employment.

To avoid duplication of effort and to enhance the number of individuals served, GVRA and SRC have developed working relationships to coordinate activities with other Georgia councils. Linkages to productive relationships exist with the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, Mayors Committees on Employment of People with Disabilities, Georgia Mental Health Planning Council, Georgia Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, Inc., Georgia Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Commission, the Council on American Indian Concerns, and other Georgia rehabilitation service agencies.

VR regional leaders continue to establish collaborative relationships with community organizations and businesses to assist people with disabilities in going to work. These organizations include, but are not limited to: chambers of commerce, city and county governments, the criminal justice system, urban leagues, churches, healthcare and social assistance services, housing authorities, and educational institutions.

(d) Coordination with Education Officials

GVRA has cultivated and formalized relationships with GaDOE and the Local Education Agencies (LEA). GaDOE and GVRA have MOU's for a Capacity Building Pilot for delivery of Pre-ETS, an overarching SEA/GVRA MOU to plan and coordinate Transition services and Pre-ETS to students with disabilities. GaDOE and GVRA have an MOU in conjunction with Georgia State University to provide Georgia Career Information System for job exploration, career exploration, assessments and more for students with disabilities statewide. At the LEA level, VR supervisors attend monthly regional Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS) meetings with Special Education Directors to ensure seamless services to students with disabilities.

(1) The designated plans, policies, and procedures for coordination

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.

GVRA has developed a strategic initiative to expand and improve VR services for youth with disabilities who are both in school or out-of-school. The purpose of this initiative is to combine existing and new resources to offer a robust, comprehensive array of VR services to all schools. Current VR program policies and procedures are being reviewed and amended to reflect this new way of doing business. The plan includes the provision of pre-employment transition services and timely development and approval of an individualized plan for employment for each youth served. One subset of the proposed GVRA plan to expand and improve VR services is a newly-awarded, five-year demonstration project entitled "Georgia Pathways to Work" funded through the USDOE RSA.

In collaboration with GaDOE, Burton Blatt Institute, and Poses Family Foundation, GVRA is customizing the landscape of career pathways for young Georgians with disabilities. The Georgia Pathways to Work program- E³: Explore, Engage, Employ- connects *real* people to *real* jobs that fill a *real* need for employers in their individual communities. The purpose of the Georgia Pathways to Work program is to improve the 18 existing career pathways by tailoring them to a variety of work opportunities available in the communities. The program will engage employers

in the model design and employ social media strategies to connect youth across the nation. The project impact is to change how organizations support the independence, employment, and career advancement of Georgians with disabilities.

The Georgia Pathways to Work program is designed for youth, ages 14 to 24, who have a disability and are either in school or out-of-school youth. This demonstration program contains the following elements:

- Development of comprehensive array of service for the over 3,000 project participants in either a school or community, integrated setting: Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) (including assessments for determining level of understanding career pathways selection for the participants); CAPI; and. customized employment to address the complexities of individualization.
- Engagement of employers using third-party agreements which will include employer presentations, job shadowing, internships, mentorships, and apprenticeships.
- Engagement of the youth's families throughout the Explore, Engage and Employ process via support from Parent to Parent of Georgia, which will offer information, training, and support to families and youth with disabilities focusing on transition to adulthood.
- Employment of social media strategies to engage youth in understanding employment-related activities in new and creative ways, including the development of industry specific blogs.
- Supported Education and Strengths-Based Case Management to accomplish the completion of education and training programs while attaining industry recognized credentials.
- Utilization of Burton Blatt Institute/Southeast ADA Center to offer training and employer education and awareness of disabilities and job accommodations.
- Partnering with the Center for Leadership in Disability at Georgia State University to complete a project evaluation and assessment for Georgia's Pathways to Work E³ program.
- The program will be launched in three school districts; an urban, suburban, and rural systems to ensure that the design of the program can be modified to overcome the unique challenges present in each of these settings. It will then be scaled to the entire State in Years four and five (2019 & 2020).

Georgia Pathways to Work will change how organizations support the independence, employment, and career advancement of Georgians with disabilities. This will be accomplished by working with statewide initiatives such as Georgia Trade Five and HDCI to be responsive to the known market demands for careers in Georgia, as well as supporting employer efforts to more effectively engage Georgians with disabilities. Furthermore, the overall goal of the Georgia Pathways to Work program is to increase the number of youth who achieve competitive, integrated employment through existing and customized pathways. Additionally, this demonstration project will be implemented to increase the average weekly wage and employer benefits of participants in each occupational cluster through successful completion of career pathways.

GVRA will develop policies that address the WIOA requirements, ensure coordination of services with GaDOE, and meet the needs of youth with disabilities in and out-of-school. VR program's current transition policies are as follows:

449.1.01 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff shall recognize that every student or youth, regardless of the severity of his or her disability, is considered able to benefit in terms of a competitive integrated employment outcome.

449.1.03 VR shall provide students 14 to 22 years old Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) that allows them to explore the world of work and engage in work based learning opportunities for the purpose of becoming employed in a meaningful career. If individualized services are needed in addition to Pre-ETS, VR shall provide these services following VR policy of application, determination of eligibility, comprehensive needs assessment and IPE development.

450.1.02 Transition services shall be provided to eligible students with disabilities to facilitate the transition from the receipt of educational services in secondary school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services oriented toward a competitive integrated employment outcome. Transition services may be either services to eligible individuals or services to groups.

(2) Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:

GVRA executed a formal Memorandum of Understanding with GaDOE that includes the following components outlining how to serve youth and students with disabilities:

Consultation and Technical Assistance to LEA's

Transition Planning

Outreach and Identification of Students who need Transition Services

Coordination and Documentation Requirements under WIOA on Limitations on Use of Subminimum Wage

(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;

VR has a strong and effective partnership with GaDOE. The two agencies established a formal Interagency Cooperative Agreement to assure cooperation in implementing and maintaining a system of VR service delivery to eligible students with disabilities. Central to this Agreement are details regarding how Consultation and Technical Assistance will be provided to assist educational agencies in utilizing current and developing VR services. An updated Cooperative Agreement between GaDOE and GVRA was signed in August 2017. Additional details of transition planning activities are described in item (B) below.

(B) Transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

Another component of the Interagency Cooperative Agreement is transition planning for educational agencies that facilitate the development and implementation of IEPs. The agreement stipulates the following:

- i. VR provides GaDOE the eligibility criteria for VR services; works collaboratively with local school districts to identify and locate students with disabilities who may be in need of services; and, develops, in conjunction with the eligible student, an IPE prior to the student's graduation. This plan includes VR services that are determined to be appropriate for the student.
- ii. Each school district receives intensive, rehabilitation services for earlier identification of and interventions provided to students with disabilities that facilitates successful employment outcomes.
- iii. VR works with each eligible student to develop a work plan and determine the VR services appropriate to the students' goal.
- iv. VR is involved in school transition planning and IEP meetings with students, parents and school personnel.

(C) Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

The MOU defines the terms, roles and responsibilities, including financial, for each agency. In particular, GaDOE is responsible for identifying and referring to VR those students with disabilities who are potentially eligible or appear to meet the requirements for eligibility for VR services, to include both those who do and do not qualify for special education and related services. While the student is in school, existing resources in the school or in the community sponsor needed services. VR will sponsor required employment-related services if they are unavailable through the school and/or community and if a student is eligible for those services through VR services.

Due to the changes in the WIOA regulations focusing on all students with disabilities on IEP's or 504's ages 14 up to 22, the LEA fund transfer for dedicated counselors were discontinued. This was to ensure that all LEA's received the same services from VR.

Additionally, the agreements outline that the financial obligation for joint training and staff development is the responsibility of the agency of the personnel.

(D) Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

Collaboration with education, disability, and advocacy groups, as well as community organizations is essential to identifying students and out-of-school youth with disabilities in need of transition services. A Transition Unit was created to ensure implementation of the WIOA transition regulations, manage the Career Pathways Demonstration grant and provide guidance and training to VR field staff and groups listed above. Six Career Pathway Specialists were hired and assigned to various regions across the state to support VR staff, partners with transition, attend and contribute to meetings with Special Education Directors and teachers. The following table is a snapshot of key local, state, and national relationships:

Collaborative Partners	
Local	LEA, Workforce Investment Board, Family Connection, Local Interagency Planning Team, Community Services Board (Public Behavioral Health Authority), Local Interagency Transition Council, Project Search, Parent Mentor Groups, Children’s Medical Services Providers, Support Employment Providers, two and four year Technical Colleges, Employer Committees
State	Georgia Workforce Development, Georgia Department of Education, Georgia State University, Parent to Parent of Georgia, Georgia Advocacy Office, Center for Disability in Leadership, Inclusive Post-Secondary Consortium, Healthy Transitions Initiatives, State Interagency Transition Councils, Georgia Department of Family and Children’s Services, Georgia Department of Community Health, Georgia Department of Education State Advisory Panel for Special Education, Atlanta Workforce Board’s Youth Council
National	Poses Family Foundation, Burton Blatt Institute

VR counselors participate in community resource fairs, attend parent/teacher functions, and serve councils to further promote the availability of services and supports to youth with disabilities who are in school, or who need to be served in an integrated, community-based setting. VR team members share information on community resources, partner in the transition process, and provide workshops on services and support opportunities for groups of students, families, and school personnel.

[\(e\) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations.](#)

Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

GVRA is currently standardizing the process for all agreements within the agency, including Cooperative Agreements. VR services has traditionally utilized Cooperative Agreements with private non-profit organizations, especially with respect to the provision of services and supports. As GVRA both expands existing services and offers new and innovative services, the agency anticipates the need to amend current business practice to include “Request for Proposals” and “Request for Quotes”. This process is consistent with current state policies and procedures regarding the development of new services.

GVRA has established a network of private non-profit providers for vocational rehabilitation services that have a wide variety of employment and work readiness services that can be offered to VR clients. These services include: vocational evaluation and training; work adjustment and skills training; supported employment and job coaching; job development, placement, and retention; extended and transitional employment; and, specialized services for individuals who have visual or hearing impairments. Cooperative Agreements (including contracts and/or MOUs) have been established with all entities from which services are purchased.

Each Cooperative Agreement includes the following information:

- i. Defines the scope and nature of services provided by both agencies; including program services, number of persons to be served, and timeframe for provision of services.

- ii. Establishes principles for the development of working between the two agencies, including the legal basis for handling interagency disagreements.
- iii. Outlines the role, function, and responsibility of each agency including referral and reporting procedures.
- iv. Addresses client staffing and their rights of informed choice about their services.
- v. Defines program criteria for admission, monitoring and successful completion of services.
- vi. States the financial procedures for submission of invoices for services provided, payment amounts, and schedules based on client outcomes.
- vii. Defines type of supervision and number of work hours for each client receiving services.
- viii. Lists the criteria by which the cooperative operations may be reviewed and evaluated in order to determine effectiveness, and includes specific outcome measurements.
- ix. Provides a Statement of Assurance for compliance.

GVRA enters into Cooperative Agreements with a non-profit services provider utilizing the Step Process Outcome model. This model consists of a 3-Tier Reimbursement component and services are predicated on a client receiving services which lead directly to successful employment. Currently, service providers submit their service and budget proposal for review. If edits are required, the proposal is returned to the providers. Proposals are approved by VR leadership. VR reviews each provider's agreement at least once annually, and, if needed, agreements are amended based on changes in law and/or methods for improving the provision of services.

FY17 STEP MOU's= 10

FY18 STEP MOU's=9

FY17 CRP's=9

FY 18 CRP's=9

Collaborative Agreements:

FY17 Non-CRP's=30

FY 18 Non-CRP's=28

FY17 Service Agreements=196

FY18 Service Agreements=187 (year to date)

(f) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services.

Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

GVRA's VR services participate in interagency collaboration to expand services for persons with disabilities receiving SE services, including youth with the most significant disabilities. GVRA defines SE as competitive employment in an integrated setting with on-going supports for the employee as long as they are employed at that job. SE services typically include job coaching, specialized job training, natural supports, individually tailored supervision, and extended services. Extended Services is defined as those services needed to support and maintain the individual's employment. VR coordinates with certified providers to plan for those extended supports.

VR has established agreements with SE providers who agree to provide the services at the established fee rate, which includes the plan for extended services. In order to have an agreement with VR, a provider must agree to provide a minimum of two contacts per month at the worksite after the employee reaches stabilization. If off-site monitoring is deemed more appropriate, two face-to-face contacts plus one employer contact are required. As needed, VR will also provide post-employment services that are not available from the extended services; such as, job station redesign or repair and maintenance of assistive technology.

VR funds SES through incremental payments when the client reaches specific milestones in their employment path, with the final milestone being the point at which the client is stabilized on the job, and transitioned to extended services. VR program has updated their SE policies, rates, and procedures to reflect best practices, and to improve and expand access to these services statewide.

One of the guiding principles of SE services is the use of all available resources and strategies to meet the needs of clients and employers. VR negotiates agreements with providers to specify the roles of consumers, service providers, and employers, and to share service provider resources. The following is a description of formal collaborative work that the GRVA's VR services are engaging in to serve individuals with the most significant disabilities including youth, ages 14 to 24, in both school and integrated, community-based settings.

FY17=137 SE agreements (includes IPS, Customized, Traditional and Project SEARCH)

FY18=146 SE Agreements (includes all types of SE as listed above in previous line)

DBHDD: GVRA has a formal MOU with DBHDD that utilizes the SE IPS model. This MOU covers both the behavioral health and developmental disabilities divisions of DBHDD to serve those individuals using Supported and Customized Employment.

This agreement allows VR services to collaborate statewide with a network of providers including CSBs for the provision of SES. These agencies prepare VR clients for permanent jobs

through supported employment and complementary services. The CSBs provide a wide scope of outpatient, day, residential housing, and community-based services that include SE. The Memorandum of Understanding with DBHDD allows for improved coordination of efforts to serve those with the most significant disabilities.

WFD: GVRA has partnered with WFD to engage youth in customized career pathways and supported employment. This work is funded through the USDOL ETA Disability Employment Initiative Cooperative Agreements.

Project Search: GVRA also collaborates with GaDOE, Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, and contracted SE Providers to meet the employment needs of transitioning students with significant disabilities through the Project Search model. This model assists students in preparing for, engaging in, and maintaining competitive employment.

The VR program also collaborates with other private non-profit CRPs to ensure the provision and choice of SESs statewide.

(g) Coordination with Employers.

Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

The purpose of GVRA is to connect *real* people to *real* jobs that fill a *real* need for employers in their communities. Too often, job development hinges on rapid-fire determination of an individual's interests, and the divining of a few job ideas, mostly stereotypical in setting and tasks performed. Without engaging a vast array of employers that represent in-demand jobs, the typical outcome usually occurs in settings that are overly familiar but that may not fit the ideal conditions of the worker. To ensure employers and businesses are engaged, the focus of GVRA will continue to be on the work that has already occurred with the State's HDCl, as well as to expand those current efforts in a much more organized manner.

To that end, GVRA has an Employment Services Division within the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, and its primary function is to create a single focused approach and strategy to engage employers in the most meaningful way. Under the GVRA employer services division, all organizations efforts of engaging, contacting and relating to local businesses and corporate entities will be coordinated into a unified approach. The overall goals of the GVRA Employment Services Division will be:

- 1) To interface with employers to identify specific employer job and workforce needs and to provide the employers with qualified candidates to meet their needs;
- 2) To interface with any employer who is a federal contractor and/or federal subcontractor to identify specific job and workforce needs pertaining to the employer's federal mandate and seven percent workforce quota and to provide employers with qualified candidates to meet their needs and fulfill their federal workforce compliance;
- 3) To interface with any employer to create employer-based training and education opportunities for individuals with disabilities, such as specific employer job education, pre-apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and career pathway customization to increase

the qualifications of individuals with disabilities as potential job candidates for that employer; and

- 4) To interface with any employer to provide education and training to that employer regarding contemporary information about hiring individuals with disabilities, such as job accommodations, disability awareness, and federal contractor requirements to increase the employer's interest and willingness to hire individuals with disabilities.

In addition, GVRA Employment Services Division will also serve to provide education and training to VR program staff regarding the unique needs of specific employers statewide, in order to work hand-in-hand with the VR field staff to better place individuals with disabilities in jobs and careers.

(1) VR services; and

With the passage of WIOA, a greater emphasis has been placed on the State's workforce development system. GVRA has changed its organizational structure for its field staff, especially as it relates to employer engagement. The intent of this restructuring is to create a standardized approach for VR field staff to engage employers, as well as working with the VR program's provider network to create a unified approach to job development and job placement.

Partnerships: Throughout this document, partnership has been the foundation to expanding and improving service delivery statewide. GVRA will continue to collaborate with the SRC, other State agencies, community stakeholders, businesses and other unique partners to share a common message that GVRA is "*good for business*" and supports employers in meeting their workforce needs and business goals with individuals with disabilities who are qualified to perform the job.

Marketing: Prior to GVRA's existence, VR services were perceived as "invisible" to both the general public and the employer community, creating a less than positive reputation statewide. To overcome this misleading reputation, GVRA has worked diligently to increase visibility and identify new opportunities to create value within the community. This has included the development of a constituent services function, marketing and communication function, a disability liaison function, and plans to add an outreach function this year. To complement these efforts, marketing collateral has been, and is being, developed for a variety of audiences to clearly educate and provide meaningful information to both increase the number of individuals with disabilities served, as well as the competitive employment opportunities for those individuals. Some of this material will include information on Accessibility Assessments, ADA Consultations, Disability Awareness Training, Job Analysis, Job Accommodation and Modification, Assistive Work Technology, and Support Services.

Business Services Division: As mentioned above, the Business Division of GVRA was recently established to focus on aligning the workforce with private and public sector career opportunities. Since its inception, the Business Division has been evolving into the centralized point of contact for all external employer relations. This division is responsible for the following:

- i. Developing new career opportunities, business partnerships and/or contracts. This includes expanding and developing relationships with corporations that turn into local hiring of persons with disabilities.

- ii. Expanding relationships with current employers who look to VR first to fill their workforce needs and assessing what the drivers are for them to hire individuals with disabilities. This division promotes current employer’s use of the Talent Acquisition Portal for job postings. Additionally, this division will be looking to these employers to engage with potential businesses to answer their questions and speak to their experiences when working with VR services.

Current Employer Partnerships by Industry Segment	
Retail/Commercial	Belk, Regions, JHOSS
Manufacturing/Logistics	JB Hunt, G&K Services, Yamaha Motor Manufacturing, Hyundai PowerTech, UPS, Mando, CSX, International Paper
Federal/Military	Delta, Manpower, Colsa Corp
Hospitality	Coca-Cola, Kroger
Hospital/Medical	Grady, Tanner Health Systems
Communication/Technology	SunTrust, Equifax, Rollins, Technicians USA

- iii. Understanding the diversity within GVRA’s total Talent Pool including placement profiles and marketing this pool to established partnerships statewide.
- iv. Working with the new marketing and outreach position to produce collateral tools that focus on awareness and inclusion.
- v. Providing consultation, technical assistance and support to employers on workplace accommodation and assistive technology.
- vi. Creating a tracking database of new and existing business opportunities. The Employer Database is being developed to integrate with GVRA’s current case management system in order to facilitate better record keeping of current and new relationships with businesses. VR will continue to work with the Georgia Industries for the Blind’s Call Center who contacts all Georgia employers quarterly to find out if they have open positions and will make this available in the database to be used by the Business Relations Specialists.
- vii. Developing new business relationships with key community advocates and State agencies.
- viii. Promoting and scheduling staff training and development.
- ix. Increasing opportunities for federal contractors/employers to hire persons with disabilities by collaborating with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs and the Metro Atlanta Industry Liaison Group in hosting Disability Vendor Fairs.

The Greater Atlanta Business Leadership Network: The goals are to: (1) Engage the business community by specifically targeting industry segments and allowing them to provide GVRA with their industry perspectives including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and; (2) Provide a forum for GVRA to clarify and explain the purpose and aims of the agency

(2) Transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

GVRA serves individuals of all ages and all disabilities. GVRA recognizes the importance of early identification of youth and students with disabilities. As such, GVRA will intensify its focus on transition services at the agency level and intends to elevate the quality and capacity of transition services statewide. GVRA is implementing several strategies to better address the needs of individuals in transition, including at a minimum:

- i. Implementing the *Georgia Pathways to Work* grant. As described in Section (d) Coordination with Education Officials, GVRA was awarded a grant through the Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration. The *Georgia Pathways to Work* will significantly change the way GVRA does business statewide in transitioning students and youth with disabilities in partnership with GaDOE, WFD, and local businesses and employers. The focus of this proposed model will be to increase access for students with disabilities to the existing high school career pathways, as well as customizing those existing career pathways for students with disabilities, and creating community-based alternative career pathways for those youth who are not in school.
- ii. Developing more mentorship opportunities that place students in contact with employers to facilitate earlier relationships with employers who are willing to hire the students after graduation.
- iii. Partnering with WIOA programs to develop employer relationships and work sites both during the summer and during the school year.
- iv. Facilitating better employer engagement in transition for Career Days and employer presentations to students.
- v. Establish a referral process with the Office of Adult Education to provide vocational rehabilitation assessment and pre-employment services to adult education students as needed.

In addition, within its overall approach to transition services, GVRA will focus specifically on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), as required by W.I.O.A.

The core component of GVRA's transition services will be Pre-Employment Transition Services as required by W.I.O.A. Specifically, GVRA is providing the following Pre-ETS required activities:

- Job exploration counseling;
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after-school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional high school setting, all of which will be provided in an integrated environment to the extent possible;
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher learning (primarily the University System of Georgia or the Technical College System of Georgia);

- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- Instruction in self-advocacy, which will include peer mentoring.

In addition to the above 5 required activities, GVRA will also offer and provide as needed the following additional 9 Pre-ETS authorized activities for every high school student served, based upon the needs and potential benefit to each student:

- Increase the likelihood of independent living, specifically through the 9 Centers for Independent Living throughout the state of Georgia, as well as other independent living activities, and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces;
- Increase the strategies to assist individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment;
- Providing instruction to VR counselors and VR professional staff, school transition personnel, and other individuals supporting students with disabilities, especially including pro-active involvement of parents and families through Parent2Parent of Georgia and the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership and within the individual school districts;
- Disseminating information about innovative, effective and efficient approaches to improve employment, postsecondary and independent living outcomes for high school students to all individuals involved and who may contribute to the overall success of the Pre-ETS services;
- Coordinating transition services with the local school districts under I.D.E.A.;
- Applying evidence-based findings to review and improve policy, procedure and practice, and the training of staff and other personnel in order to improve the overall success of the Pre-ETS services;
- Developing and implementing a model transition demonstration project, and GVRA plans to use the current federal Georgia Career Pathways grant as an instrumental pilot to test and measure and duplicate those practices in collaboration with the local school districts that tend to be most effective in producing desired transition outcomes;
- Continuing to expand and establish multistate, regional and/or statewide partnership involving key stakeholders, agencies, organizations and businesses to improve the overall success of the Pre-ETS services; and
- Disseminating information and successful strategies that improve the overall success of the Pre-ETS services, especially as it relates to individuals of the traditionally underserved or unserved populations within Georgia.

GVRA clearly recognizes the importance of transition services, specifically the PETS services targeted to high school students across the state of Georgia; and intends to both increase our focus and intensity on these services, as well as developing a comprehensive robust array of services delivered by VR and its provider network.

(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:

GVRA has established collaborative relationships with multiple State agencies in order to more efficiently and effectively assist individuals with disabilities in achieving employment in an integrated setting. In some cases, these collaborative relationships have been developed to enhance the working relationship between the VR program and other State agencies. Several of these relationships have been formalized through Interagency Cooperative Agreements that were described earlier in Sections (e) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations and (f) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of SES. GVRA has identified other State agencies in which formal agreements need to be developed to support collaboration and seamless service delivery statewide.

(1) the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

GVRA has had preliminary discussions with DCH, which is the State agency that is responsible for administering the State Medicaid plan. GVRA continues to work towards developing and executing a formal Memorandum of Understanding between GVRA and DCH as it relates to title XIX of the Social Security Act. There has not been a determination as to the timeline in which this formal agreement will be put in place.

(2) the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

GVRA executed a formal Memorandum of Understanding with DBHDD in 2015, the State agency responsible for providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities. The current MOU expands the capacity of the VR program to serve those individuals who have the most significant disabilities in both customized and SES. A description of this partnership is in Section (f) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of SES.

(3) the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

GVRA executed a formal Memorandum of Understanding with DBHDD in 2015, the State agency responsible for providing services to individuals with a mental illness. The current MOU expands the capacity of the VR program to serve those individuals who have a severe and persistent mental illness in supported employment, specifically following the IPS model of SE. A description of this partnership is in Section (f) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of SES.

(i) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development.

Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

The main goal of GVRA's VR services is to have a comprehensive system of personnel development. This is realized through the following strategies:

- i. Maintaining an established standard that all Georgia VR Counselors are certified by the CRCC or supervised by individuals who have obtained this credential.
- ii. Monitoring and providing support for counseling series positions that comply with and transition into the CRC, including preparation support to personnel who are taking the CRC exam, support to those who are engaging in continuing education, and CRC reimbursement.
- iii. Utilizing the counseling series to provide an avenue for development of non-counseling staff members to move into counseling positions.
- iv. Developing, improving and implementing foundational courses for direct services delivery positions to ensure services to people with significant disabilities are provided by qualified personnel. This also includes expanding the development and implementation of intermediate level courses for direct services delivery positions.
- v. Continuing to provide in-service training opportunities for all VR staff members that ensures services are provided by qualified personnel. This includes linking training to staff members' competencies and business outcomes.

(1) Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

- (i) *(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:*
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and
- (iv) 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.

VR collects personnel data regarding the number of positions and vacancies in each job category, the number of incumbents, years of service, credentials and certifications, and education. In addition to this data, VR collects data on staff developmental performance, career

plans and goals. Finally, information is kept on staff members' eligibility for retirement during the next five years.

The Training Coordinator and Training Specialist Team, in cooperation with VR leadership, employs the principles of Human Performance Improvement to expand core capacity and capabilities. Areas of specific responsibilities for this team are: (1) workforce performance evaluation; (2) training needs assessment; (3) performance consulting; (4) training design and development; and, (5) synthesis of post training data collected. From concept to incorporation the Training Specialist Team determines appropriate interventions to expand core capacity and capability linked to business outcomes.

The following table depicts the (i) the number of qualified personnel for the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category; (ii) the number of current vacancies broken down by personnel category; and, (iii) the projections for the number of personnel that will be needed based on the numbers served, staff who are expected to retire or leave the field and other relevant factors.

	Job Title	(i) Current Positions	(ii) Current Vacancies	(iii) Projected Vacancies Over the Next 5yrs
1	Field Service Director	4	0	2
2	Rehabilitation Unit Manager	40	8	7
3	Certified Rehabilitation Counselor	212	58	26
4	Rehabilitation Counselor Non-CRC	33	3	0
5	Rehabilitation Case Work Associate	8	4	0
6	Business Relations Specialist	41	14	3
7	Business Relations Supervisors	6	0	1
8	Counselor Assistant	120	30	16
9	Office Assistant	42	4	7
10	Field Service Assistant	6	0	1
11	AWT Services Director	1	0	0
12	AWT Engineer	4	2	0
13	AWT Occupational Therapist	4	2	0
14	AWT Technologist	11	3	1
15	AWT Technician	2	0	1
17	Veterans Support Team	3	0	3
	Total	537	128	69

The projected requirements to meet the staffing needs for the next five years includes 100 additional Counselors, 50 Counselor Assistants and ten Rehabilitation Unit Managers. The entire staff works cohesively to provide the services to GVRA clients. In the table below, there is

a historical look of those served over the past three fiscal years as well as the projected numbers that will be served through FY2020.

VR Employment Goals				
FY	Total Served	Applications	Plans	Successful Closures
2012	41,551	15,895	8,959	5,028
2013	36,343	10,767	2,999	4,177
2014	26,570	7,383	4,197	1,694
2015	30,356	10,824	6,205	2,666
2016	34,000	15,000	7,500	4,644
2017	39,000	17,500	8,750	5,500
2018	42,000	20,000	10,000	6,250
2019	46,000	22,500	11,250	7,000
2020	50,000	25,000	12,500	8,000

Based on the trend analysis and the steady growth that is projected, in FY2020 GVRA will be serving 16% more clients than this year. A review of these projections has led to and justifies the plan for the additional 100 staff listed above.

(B) Personnel Development.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

- (i) a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;
- (ii) the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- (iii) the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

GVRA is working with Fort Valley State University, Georgia State University and Thomas University to increase the number of individuals completing these graduate programs as well as encouraging existing staff to further their education. The following table (i) lists the institutions of higher education that are preparing VR professionals; (ii) number of students enrolled at each institution; and (iii) number of students who graduated. Please note that the table indicates the number of students who graduated and are eligible for certification or license. Currently, there is no process in place to follow up with the students to determine if they received certification or licensure post-graduation.

	(i) Institutions	(ii) Students Enrolled	Employees Sponsored by Agency and/or RSA	Graduates Sponsored by Agency and/or RSA	(iii) Graduates from the Previous Year
1	Fort Valley State University	119	5	0	0
2	Georgia State University	35	0	6	16
3	Thomas University	159	3	9	32

Note: Fort Valley State University = Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling and Casework; Georgia State University = Masters of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling; and Thomas University = Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling

(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 VRP continues to address the need to recruit and retain qualified staff, including those with minority backgrounds and individuals with disabilities. It is the policy of the agency to give priority to applicants who meet the qualifications for CRC. However, in order to address the ongoing capacity needs the VR program, especially in areas of the State that do not have individuals who meet the qualifications, the agency allows for individuals to be hired into the counseling series at both the bachelor and Master’s degree level, with supervision provided from a CRC team lead. This does not mean that GVRA has changed its minimum requirements. To ensure that services meet or exceed the standard of excellence that has been developed, VR continues to invest in the current personnel by providing internal training opportunities sponsored by the VR program. Additionally, VR has developed a reimbursement policy for both CRC initial testing and recertification. The VR program is also currently drafting policies for staff reimbursement for continuing education credits for staff to engage in on-going learning.

To reduce turnover and retain qualified staff, the agency has implemented a formal reward system to provide a method of rewarding employees based on their years of experience in their current role. This has included the development and implementation of a “pay matrix,” which creates salary levels based on both education and years of experience, and is more comparable to the private marketplace. Likewise, GVRA implemented an annual “employee survey” to better understand the issues impacting retention from the staff’s perspective, as well as a mandatory supervisor training to foster better communication and improved morale among all staff.

VR works closely with Rehabilitation Counseling graduate programs at Fort Valley State University, Georgia State University and Thomas University by offering opportunities for students seeking internships. Currently, the VR program has budgeted \$150,000 for students to experience paid internships. With this budget amount the VR program can sponsor up to 50

students per year. Additionally, VR staff actively participate in university career development activities which include the participation and hosting of Career Fairs. The VR program is also active on several advisory boards for the above institutions and willingly provides data for ongoing research activities regarding Vocational Rehabilitation.

(3) Personnel Standards.

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including

(A) standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

(B) the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

GVRA has developed hiring and retention competencies necessary to improve individual performance and agency outcomes. Georgia State law does not require certification or licensure for rehabilitation professionals or paraprofessionals; therefore, GVRA established the CSPD standard for the VR Counselor position. This is the CRC credential awarded by the CRCC and it follows national standards.

The CRC is the VR staff person with the authority to determine eligibility and priority category, develop Work Plans (IPE) including all amendments and all reviews, authorize funds, and close cases. One hundred percent (100%) of Georgia's CRCs meet the CSPD standard and are eligible to independently perform core functions. The remaining counselors have obtained either a bachelors or master's degree, work under the supervision of a CRC, and are encouraged to complete the education and certification process to become a CRC.

(4) Staff Development.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101 (a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

(A) a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

GVRA has developed a training plan which provides opportunities for all VR staff and appropriate VR support staff to enhance their skills for the provision of high quality services. This plan has been designed to meet the personal and career development needs of VR personnel. GVRA's comprehensive training plan includes specific training on assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and assistive technology. As referenced in the table above, GVRA employs 22 dedicated Assistive Work Technology and 55 Job Development and

Placement staff. These members provide subject matter expertise to both VR staff, community partners, state agencies, and consumers.

New Hire Orientation: New hire orientation at the Agency level provides basic training that includes the following: (1) A robust history of the agency and its mandate for providing services that are best practice and meet performance outcomes set forth by the State and funding entities; (2) A review of the vocational rehabilitation program and its core functions; (3) An introduction to how systems are integrated and policies guide seamless delivery of services agency-wide; and (4) Steps to building effective relationships and having healthy interactions with individuals with disabilities.

New VR Counselor On-Boarding. New VR Counselor On-Boarding provides task-specific training through modules that marry course instruction with hands-on training in overall case management. Module topics include: Roles of the Counselor, Service Delivery, Performance Indicators and Outcomes, Review of Georgia VR Terminology and Case Studies, and Computerized Case Management System.

Annual On-going Staff Development Training Sessions: GVRA provides annual training opportunities to staff in an effort to grow the team's knowledge base in providing services to individuals and to ensure that staff is prepared when changes occur to policies and practice standards. The following training sessions have been developed based on the feedback from personnel on what is pertinent to achieving high standards in service delivery:

(1) Disability-Specific Topics (including Positive Behavioral Supports training for counselors who have clients with Most Significant Disabilities, Deaf Culture Literacy, and Individualized Placement and Support Training for Counselors Handling Clients with Severe & Persistent Mental Illness. (2) Customized Employment Training. (3) Case Management. (4) Eligibility for Services. (5) IPE Development. (6) Varying Types of Caseloads (including Supported Employment and Transition). (7) Values-based Training for Persons Working with Individuals with Disabilities. (8) Collaborative Training with School Personnel on Creative Individual Assessments. (9) Transition Resource Planning. (10) Road Map for Services Available to Georgians. (11) Job Development. (12) Employment Engagement Training (developing a work plan and work goal). (13) Compliance Training (including Sexual Harassment and Anti-Discrimination).

Leadership Academy: GVRA developed the Leadership Academy to educate, develop and empower current and future leaders of the agency. The program follows best practice in executing the training:

- Communication Skills (including Listening Skills and Active Listening to Employees on Your Team)
- Conflict Resolution and Negotiation Skills
- Coaching and Mentoring Skills (including Positive Discipline and Open Coaching)
- Transitioning into a Management and Supervisory Role
- Situational Management
- Change Management and Problem Solving Decision Making Skills
- Team Building (including Achieving Buy-in and Building Morale)

(B) procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

VR continues to identify current information from research, rehabilitation trends and professional resources. This information is provided to agency staff through a variety of methods, including training at the State, quadrant and local level. Most recently this training has been focused on Customized Employment.

(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.

GVRA recognizes the need for counselors who are fluent in non-English languages when English is not the first language of the client. Although there is not personnel that is representative of all the languages spoken by individuals served, GVRA does have an internal directory of multi-lingual employees which includes speakers of more than a dozen languages. This list also includes staff members who are fluent in using ASL. To meet the demands across the state, the agency has a statewide contract with a translation service that allows personnel to communicate with any potential client regardless of their proficiency in the English language. This contract also allows for translation of documents such as manuals, policies, and procedures, where applicable. Within the next two years, all informational materials produced by the agency will be available in Spanish and will be further translated where needed.

(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.

In implementing WIOA and IDEA, the designated State unit collaborates with the State Education Agency to provide reciprocal training for personnel serving youth and students with disabilities on best practices. Training activities includes, but are not limited to:

- i. A statewide annual conference co-sponsored to provide personnel with information about the applicable laws;
- ii. Co-created Frequently Asked Questions disseminated to personnel bi-monthly; and
- iii. Designated State unit personnel participation in Local Education Agency meetings of Special Education Directors.

(j) Statewide Assessment

(1) Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:

In collaboration with SRC, GVRA conducts an on-going Statewide Needs Assessment to determine the VR service needs of individuals with disabilities across Georgia. Since its inception, GVRA and SRC have executed the following activities to gather the data from across the State and ensure that it is representative of a variety of sources and stakeholders.

- i. GVRA conducted statewide listening sessions in multiple locations across the State allowing key stakeholders to provide feedback about the needs that are unique to their communities.
- ii. In follow-up to these listening sessions and to provide a forum to hear directly from individuals with disabilities, SRC conducted public hearings.
- iii. SRC also encourages individuals to submit written statements and email comments, and to participate in internet surveys.
- iv. As described in more detail in Section (a) Input of State Rehabilitation Council, there is a formal opportunity for SRC to provide input as well as individuals to make public comments at every GVRA board meeting.
- v. GVRA is represented at the following meetings: Georgia statewide Coalition of the Blind, CRPs, Georgia Association of Training and Employment Supports, Statewide Independent Living Council, the Georgia Independent Living Network, and the Georgia Rehabilitation Association.
- vi. GVRA has established two major agency functions to receive on-going input from persons served: 1) Fully-staffed Constituent Services Department; and 2) a Disability Liaison.

(A) With the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

Based on the feedback that GVRA has received, there were some common statewide needs identified from individuals who are in need for SES.

Order of Selection: Stakeholders and individuals with disabilities have expressed concern that the VR services truly focus only on those individuals with the most significant disabilities and that the priority category definitions need to be amended. To address this concern, GVRA has reconsidered the priority category definitions within the State's Order of Selection which will be discussed in detail under Section (m) Order of Selection (this has included reducing the number of categories used from seven (7) to three (3)).

Access to Supported Employment: There are concerns that there is both a paucity of Supported Employment Providers, and that from the supported employment providers' perspective, SES are cost-prohibitive. Concerns regarding access to Supported Employment have highlighted the following needs for services expansion: (1) Increase in SES, especially for those individuals with significant disabilities. Many of these individuals have limited or no access to SES. (2) Increase

in both services and actual Customized Employment opportunities. (3) Increase in the availability in specific skills training that is actually aligned with real jobs within the state and less on generic training.

Non-Disability Specific Barriers: There is on-going feedback for assistance to address some of the non-disability specific barriers to employment such as transportation, disincentives through entitlement benefits, and lack of family support for employment.

(B) who are minorities;

Based on the feedback that GVRA has received, there were some common statewide needs identified for minorities with limited English proficiency or who have communication impediments, including those who use ASL. These concerns include: (1) Improve overall communication and cultural sensitivity for minorities. (2) Increase access to appropriate evaluation testing tools that document disabilities and associated functional limitations as well as recommendations to overcome limitations in regards to communication. (3) Increase number of providers who can fairly administer evaluations for clients with limited English proficiency (including ASL).

(C) who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

Based on the feedback that GVRA has received, there were some common statewide needs identified for individuals who traditionally have been unserved or underserved by VR services.

Individual being served in Day Programs: There is an overall need to offer VR services to those individuals who are currently being served within day programs, in particular, to individuals with severe and persistent mental illnesses and individuals with significant development disabilities.

Specialized Staff Training and Services: There is a need to enhance training and availability of services specific to individuals with Autism, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Chronic Mental Illness.

Veterans: As well as the need to increase specialized staff training and services for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury, there needs to be a greater emphasis on serving veterans with disabilities. Veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been identified as the most in need, but feedback in providing access to services for the statewide population of veterans who remain unemployed and homeless.

Social Security Disability Recipients: Through the variety of sources used for continuous feedback, it has been identified that more information and planning assistance is needed for Social Security Disability recipients and their families on the positive impact of working.

(D) who have been served through other components of the Statewide workforce development system;

Based on the feedback that GVRA has received, there were some common statewide needs identified for individuals who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system that center around improved communication and collaboration. This includes the following:

- i. Improve communication between GVRA and WFD about opportunities provided by Local Workforce Development Boards and other workforce system partners.
- ii. Improve communication between GVRA and other State agencies that serve a common population and/or specialty populations, including USG, TCSG, and the Georgia Council on Development Disabilities.
- iii. Enhance collaborative relationship between GVRA and WFD regarding employment potential and abilities of individuals with disabilities. This also includes identifying opportunities through grants and blended funding.
- iv. GVRA will also explore feasibility of shared grant-funding and/or blended funding opportunities.

Additional concerns included:

- i. Lack of information about available VR program services and the process of application;
- ii. Concerns with identifying themselves as having a disability and the process of eligibility; and,
- iii. Concern with other non-VR program related barriers, such as transportation and paucity of services in certain parts of the State.

[\(E\) who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.](#)

Based on the feedback that GVRA has received, there were some common statewide needs identified for youth and students with disabilities. These include: (1) Increase and enhance transition services overall, especially to younger students, ages 14-16. (2) Improve the quality of GVRA's transitional staff who are provided to the local school districts to ensure greater consistency of services. (3) Expand the array of transition services made available to schools. (4) Develop outreach efforts that engage youth with disabilities who have dropped out of school. (5) Improve alignment of GVRA's transition services with the needs of the local school districts. (6) Improve alignment of the VR program's training programs with the GaDOE's occupational clusters and career pathways.

[\(2\) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and](#)

GVRA has engaged in a dialogue with CRPs statewide in order to work more effectively together and better serve Georgians with disabilities. The focus of these discussions has been to move towards shared performance outcomes and serving individuals together. Based on these discussions and other input received, the following have been identified as the needs for improving CRPs: (1) Develop more community-based, integrated training opportunities. (2) Develop more services in rural areas of the State. (3) Improve communication with all parties through joint meetings with clients, VR field counselors and CRP staff (include discussion on client's progress and plan for achieving successful outcomes). (4) Revisit the fee structure for CRPs and/or look at alternative funding strategies, such as performance-based fees. (5) Update and modernize the specific skills and/or customized training programs to be more aligned with the actual job needs in the local community. (6) Offer unique services to special populations, such as individuals on the Autism Spectrum.

(3) Assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities

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.

GVRA has received a great deal of information and communication regarding the need to focus a majority of its efforts on transition services including coordinating VR service delivery with those services provided under the IDEA. The following have been identified as the needs for improving focus and coordinating transition services: (1) Offer access to VR services in students who are in middle school as young as age 14. (2) Provide a comprehensive array of services that can be customized to both the individual and the school. (3) Create consistency among the staff of GVRA who work with the schools. (4) Improve communication between GVRA and the school.

To specifically address the concerns identified above, GVRA plans to do the following:

- Strengthen its overall Outreach and Intake process to ensure that there is both a consistent and standardized qualitative method to identifying, recruiting and initiating students and youth with disabilities into the VR program; as well as creating a statewide approach to how the VR program interacts with every single local school district. GVRA's approach will encompass a "center-led" outreach and intake process that will utilize well-trained VR professional staff, be intentionally client-driven, and with an efficient cycle time. The intent is to design a service delivery process for the VR Program that is efficient and allows for an increased capacity to handle the expected increase volume of new VR applicants.
- In addition to the above, GVRA intends to use whatever best-practice assessment tools available to ensure that quality of the initial intake and assessment is both high quality, employment-directed and tailored to each individual VR applicant. As regards students and youth with disabilities, this assessment will also include an assessment of any unique or specific needs for each individual as may be relevant to any school-related concern, any IDEA-related concern, or the like. For students and youth with disabilities, it will also involve discussion and collaboration with the specific school personnel.
- Finally, as may be required, GVRA will work with each local school district to customize its assessment approach to be consistent with the needs of the local school district, without compromising the quality and nature of the individual's assessment. An example of this currently exists with the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, which serves deaf and hard of hearing students from 30 Georgia counties. Due to the nature of both the students' disability and the school's geographic coverage.

The reason that GVRA has chosen to discontinue the TPCA requirement for local funding with local school districts effective July 1, 2016 is to be in line with the federal guidelines on how to serve all students with disabilities. In certain cases in the past, the local school district funds required as part of the TPCA has led to a misunderstanding, lack of clarity and a barrier to collaboration between the VR Program and certain local school districts. It is GVRA's hope that by eliminating the local funding requirement, it will be an opportunity for GVRA to build better and more effective collaborative relationships with the local school districts statewide.

(k) Annual Estimates.

(1) The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services.

In 2012, the overall percentage (prevalence rate) of individuals with a disability in the State of Georgia was 12.0%, meaning that 1,172,700 of the 9,772,000 of citizens reported one or more disabilities. In addition, the State has an overall percentage (prevalence rate) of people with a disability, ages 16 to 20, of 5.7 percent. In other words, 40,300 of the 706,200 individuals, ages 16 to 20, in Georgia reported one or more disabilities. According to the 2014 ACS, the estimate for Georgia's population, ages 18 to 64, is 6,088,938. Of those who are 18 to 64, 10.9% or 633,904 have a disability. Although there are 633,904 individuals in Georgia who report having a disability, GVRA will not make an eligibility determination on this entire population. GVRA will only make an eligibility determination on those who apply for services.

(2) The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

(A) The VR Program;

GVRA anticipates a growth in those who are eligible and who will be served through VR services. This growth comes after a significant decrease that was seen through FY14. The following table provides a historical look of those served over the past three fiscal years as well as the projected numbers through FY20.

VR Employment Goals				
SFY	Total Served	Applications	Plans	Successful Closures
2012	41,551	15,895	8,959	5,028
2013	36,343	10,767	2,999	4,177
2014	26,570	7,383	4,197	1,694
2015	30,356	10,824	6,205	2,666
2016	35,858	13,616	8,599	4,052
2017	36,819	14,221	9,943	4,555
2018	41,319	14,932	10,040	4,000
2019	43,384	15,678	10,542	4,200
2020	45,553	16,462	11,069	4,410

Based on the trend analysis and the steady growth that is projected, in 2020 VR services will be serving 25% more clients than this year. In addition, as shown in the estimates above, GVRA intends to increase the development of Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) from 50% to 66% of the individuals who apply for VR services in the given year. For example, in FY2020, GVRA estimates that the organization will develop IPEs for 11,069 of the 16,462 individuals who apply for VR services.

(B) The Supported Employment Program; and

GVRA, through its MOU with the Georgia DBHDD, is planning to serve a minimum of 720 individuals with Serious and Persistent Mental Illness, and a minimum of 130 individuals who meet the criteria for the most significant disability in its Supported Employment Program.

(C) each priority category, if under an order of selection.

GVRA intends that all individuals served in SE will be in the highest priority categories within the current and/or proposed Order of Selection.

The following table presents the number of individuals that will be eligible to receive services under each priority category when the new Order of Selection is in place. A detailed description of the proposed Order of Selection can be found in Section (m).

Clients Projected to be Served in our OOS			
SFY	(1) (permanent) Individual with a Most Significant Disability	(2) (permanent) Individual with a Significant Disability or recipient of SSI/ SSDI	(3) (permanent) Individual with a Disability
2017	11,172	4,972	2,350
2018	11,730	3,265	1,584
2019	12,317	3,428	1,663
2020	12,933	3,599	1,746

(3) The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

VR services do not have a waitlist.

(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.

The following table projects the number of individuals to be served under the Order of Selection and the Cost of Services.

Priority Category	Number of Individuals to be Served	Cost of Services	
		26	28
1	11,172	\$4,348	\$4,002
2	4,972	\$8,232	\$688
3	2,350	\$6,669	\$3,297

Priority Category	Number of Individuals to be Served	Cost of Services	
		26	28
1	9,180	\$4,348	\$4,002
2	3,633	\$8,232	\$688
3	1,087	\$6,669	\$3,297

Note: 26 = Successful Employment Outcome and 28= Unsuccessful Employment Outcome

(l) State Goals and Priorities. The designated state unit must use:

GVRA’s State goals and priorities are based on a combination of best practices, findings, input, performance indicators, and other pertinent information relevant to the needs of Georgians with disabilities. These State goals and priorities are the result of the first five years of operation of this agency as a separate entity and reflect the needs that were identified during that time. Being developmental in nature, they have evolved over time and as more information is obtained each will be refined as real experience in the execution of each goal presents new opportunities to improve upon that goal.

(1) Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

GVRA has developed a great working, collaborative relationship and partnership with the SRC which has allowed for extensive dialogue, discussion, and planning between the two entities. The following State goals and priorities have been jointly developed and are agreed upon by both GVRA and SRC. If a goal needs to be revised based on new information, the SRC will be fully engaged in the process.

(2) Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

GVRA has identified the following goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and SE Programs.

Goals:

1. Increase and improve competitive employment outcomes and career opportunities for all individuals with disabilities.
2. Increase and improve competitive employment outcomes and career opportunities for youth and students with disabilities.
3. Increase and improve competitive employment outcomes and career opportunities for unserved and underserved populations, to include veterans and individuals with sensory disabilities, mental illness, developmental disabilities or autism.

Priorities:

In order to effectively increase and improve competitive employment outcomes and career opportunities for all individuals with disabilities, GVRA has identified the following priorities (under Goal 1):

- i. Integrate all VR services (VR program, Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute vocational services, and Cave Spring Rehabilitation Center vocational services, and the Business

Enterprise Program) to create an efficient and aligned VR infrastructure to oversee, coordinate and implement new and improved services.

- ii. Partner with the VR provider network to establish shared performance indicators and move from a fee-for-service model to a performance-based pay model.
- iii. Develop a Employment Services division within VR to focus on formal employer engagement that will support all VR services and create more employment and career opportunities within the local employer community; having a particular focus on two major State initiatives: 1) Go Build Georgia and 2) High Demand Career Initiative.
- iv. Develop collaborative relationships with other State agencies and organizations that share a similar mission and/or serve a common population; the intent of these relationships will be to create a seamless array of services that are complimentary and aligned in purpose.
- v. Implement an internal training plan and schedule to address transformational leadership for all supervisors within the agency; and also extensive professional staff development that focuses on creative ways to improve and increase services for individuals with disabilities.

In order to effectively increase and improve the competitive employment outcomes and career opportunities for youth and students with disabilities, GVRA has identified the following priorities (under Goal 2):

- i. Redirect VR resources (staff, equipment, services, etc.) to focus primarily on youth and students with disabilities based on the principle that serving this population will have a greater impact on the entire population of individuals with disabilities in the long-term, and thus should be a major focus of GVRA.
- ii. Develop, implement and offer a robust and comprehensive array of transition services to all school districts within the state that is a combination of traditional VR services, provider services, and unique and specialty services that can be customized to a certain degree based on individual school district needs. This will also include a new array of services available to youth as young as 14 years of age.
- iii. Develop and implement a career pathway model of services for both in-school students and out-of-school youth that will include Vocational Rehabilitation services that are aligned with the current GaDOE's Occupational Clusters and curriculum-based career pathways; as well as alternative integrated community-based career pathways for those youth who are not in school.
- iv. Partner with GaDOE, TCSG and USG to develop collaborative arrangements that improve the transition from high school to post-secondary education for students with disabilities.
- v. Recruit and train specialty staff, with expertise in transition and career pathways, to better facilitate service enhancements for youth and students with disabilities.

- vi. Partner with Certified Transition Programs also known as Inclusive Post-Secondary Education programs (IPSE) to increase client's participation in obtaining measurable skill gains and industry recognized certifications. Use the agency's Employment Services Unit to develop formal agreements with local employers and provide a variety of youth and student-directed employer supports and services, such as, career exploration, pre-apprenticeships, on-the-job training, job analysis, career pathway training curriculum development, and employment opportunities.

In order to effectively increase and improve the competitive employment outcomes and career opportunities for unserved and underserved populations, to include veterans and individuals with sensory disabilities, mental illness, developmental disabilities or autism, GVRA has identified the following priorities (under Goal 3):

- i. Recruit and train specialty staff, with expertise in the unique needs and strengths for the unserved and underserved populations, to become the agency's subject-matter experts who will guide the services delivery to these individuals.
- ii. Expand the partnership with GDBHDD specifically to offer and provide complimentary Supported Employment Services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illnesses and individuals with significant developmental disabilities.
- iii. Partner with other key organizations who work with the unserved and underserved populations to both enhance service design and delivery, as well as provide outreach to those individuals who may benefit from such services.
- iv. Use the agency's Employment Services Unit to develop formal agreements with local employers and provide a variety of employer supports and services; such as career exploration, pre-apprenticeships, on-the-job training, job analysis, career pathway training curriculum development, and employment opportunities specifically for the unserved and underserved population.

(3) Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

(A) the most recent comprehensive Statewide assessment, including any updates;

GVRA goals and priorities identified above are based on the information provided through on-going comprehensive statewide assessments, including information from the public-at-large, consumers and their families, the SRC, disability advocacy groups, other State agencies, other disability organizations, local school districts, community providers and employers. A description of the Statewide Assessment and the needs and concerns that were identified can be found under Section (j).

(B) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA;

GVRA goals and priorities identified above are based on section 116 of WIOA, in that the six primary performance indicators for the core programs were incorporated throughout.

(C) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

GVRA goals and priorities identified above have been discussed with the State Rehabilitation Council, as well as the inclusion of recommendations from the monitoring activities identified in section 107.

(m) Order of Selection.

(1) Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection

(A) The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.

When applying the OOS and assigning the individual to a priority category, the VR counselor must determine the individual eligible for VR services.

GVRA has revised its OOS based on the feedback described in Section (j(A)) Statewide Assessment and in light of the draft WIOA regulations, condensing the number of categories from seven (7) to Three (3).

The goals of the proposed Order of Selection are as follows:

- Clearly identify and distinguish those individuals classified as the “Most Significantly Disabled”, “Significantly Disabled” and “Individuals with a disability” in accordance with the Federal Regulations.
- Streamline the assignment process.
- Reduce the timeframe of “extended period of time” from six months to three months to allow for a broader capturing of short-term services that have a positive impact on successful employment outcomes.

The following outlines the OOS, Priority Category Description.

Order of Selection: Priority Category Description

- I. Priority Category 1, Individuals with a Most Significant Disability: An eligible client shall be classified in this category if he/she has been determined by GVRA to be an individual who:
 - Limitations in 3 or more Functional Capacities, and
 - Requires multiple VR services over an extended period of time

- II. Priority Category 2, Individual with a Significant Disability: An eligible client shall be classified in this category if he/she has been determined by GVRA to be an individual who:
 - A recipient of SSI or SSDI or, an eligible individual who has:
 - Limitations in 1 or more Functional Capacities, and
 - Requires multiple VR services over an extended period of time

III. Priority Category 3, Individual with a Disability: An eligible client shall be classified in this category if he/she has been determined by GVRA to be an individual who:

- An eligible individual who is determined to not have a Significant or Most Significant Disability

The following table captures the capacities, number of services and extended periods of time for GVRA's Order of Selection.

Order of Selection			
Priority Category	# Capacities	# Services	Extended Period of Time
(1) Individual with a Most Significant Disability (<i>permanent</i>)	3	Multiple	Over Extended Period of Time
(2) Individual with a Significant Disability or recipient of SSI/SSDI (<i>permanent</i>)	1	Multiple	Over Extended Period of Time
(3) Individual with a Disability (<i>permanent</i>)	May Have None	Multiple	Over Time

(B) The justification for the order.

It is the intent of GVRA's VR services to serve any and all persons in the State who are eligible for VR services. However, in the event of reduced funding, GVRA has chosen to establish an OOS to protect service delivery for those with the most significant disabilities.

Continuity of Service Provision when an Order of Selection is in Effect

When an individual is determined eligible for VR services and assigned to a priority category that is closed for services, they shall be placed on a waiting list to be served in the chronological order in which they were determined eligible. Individuals who are currently participating in an active IPE prior to the closing of the priority category for which they are assigned, shall continue to receive services. As closed priority categories are re-opened, individuals will be moved off of the waiting list in a chronological order with those with the most significant disability (Priority Category 1 and 2) being served first.

GVRA shall administer and conduct its vocational rehabilitation program activities without regard to age, gender, race, color, creed or national origin. No qualified individual with disabilities shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under the VRP because the program's or a provider's facilities are inaccessible or unusable.

Information and Referral Services

Information and referral services shall be provided to applicants, potential applicants and eligible clients who do not qualify for VR services due to the program's Order of Selection and to clients who have been determined to be ineligible for VR services due to inability to benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome. Referral to other federal and State programs,

including other statewide workforce investment system programs, shall be provided in order to best meet the individual’s needs.

(C) The service and outcome goals.

(D) The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.

The chart below displays services and outcome goals and the timeframe within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category (in number of months).

Priority Category	Number of Individuals to be Served	Outcome Goals	Outcome Goals	Time within which Goals are to Be Achieved		Cost of services	
		26s	28s	26	28	26	28
A	9180	1547	942	23	38	\$4,348	\$4,002
B	3633	559	263	37	34	\$8,232	\$688
C	1087	221	88	29	39	\$6,669	\$3,297

(E) How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

Individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services based on the following definition. Persons with the most significant disability are individuals who have limitations in 3 or more functional capacities and who require multiple VR services over an extended period of time. In order to ensure these individuals are served first, they are placed in priority Category 1.

(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.

The WIOA regulations allow eligible individuals to be served in order to maintain employment regardless of OOS. In the event of reduced funding, GVRA has chosen to establish an OOS to protect service delivery for those with the most significant disabilities.

GVRA will elect to serve individuals, who require specific services or equipment, outside of the OOS if GVRA has to go under an OOS and close priority categories.

(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.

In order to meet the expectations and intent of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA, and to maximize the funds, GVRA has developed the following goals and priorities to expand access to and use of SE services statewide:

- Increase the number of clients who will be co-enrolled with VR services and DBHDD to serve an additional 720 individuals with SPMI annually.
- Increase the number of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities who are served under SE by 130 annually.

- Use the agency’s Business Division to increase the number of members in the SE provider network by educating providers on the rate schedule that went into effect October 2015, enabling growth across all populations.
- Train SE staff in identifying and facilitating natural supports that can be found in the workplace to best utilize the provider network’s extended services and GVRA’s post-employment services.
- Continue to emphasize individual employment placements and successful employment outcomes in competitive, integrated work settings.

(2) Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities

(A) the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and

Under WIOA, funds received under Title VI must be used for the provision of SES, including extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities for up four years. The following activities will be conducted with the reserved funds:

- Develop and implement an ESP for paid and non-paid long-term supports post-placement.
- Expand the IPS sub-group work currently being done with the DBHDD that is exploring the utilization of Supported Education and SES for youth with the most significant disabilities.
- Increase the use of natural supports in the Extended Services Plan.

(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.

GVRA’s has developed the following strategies to leverage other public and private funds to increase the resources for extended services and expanded Supported Employment Opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities:

- Continue to expand the current blended funding relationship with DBHDD to increase SE service delivery to transitioning youth with developmental disabilities, or behavioral health diagnoses.
- Utilize new grant and private foundation funding to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Georgia Pathways to Work program in engaging youth with significant disabilities in early Supported Employment experiences such as supported internships, and apprenticeships.
- Explore funding options for extended supports through the Ticket to Work Program.
- Continue to expand and facilitate the SE provider network’s use of natural supports.
- Increase the use of Social Security Reimbursements for additional program expenditures.

GVRA will also continue to explore new grant and funding opportunities to expand resources for extended services and SE opportunities.

(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)):

The following goals and strategies will be required in order to achieve the goals and priorities that were outlined in Section (1) State Goals and Priorities.

Goal 1: Increase and improve competitive employment outcomes and career opportunities for all individuals with disabilities.

Strategies:

- Partner with the existing VR provider network to design and implement new types of services to better serve individuals with disabilities.
- Partner with new potential providers to design and implement new types of services in areas of the State where there is a paucity of services.
- Partner with existing mental health and developmental disability providers to assist them in transforming traditional services to become better at competitive employment.
- Identify a model for continuous quality improvement to evaluate existing and new services. The model should include: (1) Assessment of the stability of processes or outcomes to determine whether there is an undesirable degree of variation or a failure to perform at an expected level. (2) Identify problems and opportunities to improve the performance of processes. (3) Assess the outcome of the services provided. (4) Assess whether a new or improved process meets performance expectations.

Goal 2: Increase and improve competitive employment outcomes and career opportunities for youth and students with disabilities.

Strategies:

- Transform how GVRA and the VR services focus on youth and students with disabilities by integrating services agency-wide to make this population the highest focus.
- Partner with GaDOE to increase and deliver a comprehensive array of transitional services to every school district within the state, including a special focus on career pathways and customized career pathways.
- Develop a concentrated outreach effort to identify youth with disabilities that are not enrolled in school, and make the same robust services available to them.
- Partner with the existing VR provider network to create community-based career pathways for youth not enrolled in school.
- Partner with both TCSG and USG to improve post-secondary transition.

Goal 3: Increase and improve competitive employment outcomes and career opportunities for unserved and underserved populations, to include veterans and individuals with sensory disabilities, mental illness, developmental disabilities, or autism.

Strategies:

- GVRA's Employment Services Unit will develop and implement a comprehensive employer engagement plan.
- Develop formal third-party agreements with local employers to contribute to all career pathways available to youth with disabilities, both in school and out of school.
- Recruit and hire internal subject-matter experts to better serve the unserved and underserved populations, such as Veterans, and those with Autism.

(1) The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

The following methods will be employed to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities:

- Continue to expand the work with those State agencies with whom GVRA has formal partnerships with (e.g., GaDOE and DBHDD) and develop collaborative partnerships with those State and local agencies with whom GVRA does not have formal agreements with (e.g., DCH).
- Utilize GVRA's relationship with the State's workforce system at the State and local levels to increase the resources made available to individuals with disabilities.
- Identify, train, and support counselors who are dedicated to serving these populations.
- Develop additional training offerings to the SE provider network to increase their knowledge and utilization of best practices.
- Utilize expanded SE model that supports the inclusion of alternativeservices suited to the diverse populations served.
- Identify additional tools to expand the opportunities for client and provider feedback, enabling the continuous improvement of services.

(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.

As described in Section (c2) *State Programs Carried Out under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998*, GVRA works closely with the Georgia Assistive Technology Act Program. Currently, Tools for Life loans equipment for clients to try prior to purchasing the equipment. Additionally, GVRA is one of the pilot sites for Tools for Life and the State ADA office to test equipment that is under consideration for purchase by the State. Tools for Life provides training to Georgia VR's Assistive Work Technology team.

Internally, GVRA employs occupational therapists and rehabilitation engineers who provide assistive technology consultation and assist in equipment acquisition for those individuals with

disabilities who are served by the agency. The idea of having a VR Counselor who works closely with the IPS SE program ensures these individuals are afforded proper access to Assistive Work Technology and sensory services. GVRA has plans to continue expanding sensory and AWT access through VR involvement with clients with sensory disabilities.

(3) Outreach procedures

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.

GVRA has dedicated Coordinator positions whose role is to identify and serve minorities with disabilities, those with the most significant disabilities, and those who have traditionally been unserved or underserved by VR services. As stated earlier in Section (1) State Goals and Priorities, GVRA has set a priority to recruit and train specialty staff with expertise in the unique needs and strengths of these populations, and who will become the subject-matter experts leading improvements in service delivery. In addition, GVRA will provide all of its informational materials in Spanish and will further translate these materials when needed.

Provider development activities will continue to expand through the work of GVRA's Provider Relations Specialist as well as field staff.

(4) Methods to improve and expand VR services

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).

GVRA's goal to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities by the following:

- Develop and offer a comprehensive array of services to all school districts statewide. Specifically, GVRA will develop all 5 required Pre-ETS activities, as well as the 9 authorized activities as may be needed, and offer those to every school district in the state of Georgia. These will include services that are VR Program-provided, as well as services provided through the VR provider network. Where there is a paucity of such Pre-ETS services in particular geographic areas of the state, GVRA announced a Request for Proposal for Pre-ETS and Transition Services Develop new and innovative services for both in-school and out-of-school career pathways. As a part of this, GVRA is in Year 3 of the 5 year Georgia Career Pathways federal demonstration grant and is delivering Explore, Engage, Employ E3 services to 7 pilot districts. This is done in collaboration with GaDOE, the individual local school district, and the local employers and businesses. E3 will be the delivery model for all students and youth with disabilities in the future. A unique component of the E3 grant team is the Social Media Technologist who has established the E3 brand on all social media outlets. The SMT has overseen the development of 2 apps for students with disabilities to engage and develop skills. An RFP for a website has been announced and in the procurement process. The website will be non-governmental and is part of the strategy for engaging and tracking students and youth to assist them in reaching their career goals and meaningful employment. Develop a formal relationship and supportive services with TCSG and USG regarding transition to post-secondary education. Ideally, GVRA will collaborate with both TCSG and USG to

improve and facilitate the transition from high school to postsecondary education and training. This will include increasing opportunities for dual enrollment, summer transition programs between high school and entrance to postsecondary institutions; as well as working with the campus disability coordinators at each college to reduce barriers and promote success at the postsecondary level.

- Create formal employer engagements to ensure all vocational rehabilitation services lead to real jobs in the community. GVRA's intent is to enter into a formal agreement with local employers, through which there are clear deliverables for the employer, such as providing opportunities to PETS students; as well as deliverables for GVRA, such as disability training, assistive work technology, identification of qualified job candidates and on-going job coaching and support if required.
- Partner with current, as well as new providers to offer new and/or improved services to this population specifically. It is GVRA's plan to do an overall assessment of all current provider-offered services based on each service's ability to produce positive outcomes. Based on this review, GVRA will collaborate with all of its providers to: 1) either improve or eliminate unproductive services; 2) implement new services as may be needed; and 3) specifically offer those PETS services that cannot be provided by the VR Program directly. In all cases, the providers will be held to the same standards that the VR Program itself will be held to, and GVRA will continually monitor provider performance to ensure the best value for dollars spent and the best employment outcomes.

(5) If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

As described in Section (l(2)) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State;

GVRA has engaged in a dialogue with CRPs statewide in order to work more effectively together, and to better serve Georgians with disabilities.

The focus of these discussions has been to move towards shared performance outcomes and serving individuals together. The plan is to accomplish the following:

- Develop community-based, integrated training opportunities. GVRA will do this by identifying specific training gaps statewide, identifying and developing performance standards to address these gaps, and collaborating with both current and potential providers to develop new training programs addressing these gaps.
- Develop services in rural areas of the State. GVRA will do this by identifying specific service gaps statewide, and collaborating with both current and potential new providers to develop services for the rural areas where there is a paucity of services.
- Improve communication with all parties through joint meetings with clients, VR field counselors, and CRP staff (include discussion on client's progress and plan for achieving successful outcomes).
- Revise the fee structure for CRPs and/or look at alternative funding strategies, such as performance-based fees.

- Review, change and/or create customized training programs that are aligned with the actual jobs in the local community.
- Offer unique services to special populations, such as individuals on the Autism Spectrum. GVRA will do this by identifying specific population needs statewide, identifying and developing services to address these needs, and collaborating with both current and potential new providers to develop new services addressing these needs.

(6) Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

GVRA will work with all core partners to develop and monitor appropriate and relevant performance indicators, including those identified under section 116 of WIOA. These will reflect the new, improved, and expanded services of GVRA.

(7) Strategies for assisting other components of the Statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

GVRA will work with all its core partners to improve collaboration, program development and implementation, and to expand innovative VR Services to individuals with disabilities throughout the statewide workforce development system.

(8) How the agency's strategies will be used to:

(A) Achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

GVRA will ensure that all of its goals, priorities, and strategies are based a statewide, comprehensive assessment, detailing both current and future needs. This will also be supported through on-going program evaluation and constituent feedback.

(B) Support innovation and expansion activities; and

GVRA will utilize constituent feedback to identify any service gaps, which will be used to plan and support innovation and expansion activities.

(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.

Past disparities in access have been experience by individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State SE Services Programs and have been addressed through a MOU with DBHDD. This formal agreement created a dedicated team of expert counselors serving only people with these disabilities statewide.

(p) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals.

(1) An evaluation of VR program goals

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.

GVRA is only its third year of operation. In the 2014-2016 State Plan, GVRA set the following goals to guide the work of the agency.

- i. Goal I – Maximize available federal funds to assist more individuals with disabilities to achieve their employment goals.
- ii. Goal II – Expand transition services to assist more students with disabilities to go from high school to work or post-secondary education/training.
- iii. Goal III – Enhance services to unserved and underserved populations to increase their employment outcomes.
- iv. Goal IV – Help employers meet their human resources needs through hiring qualified individuals with disabilities.

Working closely with SRC, GVRA was able to make great strides in tackling and managing a greatly reduced budget for vocational rehabilitation services. In the 2014 program year, GVRA achieved the following towards its goals and objectives outlined in their 2014-2016 State Plan:

- Over 25,905 clients were served by GVRA for the most recently completed program year.
- VR collaborated with CRPs to call clients on the waiting list and quickly reengage them in the VR process. This partnership enabled VR to efficiently reduce the waiting list from 8,300 to zero.
- GVRA created a CSU to serve as a bridge to effectively meet the needs of clients and ensure that they receive excellent service in a timely manner and in accordance with all applicable regulations and policies.
- The High School/High Tech Program expanded to 72 schools providing over 3,800 transition activities to 746 students with disabilities, the highest number to date. Of those, 109 students won the competition for computers to assist them in furthering their education.
- GVRA renovated, refurbished, or moved VR field offices to more appropriate spaces and closed offices that were far from clients. VR also provided technology to counselors to more effectively serve clients in convenient locations.
- GVRA and VR implemented a plan to increase the salaries of CRCs.
- GVRA and VR collaborated with DBHDD to increase and enhance services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, and for those with developmental disabilities.

(A) Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

The primary strategy GVRA has used in realizing key achievements has been to establish and formalize partnerships. GVRA recognizes that in a time of decreasing resources and increasing need, leveraging the capacity of strategic partners is the only way to meet the needs and individual goals of persons served. Additionally, rich data through program evaluation, State Rehabilitation Council input, and constituent feedback has been used to inform and guide significant changes to GVRA over the past year. Finally, through the addition of personnel and

providers who are experts in serving individuals with disabilities, GVRA has been able to identify and incorporate new evidence-based practices into its VR services as part of these on-going changes.

(B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

The major factors impeding the changes have been a longstanding culture that held to outmoded, inefficient way of doing business. With the ongoing support and partnership of SRC, GVRA has been able to make significant changes in its organizational structure to improve service delivery, client satisfaction, and stakeholder buy-in. As started earlier in this section, the two main strategies that assisted in this included:

- GVRA created a Customer Care Unit to serve as a bridge to effectively meet the needs of clients, and to ensure that they receive excellent service in a timely manner, and in accordance with all applicable regulations and policies.

(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.

The primary strategy used by GVRA was the development of the formal MOU with DBHDD that has increased and enhanced services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness and for those with developmental disabilities. In coordination with the Georgia DBHDD, GVRA also implemented an IPS pilot, which included cross-training among the staff of both agencies.

The Individual Placement and Supports-pilot model is a very specific type of Supported Employment with Behavioral Health at this time. The IPS approach assumes everyone can work with the right supports. The person decides when and how they want to go to work. There are no prerequisites (work adjustment, pre-vocational, sheltered, enclave, work evaluations, or otherwise) to go to work. Unlike other approaches, IPS-SE has been researched and proven to achieve higher rates of employment for people with severe and persistent mental illness.

(B) Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

The main factors that impeded the achievement of goals and priorities in the area of SEP were the development of a blended funding model, and the resistance of existing providers.

(3) The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

An analysis of GVRA's performance on the performance accountability indicators has improved year-over-year, and is expected to continue to improve.

(4) How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

In FY15, GVRA spent \$10,026 in funds reserved for Innovation and Expansion to support SRC activities (including travel to SRC meetings and public hearings, meeting rooms, meals,

interpreters, publications such as the annual report and brochures, conference registration fees, and supplies). In addition, \$253,350 of the I&E funds were expended for SILC operations and activities (including quarterly meetings, public hearings, and website costs).

(q) Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.

(1) The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services

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.

GVRA's SE Program is a statewide initiative to assist those with the most significant disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment in competitive, integrated settings. SE providers work to reframe, create, and find jobs in the community that meet employer needs and match client interests and contributions.

SE services in Georgia consist of 1) Traditional Supported employment 2) IPS 3) Customized Supported Employment. These various approaches allow us to meet the continuum of needs for all clients regardless of disability or situation.

The VRP's service approach with SE is one of partnership with community-based rehabilitation providers who are contracted for their services. GVRA has agreements with each provider of the service and payment is authorized and invoiced as each client attains, with support of the provider, a milestone along the SE continuum. The last payment represents the completion of the case and transition to ongoing extended services, agreed to by all parties and funded in accordance with the SE fee schedule.

Program Evaluation

GVRA implements an extensive program evaluation at multiple levels across the program through the following methodologies:

- i. Case Review – On a monthly basis, a random sampling of case files are examined through the electronic case management system. Files are reviewed for the thoroughness of notes, sequence of service provision, and compliance with policy and procedure.
- ii. Pilot Outcome Evaluation – Both a process and outcome evaluation is completed on each pilot by an internal evaluation team in collaboration with pilot partners. Evaluation aims inform the sustainability of piloted approaches, and identify needed changes if replication is cost effective and benefits the targeted population.
- iii. Monthly Placement Monitoring – The number of individuals in the individualized, competitive employment is monitored monthly through the comprehensive case management system to track progress towards statewide goals.
- iv. Monthly Intake Oversight – statewide intake numbers are monitored monthly to ensure GVRA is serving the number of individuals as determined by the annual strategic plan.
- v. Fidelity Reviews – The IPS Supported Employment program model is evaluated through fidelity reviews that are completed in collaboration with DBHDD.

(2) The timing of transition to extended services.

Transition to extended services begins once the individual has been successfully employed in a competitive, integrated setting; and support has entered stabilization. At this time, the SE provider is responsible for ensuring that the provision of paid and unpaid long-term supports on and off the job. Extended services may include such things as natural supports at work, transportation support from community, or ongoing support from the supported employment provider.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES CERTIFICATIONS

The State of Georgia hereby certifies the following: *Certifications:*

1. GVRA is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA,¹⁴ and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;
2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, GVRA 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;
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;
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;
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
7. GVRA 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;

8. GVRA has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
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.

And the State of Georgia hereby certifies the following: Common 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:

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 (Option A or B must be selected):
 - (A) is an independent State commission.
 - (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.
 - (c) consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.

- (d) the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
- (e) the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (Yes/No)
- (f) the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (Yes/No)
- (g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan.
- (h) the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- (i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- (j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as 38 OMB Control Number 1205-0522 38 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? (Yes/No)
- (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 1. Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special 2. 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. (a) Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:

- The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- (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. (a) **Provision of Supported Employment Services:** The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- (b) The designated State agency assures that:
 - i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act
 - ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

X. TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES & SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

DHS administers TANF and SNAP at the State level while services are delivered at the local level through the network of DFCS offices located in each of Georgia's 159 counties. DHS will incorporate employment and training aspects of the SNAP and TANF programs with the unified workforce system under WIOA through four primary mechanisms: integration across programs, a focus on youth, collaborative performance measures, and strengthened relationships with employers.

Integration across State Programs

TANF and SNAP program goals align closely with WIOA's goals and outcomes as evidenced by varying levels of coordination that already exist across State regions. Moving forward, TANF and SNAP will work to co-locate staff at one-stop centers for enhanced service delivery and streamlined communication between WIOA partner programs. TANF staff will be increased strategically, starting in the metro areas, then moving where needed, to further provide integrated employment services to Georgia's citizens.

TANF and SNAP will also coordinate with other core partner agencies in providing support services to assist participants with completing their activities as well as coordinating common services to reduce duplication of services. This includes providing shared assessments, use of integrated case management systems, cross-training of program staff, and family-oriented policies. Currently, with subsidized employment and work experience, TANF and SNAP already provide work-based training strategies for adults and youth with barriers to employment. Staff will continue to promote this through integration with existing WIOA partner programs.

Finally, TANF and SNAP identify employment barriers and promote the development and maintenance of community connections and resources that address basic skill deficiencies. These local collaborations already include WIOA partner programs, and TANF and SNAP will continue to expand this collaboration through a streamlined referral process for customers eligible for WIOA services.

Serving In-School/Out of School Youth and Those with the Most Significant Disabilities and Barriers

A focus on youth is a core principle of WIOA and continues to be a programmatic focus of DHS as well. TANF policy requires a work-eligible parent, who is less than 20 years of age and has neither a high school diploma nor a GED, to participate and achieve satisfactory attendance in one of the following activities: secondary school or its equivalent, and/or participate in education directly related to employment. Participation in these activities supersedes any requirement to participate in other work activities, though obtaining employment is always encouraged. In addition, one of the four key purposes of TANF is to engage youth in order to prevent and reduce the incidence of teen and out-of-wedlock pregnancies. As such, TANF will refer out-of-school youth to WIOA for services via a streamlined referral process.

SNAP provides services to adults ranging from ages 18-24 years. However, the program is also available to those up to age 49. The services are focused on training and assisting the SNAP

recipient with achieving life-long, self-sufficiency. To achieve this, SNAP activities focus on barrier reduction, education, and job search/work place skills training.

DHS programs will also integrate with WIOA and the workforce system through a focus on participants with significant disabilities. TANF has a large population of customers who claim a disability. This population is not exempt from work requirements and these customers will receive a VR assessment through WIOA as they are expected to find a work activity in which they can perform successfully.

Strong, Collaborative Performance Measurements

In support of the unified workforce system, one of DHS's primary goals is to provide necessary assistance on a temporary basis to needy families with children, to assist parents with job preparation, and to provide work opportunities and support services. As such, performance measurements include: measuring increases in family income, the number of families that achieve employment, decreases in the out-of-wedlock pregnancy rate (particularly teens), and decreasing TANF recidivism rates.

To support the achievement of these performance measures a TFSP is developed for each recipient who has a work requirement. The TFSP specifies the recipient's personal responsibilities, employment goal, and the steps necessary for the achievement of the goal. Participants with a work requirement are assessed for potential barriers to employment. SNAP has a tool called a Personal Work Plan, which is similar to, and performs the same function as the TFSP.

DHS will work with core partner agencies to help integrate performance measures across programs. This will involve tracking those participants who have obtained a post-secondary credential, secondary school diploma, or GED® during participation or within one year after program exit, and tracking the effectiveness in serving employers. Additionally, the federal performance indicator for TANF is the work participation rate and each state is required to have a participation rate of 50% for single parent households, and 90% for two-parent households. These outcome measures will help Georgia gain a holistic picture of its workforce system.

Strengthened Relationships with Employers

Job-driven and employer-focused outcomes remain core tenants of the WIOA program and Georgia's workforce system. TANF and SNAP will leverage current program components to support the State's goal of increasing employer relationships and increasing positive outcomes. For example, all TANF participants are eligible to receive support services, but those who become employed and exceed income limits for TANF services remain eligible to participate in the Work WSP. The WSP provides support services that allows participants to transition to employment while still providing a safety net for up to a year. Within this program, TANF will provide employment services but will rely on WIOA services to direct the customers to the area of need in the local employment sector, match employment and education activities with career pathway models, and to increase the participant's qualifications. All SNAP Works participants also receive support services. SNAP support services are issued to the vendor or directly to the participant in support of their participation in an allowable activity.

In addition, TANF and SNAP will utilize WIOA services to engage employers and ensure that participants can access emerging job opportunities. This will connect the employment and

training services to the needs of local employers, and increase work activities that focus on career pathways for participants. Finally, when creating support plans with participants, TANF and SNAP will utilize information gleaned from WFD about the local employment needs and career pathways available.

APPENDICES

[Appendix 1: Georgia Department of Labor's Business Services Unit](#)

GDOL's BSU reflects a new direction and emphasis on employer-driven service delivery, and access to a market-driven staff dedicated to fulfilling the needs of Georgia employers. BSU is comprised of the following teams:

Regional Coordinators

The Regional Coordinator Program partners with economic developers locally, regionally, and statewide by executing prompt turn-around data, and customized solutions to workforce issues. Located in the twelve service-delivery regions across the state, Regional Coordinators can help economic developers identify data critical for the successful location and expansion of industry.

Business Services Recruiters

The Business Services Recruiters devote their efforts towards developing and maintaining relationships with employers regionally- identifying talent pools for target industries, identifying employer talent requirements, and matching the talent with the hiring needs.

SWAT

The SWAT team currently has more than fifty expert staff prepared to assist job seekers with résumé assistance, and the marketing tools necessary to impress hiring managers. The team works closely with Chambers of Commerce, Industrial Authorities, and economic developers to fill the gaps, and overcome the barriers to employment many veterans and job seekers face. SWAT – Job Readiness events feature workshops on a plethora of topics such as improving interviewing skills, networking skills, using social media in job search, finding a job after 40, and career expo success. Computer stations are set up at the events and hands-on training and assistance are offered to job seekers to create social media profiles, develop business cards, create their personal elevator pitch, and résumé development.

BSU provides the following services to employers:

Regional Career Expos

BSU manages Regional Career Expos that can be tailored to targeted industries, job seekers, and skill requirements, as well as general and community events where business and job seekers from all industries are able to gather and explore potential job matches. Regional Career Expos can typically include up to 90 vendors, and host up to 2,000 job seekers.

Customized Recruitment

GDOL's CR is a specialized resource offered to eligible businesses (new to Georgia) aimed towards the streamlining of the company's candidate search and recruitment process by utilizing a team of highly-successful GDOL recruiters, working on behalf of the employer. The CR team utilizes both traditional GDOL methods as well as current and innovative industry methods of recruitment to identify the most qualified candidates for an employer. The CR team is experienced in recognizing skills, critiquing résumés, and organizing large recruitment events allowing them to effectively leverage resources to draw on the talent pool. Candidates go through multiple steps of established CR checks and balances, ensuring their qualifications, applications or résumés are then referred to the employer for established next steps. CR events allow the option for GDOL and/or the employer to collect hundreds of candidate applications,

conduct a pre-screen interview for qualifications, and potentially conduct interviews all in one day. The CR team, as requested, will provide the employer with all candidates, with candidates sorted by qualification level, or with only those candidates meeting the highest levels of employer qualifications. With this proactive approach to filling desired positions quickly, the CR team partners with economic developers, and project managers to ease the recruitment piece.

GeorgiaBEST for Employers

GeorgiaBEST for Employers, a new initiative from Commissioner Butler, will gain traction as BSU rolls out four modules focused on assisting employers with their existing workforce issues. Loss of productivity can be traced to a number of components. Employers consistently agree that poor attendance, teamwork, organizational skills, and time management adversely affect their bottom lines. GeorgiaBEST for Employers provides training at the workplace that is designed specifically to address those issues on behalf of employers.

Employer Committee

The Employer Committee provides a critical link between GDOL and the business community. Employers are provided a venue to address common issues. Employer Committees are groups of local business representatives who establish and maintain a working relationship between the employer community and GDOL. The committees provide GDOL with input and guidance on how proposed policies and legislation would impact Georgia employers and employees. Committee members promote GDOL services among employers, and identify and recommend ways to meet local, and state employment-related needs.

Regional Summits

Regional Summits are designed to help business owners, managers, hiring professionals, and others better understand and conquer compliance challenges in the workplace. “Employers In the Know” attendees will meet and hear from GDOL Commissioner Mark Butler as he shares valuable information on current GDOL initiatives and programs. The Regional Summits also provide information from a Labor Law expert about federal policies and legislation that will help ensure businesses are compliant and profitable in the upcoming years. Employers also learn about what some of Georgia's most important state agencies are doing to encourage job growth and economic development. This program has been approved for 3.75 recertification credits through the Human Resources Certification Institute (HRCI).

Online Services

GDOL serves employers through its web site at <http://dol.georgia.gov/employers> by providing access to valuable, accessible information. Items accessible include publications and links to additional resources.

GDOL online services allow businesses to file quarterly tax and wage reports and make payments, change their address, participate in the State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES) and SIDES E-Response, submit job postings, and apply for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC). All parties involved in the youth work permit process (i.e., youth, employers, and issuing officers) can complete their required parts online.

The website advertises career expos, employer seminars, and other events to the community, and provides access to a variety of labor market information resources, including Georgia Labor

Market Explorer, and pertinent information for businesses, including the ability to download posters required of all employers. Also, the newly-designed website includes a responsive design for better viewing on any mobile device, as well as suggested search and translation options on every page.

GDOL provides an array of resources, services and information in as many social media formats as possible to reach the most businesses and job-seeking customers. The department will continue to maintain its presence on Facebook, You Tube, Twitter and RSS Feed, and is developing smart phone applications for real-time labor market information and job matching services.

EmployGeorgia

Georgia's EG system provides enhanced self-service options for employers, including the capability to:

- Remotely create a secure account, with unlimited subsidiaries linked by federal EIN
- Create their home page
- Create job postings (with Job Post Writer, search on nationwide job postings, etc., if needed)
- View résumés of potential employees via range bound, contextual key word, etc., searches
- Utilize automated invitations and screenings
- Conduct automated screening interviews with knock-out questions
- Sort, screen, flag, directly contact and track candidates
- Add notes and scheduled reminders
- Continue to seek GDOL staff assistance with all of the above

[Appendix 2: Performance Goals for the Core Programs](#)

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.

	Projected Baseline	PY 2018 / FY 2019			PY 2019 / FY 2020		
		Proposed	Negotiated	Proposed Final Change in Performance	Proposed	Negotiated	Proposed Final Change in Performance
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)							
Adults	69.5%	69.0%	76.0%		69.5%	77.0%	
Dislocated Workers	72.3%	72.0%	78.0%		72.3%	79.0%	
Youth	40.5%	40.0%	60.0%		40.5%	62.0%	
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange		70.0%	70.5%		71.0%	71.0%	
Adult Education							
Rehabilitative Services		Baseline			Baseline		
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)							
Adults	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%		70.5%	70.5%	
Dislocated Workers	74.2%	74.0%	75.0%		74.2%	76.0%	
Youth	42.4%	42.0%	60.0%		42.4%	62.0%	
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange		70.6%	71.0%		71.6%	71.9%	
Adult Education							
Rehabilitative Services		Baseline			Baseline		
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)							
Adults	\$4,125	\$4,000	\$4,500		\$4,125	\$4,600	
Dislocated Workers	\$4,850	\$4,700	\$5,000		\$4,850	\$5,150	

Youth	\$2,250	Baseline			Baseline		
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange		\$4,809	\$4,809		\$4,859	\$4,859	
Adult Education							
Rehabilitative Services		Baseline			Baseline		
Credential Attainment Rate							
Adults	31.1%	31.0%	40.0%		31.1%	42.0%	
Dislocated Workers		33.0%	50.0%		33.4%	64.0%	
Youth		72.0%	72.0%		72.5%	72.5%	
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange							
Adult Education							
Rehabilitative Services		Baseline			Baseline		
Measureable Skill Gains							
Adults					Baseline		
Dislocated Workers					Baseline		
Youth					Baseline		
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange							
Adult Education		56.0%	56.0%		57.0%	57.0%	
Rehabilitative Services							
Effectiveness in Serving Employers							
Adults	Baseline	Baseline			Baseline		
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline			Baseline		
Youth	Baseline	Baseline			Baseline		
Wagner-Peyser / Labor Exchange		Baseline					
Adult Education		Baseline			Baseline		
Rehabilitative		Baseline					

Services						
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Appendix 3: LWDA Map



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|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Northwest Georgia | 8 Three Rivers | 14 Lower Chattahoochee |
| 2 Georgia Mountains | 9 Northeast Georgia | 15 Middle Flint |
| 3 City of Atlanta | 10 Macon-Bibb | 16 Heart of Georgia |
| 4 Cobb | 11 Middle Georgia | 17 Southwest Georgia |
| 5 DeKalb | 12 Central Savannah River Area | 18 Southern Georgia |
| 6 Fulton County | 13 East Central Georgia | 20 Coastal |
| 7 Atlanta Regional | | |

State Designated Service Delivery Regions	4		
LWIA(s)	8		
KEY CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL ALIGNMENT			
Super Sector Industries (Employment)	Total	Percent	Dev.
Construction	6,124	4.22%	0.61%
Education and Health Services	6,124	4.22%	-8.04%
Financial Activities	4,296	2.96%	-2.96%
Information	2,505	1.73%	-1.46%
Leisure and Hospitality	15,065	10.38%	-0.50%
Manufacturing	28,650	19.74%	11.47%
Natural Resources, Mining, and Agriculture	634	0.44%	-0.20%
Other Services	3,467	2.39%	-0.09%
Professional and Business Services	19,731	13.59%	-2.46%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	30,986	21.35%	0.34%
Unclassified	488	0.34%	-0.09%
Government	27,091	18.66%	3.37%
Labor Force (Total Number of People)	233,685		
Unemployment			
Rate	7.80%		
Number	18,129		
Population (2014 Estimate)	501,537		
Education (% of Total)			
Elementary	6.00%		
Some High School	14.70%		
High School Grad/GED 3	36.80%		
Some College 2	21.10%		
College Grad 2 Yr	5.50%		
College Grad 4 Yr	10.50%		
Post Graduate Studies	5.40%		
≥ 4% variance below state average			
≥ 4% variance above state average			
One County not in region			

State Designated Service Delivery Regions	5		
LWIA(s)	9		
KEY CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL ALIGNMENT			
Super Sector Industries (Employment)		Percent	Dev
Construction	8,627	4.75%	1.15%
Education and Health Services	20,821	11.46%	-0.79%
Financial Activities	6,575	3.62%	-2.30%
Information	1,346	0.74%	-2.45%
Leisure and Hospitality	19,763	10.88%	0.01%
Manufacturing	24,730	13.62%	5.35%
Natural Resources, Mining, and Agriculture	1829	1.01%	0.37%
Other Services	3,970	2.19%	-0.29%
Professional and Business Services	14,662	8.07%	-7.98%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	38,109	20.98%	-0.02%
Unclassified	802	0.44%	0.02%
Government	40,385	22.24%	6.94%
Labor Force (Total Number of People)	277,661		
Unemployment			
Rate	0		
Number	18,954		
Population (2014 Estimate)	592,732		
Education (% of Total)			
Elementary	0		
Some High School	0		
High School Grad/GED 3	0		
Some College 2	0		
College Grad 2 Yr	0		
College Grad 4 Yr	0		
Post Graduate Studies	0		
≥ 4% variance below state average			
≥ 4% variance above state average			
One County not in region			

State Designated Service Delivery Regions	6				
LWIA(s)	10	11			
KEY CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL ALIGNMENT					
Super Sector Industries (Employment)			Total	Percent	Dev.
Construction	1,917	3,526	5,443	2.88%	-0.73%
Education and Health Services	17,574	10,963	28,537	15.09%	2.84%
Financial Activities	9,022	2,611	11,633	6.15%	0.23%
Information	1,282	482	1,764	0.93%	-2.26%
Leisure and Hospitality	8,220	11,042	19,262	10.19%	-0.69%
Manufacturing	5,101	9,872	14,973	7.92%	-0.35%
Natural Resources, Mining, and Agriculture	93	2,802	2,895	1.53%	0.89%
Other Services	1,730	1,761	3,491	1.85%	-0.63%
Professional and Business Services	10,095	7,411	17,506	9.26%	-6.79%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	17,804	17,091	34,895	18.46%	-2.55%
Unclassified	183	307	490	0.26%	-0.16%
Government	9,972	38,216	48,188	25.49%	10.19%
Labor Force (Total Number of People)	69,480	147,102			
Unemployment					
Rate	8.10%	7.60%			
Number	5,599	11,205			
Population (2014 Estimate)	153,905	340,488			
Education (% of Total)					
Elementary	5.30%	5.40%			
Some High School	14.50%	12.60%			
High School Grad/GED 3	31.10%	33.90%			
Some College 2	22.10%	23.80%			
College Grad 2 Yr	5.90%	6.90%			
College Grad 4 Yr	14.00%	11.30%			
Post Graduate Studies	7.10%	6.10%			
≥ 4% variance below state average					
≥ 4% variance above state average					
One County not in region					

State Designated Service Delivery Regions	7				
LWIA(s)	12	13			
KEY CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL ALIGNMENT					
Super Sector Industries (Employment)			Total	Percent	Dev.
Construction	4,097	3,244	7,341	4.33%	0.73%
Education and Health Services	18,881	6,093	24,974	14.73%	2.48%
Financial Activities	2,943	2,590	5,533	3.26%	-2.66%
Information	2,156	551	2,707	1.60%	-1.59%
Leisure and Hospitality	11,872	6,084	17,956	10.59%	-0.28%
Manufacturing	7,910	6,844	14,754	8.70%	0.44%
Natural Resources, Mining, and Agriculture	531	1,586	2,117	1.25%	0.61%
Other Services	2,855	1,543	4,398	2.59%	0.12%
Professional and Business Services	13,989	5,352	19,341	11.41%	-4.64%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	19,951	10,817	30,768	18.15%	-2.85%
Unclassified	200	254	454	0.27%	-0.16%
Government	26,718	12,473	39,191	23.12%	7.82%
Labor Force (Total Number of People)	98,429	102,856			
Unemployment					
Rate	8.90%	7.30%			
Number	8,723	7,540			
Population (2014 Estimate)	233,202	233,871			
Education (% of Total)					
Elementary	5.80%	6.30%			
Some High School	13.60%	13.00%			
High School Grad/GED 3	33.20%	33.50%			
Some College 2	23.70%	19.70%			
College Grad 2 Yr	6.70%	6.70%			
College Grad 4 Yr	11.10%	13.20%			
Post Graduate Studies	6.00%	7.60%			
≥ 4% variance below state average					
≥ 4% variance above state average					
One County not in region					

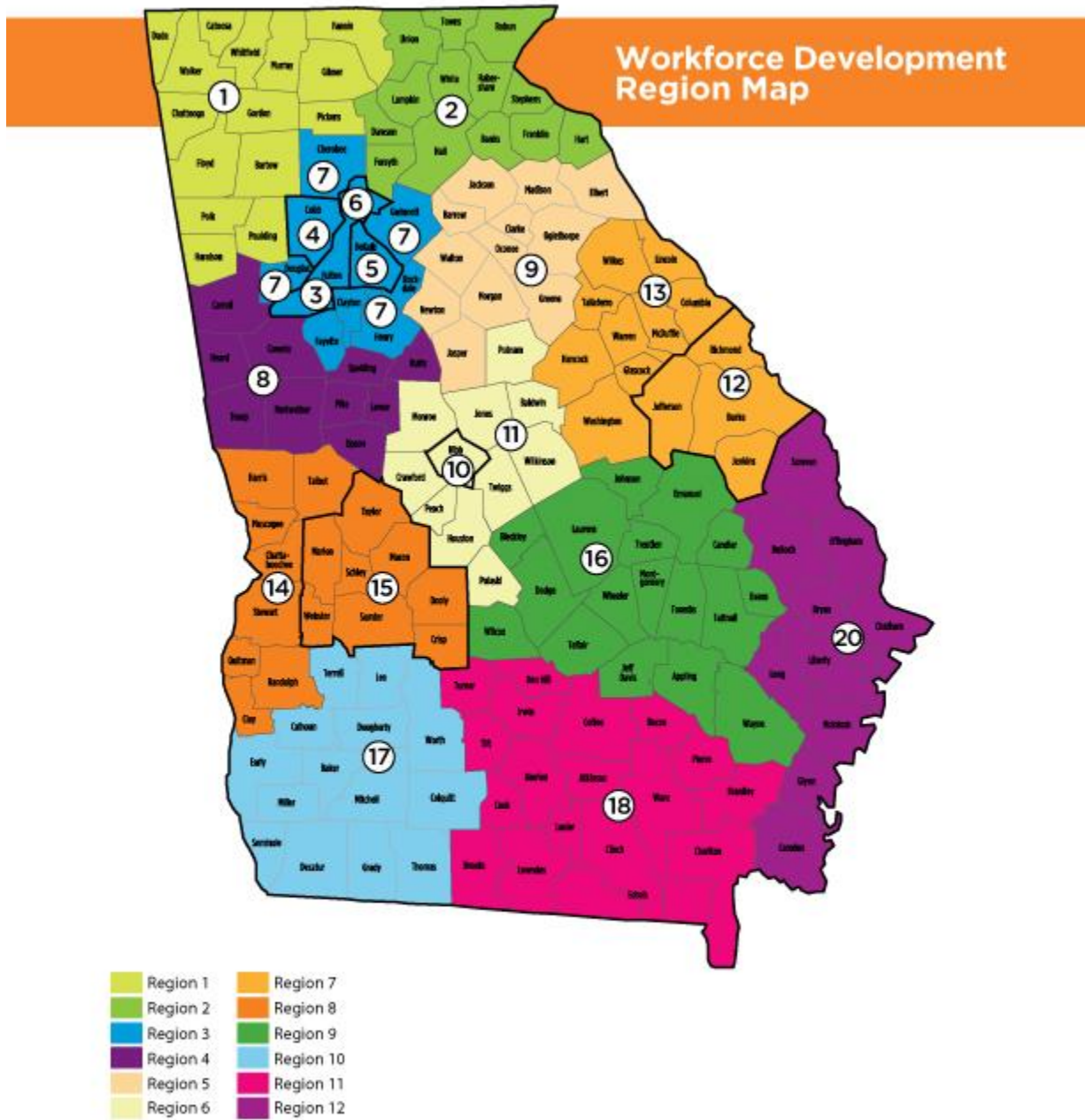
State Designated Service Delivery Regions	8				
LWIA(s)	14	15			
KEY CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL ALIGNMENT					
Super Sector Industries (Employment)			Total	Percent	Dev.
Construction	3,727	548	4,275	3.15%	-0.45%
Education and Health Services	14,749	4,001	18,750	13.82%	1.56%
Financial Activities	11,975	839	12,814	9.44%	3.52%
Information	1,385	188	1,573	1.16%	-2.03%
Leisure and Hospitality	12,950	2,847	15,797	11.64%	0.77%
Manufacturing	7,841	4,975	12,816	9.45%	1.18%
Natural Resources, Mining, and Agriculture	640	1,668	2,308	1.70%	1.06%
Other Services	2,865	480	3,345	2.47%	-0.01%
Professional and Business Services	11,619	839	12,458	9.18%	-6.87%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	16,152	5,930	22,082	16.27%	-4.73%
Unclassified	220	77	297	0.22%	-0.20%
Government	22,186	6,980	29,166	21.50%	6.20%
Labor Force (Total Number of People)	109,113	41,674			
Unemployment					
Rate	8.20%	9.60%			
Number	8,994	4,003			
Population (2014 Estimate)	270,464	107,197			
Education (% of Total)					
Elementary	4.80%	9.60%			
Some High School	11.90%	19.10%			
High School Grad/GED 3	31.70%	37.80%			
Some College 2	25.50%	17.20%			
College Grad 2 Yr	6.90%	5.30%			
College Grad 4 Yr	12.40%	6.80%			
Post Graduate Studies	7.00%	4.30%			
≥ 4% variance below state average					
≥ 4% variance above state average					
One County not in region					

State Designated Service Delivery Regions	9		
LWIA(s)	16		
KEY CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL ALIGNMENT			
Super Sector Industries (Employment)		Percent	Dev.
Construction	3,333	3.88%	0.28%
Education and Health Services	10,423	12.14%	-0.11%
Financial Activities	2,630	3.06%	-2.86%
Information	685	0.80%	-2.39%
Leisure and Hospitality	6,355	7.40%	-3.47%
Manufacturing	12,140	14.14%	5.88%
Natural Resources, Mining, and Agriculture	3008	3.50%	2.86%
Other Services	1,491	1.74%	-0.74%
Professional and Business Services	5,022	5.85%	-10.20%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	18,287	21.30%	0.30%
Unclassified	213	0.25%	-0.18%
Government	22,261	25.93%	10.63%
Labor Force (Total Number of People)	118,861		
Unemployment			
Rate	9.30%		
Number	11,055		
Population (2014 Estimate)	300,847		
Education (% of Total)			
Elementary	8.20%		
Some High School	17.10%		
High School Grad/GED 3	41.70%		
Some College 2	16.70%		
College Grad 2 Yr	5.60%		
College Grad 4 Yr	6.70%		
Post Graduate Studies	4.10%		
≥ 4% variance below state average			
≥ 4% variance above state average			
One County not in region			

State Designated Service Delivery Regions	11		
LWIA(s)	18		
KEY CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL ALIGNMENT			
Super Sector Industries (Employment)		Percent	Dev.
Construction	4,954	3.96%	0.35%
Education and Health Services	13,426	10.73%	-1.53%
Financial Activities	4,363	3.49%	-2.43%
Information	2,262	1.81%	-1.38%
Leisure and Hospitality	14,854	11.87%	0.99%
Manufacturing	15,569	12.44%	4.18%
Natural Resources, Mining, and Agriculture	5434	4.34%	3.70%
Other Services	2,589	2.07%	-0.41%
Professional and Business Services	10,453	8.35%	-7.70%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	29,554	23.61%	2.61%
Unclassified	377	0.30%	-0.12%
Government	21,321	17.04%	1.74%
Labor Force (Total Number of People)	100,781		
Unemployment			
Rate	7.70%		
Number	7,717		
Population (2014 Estimate)	235,956		
Education (% of Total)			
Elementary	6.60%		
Some High School	15.40%		
High School Grad/GED 3	33.30%		
Some College 2	23.50%		
College Grad 2 Yr	6.30%		
College Grad 4 Yr	9.30%		
Post Graduate Studies	5.50%		
≥ 4% variance below state average			
≥ 4% variance above state average			
One County not in region			

State Designated Service Delivery Regions	12		
LWIA(s)	20		
KEY CRITERIA FOR REGIONAL ALIGNMENT			
Super Sector Industries (Employment)		Percent	Dev.
Construction	9,222	3.56%	-0.05%
Education and Health Services	31,705	12.24%	-0.02%
Financial Activities	9,157	3.53%	-2.39%
Information	2,627	1.01%	-2.18%
Leisure and Hospitality	39,361	15.19%	4.31%
Manufacturing	23,793	9.18%	0.92%
Natural Resources, Mining, and Agriculture	796	0.31%	-0.33%
Other Services	7,338	2.83%	0.35%
Professional and Business Services	27,323	10.54%	-5.50%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	55,464	21.40%	0.40%
Unclassified	928	0.36%	-0.07%
Government	51,416	19.84%	4.54%
Labor Force (Total Number of People)	310,780		
Unemployment			
Rate	7.30%		
Number	22,645		
Population (2014 Estimate)	689,607		
Education (% of Total)			
Elementary	3.50%		
Some High School	10.70%		
High School Grad/GED 3	32.90%		
Some College 2	25.10%		
College Grad 2 Yr	6.90%		
College Grad 4 Yr	13.80%		
Post Graduate Studies	7.20%		
≥ 4% variance below state average			
≥ 4% variance above state average			
One County not in region			

Appendix 5: LWDA Regions Map



[Appendix 6: Working Group Benchmarks](#)

In accordance with WIOA mandates, Georgia has increased cooperation and integration among State workforce system partners through the four working groups. The four working groups provided crucial input from all of the workforce system partners. Each group, composed of SWDB members, LWDA Directors, and core program representatives, concentrated on the most complicated issues surrounding WIOA implementation. Progress was made identifying implementation hurdles, drafting and reviewing new guidance, and collaborating on State Plan development. The working groups assisted the State's core program administrative agencies and LWDAs to fully transition into the WIOA workforce system. To further detail the work performed by each working group, a timeline detailing each working group's completed and pending benchmarks is outlined below.

The One-Stop Integration Working Group

Benchmarks	Deadline
Establish State Definitions Related to Colocation	Early Summer 2015
Develop Implementation Strategy	September 2, 2015
Assess Potential Challenges to Integration	September 2, 2015
Develop Recommendations for Integration	September 23, 2015
Formalize Recommendations and Draft One-Stop Integration Plan	October 16, 2015
Develop One-Stop Certification Criteria	Spring 2016
Provide Guidance on Flow of Services	Summer 2016
Deadline for Certifying Comprehensive One-Stop	Summer 2017

The One-Stop Funding and Procurement Working Group

Benchmarks	Deadline
Release Initial Competitive One Stop Procurement Guidance	September 16, 2015
Define Minimum Service Requirements	April, 2016
Establish Deadline for Funding Mechanism Decision	May, 2016
Deadline for Demonstration of Progress towards Competitive Procurement of One-Stop Operator	June 30, 2016 NPRM § 678.635(b)
Federal Deadline for Reaching Local Consensus on One-Stop Infrastructure Funding	July 1, 2016 WIOA § 121(h)(1)(A)(ii)
Develop Detailed Competitive One Stop Procurement Policies and Guidance	July, 2016
Deadline for Competitive Procurement of One-Stop Operator	June 30, 2017 NPRM § 678.635(a)

The Data Integration Working Group

Benchmarks	Deadline
Benchmark Activities of Other States	July 17, 2015
Document Current State	August, 2015
Assess Current State	August, 2015
Develop and Assess Potential Approaches	September 28, 2015
Develop Draft Recommendations and Data Integration Plan	October 21, 2015

The Administration and Board Structure Working Group

Benchmarks	Deadline
Develop LWDB Certification Guidance and Criteria	May, 2015
Establish SWDB in Accordance with WIOA	July 1, 2015
Detail the Region Designation Process and Map	September 2, 2015
Collect Recommendations from LWDBAs on Region Planning	Mid-September, 2015
Collect Information from State Agencies on organization within WFD Regions	Mid-September, 2015
Coordinate Partner Agency State Plan Sections	Early October and November, 2015
Deliver State Plan to SWDB	November 19, 2015
Review Comments Submitted on the State Plan	January, 2016
Conduct Policy Gap Analysis	Spring, 2016
Develop Policies Based on Released Final Rules	Spring, 2016
Develop Local and Regional Planning Guidance	March, 2016