

# Region 8 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined Regional Plan

For the Period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024

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REGION 8

COMBINED REGIONAL PLAN  
2020-2024

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## OVERVIEW

Region 8 of northeast Louisiana submits its Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined Regional Plan for the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024 in accordance with Section 106 of WIOA which provides for the identification of Workforce Development Regions. This document is submitted by Region 8 that consists of the following parishes: Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Madison, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, Union and West Carroll; and was prepared in collaboration with Workforce Development Board-81, Workforce Development Board SDA-83, Inc. and its core partner agencies. Region 8 believes that collaboration and coordination of efforts in all areas is a key to success in ensuring that workforce needs of businesses and job seekers are met. Region 8 will collaborate to collect, analyze and use labor market information to make strategic decisions.

The Region 8 Combined Plan fully aligns with the Governor's strategic vision and guidance for the state's workforce development system. The process for gathering information from stakeholders included meetings of committee work groups, workforce board meetings, and partner meetings. In addition, the local boards made the plan available through electronic means and in open meetings to ensure transparency to the public.

Today's economic landscape and workforce, specifically with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, is constantly changing and the demands shift on a regular basis. One of the goals in releasing the plan, as was a goal of the State of Louisiana, is to provide a reliable guide focused on creating and sustaining good jobs while identifying strategies that support future-oriented education and training for Region 8 citizens. This vision has continued the mission with which Gov. Edwards charged the people of Louisiana. That shared mission of "Putting Louisiana First" and making it possible for all Louisiana citizens to be healthy and prosperous has guided the preparation and evolution of this plan and the State plan.

Louisiana's and Region 8's economy is evolving. Parallel to our evolution are the changing requirements and demands of our state and nation, resulting in a shift in the business needs and skills demand to meet businesses' demands today and in the future.

Region 8, in alignment with the State, envisions a workforce system that will provide pathways for all Louisianans, including individuals who are receiving public assistance, the unemployed or underemployed, those who are deficient in basic skills, as well as persons with disabilities, including disabled veterans, and others who have significant barriers to employment. All will have access to education, training and supportive services needed to prepare for and secure high-demand occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

## Chapter 1: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS – REGION 8

Region 8 believes the submission of this combined plan meets the requirements described in Regional and Local Planning Guide August 2020, OWD Policy 4-14: Use of WIOA Funds for Statewide Employment and Training Activities, and OWD Policy 2-23: Integrated Service Delivery Policy w/attachment.

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

### A. ANALYSIS OF THE:

#### 1. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF REGION 8

Analyses of economic conditions drive the required vision and goals for the State’s and Region 8’s workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.

##### a. TARGETED INDUSTRIES, HIGH-IMPACT INDUSTRY CLUSTERS, AND IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

LARGEST ANNUAL OCCUPATIONAL OPENINGS BY DEGREE TYPE

Bachelor's Degree	Star Rating	Annual Total Openings	2018 Annual Average Wage	Associate's Degree	Star Rating	Annual Total Openings	2018 Annual Average Wage	Post-Secondary Vocational	Star Rating	Annual Total Openings	2018 Annual Average Wage
General and Operations Managers	4	150	\$104,618	Registered Nurses	5	180	\$61,763	Nursing Assistants	2	280	\$20,386
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	5	140	\$44,925	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	4	160	\$35,309	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	3	260	\$28,949
Accountants and Auditors	5	80	\$65,331	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	5	130	\$44,800	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	4	220	\$35,216
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	4	80	\$49,826	Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers	5	30	\$44,678	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	5	190	\$35,315
Management Analysts	5	50	\$62,882	Loan Officers	5	30	\$50,331	Customer Service Representatives	4	180	\$28,753
Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	4	40	\$47,669	Computer Network Support Specialists	5	20	\$55,715	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	4	130	\$38,128

LARGEST ANNUAL OCCUPATIONAL OPENINGS BY DEGREE TYPE											
Financial Managers	5	30	\$100,682	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	4	20	\$44,200	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	4	130	\$57,846
Sales Managers	5	20	\$115,428	Physical Therapist Assistants	5	20	\$56,508	Teacher Assistants	2	120	\$19,758
Construction Managers	5	20	\$101,977	Chemical Plant and System Operators	4	20	\$72,853	Cooks, Restaurant	2	100	\$21,714
Medical and Health Services Managers	5	20	\$99,379	Administrative Services Managers	4	10	\$81,070	Childcare Workers	2	100	\$19,493

**Diagram 1: Occupations with the Most Projected Annual Openings by Education Level**

Diagram 1 lists the occupations with the most projected annual openings by education level, along with their star rating from Louisiana Star Jobs. Many professional and technical services occupations make the list, as that industry continues rapid growth. Engineering, construction and health care occupations also top the lists as they represent an increased need for a highly skilled workforce.

The table below (Diagram 2) lists targeted industries and their associated high-impact industry clusters, as well as their associated in-demand occupations in Region 8. Regional Labor Market Area 8: Monroe anticipates 8 percent growth through 2026. Three (3) industries that anticipate the most growth are: Health Care and Social Assistance (13.2% increase), Accommodation and Food Services (12.6% projected increase), and Retail Trade (942 jobs).

TARGETED SECTORS OF REGION 8	
W/HIGH-IMPACT INDUSTRY CLUSTER	IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS
Health Care and Social Assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambulatory Health Care Services</li> <li>• Hospitals</li> <li>• Nursing and Residential Care Facilities</li> <li>• Social Assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered Nurses</li> <li>• Licensed Practical Nurses</li> <li>• Community and Social Service Specialists, All Other</li> </ul>
Accommodation and Food Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodation</li> <li>• Food Services and Drinking Places</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Service Managers</li> <li>• Chefs and Head Cooks</li> <li>• First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers</li> <li>• Light Truck and Delivery Services Drivers</li> </ul>
Retail Trade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers</li> <li>• Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores</li> <li>• Electronics and appliance Stores</li> <li>• Food and Beverage Stores</li> <li>• Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores</li> <li>• Gasoline Stations</li> <li>• General Merchandise Stores</li> <li>• Health and Personal Care stores</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail Salesperson</li> <li>• First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers</li> <li>• Butchers and Meat Cutters</li> <li>• Pharmacy Technicians</li> <li>• Pharmacists</li> <li>• Parts Salespersons</li> <li>• Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics</li> </ul>

TARGETED SECTORS OF REGION 8	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Miscellaneous Store Retailers</li> <li>• Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealer</li> <li>• Nonstore Retailers</li> <li>• Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores</li> </ul>	

**Diagram 2: Targeted industries and Their Associated High-Impact Industry Clusters w/Associated In-Demand Occupations**

The majority of in-demand jobs in these industries are entry-level, require a minimum of a high school diploma and are lower wage occupations. However, for youth entering the Region 8 workforce, these jobs provide experience to begin building a work history, earning a standard living wage and are first steps in a career pathway.

**b. INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS WITH FAVORABLE LOCATION QUOTIENTS**

High location quotients (LQs) indicate sectors in which Region 8 has high concentrations of employment compared to the State average. The sectors with the largest LQs in Region 8 include Manufacturing, Education and Health Services. The majority of the parishes (9 of 11) follow the State’s concentration of employment in the Natural Resources and Mining industry (average LQ of 5.37). Union Parish has a location quotient of 3.34 in Manufacturing and Ouachita Parish has a LQ in Education and Health Services of 1.35.

(Source: U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Last Modified January 02, 2020-December Employment Location Quotient)

**c. INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS WITH FAVORABLE DEMAND PROJECTIONS BASED ON GROWTH**

The Monroe region’s long term employment projections suggest that the annual average workforce demand to increase by 8.2 percent. Diagram 3 shows industry and occupational projections in the Monroe RLMA.

Industry Title	NAIC	2016 Average Employment	2026 Projected Employment	Employment Change Through 2026	Share of Total Growth Through 2026
Health Care and Social Assistance	62	22,772	25,789	3,017	31.9%
Accommodation and Food Services	72	9,113	10,261	1,148	12.1%
Retail Trade	44-45	14,806	15,748	942	9.9%
Administrative and Waste Services	56	5,174	6,099	925	9.8%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	81	9,218	9,988	770	8.1%
Educational Services	61	10,543	11,123	580	6.1%
Construction	23	4,656	5,090	434	4.6%
Government	90	8,217	8,457	240	2.5%
Finance and Insurance	52	4,609	4,823	214	2.3%

Agriculture, Fishing, Forestry, and Hunting	11	4,131	4,219	88	0.9%
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**Diagram 3: Industry and Occupational Projections in the Monroe RLMA**

**d. INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS WITH FAVORABLE DEMAND PROJECTIONS BASED ON REPLACEMENTS (EXITS + TRANSFERS)**

The annual transfers are those number of jobs needed to fill those workers who are retiring. The chart below reflects both types of replacements, exits and transfers, combined to indicate the total annual openings these workers will leave behind. The chart includes the top twenty-five (25) occupations with the most openings after exits and transfers.

Occ. Code	Occupational Title	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Total Openings Due to Exits and Transfers
00-0000	Total, All Occupations	5,930	7,690	13,620
41-2011	Cashiers	350	340	690
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	250	320	570
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	300	230	530
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	230	240	470
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	170	180	350
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	120	210	330
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	120	190	310
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	150	140	290
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	140	140	280
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	140	140	280
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	140	120	260
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	70	130	200
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	70	100	170
45-2092	Farmworkers and Laborers, Crop, Nursery, and Greenhouse	40	130	170
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	70	100	170
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	90	70	160
43-5081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	70	90	160



Occ. Code	Occupational Title	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Total Openings Due to Exits and Transfers
37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	90	70	160
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	50	100	150
53-3033	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	60	90	150
29-1141	Registered Nurses	90	60	150
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	60	80	140
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	40	90	130
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	50	80	130
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	60	70	130
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	60	70	130
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	30	100	130

**Diagram 4: Industries and Occupations with Favorable Demand Projections Based on Replacements (Exits + Transfers)**

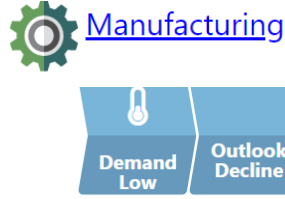
**e. INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS CONSIDERED MATURE BUT STILL IMPORTANT TO THE ECONOMY**

A mature industry is an industry that has passed both the emerging and growth phases of industry growth. At the beginning of the industry lifecycle, new products or services find use in the marketplace. Many businesses may spring up trying to profit from the new product demand. Over time, failures and consolidations will distill the business to the strongest as the industry continues to grow. This is the period where the surviving companies are considered to be mature. Eventually, growth will slow as new or innovative products or services replace this industry offering and begin a new industry lifecycle.

Earnings and sales grow slower in mature industries than during the growth and emerging industries phases. A mature industry may be at its peak or just past it, but not yet in the decline phase. While earnings may be stable, growth prospects are few and far between as the remaining companies consolidate market share and create barriers for new competitors to enter the sphere.

At the maturity stage, the majority of companies in the Manufacturing industry are well-established and the industry has reached its saturation point. These companies

constantly attempt to moderate the intensity of competition to protect themselves, and to maintain profitability by shifting their business models. At this stage, manufacturing companies have realized their maximum revenue, profits, and cash flows because customer demand is fairly high and consistent. These products have

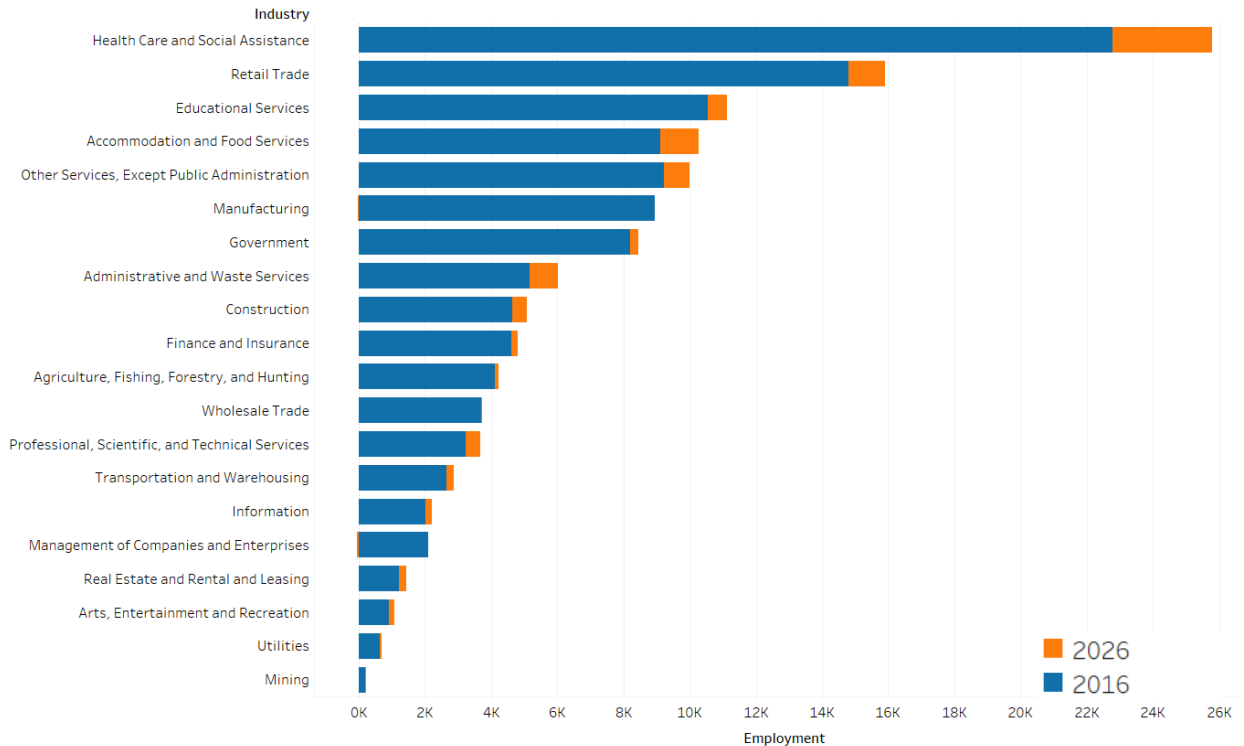


become more commonplace and popular among the general public, and their prices are fairly reasonable, as compared to new

products.

**f. INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS CONSIDERED EMERGING**

Diagram 5 provides employment growth projections expected to experience the greatest growth by 2026. The highest growth occupation according to these projections will be Health Care and Social Assistance. The establishments in this sector perform activities such as: providing nursing care, personal care, assistants to other medical personnel, and receiving and giving information.



**Diagram 5: Industries Considered Emerging in Region 8**

INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS CONSIDERED EMERGING IN REGION 8	
INDUSTRY	IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS CONSIDERED EMERGING IN REGION 8	
Health Care and Social Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Care Aides</li> <li>• Registered Nurses</li> <li>• Licensed Practical Nurses</li> <li>• Office Clerks</li> <li>• Medical Assistants</li> </ul>
Retail Trades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail Sales Person</li> <li>• Cashiers</li> <li>• Stock Clerks and Order Fillers</li> <li>• Food Preparation Workers</li> <li>• Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers</li> </ul>
Accommodation and Food Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooks, Fast Food</li> <li>• Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop</li> <li>• Bartenders</li> <li>• Light Truck or Delivery Drivers</li> <li>• Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria</li> </ul>

**Quick Facts**

Fueled by the aging of the baby boomers, the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry is projected to grow by 3,017 between 2016 and 2026. This growth is broken down further into the Ambulatory Health Services, Hospitals, Nursing and Residential Care Facilities, and Social Assistance Industries. Nearly three quarters of the growth is attributable to hospital workers and emergency care professionals, 64.1 percent. The number of job vacancies in this sector also show strong demand for workers in the Education and Health Services sector.

**g. SOURCES OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND DATA**

The lists of occupations with the most projected annual openings by education level Diagram 1, along with their star rating from Louisiana Star Jobs, was sourced from LWC’s HiRE system by using Labor Market Information>Employment Projections. ([http://www.laworks.net/LaborMarketInfo/LMI\\_employmentprojections.asp](http://www.laworks.net/LaborMarketInfo/LMI_employmentprojections.asp)).

This information was provided by Monique Breaux, Economic Development Research Analyst, with Louisiana Workforce Commission’s Research & Statistics/Office of Occupational Information Services.

The targeted industries were also provided by LWC’s Research & Statistics/Office of Occupational Information Services. The high-impact industry clusters, as well as their associated in-demand occupations in Region 8, were gathered from HiRE’s Wages and Labor Data under the Industry data tab. Changing the area selection to 8<sup>th</sup> Regional Labor Market Area, each industry was selected, then that industry expanded to show the industry clusters in that targeted industry. Going back to Wages and Labor Data, LOIS was selected to access the Employment Projections for

each industry. This selection was used to determine the in-demand occupations for each industry.

U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Last Modified January 02, 2020-December Employment Location Quotient was used to determine which industries have favorable location quotients.

Again, it was with the aid of LWC’s Research & Statistics/Office of Occupational Information Services that Diagram 3: Industry and Occupational Projections in the Monroe RLMA was made available.

Industries and Occupations with Favorable Demand Projections Based on Replacements (Exits + Transfers), Diagram 4, is a manipulation of the data in the *Monroe-Northeast-Regional Labor Market Area 8 Long Term Projections for All Occupations to 2026*. The annual total openings in the chart are the sum of the annual exits and the annual transfers. The chart was condensed to include only the top twenty-five (25) occupations.

LOIS provided the chart (Diagram 5) of Industries and Occupations Considered Emerging in Region 8 as a download from Labor Market Facts: Questions on Industries in Your Local Area>What industries are predicted to have the most future job openings in an area? To get the occupations considered emerging, the Employment Projections for each industry was accessed. This selection was used to determine the in-demand occupations for each industry.

**2. EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS IN EXISTING AND EMERGING INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN REGION 8**

The Monroe region has a focus on three industries – Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade. The Health Care and Social Assistance industry – a backbone of the state’s economy – is the largest contributor to long term growth, accounting for 31.1 percent of total forecasted growth in Region 8 through 2026.

However, looking at job postings provides insight into real time employment needs. The most frequently requested occupation group over the past twelve (12) months (August 2019 – August 2020) is for Office and Administrative Support Occupations.

Occupation Group Description (O*Net)	Total Job Orders	Total Job Openings	Total Job Referrals
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	263	926	3,874
Production Occupations	255	777	3,285
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	78	697	600

	Community and Social Services Occupations	109	623	565
L	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	221	604	2,379
C	Health care Practitioners and Technical Occupations	551	553	870
k	Health care Support Occupations	108	412	1,613
i	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	115	255	1,218
n	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	164	181	1,090
g	Sales and Related Occupations	120	142	1,438
	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	124	125	673
a	Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance Occup.	77	117	882
t	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	26	112	202
l	Construction and Extraction Occupations	76	111	615
c	Management Occupations	106	106	450
n	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	73	81	282
g	Personal Care and Service Occupations	30	69	339
t	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	47	47	99
e	Protective Service Occupations	45	46	262
r	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occ	42	42	379
n	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	14	16	14
c	Military Specific Occupations	1	10	24
C	Legal Occupations	9	9	29
c				

Occupational projections provides insight into the employment needs and provides an opportunity to ensure qualified candidates are being trained to meet employment demand. Occupations related to Health care Practitioners, Technicians and Support are projected to experience the greatest growth. Occupations in Farming, Fishing and Forestry as well as Production are declining.

Occupation	2016 Estimated Employment	2026 Projected Employment	2016-2026 Annual Avg. Percent Change
Home Health Aides	458	681	4.05%
Roustabouts, Oil and Gas	28	39	3.37%
Personal Care Aides	3,251	4,344	2.94%
Nurse Practitioners	138	179	2.64%
Physician Assistants	45	58	2.57%
Physical Therapist Assistants	113	145	2.52%
Occupational Therapy Assistants	46	59	2.52%
Web Developers	31	39	2.32%
Physical Therapists	255	319	2.26%
Computer Network Support Specialists	164	205	2.26%

### 3. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED TO MEET EMPLOYERS NEEDS IN REGION 8

Employers, more often than not, identify customer service, attendance, time management, punctuality, communication skills, and accountability as examples of essential skills needing to be improved. Applicant testing services are available to Region 8’s employers through the eleven (11) American Job Centers (AJCs), specifically the comprehensive centers located in Morehouse and Ouachita Parishes. Assessments help identify the interests, skills, and aptitudes of applicants early in the employment process. These tests can help close some of the skills gaps by helping employers better match applicants to open positions and/or identify opportunities for additional skill training. The Integrated Business Services Team is involved in employer outreach to gather information about skills and training needs of the employers in the region. Ongoing input from employers will drive future efforts to address the skill gap.

Degree Level	2016	2017	2018	Annual Projected Openings
Some Postsecondary, No Degree	8,802	9,232	11,876	62,410
Associate Degree	5,800	5,662	5,961	14,000
Baccalaureate Degree	18,973	18,725	19,532	23,490
Graduate or Professional Degree	6,997	7,150	8,080	5,880

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

The preceding table shows the number of completers from Louisiana’s public postsecondary education programs by degree level. Academic years 2016 through 2018 are included. The academic years are labeled by the year in which they begin, so 2017 is the school year beginning in June 2017 and ending in May 2018. This is compared to the number of annual openings in the State from LWC’s long-term projections, which provides an approximation of what skill levels may show gaps in the future.

Below is further breakdown of degrees awarded by occupational category. The same comparison is drawn between 2017 graduates and annual projected job openings in the Monroe region through 2026.

Degree Category	2018 Completers	Annual Projected Openings
Health Professions	7,913	14,990
Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Professions	7,425	12,710
Education	6,327	8,900

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

#### ED CAREER PATHWAY CLUSTERS

Assisting job seekers with not just job placement, but identification of career pathways is a priority in Region 8. The plan is also to create regional career pathways for each customer-base across systems (adults, dislocated workers, UI Claimants,

long-term unemployed, adult education student, TANF/SNAP, vocational rehabilitation clients, veterans, older workers and individuals with additional barriers to employment including, the homeless, etc.) to align programs and resources that lead to employment outcomes, particularly for those with barriers to employment.

Louisiana Delta Community College is planning cooperatively through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 and WIOA-planning to provide workforce skills training and integrated work-based training to meet regional employer and economic development needs. Region 8 partners will continue to work with the workforce development boards and core partners to define and build pathways appropriate to the region. WIOA emphasizes services that lead to career pathways and stackable credentials. This includes registered apprenticeships and occupational training programs, and from basic education into post-secondary programs. The foundation for this approach to post-secondary credentials is the development of career clusters at the secondary school level, these are:

- Health Science
- Manufacturing
- Business Management & Administration

A career pathway approach is designed to prepare students to meet the demands of postsecondary education and the expectations of employers, in particular those representing in-demand occupations. Integral to this process is the opportunity for participants to acquire a “portable” and “recognized” credential that they have successfully demonstrated skill competencies on a core set of content that is complete with performance standards that are based on a specific set of work-related tasks in either a single occupational area, or a cluster of related occupational areas. Louisiana currently has multiple certifications that are “Industry Based” and “Locally Designed” and available state-wide.

Region 8 recognizes that strong relationships with employers are necessary to create pathways to gainful, long-term employment for participants. The career pathway model provides a combination of education, training, and other services that align with the skill needs of industries in the region. The model prepares adults for success by organizing education, training, and other services to support their particular needs including: counseling to accomplish goals; educational training and workforce preparation that is offered simultaneously, concurrently, and contextually within a specific occupation or occupational cluster; allowance for attaining a recognized high school equivalency credential; and entrance or advancement within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

**b. Skills In-Demand**

**HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE**

<b>Advertised Detailed Job Skill</b>	<b>Job Opening Match Count</b>
Interpersonal skills	3,499
Customer service	3,392
Time management	2,619
Organizational skills	2,385
Decision making	1,273

Source: Online advertised jobs data

**ACCOMMODATION and FOOD SERVICES**

<b>Advertised Detailed Job Skill</b>	<b>Job Opening Match Count</b>
Customer service	104
Participate in the interview process	70
General maintenance	69
Restaurant management	60
Conflict management	60

Source: Online advertised jobs data

**RETAIL TRADE**

<b>Advertised Detailed Job Skill</b>	<b>Job Opening Match Count</b>
Customer service	456
Clean parking lots	103
Greeting customers	39
Inventory control	38
Bookkeeping	37

Source: Online advertised jobs data

**Diagram 6: In-Demand Industries with Employers’ Requested Workplace Skills**

Essential skills continue to be identified by Region 8’s employers as a key barrier to individuals entering employment. Not only do employers want individuals with specific occupational skills (Diagram 6), they want individuals with the foundational workplace skills as well. Through conversations and visits with employers, feedback showed that employers considered the following qualifications as essential to being hired:

- Reliability
- Personal Responsibility
- Attendance/punctuality
- Communication (active listening and learning, speaking)
- Critical thinking and judgement/decision making.



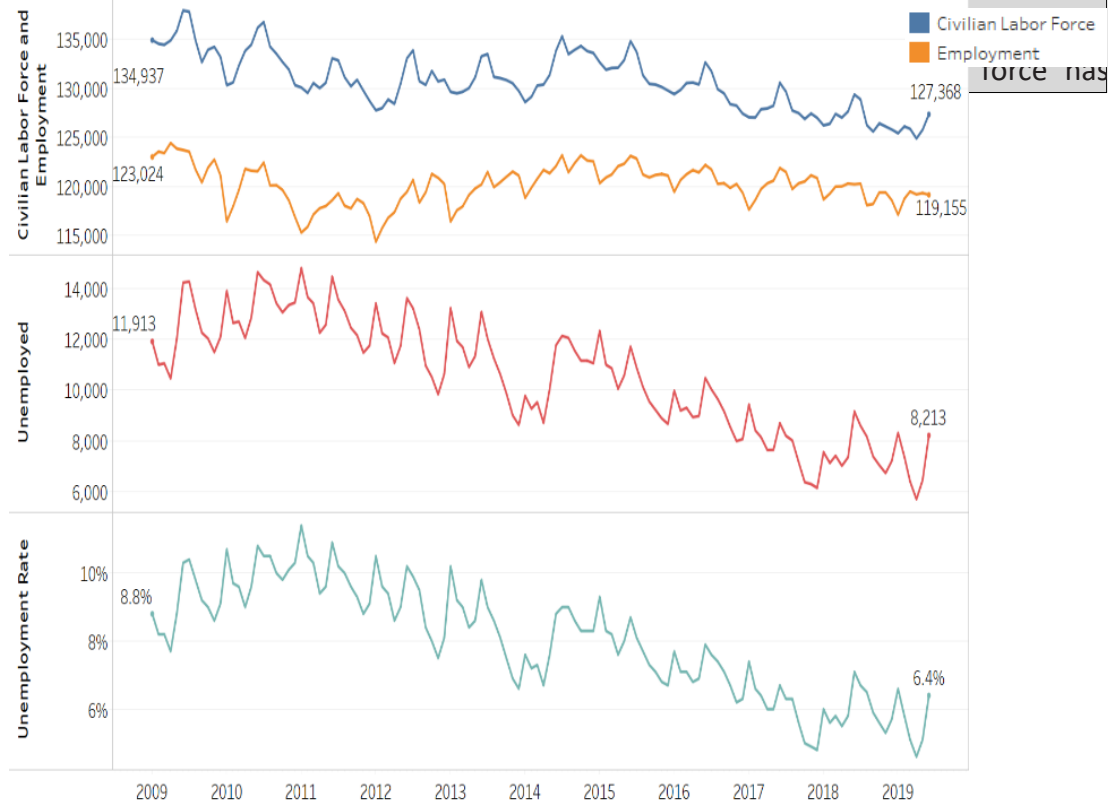
**c. Existing Job Seeker Skills vs. Demands of Businesses**

In Region 8, as in the rest of the State, the gap in skills between what a potential employee possesses and what an employer needs is a complex issue. We hear frequently that there are not enough of the right candidates for in-demand jobs. To meet the needs of employers for skilled workers, job seekers need training. This is the case for low-income adults, dislocated workers and youth as well.

**4. WORK FORCE IN REGION 8**

Civilian Labor Force Statistics

The Monroe RLMA was hit hard during the coronavirus pandemic with monthly unemployment rates exceeding 10 percent from April to May, 2020. The rate has decreased since then, with the preliminary September 2020 rate being 6.9 percent, compared to a September 2010 rate of 8.7 percent



of Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Data January 2009 to June 2019

Labor Force Status	Percent
Population	4.5%

Labor Force Status	Percent
Labor Force Participation Rate	77.0%
Employed	96.1%
Unemployed	3.9%
Not in Labor Force	23.0%
<b>Diagram 7: Labor Force Status of Veterans Aged 18 to 64</b>	
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2018 1-year estimates, Table C21005	

Diagram 7 breaks out the labor force status of Louisiana’s veterans aged 18 to 64. Veterans in Louisiana have a fairly high labor force participation rate, with over 77 percent of those aged 18 to 64 part of the labor force. Veterans account for 4.5 percent of the state’s population.

**Nonfarm Employment Statistics**  
**Seasonally Adjusted Total Nonfarm Employment January 2018 to June 2019**



**Above:** During the period of January 2018 to June 2019, seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment declined by 300 jobs during what was a very volatile period.

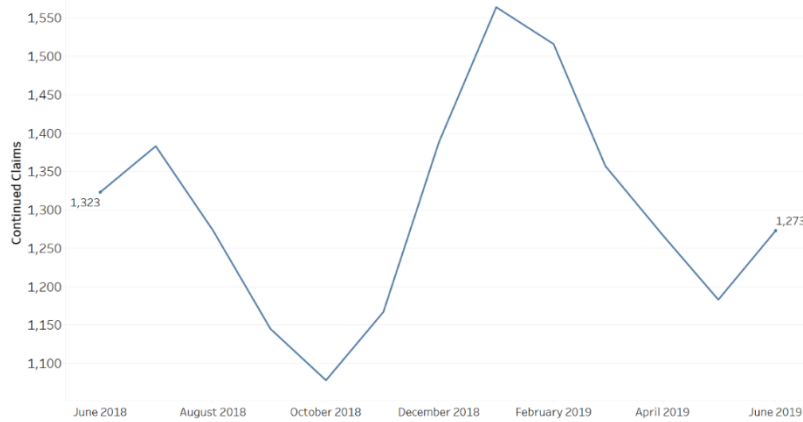
**Below:** Nonfarm employment in the Monroe MSA has grown steadily since reaching a low of 75,400 in December of 2010.



Seasonally Adjusted Total Nonfarm Employment January 2009 to June 2019

## Unemployment Insurance Claims Data

### Continued Claims for June 2018 to June 2019

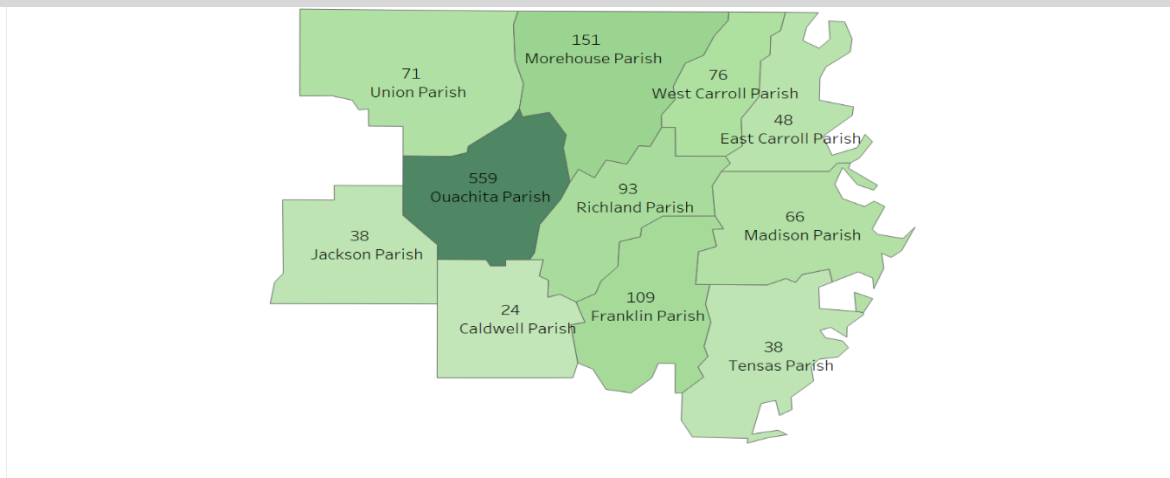


**Above:** Continued claims have decreased in the Monroe RLMA over the past year, declining from 1,323 in June 2018 to 1,273 in June 2019.

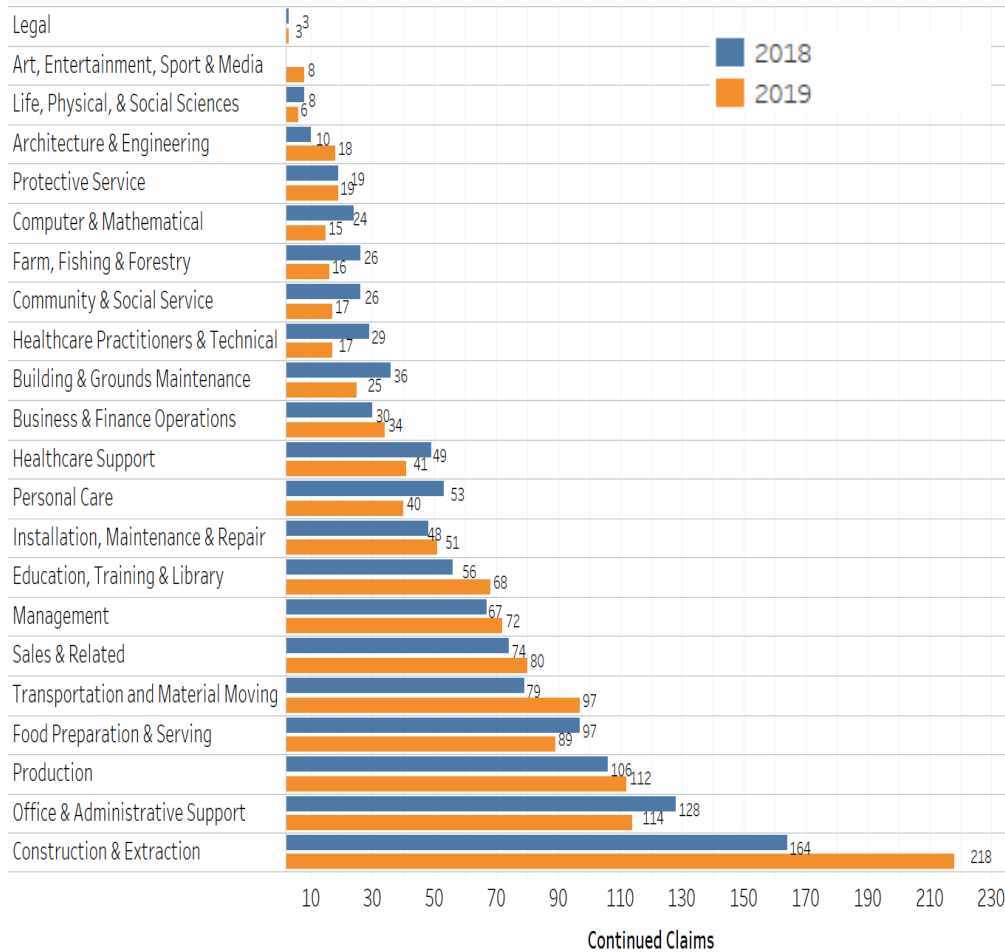
**Below:** Ouachita Parish had the most continued claims for the Monroe Region in June 2018 with 559 claims.

Both visuals display the continued claims for unemployment insurance filed for the week containing the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month.

### Claims by Parish in June 2018



### Continued Claims for June 2018 to June 2019



This chart shows the occupation clusters that contributed to Monroe’s continued claims for the week containing June 12 in 2018 and 2019. Construction and Extraction Occupations led the region with 218 continued claims.

Diagrams 8 and 9 highlight the educational achievements of Louisiana’s population. Diagram 8 looks at a younger cohort, ages 18 to 24, who may still be in postsecondary education. Their relative age likely accounts for the low percentage of Bachelor’s degree or higher completers, and the high percentage of “Some college or Associate’s degree” completers. Diagram 9 studies the population above age 24, which is more likely to have left the educational system. More than half of Louisiana’s adult population has completed some college coursework or graduated from a secondary institution.

Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce of Louisiana	
Population 18 to 24 years	Percent
Less than high school graduate	16.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	35.5%
Some college or Associate's degree	40.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	7.4%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2018 1-year estimates, Table S1501

**Diagram 8: Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce of Louisiana-18 to 24 years**

Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce of Louisiana (Continued)	
Population 25 years and over	Percent
Less than high school graduate	14.2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	34.3%
Some college, no degree	20.8%
Associate's degree	6.5%
Bachelor's degree	15.9%
Graduate or professional degree	8.4%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2018 1-year estimates, Table S1501

**Diagram 9: Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce of Louisiana-25 years and up**

**a. CHANGES IN DEMOGRAPHICS, LABOR SUPPLY AND OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND**

The population in Region 8 is slowly decreasing. The 2010 population of 8th Regional Labor Market Area, Monroe, LA was estimated at 309,026. The 2016 population of 8th Regional Labor Market Area, Monroe, LA was estimated at 306,706. This represents a -0.75% change from 2010.

Area Name	2010 Estimated Population	2016 Estimated Population	Estimated 2010-2016 Population Percent Change
8 <sup>th</sup> Regional Labor Market Area-Monroe	309,026	306,706	-0.75%

This demographic shift will continue into the future and will create continued downward pressure on labor supply for the entire region. The aging population is a key contributor to the expected strong demand for health care workers. Employers of Region 8 are also reporting that they are unprepared for the “brain drain” and skills void that will result when a significant proportion of talented, experienced older workers start retiring and leaving the workforce.

This diagram shows the number of job openings advertised online, as well as potential candidates in the workforce system in 8th Regional Labor Market Area, Monroe, LA on September 9, 2020.

Area Name	Job Openings	Candidates	Candidates per Job
8th Regional Labor Market Area-Monroe	2,923	56,088	19.19

**b. SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

WIOA established a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for Adult activities. Under this section, AJC staff, when using WIOA Adult funds to provide individualized career services, training services, or both, must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

The special (priority) populations under WIOA, and recognized in Region 8, include:

- Recipients of public assistance: SNAP, TANF, SSI, any other income-based assistance,
- Other low-income individuals who receive public assistance:
  - Family income does not exceed the poverty line or 70% of LLSIL,
  - Homeless,
  - Free or reduced school lunch,
  - Foster child,
  - Disabled,
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient, and
- Veterans and eligible spouses.

Disability Characteristic	Employed	Unemployed	Not in Labor Force
With a hearing difficulty	25.9%	8.5%	15.1%
With a vision difficulty	30.0%	29.9%	21.0%
With a cognitive difficulty	32.6%	51.2%	47.3%
With an ambulatory difficulty	30.5%	26.3%	56.7%
With a self-care difficulty	7.3%	5.7%	24.0%
With an independent living difficulty	14.5%	24.4%	46.4%
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2018 1-year estimates, Table B18120			

**Diagram 10: LA Disability Characteristics of the Workforce Aged 18 to 64 by Employment Status**

Diagram 10 highlights the rates at which various disability characteristics appear in the employed, unemployed, and not in the labor force populations. The majority of residents with disabilities, either unemployed or not in the labor force, face cognitive and/or ambulatory difficulties. Disability characteristics are not mutually exclusive, meaning one individual may have multiple difficulties, accounting for the high percentages.

In Louisiana, 6.5 percent of the employed population aged 18 to 64 lives with one or more disability. Residents with disabilities account for 15 percent of the unemployed and 31 percent of those not in the labor force.

## B. REGION 8 SECTOR INITIATIVES

### 1. CONVENING OF EMPLOYERS, FOUNDATIONS, AND REGION 8 INSTITUTIONS

Region 8 has adopted the Next Generation Sector Partnerships model. The model is a partnership of companies from the same industry in a shared labor market region that works with education, workforce development, economic development and community organizations to tackle common needs of the targeted industry. Sector partnerships

primarily focus on the education and workforce training needs of an industry, but Next Gen partnerships also focus on other issues related to an industry’s competitiveness. This ensures deeper, broader and longer-term industry engagement.

**INDUSTRY-DRIVEN, COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED  
SECTOR PARTNERSHIP**



**2. ESTABLISHED AND ACTIVE INDUSTRY SECTOR PARTNERSHIP IN REGION 8**

Region 8’s first attempt at sector partnership was in the Health care industry. Region 8’s Workforce Development Boards first convened, in the summer of 2016, what has now grown into Northeast Louisiana Health Care Alliance. This has been a very successful partnership. The NELA Health care Alliance represents nearly forty (40) diverse health care organizations in northeast Louisiana. The alliance is made up of hospitals, long term care facilities, skilled nursing facilities, home health organizations and others who provide critically needed health care to community members. These health care organizations come together in an ongoing network to tackle the most pressing health care issues of Region 8 including workforce issues, networking opportunities, and pressing policy topics that warrant a collective action.

Health care companies in other regions of the country are working together to create “health care sector partnerships”, and Region 8 must too if we are to continue to thrive. Sector partnerships are a way for multiple health care organizations to come together around important issues. They are a place to collectively address issues related to shared vitality; a single table at which to work with multiple public programs in education, workforce development and economic development; and an opportunity to help create solutions to shared pressing issues.

The launch meeting was professionally facilitated. Opportunities for industry stability and vitality in northeast Louisiana were defined for action. This was the beginning of an ongoing partnership of health care leaders in our region. Community partners such as workforce development, education, economic development, and others were there for the initial meeting in “listening” mode in order to better understand how they could help. Community partners are a critical piece to acting on the priorities defined by the Alliance.

**Wins for the NELA Health care Alliance**

- Region 8 Hospital Resource Guide
- Regional Acute Network Data-sharing Project – Live July 1, 2017



- Prompted the re-establishment of the Ambulance Advisory Committee and secured membership appointments for health care representations. Led to a new Ambulance Provider for parish 1.1.19
- Expanded working network and networking opportunities – both with health care and community partners and peer to peer networking.
- Hosted Legislative Luncheon August 10, 2017 directly resulting in 2 pieces proposed legislation with one passed SB478: Provides relative to LPN Licensure. (No longer a charge to look up LPN License.)
- Enhanced an existing Louisiana Delta Community College CNA education program to address customer service deficiencies defined by health care providers in the region. Industry Partners and support partners have also worked together to redesign C.N.A. curriculum to include a Behavioral Health course to address the lack of Behavioral Health Techs in the area.
- CNA training opportunities have expanded to non-traditional sites.
- The NELA Health care Alliance has hosted two no-cost Nursing Symposiums to address the need to up skill incumbent nurses.
- Submitted Alliance Support for a regional candidate for the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy to the Governor for appointment.
- Applied for and was awarded a Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation Collective Impact Grant of \$300,000, and a Living Well Foundation Grant award for \$44,000 for funding opportunities to support adjunct faculty to teach nursing clinicals at regional health care facilities.
- Hosted a seminar in partnership with Ochsner’s for regional security guard training for approximately 20 participants to address active shooter threats in the health care facility setting. (Acute Care Committee)
- Instrumental in the development and installation of two new in-demand occupational training programs identified by the Alliance as critical for the region: 1) Medical Assistants and 2) Behavioral Technicians.
- Awarded the 2019 International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Bronze Award for collaboration and partnership for the NELA Nursing Adjunct Faculty Project funded by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Louisiana and Living Well Foundation.

### **3. OTHER SECTOR-BASED PARTNERSHIPS IN REGION 8**

Workforce Development Boards-81 and 83 continue to evaluate industry needs to determine the next sector partnership to initiate. A partnership with the Manufacturing industry has been launched by the Monroe Chamber of Commerce. Region 8 has representatives participating in the planning meetings. The WDBs work closely with the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MePOL), a manufacturing organization.

### **4. OTHER PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN REGION 8**

In 2015, IBM, CenturyLink and the State of Louisiana announced a public-private partnership that was to create high-value, high-tech jobs in the IT sector. As part of a

ten (10)-year business transformation agreement between IBM and CenturyLink, IBM opened and staffed the new applications development innovation center in Region 8, creating at least four hundred (400) new roles for experienced professionals and drawing heavily on graduates from the state's colleges and universities. The State is providing \$4.5 million in funding over ten (10) years to expand key higher education programs in the IT sector, including the computer science program at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, the cyber engineering program at Louisiana Tech, and the data analytics program at Grambling State University. In addition, the State is providing \$12 million for construction of new office space for the use by IBM.

In the spring of 2017, Graphic Packaging International Inc. and DHL Supply Chain, North America made a combined \$274 million capital investment in the Manufacturing industry in northeast Louisiana and developed a 1.27 million-square-foot folding carton plant and logistics center in Monroe. A number of factors influenced the decision, including access to an experienced and skilled local workforce in Region 8 and the relationship with the State of Louisiana and local community. To secure the projects, Louisiana offered a competitive incentive package consisting of a performance-based, \$3 million Modernization Tax Credit for Graphic Packaging. For the public-private partnership capital investment, Graphic Packaging secured a local tax exemption agreement with the Ouachita Industrial Development Board as an alternative to the state's Industrial Tax Exemption Program. For its investment in the Monroe facility, DHL will receive an exemption of local property taxes.

In addition, Graphic Packaging will receive support from the state's FastStart® workforce training program, and the warehouse operator will be eligible to participate in the state's Enterprise Zone Program, along with either a sales tax rebate on capital equipment and materials purchased or a 1.5 percent tax credit on the company's total capital investment.

The project created over one hundred (100+) new direct jobs, and the warehouse operations resulted in more new indirect jobs. Because of the public-private partnership, Graphic Packaging will continue to employ more than eight hundred (800) people in its West Monroe mill and in the new combined folding carton plant.

Region 8 has five (5) community college campuses that support sector strategies. LDCC is in constant contact with businesses to help them align curriculum and provide quality, affordable education and training to area residents. In addition, these strategies are discussed at the partner meetings with the community college in attendance.

Partnerships with chambers of commerce and economic development agencies in Region 8 will prepare the region for future sector partnerships, especially as technology continues to change the nature of work and future jobs amid the coronavirus pandemic.

## 5. NEUTRAL CONVENERS IN REGION 8

As described in the Next Generation Sector Partnership Tool Kit, the convener plays an essential role in keeping a sector partnership on track and moving forward to accomplish the goals of the businesses in the partnership. The convener is the backbone of the sector partnership, providing administrative, project management, and facilitation support to keep the partnership focused and productive.

In Region 8, any of the community partners can be considered neutral enough to be a convener of a sector partnership. The community partners are:

- Workforce Development Boards 81 and 83
- North Louisiana Economic Partnership
- University of Louisiana at Monroe and Louisiana Tech University
- Louisiana Delta Community College
- Monroe City School District
- Ouachita Parish School District
- Monroe Chamber of Commerce.

Again, from the Next Gen model, there is no single organization that is best positioned to convene a sector partnership. Successful sector partnerships can be convened by workforce development boards, chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, industry associations, or community colleges. Whatever the arrangement, it's important that the convener has the following characteristics:

- Trusted
- Facilitative
- Process-oriented.

## Chapter 2: STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION – REGIONAL 8

WIOA promotes alignment of workforce development programs with regional economic development strategies to meet the needs of local and regional employers. The workforce system supports strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

All customers in Region 8 will have access to services in both a self-serve option and/or a staff-assisted option. Access to some services may require determination of customer eligibility, which is provided at one of the eleven (11) local American Job Centers in Region 8. Integrated Service Delivery honors the journey of the individual. In particular, it highlights the assets and interests of the customer at every point of service delivery. Integration called out in the legislation requires partners to be flexible and adaptive as customer needs change. WIOA puts the job seeker in the driver's seat at Region 8's American Job Center locations and allows them the opportunity to understand all services and choose the option(s) that will work best for them. Customers are actively engaged in service determinations throughout the process, and service providers utilize the strengths that each customer brings to their employment journey. Customers are also frequently asked to review service experiences and inform how future customer experiences can be improved. Region 8 is in the forefront of the coordinated planning and service delivery strategies that makes the regional efforts successful.

### A. Analysis of Workforce Development Activities

#### 1. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN REGION 8

What follows is a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities in Region 8. A strength of the region's workforce development activities is the many partnerships in place to help individuals with barriers to find employment that will lead to a self-sufficient wage.

##### Strengths

- Title I performance goals are the primary focus of the region.
- Increased online presence and access to automated services.
- Both LWDA's in Region 8 make Title I programs more employer driven.
- Louisiana Delta Community College is a high quality provider across the region. WDB 81 and 83 work collaboratively with the community college to help develop employer-driven programming to fill immediate and longer term employer needs.
- Information is shared across the region to reduce any overlap with employers.
- Region 8 continues to participate in the North Louisiana Work Ready Community. LWDB-81 became a certified ACT Work Ready Community in May 2019. LWDB-83 continues to progress toward becoming a Certified Community.
- The Northeast Louisiana Health Care Alliance continues to make strides in Region 8.
- Both WDBs in Region 8 utilize labor market information produced by Louisiana Workforce Commission to make sound workforce decisions.

- Both LWDAs within Region 8 are working to be more creative with program design and consistently share best practices.

### Weaknesses

- Employer involvement is not always as strong as it should be to ensure regular feedback. Region 8 seeks more feedback from employers to know how efficient and effective our programs are.
- The majority of the clients seeking assistance are the hardest to serve. “Employability” or “soft skills” are often what job seekers need the most.
- LWDAs in Region 8 seek additional training opportunities for Youth activities.
- There is a mismatch between the available labor pool and employer demand. Many in-demand jobs require advanced training to meet workforce requirements.
- Transportation issues are a constant struggle. Many workers are not close to job opportunities and do not have access to public transportation or access to a vehicle.
- Funding for child care assistance is a consistent reason for many to decline job opportunities.
- There is a perception that many clients served are “unemployable”.
- The lack of a consistent marketing campaign has diminished the ability to develop lasting relationships with both job seekers and employer customers.

## **2. CAPACITY OF PARTNERS TO ADDRESS EDUCATION AND SKILL NEEDS IN REGION 8**

Region 8 is tasked with establishing, implementing and sustaining a comprehensive, integrated workforce delivery system that expands economic development and workforce capacity. This is being done by increasing collaboration among all workforce partners to improve responsiveness and the coordinated delivery of services. Region 8 is very connected in helping to bring partners and programs together. The region is forming many new partnerships to meet the educational needs of our citizens. The LWDAs are members of the Regional Carl Perkins committee to help shape pathways opportunities.

The Region strives on providing short-term, demand-driven training. Region 8 aligns with the goal to support the Jump Start 2.0 program to better prepare students to work in high wage, high-growth industries. Region 8’s Adult Education partners are partnering with the LWDAs to provide more training opportunities. Louisiana Delta Community College is actively engaged in developing solutions. LDCC Center for Adult Development has made employment the primary goal for adult education rather than earning a credential alone.

As new firms locate in the region and as existing businesses work to remain competitive, the ability of the workforce system to identify business needs and to respond and deliver appropriate assessment, training, placement and retention strategies, is essential to maintaining workforce capacity. The WDBs of Region 8 provides direct leadership, support, services and resources to employers that: enhance specific skill

development initiatives and programs; expand technical skills, workforce capacity, apprenticeship programs, customized work training; and foster technical career support. Employer services include occupational and labor market information to inform economic forecasting, no-cost human resource services for recruiting, retaining, and hiring qualified employees. Region 8 convenes a Regional Integrated Business Service Team. The goal is to bring together a team to coordinate and streamline services to employers. The focus is to ensure employers can access workers within the American Job Center system. The team:

- engages the business community to identify industry-hiring trends and industry recognized credentials,
- supports industry-specific sector strategies designed to facilitate in-depth focus on particular industries with business partnerships in these areas,
- analyzes and disseminates labor market information to project job growth, wages, and training requirements,
- provides comprehensive analysis of Region 8's labor market,
- creates custom recruitment plans,
- posts job vacancies online,
- conducts targeted recruitment through email and Zoom contact,
- organizes job fairs and special employer events,
- provides interview scheduling services and facilities,
- provides On-the-Job training funds,
- facilitates employed worker trainings, and
- responds to WARN notices, facilitating workshops on behalf of Louisiana Workforce Commission by providing information on rights, responsibilities, and resources for the workforce.

There is opportunity for stronger coordination and consistency between partner programs in Region 8, through the use of a common intake process, referral and co-enrollment strategy that will improve efficiencies across the board for all partners. This "any door" approach will enable any job seeker to enter the system with a consistent approach, which will result in seamless transition among partner programs and supportive services providers.

### **3. CAPACITY OF PARTNERS TO ADDRESS NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS IN REGION 8**

The regional partners have continued to expand their capacity to address the needs of employers. Partners within both LWDAs in Region 8 collaborate to understand the skill needs of employers and implement appropriate responses. Partners work with employers to understand skill needs by using Business Services Teams (BST) to meet with employers on a regular basis to discuss employment needs.

The Integrated Business Service Team is designed to be a group of individuals who work with businesses to form a single point of contact that represents all of the participating partners. Business customers express the need for American Job Center services which

includes candidate screening, validation of the job-seeker information, assessment, and quality applicants. Business customers also need employee commitment and loyalty, a single point of contact, and knowledge about AJC's products and services.

Region 8's goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers mirrors those of LWC.

- Foster the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to meet occupational demands as supported by regional labor market information.
- Increase the use of labor market and educational data and technology, in coordination with local data, to inform and guide strategic workforce development decisions.
- Develop focused, regional workforce initiatives that blend partner resources to educate and train workers for jobs within the workforce region.
- Increase the alignment and efficacy of formula, discretionary and competitive workforce funding in efforts to support regional and local workforce initiatives.
- Promote meaningful, portable industry credentials supported throughout the workforce delivery system that align to workforce demand.
- Institute a system of accountability for the workforce development system that supports and promotes the evaluation of the effectiveness of both the region as well as the local workforce development boards.

#### **4. TRAINING PROGRAMS PREPARING JOB SEEKERS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN REGION 8**

Each local area has different strategies and areas of focus for best servicing the needs of its residents and employers. Region 8's Workforce Development Boards are working increasingly with our educational partners to develop career pathway programs to prepare individuals to be successful in secondary and post-secondary education or enter a specific occupation. Louisiana Delta Community College offers credentials in many different sectors. The coordination between Adult Education and Workforce partners is necessary to meet the needs of the job seekers within Region 8.

Region 8's Workforce Boards utilize work-based learning opportunities to prepare job seekers. Work-based learning opportunities include On-the-Job Training (OJT), Work Experience, Apprenticeships, and Youth Internships to provide the skills needed for job seekers to be successful in the workplace.

#### **5. COMMITMENT OF PROGRAM PARTNERS TO STRATEGIES IN REGION 8**

Through the MOU development process, each program partner has committed to the integration of workforce development services. Region 8's partners are committed to implementing the strategies for LWDA-81 and 83. The major priority continues to be communication among partners including improving and expanding technological capabilities that facilitate service referrals; coordination of services across partners for the entire workforce system; coordinated employer services; cross training provided to staffs; and performance reporting and management.

## **B. COORDINATION OF TRANSPORTATION AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

Supportive services for individuals are coordinated with community agencies as well as partner agencies such as adult education, vocational rehabilitation, and Veterans programs. In coordinating and collaborating with partners, WIOA resources will be used to provide supportive services when other funding is not available.

WIOA allows for the provision of supportive services to enable an individual to participate in career services and training services. Supportive services such as transportation, work gear, licensure tests, child care, dependent care, and housing, may be necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized and consistent with the provisions of the WIOA Title I-B.

Transportation issues are one of the most common barriers to individuals participating in activities as well as those seeking immediate employment. In all of the parishes in LWDA-83 there are no public transportation options available for training or work. Current practices include reimbursement of expenses toward transportation.

### **1. ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING SUPPORTIVE SERVICES IN REGION 8**

WIOA requires regions and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with organizations that do and could in the future provide supportive services. Each of the two (2) Comprehensive One-Stop Centers in Region 8 offer an extensive array of services which include for job seekers the provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services such as child care and transportation.

- The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is committed to providing cash assistance and supportive services to needy families meeting specific financial criteria and to provide services necessary to accomplish the goals and purposes of Section 401 of the Social Security Act (42 USC 601), as well as the goal set by participating in WIOA training activities.
- The Community Services Block Grant Unit, as a component of the LWC, Office of Workforce Development, will provide leadership and technical assistance to the local Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to support the collaboration and coordination of employment and training activities, as well as supportive services with the local and regional WDBs.
- Training provided by the State Monitor Advocate is tied to and follows outreach and provision of services to MSFWs. The SMA developed and assisted MET, Inc. and local WIOA providers in developing MOUs. Other services, such as training or supportive services, provide a pathway for MSFWs to transition to higher wage jobs and permanent year-round employment in non-agricultural work.
- Vocational Rehabilitation in providing supportive services likes eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, etc.
- It should be noted that Louisiana Community and Technical College System, as well as other public and private organizations in the state, have received millions of dollars in



discretionary grants and will continue to apply to receive future discretionary grants to support workforce training services and strategies to impact the lives of targeted populations. The governor's vision is to improve coordination and collaboration in delivering services to eligible participants in an effort to improve upon the efficacy and effectiveness of service delivery, thereby increasing participation of the state's most vulnerable populations in need of workforce training and supportive services.

Supportive services could be identified by United Way of Northeast Louisiana 211 Program. The program offers resources for food assistance and other necessities. The program is offered throughout the entire Region 8 service area. Northeast Louisiana United Way's website, <http://www.unitedwaynela.org>, gives clients the ability to access supportive services within the region. American Job Center's clients are referred to entities or organizations that are not available at the Career Centers for supportive service.

Resource guides are available to serve individuals with barriers to employment. These resource guides provide a list of supportive services available in the community and are updated regularly.

## **2. POLICIES/PROCEDURES THAT PROMOTE COORDINATION OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES DELIVERY IN REGION 8**

The two local workforce development areas in Region 8 each have supportive service policies in place that promote coordination among community providers. Transportation is more difficult to coordinate as LWDA-81 has access to a mass transit system and for LWDA-83, rural transportation organizations simply do not exist. The partners will work through the MOU process to identify better ways to promote coordination of supportive services.

## **C. COORDINATION WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

It has been a goal in Region 8 to anticipate the ongoing need for creating contingency plans to support economic growth in targeted industry sectors, and developing improved relationships with local and state economic development entities with the goal of preempting shortfalls in a skilled workforce, that we are on track to do. Meeting this goal in Region 8 has the potential to strengthen the region's overall economic vitality by bolstering regional economic competitiveness by engaging economic development experts in workforce issues while aligning education, economic and workforce development planning.

### **1. ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED IN PLANNING IN REGION 8**

Region 8 has several economic development agencies that assist in regional planning. Region 8 works closely with the Monroe Chamber of Commerce and Northeast Louisiana Economic Partnership. The chair of LWDB-81 is the President and CEO of the Monroe Chamber and a representative of NLEP sits on the Board of LWDA-81. Both LWDBs have economic development representation with Northeast Louisiana Economic

Alliance (NELEA) represented on WDB-83. With the business members of the Workforce Development Boards appointed by the chambers of commerce in Region 8, needless to say the chambers of commerce are engaged in Region 8's planning efforts.

The local areas of Region 8 work with Louisiana Economic Development's Fast Start Program. LEDFast Start provides quick workforce solutions to businesses in LED's effort to attract new businesses to the region, or retain existing businesses. Solutions include recruitment and workforce training, working with the state's community and technical college system to develop curriculum approved by the employer(s) to produce short-term training to job candidates and helping trainees attain the skills necessary to fill jobs quickly.

**2. ORGANIZATIONS DECLINING PLANNING IN REGION 8**

No economic development organizations, WIOA service providers or businesses that were invited to participate in Region 8 planning declined the invitation.

**D. COORDINATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE COST ARRANGEMENTS**

Region 8's local Workforce Boards have engaged the WIOA partners in negotiating discussion about their fair share of the workforce development system. Additionally, partners have identified cost contributions based on available funds and system use. The partners will work together toward continuous system improvements through shared costs, leveraging of resources, and a foundation of cooperation. The local boards have finalized MOUs for partners cost sharing.

### Chapter 3: VISION, GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES – REGION 8

Local Workforce Development Boards of Region 8 are increasing focus on alignment with economic, workforce, and education systems to coordinate system based on skill needs in regions, much as LWC is with the local boards. This entails aligning career and technical education and apprenticeship opportunities as well as other education programs and activities occurring at the local level in each region. Region 8, through its required Strategic Plans, is developing strategies and actions to promote the alignment of all programs with WIOA-funded programs. Additionally, they are including sector strategies and youth initiatives to promote integration of services across all programs. The strategy related to this goal is creating a new, integrated regional planning process across the economic, education, and workforce sectors.

Strategic planning elements provide a strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce. The strategy must include an analysis of economic conditions in Region 8, such as the existing and in-demand industry sectors and the knowledge and skills needed in these industry sectors.

It must also include data on the current workforce and labor market trends. This analysis must include the educational and skill levels of the workforce and specifically makes reference that individuals with barriers to employment must be included in the analysis. The strategy must further identify how the workforce development activities in the region will address the education and training needs of employers and the workforce, including a strategy for aligning the WIOA core programs and other resources in the region.

A charge for Region 8 is to provide a staff that has the knowledge and experience to carry out the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. Region 8's staff has the experience in case management, assessment, and counseling of clients to provide residents of this workforce area with an integrated service delivery for job seekers and employers. Region 8, acting under WIOA, brings together in strategic coordination, the core programs in skill development of employment and training services for adults, dislocated workers, youth and Wagner-Peyser employment services administered by LWC. Region 8 also coordinates with adult education and literacy programs and Vocational Rehabilitation state grant programs that assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment.

WIOA requires that workforce development programs be strategically aligned. WIOA ensures that employment and training services provided by the core programs are coordinated and complementary so that job seekers acquire skills and credentials that meet employers' of Region 8 needs. As partners transition to WIOA, they will utilize a customer-centered design – where the needs of businesses and workers drive workforce solutions; where AJCs provide excellent customer service to all job seekers and businesses; and where the workforce system supports strong regional economies (including across state lines) - to understand the

customer's needs and desires, and have implemented policies and procedures for integrated services based on the needs of their clients and within context of the local communities. Region 8 has altered its focus, from an organizational perspective, certifying we have the infrastructure and are aligning our priorities so that we have a strategic relationship with our employer customers

**A. STRATEGIC VISION TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH**

The development of this WIOA Combined Regional Plan is an ongoing effort by Region 8 to transcend the fragmentation of workforce programs. Overcoming silos and promoting program integration are easy goals to talk about but very difficult to achieve. Region 8 partners will work together to leverage resources, both federal and other, to achieve Governor Edward's Strategic Vision.

**B. GOALS FOR PREPARING AN EDUCATED AND SKILLED WORKFORCE**

The Region 8 partners have considered the overall needs of Region 8, the challenges of businesses and job seekers and the existing capacity of the workforce development system to respond to these needs. We have adopted the following goals to guide our work together during the next few years:

- Collaboration
  - Build a talent development delivery system through systematic change, integration of resources, and continuous improvement.
  - Align workforce development resources to anchor the following industry sectors
    - Health care and Social Assistance
    - Accommodation and Food Services
    - Manufacturing
  - Ensure the employment and training services provided by core programs identified in WIOA are coordinated so that job seekers acquire skills and credentials that meet employers' needs.
  - Evaluate performance.
- Job Seekers
  - Educate and inform, disseminate organization, workforce, and career pathway information regularly to foster interest and collaboration.
  - Foster and advance universal access to workforce services in all parishes with a focus on populations with barriers.
  - Engage and connect youth with career pathways and employment training opportunities.
  - Promote quality employment and training services for Adult and Dislocated Workers.
  - Provide access to high quality training to help job seekers acquire industry recognized credentials for in demand jobs.
- Employers

- Build relationships that promote success, engage business, industry, and the education community to ensure universal contribution and commitment to workforce initiatives and strategies that support regional economies.
- Foster regional sector partnerships and alignment between the region’s workforce development programs.
- Reinforce connections with registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs as these are proven models that provide workers with career pathways and opportunities to earn while they learn.
- Ensure the workforce and education systems meets the needs of economic development and employers.

Region 8’s seven (7) broad goals for the workforce development system are:

- Establish career pathways as the primary model for skill, credential, and degree attainment
- Expand public-private investment in the region’s pipeline of workers.
- Increase opportunities for all youth to participate in work-based learning through summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, internships and other similar experiences.
- Engage employers through sector partnerships to improve the connection and responsiveness of workforce programs to the demand side of the labor market.
- Strengthen data sharing across state agencies and workforce development partners to better understand education and employment outcomes and rely more effectively on data to improve and target our efforts.
- To be recognized by the business and industry community as a valuable resource for the provision of workforce information, data, assistance, and guidance.
- To make everyone aware of “who does what” in the community and “where to go” when specific services are needed.

WIOA provides a historic opportunity to align performance-related definitions, streamline performance indicators, integrate reporting, and ensure comparable data collection and reporting across all six of the core programs, while also implementing program-specific requirements related to data collection and reporting. Region 8 will make investments in employment, education, and training programs that ensure evidence-based, data-driven, and programmatic service delivery that is accountable to customers and taxpayers. Performance accountability and data reporting will be aligned to promote the workforce development system that creates a best-in-class regional system, responsive to business and industry.

With respect to the performance accountability measures required in WIOA and the implementing rule, the LWDAs in Region 8 individually negotiated and reached agreement with the State on local levels of performance for performance accountability measures. Negotiations will occur every other year for a two-year period and measures are in place. In addition, partners will actively engage in whatever process is implemented by the

respective state agencies for negotiating and setting targets for these measures. The goals for the Title I programs are set through the use of a statistical adjustment model. These procedures are in place and the partners consult with their respective state agency contacts and meet to discuss the implications of the performance measures and required targets for service delivery and integration. The Core Partners work cooperatively to report performance outcomes across all programs to advance the goals of improving access and success for all customers. However, currently there is no universal or shared system for partners to communicate performance to customers.

### **C. REGIONAL AND LOCAL STRATEGIES**

*In order to –*

#### *1) Facilitate Engagement of Employers*

We will use our Workforce Boards to create strategies for employer engagement and to lead engagement efforts for specific industries, particularly for the primary targeted sectors. We will work with the existing community college advisory committees to leverage the work of these committees to inform our planning and policies for career pathway development, and to help ensure that these advisory committees benefit from the perspectives of the workforce system.

Region 8 focuses on working with corporations that can offer multi-dimensional support, such as work experiences, internships, job shadowing, tutors, mentors, and provide consultation about the Youth program. WIOA contributes to economic growth and business expansion by ensuring the workforce system is job-driven and matches business customers with skilled individuals.

#### *2) Support a System that Meets the Needs of Business*

The Integrated Business Service Team is designed to be a group of individuals who work with businesses to form a single point of contact that represents all of the participating partners. Business customers say there is a need for AJC services that include candidate screening, validation of the job-seeker information, assessment, less paperwork, and applicants from the centers who are equal to or better than walk-in applicants. Business customers also need employee commitment and loyalty, a single point of contact, and knowledge about AJCs' products and services.

Region 8's business service plan clearly identifies products and services and their attributes and features that appeal to potential customers. The flow of business services follows these steps: a) assist in the forecasting of skills and knowledge needed by businesses in Region 8, b) identify eligible training providers, c) work with educational entities to provide customized training based on business customer needs and expectations, d) prepare a pool of job ready applicants and begin training them, and e) conduct targeted recruitment.

#### *3) Coordinate with Economic Development Strategies*

Region 8 has several economic development agencies. Region 8 works closely with each one. NELEA works with employers in Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Madison, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas and West Carroll Parishes in Region 8. North Louisiana Economic

Partnership (NLEP) provides professional economic development services to the other parishes of northeast Louisiana, including Jackson, Morehouse, Ouachita, and Union. The organization also represents the interests of north Louisiana with a unified voice and as a single point of contact. It acts as a catalyst, a convener, and a connector in the region to ensure that north Louisiana's economic development potential is realized.

Region 8 is also closely tied to other regional economic development agencies providing them with workforce intelligence when asked to do so to attract potential employers to the region.

#### *4) Strengthen Linkages with Unemployment Insurance Programs*

A service strategy designed by LWC is already in place for providing career services to Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants. The staff working in the centers are trained and knowledgeable in the provision of information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation. The two words "and assistance" imply a more affirmative responsibility to assist claimants in the claims filing process. Staff will need to be fully trained on customer-centered service delivery practices. These services will be expanded so all customers experience a "common front door" for all partner programs and a triage/assessment process to measure academic and occupations skills that leads to seamless customer flow and access to the services needed.

Region 8 has developed, convened, and implemented sector partnerships; one in the health care sector and a second in manufacturing. Region 8 knows how fast the health care industry is changing. Every day there are pressing questions and issues related to patient care quality, costs of care, a qualified workforce, technology innovations, public awareness and wellness, among a myriad of other topics. Aware that no single organization could do this work well alone, the LWDBs of Region 8 worked across health care organizations and with community partners to navigate the new demands. That's why the Northeast Louisiana Health care Alliance was launched.

#### *5) Promote Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprise Services*

WDBs-81 and 83 will establish relationships with entities that provide guidance, support, and resources to encourage microenterprises, defined as a small business employing nine (9) people or fewer and having a fairly small balance sheet, and entrepreneurial opportunities, including the Louisiana Small Business Development Center at University of Louisiana at Monroe. If a WIOA participant is interested in their own business start-up, they are connected with the appropriate partner.

#### *6) Implement Initiatives Designed to Meet Employers' Needs*

A top priority for Region 8 is to ensure that the entire customer spectrum has accurate and available knowledge in order to make informed choices about career pathways for job seekers, and real-time, relevant access to labor market data for employers. Armed with quality data and sound interpretation, the WDBs and staffs of Region 8 are able to better navigate the workforce and economic environment in our region.

WIOA highlights sector partnerships as a key strategy for meeting the needs of employers, workers, and job seekers. Sector Partnerships are industry-driven and community supported by education, workforce development, economic development and community organization which are required to truly support a regional industry and to connect job seekers to jobs.

The WDBs of Region 8 were well positioned to serve as the convener for this work through a contract provided to the region by Louisiana Workforce Commission and funded by a National Dislocated Worker Grant. The development and implementation of Sector Partnership strategies began in March 2016 with the launch of our first industry partnership, Health Care, planned on August 3, 2016. The following is a brief overview of Region 8's Sector Partnership scope of work:

- Identify and engage key leadership within Region 8 – Board Members, Directors and Business service Team members (March – June 2016)
- Review and analysis of labor market data to determine valid demand industry sectors
- Full sector partnership and industry engagement for WDB staff (March – August 2016)
- Facilitation of Regional Meeting with key leadership from workforce development, education, economic development, and community organizations
- Identify Industry Champions for targeted sectors
- Health care Industry Sector launch (August 03, 2016)

Develop replicable process for Sector Partnership development in region to be implemented in additional sectors.

Region 8 will continue to focus on convening and collaborating with various organizations and workforce stakeholders. Region 8's Integrated Services Team is a key player in the combined employer engagement process. A strength of Region 8 is the implementation of work-based learning programs, including Youth Work Experiences and On-the-job Training programs.

Although these programs have their own unique rules, regulations, and targeted populations, they share a unity of helping local businesses access a viable talent pool through work-based learning, which in turn supports Region 8's participants in obtaining meaningful employment.

Region 8 actively uses On-the-Job Training opportunities as one of the cornerstones of its practical learning components. With a high rate of retention, the OJT program is one that both employers and job seekers actively inquire about.

Region 8 provides other business services and implements strategies that meet the workforce development needs of our local area employers. For example, Incumbent Worker Training provides both workers and employers with the opportunity to build and maintain a quality workforce and increase both participants' and companies' competitiveness. This type of work-based training and upskilling is designed to ensure that employees of a company



can acquire the skills necessary to retain employment and advance within the company, or to acquire the skills necessary to avert a layoff. Incumbent worker training is designed to be responsive to the special requirements of an employer or a group of employers in partnership with other entities for the purpose of delivering training.

Transitional jobs are a type of work-experience considered an individualized career service. Transitional jobs are time-limited and wage-paid work experiences that are subsidized up to hundred (100) percent. These jobs are in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors and are only available for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history, as determined by the regional AJC staff. Transitional jobs provide an individual with work experience that takes place within the context of an employee-employer relationship. Region 8 will use transitional jobs to establish a work history for the individual, demonstrate success in the workplace, and develop the skills that lead to entry and retention in unsubsidized employment.

#### **D. REGIONAL STRATEGIES TO INCREASE APPRENTICESHIP AND WORK-BASED LEARNING**

Closely tied to the solutions sought by businesses in Region 8 is the expanded use of work-based learning (Registered Apprenticeships, Youth Apprenticeships, Pre-Apprenticeships, Customized Training, On-the-Job Training, Incumbent Worker Training and others). This emphasis recognizes work-based learning as often the most effective mechanism for delivering Training and Education solutions in an environment that is directly shaped to and for the needs of the employer. This is beneficial because it's an earn-while-you-learn environment. Employers like this process because it is a plus for their business.

Work-based training models will utilize work-based learning to fill Region 8's business needs for skilled employees, thereby increasing employee earning potential and the business's bottom line. To ensure quality in work-based training, Region 8 will demonstrate evidence of the following criteria:

- Occupation training for in-demand jobs as defined by Occupational Forecasting Conference and approved by the State Board (Workforce Investment Council) accessible through (Star Jobs)
- Clear program goals
- Outreach implementation to program participants and employers regarding OJT opportunities; including leveraging various partners' relationships with employers
- Standardizing and streamlining forms, including contracts and training plan templates in Region 8
- Clear roles and responsibilities for trainers, worksite supervisors and support personnel
- Assessments to identify existing skills of individual learners
- Reasonable training length reflecting both the complexity of the job and skills of the trainee
- Specified methods of instruction
- Assurance that participants are job-ready prior to work-based training opportunities
- Established evaluation processes

- Clear expectations and feedback to assess progress toward achieving learning/skills acquisition goals.

Incorporating Registered Apprenticeship into service design and delivery is one way Region 8 will address the middle skill jobs that account for over half of Louisiana’s labor market. One way to accomplish this is by having American Job Center staff involved and engaged in screening and assessment for current registered programs.

Region 8’s BSTs are working throughout Region 8 to improve the capacity of the workforce system relative to incorporating Registered Apprenticeship in service design and delivery, as well as to support the emphasis on career pathways. The engagement of BST staff with the State apprenticeship staff has also been robust, and we expect that partnership to continue. LWC believes, as does Region 8, Registered Apprenticeship is a model that strikes “...the critical balance between serving individuals and employers in a manner that will produce strategies that in the long run are good for both.”

The WIOA grant provides funds for employer incentives to assist with OJT and Related Technical Instruction (RTI) training costs. The Integrated Business Service Team will promote this benefit braiding funds with OJT contracts and ITAs to increase the amount of WIOA funds utilized by employers with a Registered Apprenticeship model and encourage Registered Apprenticeship expansion across Region 8.

During National Apprenticeship Week in 2019, Region 8 held an event in Richland Parish, the two local workforce boards coordinated together. This event focused on informing employers of the benefits of Registered Apprenticeship and how WIOA funding can amplify programs. A key strategy in Region 8 is the expansion of the use of Registered Apprenticeship programs where employer and employee are equally committed to the program’s success. Registered Apprenticeship programs have demonstrated that employers benefit from lower employee turnover, increased employee productivity, improve employee problem-solving skills and enhance employee relations.

Region 8 continues working to develop new non-traditional programs in industries such as health care and advanced manufacturing. Region 8 continues to encourage new and currently existing programs to take advantage of registered apprenticeship under the new WIOA regulations. Provisions in WIOA clearly support the expansion and incorporation of registered apprenticeship as an evidence-based approach to workforce development.

#### **E. INITIATIVES TO SHORTEN TIME FROM CREDENTIAL TO EMPLOYMENT**

Region 8 partners realize the value and significance of shortening the time from credential to employment. A range of activities are in place region-wide. All work-based learning activities (OJT, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and transitional jobs) are geared toward moving workers into employment more quickly and effectively. Region 8’s integrated and

the local Business Service Teams listen to employers' needs and work to better understand their training needs.

LDCC has partnered with high schools to offer dual credit programs, which help students quickly complete their degree and enter the workforce, while saving money along the way. LDCC is also working with four year universities to ensure credits are recognized and accepted. Louisiana Delta Community College is exploring a range of non-credit programs in conjunction with businesses, which often facilitate industry-recognized credentials more quickly than traditional course timelines, especially when these are interim credentials that would normally be part of a longer college course or program. Workers retain the value from these interim steps in themselves and should more easily be able to later take additional credentials that can be stacked toward college degrees.

**F. STEPS TO ALIGN AND INTEGRATE EDUCATION, WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), in partnership with DCFS, shares job seeker registration data to promote efficient use of public assistance resources. DCFS clients, who may benefit from WIOA staff services, are referred to Region 8's AJC offices for additional assistance.

Region 8's relationships with Adult Education promotes training opportunities for Title I WIOA participants. The integration of Title II Adult Education into the workforce system promotes the flow of communication of labor market needs and education and training opportunities between Adult Education and Workforce Development. These stakeholders use WIOA programs and internal data to maximize the efficiency of its shared programmatic efforts.

North Louisiana Economic Partnership, an Accredited Economic Development Organization, provides professional economic development services to North Louisiana. The organization also represents the interests of North Louisiana with a unified voice and as a single point of contact. It acts as a catalyst, a convener, and a connector in the region to ensure that North Louisiana's economic development potential is realized. Its vision is for North Louisiana to be a thriving region-a destination for high quality talent, innovative companies, and global investment.

Region 8 will foster the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors through the following efforts:

1. Work with our economic development partners within Region 8 to identify existing partnerships and initiatives with employers in our key sectors.
2. Identify local employers willing to provide expertise to our sector initiatives.
3. Work with community partners to organize and or expand work within existing partnerships or create new partnerships.

And, as outlined in the State Plan:

4. Increase the use of labor market and educational data and technology, in coordination with local data, to inform and guide strategic workforce development decisions.
5. Develop focused, regional workforce initiatives that blend partner resources (co-investment) to educate and train workers for jobs within the workforce region.
6. Increase the alignment and efficacy of formula, discretionary and competitive workforce funding in efforts to support regional and local workforce initiatives.
7. Promote meaningful, portable industry credentials supported throughout the workforce delivery system.
8. Fortify a system of accountability for the workforce development system that supports and promotes the evaluation of the effectiveness of state and local workforce development boards in meeting the workforce demands of business and workforce.

Region 8 will expand career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improve employment and earnings by:

1. Fostering the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors
2. Expanding information for employers and jobseekers to access services by improving the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development, and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways.

Region 8 will expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and expansion of bridge programs by taking the following steps:

1. Expand and incentivize the utilization of evidenced-based workforce strategies that support targeted populations (e.g., the long-term unemployed, individual with disabilities, veterans, out-of-school youth) into sector-based career pathways leading to gainful employment.
2. Enhance and expand the delivery of integrated reentry and employment strategies to reduce recidivism among Region 8's returning citizens and meet the skill and workforce needs of business and industry.





**WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT  
BOARD 83**

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## TION OF PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

- *The Local Workforce Development Area 83 **Memorandum of Understanding** provides a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information that is essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development systems as required by the WIOA Rule (20 CFR Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference in this plan.*
- *The Local Workforce Development Area 83 **Service Integration Action Plan** provides a description of how local workforce partners will align and coordinate services as required by the State of Louisiana Integrated Service delivery Policy (OWD 2-23.1). The Service Integration Action Plan and any subsequent modifications is incorporated by reference into this plan.*

LWDA-83 has established a one-stop delivery system through which core employment-related services are provided and through which access is provided to other employment and training services. Services are accessed through a physical one-stop center (American Job Center) in each parish in the area. One comprehensive center exists within this workforce development area, Morehouse Parish American Job Center.

The comprehensive AJC, is physically located at 250 Holt Street, Bastrop, LA. It is where job seekers and employer customers can access the programs, services, and activities of all required one-stop partners, as well as with the additional partner of HPOG 2.0 PHOCAS Project and any other partners as determined by the Local WDB. WDB-83 feels the comprehensive Center exemplifies the characteristics of a high-quality AJC as described in DOL's TEGL No. 4-15. The comprehensive one-stop center reflects a welcoming environment to all customer groups. The integrated staff of both local and state-merit employees are courteous and helpful to all job seekers, businesses, and others who interact with the Center, in person, by telephone, or online. The comprehensive Center has:

- 1) three (3) WIOA Title I and four (4) state-merit staff persons physically present, and the Center provides the career services listed in 20 CFR 678.430, 34 CFR 361.430, and 34 CFR 463.430;
- 2) access to training services;
- 3) access to employment and training activities carried out under section 134(d) of WIOA;
- 4) access to programs and activities carried out by one-stop partners; and
- 5) workforce and labor market information.

Customers have access to partner programs, services, and activities during regular business days at the comprehensive one-stop center – Monday thru Wednesday and Friday: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., and on Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The WDB-83 program director may establish flexible service hours at other times to accommodate schedules of individuals who work on regular business days or who, because of life circumstances, are not able to

access the Center during regular business hours. LWDB-83 staff is providing career services in the comprehensive Center. Career services are also provided through access to one-stop partner programs and activities, which are delivered in two (2) ways:

Option 1. Having a program staff member physically present at the Center at assigned days and times; or

Option 2. Making available a direct linkage through technology to a program staff member who can provide meaningful information or services.

All WIOA career services are available in the comprehensive Center. Most of the career services are also available at any of LWDA-83's nine (9) affiliated sites.

LWDB-83, with the agreement of the local elected official, has developed and entered into a memorandum of understanding with one-stop partners, the designated one-stop service center operator, and conducts oversight of the partners and centers.

The six core WIOA one-stop partners are:

- WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula programs) administered by LWC,
- Title II-Adult Education and literacy programs administered by the Department of Education (DOE),
- Title III - Wagner-Peyser employment services administered by LWC,
- Title IV – Rehabilitation Act of 1973 programs administered by LWC.

<b>WIOA Title I</b>	<b>Adult Employment &amp; Training</b>	WIOA Adult program services include career services, training services and job placement assistance. Priority is given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, veterans, and individuals who are basic skills-deficient.
	<b>Youth Employment &amp; Training</b>	WIOA Youth program services include the attainment of a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, entry into postsecondary education, and individualized delivery of 14 types of career readiness opportunities.
	<b>Dislocated Worker Employment Training</b>	WIOA dislocated worker program services target individuals who lost jobs due to plant closures, company down-sizing, or some other significant change in market conditions. In most cases, eligible workers are unlikely to return to their occupations, and they must be eligible (or have exhausted) unemployment compensation.
<b>WIOA Title II</b>	<b>Basic Education For Adults</b>	Adult Education and Literacy services and opportunities include high school equivalency instruction and testing (HiSET/GED), resources for migrant and seasonal farmworkers, family literacy including childcare services, prep for college enrollment, integrated teaching in career pathways of Health care, Manufacturing, and Business/Retail, career guidance and decision-making, workplace skills preparation and credentialing, coaching and support, and student leadership organizations.
<b>WIOA</b>	<b>Wagner-Peyser</b>	Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, often referred to as basic labor



<b>Title III</b>	<b>Employment Services</b>	exchange services, provide access to employment services to all job seekers including job search preparation and placement assistance services. Employers may receive general or specialized recruitment services through self-service or staff assisted job orders.
<b>WIOA Title IV</b>	<b>Vocational Rehabilitation Services</b>	Vocational Rehabilitation programs provide training services to help eligible individuals with disabilities become employed. The priority is competitive, fulltime employment. Depending on the individual's disability and functional limitations other outcomes such as part-time employment, self-employment, or supported employment are also appropriate. Services focus both on helping high school students plan as they prepare for transition to work, as well as delivery of a range of individualized adult services.

In addition to the core partners, the following partner programs provide access through the one-stops:

- Career and Technical Education (Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act)
- Local Jobs for Veterans
- MET
- Title V of the Older Americans Act (National Association for Hispanic Elderly-Ayuda)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Programs
- Unemployment Compensation Programs

Additional programs also may be partners in the AJCs in LWDA-83 with the approval of LWDB-83 and the local elected official. All partners and LWDB-83 have entered into a written memorandum of understanding describing the services to be provided, how the costs of the services and operating costs of the system will be funded, methods for referral of individuals between the one-stop operators and partners for appropriate services and activities, and other matters deemed appropriate.

The Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) used by WDB-83 and its mandatory partners contains the infrastructure costs budget, which is an integral component of LWDA-83's overall one-stop operating budget. The operating budget consists of additional costs, which include applicable career services, and shared operating costs and shared services. WDB-83 feels that an operating budget would be incomplete if any of these cost categories were omitted, as all components are necessary to maintain a fully functioning and successful local service delivery system. Local WDB-83, one-stop partners, and the CEO negotiated the use of the currently used IFA design, along with which additional costs to include while developing the operating budget for the local system. The overall one-stop operating budget is included in the MOU. WDB-83 continues to evaluate the process for the development and modification of MOUs with core and required partners.

The IFA includes the following elements:

- a) The period of time in which the IFA is effective; July 01, 2020 – June 30, 2023;

- b) Identification of the infrastructure costs budget, which is a component of the one-stop operating budget;
- c) Identification of all one-stop partners and the CEO
- d) A description of the periodic modification and review process to ensure equitable benefit among one-stop partners;
- e) Information on the process the Local WDB, CEO(s), and one-stop partners used to reach consensus or the assurance that the local area followed the SFM process;
- f) A description of the process to be used among partners to resolve issues related to infrastructure funding during the MOU duration period when consensus cannot be reached.

The IFA also includes the signatures of individuals with authority to bind the signatories to the IFA, including all one-stop partners, CEO, and WDB-83 Chairperson.

WDB-83 and its partners were able to use the Local Funding Mechanism in order to afford the WDB and its partner programs the flexibility to design and fund a one-stop delivery system through consensus, to meet the needs of our local area. By leveraging the funds and resources available to partners, and WDB-83 to optimally provide program services to our mutual customers.

WDB-83, CEO, and all required partners negotiated and agreed to the comprehensive center budget amounts for one-stop infrastructure funding, as well as the methods of calculating these amounts. The infrastructure funding terms are included in the MOU as an IFA, and both the IFA and MOU have been signed by the appropriate parties.

The one-stop partner programs' proportionate share of funding was calculated in accordance with WIOA, its implementing regulations, and the Uniform Guidance. It was based upon a reasonable cost allocation methodology, whereby infrastructure costs are charged to each partner based on the partner's proportionate use of the dedicated comprehensive center and the relative benefits received, and is considered to be allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable. Partners' contributions are reviewed quarterly and reconciled against actual costs incurred, and adjusted to ensure that actual costs charged to any one partner are based on proportionate use and relative benefit received by the partner and its respective program or activities. WDB-83 believes each partners' program contribution is consistent with the program's authorizing statute and regulations, as well as with the Uniform Guidance.

Individuals who meet the respective partner's program eligibility requirements will be encouraged by WDB-83 Career Services Team members to not only participate in Adult/Dislocated Worker and Youth programs, but other partner program services as needed, concurrently. Co-enrollment offers the opportunity to access additional program services and funds to help address a participant's specific barriers to employment and/or education. Career Service Team members will determine the appropriate level and balance of services for each individual under each Title I program. WDB-83 partners will identify and

track the funding streams that pay the costs of services and ensure there are no duplication of services.

**B. TECHNOLOGY IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM**

Workforce Development Board-83 clearly understands the concept of providing an experienced staff to the ten (10) American Job Centers. These centers will continue to provide excellent services to the residents and employers of Local Workforce Development Area-83. WDB-83 policies are in place that support a customer-centered, fully integrated, service delivery system that ensures customers have maximum access to the full range of education, employment, training, and supportive services available through the partner programs. Workforce Development Board-83's transition into WIOA included the updating of these policies to guarantee all partner services are made available to customers that may need them.

WDB-83 will conduct outreach to our more rural, impoverished communities where unemployment rates can be notably higher than the State average. WDB-83 will continue to explore the value and need for additional services for these remote areas.

Workforce Development Board-83's workforce system promotes accessibility for all job-seekers to the centers and in program services, and is fully compliant with accessibility requirements for individuals with disabilities. AJC staff will be trained to assist job-seekers with disabilities in all partner programs. Assistive technology is in place, and front-line staff members are trained in the use of this technology.

All Louisiana local American Job Centers use HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment), which is the case management, data collection and reporting system for the State. LWC ensures that LWDB-83 develops and utilizes an integrated job seeker customer flow between WIOA Core Program Partners, which will build statewide integrated, technology-based intake and case management information system as the main entry portal into the expanded Louisiana Workforce Development System for all staff and common customers (both job seekers and employers). WDB-83 hopes all workforce partners may make use of this system in the near future through data sharing agreements with the State.

The local workforce development boards of Region 8 carry out workforce activities by partnering locally through memoranda of understanding to implement core, non-core and other partner programs.

LWDA-83 will also work to evaluate and identify opportunities to implement additional streamlined systems, when applicable. For example, the two local workforce development boards within Region 8 use the same On-the-Job training contract with employers to further reduce redundancies and inefficiencies.

WDB-83 strategizes to increase the use of local labor market and educational data and technology to inform and guide strategic workforce development decisions. The Louisiana

Workforce Commission has a duty to develop data collection and management strategies that will meet the needs of data sharing between core partners. These plans hopefully will develop as system requirement updates are realized and cybersecurity measures are enhanced to protect personally identifiable information.

The need for technology to facilitate remote access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system was quickly realized with the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in the spring of 2020. WDB-83 provided means for multiple entry methods into the WIOA-system, flexible scheduling of staff, and other innovative use of technology customized for the job readiness needs of its customers. The extent to which the eligible training providers in LWDA-83 also demonstrated the effective use of technology for their instruction to include distance education. Providers were able to expand instructional content and delivery techniques to leverage technology to enhance educational opportunities. WDB-83 effectively found uses of technology, such as DocuSign and Zoom, to improve system efficiencies, not just during the pandemic, but as a new way of conducting WDB-83 business. Recently, due mainly to the coronavirus pandemic, WDB-83 authorized the purchase, by a WIOA staff member, of prepaid data/minute card(s) to ensure participants have connectivity to the new software platforms.

### **C. WDB-83 SUPPORT FOR STRATEGIES IN THE COMBINED STATE PLAN**

A few years ago, the State launched an initiative to balance the emphasis on services between employers and job seekers. This initiative is operated in LWDA-83 out of ten (10) AJCs. The initiative's purpose is to increase the "value" of services that are provided to both employers and job seekers throughout the region. Integral to this system is an understanding of and allowance for needed services to individuals with "significant barriers to employment" and the requirement for "priority of service" under WIOA.

To comply with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the American Job Centers in LWDA-83 follow the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of section 4215 of Title 38, United States Code.

WDB-83 Policy #200-10: Priority of Services to Veterans guarantees that Career Services Team members will ensure all veteran (and qualifying spouses) customers have a complete HiRE record. It is important to emphasize that homeless veterans meet the criterion of having a "significant barrier to employment" and are immediately referred to the regional DVOP specialist for enrollment into the appropriate AJC workforce programs.

After a customer is identified as a veteran, it is required the following are completed:

- HiRE WIOA Pre-Application, update customer information, and/or WIOA Application;
- For those identified in need of career development, Background Wizard which includes all of the following: educational history, work/employment history, and skills information; and
- Updated resume with copies given to the Veteran customer.

All services offered and provided to veteran customers are recorded in HiRE. The veteran is provided with or referred to any other needed supportive service. Documentation of these referrals via case notes are kept in the customer's HiRE account.

In order to provide information on veterans approved for, as well as denied, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act services, Career Services Team members will print a copy of the application completed in HiRE on all veterans and qualifying spouses. These applications will be kept in a designated folder at each parish center.

After a decision has been made on the path of service – WIOA funded, referred to other agencies, or denied services – documentation should be attached to the application and returned to the veteran's folder.

Individuals who are underemployed and meet the definition of a low-income individual may receive career and training services under the Adult program on a priority basis. Individuals who meet the definition of an individual with a barrier to employment who are underemployed may also be served in the Adult program; however, unless they are a recipient of public assistance, a low-income individual, or are basic skills deficient, they are not eligible for service on a priority basis.

LWDB-83 continues to develop and refine innovative and effective models for obtaining industry recognized credentials, including integrated education and training approaches, such as, career pathways, industry or sector partnerships, including those pertaining to Registered Apprenticeship programs and opportunities. Integrated Education and Training (IET) is a service approach that provides three components simultaneously, concurrently, and contextually: (1) adult education and literacy (2) workforce preparation activities, and (3) workforce training.

Youth with special challenges and issues that make it difficult for them to succeed at school often have limited workforce opportunities as adults. Youth with the most serious challenges, referred to as "disconnected", are those between the ages of 14 and 24, are low income and either unemployed, not enrolled in or at risk of dropping out of school, involved in the justice system, homeless, or in foster care. These youth will benefit from comprehensive, integrated programs, including programs that combine education, job training and preparation, counseling, health and mental health interventions, and social services.

LWDA-83 has clearly defined its Youth program design and service strategies to ensure services provided to youth offer the individual a career pathway. Such a pathway provides a combination of education (pathway may start with adult literacy), training, and other services in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the

individual. WIOA outlines a broader youth vision that supports an integrated service delivery system.

WDB-83 has established an integrated vision for servicing youth that supports a service delivery system that leverages other federal, state, local and philanthropic resources to support in-school and mainly out-of-school youth. With the help of LWC Outreach Director, Region 8 has changed over to WIOA regulation with “partners” not ever worked with, i.e., sorority/fraternity groups, housing authorities, school boards.

The number or proportion of LEP individuals eligible to be served or encountered in LWDA-83 and the frequency of these encounters is very low. With this number being so low, it will not be required for each American Job Center in the area to post notices in commonly encountered languages notifying LEP persons of language assistance. Instead, LWDA-83 staff will be instructed to contact the Foreign Language Department of the University of Louisiana at Monroe (318-342-1525) for assistance in identifying the language spoken by the customer and to attain interpreter services as per WDB Policy 200-14: Language Assistance Plan.

In view of the fact that it is essential for the American Job Center staff to be knowledgeable about the organization’s obligation to provide meaningful access to information and services for LEP persons, this Language Assistance Plan includes training to ensure staff knows the LEP policy. Language Assistance Plan training will be included as part of the orientation. (Reference: WIOA SEC. 3. Definitions. (21) English Language Learner) Workforce Development Board-83 will ensure that the AJC staff are informed about the importance of providing services to individuals who are English Language Learners and individuals who face substantial cultural barriers, including immigrants, refugees, and new Americans under WIOA.

An attempt will be made to notify LEP persons that language services are available and that they are free of charge. LWDA-83 will work with community-based organizations, including our WIOA Partner agencies, to inform LEP persons of the language assistance available. Notices in local papers in languages other than English may be used if a LEP population is identified in an area. During presentations at schools, civic, and religious organizations, our communities will be notified that the LEP Plan has been implemented.

The Language Assistance Plan will be re-evaluated for potential plan modification based on LEP populations in the service area or population encountered or affected in the area. If the frequency of encounters with LEP language groups or availability of resources increases, the plan may be modified. If the existing assistance does not seem to be meeting the needs of LEP persons or identified sources for assistance are no longer available or viable this plan may be revisited to reflect current resources. (WDB Policy #200-14: Language Assistance Plan)

Efforts will be increased by WDB-83 to apply knowledge gained from dual credit partnerships within the general education program to increase CTE dual credit programming and diversify courses that are offered. However, this is challenging because many area secondary schools do not have the necessary facilities or qualified instructors to provide instruction within such programs. Louisiana Delta Community College, with five (5) campuses in LWDA-83, partners with local high schools and home schooled students to offer dual credit programs. However, LDCC is working with four-year universities to ensure credits are recognized and accepted.

WDB-83 agrees with the idea that a person's skills and learning should be valued by higher education, regardless of how those skills and learning were acquired. Prior Learning Assessments (PLA) are one way those skills can be evaluated. A person's college-level extra-institutional learning for the purposes of awarding college credit or advanced standards should be recognized. PLA policies should not discriminate against students who may have acquired their skills and knowledge through specific types of life experiences, including family background and upbringing. Native and heritage speakers of non-English languages, for example, should have the same opportunities as non-heritage speakers to demonstrate their learning and earn college credit. This is an issue not only about equity and fairness, but also about impact. WDB-83 will work with LDCC and local universities to help determine the most effective marketing methods and messages to inform their students of these assessments.

WIOA allows the State to use funds not more than 15 percent of the amount of WIOA formula funding allotted for Adult, Youth and Dislocated Workers, reserved by the Governor, and administered by the Secretary, or her designee, to provide for additional statewide employment and training activities. This may include the development or identification of education and training programs that utilize direct assessment and prior learning assessment to measure and provide credit for prior knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences, evaluate such skills and competencies for adaptability, ensure credits are portable and stackable for more skilled employment, and accelerates course or credential completion.

LWDA-83's mature workers provide a powerful resource for knowledge sharing and direct transmission of workplace skills, knowledge and institutional cultures to new workers. WDB-83 will work closely with its integrated Business Services Team to develop knowledge-sharing practices that can be adopted and implemented by employers in the local workforce area. The BST will work to recruit new or recent retirees and senior workers from partner agencies to serve as mentors for adult students in training for the same or similar occupations as well as support these firms in developing mentoring efforts for newly hired workers. Although mentoring is not a major aspect of WIOA programming at WDB-83 at this time, effective models can be explored over the term of this plan and incorporated into initiatives that would be best served by the addition, such as mentoring for women who are breaking into traditionally male fields.

Louisiana has a large population of underemployed individuals working less than thirty (30) hours per week. WDB-83 will engage in a planning process that explores identifying unemployed and underemployed individuals that lack a high school diploma, basic skills, and post-secondary credentials. WDB-83 will develop additional strategies on how identified individuals will have access to the services and employment and training activities including providing access through the local American Job Centers, job readiness training provided through Success Training Institute, career coaching, and working with training and service providers around stackable credentials.

Implementing regional process improvement strategies to create shared access to data between partner agencies should reduce duplicate efforts and streamline customer interactions. This will be significant, making co-enrollment in multiple programs commonplace. Co-enrollment provides the customer with the ideal service plan while allowing the workforce system to utilize its resources in an efficient manner.

Basic career services offered in LWDA-83 include the determination of whether an individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs, including co-enrollment among these programs. In addition to the Adult and Dislocated Worker formula grants, the Workforce Development Board-83 (WDB) of Region 8 also administers training grants intended to serve Dislocated Workers when applicable. These grants include the NDWG-Louisiana Severe Storms and Flooding, and, most recently, the COVID-19 Disaster Recovery NDWG. Utilizing appropriate co-enrollment service strategies, Region 8 is able to expand the capacity to serve Dislocated Workers through increased OJT and supportive services access.

LWDA-83 will encourage co-enrollment, as we have with HPOG 2.0 PHOCAS Project participants, of job-seekers in one or more core programs delivering services through the centers. WIOA provides for youth through 24 years of age, which will likely create more co-enrollments across Youth and Adult programs.

LWDA-83 will work with both secondary and post-secondary education partners to facilitate the development of career pathways, especially within targeted industry sectors, as a strategy to help individuals of all skill levels complete the education and training they need to attain industry recognized credentials and occupations. In order to achieve these goals, our relationship with educational providers in the region/local area is paramount.

AJCs in LWDA-83 offer training services such as ITAs and work-based learning that lead to industry-recognized credentials in in-demand career fields as shown through LWC's LMI. Having labor market information improves workers' ability to make informed decisions about training and employment.



LWDB-83 has been commissioned by WIOA to establish procedures to identify priority occupational skills training in programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations identified by the State. Post-secondary training that takes less than two years has been shown to have valuable returns. Post-secondary training programs that result in credentials related to technology, state licensure, and in-demand occupations are associated with particularly positive outcomes. WDB-83 will abide by these procedures in order to train a workforce highly skilled in the occupations deemed to be in-demand.

**D. WDB-83 COORDINATION STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE SERVICES AND AVOID DUPLICATION OF ACTIVITIES**

Drawing on the improved alignment and coordination with partner programs during the past few years, WDB-83 has sought to improve the quality and accessibility of services that job seekers and employers receive at their local American Jobs Center, especially the comprehensive AJC located in Morehouse Parish. WIOA directed federal agencies to take certain actions to better align and integrate service delivery across multiple programs. WDB-83 will continue to improve the fragmentation, overlap, and potential for duplication among the core and mandated programs and identify the areas of inefficiencies. Determining whether fragmentation and overlap exist among programs is a key step in WDB-83 identifying opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness of programs.

It is important to use the performance results of core and mandated programs to assess options to reduce or better manage negative effects of fragmentation, overlap, and duplication, such as inefficient use of program funds. Evaluation and other periodic reviews during the bi-monthly LWDA-83 Partner Meetings could help identify ways to address gaps in information on how partner programs are serving the employment and training needs of specific populations, such as youth and dislocated workers, or the extent to which they have implemented practices to manage unwanted effects of fragmentation and overlap and improve coordination and efficiency. However, there are still numerous efforts state level administrators could undertake to improve coordination among the programs, including exchanging more information on strategies and methods used by each program to address obstacles that impede coordination. WDB-83 is learning whether its actions to improve partner program coordination and integration is working, but must continue undertaking activities that will lead to desired results – alignment and coordination of partner agency programs in LWDA-83.

WIOA provides significant flexibility to local areas when providing services with adult and dislocated worker funds. In addition to the required career and training services, LWDA-83 may use these funds to provide additional job seeker services, business services, as well as to facilitate enhanced coordination between other partner programs and entities. These funds may be to develop new types of technical assistance, develop new intake procedures, test new procurement methods which may lead to better outcomes for job seekers, and ensure provision of robust services for businesses throughout the workforce system. Permissible activities provided by WDB-83 include:

- Customer support to enable individuals with barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities and veterans) to navigate among multiple services and activities (e.g. WDB-83 has a dedicated staff member specializing in disability services);
- Training programs for displaced homemakers and for individuals training for nontraditional occupations (see WIOA sec. 3(37));
- Work support activities for low-wage workers, in coordination with American Job Center partners, which will provide opportunities for these workers to retain or enhance employment. Work support activities are a strategy that can be used to ensure quality services to individuals who are underemployed. This may include any activities available under the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in coordination with the appropriate activities and resources available through partner programs. For example, an apprentice who has not yet reached the full wage-rate could be provided these services to help him/her to continue to advance in the RA;
- Employment and training activities in coordination with activities to facilitate remote access to services provided through the American Job Center network, including facilitating access through the use of technology; and
- Strengthening linkages between the American Job Center network and the unemployment insurance programs.

LWDB-83's Morehouse Parish AJC designated as a Comprehensive One-Stop Centers offer an all-embracing array of services for job seekers as required by WIOA. For employers, all required WIOA services are available in the comprehensive centers.

WDBs in Region 8 also administer the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) initiative, connected to recipients of Unemployment Insurance. Customers connected to this initiative are more likely to be eligible for Dislocated Worker services. Through this initiative, we have developed workshops that introduce the full array of services, including an overview and suggested action steps for this population to consider the additional services provided through the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. We expect this initiative to expand our footprint to eligible workers.

One change perceived to be helpful in program eligibility for Adult and Dislocated Worker participants, is the ability to transfer funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The WDB may transfer, if approved by the Governor, up to 100 percent of funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker activities.

WIOA continues to focus on job search and placement assistance, as well as career counselling. What is new to WIOA is the emphasis on the provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations as well as provision of information on non-traditional employment.

WIOA has no sequence of service. Customers may access training immediately. LWDA-83 will meet the job-seeker where they are and move them through a series of planned

courses of study while working with them to reach self-sufficiency. WIOA career services may be self-service, informational, group, staff-assisted, and/or one-on-one. Career services are not required for initiation of training services. To be considered appropriate for training, eligibility for WIOA training services requires an interview, evaluation, or assessment, and career planning, before being determined, by AJC staff or a partner agency, as unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment. The training must lead to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment.

- Outreach, intake (including identification through the RESEA program), and orientation to information and other services available through the service delivery system;
- LWDA-83 provides individuals with the opportunity to initiate an application for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) benefits, via the DCFS Community Partner initiative. These services have been implemented through the provision of paper application forms and links to the application web site;
- Initial assessment of skill levels, including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services, including—job search and placement assistance and career counseling
- Referrals to, and coordination of activities with, other programs and services
- Workforce and labor market employment information, including accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including-job vacancy listings in labor market areas; information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; information relating to local occupations in-demand; and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for occupations in demand;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers and workforce services by program and type of providers;
- Provision of information, in usable and understandable formats and languages, about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures;
- Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for financial aid assistance for training and education programs; and
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs.

LWDA-83 uses a comprehensive assessment created locally to be accessed via Survey Monkey to assess customers on their first visit. We also use CASAS, although we are looking into other options for grade-level assessing. WDB-83 has the WorkKeys assessment installed in all centers, but have not used them to their fullest potential. With the creation of the North Louisiana Work Ready Community, we look for that to change. WDB-83 utilizes

previous assessments when possible to reduce duplicate assessments and develop enhanced alignment across partner programs.

WIOA staff when using WIOA Adult funds to provide individualized career services, training services, or both give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Under WIOA, priority is implemented regardless of the amount of funds available to provide services in the area.

The priority established in the previous paragraph does not necessarily mean that these services may only be provided to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. However, WDB-83 has not identified any additional priority populations. For the purpose of determining eligibility of adult under WIOA, individualized career or training services will constitute a minimum of 51% of adults served meeting the priority target groups. This minimum threshold will ensure that LWDA-83 AJCs are targeting adults in most need of services beyond basic career services while developing talent pools that meet the short-term as well as long-term workforce needs of local businesses.

The local WDB has developed a policy on supportive services (WDB-83 Policy 200-28-06: Standard Operating Procedures for Provision of Supportive Services or Assistance [revised 04/01/2020]) that ensures resource and service coordination in the local area. WDB-83 Policy 200-23-01: Standard Operating Procedures for Provision of Referrals to/from Partners address procedures for referral to such services. These policies establish limits on the provision of supportive services, including a maximum amount of funding to be available to a participant. The supportive service policy ensures that supportive services are WIOA-funded only when these services are not available through other agencies and that the services are necessary for the individual to participate in Title I activities.

LWDA-83's supportive services include:

- Assistance with transportation;
- Assistance with child care and dependent care;
- Emergency expenses such as car registration, first month's insurance fees, or vehicle repairs;
- Temporary assistance with housing;
- Needs-related payments;
- Utilities assistance;
- Referrals to health care;
- Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eye glasses and protective eye gear;
- Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications;
- Provision of prepaid data/minute card(s) to ensure the participant has connectivity to the job ready platform; and

- Fees associated with registering for classroom training.

Needs-related payments are designed to provide a participant with financial assistance for the purpose of enabling them to participate in training services. Needs-related payments can help individuals meet their non-training expenses and help them to complete training successfully. The maximum level of needs-related payments established by the WDB-83 is \$20.00 per day, not to exceed \$400.00 in one month.

While basic career services are available to all participants, individualized career services are available to participants after staff have determined that such services are required to retain or obtain employment. Generally, these services involve significant staff time and customization to each individual's need. Individualized career services offered locally include services such as: specialized assessments, developing an individual employment plan, counseling, and work experiences (including transitional jobs), to name a few.

Transitional jobs are a type of work-experience considered an individualized career service. Transitional jobs are time-limited and wage-paid work experiences that are subsidized up to 100 percent. These jobs are in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors and are only available for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history, as determined by the local AJC staff. Transitional jobs provide an individual with work experience that takes place within the context of an employee-employer relationship. WDB-83 will use transitional jobs to establish a work history for the individual, demonstrate success in the workplace, and develop the skills that lead to entry into and retention in unsubsidized employment. With transitional services being a new approach in LWDA-83, WDB-83 adopted a revised policy, 400-04-03: Guidance on WIOA Work-based Training (revised 10/08/2019) and identified appropriate employers. Additionally, the policy includes the amount of reimbursements for the jobs (100 percent of the wage), what supportive services are to be included, and the limits on the duration of the transitional job. WDB-83 has developed policy for defining and identifying individuals who are "chronically unemployed" or "have an inconsistent work history". WDB-83 targets individuals who are long-term unemployed, ex-offenders, and individuals who are currently receiving or have exhausted TANF benefits.

Follow-up services are provided, as appropriate, for Adult and Dislocated Worker program participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. WDB-83 has established a policy (WDB-83 Policy 300-02: Guidance on Follow-up Services) that defines what are considered to be appropriate follow-up services for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

Despite numerous studies indicating a robust return on investment, reported data indicate low utilization of Registered Apprenticeship (RA) as a workforce development strategy; this stands true for WDB-83. Based on the new statutory provisions supporting Registered Apprenticeship, WDB-83 has set goals to increase training provided by Registered

Apprenticeships. WDB-83 is working to create new RA opportunities as well as increase participation in established apprenticeship programs.

WDB-83 has partnered with the RA system in Region 8 and uses RA opportunities as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers. RA programs are automatically eligible for inclusion on the ETPL, if they choose to be, allowing ITAs to support participants in RA programs. WDB-83 is committed to fully integrating RA programs as an employment and training solution for its local job seekers and employers.

OJT contracts are entered into with RA program sponsors/participating employers in registered apprenticeship programs for the OJT portion of the program. With the length of the registered apprenticeship traditionally depleting the \$7,000 cap on OJT (WDB Policy 400-04-03 [revised 10/08/2019]), these funds only cover some of the duration of the registered apprenticeship.

It is not only educational barriers that can hinder success. There are other obstacles; these may include child care, transportation issues, and/or relationship problems. Career Service Team (CST) members will help participants identify and find solutions for pitfalls or roadblocks that might hinder them from reaching their goals.

The initial assessment of customers will calculate the participant's skill levels (including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency), aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs. LWDA-83 expects WIOA initial assessment will go far beyond the "How may I help you?" of WIA. Using tools not yet identified, LWDA-83 will determine participant's specific skill levels to know which skills are particular strengths and where there are skill gaps. These assessments are assumed to be conducted in a one-on-one, staff-assisted setting.

Part of being able to accelerate learning and progress of the participants will be the ability to provide individual and flexible program elements. LWDA-83 will develop a system of case management support by taking advantage of the system partners. Every participant will be assigned to an interdisciplinary case management team. This team will consist of a Career Services Team member, a teacher from the academic program (likely LDCC's Center of Adult Development), a member of NELA NOVA's Career Coaching staff and either a vocational instructor if the participant's goals require classroom training or an employer from the industry of the participant's career path.

Participants of LWDA-83 will meet with the case management team on a regularly scheduled basis to review their progress and plan for their future. Every decision made about the participant's career path will be made by the case management team and the participant.

A process presently exists for staff to assess customers' educational barriers and refer them to the appropriate services that address their specific educational needs. This is true of the service strategy for Youth participants who have been determined to be basic skills deficient. The process in place provides them with access to educational activities, through LDCC's Center of Adult Development program. As LWDA-83 transitions wholly into WIOA and identifies the partners participating in the new workforce development system, Youth will be able to access programs, activities, and supportive services to assist them in obtaining high school and postsecondary credentials and succeeding in careers.

WDB-83 will aid community partners in identifying the five new program elements and ensure eligible Youth have access to them: financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills training, services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the region (such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services), education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities and training for specific occupations or occupational clusters and activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training. Management from LWDA-83 has alerted LWC OWD of the need for technical training on identifying and providing the required Youth elements of WIOA in the rural parishes.

In LWDA-83, leadership and community service opportunities are integrated throughout the Youth program. Participants are asked to complete at least four hours of community service each quarter. The young people LWDA-83 serves have not experienced tremendous success in most aspects of their lives. For them to engage in serving their community and see themselves as leaders and as role models for other young people will change how they envision their future and build confidence.

Participants hold each other accountable and encourage one another to stay with the plan developed for them, by them, in their Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

LWDA-83 will create a pipeline of youth services providers who work with young people, employers, and the community colleges, to ensure young adults are career ready and can have long-term success in market-driving sectors. WDB-83 has taken a sector-specific approach to ensure the alignment of skilled workers with the needs of employers. It will be the needs of business and workers that will drive workforce solutions. WDB-83 works to make sure career pathways are leading to actual vacant jobs in Region 8, including at this time, the targeted industries of Health Care and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade. WDB-83 works to ensure alignment between training, the needs of the employers, and the community college system. With the right messaging and tools, employers can be great partners of WDB-83 in providing the kinds of training opportunities that young adults need to make the transition to being highly motivated, highly productive employees in the workforce of Region 8.

WDB-83 will continue to formulate partnerships to advance LWDA-83's Youth services. One of the responsibilities of the system's key partners and stakeholders is to take a concentrated look at the eligible youth population in LWDA-83 and identify the principal service needs of out-of-school youth.

LWDB-83 has arranged for each partner providing a program of youth workforce activities will ensure that any eligible applicants who do not meet the enrollment requirements of their particular program or who cannot be served will be referred for further assessment, as necessary, and referred to the appropriate programs. WDB-83 ensures that those eligible youth that are not enrolled in the program are appropriately referred to alternative programs, if available.

LWDA-83 and these key partners and stakeholders will develop an on-going, collaborative approach for recruiting, referring, and providing holistic Youth services. LWDA-83 has conducted an assessment of available organizations and programs within the area that provide services to eligible populations to determine areas of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities that are being addressed in the WIOA Youth services program design and ensuring maximum leveraging and alignment. Program activities assessed were those that may be provided with a partner program for Youth, such as tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies; alternative secondary school offerings or dropout recovery services; paid and unpaid work experiences with an academic and occupational education component; occupational skill training, with a focus on recognized postsecondary credentials and in-demand occupations; leadership development activities (e.g., community service, peer-centered activities); supportive services; adult mentoring; follow-up services for at least twelve months after program completion; comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling; integrated education and training for a specific occupation or cluster; financial literacy education; entrepreneurial skills training; services that provide labor market information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Follow-up services are critical services provided following a Youth's exit from the program to help ensure the Youth is successful in employment and/or postsecondary education and training. Follow-up services include monthly contact with the Youth's employer to offer assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise. Follow-up services begin immediately following the last expected date of service in the Youth program. Follow-up services for LWDA-83 Youth may include: (1) supportive services; (2) adult mentoring; (3) financial literacy education; (4) services that provide labor market and employment information; and (5) activities that help the Youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training. All youth participants are offered an opportunity to receive follow-up services. Furthermore, follow-up services are provided to all participants for a minimum of twelve (12) months unless the participant declines to receive the services or the participant cannot be located or contacted. Some youth may not be responsive to attempted contacts for follow-up, and other youth may be difficult to locate making it



impossible to provide follow-up services for such individuals. LWDB-83 has policies in place to establish how to document and record when a participant cannot be located or contacted (WDB-83 Policy 300-02: Guidance on Follow-up Services). A request to opt out or discontinue follow-up services made by the Youth is documented in the case file.

LWDA-83 has been advancing its strategies to identify and recruit out-of-school youth with the addition of a Youth Career Services Team member to its staff membership. Dropout recovery efforts have been fortified by the creation of a corporate endeavor agreement between the WDBs of Region 8 and the seven (7) participating public school systems in the region to soften the hand-off of students at risk of dropping out or expulsion to ensure the students are “out-of-school” at the time of enrollment into the WIOA Youth program and are referred to Youth staff for inclusion in the Youth program.

WIOA also authorizes the following changes that have been addressed in policy changes:

- Out-of-school youth must be aged 16 – 24, not attending any school, and meet one or more additional conditions, which could include:
  - school dropout; within age of compulsory attendance but has not attended for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter; hold a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent and is low-income and is basic skills deficient or an English language learner; subject to the juvenile or adult justice system; homeless, runaway, in foster care or aged out of the foster care system, eligible for assistance under Section 477, Social Security Act, or in out-of-home placement; pregnant or parenting; an individual with a disability; low income person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment
- In-school youth must be aged 14 - 21, attending school, low income, and meet one or more additional conditions, which could include:
  - 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; person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.

In WDB-83 Policy 100-14-02 (revised 07/01/2020), “Needs additional assistance” is defined as:

1. Has a family history of chronic unemployment (during the two years prior to application, immediate family members living in the household were unemployed longer than employed);
2. Has been referred to or is being treated by an agency for depression or a substance abuse-related problem;
3. Is a youth 16 years of age or older who has not held a job for longer than three months, has sporadic employment (has held three or more jobs within the last 12 months and is no longer employed), or is currently unemployed and was fired from a job within six months of WIOA application;

4. Child of currently incarcerated parent(s);
5. Resides in a non-traditional household setting (single parent, lives with unofficial guardian, grandparent(s), domestic partner);
6. Lives with only one or neither of his/her natural parents; or
7. Lives in public housing.

Not all the benefits of participating in a WIOA activity are quantifiable; many are intangible, such as improved participant self-esteem and morale. Moreover, trying to set a monetary value on the value of training is complex. For LWDA-83, it will be simpler to do cost-to-benefit ratio calculations when the program is serving many participants, when the program represents a sizable investment of financial resources, and when the "before" and "after" performance factors are tangible, can be quantified in some manner (i.e., with measurable indicators), and can be assigned monetary values. There are many different ways to calculate return on investment. Region 8 awaits guidance from the State on which method to use.

Incentive payments to Youth participants are used for recognition and achievement directly tied to training activities and work experiences. WDB-83 has policies and procedures in place governing the award of incentives and ensure that the incentive payments are tied to the goals of the program (600-03-03: Helping Individuals Progress (HIP) Project for Out-of-School Youth).

Financial literacy services are novel to WIOA services. Financial literacy services include the ability of participants to create household budgets, initiate savings plans, and make informed financial decisions about education, retirement, home ownership, wealth building, or other savings goals. Financial literacy also comprises the ability to manage spending, credit, and debt, including credit card debt, effectively. Awareness of the availability and significance of credit reports and credit scores in obtaining credit, including determining their accuracy (and how to correct inaccuracies in the reports and scores), and their effect on credit terms are also contained in financial literacy services. LWDA-83 participants will learn the ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities.

Region 8 establishes relationships with employers to provide Youth with work experience activities. LWDA-83 will improve its work experience activities to include a component of academic and occupational education, which may include summer employment, internships that are linked to careers, service learning, and OJT.

WDB-83 website will be used to engage employers in partnering to create programs for out-of-school youth, a partner directory will be available as a platform to focus on involved employers' commitment to young people and their employment potentials. There would be a prominent place on the website to elevate commitments that employers are making to youth in the workforce. Most of the commitments would be from companies whose names

are recognizable, but since we represent rural northeast Louisiana, we would like to have commitments by smaller employers as well. In our area it's critical to get young people involved with these small and medium-sized employers. Internships and mentoring are two ways for employers to help young adults begin to develop their skills, networks, and experiences they need in order to be prepared for work.

It is essential that Youth participants are experiencing the standards and expectations within the program that they will need to comply with outside of the program. LWDA-83 brings into its Youth programs the ethics one should perform in an apprenticeship program, in college, and/or in employment. LWDA-83's Youth programs will be rigorous and challenge participants to meet very high expectations, but this will be done with support from all partners whose goal is to see the participant successful.

Adult literacy services in Region 8 are delivered through Louisiana Delta Community College's Center for Adult Development. CAD funds and administers services intended to improve the basic academic skills and English language proficiency of adults.

CAD's instructional services are intended to improve the reading, writing, listening, and math skills of individuals who are not enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education, as well as the English language proficiency of adult speakers of other languages. For the most part, adult literacy programs are aimed at bringing the learner's academic and English language skills to the level represented by completion of a secondary school education program.

In some cases, individuals have high school completion credentials but still lack the reading and math skills necessary to be successful in post-secondary education or career training programs. To address this problem, CAD offers developmental education courses that provide remedial instruction to raise the literacy skills of enrolled students to at least a beginning post-secondary level. The term developmental education is also used to describe programs of academic instruction made available for incumbent workers who may have a high school credential but need to upgrade basic literacy skills in order to improve their job performance and/or advance their careers.

The purpose of the workforce development system is to improve the quality of jobs and workers and support economic development by ensuring the availability of a skilled, competitive workforce. While adult literacy activities are not the system's main focus, they are a key priority according to WDB-83's strategies to creating a sustainable workforce system.

The relationship established with LDCC's Center for Adult Development (CAD) has included a formalized MOU and infrastructure agreement to ensure that duplication of services is eliminated and the value of services between the two partners is quantified. In addition, a

creation of a clear referral process is agreed upon and documented with biweekly reports between WDB-83 and CAD. In addition, CAD is represented on the LWDB.

With that being said, WDB-83 is not directly involved in WIOA Title II solicitation and procurement; the Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program competition is run by Louisiana Department of Education, and all funding decisions are made by LDE. The local board should review applications submitted to LDE for WIOA Title II funds for alignment with the goals and strategies of this local area plan, and then provide recommendations to LDE on ways to improve alignment, if applicable. Federal regulations require LDE to establish the process by which the local boards will review the WIOA Title II applications for alignment with the local area plan and submit recommendations back to LDE for improvement of alignment.

Wagner-Peyser provides employment services and career counseling to job seekers, as well as labor exchange services to job seekers and employers. LWDA-83, as does the entire State, already meets a major requirement of WIOA to co-locate Wagner-Peyser employment services and staff in the AJCs. Unemployment Insurance claimants receive the same services as all other job seekers, including job training, labor exchange, career counseling, and labor market information. The UI claimant/job seeker also receives eligibility assessments and referrals to an array of education resources and training providers.

The Employment Service focuses on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including, but not limited to, job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services and staff assisted service delivery approaches. Depending on the needs of the labor market, other services may be available such as: job seeker assessment of skill levels, abilities and aptitudes; career guidance, when appropriate; job search workshops; and referral to training.

In LWDA-83, as in the State, the agricultural industry is characterized by a large workforce with numerous job openings, chronic unemployment and underemployment due to the cyclical nature of the work, and below average pay. Migrants and seasonal farmworkers, whose livelihood is primarily derived from agricultural employment, not only experience the chronic unemployment or underemployment inherent in the industry, but also face additional, significant barriers to employment. These include low levels of education, limited English proficiency, inferior housing, and few assets to sustain them through a period of retraining. In addition, farmworkers also experience geographical isolation and many lack transportation. Public transportation is rarely available to where they live.

Migrant seasonal farmworkers are given information on services they may be eligible to receive. They are given partner contact information. Partners may schedule an appointment to come into the AJC to meet with migrant seasonal farmworkers.

The services offered to the employers in LWDA-83, in addition to the referral of job seekers to available job openings, include assistance in development of job order requirements, matching job seeker experience with job requirements, skills, and other attributes, assisting employers with special recruitment needs, arranging for job fairs, assisting employers to analyze hard-to-fill job orders, assisting with job restructuring, and helping employers deal with layoffs. Offering WOTC and other tax credit information to employers, assisting with labor market information for workforce wages, and prescreening applicants to ensure they meet employer qualifications, are all additional services available through Wagner-Peyser funding.

Job seekers who are veterans receive priority referral to jobs and training as well as special employment services and assistance. In addition, the system provides specialized attention and service to individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, youth, minorities, and older workers.

Unemployed workers are provided information on how to file for unemployment compensation in Louisiana. Also, a phone number to call for assistance with UI claims is toll free. Computers are available in the resource area of the AJCs in LWDA-83 for the applicants' convenience. UI claimants are asked to register in the HiRE system and can create a resume. They have the ability to conduct work searches and generate job alerts.

WDB-83 supports extensive collaboration across multiple workforce and disability service systems including Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, business leadership networks, and other community and nonprofit organizations. WDB-83 supports the workforce development system's participation in the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Ticket to Work (TTW) Program as WDB-83 is an employment network. Many Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries use the AJC system to seek employment opportunities. As an employment network, WDB-83 has expanded the capacity of the AJCs to better serve Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities.

In order to align the core programs and create additional flexibility, LWDB-83 will use funds allocated for adult and dislocated worker activities to improve coordination between employment and training programs for individuals with disabilities. This will ensure a highly coordinated service delivery in coordination with Title IV activities to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive the services they need for their career needs.

WDB-83 is committed to promoting the employment opportunities of people with disabilities. Through WIOA programs, AJC staff provide assistance so job seekers with disabilities can work. Having a Ticket-to-Work Employer Network in Region 8 enables the

AJC system to provide benefits planning and job search to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries. Staff of LWDA-83 works closely with program partners, with the major of these being Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, made up of government agencies, community organizations, and private sector employers, to reach our area's job seekers with disabilities.

While the workforce system's core function remains focused on employment, WIOA legislative intent was to significantly impact policies and ultimately provide more access to post-secondary credentials than occurs when workforce and post-secondary systems work independently.

LWDA-83 has an extensive history of effective alignment between workforce programs and public secondary and post-secondary institutions and agencies, particularly the community college-Louisiana Delta Community College (LDCC). Recently, a concentrated effort has begun to strengthen our partnership with the University of Louisiana at Monroe, a four-year university. LWDA-83 continues to work collaboratively with the local secondary and post-secondary education programs in the community to fully implement the strategic intent of WIOA.

LWDA-83 has placed special emphasis on the development, implementation, and expansion of three initiatives. The first is with five (5) of our school districts within the workforce development area. These Cooperative Endeavor Agreements transition students leaving the secondary education system (dropouts) to career services at the American Job Centers. The goal with this partnership is to more fully engage out-of-school youth and to place them on a career path as soon as possible.

The second initiative for LWDA-83 is the implementation of its initial sector partnership (Health Care) that began in April 2016. WDB-83 embraces strategies for meeting the needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers through sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

A third initiative is the Jump Start initiative with secondary education. Jump Start is Louisiana's innovative career and technical education (CTE) program. Jump Start prepares students to lead productive adult lives, capable of continuing their education after high school while earning certifications in high-wage career sectors. Students are required to attain industry-promulgated, industry-valued credentials in order to graduate with a Career Diploma. (Jump Start is an elective path for students pursuing a university-preparatory diploma.)

Regional teams – partnerships among K-12 and post-secondary educators, industry leaders and experts in workforce development and economic development – lead the local implementation of Jump Start 2.0, creating graduation pathways and collaborating to

provide workplace experiences for students and teachers. WDB-83 sits on both the regional Jump Start and Super Regional Jump Start teams.

Examples of coordinated efforts include but are not limited to;

- LWDA-83 has established a referral process with secondary and post-secondary educational providers that will allow us to leverage our WIOA funds for students that are just entering training or those who are already enrolled. Through our coordination of services, we can evaluate and assess the customers' needs for financial assistance through an ITA and often times provide wrap-around supportive services and employment assistance to candidates who have already completed their training experience. WDB-83 Policy 200-23-01: Standard Operating Procedures for Provision of Referrals to/from Partners (revised October 18, 2016), addresses procedures for referral to such services. This policy ensures that services are WIOA-funded only when these services are not available through other agencies and that there is no supplantation of services among partner agencies.
- LWDA-83 program staff reviews customers' financial analysis and financial aid, and will supplement Pell grants with WIOA funds for training that leads to certification or credentialing.
- LWDA-83 staff routinely meets with educational partners to discuss WIOA programmatic eligibility/suitability requirements, application processes, and availability of funds.
- LWDA-83 program staff coordinates onsite pre-screening and recruitment events to speak directly to new or active students to discuss available services and promote the benefits of participating in WIOA.
- LWDA-83 program staff discusses career pathway options with customers and encourages utilization of online assessments to help determine this process. In addition, onsite assessment, eligibility determination, case management, ITAs, and supportive services are provided to the customers throughout the duration of training.

Louisiana Delta Community College agrees to contribute to the delivery of the following shared services:

- Program Alignment: To be assured of an adequate supply of skilled workers, the college will strive for alignment between training programs and the needs of employers.
- Outreach/Informational Services: Literature concerning occupational and academic education programs will be provided for dissemination at the local workforce centers. College staff will coordinate campus visits by WDB 83 staff to facilitate counseling and processing of potential customers.
- Professional Development and Cross Training: Cross training of staff will occur between LDCC and WDB 83 during periodic professional development activities. Programs and news from each partner will be highlighted while staff are advised of related processes and procedures.
- Process for Referral and Communication: College staff will utilize technology to engage in the referral process developed by WDB 83 to assist with identifying, connecting, and

tracking participants. A partner directory of key staff will make contact information readily available.

- **Coordinating:** Participants will benefit from an interdisciplinary case management team providing career services, academic interventions--where needed, and overall support of the career path that the participant has chosen.

WIOA offers new opportunities for the workforce system and TANF programs to work together. Serving TANF recipients is already being done in the centers of LWDA-83 as they are coming in to register for work as a requirement of the Department of Children and Family Services. A key partner and services will be available at the AJCs through the addition of the TANF program as a mandatory partner.

Louisiana has fourteen contracted partners which provide Expanded E&T services to SNAP recipients. Those services are provided in Region 8 by New Opportunities Vision Achievement which offers services for residents in Ouachita, Richland, Morehouse, Madison, East Carroll, and West Carroll parishes. While Louisiana Delta Community College offers services for residents in Union, Jackson, Caldwell, Ouachita, Morehouse, West Carroll, Richland, Franklin, Tensas, Madison, and East Carroll parishes. The following components will be offered through the E&T Program: job search training, supervised job search, WIOA participation, work experience, job retention, and education - vocational training.

The Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program, carried out under Chapter 41 of Title 38 of the U.S. Code provides services to veterans and eligible persons according to need, and significant barriers to employment. LWC Jobs for Veterans State Grant-funded activities are co-located within Ouachita Parish American Job Center and serve the entire Region 8 area. JVSG staff referred to as Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) and Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist are essential parts of and fully integrated into the workforce development network of Region 8.

Community Service Block Grants (CSBG) have been in existence since 1965, always with the same mission: to improve the causes and conditions of poverty. Initiatives have included, but are not limited to: neighborhood linkages, leverage of community resources, conduction of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites, building housing capacity, provision of family self-sufficiency and case management, early childhood intervention and Head Start; facilitation of Results-Oriented Management and Accountability. CAAs collaborate and coordinate employment and training activities, as well as supportive services, with WDB-83. This program funds programs that provide opportunities for participants to attain basic employability skills, occupation-specific skills, and work experience necessary to meet employer talent needs. CAAs are well-positioned to serve as lead partners in the development of "supportive service pathways" or service flow charts for vulnerable populations (low-skilled, low income, individuals with disabilities, re-entering citizens) focusing on reduction of the barriers to employment. However, no CSBG agency in our



service delivery area offer employment and training grant activities which require them to share in the IFA process.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program is available to workers who lose their jobs or experience reduced hours or income as a result of increased foreign trade activity. Local Board 83, if TAA petitions were to happen, will actively reach out to affected workers to provide TAA-funded training with the same goals as provided under the dislocated worker program. Trade services are considered an integral part of the American Job Center's service delivery and may involve any and all partners based on the particular needs of individual clients. As such, trade affected workers may be eligible for:

- Training services
- Job-search allowances
- Relocation allowances
- Re-employment services
- Funded training
- On-the-job training.

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

To ensure timeliness, the State's Rapid Response team, begins intervention efforts within forty-eight (48) hours of a layoff notification. To better meet the needs of Region 8, there is a Rapid Response coordinator located in the region to lead and manage activities, and to provide customized responses to businesses and workers within the region. LWC's Rapid Response unit provides the initial contact with employers when a lay-off of employees is to occur. This TAA unit organizes an orientation session to present information about the TAA program. WIOA staff initiate enrollment of eligible laid-off employees for case management at the local AJC. Enrollment involves the participant registering in HiRE and staff entering the WIOA application into the system.

Once trade impacted employees are certified, state merit-staff will approve and enter the TAA program information in HiRE for services. LWC has a policy requiring co-enrollment into WIOA services for Trade affected workers receiving services under the TAA. Co-enrolling TAA participants aligns resources and supports the development of clear plans for integrated service strategies necessary to effectively and efficiently assist the trade-affected workers in transition. As TAA participants are co-enrolled in the WIOA program, they are eligible to apply for assistance for expenses not covered under TAA or that they are not eligible for from the TAA program (for instance, when the participant lives inside the commuting area of their chosen training facility - 50 miles round trip - they are not eligible to receive TAA travel payments).

Certification of a dislocated worker for TAA includes determining eligibility by matching the laid-off employee to the USDOL certified petition and the employer's lay-off list. To be placed in training, the affected person must also meet the approval of the six (6) TAA criteria for eligibility. The TAA criterion requires assessing the emotional, spiritual, financial, and intellectual abilities of the trade impacted worker. The applicant must be able to demonstrate an ability to undertake, complete, and benefit from the planned training. In LWDA-83 an online test administered at the local AJC is used. If the assessment identifies a TAA certified participant's need for adult education or remedial services, these programs can be offered by local staff. The assessment tool also can be used to identify educational gaps and to pinpoint work-related aptitudes and interests.

Approval for TAA training services and selection of a training method or program is based on matching these factors to the participant for appropriate training in a demand occupation. When a TAA training activity is entered into HiRE, the program budget obligation and expenditure record is also entered.

The Combined Plan partner programs the State is electing to include in the plan did not include Career and Technical Education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.).

LWDA-83 has developed and maintains operational policies and procedures to direct issuance and coordination of transportation and other supportive services. A participant budget (Obligated Cost Agreement) is created and maintained as per allowable levels of services and availability of funds. Part of the developed procedure is monthly or quarterly review of program issuances, participant budgets, and program resources to manage overall delivery of services and maintain coordination.

Workforce Development Board-83, has adopted a Supportive Services policy (200-28-06: Standard Operating Procedures for Provision of Supportive Services or Assistance [revised 04/01/2020]) that addresses transportation needs for WIOA enrolled participants. A participant may be reimbursed, based on the individual need of the participant, travel expenses incurred during their daily commute to a classroom training site at a rate based on the actual distance travelled for educational purposes. The current mileage rate paid by the State of Louisiana will be paid by WDB-83 to a participant who incurred such travel during their daily commute to and from a classroom training site. [When the training site is temporarily outside of the classroom (e.g. clinical site, another campus) the reimbursement remains the same as the distance to the original classroom training site.] Each case will have an upper limit of \$5,000 per program year.

In addition, the LWDA-83 staff attends quarterly Northeast Louisiana Human Services Coordination meetings for Federal Transit Administration or area transportation planning.

A copy of the WDB-83 supportive services policy is attached as **Attachment #**. The local Board used the bi-monthly partners' meeting to coordinate the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the LWDA-83.

**E. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

The WIOA Adult program for LWDA-83 is designed to help adults receive training in demand occupations and find employment with speed and flexibility.

Career services are offered to all adults in LWDA-83 at the ten (10) AJCs. Job seekers who receive staff-assisted services will be co-enrolled in both Wagner-Peyser (WP) and WIOA Title 1. This is so regardless of the presence of WP-funded staff at the enrolling service location, which is the majority of AJCs in LWDA-83.

Career services may include:

- Job search and placement assistance, including career counseling,
- Labor market information identifying job vacancies, skills necessary for occupations in demand, and relevant employment trends in the local, regional, and national economies,
- Initial assessment of skills and needs,
- Information on available services and programs, and
- Follow-up services to assist in job retention.

Individuals who qualify can also receive training services that provide industry recognized credentials in demand occupations. Following training, individuals are assisted with finding employment. Training services include:

- Occupational skills training
- Skills upgrading
- On the job training
- Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training
- Academic and career preparation for training
- In limited cases, help with transportation and child care to attend training

There are three (3) tracks that any job seeker may take; these are “Workforce Ready, in a Demand Occupation”, “Workforce Ready, Not in a Demand Occupation” and “Case Management”. During the course of service assessments and re-evaluation the job seeker may move from one track to another.

If an initial assessment indicates that the job seeker has no significant barriers to employment and is determined to be workforce ready in a demand occupation, the job seeker will be introduced to a member of the Business Services Team for job referral. The BST member will review the job seeker’s skills comparing them to specific demand occupation job vacancies, match those skills to the job vacancies and make a staff referral.

When the initial assessment indicates the job seeker is workforce ready, but not in a demand occupation, the job seeker will be referred to self-service and offered assistance as needed with informational services. These services will include guiding the job seeker to labor market information including jobs in demand, wage rates, education requirements, work search tools, skills and interest matching assessments.

Career Services Team members will follow up with and reassess job seekers as necessary. Continued failure to achieve employment may indicate the existence of a barrier to employment that was not identified earlier in the assessment process. If the job seeker is continually unemployed, more individualized services may be needed. The job seeker will be moved to the Case Management Track if this is the situation.

Job seekers who are not ready for the workforce because of poor work history, limited skills, limited education, lack of credentials, lack of soft skills, or have any other barriers to employment will be provided Individualized Career Services, including a Comprehensive Assessment and development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) with the job seeker.

In addition to providing career and training services to individuals who are unemployed, a significant number of job seekers in LWDA-83 are underemployed. WDB-83 has developed local policy (**WDB-83 Policy 100-02:** for serving individuals that are underemployed. WDB-83 will consider individuals to be underemployed that include:

- Individuals employed less than full-time who are seeking full-time employment;
- Individuals who are employed in a position that is inadequate with respect to their skills and training;
- Individuals who are employed who meet the definition of a low-income individual in WIOA sec. 3(36); and
- Individuals who are employed, but whose current job's earnings are not sufficient compared to their previous job's earnings from their previous employment.

In order to further clarify, the definitions of a dislocated worker, terms such as a "general announcement" of a plant closing, "unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community in which the individual resides or because of natural disasters," and "unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation" are defined by the local Board. WDB-83 has a policy on standard operating procedures including determining eligibility of Dislocated Workers (WDB Policy 500-03-01), which provides the definition for "unlikely to return . . . "WDB will amend said policy to further describe "general announcement" and ". . . general economic conditions".

Individuals who were determined eligible for the Dislocated Worker program and who are determined to be underemployed, may still be considered eligible to receive services under the Dislocated Worker program. WDB-83 will develop a policy and procedures for determining underemployment for the dislocated worker program.

Available services for Dislocated Workers include:

- Assistance in job search and job placement
- Assessment of skills and barriers to employment
- Labor market and career information
- Skill enhancing workshops
- Referrals to community resources/partners
- HiSET training.

In LWDA-83, these services are provided through the American Job Centers or one-on-one with a WIOA Career Services Team member.

Training services may be available to individuals who are determined eligible and do not secure employment. Financial assistance may be provided for tuition, books and other support services depending on eligibility and need. Participation in a training program must lead to a profession determined to be a high-demand occupation.

BST members will review and coordinate with employers to produce complete and thorough job orders in HiRE. BSTs will also actively recruit, screen and refer job seekers to job orders, with the priority being on jobs in a demand occupation. BSTs will alert the CSTs about new job orders in demand occupations and assist with referral of job seekers who are workforce ready. BSTs daily review job orders to provide veterans' priority searches.

The BST who made the referral to a demand occupation job, will follow up with the job seeker to determine the outcome of the referral.

Rapid Response works closely with Region 8 to ensure that dislocated workers receive program information and services. Rapid Response provides core and intensive Rapid Response services at times and locations determined by LWC, the employer, and the needs of the affected workers. The Rapid Response Unit quickly and efficiently gathers the appropriate state and local resources and works with the employer/management to provide a package of services and activities that will help the affected workers get and keep subsequent jobs.

LWDA-83 works closely with the Rapid Response Unit to provide various services and activities which will enable dislocated workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible following either a permanent closure or mass layoff, a natural or other disaster resulting in mass job dislocation, WARN (Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification), and/or other non-WARN events. Services are typically delivered on-site in partnership with LWDA-83 and according to the needs and schedules of the workers. These services may include Worker Orientation sessions which provide workers with a comprehensive overview of dislocated worker services including assessment, job search, training, unemployment insurance, and labor market information to name a few. Other customized on-site services may include job search workshops, Worker Transition Centers, and Job Fairs. These services

can range from assessment to career exploration to resume preparation to job search to educational opportunities.

#### **F. WDB-83 YOUTH ACTIVITIES**

WDB-83 understands and recognizes Governor Jon Bel Edwards' vision for serving youth under WIOA. WDB-83 has continually served youth by initiating them to a demand-driven workforce system. WDB-83 makes key investments in serving disconnected youth, as well as other vulnerable populations. WIOA prepares youth for successful employment through increasing the use of proven service models. In accordance with WIOA, LWDA-83 has increased the percentage of youth formula funds used to serve out-of-school youth to 80 percent from 30 percent as was required under the Workforce Investment Act. WDB-83 will spend at least 20 percent of youth formula funds on work experience activities such as summer jobs, pre-apprenticeship, on-the-job training, and internships so that youth are prepared for employment. Allowable expenditures that WDB-83 will count toward the work experience expenditure requirement include the following:

- Wages/stipends paid for participation in a work experience;
- Staff time working to identify and develop a work experience opportunity, including staff time spent working with employers to identify and develop the work experience;
- Staff time working with employers to ensure a successful work experience, including staff time spent managing the work experience;
- Staff time spent evaluating the work experience;
- Participant work experience orientation sessions;
- Employer work experience orientation sessions;
- Classroom training or the required academic education component directly related to the work experience;
- Incentive payments directly tied to the completion of work experience; and
- Employability skills/job readiness training to prepare youth for a work experience.

Policies supporting and methods of including these efforts are being established.

LWDB-83 has decided to directly provide youth services.

In order to measure Educational Functioning Level (EFL) gains after program enrollment, WDB-83 will use an NRS approved assessment for both the EFL pre- and post-test. With the introduction of TABE 11/12, LWDB-83 selected to use another assessment to measure EFL, CASAS.

LWDA-83's American Job Centers actively participate in a wide variety of youth career development endeavors. When addressing the youth population considered, or categorized as "Out-of-School" (OSY), we focus on the age group between 16-24 years old, and who are not participating in secondary or post-secondary education at the time of enrollment.

The focus of Youth services under WIOA supports the attainment of a secondary school diploma or HiSET which provides out-of-school youth and adults with the best opportunity

to demonstrate their high school-level proficiency and their readiness for higher education or the workplace. Attention in the Youth program will provide for entry into post-secondary education and career readiness.

In the spirit of WIOA, Workforce Development Board-83 has shifted focus and resources to OSY, to ensure that this cohort of participants is engaged, despite the difficulties in doing so. The main focus for this age group is the offering of adult education and literacy activities through programs such as LDCC CAD, an education program for these specific participants as a mechanism to introduce, or re-introduce them to basic skills advances.

As recently as the month of September 2020, WDB-83 began the planning stage to co-enroll students attending Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) programs in LWDA-83 sponsored by LDCC CAD. JAG is dedicated to supporting young people of great promise. JAG is currently delivering the best results in its 40-year history, while serving youth who face significant challenges, to help them reach economic and academic success. WDB-83 plans to offer work experience activities, incentives and stipends to eligible Youth who are enrolled in the adult education classroom, JAG program and the local Youth project called HIP (Helping Individuals Progress). This will allow WDB-83 to offer pieces from the required fourteen (14) Youth elements that are not traditionally available in our rural areas, while also serving Youth to the fullest of ability of three (3) programs.

The process of recruiting youth to any of the partner programs will involve "casting a very wide net". LWDA-83 will work within a system of cohorts where there will be a lot of cross-referral. LWDA-83 will identify organizations that work with the targeted youth population and actively communicate with them and make sure they know about the Youth program eligibility, admission dates, etc. and understand how to refer young people to the WIOA Youth program. If it is determined that WIOA is not the best provider for an individual young person, AJC staff will make all effort to be sure the customer receives a "soft landing" to the partner agency.

Reengaging out-of-school youth can take many forms, including information sharing from school systems. LWDB-83 partners with the five (5) school districts in order to access youth who are currently not attending school or who have dropped out. The regional effort that focuses on directing youth that are dropping out of high school is the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement (CEA) to Engage Out-of-School Youth. The CEA's purpose is to create a pathway towards a high school equivalency while incorporating work-based learning that re-engages youth who have already left high school.

LWDA-83 has varied its Youth recruitment strategies. Utilizing multiple methods to reach out-of-school youth ensures that as many OSY as possible are contacted. One strategy is street recruitment which should demonstrate the highest percentage of enrollments. A

Youth staff person will go into neighborhoods where the out-of-school youths can be found. LWDA-83 Youth staff have demonstrated dedication to the success of young people serving as mentors, and the young people see, and feel, that staff are genuine to their success.

In addition, many TANF participants may be eligible for the WIOA youth program given the OSY age increased under WIOA. American Job Centers in LWDA-83 partner with TANF in order reach the TANF population.

Another strategy is friend and family referrals. This is generated by participants and family members of participants, past and present, who have seen the success of the program.

Prescreened and “vouched-for” referrals are yet another strategy. These come from system partners as well as other community agencies with whom an MOU has been negotiated. The MOU includes the process for an electronic referral (WDB-83 Policy # 200-23-01 [revised 10/18/2016]). The referral comes directly to a staff member and that person follows up through phone or outreach to the young person. There is an agreement between agencies to provide feedback on whether or not the individual enrolled into a program or decided not to participate at that time.

The last strategy for recruitment is the use of social media. Eventually a Youth advisory group, along with a staff member, will monitor the media outlets to promote activities, events and services. With the use of social networking sites, such as Skype, Twitter, Facebook, etc., youth will be able keep abreast of services and events offered in the local areas.

LWDA-83 will continue to grow its social media community as a way of communicating with young people, attend events specific to young people, as well as promote Youth programs in a variety of venues. However, the “experts” on out-of-school youth are the youth themselves. LWDA-83 will make the Youth participants actively involved in designing outreach and recruitment strategies and implementing program design. For example, the Youth will assist in the designing of what they deem appropriate language for prospective enrollees, assist with the way LWDA-83 frames the Youth program making sure it is effective in communicating to out-of-school youth, and they will tell LWDA-83 staff where to find out-of-school youths in our communities.

LWDA-83’s Youth programs are designed to provide disconnected youth access to career pathways and sector strategies to increase credential attainment and long-term career success.

WIOA affirms LWDA-83’s commitment to providing high quality services for youth and young adults beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, and culminating with a good job along a career pathway or enrollment in post-



secondary education. LWDA-83 will make sure everything the participants do in the program is relevant to them and that they understand the connection between the activity they are in and how it will impact their future.

LWDA-83 sees three categories key to the engagement and retention of out-of-school youth. First is immediate immersion in career planning to reinforce the chosen career pathway. Secondly, supportive services. A large percentage of youth that LWDA-83 serves is economically disadvantaged and depends highly on the supportive services payments. Finally, employment opportunities that will go beyond what the Youth would normally have. The concept is not to just get the young person a job, but to identify a career pathway in a demand occupation that the young person will be able to continue on to earn a livable wage. All of LWDA-83's employment development efforts will be tied to career pathways.

LWDA-83's Youth program design will continue to incorporate assessment tools, such as *the* objective assessments of academic levels (CASAS), skill levels (WorkKeys), and service needs of each participant in order to link their service strategy to career pathways, leading to recognized post-secondary credentials. Career Service Team members who work with employers use the assessment results to develop work experiences. WDB-83 Policy 600-02-04: Youth Workforce Investment Activities Standard Operating Procedures (revised 07/01/2020) assures assessment instruments are valid and appropriate for the Youth population, and provide reasonable accommodations in the assessment process, if necessary, for individuals with disabilities.

LWDA-83 has a strong history of meeting the minimum expenditure rate (75% of program expenditures) for out-of-school youth and is committed to continuing to do so. Local areas are required to track youth formula-fund expenditures on the Monthly Expenditure Report. These reports are reviewed and evaluated each month by the Executive Director, WIOA Program Director and the Accounting Supervisor to ensure adequate expenditure levels. Service strategies are developed with the WIOA Program Director, the Youth Coordinator and the One-Stop Operator to ensure adequate program participation is achieved to reach or exceed the minimum expenditure rate. Corrective action is taken when necessary to increase expenditure levels by evaluating worksites and attendance.

Assessment, guidance and counseling, and work-based learning activities are at the forefront of LWDA-83's high-impact program priorities for Youth, who may also access ITAs for occupational training in accordance with State and local policies. LWDA-83 recognizes that Out-of-School youth represents a large talent pipeline and an opportunity to invest in the future workforce generation. The Board will continue to advocate for programming that promotes workforce development of youth with barriers to employment which will incorporate the following:

- Occupational skills training, with a focus on career pathways and stackable credentials to facilitate achievable goals for youth
- Support services

- Remedial/prevocational training
- Work experience/Internships/On-the-Job training
- Assisting youth in achieving a Hi-SET

**G. INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT**

WIOA emphasizes serving those individuals with barriers to employment and individuals more at-risk of not connecting to the labor market. LWDB-83 serves individuals with barriers to employment who often need higher levels of service to achieve a positive outcome. WDB-83’s purpose is to provide individuals, including Youth participants with barriers to employment, with workforce investment activities, education, and support services to enter or retain employment. WIOA’s definition of barriers to employment include: a) displaced homemakers, b) low-income individuals, c) Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, d) individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities, e) older individuals, f) ex-offenders, g) homeless individuals or homeless children and youths, h) youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system, i) individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers, j) eligible migrant and seasonal farm works, k) individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility for TANF, l) single parents including single pregnant women, m) long-term unemployed individuals, and n) such other groups as the Governor determines to have barriers to employment

Individuals with disabilities are identified as individuals with barriers to employment under WIOA, and receive any and all American Job Center services that would normally be provided to any other job seeker. Staff of LWDA-83 AJCs will advise and inform clients and other individuals with disabilities of all the available services and benefits under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA. WIOA provides new opportunities for coordination and referrals for the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs to partner and enhance service delivery to individuals with disabilities, including those served under Title IV of WIOA.

WDB-83 will provide quality services to all customers including priority populations listed below that are outlined in the State Combined plan. Policy 100-15-01: Priority of Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers has been approved by the Board, with amendments on October 08, 2019. One-Stop Partners will work cooperatively to serve these and all priority populations. WDB-83 will run reports in HiRE to examine the data related to these special populations recurrently. Priority Populations include:

- Low Income Individuals
- Basic Skills Deficient
- Veterans (WDB-83 Policy 200-10: Priority of Services to Veterans)
- Persons with Disabilities

LWDA-83 will continue to ensure that policies and programs in the local workforce system are accessible, regardless of racial, gender, or socioeconomic background. The One-Stop

Operator and or the WIOA Program Director will publish quarterly reports to partners of the local area which will provide a detailed breakdown of clients by residential parish, race/ethnicity, education level, age, gender, basic needs, and job search needs in order to identify gaps in access to workforce and educational services. Where gaps are identified, partners will work to strategize solutions.

WDB-83 will review any existing equity goals from the area's community college (Louisiana Delta Community College) and identify alignment between the institution's equity goals. WDB-83 will incorporate those aligned goals as its own and develop strategies that will achieve its proposed outcomes. Continual improvement and monitoring will be the responsibility of the Board.

Continual improvement and monitoring will be the responsibility of the Board. LWDB-83 will, in particular, focus on improving technology skills for all workers, but especially for minorities who consistently lag behind the general population in IT skills acquisition and needed workplace skills such as coding and basic computer literacy.

WDB-83 will work to explore mentoring programs by convening participants, staff, local board, and employers' input and come up with a plan on how we can expand mentoring programs to adults. Identifying mentors from those who have successfully completed the program while living with some of these barriers to employment would be an avenue to explore. Utilizing the Board members as mentors or developing a program with the service providers would be another way to ensure success with our adult participants. These are areas to examine and look to expand upon.

As part of LMI training that is provided to new staff and as refresher training to existing staff, trainings on the labor equity gaps, customer demographics and program placement outcomes and how efforts can work to bridge those gaps will be included. Quarterly reports from LA Performs will provide insight into which populations are being served and their outcomes which will be beneficial to identifying gaps in equity, if applicable. The plan will include providing technical assistance opportunities from LWC to train staff on data-driven approaches to address equity gaps.

WDB-83 has an American Job Center located in the parish seat of each of the ten (10) parishes it serves. Most are located near prominent landmarks, such as the parish court house, Walmart, community college campus, hospital, police jury office, etc., that are easily acceptable to customers and participants.

#### **H. WDB-83 TRAINING POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES**

Workforce Development Board-83 is following current guidance from WIOA Title 1 for all Adult and Dislocated Worker funds. LWDA-83 is working to deploy new strategies including enhancing collaboration with the local community college, apprenticeship programs and other initiatives to ensure that we meet the training expenditure requirements. The

Executive Director reports to the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board quarterly expenditure benchmarks for budget to actual expenditure to ensure adequate training levels are met.

Fiscal staff report to the Board with expenditure benchmarks data, and program staff is notified monthly if adjustments or modifications are required to meet annual benchmark goals. Local emphasis on collaborating more closely with employers and working with other business groups to access the smaller employers that are predominant in our rural area will support informed customer choice in the selection of Individual Training Account-funded occupational training. These activities may also result in the identification of training gaps, which may be addressed through customized training available to LWDA-83 employers. LWDA-83 also looks to increase its investment in On-the-Job Training programs, which reimburses employers for wages during a new employee's training period and skill upgrades for underemployed workers.

Policies, practices and processes that define WDB-83 and the way it conducts business include, the procedure of routinely and periodically evaluating its budget, resource allocations, and expenditures. LWC requires local boards to specifically report on expenditures for career and training services and on the number of participants who received career and training services. This requirement is specifically designed to make planning and funding decisions more transparent, and to provide better opportunities for public oversight. WDB-83 adheres to the uniform administrative requirements set forth in Title 2 CFR Part 200 and Title 29 CFR Parts 95 and 97. WDB-83 consistently meets the federally-mandated responsibilities for more than the required two previous program years, including timely reporting of participant and expenditure data, timely completion and submission of the required annual single audit and not having been placed on cash hold for longer than 30 days. (WIOA Section 106(e)(2)).

WDB-83 will maximize work-based training program models as part of its training strategy. Closely tied to the solutions sought by businesses is the expanded use of work-based learning (Registered Apprenticeships, Pre-Apprenticeships, Work Experience, Transitional Jobs, On-the-Job Training, and Incumbent Worker Training). The work-based training model has as its goal to meet job seekers as well as employer needs. Work-based training is beneficial because it's an "earn while you learn" environment. Employers like this process because it is a plus for their business.

WDB-83 will use structured work-based learning, such as paid and unpaid work experiences and career exploration that lead to gainful employment, as a strategy in serving Youth. Work-based learning strategies are essential for young people to acquire work experience. WDB-83, as the local area Youth provider, is required to spend at least twenty (20) percent of its contract funding on work-based learning. Youth customers are being linked to work-based learning opportunities based on employer need and commitment, and interest among job seekers.

Work-based training allows employers to train their employees while continuing to be productive members of the workforce. WIOA provides for a workforce system that is job driven.

Registered Apprenticeship (RA): RA is an important component of potential training and employment services that WDB-83 provides to its customers. WIOA provides an overall emphasis on registered apprenticeship programs throughout the one-stop delivery system. WDB-83 has partnered with the RA system and uses RA opportunities as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers.

Pre-Apprenticeship: Pre-apprenticeship is a program designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program, which includes:

- training and curriculum that aligns with the skill needs of employers in the economy of the State or region,
- access to educational and career counseling and other supportive services,
- hands-on, meaningful learning activities that are connected to education and training activities, such as exploring career options, understanding how skills acquired through coursework can be applied to a future career,
- opportunities to attain at least one industry-recognized credential, and
- a partnership with one or more registered apprenticeship programs that assists in placing individuals who complete the pre-apprenticeship into a registered apprenticeship program.

The target populations for pre-apprenticeship are youth and adults with barriers to employment who are identified to need certain skills or credentials in order to successfully enter into a registered apprenticeship program, dislocated workers transitioning to new industries or occupations in need of new skills, other eligible individuals identified by CST members as likely to succeed and have an interest in registered apprenticeship programs.

Work Experience (WE): A work experience is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. WDB-83 limits WE activities to ninety (90)-day intervals and for no more than thirty (30) hours per week. A WE activity can only be extended beyond the original ninety (90) days if justification for such an extension exists and is recorded in the participant's case notes.

Transitional Jobs (TJ): Transitional jobs are a type of work-experience and are considered an individualized career service. Transitional jobs are time-limited and wage-paid work experiences that will be subsidized at 100 percent. WDB-83 may not use more than 10 percent of its allocated funds to provide transitional jobs. Transitional jobs are limited to ninety (90)-days and require not more than 30 hours of work per week. These jobs are in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors. Transitional jobs are designed to help participants establish a work history, demonstrate success in the workplace, and develop the skills that lead to entry into and retention in unsubsidized employment. There is no expectation that the employer providing the transitional job placement will hire the participant permanently.

Transitional jobs must be combined with comprehensive career services and/or supportive services.

On-the-Job Training (OJT): OJT opportunities provide structured training for participants to gain the knowledge and skills to be competent in the job for which they are hired and lead to stable employment. It is also designed to assist employers with a wage subsidy during the training period, as an incentive to the employer to hire individuals who lack marketable skills for the current job market.

Incumbent Worker Training: (WDB-83 Policy 400-05-01) Incumbent Worker training is designed to meet the needs of an employer or group of employers to retain a skilled workforce or avert layoffs. Incumbent Worker training can be used to either:

- Help avert potential layoffs of employees; or
- Obtain the skills necessary to retain employment, such as increasing the skill levels of employees so they can be promoted within the company and create backfill opportunities for new or less-skilled employees.

Workforce Development Board-83 will continue to support WIOA customer training through Individual Training Accounts in accordance with the law and applicable local policies. Eligible program participants who seek training services may, in consultation with AJC staff, select a training vendor from the list of eligible training providers.

For the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, ITAs are the primary method for funding participants' training services. The Title I Youth Program also uses ITAs to fund training services for out-of-school youth. Training funded through an ITA must be selected from Louisiana's Eligible Training Programs List (ETPL). Louisiana's ETPL is published online and provides detailed information about programs eligible for ITAs, including cost information and aggregated performance metrics related to students' program completion and their employment and earnings outcomes.

The approved ETPL serves as an important tool for participants seeking training to identify appropriate providers, and relevant information such as cost and program outcomes. Using the ETPL, career coordinators in LWDA-83's AJCs can assist participants in identifying training and training providers in high demand industries that result in positive outcomes and recognized credentials. The local Board works with LWC to ensure that there are sufficient numbers and types of providers of career services and training services (including eligible providers with expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities and eligible providers with expertise in assisting adults in need of adult education and literacy activities) serving the local area and providing the services involved in a manner that maximizes consumer choice and leads to competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities.

Upon selection, in accordance with local policies and available funding, the AJC staff will refer the participant to the eligible provider and arrange for payment through an ITA.

WDB-83 believes ITAs, which allow workers to choose their training and training provider, result in more positive outcomes when workers received structured guidance and information compared to workers who received the ITA and selected training options on their own. This belief will be reflected in the process of services offered to AJC customers.

WDB-83 considers the full cost of participating in training services, including expenses related to dependent care, transportation and other essential needs for individuals who need additional assistance. WDB-83 uses a broad range of training programs as part of its workforce development strategy. These programs collaborate with the local workforce development board, companies and education/training providers to improve training.

Providers of on-the-job training, customized training, incumbent worker training, internships, paid or unpaid work experience, or transitional employment are not subject to the ETP requirements of WIOA. WDB-83 has established a procedure for training providers to petition a denial of training funds which explains the appeals process for denial or termination of their training services.

Workforce Development Board-83 is committed to continuous improvement of service delivery. WDB-83 considers continuous improvement to be a critical factor in the negotiations process for annual performance levels. Continuous improvement may reflect an increase in the level of performance, a change in service strategy and delivery, or a change in the customers served. The customers served by Local Workforce Development Area-83 (LWDA-83) has a significant impact on the outcomes depending on factors unique to the population.

#### **I. WDB-83 TRANSFER OF WIOA TITLE 1B WORKFORCE FUNDS**

WIOA sec.133(b)(4) provides the authority for Workforce Development Board-83 to expend up to 100 percent of the Adult activities funds on DW activities, and up to 100 percent of DW activities funds on Adult activities. LWC's State Combined Plan outlines the policy to evaluate transfer requests from local workforce areas. Expenditures of monies transferred between local DW and Adult programs are reported on the ETA-9130 reports. ETA notes when considering such transfers that career and training services must continue to be made available to both Adult and DW participants in the AJCs. However, State policy will limit the maximum allowable transfer to 75 percent. WDB-83 may send written notice requesting a transfer of funds between adult and dislocated worker funds up to a maximum amount of 50 percent in the first year in which funds are made available. In the second year, the Board may send written notification requesting up to an additional 25 percent.

One service strategy newly implemented by WDB-83 is that of Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). Sessions with local employers are planned to introduce this training concept. WDB-83 has adopted an upskill/backfill strategy which involves filling jobs vacated by workers who are moving into more advanced positions in a company with other WIOA participants. WDB-83 will develop its IWT contract such that once incumbent workers advance with the

employer; the employer then provides an opportunity to fill this now vacant position with a local WIOA participant.

Individuals receiving incumbent worker training are not considered to be participants for the purpose of inclusion in WIOA performance indicator calculations. The required participant and performance data elements reported for incumbent worker individuals are limited to basic information and the elements needed to calculate incumbent worker training performance indicators for employment in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit, Median earnings in the 2nd quarter after exit, Measurable Skill Gains, and Credential Attainment. For the purposes of calculating these metrics, the exit date for an individual who only has received incumbent worker training will be the last date of training, as indicated in the training contract. Unlike other types of training, incumbent worker eligibility is determined at the employer level.

WDB-83 may use up to twenty (20) percent of its adult and dislocated worker allocations to provide for the cost of IW training. WDB-83 has identified Louisiana Delta Community College and Training Logic Inc. as potential training providers for procurement by employers.

WDB-83 Policy 400-05-01: Guidance on Incumbent Worker Training Program is used to determine an employer's eligibility for participating in IWT based on:

- The relationship of the training to the competitiveness of the individual and employer;
- The number of employees participating in the training;
- The employee's advancement opportunities along with wages and benefits;
- Skills gained as a result of the training;
- Layoffs averted as result of the training;
- Utilization as part of a larger sector and/or career pathway strategy; and
- Employer size.

For an employer to receive WDB-83's IWT funds, individuals receiving the training must be:

- Employed;
- Meet the FLS Act requirements;
- Have an established history with the employer for six (6) months or longer; and
- If the majority of employees being trained meets these requirements, a cohort of employees may participate.

WDB has established a policy regarding the non-federal share of the cost of IWT. The employers will pay for a significant cost of the training through either, or both, cash payments and/or in-kind contributions, with the wages paid to the employees while in training used as matching funds.

WDB-83 will consider the number of employees participating in the training, the wage and benefit levels of the employees, the relationship of the training to the competitiveness of



the employer and employees. Using the chart below, WDB-83 will base the minimum amount of employer share on the size of the company.

<b>EMPLOYER SHARE</b>	<b>SIZE OF EMPLOYER</b>
At least 10% of the cost	50 or fewer employees
At least 25% of the cost	51 – 100 employees
At least 50% of the cost	More than 100 employees

WDB-83 may use up to 10 percent of its combined total of adult and dislocated worker funds to provide transitional jobs to local individuals. WDB-83, to this point in time, has no plans to use funds to pay for performance contracts.

LWDA-83 will continue those practices and processes that have resulted in a high-performing board that is business led, market responsive, results-oriented and integrated with other workforce development system partners. The current Board seeks to foster customer service excellence, seeks continuous improvement and demonstrates value by enhancing employment opportunities for all individuals.

Policies, practices and processes that define this board and the way it conducts business include, but are not limited to the following:

- The LWDA-83 Board monitors the implementation of strategies established and performance achieved.
- The LWDA-83 Board routinely and periodically evaluates its budget, resource allocations, and expenditures.
- The LWDA Board’s agenda includes financial, strategic, governance, operational and other key workforce issues that provides the structural framework for the Board’s oversight.
- The LWDA-83 Board solicits and considers input from the community and customers.
- The LWDA-83 Board maintains a governance structure/framework that is responsive to its stakeholders.
- The LWDA-83 Board, although it operates in a very rural environment, strives to practice pro-active governance, especially related to board member recruitment and reappointment.
- The LWDA-83 Board oversees the quality of leadership and management.
- The LWDA-83 Board maintains a constant communication with key stakeholders on the organization’s achievements and plans.
- The LWDA-83 Board has an extensive history of effectively securing discretionary grants to strengthen financial resources to reinvest in the devastatingly high poverty area that we serve.

### **A. WDB-83’s LEVELS OF NEGOTIATED PERFORMANCE**

For this plan, WDB-83’s Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

Workforce Development Board SDA-83, Inc. and LWC negotiated and reached agreement on local levels of performance based on the State negotiated levels of performance for PY20 on September 23, 2020. In negotiating the local levels of performance, especially those due to the coronavirus pandemic, WDB-83 made adjustments for the expected economic conditions and expected characteristics of participants whom we serve in our area.

<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</b>	<b>LWDA-83 Negotiated Local Performance</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</b>	<b>LWDA-83 Negotiated Local Performance</b>
<b><u>ADULT</u></b>		<b><u>DISLOCATED WORKER</u></b>	
Entered Employment Rate, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	<b>76.1%</b>	Entered Employment Rate, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	<b>75.0%</b>
Entered Employment Rate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	<b>70.0%</b>	Entered Employment Rate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	<b>67.2%</b>
Median Earnings	<b>\$5,777</b>	Median Earnings	<b>\$6,750</b>
Credential Attainment	<b>75.0%</b>	Credential Attainment	<b>73.0%</b>
Measurable Skills Gains	<b>73.8%</b>	Measurable Skills Gains	<b>78.8%</b>
<b><u>YOUTH</u></b>			
Entered Employment Rate, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	<b>68.4%</b>		
Entered Employment Rate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	<b>68.2%</b>		
Median Earnings	<b>\$3,319</b>		
Credential Attainment	<b>48.0%</b>		
Measurable Skills Gains	<b>67.8%</b>		

In addition to the common performance measures described in Section 116(b)(2)(A), WDB-83 asks that LWC track business-focused metrics as USDOL identifies standardized indicators for measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers (EISE). LWC reports annual count data, housed in the HiRE MIS system, of employer services. Further, LWC chose two EISE pilot performance measures to report to USDOL annually—Employer Penetration and Repeat Business Customers Rate.

- Employer Penetration Rate (Percentage of employers using services out of all employers in the State) - This approach tracks the percentage of employers with twenty (20) or more employees who are using the core program services out of all employers represented in LWDA-83.

- Repeat Business Customers (Percentage of repeat employers using services within the previous three (3) years) - This approach tracks the percentage of employers who receive services that use core program services more than once. This approach is useful in determining whether employers who receive services from the core programs are satisfied with those services and become repeat customers. This approach also assesses the LWDA-83’s workforce system’s ability to develop and maintain strong relationships with employers over extended periods of time.

WDB-83 opted not to participate in the negotiation of the state-level Wagner-Peyser measures. Measures assigned to the ten (10) parish area that is LWDA-83 are:

<b>WAGNER-PEYSER</b>	
Entered Employment Rate, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	<b>60.0%</b>
Entered Employment Rate, 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	<b>61.0%</b>
Median Earnings	<b>\$4,650</b>

**B. WDB-83’s CURRENT AND PLANNED EVALUATION ACTIVITIES**

Currently, reports on successful strategies occurring within LWDA-83 are reported at each quarterly Board meeting. The primary service delivery strategy for LWDA-83 continues to be the use of ITAs to assist WIOA participants in returning to work, boosting their earning potential, and/or beginning or continuing on an in-demand career pathway. The success and return on investment of this strategy can be seen in WDB-83’s Adult and Dislocated Worker performance outcomes, where all measures were met or exceeded in PY19.

LWDA-83 will continue to align new service strategies to address educational and training needs locally by addressing these common barriers:

1. Transportation and child care issues
2. Basic skills deficiencies
3. Identification of the proper agency to isolate the barriers the participants are facing - food, shelter, health care and other basic needs.

The One-Stop partners in LWDA-83 have always collectively helped customers with the above barriers, but additional training for front line staff and partner agency staff, will help to develop more knowledge about these services.

At this time our local area will not eliminate any programs based on no or minimum return on investment. However, we will focus on taking a more data-driven approach in starting new programs. During meetings with staff and partners, discussion will take place on a plan

for tracking programs using data. This will in turn allow our local area to ensure we are receiving the best return on our investment.

The area will work to collect more extensive data on the industries and occupations that are seeing greatest success in job placement, wages at placement, and the specific occupational training programs that are resulting in placement into well-paying jobs. The Board's Strategic Planning Committee and Business Services Team will leverage improved employer and industry information to target particular trainings as well as insights on major barriers to employment and retention and work to build new solutions.

Some key strategies that have shown promise, many with low investment and high ROI, which will be pursued include:

- Expanding contextualized basic skills education such as bridge programs delivered in conjunction with industry.
- Educating employers on the benefits of apprenticeship programs (whether formally registered or other apprenticeship-like training options that can be implemented).
- Promoting to employers a range of work-based learning and training methods in conjunction with education/training, which can incentivize workers and build career pathways.
- Expanding technology and basic computer skills training for all customers, given the presence of information technology activities.

Other strategies for which the area does not have ready solutions, but recognizes a need and will work to advocate with other local and regional institutions include:

- A need for improved access to technology including the presence of major gaps in high-bandwidth internet access within the region and lack of computer skills for many workers. This presents barriers to workers in terms of applying for jobs (almost all job applications are now online) as well as for succeeding workplaces in which technology and computer skills are ever more required.

**A. FISCAL MANAGEMENT**

By mutual agreement of the duly-elected legislative bodies of the ten (10) parishes of LWDA-83, the Union Parish Police Jury is designated as the local grant recipient and held liable for the grant funds allocated to the local area for Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker activities. Chief Elected Official for Workforce Development Board 83 has appointed the Workforce Development Board SDA-83, Inc. Administrative staff as the fiscal agent for LWDB-83 grant funds.

All subgrants and contracts will be procured through WDB-83's formal procurement policy processes, such as Request for Proposal (RFP). WDB-83 has established procurement policies and procedures in compliance with Federal and State laws and regulations and they meet the procurement standards specified in Uniform Guidance and the DOL Exceptions. These policies and procedures are audited by independent CPAs in the conduct of our annual single audit and are monitored by state staff during the conduct of their administrative monitoring process.

The competitive process used by LWDA-83 to award subgrants and contracts for WIOA funded activities adheres to the RFP. The competitive process begins with a public notification of interested parties and a legal public notification in order to ensure as many proposals as possible are received. Proposals are received and reviewed by the LWDB staff and the Executive Committee of the Board. Submissions are reviewed, procedure is taken to ensure any responding companies are not on the excluded list or that any conflicts of interest exist. A rating matrix is used to evaluate proposals for responsiveness to the RFP. The committee then makes a recommendation to the full board for discussion and final approval. The contract is drafted between the LWDA-83 and the winning bidder; that includes requirements of federal and state regulations.

WIOA does not allow for the "designation" or "certification" of any entity as an Operator without a competitive process. The one-stop operator that coordinates the service delivery of the required one-stop partners and service providers in LWDA-83 was selected by WDB-83 through a competitive process. The selected provider is Louisiana Delta Community College. As the Joint WIOA Final Rule requires that a competitive process be conducted at least once every four years, the local Board has decided to follow this timeline pending satisfactory performance review completed annually to ensure accountability and compliance.

**B. PHYSICAL AND PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY**

Recognizing the high unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities and the qualified-employee shortage businesses are facing, LWDA-83, as is LWC, is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and access to all programs, services and facilities.

With support of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant (2012 -2015), LWC worked to ensure the physical, communication, and programmatic accessibility of all American Job Centers by conducting specialized training for all center staff on topics including accessibility for all, disability etiquette and awareness, and identifying and assisting job seekers with hidden disabilities.

WDB-83's one-stop certification process assures effective services for individuals with disabilities are present in the comprehensive one-stop center and in its affiliate locations through skills training which enhances the ability to obtain, in particular, "high demand jobs". LWDA-83 is committed to complying with Section 188 and the American Disabilities Act (ADA) regarding physical and programmatic accessibility. As part of compliance, LWDA-83 will conduct an annual review of all One-Stop centers throughout the local area, to ensure compliance.

LWDA-83 operates WIOA programs and activities in a manner that makes services readily accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities. These efforts include, when appropriate:

- Advertising so various target populations become aware of programs and/or activities:
  - Marketing materials state WDB-83 is an equal opportunity employer/program operator, Universal Access, and auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Materials also include contact phone number, TRS #711, and email ([wib83@bayou.com](mailto:wib83@bayou.com)).
- WDB-83 is committed to complying with Section 508 of the National Rehabilitation Act.
- WDB-83 is an Employment Networks in Social Security's Ticket to Work Program.

WDB-83 uses evidenced-based workforce strategies that places individuals with disabilities into sector-based career pathways leading to gainful employment.

WDB-83 continues to be committed to the development and continued growth of professional staff members. In an effort to meet the current and projected needs for qualified personnel, WDB-83 encourages the hiring of staff members from minority backgrounds and individuals with disabilities.

WDB-83 will continue to collaborate with other key workforce partners serving individuals with disabilities to determine improvements that can be achieved through collaboration and partnerships.

Title IV of WIOA makes a number of significant changes to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in order to improve and align core programs towards the goal of empowering individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion in and integration into society.

Effective partnering with the core and mandated programs is essential in order to ensure individuals with disabilities seeking employment and training services receive the services

they need for employment. In order to better align the core programs and create additional flexibility for the purposes of achieving WDB-83 goals, funds allocated to LWDA-83 for Adult and Dislocated Worker activities are used to improve coordination between employment and training programs carried out in the local area for individuals with disabilities through the American Job Center network. WDB-83 utilizes this flexibility to ensure a highly coordinated service delivery that ensures individuals with disabilities receive the services they need for their career needs, regardless which partner agency the services are provided by. Additionally, ETA encourages local areas to coordinate with programs carried out by State agencies relating to intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as local agencies and organizations serving individuals with significant disabilities, including the local network of centers for independent living in each State.

### **C. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC COMMENT**

Local Boards must provide the opportunity for public comment and input, which allows interested stakeholders to participate actively, effectively, and transparently in the development of the plan. WDB-83 will submit a draft of its local plan to the Louisiana Workforce Commission on or before December 04, 2020. At that time an electronic copy of the draft plan will be sent to each member of the Workforce Development Board, as well as to all partner agencies for review and comment.

The full membership of LWDB-83 will have an opportunity for review and comments at the October 2020 annual meeting.

Additionally, a copy of the Draft plan will be posted on LWDB-83's website ([www.wdb83.com](http://www.wdb83.com)) with directions for submission of public comments. These comments will be reviewed and recorded into the development of the final plan document before submission on or before December 04, 2020.

To ensure public access for those that may not be familiar with the Workforce Development Board website, LWDB-83 will place the following public notice in the regional paper, Monroe News Star, to run for a period of one week. The comment period to allow public and shareholder feedback will be open for a period of 30 days beginning October 02, 2020.

July 28, 2020 - Requested Regional data from LWC Research and Statistics Division

August 17, 2020 - Received Regional LMI data

August 19, 2020 - Strategic Planning Meeting with WDB-81 & WDB-83



#### **IV. COORDINATION WITH REGIONAL/LOCAL PLAN PROGRAMS**

Local workforce partners representing WIOA core and other programs are involved in the development of the Regional/Local Plan in a variety of ways; Individuals representing WIOA core programs serve on the workforce development boards (WDB-81 and WDB-83) along with representatives from local labor union affiliations and apprenticeship federations, economic development and partners who provide services to hard-to-serve populations. Local board members and partners were invited to the strategic planning sessions that occurred on the dates provided below. Input was solicited from those present. Representatives from both the University of Louisiana at Monroe and Louisiana Delta Community College were engaged to ensure that the primary providers of occupational skill training in the local area shared in the development of local workforce initiatives.

WDB-83 convenes two job center teams, the One-Stop Management Team and the Integrated Business Services Team. Initiatives identified in the Local Plan will be incorporated into team activities and represented in the One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding.

#### **V. COMMON ASSURANCES**

##### **a. Conflict of Interest**

LWDB-83 has established a Conflict of Interest Policy. Compliance with this requirement is evidenced through WDB-83 Conflict of Interest Policy 100-17.

##### **b. Public Access to Meetings**

LWDB-83 has established a Public Meeting Access Policy. Compliance with this requirement is evidenced through WDB-83 Public Meeting Access Policy 100-18.

##### **c. Fiscal Control and Fund Accounting Procedures**

LWDB-83 has a Fiscal Policies and Procedures Policy that addresses fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that are necessary to ensure proper accounting for funds allotted to the local area. Compliance with this requirement is evidenced through WDB-83 Fiscal Policies and Procedures 100-08-08 (revised 07/21/2020).

##### **d. Uniform Administrative Requirements**

LWDB-83 has a Fiscal Policies and Procedures Policy and a Monitoring Policy that describes action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements of WIOA. Compliance with this requirement is evidenced through WDB-83 Fiscal Policies and Procedures 100-08-08 (revised 07/21/2020) and Monitoring Policy 100-09-01 (revised 07/21/2020).

**e. Nondiscrimination**

LWDB-83 has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable. WDB-83 EEO Policy 100-03-01 (revised 07/21/2020).

**f. WIOA Priority of Service**

LWDB-83 has implemented a policy to ensure adult-program funds provide a priority in the delivery of career and training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipient or basic skills deficient. Compliance with this requirement is evidenced by WDB-83 Priority of services for Adults and Dislocated Workers 100-15-01 (revised 10/08/2019).

**g. Federal Funds Expenditure**

LWDB-83 ensures that 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.

**h. Deterring of Union Organization**

LWDB-83 will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7).

**VI. Statement of Concurrence**

Pursuant to Section 106 of the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act, this is to certify that both the Chief Elected Officials of the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) and the local Workforce Development Board Chairs for Region 8 concur with the Regional/Local Plan as presented herein.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Johnny Buckley, President**                      **Date**  
Union Parish Police Jury  
Chief Elected Official LWDB-83

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Steve Henderson, Chair**                      **Date**  
Workforce Development Board 83

## CENTER ACCOUNTABILITY AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

**LVR – Louisiana Vocational Rehabilitation**  
**LDCC – Louisiana Delta Community College**  
**Center for Adult Development**  
**ULM – University of Louisiana - Monroe**  
**NLWC – Northeast LA Workforce Centers, Inc.**

### QUESTIONS FOR PARTNER MOU DEVELOPMENT

1. What overarching goals do we want to establish as part of our MOU and in creating a new partnership?

**LVR** - Create Method of communication regarding participants seeking employment, establish goal/percentage for employment outcomes for participants seeking employment, Establish and maintain a working relationship with employers in community, establish method of determining consumer satisfaction with services provided by partner agencies and establish and maintain a method of ensuring employers satisfaction with service provision and the quality/prep of employment applicants.

**LDCC – No response**

**CENTER FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT – To prepare an increasing number of adults to meet ed and readiness criteria for NELA’s workforce demands.**

**ULM – ULM will be a training partner with WDB.**

**NLWC – To define and reinforce the relationship between WDB and NLWC.**

2. What guiding principles will we agree to follow (ex., customer focused services, customer satisfaction, etc.)?

**LVR – Ensure annual customer service training for all partners, create an annual customer service survey, Create a committee consisting of past and current career solutions participants, and establish a confidentiality statement in order to share information with partners regarding each consumer.**

**LDCC – No response**

**CENTER FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT – Customer focused services, mutually aligned outcomes.**

**ULM – Customer focused services will guide our participation as we offer training that targets clients seeking career placement. ULM will strive to provide training in both courses for academic credit as well as non-credit Continuing Education courses that are identified as having potential to lead to employment in health care or other high demand occupations.**

**NLWC – Offering as many employment, training and education services as possible for employers and individuals seeking jobs or wishing to enhance their skills; offering a wide array of useful info with wide and easy access to needed services; customer focused quality services for customers to make informed choices; performance based mutually negotiated outcomes and methods for measurements.**

3. Will the agencies agree to sharing space and/or other resources? Please List.

**LVR –Agencies should certainly share space if available as well as; telephones, copy machines, and computers.**

**LDCC – LDCC and WC staff coordinate times for campus visits to facilitate student counseling and processing, with particular focus on critical events such as LDCC registration periods and advising sessions.**

**CENTER FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT – LDCC and Center for Adult Development are always willing to explore all possibilities; however, it is difficult to make steadfast decisions as Delta Linc’s admin is currently in transition.**

**ULM – No response**

**NLWC – Yes – Payroll/Fiscal Services.**

4. What will the roles of each partner be in the One-Stop system design?

**LVR – To work in collaboration with each partner to ensure that every applicant seeking services from the LWC receive services in a timely and quality manner.**

**LDCC – No response**

**CENTER FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT – Center for Adult Development will be responsible for training participants in skills gaps, HISET prep, job readiness, etc.**

**ULM – ULM through Continuing Ed will meet with clients and help with documentation required for program participation, if necessary. Information will be disseminated on appropriate ULM webpages. Links to applications and WIOA approval documents, the WDB83 website and other related links will be posted on Continuing Ed, Career Connections and Financial Aid webpages. Appropriate social media sites may also be used. ULM Continuing Ed website will include the application materials and criteria for enrolling in that office’s courses. ULM will identify potential training opportunities that exist in current offerings in the areas of high demand occupations. ULM will also offer employer requested training among available courses as well as customized training requested by employers.**

**NLWC – NLWC will participate in a joint planning process which will result in the regional WIOA Plan; continuously build partnerships between all WIOA partners; respond to specific local and economic conditions that affect employer needs; adhere to strategic planning principles for the requirement of continuous improvement; adhere to common data collection and reporting; be diligent in developing coordinated local leadership by being responsive to customer needs, sharing information, and managing performance to measure the success of the One Stop System.**

5. What will be the process for referrals between partner agencies?

**LVR – A point for the initial contact should be established for each partner agency and shared with each partner. A referral form has already been established. Once the needs of the referrals have been determined, the completed referral form should be forwarded to the point of contact for the perspective partner. Referrals and outcome referrals should be discussed at quarterly meetings.**

**LDCC – Once a student completes entire app process for WIA and is denied, notification is sent to the appropriate Campus Director including the reason. This information will enable LDCC staff to address issues related to student account. In addition, WC staff utilize contacts at the college to follow up with students who may have initiated the application process but never returned to complete it.**

**CENTER FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT – Everyone who comes to Center for Adult Development will register with AJC/One Stop. Everyone who comes to AJC needing training for skills gap, no H.S.D., workforce readiness, will be referred to Center for Adult Development.**

**ULM – An existing process is in place for referrals and ULM will abide by that process.**

**NLWC – Local Workforce Development Area 83: American Job Centers Plans and Operations: Workforce Development Policy: Number 72 Attached.**

6. Will participants be co-enrolled?

**LVR –Yes, each partner providing services to a participant should have a case file with ongoing activities reports.**

**LDCC – no response**

**CENTER FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT – Yes**

**ULM – N/A**

**NLWC – WIOA participants will be co-enrolled with WIOA partners where allowable.**

7. How will customer flow between programs be organized?

**LVR** – Quarterly staffing between partners of participants progress, and communication, emails, phone calls between partners should occur.

**LDCC** – WC staff visit campuses regularly to interface with college staff and students. Visiting classes could easily be arranged if testing days do not provide access to enough students. Financial aid and admissions staff make WIOA/PHOCAS materials available to prospective students who need assistance. Where appropriate, a list of names referred to WC could be kept on campus for follow up.

**CENTER FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT** – Register with One-Stop to educational Center for Adult Development to employment follow/up/One Stop.

**ULM** – N/A

**NLWC** – Customer flow will be organized through the referral process agreed upon by partner agencies.

8. How will the one-stop system operating costs be covered equitably by each partner?

**LVR** – Unknown, at this point.

**LDCC** – No response

**CENTER FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT** – LDCC/Center for Adult Development funds are able to be utilized to fund the cost of training with the exception of minimal registration fees (participant usually pays this fee).

**ULM** – N/A

**NLWC** – N/A

9. Will cross-training of staff be necessary? If so, how will it occur?

**LVR** – All partner agencies should provide annual training. All new staff associated with partner agencies should receive cross training/job shadowing from other partner agencies within 3 mos of hire.

**LDCC** – Cross training of staff would enable both LDCC staff and WC staff to understand, communicate and provide advice and assistance to students who could benefit from both programs. A professional development workshop where both LDCC and WC staff share info about their programs, policies and procedures would help ensure a better understanding of one another. LDCC would be willing to host the workshops or travel to a convenient location to participate.

**CENTER FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT** – Yes – face to face and webinar, cross hosted

**ULM** – ULM offices such as Continuing Ed, Career Connections, and Financial Aid will train appropriate personnel so that they may offer high quality customer service to all clients seeking training through this program.

**NLWC** – Cross training with WIOA staff will be necessary for all partner agencies because the completion of the WIOA pre-application will be requested of each partner as part of the referral process to the American Job Centers. Cross training of partner staffs on the use of the Hire system and WIOA regulations should be conducted in person with access to internet and computer connections available.

10. How will partner agency staff communicate across programs?

**LVR** – Quarterly meetings of partners and quarterly meetings of point of contact staff.

**LDCC** – LDCC and WC staff could provide a directory of key staff members who would be able to assist the student/client with enrollment and application needs. The directory would include name, job title with short description of job duties. Email address and phone number. This director would need to include multiple centers/campus locations since students frequently cross parish lines to

enroll in college courses. LDCC and WC staff agree to share student info readily and expeditiously, provided that students sign appropriate release forms.

**CENTER FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT – Electronic – face to face**

**ULM – The offices mentioned in # 9 will communicate with each other to keep info current and accurate.**

**NLWC – An email listing of partner leadership should be established in order for communication to be delivered to the leadership of each agency then diffused to necessary staff members.**

11. Will regular partner meetings be necessary to ensure fulfillment of MOU requirements? If so, when, where and what will be discussed?

**LVR – If so, when, where and what will be discussed? Partners meeting should be held quarterly for the next 12 months to ensure a full understanding of the MOU and to foster relationships among partners. The meetings should rotate among partner locations. After the first year, meetings can be held semi annually or as needed.**

**LDCC – A quarterly meeting of partners will provide an opening for discussion related to student and client concerns. It would also be a great way to share program successes, news, and initiatives on the horizon,**

**CENTER FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT – Yes – monthly for first six months, then quarterly – trade off between locations discuss info flow outcomes for co-enrolled, evaluate referral process.**

**ULM – That will not be the decision of the three offices at ULM who will be involved. However, the directors of those offices are willing to be included in the partner meetings if that is requested.**

**NLWC – Regular partner meetings to ensure fulfillment of the MOU will not be necessary, however, any partner agency may “call” a meeting as the need arises.**

12. Who will sign the MOU on behalf of each partner agency?

**LVR – The LRS Regional Manager for region 8 has been given the authority to sign the MOU for Board 83.**

**LDCC – No response**

**CENTER FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT – Chancellor Barbara Hanson**

**ULM – Dr. Eric Pani**

**NLWC – NLWC’s MOU will be signed by the Program Director.**