



THE COORDINATING & DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

City of Shreveport  
Community Development

**Region 7**  
**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**  
**2020 - 2024 Regional/Local Plan**



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## OVERVIEW

The Local Workforce Development Boards 70 and 71 are charged with providing strategic direction and guidance over the local area's federal, state, and local workforce funds and service programs. LWDB 70 and LWDB 71, appointed by their chief elected official and/or parish mayor and certified by the Governor, includes representatives of private business/industry, education, economic development, labor, and community-based organizations. Area business partners make up most of the WDBs membership and contribute to its strategic development by maintaining a leadership role on both WDBs.

The LWDB 70 provides policy and oversight for all workforce development activities in the ten-parishes throughout Northwest Louisiana: Bienville, Balance of Caddo, Bossier, Claiborne, DeSoto, Lincoln, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, and Webster. The LWDB 71 provides policy and oversight for all workforce development activities within the City of Shreveport in Caddo Parish in Northwest Louisiana.

Find true north and you can find your way no matter the environment you find yourself in. Region 7's true north is assisting people to develop their potential. Amid the chaos and crises of COVID-19 and social unrest, our Region's true north continues to drive us to stay on target. In our pursuit to better serve the people of Region 7, in assisting them to develop their potential through WIOA activities, we are focusing our attention on expanding our demand-driven workforce system to be more robust for its participants, and more effective for its businesses.

We continue to develop our current partnerships along with developing new ones with various agencies and businesses that will best provide training and educational opportunities for the people of our region to attain self-sufficient employment opportunities within their own region.

LWDA 70 has made significant restructuring changes to its internal operations to better serve participants and businesses within the region. These changes were made with the aim of providing more time to assist participants in developing their potential, especially the youth population, and to provide better tools for the case managers to utilize.

In 2017, Region 7 created a three-year WIOA plan, outlining goals and strategies for the workforce system over the next three years. In alignment with this plan, the Board engaged in a variety of strategic initiatives to better serve business and jobseeker customers, promote collaboration among system partners, and continuously improve organizational operations. The timing of this 2020 Regions 7 strategic plan update comes in response to the ending of the original plan's timeframe, the many changes that have occurred within the workforce development landscape in the previous three years, and the current national COVID-19 pandemic crisis, which has drastically impacted the area's economy and workforce.

In 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was enacted, replacing the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and providing a new vision for the workforce development system. WIOA emphasizes customer-centric service design, a demand-driven system with business as the primary customer, and earn and learn opportunities, as well as reinforcing the role of the local Workforce Development Board as a strategic convener. In response to this change in federal legislation, the State of Louisiana, and the local workforce boards on Region 7 have taken a close look at plans, policies, and procedures to align with the new law and carry out its vision. Region 7 was ahead of the curve on much of WIOA's strategic focus, which has allowed LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 to continue its work pushing toward its goals to provide the highest quality services to businesses and jobseekers.

## **CHAPTER 1: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS**

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

According to estimates made by the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis, economic activity in the Shreveport-Bossier City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the population center of Region 7, contributed approximately 9.2% of Louisiana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2018 with close to 12.0% of the state's civilian labor force residing in Region 7. The following analysis will show that Region 7 has not fared well in employment growth over the last five to ten years with only three industry sectors experiencing a significant increase in employment. Recent events related to the COVID-19 pandemic (an exogenous event) and an accompanying drastic drop in the price of oil (a partially demand driven event) will also have a considerable negative, but hopefully short term, impact on economic activity and employment in Region 7 that is not captured in the following analysis.

The data contained in Table 1 depict changes in employment for two-digit NAICS sectors within Region 7 in comparing two points in time: the years 2014 and 2018. Since the data come from employers' quarterly wage reports, the table gives a fairly accurate picture of actual (not projected) changes in employment over a five-year period.

**Estimates of Low-Income Adults, 18 to 64, for Ten Parishes in Northwest Louisiana**  
**Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2018 5 Year Estimates**

	<b>% of Population 18 to 64 with Income at Poverty Level</b>	<b>Target Population Estimate for Low Income Adults</b>
Bienville	28.3%	2,170
Bossier	15.4%	11,500
Caddo	21.3%	30,490 (includes City of Shreveport)
Claiborne	30.3%	2,960
DeSoto	24.0%	3,700
Lincoln	32.6%	9,400
Natchitoches	34.7%	7,530
Red River	18.7%	890
Sabine	19.0%	2,460
Webster	25.3%	5,640

**Table 1**  
**Change in Employment by Major NAICS Sectors 2014 to 2018 - Region 7 (Northwest Louisiana)**  
**Source: Labor Market Information from www.laworks.net**

	<b>Employment 2014</b>	<b>Employment 2018</b>	<b>Change (2014-2018)</b>
Total	225,452	223,488	-1,964 (-.90%)
Health Care & Social Assistance	41,857 (18.6%)	43,219 (19.3%)	+1,362 (+3.3%)
Retail Trade	28,602 (12.7%)	28,480 (12.7%)	-122 (-.43%)
Accommodations & Food Services	22,905 (10.2%)	25,045 (11.2%)	+2,140 (+9.3%)
Educational Services	22,635 (10.0%)	21,803 (9.8%)	-832 (-3.7%)
Manufacturing	17,043 (7.6%)	16,419 (7.3%)	-624 (-3.7%)
Administrative & Waste Services	12,183 (5.4%)	12,200 (5.5%)	+17 (+.10%)
Construction	11,661 (5.2%)	10,618 (4.7%)	-1,043 (-9.0%)
Public Administration	10,534 (4.7%)	10,584 (4.7%)	+50 (+.50%)
Wholesale Trade	8,798 (3.9%)	7,927 (3.5%)	-871 (-10.0%)
Transportation & Warehousing	7,424 (3.3%)	7,532 (3.4%)	+108 (+1.5%)
Professional & Technical Services	6,767 (3.0%)	7,865 (3.5%)	+1,098 (+16.2%)
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	6,176 (2.7%)	4,314 (1.9%)	-1,862 (-30.1%)
Finance & Insurance	6,048 (2.7%)	5,505 (2.5%)	-543 (-9.0%)
Mining	5,921 (2.6%)	5,908 (2.6%)	-13 (-.20%)
Other Services	5,252 (2.3%)	4,985 (2.2%)	-267 (-5.1%)
Real Estate & Rental Leasing	3,542 (1.6%)	3,842 (1.7%)	+300 (+8.5%)
Information	3,134 (1.4%)	2,822 (.90%)	-312 (-10.0%)
Utilities	2,026 (.90%)	1,731 (.80%)	-295 (-14.6%)
Management of Companies & Ent.	1,646 (.73%)	1,515 (.70%)	-131 (-8.0%)
Agriculture & Forestry	1,298 (.60%)	1,174 (.52%)	-124 (-9.6%)

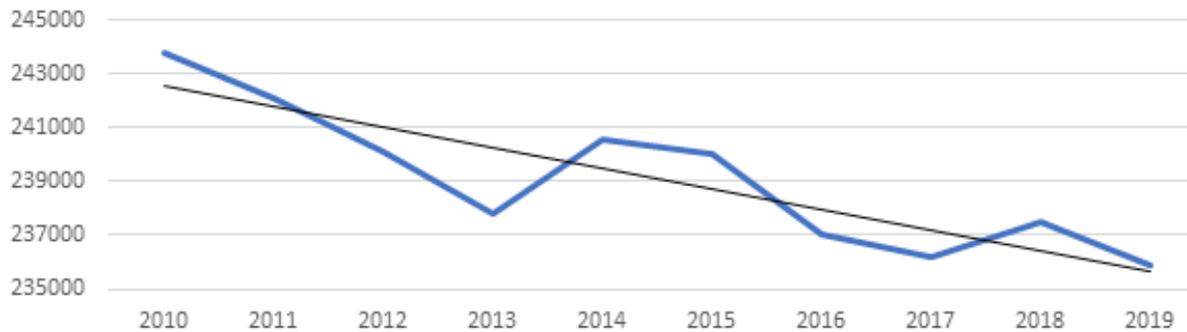
**Employment Increase = +5,075    Employment Loss = -7,039    Net Change = -1,964**

Net aggregate employment for the twenty NAICS sectors in Region 7 dropped by only about 1.0%. The Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sector was especially hard hit with a decline in employment of around 30%. This is the sector within which Shreveport and Bossier City's casino industry is grouped, an industry that was largely responsible for reviving both cities' economies during the decade of the 1990s. As indicated in Table 1, thirteen of the twenty NAICS sectors within Region 7 likely lost jobs over this five-year period. Graph 1 below also reflects a strong negative trend ( $R = -.877$ ) in the number of employed within Region 7 over the most recently completed decade (2010 to 2019).

In line within an ongoing national trend, growth in employment within Region 7's Healthcare & Social Assistance sector continues. This sector now employs almost 20% of the region's labor force, providing a paycheck for one out of five workers. Strong growth in employment occurred in the Accommodations & Food Services sector. Within this sector is found hotels/motels, fast food restaurants, cafes, cafeterias, and upscale restaurants with specialized cuisine. Although providing only around 3.5% of the jobs for Region 7's labor force, the Professional & Technical Services sector ranked first in employment growth rate at 16.2%. This sector (NAICS 54) is very diverse in the types of businesses it includes but one, which may be of considerable significance as an emerging industry, is Computer Systems Design and Related Services. Altogether, the three sectors Healthcare & Social Assistance, Accommodations and Food Services, and Professional & Technical Services contributed 90% of the net increase in employment within Region 7 over the period of 2014 to 2018 (4,608/5,075).

Graph 1 Number Employed in Region 7 (Northwest Louisiana)  
2010 to 2019

Source: Labor Force Data from laworks.net



With three NAICS sectors likely contributing most of the recent employment growth in Region 7, an important question is what impact is this having on occupational demand – what types of occupations or jobs are being created for the region's labor force by these three sectors? A comprehensive answer to this question is difficult given the great diversity in the types of businesses that make up these three sectors. However, using Occupational Employment Distribution Tables available through the Louisiana Workforce Commission's Occupational Projections Program, the occupations that are most prominent within each sector (i.e., employ the greatest number of workers) and their Louisiana Star Jobs rating for Region 7, can be identified as follows.

### **Accommodations and Food Services (NAICS 72)**

Waiters and Waitresses  
Food Preparation Workers  
Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers  
Restaurant Cooks  
First-Line Supervisors of Food Prep & Serving Workers  
Cashiers  
Bartenders  
Fast Food Cooks  
Restaurant Host and Hostesses  
Dishwashers

### **Demand Occupation Rating**

One Star for Region 7  
One Star for Region 7  
One Star for Region 7  
Two Star for Region 7  
Three Star for Region 7  
One Star for Region 7  
One Star for Region 7  
Two Star for Region 7  
Not Shown  
One Star for Region 7

### **Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62)**

Registered Nurses  
Nursing Assistants  
Licensed Practical Nurse  
Home Health Aides  
Childcare Workers  
General Office Clerks  
Receptionists and Information Clerks  
Secretaries & Administrative Assistants  
First-Line Supervisors of Administrative Support Workers  
Social and Human Service Assistants

### **Demand Occupation Rating**

Five Star for Region 7  
Two Star for Region 7  
Four Star for Region 7  
One Star for Region 7  
Two Star for Region 7  
Two Star for Region 7  
Two Star for Region 7  
Four Star for Region 7  
Four Star for Region 7  
Two Star for Region 7

### **Professional and Technical Services (NAICS 54)**

Accountants and Auditors  
General Office Clerks  
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants  
Paralegals and Legal Assistants  
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks  
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, Weighers  
Business Operations Specialists, All Other  
General and Operations Managers  
Civil Engineers  
Receptionists and Information Clerks

### **Demand Occupation Rating**

Five Star for Region 7  
Two Star for Region 7  
Four Star for Region 7  
Five Star for Region 7  
Four Star for Region 7  
Four Star for Region 7  
Not Shown  
Five Star for Region 7  
Five Star for Region 7  
Two Star for Region 7

In considering the limited number (30) of occupations shown above, it is obvious that Professional and Technical Services (NAICS 54) includes the greatest number that have a four or five star demand rating – occupations that are more likely to require an extensive investment in post-secondary education (i.e., college, vocational school) and offer much higher incomes. Accommodations and Food Services may lead in employment growth but includes, on the average, occupations through which qualifications and needed skills are mostly acquired on the job with much lower incomes. The Health Care Sector presents a mixed picture in terms of occupations requiring post-secondary education (e.g., Registered Nurse, Licensed Practical Nurse) and occupations requiring little or very limited post-secondary education (e.g., Home Health Aides, General Office Clerks). All this has significant implications in terms of the education and training required of the Region 7 labor force.

### **Emerging Trends in Employment by Industry and Occupation**

Labor market information available from the Louisiana Workforce Commission includes the employ-

ment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations was analysis for the Northwest Region of Louisiana. Labor market information available from the Louisiana Workforce Commission includes employment projections for the twenty major NAICS sectors over the ten-year period of 2016 to 2026. The projections are based on a statistical model that is built on assumptions concerning the future course of the national, state, and regional economies and their probable impact on changes in employment for each of the NAICS sectors. Table 2 below contains the employment projections for Region 7 (Northwest Louisiana).

The projections contained in Table 2 present a much better picture in terms of anticipated employment growth for Region 7 compared to Table 1. However, the assumptions underlying the statistical model used to generate the employment projections in Table 2 are unknown. As an example, Table 1 shows that employment in the Construction sector dropped by 9.0% over the period of 2014 to 2018 but Table 2 indicates that employment in the Construction sector is projected to increase by 7.1% over the ten-year period of 2016 to 2026. Events expected to take place in the national, state, and regional economy that will drive employment growth in the Construction sector cannot be identified for the purpose of this analysis. Nonetheless, as shown in Table 2, only four NAICS sectors in Region 7 are projected to see modest declines in employment over the ten-year period. Consistent with the data in Table 1, three NAICS sector will be responsible for over half of the increase in employment projected over the ten-year period: Accommodations & Food Services, Health Care & Social Assistance, Professional & Technical Services. Also consistent with Table 1, the Professional & Technical Services sector leads with a projected employment growth rate of 20.5% while only employing 3.1% of the Region 7 labor force in the year 2026.

**Table 2**  
**Projected Changes in Employment for Major NAICS Sectors in Region 7 – 2016 to 2026**  
**Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission Labor Market Information (laworks.net)**

	Projected Change in Employment	Project Growth Rate
Accommodations & Food Services	+3,768	+15.4%
Health Care & Social Assistance	+3,714	+8.8%
Professional & Technical Services	+1,351	+20.5%
Administrative & Waste Services	+1,115	+9.8%
Other Services	+989	+5.6%
Public Administration (Government)	+809	+5.0%
Manufacturing	+789	+4.8%
Construction	+724	+7.1%
Retail Trade	+690	+2.3%
Transportation & Warehousing	+675	+8.1%
Educational Services	+570	+2.5%
Mining	+567	+12.5%
Wholesale Trade	+224	+2.6%
Agriculture & Forestry	+158	+5.8%
Real Estate & Rental Leasing	+140	+3.9%
Utilities	+73	+6.1%
Information	-15	-.60%
Finance & Insurance	-33	-.60%
Management of Companies & Ent.	-36	-2.2%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	-49	-1.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>+16,223 (net)</b>	<b>+6.8% (net)</b>

One indicator for identifying an emerging demand industry or occupation could be an above average growth rate. With Table 2 showing an average growth rate of +6.8% for total projected employment over the ten-year period, there are seven NAICS sectors in Region 7 that meet this standard. These seven sectors and their rank in employment growth rate are as follows:

- ▶ Professional & Technical Services - +20.5%
- ▶ Accommodations & Food Services - +15.4%
- ▶ Mining - +12.5%
- ▶ Administrative & Waste Services - +9.8%
- ▶ Health Care & Social Assistance - +8.8%
- ▶ Transportation & Warehousing - +8.1%
- ▶ Construction - +7.1%

Of these seven NAICS sectors, there are two in Table 1 with little change in employment (Administrative & Waste Services, Mining), one with a modest increase in employment (Transportation & Warehousing), and one with a substantial decline in employment (Construction). Reconciling the differences in employment growth rates for Region 7's NAICS sectors in Table 1 and Table 2 is not possible for the purpose of this analysis.

Industries (NAICS sectors) for which employment is expected to grow obviously impact the types of occupations (jobs) that will be available for Region 7's labor force. Tying emerging industries with emerging occupations can again be approached by identifying the occupations that are expected to provide the greatest number of employment opportunities (jobs) for the labor force and the occupations that have above average employment growth rates, a possible indication of increasing demand by the individual employers (firms, businesses) that make up each NAICS sector. Table 3 below contains projections for 33 occupations for which employment in Region 7 is expected to increase by at least 100 "jobs" over the ten-year period of 2016 to 2026.

**Table 3**

**Top 33 Occupations with Greatest Projected Increases in Employment in Region 7 2016 to 2026**

Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission Labor Market Information (laworks.net)

	2016 Estimated Employment	2026 Projected Employment	Projected Increase in Employment
Personal Care Aides	4,360	5,660	+1,300
Combined Food Preparation	3,730	4,640	+910
Registered Nurses	7,160	7,930	+770
Waiters & Waitresses	4,480	5,100	+620
Food Preparation Workers	4,000	4,540	+540
Laborers, Freight, Stock, Material Movers	5,000	5,440	+440
Restaurant Cooks	1,950	2,330	+380
Janitors & Cleaners	4,430	4,790	+360
General & Operations Managers	3,300	3,620	+320
Customer Service Reps.	3,630	3,940	+310
First Line Supervisors, Food Preparation	1,950	2,230	+280
Home Health Aides	730	1,000	+270
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	2,480	2,750	+270
Nursing Assistants	4,210	4,460	+250
Construction Laborers	2,410	2,660	+250
Maintenance & Repair Workers	3,040	3,280	+240
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	3,150	3,350	+200
Truck Drivers, Light or Delivery Services	2,130	2,330	+200
Business Operations Specialists	1,580	1,770	+190
First Line Supervisors, Retail Sales	3,600	3,770	+170
Retail Salespersons	7,250	7,420	+170
Sales Representatives Wholesale & Mfg.	2,530	2,690	+160
Stock Clerks & Order Filers	2,580	2,740	+160
Landscaping & Grounds Keeping	1,600	1,750	+150
Production Workers	1,540	1,690	+150
Accountants & Auditors	1,170	1,310	+140
Operating Engineers	1,020	1,150	+130
Managers (All Other)	1,670	1,800	+130
Welders, Cutters, Solderers	1,030	1,150	+120
First Line Supervisors, Construction	1,100	1,210	+110
Carpenters	2,040	2,150	+110
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	880	990	+110
Medical Assistants	610	710	+100

Of the 33 occupations listed in Table 3, 14 (or 42%) are identified as 4- or 5-star demand occupations or, using Louisiana Workforce Commission terminology, constitute “top demand” occupations in Region 7. However, these 14 top demand occupations will, in the aggregate, contribute only about 15% of the total growth in projected occupational employment over the ten-year period (2,390/16,230).

The growth in employment for an occupation can be attributed to replacement or transfer needs (e.g., retirements or employee turnover) or growth driven by an increased demand for an Industry sector’s goods or services – the individual firms or business that make an industry sector expand their workforce to meet this increased demand often requiring the filling of new job vacancies that, in turn, may require specific skills and knowledge acquired through formal education (college, vocational school) or extensive work experience. Using the Louisiana Workforce Commission’s occupational employment projections for Region 7, Table 4 below ranks 25 occupations by their “annual new growth” (at least 20 “jobs”) and their demand occupation star rating.

**Table 4**  
**Occupations in Region 7 Ranked by Projected Annual New Growth 2016 to 2026 with Star Rating**  
**Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission Labor Market Information (laworks.net)**

	<b>Annual New Growth Jobs</b>	<b>Louisiana Star Jobs Rating</b>
Personal Care Aides	130	2 Star
Combined Food Preparation	90	1 Star
Registered Nurses	80	5 Star
Waiters and Waitresses	60	1 Star
Food Preparation Workers	50	1 Star
Restaurant Cooks	40	2 Star
Janitors and Cleaners	40	2 Star
Laborers, Freight, Stock, Material Movers	40	3 Star
General & Operations Managers	30	5 Star
Home Health Aides	30	1 Star
Nursing Assistants	30	2 Star
First Line Supervisors, Food Preparation	30	3 Star
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	30	2 Star
Customer Service Reps.	30	4 Star
Construction Laborers	30	3 Star
Maintenance & Repair Workers	30	4 Star
Business Operations Specialists	20	Star rating not shown
Landscaping & Grounds Keeping Workers	20	3 Star
Retail Salespersons	20	3 Star
Sales Representatives Wholesale & Mfg.	20	5 Star
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	20	2 Star
Production Workers	20	Star rating not shown
Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	20	4 Star
Truck Drivers, Light or Delivery Services	20	4 Star
First Line Supervisors, Retail Salespersons	20	4 Star

As Table 4 shows, the occupation for which the greatest number new jobs are expected to be created, Personal Care Aides, has a 2 Star rating (not considered to be a demand occupation) and does not necessarily require formal education or vocational training. Of the twenty-five occupations appearing in Table 4, eight have a 5 or 4 Star rating and, under the Louisiana Workforce Commission's terminology, constitute high demand occupations (five occupations were assigned a 3 Star rating). The third ranking occupation in the growth of new jobs, Registered Nurses (a 5 Star demand occupation), does require an Associate or Bachelor's degree (occupation-specific training) and, within Region 7, offers an annual average income of \$64,466. The Personal Care Aides occupation offers an annual average income of only \$19,393.

### Employment Needs for In-Demand Industry Sectors

As noted, three NAICS sectors are likely to be the source of most employment growth in Region 7: Accommodations and Food Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Professional and Technical Services. The following identifies a select number of occupations found in these three sectors and their education (credential), training, and occupational license requirements.

**Table 5**

**Accommodations & Food Services (NAICS 72) - Education & Training Required for Select Occupations** Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission Labor Market Information (laworks.net)

	Education/Training Required	Occupational License	Annual Earnings
Waiters & Waitresses	Less than high school	None	\$18,183
Food Preparation Workers	Less than high school	None	\$18,612
Combined Food Preparation & Serving	Less than high school	None	\$18,210
Restaurant Cooks	Postsecondary nondegree	None	\$22,753
First-Line Supervisors, Food Preparation	High school diploma	None	\$30,614
Cashiers	High school diploma	License required	\$19,535
Bartenders	Less than high school	None	\$18,360
Fast Food Cooks	Less than high school	None	\$18,588
Restaurant Host & Hostesses	High school diploma	None	Not shown
Dishwashers	Less than high school	None	\$18,303

**Table 6**  
**Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62) – Education & Training Required for Select Occupations**  
**Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission Labor Market Information (laworks.net)**

	<b>Education/Training Required</b>	<b>Occupational License</b>	<b>Annual Earnings</b>
Registered Nurses	Associate degree	Yes	\$64,466
Nursing Assistants	Postsecondary nondegree	Yes	\$23,308
Licensed Practical Nurse	Postsecondary nondegree	Yes	\$39,028
Home Health Aides	Less than high school	No (Cert. Available)	\$19,726
Childcare Workers	Postsecondary nondegree	No (Cert. Available)	\$21,840
General Office Clerks	High school diploma	No	\$25,572
Receptionists/Info. Clerks	High school diploma	No (Cert. Available)	\$26,023
Secretaries/Admin. Asst.	Postsecondary nondegree	No (Cert. Available)	\$31,951
First Line Supervisors of Administrative Support	Associate degree	No	\$46,512
Social & Human Services	High school diploma	No	\$28,407

**Table 7**  
**Professional and Technical Services (NAICS 54) – Education & Training Required for Select Occupations**  
**Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission Labor Market Information (laworks.net)**

	<b>Education/Training Required</b>	<b>Occupational License</b>	<b>Annual Earnings</b>
Accountants/Auditors	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	\$59,792
General Office Clerks	High school diploma	No	\$25,572
Secretaries/Admin. Asst.	Postsecondary nondegree	No (Cert. Available)	\$31,951
Paralegals/Legal Asst.	Associate degree	No	\$47,755
Accounting Clerks	Associate degree	No	\$36,304
Inspectors, Testers	High school diploma	Yes	\$41,312
Business Op. Specialist	High school diploma	No	\$55,487
General Managers	Bachelor's Degree	No	\$102,810
Civil Engineers	Bachelor's Degree	Yes	\$88,868
Receptionists/Info. Clerks	High school diploma	No (Cert. Available)	\$26,023

As already noted, the Accommodations & Food Services sector leads in actual and projected employment growth for Region 7 but, as depicted in Table 5, is dominated by occupations that do not require, for the most part, education and training beyond a highschool diploma.

Most skills for the occupations shown in Table 5 are acquired “on the job” or through work experience with the only possible exception of Restaurant Cooks. Employers (businesses) found within this sector hire workers though what is sometimes referred to as the “secondary labor market” characterized by job applicants with limited work experience or education, often youth or young adults just entering the labor force. Because of the typically low pay and absence of education/training required for such jobs; employers contend with a high employee turnover often leaving job openings in this sector plentiful.

The Health Care and Social Assistance sector includes a mix of occupations in terms of the need for formal education and training (i.e., occupational credentials). Healthcare practitioner and technologist occupations within this sector are numerous and identifying them all is beyond the scope of this analysis but, within Region 7, there are colleges, universities, and vocational technical schools that provide education and training for most. Some limited examples are Respiratory Therapists, Medical Lab Technicians, Surgical Technologists, Radiologic Technologists, Physical and Occupational Therapists, Pharmacy Technicians, and Emergency Medical Technicians.

As already noted, the Professional and Technical Services sector, leads in actual and projected employment growth rate within Region 7. As reflected in Table 7, this sector is prevalent with occupations that require substantial education and training. This sector (NAICS 54) is also highly diverse in the types of businesses found within its grouping. Some examples are as follows:

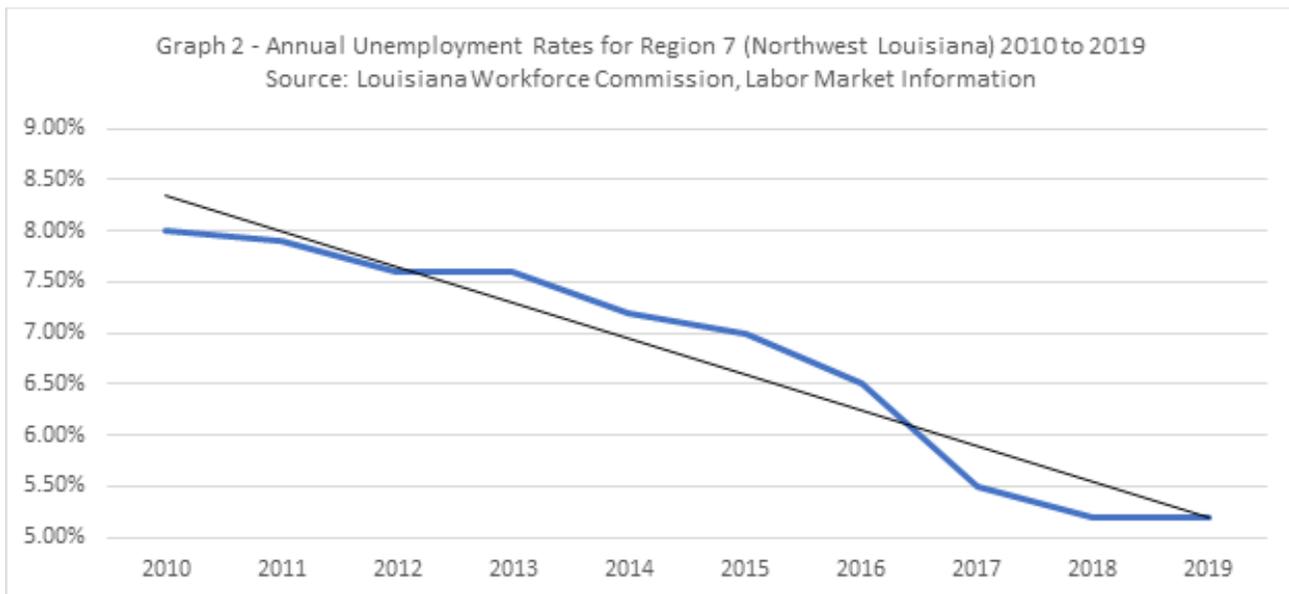
- ▶ Legal Services
- ▶ Accounting, Tax Preparation, Payroll Services
- ▶ Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services
- ▶ Specialized Design Services
- ▶ Computer Systems Design and Related Services
- ▶ Advertising and Public Relations

Employers with businesses found in these industry groups are more likely to be seeking employees with college/university/professional degrees (baccalaureate and graduate degrees) sometimes requiring them to recruit employees from educational institutions outside of Region 7.

Of particular interest, as an emerging demand industry with associated occupations, is Computer Systems Design and Related Services (NAICS 5415). Information technology and computer networking systems are essential to the functioning of just about all businesses (in addition to the public sector) and will likely increase in importance for the future. Within Region 7 is located Bossier City's Cyber Innovation Center which has received considerable financial support as an economic development initiative through the State of Louisiana and Louisiana Tech University. The growth of the Center will mean an increased demand for employees with specialized knowledge and skills associated with occupations such as Information Security Analysts, Computer Systems Analysts, and Computer Network Support Specialists – all identified as 4- and 5-Star demand occupations within Region 7. The Center's partnership with Louisiana Tech University will facilitate the availability of employees with the requisite knowledge and skills.

### **Labor force trends in Region 7 and an analysis of the education and skill levels of the working age population**

As shown in Graph I, aggregate employment in Region 7 declined over the most recently completed decade (2010 to 2019). However, the trend in annual unemployment rates over the same period presents a similar picture. In theory, one would expect that as the number of employed workers declines over time, the unemployment rate will rise. Conversely, a strong economy exhibiting substantial employment growth should lead to declining unemployment. This was the case with the national economy following the end of The Great Recession. At the beginning of 2010, the national unemployment rate stood at 9.8% with close to 130 million workers on employer payrolls. By the end of 2019 the unemployment rate had dropped to 3.5% with almost 152 million workers on employer payrolls (an increase of 22 million jobs and a drop in the national unemployment rate of a little over 6 percentage points).



Graph 2 above shows the trend in annual unemployment rates for Region 7 from 2010 to 2019. At the beginning of the decade (2010) the unemployment rate for Region 7 was estimated as 8.0% but, by the year 2019, had dropped to 5.2%. In 2010 employment (number employed) in Region 7 was estimated at 243,809. By 2019, this figure had dropped to 235,888 – over the decade the number of employed declined by 3.2% with the unemployment rate declining by a dramatic 35%.

One clue behind this unexpected phenomenon may be population dynamics – declines in population, especially declines in the segment of the population in its prime labor force participation years (25 to 54). If the size of the population in its prime labor force participation years shrinks, this could lead to a smaller number of persons working or seeking employment with a resultant drop in the number of unemployed and unemployment rate.

Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11 below give some indication of the population dynamics that could be influencing Region 7's declining unemployment rate (Graph 2). Region 7's population increased by barely one percent (.94%) over the last decade with the most significant population growth taking place in Bossier Parish and Lincoln Parish. An estimated 80% of Caddo Parish's population is concentrated in the City of Shreveport where WIOA program services are provided by LWDA 71. Economists generally identify 25 to 54 as the prime labor force participation years. As shown in Table 9, this segment of the population in Region 7 dropped by 3.7% from 2010 to 2018. Only Bossier Parish experienced a substantial increase in population for this age group. Table 10 and Table 11 contain estimates of the employment-to-population ratio and labor force participation rate for each of the ten parishes in Region 7 in 2015 and 2018.

**Table 8**  
**Changes in Population for Ten Parishes in Region 7 - 2010 to 2018**  
**Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2010 & 2018 5-Year Estimates**

	Population 2010	Population 2018	Change (2010-2018)
Caddo	253,048	248,361	-4,687 (-1.9%)
Bossier	113,837	126,131	+12,294 (+10.8%)
Lincoln	45,797	47,356	+1,559 (+3.4%)
Webster	41,238	39,631	-1,607 (-3.9%)
Natchitoches	39,274	38,963	-311 (-.80%)
DeSoto	26,465	27,216	+751 (+2.8%)
Sabine	24,119	24,088	-31 (-.10%)
Claiborne	17,160	16,153	-1,007 (-5.9%)
Bienville	14,546	13,668	-878 (-6.0%)
Red River	9,181	8,618	-563 (-6.1%)
<b>Total for Region 7</b>	<b>584,665</b>	<b>590,185</b>	<b>+5,520 (+.94%)</b>

**Table 9**  
**Changes in Population 25 to 54 Years of Age - Ten Parishes in Region 7 - 2010 to 2018**  
**Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2010 & 2018 5-Year Estimates**

	Population 2010	Population 2018	Change (2010-2018)
Caddo	101,033	94,372	-6,661 (-6.6%)
Bossier	47,618	51,123	+3,505 (+7.4%)
Lincoln	15,564	14,951	-613 (-3.9%)
Webster	15,756	14,433	-1,323 (-8.4%)
Natchitoches	13,878	12,553	-1,325 (-9.5%)
DeSoto	10,424	10,078	-346 (-3.3%)
Sabine	8,872	8,541	-331 (-3.7%)
Claiborne	7,064	6,697	-367 (-5.2%)
Bienville	5,377	4,847	-530 (-10.0%)
Red River	3,500	3,092	-408 (-11.7%)
<b>Total for Region 7</b>	<b>229,086</b>	<b>220,687</b>	<b>-8,399 (-3.7%)</b>

**Table 10**  
**Employment-to-Population Ratio - Ten Parishes in Region 7 - 2015 and 2018**  
**Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2015 & 2018 5-Year Estimates**

	2015	2018
Bossier	59.3%	55.6%
Caddo	54.6%	53.9%
Lincoln	53.3%	53.5%
DeSoto	49.6%	50.2%
Webster	47.6%	48.2%
Red River	47.0%	46.8%
Natchitoches	46.7%	40.2%
Bienville	46.4%	43.4%
Sabine	46.2%	42.7%
Claiborne	39.8%	38.7%

**Table 11**  
**Labor Force Participation Rates - Ten Parishes in Region 7 - 2015 and 2018**  
**Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2015 & 2018 5-Year Estimates**

	2015	2018
Bossier	66.7%	63.7%
Caddo	60.5%	57.7%
Lincoln	59.2%	58.3%
DeSoto	54.8%	55.9%
Webster	53.3%	46.6%
Red River	51.9%	49.1%
Natchitoches	51.8%	47.6%
Bienville	51.7%	45.9%
Sabine	51.6%	51.3%
Claiborne	46.0%	42.8%

The employment-to-population ratio is generally defined as the number of people employed within the working-age population beginning with the age of 16. Only three parishes with Region 7 saw their employment-to-population ratio increase from 2015 to 2018: Lincoln, DeSoto, and Webster. The parish with the second largest overall population, Bossier, saw its employment-to-population ratio drop by almost four percentage points (59.3% to 55.6%).

Table 11 is perhaps the most significant. The labor force participation rate declined for all but one parish (DeSoto) from 2015 to 2018. In 2018, the labor force participation rate for the United States economy was approximately 63% - only one parish in Region 7, Bossier, was at this level. Although it cannot be determined with certainty, declines in the employment-to-population ratio and especially the labor force participation rate in Region 7 may be behind the strong negative trend in annual unemployment rates depicted in Graph 2. Another contributing factor may be the retiring baby boom generation leaving the labor force. Around 60% of Region 7's population resides in Caddo and Bossier Parish (Table 8). From 2010 to 2018 the population 65 years of age and over in these two parishes combined increased by almost 9,000, or approximately 19%, which very likely had an impact in reducing labor force participation.

The ten parishes that make up Region 7 are diverse in population, employment, income and the extent of poverty. This is obvious when looking at data in Table 12 below. Only Bossier Parish has a median household income higher than that for the state (\$53,806 vs. \$47,905) and a poverty rate lower than the state's (16.4% vs. 18.6%).

**Table 12**  
**Median Household Income, Poverty Rate, and Percent of Population Receiving SNAP Benefits**  
**Ten Parishes in Region 7, Louisiana, and United States**  
**Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2018 5 Year Estimates**

	Median Household Income	Poverty Rate	% Receiving SNAP Benefits
Bossier	\$53,806	16.4%	11.5%
DeSoto	\$44,230	24.9%	20.8%
Caddo	\$40,866	23.3%	18.3%
Sabine	\$39,465	19.5%	19.2%
Lincoln	\$34,154	29.7%	19.3%
Red River	\$33,446	23.6%	17.7%
Webster	\$30,358	26.3%	19.2%
Bienville	\$30,300	29.2%	24.9%
Natchitoches	\$27,795	33.5%	28.5%
Claiborne	\$27,303	30.5%	25.7%
Louisiana	\$47,905	18.6%	15.6%
United States	\$61,937	13.1%	12.2%

Looking at the data in Table 12, there appears to be an interrelationship between median household income, poverty rate, and the percentage of a parish's population receiving SNAP (food stamp) benefits. As might be expected, parishes in Region 7 with a higher median household income tend to have a lower poverty rate and a smaller percentage of their population receiving SNAP benefits. In fact, statistical correlations between the three show values of .80 (positive or negative) or greater. With the exception of Bossier Parish, the parishes in Region 7 have median household incomes lower than that for the state in addition to higher poverty rates and a higher percentage of their populations receiving SNAP benefits.

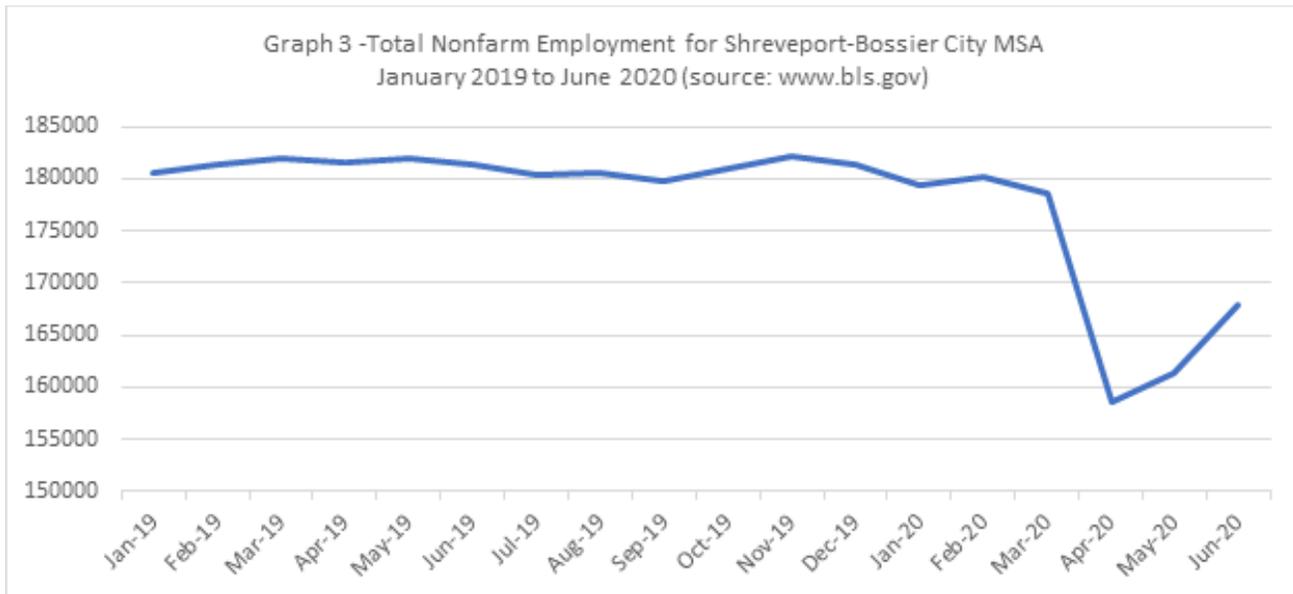
**Table 13**  
**Percent Population 18 to 64 with Disability and Percent Receiving Supplemental Security Income**  
**Ten Parishes in Region 7 – Source: U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2018 5 Year Estimates**

	<b>% Population 18 to 64 with Disability</b>	<b>% Population Receiving SSI</b>
Bienville	20.9%	12.9%
Red River	18.0%	11.5%
DeSoto	16.3%	10.5%
Sabine	12.4%	10.0%
Claiborne	12.3%	16.6%
Caddo	13.1%	9.0%
Natchitoches	11.9%	12.3%
Webster	13.0%	15.9%
Lincoln	10.8%	5.7%
Bossier	10.5%	5.8%

Of the individuals with barriers to employment identified in Section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), there are two groups that are of particular significance to Region 7: individuals with disabilities and low income adults. Table 13 ranks the ten parishes in Region 7 in terms of the percent of their populations 18 to 64 years of age with a disability and the percent of their populations receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits – a means tested income support program for persons with disabilities. There is no clear association between the two – for the ten parishes, a higher percentage of the population 18 to 64 with a disability does not correlate with a higher percentage of the population receiving SSI benefits. The factors influencing the percent disability rankings in Table 13 are unclear. Although the population 18 to 64 is more likely to be participating in the labor force (employed or seeking employment), Table 13 tells nothing about the nature of or severity of each parish population’s disabilities or to what extent, if any, the disabilities present barriers to labor force participation. However, this points to the importance of the presence of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) as a partner within Region 7’s public workforce system (American Job Centers) and its mission to enable persons with disabilities to participate in the labor force.

**Recent Labor Market Trends**

An analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industry and occupations, has already been addressed in this plan’s narrative. The arrival of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 has created considerable turbulence and uncertainty in the national, state, and local economies. For the Shreveport-Bossier City MSA, this can be seen in Graph 3 below.



Beginning with March of 2020, total nonfarm employment for the Shreveport-Bossier City MSA dropped dramatically as the coronavirus lockdown and state mandated business closures went into effect. From February to April 21, 2020, 21,700 jobs were lost with the leisure and hospitality sector (in which is found the casino and restaurant industries) seeing the largest percentage drop in employment. The month of May brought a rebound in employment with employment increasing again in June. However, for the month of June, total nonfarm employment was still far below its level a year ago (168,000 vs. 181,300). It is not possible to predict when the Region 7 economy will completely recover from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Table 14 gives a distribution of employment by major occupational groups for the ten parishes in Region 7. The parishes are listed in the order of their population size with Caddo Parish first and Red River Parish last. The occupational structure within each parish is dependent on the industries or types of businesses present that provide sources of employment with some members of each parish's labor force commuting to other nearby parishes for their jobs. The occupational structure also reflects to some extent the education and skills of the labor force. The chart (Table 14) appears to suggest that the parishes with a larger population (e.g., Caddo Bossier, Lincoln) have a greater percentage of their labor force employed in Management, Business, Service, and Arts occupations likely reflecting a more diversified economy. On the other hand, parishes with a smaller and more rural population such as Sabine, Red River, Bienville, and Claiborne have a greater percentage of their labor force employed in the occupational group Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance in addition to Production, Transportation, and Material Moving related occupations.

**Table 14**  
**Distribution of Employed Civilian Labor Force by Major Occupational Groups**  
**Ten Parishes in Region 7**  
**Source: Census Bureau ACS 2018 5-Year Estimates**

	<b>Management Business, Service, and Arts Occupations</b>	<b>Service Occupations</b>	<b>Sales and Office Occupations</b>	<b>Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations</b>	<b>Production, Transportations, and Material Moving Occupations</b>
Caddo	34,664 (33.0%)	22,725 (21.6%)	24,137 (23.0%)	9,515 (9.0%)	14,104 (13.4%)
Bossier	20,384 (37.4%)	9,190 (16.8%)	12,870 (23.6%)	6,166 (11.3%)	5,922 (10.9%)
Lincoln	7,495 (35.9%)	5,002 (23.9%)	4,664 (22.3%)	1,327 (6.4%)	2,403 (11.5%)
Webster	3,983 (26.0%)	2,921 (19.1%)	3,043 (19.9%)	2,838 (18.6%)	2,507 (16.4%)
Natchitoches	3,512 (28.7%)	1,991 (16.3%)	2,824 (23.0%)	1,186 (9.7%)	2,736 (22.3%)
DeSoto	2,888 (27.0%)	2,014 (18.9%)	2,222 (20.8%)	1,487 (13.9%)	2,072 (19.4%)
Sabine	2,361 (29.1%)	1,277 (15.8%)	1,590 (19.6%)	1,483 (18.3%)	1,392 (17.2%)
Claiborne	1,331 (25.3%)	1,034 (19.7%)	916 (17.4%)	848 (16.1%)	1,124 (21.4%)
Bienville	1,197 (25.4%)	967 (20.5%)	1,007 (21.4%)	694 (14.7%)	845 (17.9%)
Red River	805 (25.5%)	637 (20.2%)	628 (19.9%)	604 (19.2%)	479 (15.2%)

**Table 15**  
**Educational Attainment of Population 25 Years and Over - Ten Parishes in Region 7**  
**Source: Census Bureau ACS 2018 5 Year Estimates**

	<b>Less than High School Graduate</b>	<b>High School Graduate</b>	<b>Some College or Associates Degree</b>	<b>Bachelor's Degree or Higher</b>
Red River	20.6%	40.0%	25.5%	13.9%
Claiborne	18.8%	41.4%	25.1%	14.7%
DeSoto	17.6%	42.8%	25.4%	14.2%
Bienville	17.1%	41.7%	28.8%	12.4%
Webster	16.8%	41.5%	26.6%	15.1%
Sabine	14.7%	46.4%	25.8%	13.1%
Natchitoches	13.5%	35.0%	33.7%	17.8%
Caddo	13.4%	33.4%	29.6%	23.5%
Lincoln	11.6%	27.3%	24.6%	36.5%
Bossier	10.7%	29.5%	34.2%	25.6%
Louisiana	15.2%	34.0%	27.1%	23.7%
United States	12.3%	27.1%	29.0%	31.5%

In Tables 5, 6, and 7, there is an association between occupations requiring greater education and training or occupational licensing with higher incomes. An important indicator of a population's "human capital" is its educational attainment. For the ten parishes in Region 7, this can be seen in Table 15. In Table 15, the parishes are ranked by the percentage of their population 25 years of age and over without a high school diploma or equivalency (Less Than High School Graduate). The adult population with this level of educational attainment is more likely to face barriers in obtaining employment that provides for economic self-sufficiency and possibly, to a lesser extent, the percentage of the adult population with only a high school diploma. Again, considering the data in Table 15, there appears to be an association between population and educational attainment – parishes in Region 7 with smaller populations (e.g., Red River, Claiborne, Bienville) have a greater percentage of their adult population without a high school diploma (or equivalency) and a smaller percentage of their adult population possessing

a bachelor's degree or higher (i.e., graduate education). Lincoln Parish, in which is located Grambling State University and Louisiana Tech University, has the highest percentage of its adult population with a bachelor's degree or higher. Two factors then, most probably influence the educational attainment of a parish's adult population: its economic geography (the types of industries and businesses present that offer employment opportunities to the population) and the presence of institutions (public and private) offering post-secondary educational opportunities.

### **Skill Gaps**

Lack of a high school diploma or no formal education or vocational training beyond a high school diploma may be a significant skill gap for Region 7's adult population and labor force. LWDA 70 and LWDA 71's partnership with Adult Education programs in Region 7 has been vital in partially closing this skill gap and providing WIOA participants, especially youth participants who are dropouts, with the educational prerequisites to advance to post-secondary education, particularly enrollment in vocational degree programs tied to a demand occupation in Region 7. This is especially critical to the expansion of employment in the Health Care Sector where a substantial portion of jobs require post-secondary education. As already noted, employment opportunities in the Accommodations and Food Services Sector may be abundant but most jobs in this sector require no education beyond a high school diploma (or less) with required skills learned mostly on-the-job.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission's Regional Industry Coordinator for Northwest Louisiana meets with employers to discuss their human resource or hiring needs which involves identifying possible skill gaps. Particular emphasis is given to meeting with employers (firms, businesses) who are part of the four targeted industry sectors for Region 7: Health Care, Manufacturing, Transportation, and Services. The following identifies some of the specific soft skills and hard skills (occupation specific) that employers have indicated they are in need of:

**Health Care:** Medical Coding, experienced Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Certified Nursing Assistants due to frequent employee turnover.

**Manufacturing:** Machinists, Environmental, Health, and Safety Specialists, Electricians, Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) and Human Machine Interface (HMI) programming skills, good math skills, Maintenance Mechanics, Electronic Technicians, Welders, AutoCAD skills, Diesel and Gas Vehicle Mechanics, CDL Drivers for transport trucks.

**Services:** Good customer service skills, better communication (verbal, written) and social skills, trained cooks, ability to pass drug screening tests and background checks, ability to use applications software such as Microsoft Word and Excel, better interviewing skills.

**Transportation:** CDL Drivers.

Information acquired by the Regional Industry Coordinator is shared with local colleges, universities, and vocational-technical schools for the creation of new degree programs or new courses to be included in existing degree programs that will better meet the hiring needs or skill gaps identified by employers. The possession of specific technical skills and education is important but a common theme among local employers is the need for job applicants and employees with soft skills and work readiness related to such attributes as the absence of substance abuse issues, punctuality and attendance, cooperation with supervisors and coworkers, and good customer relations skills. The public workforce system in Region 7 has the capacity and resources to address most skill gaps identified by employers. The challenge is making the connection between the regional labor force (employed and unemployed) and the numerous colleges, universities, and vocational-technical schools that offer the needed education and training.

***B. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region.***

Region 7 has met with training providers and businesses within the region on a individual and within some collaborated efforts; however, we recognize the need to build upon this strategy. Therefore, we have formed a Business Service Team with key regional partners to meet on a quarterly basis to strategize on how better to convene employers and institutions to help lead sector partnerships into a more in-demand workforce system.

As described in the Economic and Workforce Analysis section of this plan, Region 7 has experienced weak employment growth over the last ten years with only three NAICS (industry) sectors showing any significant job creation. This will require Region 7 to put in place an effective strategy through the use of its WIOA funds and services provided through its American Job Centers to assist customers in obtaining employment that will lead to economic self-sufficiency. Program partners will also play an important role as part of this strategy through the customer referral process. Customers obtaining employment through direct job placement or WIOA funded training services are more likely to have the income needed to purchase the goods and services offered by local businesses further stimulating Region 7's economy. Employers will also have a source for recruiting qualified workers possessing the needed skills and education. This strategy will also entail connecting customers with the employment opportunities being created by the following industry sectors:

**Health Care**

Employment in Regions 7's Health Care sector continues to increase, providing jobs for close to 20% of the labor force. WIOA funds will continue to be used to provide financial assistance to those Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth wanting to enroll in college degree or vocational training programs related to health care occupations. In calendar year 2019, LWDA 70 issued close to 100 Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to WIOA participants seeking education and training in health care related occupations such as Licensed Practical Nurse, Registered Nurse, Medical Assistant, Emergency Medical Technician, Physical Therapy Assistant, and Medial Lab Technician.

**Transportation & Warehousing**

According to data available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, nationally, employment in Truck Transportation increased by over fifty-five thousand jobs from January 2018 to December 2019 as the country was in a period of strong economic growth and low unemployment. Even with the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the trucking industry continued to play a vital role in delivering essential goods across the country, goods that often require warehousing before being made available for purchase by the public. Truck Drivers, both Tractor-Trailer and Delivery Services, continues to be a demand (4 Star) occupation in Region 7. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) will continue to be issued by both LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 to WIOA participants wanting to enroll in truck driving schools in order to obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

The Port of Caddo-Bossier, located on the Red River, is an extensive transportation and warehousing operation and serves not only as a multi-modal (barge, truck, rail, air) commerce hub, but also as a key economic development activity working to attract investments and create and retain jobs at the Port complex, as well as throughout Caddo and Bossier Parishes. The Port has received strong support from citizens throughout Caddo and Bossier Parishes through the approval of property mill taxes dedicated to its operation and for the acquisition of land to further expand the multi-modal transportation network to attract world-class industries to Northwest Louisiana. The Port of Caddo-Bossier is easily accessible by ground transportation and is strategically located to access major interstate, Federal and State highways with the future extension of Interstate 69 providing a direct route to the Port.

The Port of Caddo-Bossier places high priority on moving raw materials and manufactured goods in and out of the Port quickly and efficiently via ground, water, air, and rail transportation. A comprehensive rail network by two Class 1 Rail Lines provides service to the Caddo-Bossier community. The Port complex itself is serviced by the Union Pacific with local access to Kansas City Southern (KCS) available. The Port complex includes 22 miles of industrial grade track and rail. Three Port owned and operated locomotives are available for immediate rail car switching. In addition, the Port offers more than 20,000 feet of rail storage for its tenants.

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that, nationally, employment in the Rail Transportation industry steadily increased from 2010 to 2015 but entered a period of decline from 2016 through 2019. Nonetheless, transportation by rail in Northwest Louisiana is growing. Kansas City Southern (KCS) Railways Company is the smallest and third oldest Class 1 railroad in North America. KCS operates over 3,200 track miles in ten states, which includes Louisiana. Shreveport is one of the company's major hubs. KCS is providing a wide variety of shipping, from the local farmer to major manufacturers with competitive and reliable transportation solutions.

### **Manufacturing**

In 2015, Benteler Steel/Tube began operation with its location in the vicinity of the Port of Caddo-Bossier. Initially, 350 workers were hired at the plant with employment eventually rising to 530 jobs. Unfortunately, the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic in March of 2020 and its negative impact on the demand for and price of oil forced the company to temporarily lay off 375 workers. However, Benteler Steel's presence highlights Region 7's resources (natural, infrastructure, and human) in attracting a major international manufacturing firm. Employment in Region 7's Manufacturing Sector continues to decline having reached its peak during the 1970s and 1980s. However, there are some manufacturing firms that continue to thrive such as International Paper in DeSoto Parish (Mansfield) and the Boise Cascade Company in Sabine Parish, both entering into WIOA funded on-the-job training (OJT) contracts with LWDA 70 in 2019.

### **Other Services**

Employers in the information technology and computer networking systems industry, as exemplified Bossier City's Cyber Innovation Center, have established a presence in Region 7. LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 will continue to monitor developments in this industry and the creation of employment opportunities and, where needed, devote financial resources in providing training opportunities for WIOA participants in the highly technical occupations found in the information technology industry. A number of colleges and vocational schools in Region 7 offer degree program in information technology, many of which are eligible for WIOA financial assistance.

### **Adult Education**

As already noted, lack of a high school diploma or its equivalent is a major skill gap for a fairly significant portion of the adult and youth population in Region 7. Linkages with and the promotion of adult education programs (i.e., HiSET) will continue to be an essential part of Region 7's strategy in improving the employability of its working age population. Assisting out-of-school youth who are dropouts in pursuing a high school equivalency diploma through adult education programs is a centerpiece of both LWDA 70 and LWDA 71's WIOA youth programs.

Ongoing planning will include improved communications between employers and education and training providers to align programs to employer needs. Strategies include working across education systems and direct employer participation to improve job seeker skills that match to employer needs.

Region 7, in partnership of multiple employers within the region, will work closely with education, economic development, and community organizations to identify and collaboratively meet the workforce needs of businesses within the regional labor market. Region 7 will focus on building regional talent pipelines, addressing skill gaps, and creating meaningful career pathways for a range of workers in regional industries.

## **CHAPTER 2: STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION - REGIONAL COMPONENT**

***This regional component of the plan must describe the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers.***

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

Region's 7 Service Delivery Model focuses on the provision of individualized career services and training services an approach that gives all partner staff in American Job Centers the flexibility to provide customer services based on an assessed need:

- ▶ Provides flexible training delivery options to meet the needs of low-income individuals.
- ▶ Conduct research to identify the individuals served, understand the strengths and the challenges they face, and identify the partnerships necessary to affect change; develop data systems to support the evaluation of programmatic outcomes, reporting outcomes, and continuous improvement.
- ▶ Identify and coordinate needed wrap-around services at all levels of career pathways by being responsive to a person's needs in real time.
- ▶ Use a career pathways model linked to industry sector strategy and high-demand occupations to provide youth, job seekers, and workers with opportunities for upward mobility and to provide a pipeline that meets employers' needs; engage industry councils to define clear career pathways.
- ▶ Allows Region 7's Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDA 70 and LWDA 71) to develop new partnerships and contract to supply career services for high-demand occupations.
- ▶ a mutual understanding of the features of our service delivery model, Region 7 Through LWDAs approach the ecosystem within our region in a way that strives for a greater impact in the delivery of career services such as those provided through the WorkReady U program.
  - ▶ WorkReady U (WRU) provide these services under existing funding sources, including integrated education and training and co-enrollment in the HiSET Program, and attainment of high-demand industry credentials.

Each American Job Center in Region 7 that is also a Comprehensive American Job Center offers an extensive array of services which include for job seekers:

- ▶ Outreach, common intake and assessment, orientation to services, informational services, and referral to other services as necessary based on assessment.
- ▶ Initial and Comprehensive Assessment of skills, aptitudes, interests, and abilities, both in a self-service and staff assisted service context, based on specific needs of the job seeker. WRU can provide comprehensive assessment through use of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). This is one of four fundamental fundable instructional services provided by WRU.
- ▶ Career counseling, job search, and placement assistance.

- ▶ Provision of Labor Market Information (LMI) by location, Region, and National areas, job vacancy listings, information on skills relating to Local occupations in demand, and the earnings and requirements for those occupations.
- ▶ Provisions of performance information and program cost information on eligible training providers. Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services such as childcare and transportation.

For employers, Comprehensive American Job Centers offer:

- ▶ A demand-driven model for workforce development
- ▶ Efficient and effective screening and referral of qualified job candidates.
- ▶ Active outreach and assistance in developing effective recruiting job orders.
- ▶ Assisting with searching the State's talent bank.
- ▶ Job fairs and recruitment events.
- ▶ Connection with community service organizations and tax credit opportunities.
- ▶ Training for Incumbent Workers.
- ▶ Connections to Apprenticeship programs.
- ▶ Provision of information regarding the availability of On-the-Job Training and Customized Training, including referral of employers to sources of funding for worker training.
- ▶ Coordination with economic development and other programs that assist business.
- ▶ Assistance with layoff aversion programs and services.

The Region 7 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) will explore opportunities to use a portion of Local funds to fund pay-for-performance contracts as a form of training delivery under Title I, with continuous evaluation of how target populations are chosen, to fairly serve individuals who face barriers to employment and economic success.

Region 7 LWDBs will permit their One-Stop operators in the Region to consider the full cost of participating in training services, including expenses related to dependent care, transportation, and other essential needs for individuals who are unable to obtain Pell Grant assistance or who need additional assistance beyond Pell Grants.

Region 7 uses a broad range of training programs as part of its workforce development strategy. These programs involve collaborating with its LWDBs, companies, and education/training providers to improve training.

LWDBs within Region 7 will prepare reports on expenditures for career and training services and on the number of participants who received career and training services as required by the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC). This requirement is specifically designed to make planning and funding decisions more transparent, and to provide better opportunities for public oversight.

LWC also requires that eligible training providers report results for all of their students for common measures for each program of study, not just participants whose training costs were paid for through the use of WIOA funds in order to improve transparency after results for programs and for disadvantaged persons.

LWDA 70's Business Service Team may consist of the following: WIOA Program Manager, Business Services Representative(s), Youth Business Coordinator(s), Rapid Response Representative, Incumbent Worker Representative, WFD Specialist located at each LWDA 70 American Job Center, and any other workforce development colleague within Region 7.

Region 7 is working to improve the capacity of the workforce system relative to incorporating Registered Apprenticeship in service design and delivery, as well as to support emphasis on career pathways. There are still challenges with in the Region's rural parishes and metropolitan areas. These are difficult to serve consistently, due to varying location and size of firms and industry concentrations.

In the context of waning budgets and moving industry targets, the Region's Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) face a series of strategic challenges to the workforce system both in services to job seekers and employers. These challenges are high, but the opportunities to address these challenges are even greater. The Region is building a coalition of partner programs and shall effectively address the next stage of the workforce development system through strategic realignment, simplified navigation, and an integrated approach to serving all its customers.

Region 7 has realigned staffing and its operational strategy to provide effective guidance and support its two Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) identified in this Plan, along with supporting of Regional business engagement strategies. One partner, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, has identified human resources as its greatest challenge in meeting the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This is due, largely, to current vacancies and attrition. Region 7's Service Delivery Model is a solid foundation for striking the critical balance between serving individuals and employers in a manner that will produce strategies that in the long run are good for both.

### **Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis**

The Regional/Local Plan includes an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the Regional/Locals workforce system and programs will operate. Region 7's economic and workforce analysis serves to provide strategic economic and demographic information for Region 7 to better focus on multiple facets of workforce development across the Region. These include providing information for better business decisions for industries, aligning industry demand with workforce supply that originates in Region 7's schools and college system, and helping job seekers, students, and parents make better career choices. The analysis also aims to develop opportunities to increase workforce participation in Region 7's economy, and how all agencies can contribute to mitigate challenges through collective efforts of providing services to all job seekers to fill high- demand occupations in the Region.

Region 7's economic development has historically relied on natural resource extraction and processing and with the low cost of land and favorable wage rates to attract manufacturing plants. Its large oil and gas extraction and refining industries have provided some insulation from the economic hardship faced by the rest of the country during the most recent recession period. Due to a recent large number of layoffs in Region 7, the Region's traditional economic sectors such as timber, manufacturing, and oil and gas extraction, have been the most affected by the decline in the global economy. Region 7 has focused its economic development efforts on bringing in and attracting new employers in professional and technical services sectors. These efforts will hopefully diversify the labor market and add high-wage and skilled workers to the economy. Recent declines in oil prices have caused some unemployment in the Region's workforce, but increased collaboration with employers, community colleges, and other training providers has helped to develop transferable skills to address this challenge. The Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) in Region 7 (LWDA 70 and LWDA 71), under the guidance of the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDAs), continue to monitor business expansion that should increase demand for a skilled workforce.

To better understand demand for workforce, Region 7 reviews Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC's) statistical models of short-term and long-term industry demand with inputs from business and industry, economic development partners, and Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). COVID-19: As of this writing, over 100,621 Louisianans have filled unemployment insurance claims according to the U.S. Department of Labor. While it is believed that many of these individuals will eventually return to their jobs, it is also clear that a number of job seekers in Region 7 will grow substantially as a result of current and future business closures. While states are opening venues including personal services, dining, and retail, some business owners are realizing and publicizing that they cannot turn a profit and will just stay closed if they are forced to reduce capacity to 50% of pre-pandemic capacity. More alarming, other business owners, realizing the same profit dynamics, are choosing to close permanently.

A 27 April-4 May 2020 Washington Post-Ipsos national poll found 77% of furloughed workers expect to be rehired by their previous employer once the stay-at-home orders in their area are lifted. First, many companies are going bankrupt or shutting down permanently, so they won't need employees. Second, even after parts of the economy reopen, many people will be hesitant to shop, travel, and go out to eat as they did before. Businesses operating at one-half capacity or switching to online or takeout don't need nearly as many workers. Unemployment benefits that provide an extra \$600.00 a week through a federal pandemic stimulus package expire the end of July. While some economist expects economic growth to return, no one expects the job market to reach the same lofty levels of the first months of 2020.

Complicating this from a workforce development standpoint, a cohort of these dislocated workers—e.g. small business owners, healthcare employees, airlines employees, and business services workers—are highly skilled and may have difficulty finding fulfilling work that pays comparable wages. Too, the workforce development service delivery network may be strained—in human and financial capacities—to serve the expected rise in job seekers, customers seeking training or re-training, and employers seeking workers as business and industry return to full employment.

The current cessation due to COVID-19 of workforce development services through the bricks and mortar American Job Center model lays bare weaknesses in the delivery of workforce services across the state and in the Region 7. A lack of tools to successfully intersect with virtual online learning has prohibited existing customers from continuing their education, while new customers—both job seekers and business-- have been unable to be determined eligible for WIOA services or utilize the human resource function of the American Job Center, respectively.

A number of Federal, state, and local organizations have increased the provision of resources to businesses and individuals during the novel coronavirus and COVID-19 infections.

## **Strengths And Weaknesses Of Workforce Development**

### **Strengths:**

- ▶ In order to comply with WIOA's expectations, Region 7 has adopted and implemented numerous policies. LWC has developed policy, vision, certification criteria and contracts to assist LWDBs in complying with WIOA's expectations. LWC requires development of a regional plan by respective LWDBs including performance targets.
- ▶ Since the implementation of WIOA Region 7 has created a strong foundation on which to build true partnerships through implementation of the new basic Service Delivery Model and the Continuous Improvement Process as support strategies to LWDA operations.

- ▶ This Plan has allowed Region 7's Boards to operate affiliate American Job Centers with any subset of partners, including two comprehensive One-Stop Centers in the Region.
- ▶ The Plan drives the realignment of funding streams to improve accountability across core programs, support Career Pathways and sector strategies, and create continuous opportunities and measure performance and identify areas for improvement, resulting in an effective and efficient operation.
- ▶ Adult Education in Region 7 has adopted and implemented the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education. Standard alignment with K-12 partners provides rigorous standards that specify what learners should know at each level.
- ▶ Provide professional development activities/training that aligns CCRS with evidenced-based practices.
  - ▶ Developed and mandated teacher certification course to improve teacher quality and understanding of WIOA requirements.
  - ▶ Data driven teacher quality evaluation process
- ▶ As a result of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program being within Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC's) organizational structure in Louisiana, integration of Vocational Rehabilitation into the Local One-Stop infrastructure has already begun. LRS counselors work within the Caddo, Lincoln, Natchitoches, and Webster American Job Centers.
- ▶ An array of services is provided by each component of the American Job Centers, including LRS/VR.
- ▶ LRS has Employment Development Specialists available in each Region. These individuals are specialized in working with individuals with disabilities, including job placement.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- ▶ LWDA leadership across Region 7 has experienced, in many instances, challenges developing viable Regional workforce partnerships with economic development and educational entities. Vast improvement has been seen in this area through the development of a two-year updated Regional/Local Plan that aligns with the Governor's vision on workforce and the sharing of resources and ideas for Regional implementation, as scarcity of resources, and the true need to partner are becoming drivers.
- ▶ While a number of AJC partners utilize referrals, not all AJC partners are actively referral customers.
- ▶ Budgetary realities and restrictions, combined with the refocus and expansion of services under WIOA, require Region 7 to take a comprehensive look at how it provides support to service partners.
- ▶ While the State's Local American Job Centers effectively became integrated with Local WIOA and State Wagner-Peyser staff as early as 2005, there are currently American Job Centers in Region 7 with limited presence of both Local and State-funded staff providing staff assisted services to employers and job-seekers.
- ▶ LWDA staff needs more training opportunities and cross-training within our partners programs.
- ▶ To overcome this weakness Region 7 must become more strategic and effective in managing formula-fund dollars. This will provide an opportunity to move towards a more proactive, strategic, and engaged approach.
- ▶ Streamline assessment mandates and reporting results for students. Adult Education has the capability to provide assessment services throughout the workforce training system for American Job Centers, including services to OSY under WIOA, as well as post-secondary educational institutions, TANF and SNAP programs.
- ▶ Employer engagement and involvement on program design and curriculum to ensure valid education/training meet Regional labor market demands.
- ▶ Develop procedure to evaluate programs and activities to ensure continuous improvement and expansion.

- ▶ Must ensure ABE teachers evaluations include analysis of education services provided to WIOA OSY to ensure WIOA Common Measures are understood and met or exceeded.
- ▶ Expand the integration of Vocational Rehabilitation services within American Job Centers. Proactively address physical and programmatic accessibility; space and logistics, including funding/cost allocation agreements.
- ▶ Integrate VR into the One-Stop Service Delivery Model. Eliminate duplication of effort/services where possible. Cross-train staff and clarify services available. This includes those responsible for providing said services.
- ▶ To enhance employer outreach and collaboration with American Job Centers efforts in employer engagement.

Community Colleges participate in our board meetings, the non-credit and credit side have pathways to improving employment needs of local industry. Members of secondary and post-secondary schools are involved in workforce boards which include business, such as ACT WorkKeys and other initiatives.

A Youth with low-income, or other unique challenges that prohibit them from completing their educational goals may receive additional assistance to complete their education. Appropriate and reasonable financial records and other documentation must be gathered and maintained in the case file. Individuals will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Region 7 is quickly building capacity in Business Services through the use of a combination of a Regional Industry Sector Coordinator and Business Consultants to provide activities to address the needs of employers. One of the main focuses will be on specific industries (Manufacturing, Healthcare, Services, and Transportation) while the other focuses on providing services to specific employers within an industry. Together they connect with program partners who are enrolling, assessing, and providing career and individualized services to jobseekers in order to anticipate and meet labor market demands in a timely manner.

LWDA 70 is forming a regional Business Service Team which works with business and industry to identify their workforce needs and provides oversight for training programs and contractors. The Business Services Team works closely with businesses to provide tailored talent solutions including labor market information, recruitment, job readiness training, pre-screening, specialized training, On-the-Job-Training (OJT), human resource services, and retention services. The Business Services Team develops strategies to address short and long-term requirements for skills; makes recommendations to the Workforce Director regarding funding and service priorities; and directs strategies for building a comprehensive, regional system for occupational advancement, career ladders and work retraining.

Regions 7's existing training programs in the local areas prepare job seekers to enter and retain employment with regional businesses are based on the needs of individuals and funding availability. Region 7 may adopt a Career Pathway approach to address efficiency issues related to how timely and responsive it is in developing plans and entering jobseekers into training with the focus on Industry Based Certifications (IBCs). This will allow employers and jobseekers to focus on a stepped approach to earning education and training.

Region 7 is determined to meet the need of market connection by identifying and providing working learners, with greater flexibility and broader opportunities in education and training in order to overcome limited funding. Region 7's goal is to develop capacity to assist job-seekers, who find training and education with making a family sustaining wage. This can be accomplished through closely managed and leveraged resources.

Region 7 has seen a growth in the region with area partners building pathways to self-sufficient employment with local businesses. A couple examples such as the Tech 20 (google to see if correct) which is a collaboration between cities, businesses, and schools along the I-20 corridor to skill residents in in-demand occupations and with the goal of attracting new businesses on this corridor. Region 7 has seen the growth of pathways between General Dynamics and Bossier Parish Community College in their IT programs. Also, the collaboration between Louisiana Tech and Bossier Parish Community College to bring employers onto the BPCC campus and engage students in Allied Health and other sectors.

The Region 7 Plan partners have defined capacity in three categories of service: efficiency, connectivity, and funding. Region 7 has a solid foundation in efficiently providing employer and job-seeker services. The implementation and operation of a continuous process improvement strategy shows promise in continuing to create efficiencies in these processes.

With the addition of new partners contributing to the Comprehensive One-Stop Centers infrastructure costs, there remains more opportunity for stronger coordination and consistency between partner programs, through the use of a Common Intake Process 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.

The addition of new partners to American Job Centers (AJCs) should help to alleviate the problem of the Centers being supported primarily by Wagner-Peyser (WP) and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult; Youth, and Dislocated Worker program services. The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) will guide Region 7 in leveraging additional partner program funding in order to overcome any shortfall in AJC Services.

### ***Commitments of each program partner to implement the selected strategies.***

Region 7's partners have committed to implementing the strategies in the local area. Major priorities in the Region will consist of communication across partners which includes improving and expanding technological capabilities that can facilitate referrals, joint case management involving the coordination of services for the individuals and cohorts who comprise the entire regional case management system, coordinated employer services, and shared performance reporting and management.

The core partner programs consisting of WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Basic Education, Wagner-Peyser and Vocational Rehabilitation, work in concert to effectively serve job seekers and employers. While each program has clearly defined activities to carry out, as defined by law, it is through coordination and cooperation that optimum outcomes can be achieved. Region 7's alignment of core programs includes establishing effective sector strategies that combine guidance, education, training, and support services to prepare individuals for careers. Given their needs and career goals, the system helps to guide individuals to appropriate programs and services. Region 7 promotes co-enrollment when appropriate to align services and works closely with partners to prevent duplication of services among the core programs.

Partners will promote system integration to the maximum extent feasible through:

- ▶ Effective communication, information sharing, and collaboration with the One-Stop Operator;
- ▶ Active involvement in joint planning, policy development, and system design processes;
- ▶ Commitment to and active involvement in the development of a joint mission, vision, goals, strategies, and performance measures;

- ▶ The design and use of common intake, assessment, referral, and case management processes;
- ▶ The use of common and/or linked data management systems and data sharing methods, as appropriate;
- ▶ Leveraging of resources, including other public agency and non-profit organization services;
- ▶ Participation in a continuous improvement process designed to boost outcomes and increase customer satisfaction;
- ▶ Establishing a point-of-contact(s) to serve as a liaison between each Partner program, and
- ▶ Participation in regularly scheduled Partner meetings to exchange information in support of the above and encourage program and staff integration.

The LWDAs identified goals for service integration in their action plan. The following is the compiled list of the goals in order of priority across the Region:

Communication across partners:

- ▶ Use technology to share information via social media and websites
- ▶ Develop/improve communication vehicles such as newsletters, meetings, calendars,
- ▶ Partner meetings
- ▶ Improve the partner referral form; finalize the process and share information
- ▶ Create a work group to review referral system and develop a feedback process
- ▶ Create detailed handbook of partners services
- ▶ Increase knowledge of Career Pathways using common language across partners

Cross-training provided to staff:

- ▶ Create work group and set schedule meetings for cross-training
- ▶ Create onboarding/cross-training program, supported with training materials
- ▶ Establish shared vision for customer service
- ▶ Encourage staff contribution for continuous improvement

Business services:

- ▶ Create a Region 7 Business Service Team (BST) with a focus on capacity and partner representation
- ▶ Develop a script for BST staff to follow up on employer visits/contact protocol
- ▶ Identify partnerships and increase engagement with small and medium employers requiring specialized attention
- ▶ Increase frequency of BST meetings
- ▶ Host coordinated hiring events with all system partners
- ▶ Obtain information from the community needs assessment
- ▶ Create employer list by sector
- ▶ Use business customer input to design and deliver services
- ▶ Continue to use/revise/update existing customer satisfaction tools
- ▶ Use a universal intake form
- ▶ Create FAQ on partner programs

Job expectations communicated to staff:

- ▶ Establish core staff competencies
- ▶ Continue/increase frequency of partner meetings for updates, share feedback
- ▶ Update staff procedures manual
- ▶ Establish a vision for customer service

Access to services is timely and coordinated:

- ▶ Identify/implement common electronic referral system for partners
- ▶ Review referral outcomes monthly
- ▶ Increase partner presence at AJCs
- ▶ Inventory marketing/social media resources and communicate to customers
- ▶ Produce AJC orientation video
- ▶ Improve TANF referral outcomes
- ▶ Create master calendar of workshops/sessions throughout region

Customer information is shared:

- ▶ Create AJC manual of all partner services
- ▶ Develop shared database/case management system
- ▶ Hold quarterly BST/employer roundtables
- ▶ Review customer satisfaction survey to represent all programs/services

Partners share an understanding of Career Pathways:

- ▶ Provide training for all staff
- ▶ Develop Career Pathways training for frontline staff
- ▶ Host industry representatives to inform staff of career pathways
- ▶ Provide info from WIOA regional plan survey and Perkins needs assessments to frontline staff

All staff valued and respected:

- ▶ Solicit frontline staff input into policy at the local or regional level
- ▶ Include frontline staff at center-level AJC meetings
- ▶ Ensure staff provided with time to discuss customer service
- ▶ Working relationships that promote service integration

Services delivered by function:

- ▶ Map flow of all customers and services
- ▶ Review services by function for each title and identify opportunities for collaboration
- ▶ Create Business Services Team and client organizational charts and reevaluate the referral process

Board expectations drive One-Stop expectations:

- ▶ Conduct anonymous survey of LWDBs and partner staff
- ▶ Provide WIOA 101 for all staff
- ▶ Program Services Team invites LWDBs to quarterly meeting

Staff collaborate on customer assessment:

- ▶ Share assessment information at Partners Meetings
- ▶ Develop collaboration tools for jobseekers
- ▶ Create matrix of assessments currently in use across partners
- ▶ Share workforce data more frequently to build bridges across partners agencies

***B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region.***

Region 7's Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) are committed to providing resources and fostering partnerships in low-income communities that enable low income individuals to achieve self-sufficiency enhance family stability and revitalize their community.

Region's 7 LWDBs will coordinate workforce development activities in the Region with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the Region 7.

As partners in the Regional Plan, Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), and Department of Children's and Family Services (DCFS) carry out programs that assist low-income populations with public transportation, housing, childcare and other supportive services.

Most of the urban areas in the region have public transportation systems that provide the general public with affordable transportation options. Some locations, including most rural areas, lack efficient, dependable transportation systems.

There is more demand for transportation than supply of providers. Lack of transportation is a significant and often identified barrier for participants in attending training or commuting to/from work, and transportation barriers limit customers' employment opportunities. The LWDBs coordinates with core partners to effectively use limited resources to help alleviate transportation barriers. Programs typically offer transportation assistance in the form of stipends, bus passes, or gas cards for participants attending training programs. Service providers are utilizing shared ride services, such as Uber and Lyft, in rural areas. Participants can connect with transportation via websites or mobile apps on smartphones and payment arrangements can be made through service providers.

Regions 7 is committed to providing a comprehensive approach to supportive services to give participants in the workforce system greater opportunity for success.

Supportive service payments—whether for adult, dislocated worker, or youth participants—are intended to enable WIOA-enrolled customers to participate in workforce-funded programs and activities to secure and retain employment. Based on individual assessment and availability of funds, supportive services, such as transportation and needs-related payments, may be awarded to eligible participants on an as-needed basis. To enhance the provision of transportation and other supportive services, LWDB 70 and LWDB 71 will ensure the sharing of best practices for possible replication among the two LWDA.

Additionally, Region 7 continues to maximize funding available for supportive services by coordinating services through partner and community programs. Through collaboration with other organizations offering supportive services, the region maximizes customers' access to services not available through the AJC. These ongoing conversations include DCFS, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other agencies that serve populations with barriers in order to identify, promote, and replicate common strategies, streamline funding, reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts, and foster clear data reporting that advances predictive analysis. For example, LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 partners with agencies offering transportation or childcare services on behalf of customers in need to coordinate schedules, arrange services, or to potentially fund such services for both individuals and groups. Each local area maintains policies and procedures for administering and coordinating support services to ensure funds are spent in a manner that avoids redundancy. The LWDB continues to provide oversight and guidance regarding the need for additional support services, policies, and procedures.

***C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and WIOA service.***

Economic development organizations, WIOA service providers and businesses that actively engaged in regional planning:

- Job Corps – Shreveport Job Corps
- Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)
- Wagner-Peyser (includes MSFW)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Jobs for Veterans (JSVG)
- Rapid Response
- Labor Programs
- Office of Administration
- Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP)
- Unemployment Insurance (UI)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (STEP)
- Reentry Employment Opportunities
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- National Association for Hispanic Elderly (AYUDA) - Senior Employment
- The Coordinating & Development Corporation - WIOA Title 1 (Adult, Dislocated Worker & Youth
- Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC) - Adult Education (BPCC)
- Motivation Education & Training, Inc. (MET) - National Farm Worker Job Programs (NFJP)
- Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College (NLTCC) - Adult Education
- No organization that was invited to participate in the planning process declined.

***D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate.***

Coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including pooling of funds for administrative costs, are agreed upon through the Infrastructure Funding Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding among AJC partners/MOU. IFAs are developed with onsite partners in the AJCs in order to establish methods of cost sharing. IFAs are updated quarterly and reviewed by partner leadership for accuracy and monitoring of shared costs and expenditures.

The fiscal staff for the local board invoices partners quarterly ensure timely payment of shared costs.

Memorandums of Understandings are being redeveloped to provide staff training beyond what their individual budgets would allow. AJC partners also will enter into a revised Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) in order to leverage resources, eliminate duplication of services, and improve effectiveness, thereby decreasing administrative and program costs. Current MOUs and IFAs reflect the sharing of infrastructure costs among partner programs, based on proportionate use of the AJCs and relative benefit received.

**CHAPTER 3: VISION, GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES – REGIONAL COMPONENT**

***This section will outline how the Local Board(s) will coordinate the regional workforce, education and economic development activities with regional activities that are carried out in the local areas. The responses must ensure alignment with other plans as well as illustrate that businesses, education, and workforce development stakeholders have provided input and are involved in the development of the strategies.***

**A. Describe the local strategic vision to support state and regional economic growth.**

Region 7's workforce Strategic Vision is to increase the competitive position of Northwest Louisiana businesses through the development of a highly skilled Workforce. The East Region envisions a regional system that:

- ▶ Is employer-centric and built on the collective efforts of economic development partners with strong industry partnerships
- ▶ Is holistically focused on the industry sectors that are recognized as regional sector strategies
- ▶ Uses current, available labor market data to understand both the supply and demand sides of the regional economy, including the talent needs and qualifications of employers and the effectiveness of the education and training systems in meeting those needs.
- ▶ Builds on educational opportunities throughout the region to identify and create career pathways for all on-ramps within targeted industry sectors and associated occupations.
- ▶ Advances opportunities for all job seekers including low skilled adults, youth, individuals with disabilities, veterans, returning talent, and other individuals with multiple barriers.
- ▶ Creates a system of workforce, education, and economic development partners to meet the needs of businesses and individuals while growing a vibrant and robust regional economy.

Region 7 WIOA partners will work collaboratively to deliver a workforce development system that provides opportunities for career growth for the Region's jobseekers and workers as well as ensures a skilled workforce to meet the needs of businesses.

The Region's workforce development system will be responsive to changes in the economy, including changes in dominant industry sectors, technology-based impacts and changes, and changes in the skills and education needed for jobs. The workforce development system will assist the Region's workers and jobseekers to advance along career pathways and will effectively collaborate with educators and economic development agencies to provide an aligned system for the Region's stakeholders. Specifically, the One-Stop delivery system shall provide a true "One-Stop" experience, at which any employer, worker or job seeker can access the programs and resources they need, whether in-person or electronically.

**B. Describe the local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment) and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators.**

These goals include:

**(Goal 1)** Establish Career Pathways as a model for skill, credential and degree attainment for Region 7's citizens to secure jobs that provide opportunities for economic independence and family stability. This goal will be accomplished by executing the following objectives:

- ▶ Workforce development system partners will develop a shared vision and strategy for industry sector-based Career Pathways for Youth and Adults. Career Pathways must be diverse, with multiple entry and exit points allowing individuals of varying abilities, including low-skilled Adults and Youth with multiple barriers to employment, to have realistic access to Career Pathways.
- ▶ Engage employers and integrate sector strategy principles to ensure multiple employers, business associations and organized labor are partners in creating demand-driven Career Pathways.
- ▶ Increase the identification, prioritization and leverage of workforce system partner resources to provide supportive services and reduce barriers for low-skilled Youth and Adults.
- ▶ Strengthen the alignment of Jump Start, WorkReady U (WRU), STEP Forward, and other viable initiatives as entry and exit points in the Career Pathways model for In and Out-of-School Youth.
- ▶ Expand utilization of Registered Apprenticeship by industry sector employers to train workers and meet occupational demands.
- ▶ Support and grow learning opportunities for jobseekers and workers by improving processes for transfer credits through postsecondary, Apprenticeships and college coursework.

**(Goal 2)** 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 the expansion of bridge programs.

- ▶ Expand and incentivize the utilization of evidenced-based workforce strategies that support targeted populations (e.g., the long-term unemployed, individuals with disabilities, Veterans, Out-of-School Youth) into sector-based Career Pathway initiatives to achieve similar outcomes relative to other populations.
- ▶ Create new pathways for success by preparing very low-skill Adults to take advantage of sector-based bridge programs that link foundation skills and Adult Basic Education.
- ▶ Enhance and expand the delivery of integrated re-entry and employment strategies, and meet the skill and workforce needs of business and industry.
- ▶ Promote the efficient alignment and utilization of supportive resources for populations facing multiple barriers to employment at the Regional and Local service delivery levels.
- ▶ LWDA 70's creation of Success Coach and Youth Business Coordinators puts focus and attention on service Out-of-School Youth in overcoming their barriers and actualizing their potential.

**(Goal 3)** Increase the participation and utilization of the workforce system by employers and job-seekers.

- ▶ Foster the improvement and expansion of employer-driven Regional Sector Partnerships to meet occupational demands as supported by Regional Labor Market Information (LMI).
- ▶ 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 (co-investment) 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 the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) in meeting the workforce demands of both business and the workforce.
- ▶ LWDA 70's creation of a Business Service Team which covers the region in developing workforce needs and provide oversight for training programs and contractors to businesses.

The Region's Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) performance levels have been negotiated with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC). In addition to the Common Performance Measures described in Section 116(b)(2)(A), LWDAs will use business-focused metrics to assess outcomes.

### ***Business Metrics for Region 7***

#### **Employer Penetration Rate**

The denominator is the number of unique businesses employing 20 or more people in the parishes contained within a given Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA).

The numerator includes the number of unique businesses with 10 or more employees, registered in Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE), which independently, or with American Job Center (AJC) staff assistance, are engaged with the HiRE system by:

- ▶ Posting a job in HiRE.
- ▶ Providing Employer-Based Training.
- ▶ Conducting a resume search.

- ▶ Utilizing customized Labor Market Information (LMI) services for a specific industry or occupation.
- ▶ Receiving Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) funding.
- ▶ Attending seminars and/or workshops.

The primary source of information for this measure is data recorded in the Management Information System (MIS) system of the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), HiRE. Services to employers are automatically recorded by HiRE and manually entered into HiRE by AJC staff. The HiRE system has the capability to have service codes added to indicate business market penetration activity.

### **Repeat Business Customers**

The numerator of this measure is a count of unique employers who received at least one American Job Center (AJC)/ Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE) service in the baseline year.

The denominator is a count of the unique employers who received at least one AJC/HiRE service in the prior year, such as:

- ▶ Posted a job in HiRE.
- ▶ Provided Employer-Based Training.
- ▶ Conducted a resume search.
- ▶ Utilized customized Labor Market Information (LMI) services for a specific industry or occupation.
- ▶ Received Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) funding.
- ▶ Attended seminars and/or workshops.

The primary source of information for this measure is data recorded in the Management Information System (MIS) of the LWC, HiRE. Staff records employer services in the HiRE system. The HiRE system automatically indicates the activities performed by employers without staff assistance. The Region may establish a scorecard that incorporates the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) common measures, State-established business service metrics and other relevant data that measures progress toward meeting the goals and objectives set forth in this plan.

### **C. Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and principles.**

The Business Engagement Initiative is focused on garnering and utilizing input from businesses to build a package of services and strategies to meet business needs today and into the future. There will be special effort to foster relationships with small businesses and targeted industry sectors in order to develop a custom package of services for these customers.

Business Engagement will increase overall business utilization and value received from the workforce system, reduce employer costs to recruit and hire qualified workers and decrease the time required to fill vacancies.

Regional Business Service strategy will transform Region's 7's workforce development service delivery, creating a positive long-term economic impact. This Regional approach is appropriate for the following reasons:

- ▶ A sector (also termed industry cluster) builds strategic partnerships among businesses, training providers, community organizations and other key stakeholders in a labor market Region to bolster the Region's economic competitiveness and promote systemic change.
- ▶ A sector approach is more responsive to labor demand than traditional job-matching and training

services because it is problem-oriented versus program-oriented, addresses needs interdependently, and works to understand the specific needs of businesses within a particular sector.

Reasons a Regional approach is preferred include:

- ▶ This approach allows Business Services to provide a coordinated plan ensuring adequate service delivery to employers who maintain locations in a wider geographic area than the previous, basically parish-oriented model. The creation of a Business Services Team which coordinates different workforce agencies, such as: Rapid Response, Incumbent Worker Representatives, and Business Service Representatives, to name a few to better serve regional business.
- ▶ Expanded areas of delivery capture more job-seekers for employers to choose from.
- ▶ Economically less-developed areas are able to recruit, train, and retain workers
- ▶ Business Engagement Initiatives meet the skill, recruitment and retention needs of employers and the training, employment and career advancement needs of workers. They address the needs of employers by focusing intensively on the workforce needs of a specific industry sector over a sustained period, often concentrating on a specific occupation or set of occupations within that industry.
- ▶ Creating formal career paths to good jobs, reducing barriers to employment and sustaining or increasing middle-class jobs.
- ▶ Regional economic competitiveness is bolstered by engaging economic development experts in workforce issues and aligning education, economic and workforce development planning.
- ▶ A broader array of key stakeholders is engaged through partnerships organized by workforce intermediaries. This promotes systemic change that achieves ongoing benefits for industry, workers and the community.
- ▶ LWDA 70 is also piloting a Business Service Representative through the Bossier Chamber of Commerce to see if such a model could prove effective in other parishes within the region as well.
- ▶ LWDA 70's creation of Youth Business Coordinators (YBC) provide both as youth recruiters and WEX placement coordinators. They also comprise of the Business Service Team to better service businesses in the region. The YBC acts much like a Business Service Representative but for youth.

This Regional sector strategy helps promote and support the development of Regional sector initiatives.

Implementation of a Regional industry sector-based approach is a partnership of the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), Local Workforce Development Boards, (LWDBs) core programs and other partners in each Region to create and develop the Regional Business Services Team (RBST) structure.

A RBST within the Region consists of the following programs:

- ▶ Wagner-Peyser.
- ▶ Veterans/LVER.
- ▶ Adult/Dislocated Worker/Youth Programs.
- ▶ Louisiana Rehabilitation Services/REDS.
- ▶ Incumbent Worker Training Program (State).
- ▶ Rapid Response Team.
- ▶ Other stakeholders that engage employers.

This supports and aligns American Job Center (AJC) Business Services to small business and industries within each Region.

In Region 7, we have also made an effort to house as many programs that serve businesses as possible. Our Bossier American Job Center currently houses Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Business Consultant (BC), Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP), Rapid Response (RR), and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP). WIOA referrals, Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA), Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker, Shreveport Job Corps, Strategies to Empower People (STEP). This allows communication between partner programs on a daily basis. This also facilitates strong relationships between programs. Several of these partners also have programs that extend outside of our Region. This adds the ability to work not only in our Region, but knowledge of our neighboring Regions. Working across these lines adds credibility to our Business Services, as businesses do not have these borders.

To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development Region 7 will re-search the Regional Labor Market Area for Northwest Louisiana contains Regional and Local Economic Development Organizations (EDOs) that have a history of partnering with each other, higher education institutions, industry associations, and Local and State government to achieve shared workforce goals that will advance their Regional economies, along the lines of the activities identified in this Plan. Partnership with Regional and Local EDOs will be most beneficial in achieving these strategic goals of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Regional/Local Plan.

1. Establish Career Pathways as a model for skill, credential, and degree attainment for Louisiana citizens to secure jobs that provide opportunities for economic independence and family stability.
2. Increase the participation and utilization of the workforce system by employers and jobseekers.

In particular, Regional and Local EDOs have agreed to:

- ▶ Use their strategic plans, industry targets, and priority programs to work with the WIOA Regional Planning Team to develop common goals and priorities for workforce development.
- ▶ Provide feedback on priority status of top industries for this Region based on data and emerging trends learned from existing, new, and prospective employers.
  - o For example, the North Louisiana Economic Partnership (NLEP) conducted a 5-year strategic plan that identifies target industries for business development based on our Regional strengths and assets, and target talent clusters that should be prioritized to ensure a skilled workforce for our economic driver industries. These talent clusters (skilled trades, healthcare, and information technology) line up well with the Star Jobs and Tiered Job analysis done by the State.
- ▶ Assist in development of sector partnerships by:
  - o Providing guidance on priority target sectors (see above)
  - o Identifying employers in priority target sectors
  - o Identifying existing industry associations to leverage in development of sector partnerships (e.g. Manufacturing Managers Council, TECHBY20, Louisiana Associated General Contractors)
  - o Invite new employers in target sectors to join sector partnership
- ▶ Serve on Regional Business Services Team, including attending regular Team meetings and providing feedback from employers on employment needs, existing and emerging, as well as skills gaps.
- ▶ Assist in development of Career Pathways and stackable credentials based on employer feedback.
  - o Based on strong existing relationships with higher education institutions in developing or updating certification programs to meet the needs of employers (e.g. Advisory Board participation, scheduling intensive interviews/tours of employers' facilities and critical skill needs), EDOs can

convene industry-education-training work sessions to develop detailed Career Pathways with relevant industry-valued credentials.

- ▶ Assist in alignment of sector training between K-12 (Jump Start) and post-secondary to ensure there are not gaps and that students can easily transition from industry training under Jump Start to related industry training at a post-secondary institution within their Region.
- ▶ Identify employers that could form consortia for training (Incumbent Worker Training, in particular) or Apprenticeship programs.
- ▶ Solicit feedback from employers about Star Jobs identified for this Region (are they relevant for Regional employers, what jobs are missing). Assist in creation and dissemination of target sector employer skill surveys.
- ▶ Market workforce solutions offered by the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), American Job Centers (AJCs), and Louisiana Economic Development (LED) Fast Start to existing and new employers.

As part of existing business outreach efforts, as well as business development proposals, it is critical that EDOs fully understand all workforce training and recruitment programs and services available to assist employers and can relay the information to employers and assist in any follow-up.

- ▶ Assist in development and implementation of public marketing strategies to highlight Star Jobs and training programs that support them to all segments of the community (parents, elected officials, non-profits organizations, other government agencies, etc).
  - o Northwest Louisiana Manufacturing Week is one way the North Louisiana Economic Partnership is starting this process, by coordinating tours of manufacturing plants and manufacturing training programs for high school students in Northwest Louisiana. Each student receives a take-home booklet of information on manufacturing occupations, average salaries, and Regional training programs.
  - o The NLEP hosted its first Workforce Summit in March 2015, featuring three industry panels with representatives from the 3 priority talent clusters identified in their strategic plan. The public was invited to attend but particular emphasis was placed on K-12 and higher education representatives to allow them to hear from employers in target industries what current and emerging skills they are looking for in employees. The NLEP is open to partnering on similar events in the future, and ideally, they would be marketed to the public and highlight Star Jobs and training for them.
- ▶ Assist in identifying alternate funding (private sector, Federal government, non-profit) for critical training programs or services that support Star Jobs.
  - o This could include organizing employer consortia for Apprenticeship programs, soliciting private, public, and foundation dollars for support of Jump Start implementation and marketing, and bringing together collaborators on Federal or National foundation grant opportunities.

Region 7 will strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs. Louisiana is one of the few states to operate the Re-employment and Services Eligibility Assessment Grant (RESEA) statewide due to its integrated service-delivery system. Louisiana's system is demand-driven and operated under a continuous improvement process. Therefore, the system is able to respond quickly to immediate and long-term credentials in demand occupations. Louisiana's integrated service-delivery process was redesigned as a foundation for establishing operations that support the key principles found in the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) law and to initiate expanding partnerships and services.

All of the Region's American Job Centers (AJCs) staff members are trained in the program overview, case management, and all key aspects of job-specific functions. Administrative and managerial staff members at all levels provide operational oversight and technical support for programs.

Functional Supervisors through their Local managerial structure and in cooperation with Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) leadership are responsible for ensuring a seamless process in AJCs through coordinating staff training, providing technical support, maintaining program documentation and continuous communication and dissemination of information. These leaders work in coordination with Management Information Systems (MIS) technicians and Unemployment Insurance (UI) technical support teams on all issues relating to UI eligibility, disqualifications and requalification.

State management, with support from Local management, also provides fiscal and programmatic monitoring and functions as a liaison between workforce and UI, and UI staff (the claim center, adjudication, appeals and the technical support unit) and provides technical support for external customers (job-seekers/claimants) and internal staff (Workforce Development Specialists (WFDS), and workforce management). The UI technical support unit provides training to all WIOA and Wagner-Peyser (WP) staff concerning Federal and State UI regulations, eligibility reviews, adjudications services, appeal processes and all other related UI services for jobseekers/claimants.

MIS also provides technical assistance for State and Local staff using Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC's) integrated case-management system, Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE). This system is used to record and track all re-employment service-delivery activities. Staff training is provided quarterly via localized Statewide training, web-based courses and conferences and meetings.

Subject-matter experts in workforce services and UI facilitate initial, recurring and specialized training as part of the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) and as necessary to ensure all service-delivery methods and program-specific goals are being met.

After the jobseeker/claimant files an initial UI claim and is determined monetarily eligible, he/she is profiled. Jobseekers/claimants that meet specific variables for RESEA as set in the State's statistical model and receive a factor score of greater than 2.4 are placed in the RESEA selection pool. Once he/she has claimed their 2nd week within their claim series, they are selected to participate in the RESEA program and participation becomes mandatory.

All UI for Ex-servicemembers (UCX) jobseekers/claimants who are determined monetarily eligible will be required to participate in the RESEA program. Their factor score will not be used to determine participation, but rather determine job readiness.

### **Description of a RESEA**

**Group and/or Individual RESEA Orientation:** Provides general information concerning Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefit eligibility, available re-employment services, guidance on the use of self-assisted services, provision of Labor Market Information (LMI) and other services available through Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE) and workforce partners.

**Eligibility Review:** Provides immediate feedback on UI eligibility of each jobseeker/claimant by reviewing work-search activities, ensuring job-seeker/claimant is actively seeking employment and is able and available for work. Any issues discovered, such as able and available, are immediately referred to the adjudication unit to be investigated and eligibility determination assigned.

**Labor Market Information:** Provides information on labor market and career information that addresses the jobseeker/ claimant's specific employment needs.

**Employment Strategy Plan:** Face-to-face interviews conducted by Workforce Development Specialist (WFDS) staff to assist in the development and review of the jobseeker/claimant's plan. Once a

job-seeker/claimant registers in HiRE, a general plan is automatically created in HiRE, with populated information such as the last occupation, information on job-search activities and online courses taken in HiRE. Staff discusses strategies to create job alerts and suggests trainings and other re-employment services. Staff assists the job-seeker/claimant to build their Plan and explore career and educational goals.

**Individual Employment Plan (IEP):** Face-to-face interaction conducted by WFDS staff to assist in evaluating the needs of the jobseeker/claimant including a structured assessment identifying barriers to employment and establishment of employment and/or educational goals with attainable objectives and outcomes. Plans are developed, updated, and tracked using the State's web-based case management system HiRE.

**Referral to Re-employment Services and Appropriate Training:** Through identified barriers, employment challenges, and career goals during the face-to-face interview session, referrals to reemployment services which include, but are not limited to, workshops and/or appropriate training will be provided to each jobseeker/claimant in order to meet the expected objective of the plan and documented in HiRE. The plan will be amended as needed through career counseling.

**Re-employment Services:** Job-seekers/claimants will be provided an array of re-employment services that include, but are not limited to, workshops (resume writing, interviewing techniques, and job readiness), and job clubs that support peer-to-peer networking, computer literacy, and financial literacy.

Once the jobseeker/claimant has filed their second week of a monetarily eligible claim within their claim series and has met profiling criteria, he/she is selected for participation in RESEA and notified via a letter generated through an automated process. Letters provide notice of their RESEA appointment with a WFDS and the requirements and date the service must be completed in order to maintain UI eligibility. Jobseekers/claimants have two weeks (14 days) to comply with the service requirement from the date on their notification letter.

Initial notification letters mailed to selected jobseekers/claimants scheduling their RESEA appointment, failure to keep this appointment may result in a denial of UI benefits.

Jobseekers/claimants who fail to report for their scheduled RESEA with no contact with the WFDS or UI Claim Center are considered a Failure to Report and are in jeopardy of losing benefits for one (1) week. Subsequent RESEA non-compliance determinations will result in an indefinite disqualification until the jobseeker/claimant complies. A non-monetary determination is issued to the job-seeker/claimant explaining the reason for their disqualification resulting in a stoppage of benefits. Notification is mailed to the jobseeker/claimant and a copy is sent to their personal message center in the HiRE system. The UI Claim Center number is provided for assistance on all correspondence.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) has taken an aggressive approach in developing more comprehensive integrated systems throughout the agency. True integration and collaborative processes have been established through building stronger links among Office of Workforce Development (OWD), UI, and IT working together to provide a full array of services to our customer base. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is currently in place with all partners.

Any person filing a UI claim in Louisiana is automatically registered in HiRE, subsequent to the completion of any UI claim and prior to determination of monetary eligibility all claimants are enrolled in Wagner-Peyser (WP) services and are then profiled and placed on a standardized service delivery track as delineated in the State's Integrated Service Delivery policy.

Region 7 has Regional Industry Coordinators and Business Consultants to promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. Their primary roles are to engage business and industry to identify short and long-term workforce needs, and assist the Region's LWDBs and AJCs, with developing goals, objectives, and strategies to address these needs.

Region 7 has identified the top industries within the Region Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation, and IT industries that have the need to fill vacancies in high-demand occupations. Star Jobs (3-5 stars) are the targets. These industries are identified through the use of Labor Market information (LMI) and engagement with Regional EDOs.

Business Metrics have been created to provide a mechanism in which to measure the effectiveness of services provided to businesses in the Region. These Metrics include overall market penetration, and repeat business customers.

***To implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional employers.***

### **Incumbent Worker Training Program**

The Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) is a partnership between the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), business and industry, and training providers.

It is designed to benefit business and industry by assisting in the skill development of existing employees and thereby increasing employee productivity and the growth of the company.

These improvements are expected to result in the creation of new jobs, the retention of jobs that otherwise may have been eliminated, and an increase in wages for trained workers. The program is funded by a charge assessed on employers that is paid along with Unemployment Insurance (UI) tax contributions.

### **On-the-Job Training/Customized Training**

Region 7's Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) utilize On-the-Job Training (OJT) program in conjunction with the Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC's) Business Consultants (BCs) as the methods of service delivery to Local businesses. LWDA 70 is in the process of hiring their own Business Services Representative to assist business with demand-driven workforce needs, including On-the-Job-Training (OJT) contracts. LWDA 70's Business Service Representative through the Bossier Chamber also works to establish OJT contracts with businesses, as will their Youth Business Coordinators in addition to Work Experience. The OJT program addresses the need of businesses for short-term experiential training.

The Region 7 LWDAs also offer Customized Training tailored to specific industry requirements. The Business Service Representatives (BSR) and the Youth Business Coordinators (YBC) are in contact with Local businesses and are very familiar with the services offered through Region 7's LWDAs. The BSR's and YBC's are an excellent source of referral for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) clients for the OJT or Customized Training components.

The Region utilizes Workkeys and other interest and aptitude assessments as the common assessment instruments for WIOA clients. The Region has attempted to make the assessment process as customer friendly as possible by strengthening its partnership with Ready2Work and other partners involved with WorkKeys. This allows the client to fit the process to their schedule thus making for an efficient and streamlined assessment.

OJT is considered one of the most beneficial training opportunities. It assists an employee that does not possess the skills needed for a job with a chance to learn a new job while earning an income. It also allows an employer a chance to train an employee with less expense to the employer. The employer can be in the public, private non-profit, or private sector. The employer can be reimbursed up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the individual for the extraordinary cost of providing the training and increased supervision related to the training.

OJT is limited in duration, based upon the target occupation for which the participant is being trained, the participant's prior work experience, and the service strategy. After trainees have been certified as eligible for the OJT program and hired by the employer, reimbursement begins, and continues until the allotted training time expires.

The following represents companies in Region 7 that benefited from OJT contracts.

**Caddo Parish**

Camus Electric  
Feazel Electric  
Module X Solutions

**Desoto Parish**

DeSoto Healthcare  
International Paper

**Red River Parish**

RR Police Jury

**Bossier Parish**

Bossier Family Medicine  
Zaxbys Restaurants

**Lincoln Parish**

Green Clinic Management

**Sabine Parish**

Boise Cascade Company

**Webster Parish**

Hicks Manufacturing

Customized Training is designed to meet the special occupational requirements of an employer or group of employers; is conducted with a commitment by the employer to employ or retain an individual on successful completion of the training.

Participants acquire additional skills with new technology, workplace literacy or new procedure. In addition, it allows individual(s) to gain employment opportunities or job advancements and maintain unsubsidized employment.

**Sector Strategies and Career Pathways**

To create sector strategies, the Region's Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) will collaborate in a Regional planning process, establish a Regional service strategy, and develop sector initiatives for in-demand sectors or occupations in the Region. Along with a sector strategy, the LWDBs in the Region, with representatives from secondary and post-secondary education programs, shall lead efforts in the Regional/Local area to develop Career Pathways by aligning employment, training, education, and supportive services.

Engaging industry will lead to the development of Career Pathways, growing the pipeline of qualified job candidates to fill existing skill gaps in targeted industries. Two existing within the education system are Jump Start and WorkReady U (WRU).

The implementation of a Regional sector strategy does not follow a cookie-cutter approach, but does reflect the common principles outlined above.

The Region will create and implement the best overall approach for its Local economy. To date, Region 7 has accomplished a number of initiatives in the implementation of the Jump Start Program.

Successful Regional Sector Strategies will share the following common principles:

- ▶ Serve the dual purpose of aligning education, training, and support services to the needs of employers in an industry sector, while ensuring that those services are accessible to a range of workers.
- ▶ Require a strong intermediary organization that sustains energy, coordinates dialogue and brokers relationships among service providers and employers in carrying out the partnership's agenda.
- ▶ Be employer-driven, wherein employers recognize their self-interest in and need for the partnership.
- ▶ Promote systemic change benefiting workers of all wage and skill levels, the industry and the community at large.
- ▶ Include the workforce system as a central player in any number of roles, such as the neutral intermediary body, the manager of operations and funding, and/or the source of Labor Market Information (LMI).

**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, high-skill, in-demand career sectors.

Students are required to attain industry-promulgated, industry-valued credentials in order to graduate with a Career Diploma.

Schools receive the same accountability grade credit for preparing students for careers in high-demand job sectors as they do for students who achieve top academic honors. The Regional Industry Coordinator with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) has been an integral part of this Northwest Louisiana Jump Start Team.

Local Workforce Development Board Directors dutifully attended many meetings to supply needed input and support at the early Jump Start meetings, and now with the expanded Perkins Region 7 Leadership Team. Each area of the State could implement parts of the Jump Start Model as soon as it was possible, but the full implementation occurred in the Fall of 2017. Spring 2020, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved 11 Jump Start 2.0 pathways, along with a waiver process for facilitating changes late in students' progressions. As a condition of approving the pathways, the board commissioned a panel that includes CTE directors to bring back to BESE further adjustments to Jump Start 2.0, including further universal courses.

We are fortunate that we have not one, but two schools dedicated to the goals of the Jump Start Initiative: Caddo Career and Technology Center and the Bossier Parish School for Technology and Innovative Learning. The Caddo Career and Technology Center has received national awards in the past, and the Bossier Parish School for Technology and Innovative Learning has the newest and latest in many training areas, for example, they have a machine in their Automotive Repair Shop that only three high schools in the nation have. These two facilities will enable this area to move forward quickly in the Jump Start Initiative, and students, parents, and business have benefited because of it. Jump Start 2.0 Northwest Louisiana offers promise of a better future for many student's many businesses.

**WorkReady U, (WRU)** supports the mission of educating Region 7's Adult population and moving them beyond a high school equivalency diploma through credit-earning coursework for postsecondary certificates, degrees and family-supporting jobs. Louisiana colleges and WRU providers have implemented Career Pathways in the following industries:

- ▶ Health Sciences

- ▶ Information Technology
- ▶ Skilled Crafts
- ▶ Manufacturing
- ▶ Business Office Technology
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Industrial Technology

Region 7 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) representatives work with many entities in order to facilitate solutions to employer's needs and issues. One example is our involvement with the Jump Start Initiative. Both Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Directors, both Program Manager/Local Area Coordinators (LACs), and the Regional Industry Coordinator have been involved in this initiative since its inception a couple of years ago. Jump Start has proposed a four-year implementation timetable. The goal was to work with and through Regional Teams so that Local experts (from the business community, economic development officials, school representatives, workforce development officials, etc.) could collaborate and create the graduation pathways, courses, internship and work-based experiences necessary to help Louisiana students attain high-value industry credentials. Due to the dedicated work of many involved, Jump Start is now over one year ahead of its implementation timetable.

Another example is our involvement with the **STEP Forward Initiative**. This is a cradle to career initiative beginning with reading tutors volunteering in the elementary grades to workforce development projects involving high school students and young people up to the age of 25.

With the collaboration of the business community, non-profit organizations, workforce development officials, education representatives, economic development officials, Chamber of Commerce leaders, etc. there has been much progress and quite a few successes. The Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC's) Regional Industry Coordinator has been the Workforce Development Committee's Chairman since its inception a couple of years ago. One outstanding project was the taping of over 20 Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), Executives, etc. concerning the business they are in and what they are looking for in future employees. Many told their personal story in order for more young people to understand the effort it takes to be successful in life and in a business environment. These interviews were edited down to ten minutes per person. These videos will be used in classrooms, on social media, and wherever we can reach young people.

Medical Assistant (MA) Training Program *A CAREER PATH IN HEALTHCARE* The "MA NOW" Training Program is a tuition-free program for eligible candidates. If accepted into the program, you will be on a solid career track into healthcare.

Ochsner Health System, Bossier Parish Community College, LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 have partnered to offer this program. The MA program covers a four-month period in which students receive classroom and clinical instruction. Students will receive hands-on training through rotations in a wide range of departments. Additionally, the program also includes training for students to be certified in CPR, HIP-PA and OSHA.

Medical Assistants provide direct patient care under the supervision of a licensed healthcare provider. Duties include scheduling and receiving patients, preparing and maintaining medical records, serving as a liaison between physicians and other healthcare professionals, taking patient histories and vital signs, collecting and processing specimens, assisting the licensed healthcare provider with examinations and treatments. Medical assistants are trained to operate various equipment, screen patients, recognize and respond to emergencies.

After successfully completing the program and hiring requirements, participants will be placed into a Medical Assistant position at one of Ochsner's area neighborhood health centers.

Apprenti - To address the tech workforce challenge in northwest Louisiana, Region 7 looks to partnered with Apprenti to bring a nationally recognized, USDOL approved, registered IT apprenticeship program to the region.

At a national level, as of 2019, Apprenti has close to 800 apprentices that are either currently in, or have completed, programs in 13 states with expansions forthcoming. Specifically focused on diversifying the current talent pool in tech, apprentices with Apprenti have a wide variety of backgrounds and levels of education. Currently, 57 percent of apprentices are people of color, 23 percent are women, and 61 percent are veterans, which are all above the national average. In addition, 56 percent of the candidates of a four-year degree. Coupled with an 80 percent retention rate, Apprenti is proving to be a viable talent solution for industries struggling to meet demand.

#### **D. Describe regional strategies that will increase apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.**

Through a collaborative effort and coordination of services with Louisiana Workforce Commission an emphasis on apprenticeship programs and Work-Based Learning programs. Region 7 is hopeful to have more programs available and to ensure the following:

- ▶ Recruit more employers as sponsors of work-based learning opportunities,
- ▶ Expand access to Registered Apprenticeship programs and assist employers in creating new programs,
- ▶ Connect Career/Technical Education (CTE) students to apprenticeship programs with higher education partners and employers,
- ▶ Promote to employers the wide range of work-based learning options that are available for them to address skill gaps - apprenticeship, on-the-job training (OJT), and part-time jobs for students,
- ▶ Promote the message of work-based learning as affordable approach for acquiring higher education without debt, and
- ▶ Ensure that the state's Eligible Training Provider List includes access to apprenticeship and other work-based learning options.

#### **E. Describe initiatives to shorten the time from credential to employment and address how the area will work with the education system to begin putting training opportunities in place to meet this strategy.**

LCTCS started an initiative that they are kicking off called "Reboot Your Career". It is a short-term training opportunity at the community and technical colleges across the state for those affected by the pandemic. They will be using funding from the CARES Act to support the tuition. The Governor and Legislature approved \$10 million of Cares Act funding to skill and upskill 5,000 individuals across the state. Each of the 14 participating colleges (all 12 LCTCS campuses plus SUSLA and LSU-E) will be able to seek reimbursement for credentials individuals earn through their workforce-prep programs. Each college determines the "deal" they can offer to students. Opportunities to incentivize enrollment may include rebates upon earning the credential, sponsored exam fees, reduced/low/free tuition depending on the program and college, etc. Course delivery may be in person, online, or hybrid.

#### **F. Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state's efforts to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development.**

Region 7 will work with education, workforce and economic development in establishing and managing partnerships to achieve and promote economic growth and economic advancement, especially in rural counties and communities. Future strategy development will be employer-driven and will promote systemic change that benefits workers of all wage and skill levels, the industry, and the commu-

nity at large. The impact of technological, demographic and socio- economic changes will impact the employment landscape and skills requirements. Also, the current National crisis will result in uncertain future labor demands. The region will identify sectors using economic, industry, and labor market data collection and analysis. The use of traditional and real-time LMI and workforce planning information will identify specific skill needs, level of demand, and area education and training program gaps within target industries.

Over the long term, labor demand decisions by employers will be critical to the workforce system and its ability to meet local and regional skill needs. Future sector strategies must be defined by regional business and industry in order for workforce development agencies to provide employment and training programs that will improve employment opportunities for job seekers and the competitiveness of industries.

***Region 7 will continue to improve and expanded regional sector partnerships, which will increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors.***

Collaboration across partners and Region 7 will continue to focus strategies around Regional partners engaging with small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Work with community colleges will continue to focus around industry sector talent development especially where industry-recognized credential attainment is necessary.

Region 7 will continue to analyze and incorporate LMI to further develop strategy development for future sectors. This strategy development includes, but is not limited to:

- ▶ Expanding Career Pathways focused on the primary targeted industry sectors. Pathway creation for the secondary targeted industry sector will also be explored. These pathways will contain multiple entry and exit points to connect individuals of varying abilities with realistic and meaningful opportunities.
- ▶ Expanding Apprenticeships & Earn and Learn opportunities by leveraging the relationships between economic development partners and employers in the targeted industry sectors. Integrated business services will be developed so that employers can access training resources from all relevant partners.

Region 7 will continue to expand workforce opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to career advancement through improved career services, career pathway programs and expansion of bridge programs.

Region will continue to expand information for employers and job seekers to access services to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways.

## **CHAPTER: 4 OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES - LOCAL COMPONENT**

This chapter provides an overview of all the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs). LWDAs must incorporate key documents into the plan that describe the one- stop delivery system and the services provided by the workforce partners.

### **A. Coordination of Planning Requirements**

Coordination of Planning Requirements: The plan will incorporate the Memorandum of Understanding and Service Integration Action Plan and include the following statements in this chapter:

Local Workforce Development Area 70 and Local Workforce Development Area 71 **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 into this plan.

LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 each has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the organizations managing each federal program at the local level. The MOU outlines the roles and contributions of partners in the one-stop system, as well as how services will be coordinated among the programs. Access to each partner program is available at Region 7s American Job Center locations either directly or indirectly through referrals.

Through the MOU, Region 7 partners are also committed to cross-training of staff, as appropriate, and to providing other professional learning opportunities that promote continuous improvement that outlines the roles and contributions of partners in the one-stop system, as well as how services will be coordinated among the programs.

A narrative that follows describes coordination with the WIOA core and other required program partners as prescribed by the WIOA.

Region 7 has built strong and effective relationships with state and local agencies that represent the One-Stop partner programs. Over the next four (4) years, Region 7 looks forward to further enhancing coordination with each of the workforce system partners.

PARTNER NAME	PROGRAM	PROGRAM AUTHORITY
Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC)  Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College (NLTCC)	Adult Education and Literacy	Adult Education and literacy (WIOA 121(b)(1)(B)(iii) – Title II
Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)	Community Services Block Grant	Community Services Block Grant Employment & Training Programs (42 USC 9901 et seq.)
Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC)  Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College (NLTCC)	Post-Secondary Vocational Education	Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education Improvement Act 2006 (20 USC 2301)
Louisiana Rehabilitation Services <b>Or</b> Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)	Vocational Rehabilitation	Rehabilitation Act, Title I, Parts A & B – Rehabilitation Services Commission (29 USC 720)

<b>PARTNER NAME</b>	<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>PROGRAM AUTHORITY</b>
Department of Children and Family Services	TANF/SNAP/STEP	Social Security Act – Parts A, Title IV (TANF) (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), subject to subparagraph (C)
A.N.P.P.M Project Ayuda <b>Or</b> Association National Pro Personas Mayores/National Association for Hispanic Elderly (AYDUA)	Senior Community Service Employment Program	Older Americans Act Title V – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) (42 USC 3056)
Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)	Trade Adjustment Act	Trade Act Title II, Chapter 2 – Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) (19 USC 2271)
Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)	Unemployment Insurance	Unemployment Insurance (UI) – (5 USC 85) (ORC Chapter 4141)
Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)	Wagner-Peyser	WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser Act Programs (29 USC 49)
Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)	Jobs for Veteran’s Programs	Veteran’s Workforce Programs – Chapter 41 of title 38, US Code; WIOA 121(b)(1)(B)(viii)
Motivation Education & Training, Inc. (MET)	National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP)/Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers	WIOA Title I – Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Programs (29 USC 2912, 29 USC 2919)
The Coordinating & Development Corporation (LWDA 70)  The City of Shreveport (LWDA 71)	WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs	WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs
Shreveport Job Corps Center (MINACT, Inc.)	Job Corps	WIOA Title I – Job Corps (29 USC 2881-2900, 29 USC 2901)
Institute for Indian Development	Native American Program	WIOA Title I – Native American Programs (29 USC 2911, 29 USC 2919)

**ADDITIONAL PARTNERS INCLUDE**

<b>Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)</b>	<b>Rapid Response Services</b>
<b>Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)</b>	<b>Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP)</b>
<b>Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)</b>	<b>ReEntry</b>
<b>Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)</b>	<b>Labor Programs</b>
<b>Division of Administration</b>	<b>Office of Technology Services</b>

The following information summarizes the ways in which Region 7 and the local workforce system collaborate with organizations managing the federally mandated One-Stop partner programs.

**WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs:** The three (3) formula-funded programs are administered by LWDB 70 and LWDB 71. LWDB 70 services are delivered at one comprehensive and eight (7) affiliate America’s Job Centers, and LWDB 71 services are delivered at one comprehensive America’s Job Centers.

**WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy:** Provide WIOA Title II adult education and literacy services in the local areas. Referrals are regularly made between the Title I and Title II programs and many participants are co-enrolled.

**WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser:** Wagner-Peyser staff are co-located in the LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 AJC Centers in Region 7. In addition, LWDA and AJC staff work with LWC to coordinate marketing and outreach to Unemployment Insurance claimants, ensuring full access to all available WIOA services. LWC and LWDA staff also collaborate on Rapid Response orientations for laid off workers.

**WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation:** WIOA Title IV staff is co-located at the American Job Center. LRS staff is available to provide technical assistance and training to AJC and partner staff in the areas of disability awareness and the use of competitive integrated employment.

**Carl Perkins Career Technical Education:** The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) is a principal source of federal funding to states and discretionary grantees for the improvement of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs across the nation. The purpose of the Act is to develop more fully the academic, career, and technical skills of secondary and postsecondary students who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs. The community colleges, which as the primary recipients of Perkins funding in Region 7, regularly make referrals to and receive referrals from staff of the AJCs.

**Title V Older Americans Act: Senior Community Services Employment Programs (SCSEP)** that serve Region 7 Residents. The program enrolls eligible seniors who are 55+, low income, and have barriers to employment; and provides part-time, temporary on the job training through community service assignments at local nonprofits and government agencies to enrolled participants.

**Job Corps:** Program representatives conduct eligibility determination for Job Corps services. Their principal activity at the AJC is to promote the Job Corps program to potential applicants who are youth and young adults ages 18 to 24.

**Native American Programs:** LWC and WIOA program staff collaborates with AJC staff to provide referrals and co-enrollment opportunities to provide Indian and Native American job seekers access to all WIOA and partner services in available through Regions 7’s local network of AJCs.

**Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Program:** LWC and WIOA program staff works with MSFW staff to provide referrals and co-enrollment opportunities to ensure MSFW programs services are available for eligible agricultural participants.

**Veterans Services:** LWC administers this program and designated Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVER) Specialists are stationed at the comprehensive center to assist veterans seeking employment.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Act: Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA) is a federal program that provides aid to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports. The TAA program offers a variety of benefits and reemployment services to help unemployed workers prepare for and obtain suitable employment. Workers may be eligible for training, job search and other reemployment services. Coordination with TAA generally includes co-enrollment into WIOA, which provides multiple benefits, including TAA funds being used to cover all training costs.

Community Services Block Grant: Supports AJC staff in accepting referrals, depending on identified needs and eligibility requirements. CSBG staff may also make referrals to any AJC location in the region for employment and training services.

Unemployment Compensation: The Unemployment Insurance program is generally represented in the AJCs by LWC's Wagner-Peyser staff. AJC staff work with LWC staff to coordinate marketing and outreach to UI claimants, ensuring full access to all available WIOA services.

Department of Child and Family Service: Supports AJC staff in accepting referrals, depending on identified needs and eligibility requirements. DCFS staff may also make referrals to any AJC location in the region for employment and training services.

The parties in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agree that all required Partners and co-located additional Partners have a joint responsibility to support and maintain an effective local integrated service delivery system. In addition, all parties to the LWDA's MOU recognize that shared and infrastructure costs are applicable to all the required Partners. The MOU outlines the local vision for program alignment, Partner roles and responsibilities, and accountability for a coordinated service delivery system.

Costs of Services (WIOA Regulations 678.700, USDOL December 27, 2016: Infrastructure Funding Guidance): WDBs and Workforce Development Partners "Infrastructure Funding Agreements" (IFA) contains the effective time period, infrastructure and shared services budget, identifies all one-stop partners/CEOs/local Boards participating, and describes the periodic review and reconciliation process to ensure equitable benefit among partners. The infrastructure funding agreement (IFA) may have a different effective time period from the duration of the MOU.

The IFA and budget establish a plan to fund the services and operating costs of the center and Parties to each LWDA MOU agree that joint funding is an essential foundation for an integrated service delivery system and necessary to maintain the One-stop network. Cost allocation among Parties shall meet WIOA regulations, Federal Uniform Guidance, including the partner program's authorizing law and implementing regulations, and state rules, policies, and guidelines.

The shared LWDBs operating costs, the projected cost amounts, and each party's method of funding its fair share of those costs is identified in their Budget Planning and Reconciliation Document. The methodologies that will be used to determine and allocate each party's fair share of operating costs are as follows:

- ▶ Resource sharing may include contributions of staff time in addition to equipment and other material resources needed for the operation of any AJC location in the region.

Shared resources and services provided at the American Job Centers will be defined in each of the LWDA's Memorandums of Understanding Addendum Resource Sharing Agreement.

Development of the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), with assistance from The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), will be fundamental to alignment of Region 7's partner programs, required and optional partners programs, and other resources. The MOU will:

1. Articulate the coordinate vision, goals, and objectives for the Region's workforce system and the combined Regional/Local Plan;
2. Establish agreement at the Regional level for service delivery systems, co-enrollment, and define framework of key strategies and other key functions of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core partners;
3. Provide guidance for partnerships at the Regional and LWDA level.

Integrating the services available from program partners was hampered during most of 2020 and the initial months of 2021 due largely to the coronavirus pandemic. Previously, quarterly MOU partner meetings were held to discuss effective customer referral procedures and for all partners to gain a better understanding of the range of services available to the residents of Region 7. MOU partner meetings in Region 7 are set to resume and will provide an important means for accomplishing the objective of developing and implementing a plan for effective service integration.

LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 Workforce Development Board meetings are another means for developing effective service integration among the required partners who attend such meetings. The Workforce Development Board chairmen and members fulfill a leadership role with LWDA 70 and 71 staff providing ongoing support and technical assistance. New program activities or projects are presented for discussion, which may result in collaborative efforts among program partners. Additionally, joint meetings, including the chairmen and members of both Workforce Development Boards in Region 7 may be held to facilitate an even more comprehensive regional approach to service integration. A past example has been LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 working together to provide on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities for recent graduates of Shreveport's Job Corps Center, meeting the hiring needs of a local employer. As a program partner, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) has taken the lead in service integration by making available for its staff at Region 7's American Job Centers.

In developing the regional plan, all program partners are provided the opportunity to contribute ideas related to the coordination of services (i.e., service integration). In doing this, the objective is to promote a strategy that aligns program partner services with the development of Region 7's economy along with sustained efforts to contribute to the skill needs of the businesses and industries within the region. There is considerable commonality in the populations that program partners to provide services to. Recognizing this, effective and efficient service integration between program partners in Region 7 is considered a priority.

The State's WIOA Lead Team has begun to develop the MOU framework and recognizes that the fidelity of the State leadership to the collaborative process will have significant impact on Regional and Local implementation.

LWC shall create and provide opportunities and leadership to encourage and facilitate Regional collaborative efforts by workforce system leaders LWDBs and WIOA required partner programs to align workforce policies and services with Regional economies and supportive service delivery strategies. LWC shall lead in the analysis of Regional labor markets, establishment of Regional service strategies, development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations

for the Region and coordination of services. These efforts are expected to enhance capacity and performance of the integrated workforce system.

LWC has developed policy, vision, certification criteria, and contracts to assist the Region's LWDBs in complying with WIOA's expectations. LWC requires development of a Regional/Local Plan by respective Local boards which must include performance targets.

It is the intent of LWC to provide guidance, and support to Local leadership, while allowing Local and Regional leadership, the flexibility to develop and implement innovative workforce strategies and solutions necessary to meet the needs of employers, job seekers, and the emerging workforce.

LWC shall monitor and support the Region's LWDBs efforts in the strategic integration of workforce programs, services and initiatives in order to operate in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible, while remaining flexible, adaptable, market-based, and customer-focused. LWC has adopted, and is committed to, a Continuous Improvement Process (CPI) approach in refining the structure and alignment of programs under WIOA with additional resources to support achievement of State vision and goals.

***B. Provide information regarding the use of technology in the one-stop delivery system, including a description of:***

Region 7 is committed to expanding its efforts to make sure its staff is educated and equipped in becoming agents of collaborative change within their communities. We have and continue to make significant changes to our service model, policies, procedures and staffing to become leaders within the State to model a strong in-demand Workforce System.

LWDB 70 continues to look for new ways implementing Integrated Education and Training models, such as pre-apprenticeships, postsecondary education opportunities and Out-of-School Youth activities which engage participants with their community and education aspirations.

Region 7 is committed to working with all sectors of the public to assist in their goals of self-sufficiency. Our case managers are encouraged to stay abreast with Workforce GPS to learn about successful trends in workforce development under WIOA. In the future, Region 7 will focus on segments, such as the mature workforce and the underemployed, to learn how to better serve these populations within our region. It is LWDB 70s goal for this year to investigate into targeted marketing within its Business Service Team which comprises of its Business Service Representatives, Youth Business Coordinators, key management leaders within Workforce Development and employers to better reach and serve our community members.

Region 7 continues to partner with area colleges looking for career pathways to better serve our participants, such as the Carol Perkins collaboration and other inactivates listed in the plan. (Louisiana Career Pathways is listed right after this statement). Region 7 is improving its communication with partnering agencies and looking for ways to improve co-enrollment. Currently we are exploring new opportunities with LRS with a training provider to provide greater services to our participants.

LWDA 70 utilizes a coordinated navigation process embedded in their website - [www.cdconline.org](http://www.cdconline.org). Job seeker customers can gain entry to the Center in one of three ways- in person, by phone, or online. In all cases, whether staff-assisted or independently accessed, all customers complete the navigation questionnaire located on the website, and their responses are recorded on the backend of the platform. The Navigators on staff guide each customer to the proper referrals and identify the next steps for the customer to take based on their responses.

Louisiana Workforce Commission – [www.laworks.net](http://www.laworks.net) - mobile-friendly website serves as an entry-point to the one-stop delivery system for staff-assisted services, as well as offering numerous options for self-assisted service including:

- ▶ Access to job listings
- ▶ Career exploration and career pathway tools
- ▶ Profiles of local employer partners who are hiring
- ▶ Tips and resources on resume writing, interviewing, negotiating, and job retention
- ▶ Specialized information for veterans and individuals with disabilities
- ▶ Comprehensive business services information for employers
- ▶ Needs assessment tool for employers

Additionally, [www.laworks.net](http://www.laworks.net) HiRE operates several ways to connect the community with information and services.

Lastly, all Partners are required to have staff on-site at LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 AJCs to provide services, or, in the absence of on-site staff, a direct linkage wherein no decline in customer experience is noted. Partners providing direct linkage access to services, as described in the MOU, should experience comparable customer service and experience to having a staff member on-site. Direct linkages at LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 consist of direct phone lines manned by staff of the representative agency who are prepared to provide information and access to service immediately via phone.

***C. Describe how the Local Board will support the strategies identified in the Combined State Plan and work with entities carrying out core programs.***

Region 7 Staff uses their Board Policies for determination of Need for support services which are documented in HiRE in case notes to clearly reflect the need for the support service. The procedure includes the following:

- ▶ Financial need for support service
- ▶ Lack of community resource to meet the need
- ▶ Budget worksheet to reflect current financial situation
- ▶ Justification of service (ensuring support service is reasonable and consistent with board, state and federal regulations). Documentation of resource exploration and rationale for approval, disapproval, or termination of support services will be entered in HiRE case notes.

Region 7 continues to upscale their use of Integrated Education and Training models to help adults get their GED and work on other basic skills and English language acquisition while earning credential and industry-recognized credentials that lead to in-demand occupations.

Region 7's Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) will ensure compliance with all Federal and State regulations, and upon request, each office offers Language Line Services who can assist with service delivery for job seekers of Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

The Region's LWDAs continue to ensure all materials and delivery methods are appropriate to diverse cultures, languages, and education. This program accommodation includes, as appropriate upon request, the provision of interpreters, through Language Line Services, and for those individuals that have hearing and visual impairment, referral to the appropriate partner agency. Region 7's Equal Opportunity (EO) Coordinators will provide technical assistance to the American Job Centers if necessary and monitor the system for compliance.

Dual Credit Program is an opportunity for qualified high school students to enroll in a college-level course and, upon successful course completion, earn both college and high school credit. The college courses are taught at the high school during the regular school day by high school teachers who are credentialed as adjunct faculty at select LCTCS. This coursework plays a pivotal role in the integrated programs of study with district high schools that aim to expand career pathways opportunities and to align course work to ensure smoother transitions between education and the workforce.

The Colleges will increase meaningful and intentional CTE dual credit offerings where appropriate to reduce college costs, speed time to completion, and further enhance high school to college transitions. Efforts and strategies will be implemented to ensure certificate and degree attainment for underserved populations.

Region 7 will encourage Adults and Dislocated Workers with an extensive career history to ask the training provider of their choice to take a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) to determine if the amount of education can be reduced. The Region 7 will encourage its training providers to see this as a positive step toward recovery from the pandemic crises.

Career pathways are a hallmark of WIOA legislation. Career pathways offer a clear sequence, or pathway, of education coursework and/or training credentials aligned with employer-validated work readiness standards and competencies. A number of career pathways are available to job seekers, with a recent focus on Manufacturing, IT and Healthcare occupations. Information on career pathways is readily available at the One-Stop Center as well as on Louisiana Works. Region 7 Staff are trained to understand the local high demand occupations and the career pathways that exist in those occupations. This knowledge allows the Region 7 Staff to educate job seekers on various pathways available and the educational opportunities available to get onto a career pathway. Co-enrollment in core programs across the system is encouraged.

The Local Boards are committed to exploring robust development of career pathways options for high school students in conjunction with the secondary education system in Region 7, private business, and area Chambers of Commerce or other business-oriented stakeholders. Over the term of this plan, it is expected that growth in the amount and awareness of available career pathway options in high schools will increase significantly.

*Investigating how targeted marketing can identify segments of the labor force, such as mature workers and the underemployed, who may not require extensive education or training to qualify for jobs in high demand occupations.*

Efforts at targeted marketing for segments of the labor forces such as mature workers and the underemployed are approached through the following activities and services:

Mature workers (those 55 years of age and over) constitute part of the baby-boom generation which, during the 1970s, began their entry into the labor force. With many now starting to leave the labor force through retirement, the economy loses their experience, knowledge, and skills. However, there is a trend showing more mature workers delaying retirement and maintaining their labor force participation past the age of 65 due to a variety of reasons. Some, after retirement, decide to reenter the labor force and this is where marketing the services available through Region 7's American Job Centers and its program partner, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (Project Ayuda), makes an important contribution. A liaison representing this program partner will be available at two of Region 7's American Job Centers with plans to possibly extend this to two additional AJCs. Arrangements can be made for customers visiting Region 7's American Job Centers, who are 55 years of age and over, unemployed and seeking employment, to meet with a liaison from the Senior Community Service Em-

ployment Program to discuss services available, depending on their eligibility for such services. Mature workers visiting Region 7's American Job Centers, who are unemployed (or underemployed) will also have access to Wagner Peyser services, which includes job search assistance and referrals to WIOA program training services to upgrade their skills, if needed, to enhance their employability for reentering the labor force.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission's Rapid Response Coordinator for Region 7 provides another avenue for marketing American Job Center TAA and WIOA program services for mature workers. Workers 55 years of age and over impacted by a mass layoff or business/plant closure face a number of challenges – they are not ready to retire but need assistance in finding other employment opportunities that match their education, experience, and skills or consider the possibility of retraining for a new career in a high demand occupation. Their age can present a barrier in finding employment after losing a job they may have held for years. Information on AJC services (Wagner Peyser, TAA, WIOA) available to mature workers impacted by a layoff is provided by Region 7's Rapid Response Coordinator at rapid response meetings.

In deciding when WIOA training services are needed, LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 follow the policy principles contained in the U.S. Department of Labor's TEGL 19-16. If the customer is unemployed or underemployed, an assessment is completed by an AJC staff member to evaluate what the customer may be lacking in education or specific vocational skills that limits their ability to obtain employment providing for economic self-sufficiency which can be remedied through referrals to adult education or training services available through the WIOA program. In some cases, if the customer is employed but not employed in a job that makes use of their education and skills (underemployed), career services are offered, which may correspond with On-The-Job Training Services.

### **Louisiana Career Pathways**

Region 7 Higher Education community college schools are working to streamline the processes for community stakeholders who are transitioning from unemployment, high school graduation, and high dropout status. These community college institutions include Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College, Bossier Parish Community College, Louisiana Delta Community College, Central Louisiana Technical Community College, and Southern University Shreveport. In working together these colleges have developed extensive crosswalks that will map out a career to employment starting in Secondary Education through Employment. Based on feedback and labor market analysis the high demand high wage focus will include Health Sciences, Information Technology, and Manufacturing. The crosswalks include Industry Based Credentials so that an individual will have knowledge of progress toward employment along their selected career path.

The above-mentioned institutions are striving to partner with Region 7 businesses to further develop internships and work-based learning opportunities. Region 7 Industry partners are working with the institutions work force divisions to develop short term Industry Based Credentials that will also help the community stakeholders who maybe underemployed transition into a high demand high wage job. Crosswalks have been developed as well for these individuals.

Through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) planning process, the State's education and workforce partners developed a vision and framework for Louisiana Career Pathways. The following describes their approach in creating a vision and framework for the implementation of a Career Pathway strategy that aligns within demand occupations.

**Vision:** Louisiana Career Pathways are designed to improve lives and the economy. Through integrated Career Pathways, all citizens of Louisiana will have the opportunity to access progressive levels of

education and training leading to high-value, high-demand careers.

The Career Pathways approach meets learners where they are, by spanning high school, Adult Education, post-secondary education and beyond, leading to sustainable employment.

Louisiana Career Pathways connect education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector, and to advance, over time, to successively higher levels of education and employment in that sector. Each step on the Career Pathway is designed explicitly to prepare workers and students for the next level of employment and education.

Minimally, all Louisiana Career Pathways must:

- ▶ Be designed in partnership with business and industry as well as Regional economic development entities (in order to meet both current and future sector needs).
- ▶ Have multiple entry points, including for those with limited basic skills and those with prior educational and work experience.
- ▶ Incorporate multiple exit points (off-ramps, stop-out points) connected to the attainment of industry-recognized stackable credentials and/or academic credentials.
  - o First stop-out point must be aligned with a viable career opportunity.
  - o Exit points must be embedded in a longer pathway that ultimately leads to high-wage, high-demand careers.
- ▶ Pathways include opportunities, where appropriate, for acceleration, contextualization, work-based learning and co- or dual-enrollment.
- ▶ Include a logical progression/sequence of courses that are applicable to the target credential.
  - o Could define this as blocks of courses tied to defined entry/exit points.
  - o Course sequence provides a clear plan for what students take and when.
- ▶ Integrate student (participant) supports, including academic supports, non-academic/general support, transitional support, up-front career exploration and ongoing career development, as well as job-placement assistance.
- ▶ Provide the opportunity to earn college credit.
  - o Can include noncredit programs leading to Industry-Based Credentials (IBC's), but need consistent State policy on how to award college credit for IBC's.
  - o Noncredit Pathways are aligned with credit Pathways so that students can continue into credit-bearing Pathways with transcript credit and without repeating coursework.

Through guidance from The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council (WIC), Region 7 recognizes the need for an education and training system that addresses the Region's economic and workforce challenges. The State's Planning Team will continue to provide leadership in developing Career Pathway initiatives with a focus on targeted populations with significant barriers to employment (e.g., individuals receiving public assistance, long-term unemployed, basic skills deficient Adults and Youth).

- ▶ Improving access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential.

***D. Provide information regarding the local coordination strategies with state (including the Combined State Plan), regional and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities.***

#### Adult

Region 7 recognizes that for many low-skilled and disadvantaged adults, improved economic opportunity depends on their ability to access education and training necessary to prepare them for college and career success. Evaluation of job training programs for Adults finds that postsecondary education, in particular a degree or industry-recognized credential related to in-demand jobs, is the primary

determinant of lifetime earnings. Education and training provide opportunities for increasing a family's financial resources, helps parents stay employed, and establishes a solid foundation for the next generation.

Region 7 continues its pursuit toward a knowledge-based economy driven by the demand and opportunities of its industry partners. Employers in this sector increasingly require post-secondary credentials when hiring workers for good jobs that provide family-supporting wages and career advancement opportunities. Region 7 continues to see an increase in the number of jobs requiring post-secondary education of some kind. Over the past two years, the ecosystem of Region 7 has labored in creating new apprenticeship opportunities and is gaining ground. The local boards are involved in the creation, development, and continuous support of apprenticeships within the region.

Region 7 operates its Adult training program to identify workers who currently need, or will need, higher levels of education to fare better in the labor market to reduce incidences and shorten durations of unemployment, while supporting higher earnings and job stability. Participants who have successfully completed their training, and have secured self-sufficient employment through it, continue to provide enough promotion of the program that our centers end up with waiting lists well before the end of the fiscal year ends.

Region 7 will honor the Title 1, Priority of Service requirement, by leveraging all available funding streams and partnerships, regardless of State or Local funding availability in providing priority access to higher-intensity career services and training to:

- ▶ Public assistance recipients
- ▶ Other low-income individuals
- ▶ Individuals who are basic skills deficient

Adult services are custom-tailored to meet an individual worker's specific needs.

Working one-on-one with a case manager, workers are guided through the process of developing an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP) that includes as a minimum:

- ▶ Career planning and counseling
- ▶ Job search and placement
- ▶ Approved training, such as On-the-Job-Training (OJT)
- ▶ Other needed support services

LWC requires Region 7's local boards to:

- ▶ Report the number of individuals with barriers to employment that are served by each core program, with specific break downs by subpopulation.
- ▶ Report on the number of individuals with barriers to employment that are served by the Adult and Dislocated Worker program, with specific breakdowns by subpopulation, race, ethnicity, gender, and age.

### Dislocated Worker

Layoffs are always challenging for workers and employers. The Region 7 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) work with other partners (training and supportive service providers) to assist both.

The State provides direct services to employers facing a plant shutdown or large-scale lay-off and are designed to help them proceed in an orderly and legal way by guiding them through the process and providing on-site services for their workers by means of a Rapid Response Team. The local boards continue to work with Rapid Response to develop innovative ways to provide meaningful services and outreach to companies and their employees.

Region 7 offers services to workers who have been laid off (or notified that a layoff is coming) through no fault of their own, at no cost. These services focus on preparing workers to find a suitable new job, credential attainment, apprenticeships, and On-the-Job-Training (OJT) opportunities. The primary design and goal of these services are to get workers back to work as quickly as possible by helping them overcome such difficult barriers to employment as:

- ▶ Transferring specialized skills to other occupations or industries.
- ▶ A decline in the market demand for certain skills.
- ▶ Age or length of work experience.
- ▶ Need for formal training or education.
- ▶ Lack of jobs with earnings at a level comparable to their previous positions.

Like the rest of the Nation, Region 7 is experiencing a high disruption in the labor market due to COVID-19, and the dislocation of thousands of workers. The local boards are aggressively pursuing all possible avenues to assist our partners and industries to better serve the Dislocated Worker population.

Like the Adult program, Dislocated Worker services are custom-tailored to meet an individual worker's specific needs. Working one-on-one with a case manager, workers are guided through the process of developing an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP) that includes as a minimum:

- ▶ Career planning and counseling.
- ▶ Job search and placement.
- ▶ Approved training.
- ▶ Other needed support services.

### Youth

Because there is no single specific system designed to meet the specific development needs of In and Out-of-School Youth (16 to 24), Region 7 with its core partners, and partner programs are committed to better targeting their programming for this population. This Youth population could be served as part of the Adult workforce system; however, doing so would inevitably result in some developmental needs going unmet. Local boards support the implementation of Career Pathways that support post-secondary education and address the needs of low-income youth and support pre-apprenticeship to Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. Local boards will offer and provide all fourteen of the youth program services elements. The Region 7 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) through aggressive outreach will work to identify at-risk Youth by developing specific interventions within their Youth Programs.

LWDA 70 has created two new positions to better serve its Out-of-School Youth (OSY) population. The Youth Business Coordinators recruit OSY on the front of the program, and then finds Work Experience (WEX) opportunities on the back end of the program with the intent, if possible, of transitioning the WEX into an On-the-Job-Training (OJT) opportunity.

Success Coaches are to provide intense case management and coaching to assist the OSY to achieve their objectives set forth in their Individual Service Strategy (ISS). Prior to the creation of the Success Coach, OSY were served by Account Executives who also served Adult and Dislocated Workers. The aim of the Success Coach is to coach capacity development in the youth and develop self-sufficiency skills in an effort to break the cycle of underemployment and chronic unemployment in low income families. The chart below explains the Fourteen Youth Program Services available to participants enrolled in WIOA. LWDA 70 Success Coaches are able to provide online training through Success Training Institute (STI).

Program Element		Service Provided
1	Tutoring / Study Skills Training	This element is provided by WOD youth staff by using the either the Workkeys Curriculum and/or the STI curriculum that meets and supports this element through helping individuals build the essential career-relevant skills needed for learning, personal development and effective job performance. Referral(s) to an outside agency, depending on specific needs of the participant, like Literacy programs.
2	Alternative Secondary School Services or Dropout Recovery	This element will be provided by the WOD staff utilizing STI curriculum which supports this element through video courses, end of course exams, etc. WOD staff maintain partnerships and referral process to and from organizations such as the Rapides Parish School Board. Coordination with alternative school(s) and credit recovery programs such as The Rapides Alternative Positive Program for Students (RAPPS). Also, co-located in the One-Stop is Central LA Technical College (CLTCC) providing adult education through the WorkReady U program services and opportunities for secondary education include; HiSET, Secondary Credential Preparation, Basic Skills Remediation and English as a second language.
3	Work Experiences	This element is provided in-house by the WOD staff providing training and providing help in resume creation, job applications, work ethics, etc. Staff, in collaboration with area partners and employers, develop paid and/or unpaid work experience positions for eligible youth participants throughout each program year that could include but not limited to; summer employment, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, or On-the-Job training. STI curriculum may be offered in support of this element.
4	Occupational Skills Training	This element is provided by the WOD staff utilizing the ETPL and through referral to an eligible training provider to enroll youth for training for accredited postsecondary and occupational accredited programs for demand occupations. Tuition/fees and supportive services may be provided to eligible participants. Also, STI curriculum may be utilized to support this element to provide virtual training to eligible youth participants.
5	Career Pathways	This element is provided by the WOD staff in partnership with the Rapides Parish School Board's Jumpstart Initiative, and by participating in regional events such as: youth job fairs, the Orchard Foundation's events and projects. Also, staff use STI curriculum to administer and support this element. STI provides training and workforce preparation courses such as: Positive Mindset, Dress for Success, and Time Management and other mandatory and optional classes. WOD staff, through comprehensive case management and assessment, provide an effective approach to the development of a skilled workforce through the organization of education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable.

Program Element		Service Provided
6	Leadership Development	This element is provided by the WOD staff using the STI curriculum that meets and supports this element. STI curriculum contains in-depth training courses that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors that aid in Leadership Development.
7	Supportive Services	This element is provided in-house by WOD staff utilizing WIOA Youth program funds when the youth participant is unable to obtain financial assistance for services. Some of the supportive services provided to eligible participants include; Tuition assistance, school supplies, books, work and interview clothes, transportation assistance, rent, food, utilities, etc. WOD staff will administer this element and offer STI courses that support this element that include but not limited to; Proactive Thinking, Establishing Lasting Partnerships, Connecting with Communities, Requesting and Seeking Assistance.
8	Adult Mentoring	This element is provided in-house by WOD staff to include structured activities where the youth case manager offers guidance, support, and encouragement to help develop the competence and character of the youth participant. STI curriculum meets and supports this element via National Online Mentorship Programs where youth are connected to Adult Mentors and courses on topics that include: Mentorship, Cultivating Relationships, Transparency, Establishing Trust, Communication, and more. This element is provided by youth staff until services are no longer needed.
9	Follow-up Services	This element is provided in-house by WOD staff for not less than 12 months after completion of participation and may include the following program elements: vocational guidance, employment services, and supportive services such as; assisting with Pell Grants, completing FAFSA application, job searches and matching, etc.
10	Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling	<p>This element is provided in-house by WOD youth workforce professionals or by referral to an outside agency per the needs of the participant. STI course curriculum, which supports this element, will be used to enhance the learning experience of the participant. STI offers Workforce Readiness Courses including; Interviewing skills, Job Retention and Personal Maintenance.</p> <p>Case management may include referrals to external agencies providing low-fee or no-fee, specialized counseling that could include drug and alcohol abuse treatment.</p>

Program Element		Service Provided
11	Financial Literacy	Financial Literacy is provided in-house by WOD staff, utilizing STI curriculum courses that include Financial literacy classes, budget, checking and saving accounts, managing spending and debt, etc. Referral(s) could be made to an outside agency per the needs of the participant. In-school youth (ISY) are required to take financial management courses in order to graduate. However; ISY may be referred to JAG through our local school board.
12	Entrepreneurial Skills Training	This element is provided in-house by WOD staff through STI curriculum to deliver and/or support this element. Referrals to employers who will provide job shadowing in demand jobs that align with the participants skills and capabilities. Entrepreneurial skills training could also include workshops and referral to small business services.
13	Provision of Labor Market and Career Awareness Information	Labor Market Information is provided by WOD youth staff on an individual basis, utilizing LMI resources available at <a href="http://www.laworks.net">www.laworks.net</a> .
14	Post-Secondary Preparation Activities	Activities that aid or help to prepare youth participants for and to transition to postsecondary education and training is provided in-house by WOD staff. The staff assists youth participants with program elements could include; postsecondary transition, budgeting assistance, housing search assistance, assistance completing school applications, program area of study, Pell grants, and the FAFSA. In support of this training, WOD staff might also offer coursework through the STI curriculum.

### **Region 7's Local Workforce Boards will work to ensure they:**

- ▶ Will not require Out-of-School Youth in high-risk categories to prove low-income status to receive services.
- ▶ Will provide services to individuals who have dropped out of high school, have not attended school for at least one calendar quarter of the most recent school year, or are subject to the juvenile or Adult justice systems under the Out-of-School Youth program.
- ▶ Will target and provide services to homeless individuals, runaways, current or former foster care Youth, and individuals who or are pregnant or parenting.
- ▶ Will provide services to Youth who are not attending school, hold a secondary credential, and are either basic-skills deficient or an English language learner.
- ▶ Will consider Youth living in a high-poverty area to meet the low-income criterion for Youth activities funding and services.

A minimum of 75% of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth funds will be spent on workforce development services for Out-of-School Youth.

### **Adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II.**

The Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) currently operates Louisiana's Comprehensive Adult Education System, WorkReady U (WRU) and partners through co-enrollment with the Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC's) American Job Centers (AJCs), offering services at nearly 200 Adult Education instructional sites around Louisiana.

In 2010, The Louisiana Legislature finalized the transference of responsibility of Louisiana's Adult Education Delivery System from the Department of Education (DOE) to Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS). This effort was not simply about moving a program's administration from one agency to another. It was about reconsidering completely the goals, outcomes, and direction of Adult Basic Education in Louisiana.

LCTCS developed a new policy framework whose primary focus is putting Louisiana Adults to work by providing high-quality basic skills instruction, in addition to wrap-around student services that lead to a seamless transition to post-secondary enrollment, technical skill training, credentialing, and sustainable employment. The LCTCS, *Moving Adult Education Forward, A Pro Forma Business Plan*, was a milestone in re-defining the vision for Adult Education, focusing on new performance goals, including high school equivalency diplomas, post-secondary enrollments, post-secondary completers, and placement in sustainable employment at family-supporting wages.

As a symbol of the new vision, the Louisiana Adult Education program was renamed WRU, to reflect Louisiana's Comprehensive Adult Education Delivery System. Since the 2010 renewed set of expectations and vastly different philosophy in Louisiana with regards to Adult Education, Adult Education programs have progressively adjusted educational service and delivery, and are well-positioned to provide, deliver, and coordinate the required activities under Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Adult Education connects into the One-Stop System through the intake and assessment process to identify Adults with limited basic skills, and then to use innovative instructional models as necessary to prepare Adult learners for post-secondary education within the context of serving learners at the lowest skill levels. The LCTCS Adult Education and Family Literacy Program, WRU, administers and provides program performance oversight to eligible Local entities that provide Adult Education services. These services include academic instruction and education services that increase the individual's ability to:

- ▶ Read, write, and speak English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
- ▶ Transition to post-secondary education and training (Train to Attain) is a program of WRU and allows for the earning of an Industry Based Certification (IBC) while enrolled in HiSET courses.
- ▶ Obtain employment.

### **Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services**

Region 7 already meets a major requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) with the co-location of Wagner-Peyser (WP) Employment Services in the Region's American Job Centers (AJCs). The intent is to ensure that unemployment insurance claimants receive the same services as all other jobseekers, including job training, labor exchange, career counseling, and labor market intelligence. The Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimant/jobseeker will also receive eligibility assessments and referrals to an array of education resources and training through the WP Employment Service Program. The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) currently operates fifty-nine (59) AJCs around the State that offer skills assessment services, job search assistance, and referrals to Adult Education programs seeking to connect individuals with meaningful and sustainable employment. Region 7 has twelve Business and Career Solution Centers dispersed throughout the ten-parish area. There are ten affiliated Centers in Region 7. The Region has two comprehensive One-Stop Centers in Caddo and Bossier Parishes.

Region 7's leadership utilizes weekly professional staff development activities for staff members located at the AJCs to ensure that high quality services are provided to both job seekers and employers. The structure is a combination of training for the whole staff in a joint session as well as for individual team members, such as the Recruitment and Placement Team, Membership Team, and Business Services Team.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission, Office of Workforce Development (OWD), has developed and implemented the following internal training program for employment service staff, which includes:

- ▶ Standardized performance ratings for individual staff members with technical competencies based on Federal and State laws, regulations, statutes, and standardized operating procedures were developed for use statewide with behavioral competencies required for effective case management and provision of service.
- ▶ Standardized performance monitoring of case management and career services.
- ▶ A streamlined and effective Service Delivery Model that fit within the requirements of WIOA and WP, with the nuances required under other programs, and training to board leadership.

Many of the funded employment and training programs under the umbrella of the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), such as Wagner-Peyser (WP), Veterans Program, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Rapid Response, WIOP, RESEA, IWTP, STEP, LRS, have long standing working relationships with the local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program. The operators of these programs have demonstrated over the years their knowledge of the sponsored activities and how these activities complement each other. Some of the sponsors of these programs serve as representatives on the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). They have input on the kinds of activities that are implemented through the WIOA program. They will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that describes the scope of each program and values shared by each entity for the American Job Center (AJC) system. The MOU also addresses how partner programs can utilize a common client referral process.

Several cross-training sessions have been held with Local partners to acquaint each other with their services, and how services can be improved for our customers, and the integrity of the system.

Finally, as stated in other parts of this document, the goal in Region 7 has been to better coordinate the delivery of employment and training services by LWC's WP funded program staff and the staff under the authority of the LWDB. This required the alignment of workforce services functions across WP and WIOA programs.

The staff of the LWDBs have long-standing working relationships in employment and training programs. They have engaged in combined activities such as coordinating Employer-Based Training activities with employers, Rapid Response, the Region's Business Services Team, and training.

In fact, the two (2) LWDBs in Region 7 have several of the same members participating on each Board. They are knowledgeable of what's happening with the two (2) LWDBs in the Region and can convey such information to other Board members.

The staff of the LWDBs have come together on the writing of the program plan. The staff have also discussed ways of combining Employer-Based Training activities under one contract with specific employers.

The Directors are members of the State Director's Association and are in constant communication concerning State, Local, and Regional issues. They have the pulse of their respective LWDBs and can draft policies and procedures that facilitate necessary collaboration on the part of the LWDBs.

#### **Vocational rehabilitation service activities under WIOA Title IV**

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) continues its collaboration efforts in identifying effective ways to integrate services in the American Job Centers (AJCs) located within Region 7. LRS has a good working relationship with the AJCs in Region 7 and continues to share resources with those Centers.

LRS provides access to services in the comprehensive One-Stop Centers in the Region and in affiliate locations as necessary to assure effective services to individuals with disabilities through participant's skills training which enhances participant ability to obtain employment in their desired field, in particular, high demand jobs.

To improve knowledge regarding assistive technology and address other accessibility issues, the LRS Program Coordinator for Rehabilitation Technology continues to provide consultation to the AJCs in Region 7.

In addition, the agency's Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialist (REDS) serves as the LRS liaison for all AJCs in Region 7 which includes providing LRS Public Awareness as well as services to consumers such as building job seeking skills and employment development. LRS is committed to the success of the AJCs and works collaboratively to serve individuals with disabilities at assigned Centers. To improve knowledge regarding assistive technology and address other accessibility issues, LRS Program Coordinator for Rehabilitation Technology continues to provide consultation to the AJCs.

LRS will continue to uphold the achievement of competitive integrated employment of individuals with disabilities. Our Vocational Rehabilitation Program sets out to accomplish this task by building relationships with employers in the communities and various cities in the State of Louisiana. In order to form these connections, LRS REDS begin to build these relations by first gaining an understanding of what the business and workforce needs are in each area of the State. This is done by expanding our outreach to the business community and then by referring or recommending those clients that will fit their workforce needs.

LRS REDS are involved with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Board meetings and have formed relationships with the Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC's) Regional Industry Coordinator which helps to identify workforce needs in Region 7.

Industry Coordinators are Region specific and have knowledge related to the needs of the businesses, the qualifications needed to obtain employment in a given industry, and resources, such as Apprenticeship programs, that may be available to help our consumers achieve competitive integrated employment. The Program Coordinator over employment initiatives provides further technical assistance to the REDs to assist them in outreach efforts to businesses and their Human Resource Management Teams. Outreach efforts include attendance at Local and Regional job fairs, Chamber of Commerce meetings, and the Society of Human Resource Management monthly meetings. REDs also contact hundreds of employers every month in an effort to identify workforce needs and determine if we have consumers that are job ready and meet the qualifications for positions available.

When REDs place the consumers in competitive and integrated employment, they continue to work with the business and the consumer, ensuring the employment opportunity is a good fit for both. LRS continues to renew and revise existing Local cooperative agreements, as applicable, with school districts and Charter Schools in Region 7.

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The Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC), which is the State's rehabilitation council, meets with LRS quarterly as a part of the council meeting. During these meetings, LRS provides quarterly updates, and LRC provides input and recommendations to LRS. The LRC incorporates public forums, consumer/counselor interviews, etc., to ensure the services provided by LRS meet the needs of Louisiana's citizens with disabilities.

As part of the State Transition Plan, the Department of Education (DOE) and LRS continue to work together to establish Regional Core Teams. The LRS Transition Program Coordinator continues to collaborate and partner with DOE, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD), Work Incentive Planning Program, Office of Community Services, LWC, and the Office of Youth Development in an effort to network, share information, and utilize comparable benefits to enhance Vocational Rehabilitation services to transition students.

The primary focus of LRS collaboration is to identify and address barriers, (e.g. policies, eligibility process, resource allocation), assure effective service provision through the support of Local interagency core teams, provide cross-agency training, outreach, engage in capacity building of young Adults and family outreach efforts, provide continued support of innovative models and practices related to transition, and provide information and technical assistance.

LRS has appropriate cooperative arrangements with, and uses the services and facilities of, various Federal, State, and Local agencies and programs. LRS coordinates with other agencies and programs to ensure individuals with disabilities receive appropriate services. These agencies and programs include:

- ▶ Department of Education, Division of Special Populations (DOE)
- ▶ Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Behavioral Health (DDH)
- ▶ Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)
- ▶ Louisiana Workforce Commission, Office of Workforce Development (OWD) Louisiana Workforce Commission, Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program (WOTC)

- ▶ Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD)
- ▶ Office of Disability Affairs
- ▶ Department of Children and Family Services, Office of Disability Determination (DCFS)
- ▶ Department of Children and Family Services, Office of Family Support, Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP)
- ▶ Social Security Administration
- ▶ Social Security – Bendex (2002)
- ▶ Central Louisiana Intertribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title 121)
- ▶ United Houma Nation (Title 121)
- ▶ U. S. Department of Labor, Office of Worker’s Compensation Program.

### **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**

The State continues to administer the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, which is available to workers who lose their jobs or experience reduced hours or income as a result of increased foreign trade activity.

Region 7 will actively reach out to affected workers to provide Trade funded training with the same goals as provided for Dislocated Workers.

TAA services are considered an integral part of the American Job Centers (AJCs) 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 Dislocated Worker, TAA-funded training helps trade-impacted workers obtain the skills necessary to gain suitable employment. TAA will pay 100 percent of 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.

### **Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)**

Louisiana provides employment, training and placement services to all Veterans through a network of strategically located in the American Job Centers (AJC) and supported by Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE). Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) provides services to Veterans and eligible persons according to need and significant barriers to employment. The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) JSVG funded activities are co-located within the State’s American Job Centers.

Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) and a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist are essential parts of and fully integrated into the workforce development network. The LVER staff member in Region 7 is located at the Caddo American Job Center.

There are four DVOP staff members in Region 7, and one located in Region 8 that covers Lincoln Parish. There are two DVOP staff members at the Caddo AJC that cover Caddo Parish, there is one DVOP located in the Bossier AJC that covers Bossier, Bienville, Claiborne, and Webster Parishes. There is one DVOP located in the Natchitoches AJC that covers DeSoto, Natchitoches, Red River, and Sabine Parishes.

Region 7's Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) provide employment training and placement services to all Veterans through a network of strategically located American Job Centers (AJCs) and supported by Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE). Services are provided to Veterans and eligible persons according to need, and significant barriers to employment. Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) funded activities are co-located within the State's AJCs. 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. Further, the Veterans program is operating a fully functional re-entry program for returning citizens that is acting as a pilot program for non-Veteran returning citizens.

The Region provides priority of service in accordance with TEG-05-03. When a Veteran is identified as having barriers to employment, they are fast tracked on a priority basis to ensure that those barriers are resolved as expeditiously as possible. The State has Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with U. S. Department of Labor-funded programs covered by Section 4215 on Veteran's priority and refers Veterans to training and supportive services within that network on a priority basis. The Region's partners with educational entities within the area and the Vocational Technical Institutions, which also provide priority service for Veterans and assists them with their educational and literacy needs.

Veterans receive priority for employment and job training opportunities available through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding, On-the-Job Training (OJT), skills development training, and Youth training contracts.

Veterans can locate training opportunities through use of the Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE) database and receive training at private facilities, which have been approved through the State-wide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Should Veterans meet the eligibility criteria, their training cost are paid by the WIOA program or through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Veterans take priority in instances of training fund shortages. Local LVER staff and other AJC staff identify jobs and training opportunities specifically tailored for Veterans, as they promote Veterans as potential employees. These priority services are made available and provided to Veterans, transitioning service members, Chapter 31 Veterans, Native American Veterans, and other groups targeted for special consideration, including difficult-to-serve Veterans and Veterans with barriers to employment.

JVSG management and the Region's Local Area Coordinators with both LWDAs shall periodically conduct site checks to ensure all required priority of service signs are present and properly displayed, and that AJC staff understand both the requirement of priority of service and its proper implementation. During these site visits, monitors pay particular attention to the implementation of priority of service beyond core services, particularly in the allocation of training funds. The State shall consider an indicated referral rate in any one of these areas being lower for Veterans and other eligible persons than for non-Veterans to be evidence of a potential priority-of-implementation problem.

The State shall immediately place the affected Region under examination and take corrective action measures to include, but not be limited, to additional training.

The Regional JVSG staff shall provide priority of service for Veterans in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4215(b). The term priority of service means, with respect to any qualified job training program, that a covered person shall be given priority over non-Veterans for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under that program, notwithstanding any other provision of law. Such priority includes giving access services to a covered person before a non-covered person, or, if resources are limited, giving access to such services to a covered person instead of a non-covered person.

Priority starts with the first AJC member that comes in contact with the Veteran or eligible person. During the reception process, a series of questions identifies Veteran or eligibility status. Qualified Veterans and/or qualified spouses are provided services prior to other customers and an initial assessment is completed by the first available BSCS staff member. If during the initial assessment it is determined that the Veteran is a member of another special category, the Veteran is immediately referred to a DVOP specialist.

### **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

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) in order to:

- ▶ Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.
- ▶ End dependence of parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, and work.
- ▶ Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancy.
- ▶ Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

TANF clients are required to report to Case Managers located at five American Job Centers in the Region. These Case Managers assist the clients in developing high-demand job skills and move towards self-sufficiency.

### **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

In January 2014, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) partnered with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) to help Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients develop high-demand job skills and move toward self-sufficiency.

This partnership builds and expands on the previous partnership between DCFS and LWC, the Region's Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), and the American Job Centers (AJCs) to deliver workforce services to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) families engaged in the Strategies to Empower People (STEP) program and the SNAP Louisiana Job Employment Training (LaJET) program. The LaJET program previously only targeted SNAP recipients classified as mandatory work registrants living in five Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). The expanded partnership supports the registration of all working-age SNAP recipients to enroll with LWC and providing access to job postings, job trainings, and all other services of LWC.

To this end, the DCFS has committed to entering into agreements with public agencies, non-profit organizations, or for-profit organizations to provide intervention services including crisis intervention, counseling, mentoring, support services, and prenatal care information, in addition to information and referrals regarding healthy childbirth, adoption, and parenting to help ensure healthy and full-term pregnancies. Region 7's Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) shall facilitate and operate as appropriate under the specifics of these agreements.

### **Unemployment Insurance Programs- Louisiana Incumbent Worker Training Programs (IWTP)**

The Louisiana Employment Security Administration Fund is also known as the Incumbent Worker Training (IWTP) Account.

Amounts from this account are pledged and dedicated exclusively to fund training for businesses operating in Louisiana that incur a State Unemployment Insurance (UI) tax liability. The purpose of this program is to upgrade job skills through training.

Additional emphasis is placed on preventing job loss caused by obsolete skills, technological change, or national or global competition; retaining jobs; and creating jobs in labor demand occupations. The IWTP is a partnership between the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), business and industry, and training providers. The IWTP is designed to benefit business and industry by assisting in the skill development of existing employees and thereby increasing employee productivity and the growth of the company.

These improvements are expected to result in the creation of new jobs, the retention of jobs that otherwise may have been eliminated, and an increase in wages for trained workers. The IWTP staff member in Region 7 is located at the Bossier American Job Center.

The Louisiana Incumbent Worker Training Account funds are dedicated to support the following types of training:

- ▶ Customized Training. Designed to meet the special need and skill requirements of business and industry, customized training programs may include specialized curriculums, instructional materials, training delivery methods, and training locations. Customized Training may also include standardized courses.
- ▶ Small Business Employee Training. This type of training is individual standardized (off-the-shelf) training and is available to businesses having fifty or fewer employees.
- ▶ Pre-employment Training. This type of training is provided for non-incumbent workers for expanding businesses. This training may include screening, skills assessment, testing, remediation, and occupational and technical training, via WorkReady U (WRU) or their higher education partners.

### **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)**

Region 7 is committed to bringing together diverse stakeholders (including its Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and One-Stop Operators) in the development of employment and training opportunities for the senior citizens of the Region. Senior citizens are an integral part of Region 7 and should be afforded the opportunity to provide useful contributions to the Region's workforce. This plan is designed to take a long-term, strategic view of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in Region 7 and help develop workforce strategies. The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based training program for older workers. Authorized by the Older Americans Act, the program provides subsidized, service-based training for low-income persons 55 or older who are unemployed and have poor employment prospects. Participants have access to both SCSEP services and other employment assistance through One-Stop Centers.

### **Job Corps**

The Job Corps Program in Region 7 has a residential and non-residential training center in Shreveport. Job Corps maintains offices in the Caddo and Bossier American Job Centers to provide counseling services. Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Job Corps is linked to the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II), and the State Vocational and Rehabilitation Programs.

Region 7 is committed to partnering with Job Corps in its purpose of assisting eligible Youth to connect to the labor force by providing them with:

- ▶ Social, academic, career and technical education, and service-learning opportunities.
- ▶ Obtaining secondary school diplomas or recognized post-secondary credentials leading to successful careers in in-demand industry sectors or occupations.
- ▶ Achieving economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement, or enrollment in post-secondary education, including an Apprenticeship program.

- ▶ Provide ongoing transitional assistance to aide youth in becoming working class citizens.

Shreveport Job Corps and the Caddo American Job Center are currently operating in partnership, placing an emphasis on the Region's goals and mission. The Region's goals are strategically aligned to support Job Corps determination for:

- ▶ Placing new emphasis on credentials, post-secondary education, and training for in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
- ▶ Improving connections with the workforce system.
- ▶ Establishing consistent elements Job Corps will consider when making contracting decisions.
- ▶ Implementing new performance indicators and requiring their use in decision-making.

### **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**

Region 7 is committed to providing resources and fostering partnerships in low-income communities in order to enable low-income individuals to achieve self-sufficiency enhance family stability and revitalize their community.

The Community Action Agency network through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) will form a partnership with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) system in the coordination support services to low-income individuals and families through the American Job Centers (AJCs); thereby, contributing to the self-sufficiency and stability of individuals and families in the prevention and reduction of poverty.

Services provided by each community action agency may vary; however, services include assistance with utility bills through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Other services provided by the agencies include emergency rental and housing assistance, housing counseling, Home Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), food and clothing pantry, and transportation.

Early Head Start is for children under the age of 3, infants, and pregnant mothers. The other option is Head Start, which is for children that range in age from 3-5. Bossier Office of Community Services program provides children with early education services, health and mental care, free food, and other social services. Teachers and social workers that are part of Early Head Start are also coordinating with organizations providing early intervention for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Additionally, the Shreveport Water Assistance Program (SWAP) assists residents of Shreveport only.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) coordinates activities and services in order to achieve four goals:

- ▶ Administer the CSBG program in accordance with the statutory purpose and in compliance with all other applicable statutes, rules, regulations, policies and procedures set forth by Federal and State government in a manner which will increase management efficiency and program effectiveness.
- ▶ Support organizational best practices and strengthen organizational capacity, management efficiency, and program effectiveness.
- ▶ Advocate for the continuation of funds, community involvement and support, and the expansion of programs to provide services and activities having a measurable impact on the causes and conditions of poverty.
- ▶ Develop and expand partnerships with other State departments and agencies to support the coordination of resources that support and empower low income individuals to move towards self-sufficiency.

## **Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program**

Region 7, LWC, and its Local workforce partners have allied with the Northwest Louisiana Re-Entry Coalition to support initiatives that assist ex-offenders and their families with a vast array of services that engender an upgraded lifestyle. These include workforce development related sources such as employment services provided by Region 7, LWC, Goodwill, and similar organizations in accessing resources connected with training programs, both subsidized and non-subsidized, and community resources that provide medical, educational, housing, military Veteran, and law enforcement/correctional information, and services that are often crucial.

The Coalition consists of representatives from Local and Regional agencies and service providers that offer the services and conducts monthly meetings, usually held at the Goodwill facility at 800 W. 70th St. in Shreveport to provide a forum to share valuable information with participating members and seek to actually make these services and this information available at the grassroots level. The coalition consist of over 100 members and monthly meetings average 40 members. As the efforts of the Coalition and the awareness of its work expand, the potential positive contributions of a re-energized and re-directed returning citizen community will benefit our Region and beyond in many ways.

In addition to the partnership with the local coalition Region 7 and LWC serves an active member of the Northwest Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LaPRI) Reentry Steering Team and participate in several Work Groups. The LaPRI Steering Team is a group of specific community leaders who help influence and lead system change within the local community and state. Work groups consist of people who work on the front line helping returning citizens and are divided into six focus areas. The focus areas are employment, education, housing, health (mental and physical), legal and pro-social/faith. Work groups help identify gaps and barriers in service for returning citizens in our community. Work groups work directly with the Steering Team to educate the Louisiana Department of Corrections and local community officials to help fill service gaps and stimulate system change.

## **Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education**

The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) was signed into law July 31, 2018. This Act, which became Public Law 115-224, reauthorizes the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV). It was approved unanimously by both chambers of Congress, reflecting broad bipartisan support for career and technical education (CTE) programs. Perkins V is largely based on the structure and content of current law but makes some key changes that will impact the implementation of CTE programs and administrative processes around the country. As the new law was making its way through the reauthorization process, a key area of debate was "Secretarial authority" or the role of the U.S. Secretary of Education (Secretary) in the process of state and local planning and accountability. In Perkins V, we see evidence of the compromise on this issue, with enhanced prohibition language that limits the Secretary's role and the elimination of the negotiation process between the Secretary and states on performance measure targets. In turn, we also see more specific requirements for setting these targets, including additional stakeholder engagement and expanded definitions.

The new law went into effect on July 1, 2019, and the first year of implementation was considered a "transition year." Louisiana's Perkins V State Perkins Plan was approved by the Secretary of Education on June 12, 2020.

The State Plan focuses on improving efforts in Career and Technical Education (CTE), academic and technical skills training delivered to youth and adults through the dedicated efforts of talented literate, numerate and qualified teachers, faculty and administrators at geographical and charter Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and postsecondary institutions, Louisiana's program completer's will acquire the

core academic and technical learning skills they need to be lifelong learners, readily adapting to the changing needs of the workplace. They will possess specific technical (or occupational) skills in the career field for which they are prepared. Just as important, our program completer's will understand the value that employers place on essential employability skills such as the ability to:

- ▶ Communicate;
- ▶ Manage Information Responsibly;
- ▶ Think and Solve Problems;
- ▶ Demonstrate a Positive Attitude;
- ▶ Work with Others;
- ▶ Assume Personal Responsibility; and
- ▶ Portray Resiliency.

This Louisiana Perkins V State Plan for CTE is designed to:

- ▶ Ensure students are provided academic skills such as literacy and numeracy, technical skills and knowledge, and essential employability skills via all Perkins Eligible CTE Programs of Study;
- ▶ Give individuals the best opportunity for workplace success in high-skill, high-wage, in-demand or emerging occupations; and
- ▶ Partner with business and industry to strengthen and expand existing businesses as well as attract new employers to Louisiana with a highly skilled workforce. To reach these outcomes, Louisiana is working to improve the quality of every CTE course and program, to align secondary and postsecondary programs, to ensure a seamless transition from one level to the next, to provide sequenced and non-duplicative coursework, and articulated, dual, and prior learning, where possible. All Perkins funded programs will meet the definition of a Perkins Eligible CTE Program of Study.

Region 7 LWDA's will work with the Perkins Region 7 Leadership Team, Small Business Development Centers and Biz Camps in Northwest Louisiana to provide entrepreneurial training and advising services. Information on these programs and referrals will be made to WIOA customers as determined appropriate in the Individual Service Strategy.

The Perkins Region 7 Leadership Team consists of Secondary, Adult, and Post-Secondary Education Partners, Workforce Development and One Stop Shops, Youth and Adult Corrections, Industry representatives, and Community Service Organizations (including students and parents). This team facilitates the recruitment and participation of larger stakeholder groups in the creation and evaluation of a Regional Comprehensive Needs Assessment. The Regional Perkins Region 7 Large Stakeholders Team evaluates and makes recommendations on the topics of:

- ▶ Student Performance in CTE Programs;
- ▶ Program Size, Scope, and Quality;
- ▶ Alignment of Programs to Labor Market Needs;
- ▶ Progress Toward Implementing CTE Programs and Programs of Study;
- ▶ Recruitment, Retention, and Training of CTE Educators; and
- ▶ Progress Toward Improving Equity and Access.

Higher Education is not a mandated partner in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), however, the Region 7 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) consist of Adult Education leadership and Higher Education leadership, which includes the Louisiana Community and Technical College System and Universities in the Region. The Region's LWDA's provide policy leadership, guidance, and support for the innovation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Region 7 will follow Louisiana's developed definition and framework for Career Pathways as the model for the alignment of education, training, and work-based learning (Apprenticeships, Internships) and

support services that enable individuals and students to be better prepared to achieve economic independence and family stability.

The Region's WIOA partners are embarking on a new concept to organize resources (staff, supports, etc.) around target job-seeker populations and business development using a pathway model that will encourage separate agencies to wrap resources, staff, and supports around the customer base.

Regional business and sector strategies, and the educational partners, particularly the Louisiana Community and Technical College System institutions, are key partners in the Regional and sector strategies, providing workforce skill training and integrated work-based training to meet Regional employer and economic development needs.

State partners will work with the Region's LWDBs and partners to define and build pathways appropriate to the Region.

Region 7's LWDBs are charged with aligning education and training resources in their Region to provide maximum opportunities for job-seekers to attain skills and experiences needed to obtain employment.

Region 7's LWDBs has been a catalyst for the leveraging of Federal, State, and Local investments to expand access to workforce development programs in education and training institutions. The Region's LWDBs will continue to work closely with post-secondary education partners, including all Perkins post-secondary recipients, to leverage Federal, State, and Local resources to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

The basic education skills acquired through a high school diploma (or its equivalent) are the foundation needed to pursue additional education or vocational training to obtain the skills required for the job opportunities being created by the employers that make up Region 7's economy. With close to 20% of the Adult working age population possibly lacking a high school diploma, Adult Education programs offered through Louisiana Technical Colleges in Region 7 will be an essential component of workforce development activities.

Staff involved in the administration of Adult Education programs located at Louisiana Technical Colleges are members of both Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) in Region 7. This will provide the opportunity to better coordinate the provision of Adult Education services to the customers of Region 7's American Job Centers (AJCs) who are in need of increasing their basic education and literacy skills in order to enhance their employability or to pursue vocational training to qualify for most demand occupations.

Through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program, both LWDBs in Region 7 have already undertaken the support of older Youth dropouts enrolled in HiSET (Adult Education) programs operated at Louisiana Technical Colleges. Some of these Youth have also been placed in WIOA funded work experience positions with public and private employers as part of their Individual Service Strategies (ISS). The cooperation of staff (administrative and instructional) involved in the operation of Adult Education programs at Region 7's Louisiana Technical Colleges has been essential to the successful implementation of this program initiative.

The Local Boards support the state strategies by carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study and career pathway programs under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education to support service alignment and needs identified in regional or

local level assessments including the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment.

The Local workforce system is delivering employment and training services that must be proactive by responding to economic drivers in moving to a service delivery system that:

- ▶ Ensure that the business needs of hiring, retention, training, and advancement of workers is the driving force.
- ▶ Connect businesses that are looking for qualified workers and individuals seeking employment.
- ▶ Eliminate duplication of services and reduce administrative overhead through integration of Local programs.

A Comprehensive Labor Market Information System that includes four components:

- ▶ A consumer information component on employment and training,
- ▶ A report card on training programs,
- ▶ Information on projected workforce and job growth and demand, and
- ▶ An automated job-matching information system. The third component includes an occupational forecasting system that forecasts new and replacement needs of occupations. This fourth component is accessible to employers, job seekers, and other users via the Internet based system in Louisiana, Helping Individuals Reach Employment, (HiRE).

Region 7's Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) will work with core program partners along with One-Stop partner programs in the Region to coordinate activities and resources in carrying out core programs. Workforce development programs support alignment of the core and One-Stop partners to provide coordinated activities and resources that are designed to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to jobseekers and to the employer to meet their current and projected workforce needs. This Regional approach is appropriate for the following reasons:

- ▶ It builds strategic partnerships among core and One-Stop partner programs, and other key stakeholders in a labor market Region that is designed to bolster the Region's economic competitiveness and promote systemic change to achieve ongoing benefits.
- ▶ This approach is more responsive to labor demand than solely traditional job matching and training services because it is problem-oriented and works to understand the collective workforce needs in the Region.

Higher Education is not a mandated partner in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), however, the Region's LWDB membership consists of the leadership of all of the Region's educational institutions, including the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, under the Carl D. Perkins Act of 2006.

The State has developed a shared definition and framework for Career Pathways as the model for the alignment of education, training, and work-based learning (Apprenticeships, Internships) and support services that enable individuals and students to be better prepared to achieve economic independence and family stability.

The Region's WIOA partners are embarking on a new concept to organize resources (staff, support, etc.) around target job-seeker populations and business development using a pathway model that will encourage separate agencies to wrap resources, staff, and support around the customer base.

Educational partners, particularly the Louisiana Community and Technical College System institutions, are key partners in Regional sector strategies, providing workforce skill training and integrated work-based training to meet Regional employer and economic development needs. State partners will work with Region 7's LWDBs and partners to define and build pathways appropriate to the Region.

Championed by the Governor's Workforce Cabinet, with the support of Labor Market Information (LMI) and Occupational Forecasting Conference, the Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC's) Star Jobs ratings system was developed.

The Star Jobs ratings system provides a ranking of the highest-demand, highest-wage jobs in Louisiana, based on factors such as forecasted employment growth (long-term and short-term), jobs available in the previous year, and wages. Star Jobs ratings are developed and dynamically updated in collaboration with leading Louisiana academic, economic development, workforce development, and industry experts. Since the inception and implementation of Star Jobs ratings, this ranking system has been utilized by educators across Louisiana at all levels. Below are a few examples:

- ▶ The Louisiana Board of Regents incorporates the Star Jobs ratings as part of its cost formula, upon which the funding formula distribution is based.
- ▶ The Louisiana Community and Technical College System uses Star Jobs ratings to guide decisions about program eliminations, modifications and additions, to direct its Federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education funds to grant applications that will increase the supply of high-wage jobs that meet projected State workforce needs and to direct the Workforce Training Rapid Response Grant Program.
- ▶ The Department of Education indicates the Star Jobs ratings related to all Jump Start industry credentials, enabling school counselors to guide students to careers that promise both interesting work and well-compensated career opportunities aligned with their interests and capabilities.

The region is committed to providing a comprehensive approach to supportive services to give participants in the workforce system greater opportunity for success. LWDA 7- and LWDA 71 will expand their partnerships with transportation, housing, child care, and mental health providers to develop sustainable solutions for customers. Most of the urban areas in the region have public transportation systems that provide the general public with affordable transportation options. Some locations, including most rural areas, lack efficient, dependable transportation systems.

There is more demand for transportation than supply of providers. Lack of transportation is a significant and often-identified barrier for participants in attending training or commuting to/from work, and transportation barriers limit customers' employment opportunities. Region 7 Staff coordinates with core partners to effectively use limited resources to help alleviate transportation barriers. Programs typically offer transportation assistance in the form of stipends, bus passes, or gas cards for participants attending training programs. Service providers are utilizing shared ride services, such as Uber and Lyft, in rural areas. Participants can connect with transportation via websites or mobile apps on smartphones and payment arrangements can be made through service providers.

Supportive service payments—whether for adult, dislocated worker, or youth participants—are intended to enable WIOA-enrolled customers to participate in workforce-funded programs and activities to secure and retain employment. Based on individual assessment and availability of funds, supportive services, such as transportation and needs-related payments, may be awarded to eligible participants on an as-needed basis. To enhance the provision of transportation and other supportive services, the regional planning council will ensure the sharing of best practices for possible replication among the two LWDA's.

Additionally, Region 7 continues to maximize funding available for supportive services by coordinating services through partner and community programs. Through collaboration with other organizations offering supportive services, the region maximizes customers' access to services not available through the AJC. Each local area maintains policies and procedures for administering and coordinating support services to ensure funds are spent in a manner that avoids redundancy. The regional planning council

continues to provide oversight and guidance regarding the need for additional support services, policies, and procedures.

***E. Provide a description of how the local area will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities including:***

Region 7 operates its Adult training program to identify workers who currently need or will need higher levels of education to fare better in the labor market to reduce the incidence and duration of unemployment while supporting higher earnings and job stability. Region 7 honors the Title I Priority of Service requirement by leveraging all available funding streams and partnerships, regardless of Local funding availability, in providing priority access to higher-intensity career services and training to:

- ▶ Public assistance recipients.
- ▶ Other low-income individuals.
- ▶ Individuals who are deficient in basic skills.

Region 7 Dislocated Worker services are custom-tailored to meet an individual worker's specific needs. Working one-on-one with a case manager, workers are guided through the process of developing an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP) that includes as a minimum:

- ▶ Career planning and counseling.
- ▶ Job search and placement.
- ▶ Approved training.
- ▶ Other needed support services.

Assessment may include the use of tools and processes that shall be modified by Local leadership to be most effective based on the demographics of their specific location, customer-based, staffing levels, program availability, and access to supportive services.

The American Job Centers (AJCs) staff shall provide services without regard for their status as State or Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) employees. Minimally, job-seeker services must include initial registration, Wagner-Peyser (WP) and (when applicable) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) enrollment with the appropriate staff-assisted first service.

Career services shall include both basic career and individualized career services as appropriate, based on jobseeker and employer need. These services may include, but are not limited to, assisted job search activities, evaluation of skills, interests, preferences, career counseling, training options, matching skills to current job openings, individualized career services, case management, and follow-up.

**The Three Tracks for a Jobseeker**

In the revised service delivery process, there are three tracks that any jobseeker may take. These are defined as workforce-ready in a demand occupation, workforce ready not in a demand occupation, and case management.

It is important to note that one of these tracks will apply to all job-seekers regardless of their reason for entering our staff-assisted service, and that during the course of service assessments and reevaluation the job-seeker may move from one track to another.

Entry may begin as a self-service electronic registration in or out of a American Job Centers (AJCs), an outreach contact (regardless of reason for outreach), an automatic registration created by an application for Unemployment Compensation (UI) benefits and the subsequent required service points requiring a visit to a Center, a staff-assisted registration and enrollment for a job-seeker who is a walk in to a Center, or an individual who is registered by any means while receiving Rapid Response services.

### **Jobseekers who are also UI claimants**

Required service entry for Unemployment Insurance (UI) beneficiaries takes one of two forms based on worker profiling. They are profiled as least likely to exhaust their benefits (workforce ready) or most likely to exhaust their benefits (not workforce ready.)

These jobseekers must report to the American Job Centers (AJCs) at specified service points as a requirement of continued eligibility to receive UI benefits (following the most current U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and State guidance for grant specific requirements). Any jobseeker who is also a UI recipient entering a Center for service shall receive an orientation (e.g. provision of labor market information and career information, information on assessment tools, and orientation to services available through the Center and partner organizations). Orientation is optional but is encouraged for all non-UI recipient jobseekers as well.

### **Workforce Ready, in a Demand Occupation**

Jobseekers who are not Unemployment Insurance (UI) recipients may arrive at the American Job Centers (AJCs) for a variety of reasons, and they may be unemployed by choice or seeking a career change. If the initial assessment indicates they have no significant barriers to employment and are workforce ready in a demand occupation, they will be considered workforce ready in a demand occupation.

When an initial assessment indicates no significant barriers to employment, and the job-seeker has skills, credentials, certification, education, soft skills, previous experience, or a combination of these factors that qualifies them in a demand occupation, they will be sent to career specialists performing business services or other career specialists by Local management for job referral.

Career specialists shall review the job-seeker's skills comparing them to specific demand occupation job vacancies, match those skills to job vacancies, and make a staff referral. The career specialist who made the referral, or who is case managing the jobseeker, should plan for a formalized follow-up process, such as a 30, 60, or 90-day cycle, developed locally with documented reassessment. Follow-up does not necessarily require a contact call. Alerts and electronic messaging available in HiRE may be utilized.

### **Workforce Ready, Not in a Demand Occupation**

When the initial assessment indicates a job-seeker is workforce ready, but not in a demand occupation (including Unemployment Insurance (UI) recipients determined to be least likely to exhaust their UI benefits), that job-seeker shall be referred to self-service and offered assistance as needed with informational services.

Informational services will include guiding the jobseeker to Labor Market Information (LMI), including jobs in demand, wage rates, education requirements, work search tools, skills, and interest-matching assessments.

Career specialists should plan for effective follow-up, reassessing as necessary. This is critical because continued failure to achieve employment may indicate the existence of a barrier to employment that was not identified earlier in the assessment process.

Should follow-up for any jobseeker on the workforce ready track show continued unemployment, more individualized career services may be indicated. These jobseekers shall be moved to a case management track.

## Case Management Track

Job-seekers who have poor or large gaps in their work history, limited, obsolete, or unknown skills, limited education, lack credentials, lack soft skills, have significant barriers to employment, or a combination of any of these factors, as well as, any job-seeker determined most likely to exhaust all their Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits, shall be considered not workforce ready.

Jobseekers who are not workforce ready shall be provided individualized career services, consisting of a minimum of a Comprehensive Assessment and development of an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP) in the context of case management.

Comprehensive Assessment is vital to collecting information on job-seeker barriers to employment, employment goals, knowledge skills and abilities, and proficiency in occupational knowledge. This Assessment shall be done as a client-centered approach to evaluating the needs of a participant without regard to services or training program availability. The purpose is not to match the jobseeker to what is available, rather to determine job-seeker needs.

This Comprehensive Assessment is best defined operatively as an intensive interviewing process, which includes behavioral observations, and may also require the use of structured assessment tools. Other information gathered may include detailed work history, family support available, social services affiliations, offender status, and a detailed education history.

Comprehensive Assessment must be documented via case note(s), with regard for privacy and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) rules. It is the responsibility of Local management to ensure staff is cognizant of HIPAA rules.

The Comprehensive Assessment is the foundation for development of an IEP, and no IEP shall be created without completing a Comprehensive Assessment. In many cases the Comprehensive Assessment will then be an ongoing process that may result in changes to the goals and objectives of the IEP. The IEP is developed with a jobseeker to identify or create employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and the right combination of services to assist in achieving goals and objectives.

The IEP must include goals and objectives that are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound). A case note must accompany the IEP and must justify the Plan based on the identified barrier(s) to employment.

Case management requires a regular follow-up and review or revision of the IEP until such time as the jobseeker becomes workforce ready or enters a training program. In either case, follow-up is critical, using a 30-day cycle until the jobseeker attains employment or complete training.

All IEPs will be entered into Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE), using the HiRE Wizard.

The local LWDBs will coordinate workforce development activities in the local area with rapid response services for the workers and employers that are facing challenging times due to layoffs. The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) provides Rapid Response Services designed to help employers proceed in an orderly and legal way by guiding them through the process. LWC works with Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and other partners (training and supportive-service providers) to help both.

Direct services to workers facing a plant shutdown or large-scale lay-off, are focused on preparing them to find suitable new employment, and get them back to work as quickly as possible by helping them overcome such difficult barriers to employment as:

- ▶ Transferring specialized skills to other occupations or industries.
- ▶ A decline in the market demand for certain skills.
- ▶ Age or length of work experience.
- ▶ Need for formal training or education.
- ▶ Lack of jobs at a level comparable to their previous positions.

***F. Provide a description of how the local area will provide youth activities including:***

Region 7 has the autonomy to develop its own Youth service delivery model for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth services. This model must support the implementation of Career Pathways that support post-secondary education and address the needs of low-income In-School Youth as well as Out-of-School Youth. Region 7's Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) will procure and provide all fourteen of the Youth Program Elements under WIOA. Region 7 is committed to developing and providing appropriate models for Out-of-School Youth.

Region 7's Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) will work to ensure that they:

- ▶ Will not require out-of-school Youth in high-risk categories to prove low-income status to receive services.
- ▶ Will provide services to individuals who have dropped out of high school, have not attended school for at least one calendar quarter of the most recent school year, or are subject to the juvenile or Adult justice systems under the Out-of-School Youth program.
- ▶ Will target and provide services to homeless individuals, runaways, current or former foster care Youth, and individuals who are pregnant or parenting.
- ▶ Will provide services to Youth who are not attending school, hold a secondary credential, and are either basic-skills deficient or an English language learner.
- ▶ Will consider Youth living in a high-poverty area to meet the low-income criterion for Youth activities, funding, and services.

Both the State and LWDAs in Region 7 will continually monitor financial operations for compliance with the 75% expenditure rate for out-of-school youth services.

Region 7's partnership with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) will be utilized to provide services to Youth with disabilities requiring accommodations or assistive technology in order to participate in program activities, such as, tutoring and study skills training, attainment of the HiSET, work experience, summer employment, and where appropriate, vocational training.

A combination of contracted youth services (LWDA 71) and in-house services (LWDA 70) provision is used by Region 7. Expenditures made on Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and work-based learning for WIOA-eligible youth are typically exclusively for out-of-school youth. Contracts awarded for youth training services are also primarily focused on out-of-school youth, with a small percentage being awarded to in-school programs.

Other Youth Program Initiatives will include:

**Pre-Employment Training Services (PETS)**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires VR agencies to make Pre-Employment Transition Services available to all students with disabilities. Students with disabilities include individuals still enrolled in secondary education (high school) or post-secondary education who have a disability (receives services under an IEP, 504 plan/IAP, or has a documented disability that meets the definition of disability per Section 504) and are at least 16 years old but less than 22 years old. Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are coordinated activities for a student with a disability

designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities leading to competitive integrated employment. Counselors must make these services available to students with disabilities receiving services under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or is an individual with a disability for purposes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (IAP).

Pre-ETS includes five “required” activities that, in collaboration with local education agencies, VR shall provide or arrange for the provision of these services for all potentially eligible and eligible students with disabilities. Services provided by VR enhance transition services but do not reduce the responsibility of local educational Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) required by WIOA include:

- ▶ Job Exploration Counseling
- ▶ Work-Based Learning Experiences
- ▶ Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education
- ▶ Workplace Readiness Training
- ▶ Instruction in Self-Advocacy

### **STEP Forward Initiative**

This is a cradle-to-career initiative which is striving for success in every child in the Northwest Louisiana Community (Caddo, Bossier, DeSoto & Webster Parishes), with the ultimate goal of ‘Thrive by 25’ – obtaining a sustainable, living-wage job by the age 25.

After a few years of a stand-alone non-profit, STEP Forward will once again become a part of the Community Foundation of North Louisiana (CFNLA) as of September 1, 2020. CFNLA will continue the legacy of STEP Forward’s mission to foster regional collaboration to improve educational outcomes for all children.

The main committees are: My Brother’s Keeper, Building Foundations, Building Futures (a combination of the Workforce Development Committee & the STEM Committee), and the Teen Advisory Committee. The Louisiana Workforce Commission’s Regional Industry Coordinator has been the Workforce Development Committee (now the Building Futures Committee) Chairman since its inception 6 years ago.

This initiative collaborates with the Business Community, Non-Profit Organizations, Workforce Development Officials, Education Representatives, Economic Development Officials and Chamber of Commerce Leaders. STEP Forward has facilitated 50 Collaborative Projects to date!

### **Jump Start Initiative**

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, high-skill, in-demand career sectors.

Students are required to attain industry-promulgated, industry-valued credentials in order to graduate with a Career Diploma.

Schools receive the same accountability grade credit for preparing students for careers in high-demand job sectors as they do for students who achieve top academic honors. The Regional Industry Coordinator with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) has been an integral part of this Northwest Louisiana Jump Start Team.

Local Workforce Development Board Directors have dutifully attended many meetings to supply needed input and support at the early Jump Start meetings, and now with the expanded Perkins Region 7 Leadership Team.

Each area of the State could implement parts of the Jump Start Model as soon as it was possible, but the full implementation occurred in the Fall of 2017. Spring 2020, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved 11 Jump Start 2.0 pathways, along with a waiver process for facilitating changes late in students' progressions. As a condition of approving the pathways, the board commissioned a panel that includes CTE directors to bring back to BESE further adjustments to Jump Start 2.0, including further universal courses.

We are fortunate that we have not one, but two schools dedicated to the goals of the Jump Start Initiative: Caddo Career and Technology Center and the Bossier Parish School for Technology and Innovative Learning. The Caddo Career and Technology Center has received national awards in the past, and the Bossier Parish School for Technology and Innovative Learning has the newest and latest in many training areas, for example, they have a machine in their Automotive Repair Shop that only three high schools in the nation have. These two facilities will enable this area to move forward quickly in the Jump Start Initiative, and students, parents, and business have benefited because of it. Jump Start 2.0 Northwest Louisiana offers promise of a better future for many students and many businesses.

***G. Provide a description of how the local area will provide services to individuals with barriers to employment as outlined in the Combined State Plan:***

The Region's Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) working in conjunction with entities carrying out core programs will place special emphasis on serving the needs of special applicant groups in order to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.

The American Job Centers (AJCs) in the Region in coordination with the system partners, will develop service strategies designed to meet the specific needs of these groups. Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE) gathers information on placement and retention of special applicant groups to determine the best service strategies.

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) staff are maximized to provide all-inclusive case management services to Veterans. To the extent feasible, services will be given to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs). Faith-Based and Community-Based Organizations (CBO's) are involved in the process, both as a provider of services and as a skills resource for special applicant groups.

The following populations with special needs have been identified:

- ▶ Low-Income Individuals (recipients receiving public assistance, including those individuals that are basic skills deficient)
- ▶ Disabled Individuals
- ▶ Veterans
- ▶ Unemployment Claimants and Long-Term Unemployed
- ▶ Individuals with Limited English Proficiency
- ▶ Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers
- ▶ Homeless
- ▶ Individuals with Multiple Barriers to Employment
- ▶ Individuals Training for Nontraditional Employment
- ▶ Displaced Homemakers

- ▶ Ex-Offenders
- ▶ Older Workers
- ▶ Youth

The employment and training needs of all job seekers will be met through the provision of career services accessible through the AJC system. It is the policy of the Region's Local Workforce Areas (LWDAs) to prohibit all forms of unlawful discrimination in employment and in the delivery, provision of and access to any LWDA service, program, resource, or opportunity.

To ensure that special populations are appropriately served and that non-traditional career opportunities are presented, the LWDBs will provide professional development training to all front-line personnel.

The LWDBs will include service providers that serve special populations on the LWDBs, or its groups and subcommittees.

The LWDBs will develop a Local policy regarding priority of service for the provision of career and training services to Adults and Dislocated Workers under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

The Adult priority of service policy will provide priority to low-income individuals receiving public assistance and are basic skills deficient, and will clearly define how the needs of displaced workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, public assistance recipients, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, Veterans, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment including older workers, individuals with limited English-speaking abilities, and individuals with disabilities, will be met.

In the event of WIOA funding limitations, LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 will give priority of Adult employment and training activities to veteran who are recipients of public assistance and low-income veterans. Next, in the priority are other non-veterans who are recipients of public assistance and low-income non-veterans.

In the event that funding is available and Adult customer's income exceeds certain defined thresholds, the local boards will follow guidance from the Department of Labor.

Underlying the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is Section 188 which mandates nondiscrimination in the provision of WIOA program services. Both LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 are committed to the goal of equity in the provision of program services through the following activities:

- ▶ Region 7 collects data on race, gender and disability status of all persons registering for services. The review of the race and gender of WIOA participants and their representation among the region's population and labor force is conducted periodically. Data from the Louisiana Workforce Commission's publication Louisiana Labor Force Diversity Data is analyzed to ensure that there are no underserved populations in having access to WIOA program services within Region 7.
- ▶ Using local media sources, information on WIOA program services is made available to the public with the objective being to increase the availability of program services to all population groups. For WIOA partnerships this development on the IEP/ISS utilizing LMI tools.
- ▶ Region 7 makes efforts towards ensuring that potential eligible youth have access to services by contacting public, private and nonprofit organizations in the career field of science, technology engineering and math fields. Ongoing training provided to WIOA program staff concerning the nondis-

crimination requirements of the WIOA program (i.e., Section 188) and the importance of equal access to program services. Youth Business Coordinator's recruitment avoids as much bias and focus on career exploration, motivation, mentoring, etc.

► The location of American Job Centers within the ten parishes that comprise Region 7 is to ensure that the residents of all parishes have convenient and reasonable access to WIOA program services and the services of program partners. IEP goals and objectives are included in WIOA participate follow up. Also, staff are being trained to help instill into the participants' perspective the value of mentorship, which shows up in the process of developing the IEP.

► Taking steps to see that all American Job Center customers, regardless of their race or gender, have access to information on the full range of educational and training activities available to them as contained in the Louisiana Workforce Commission's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). During the IEP/ISS development, LMI and other data-driven tools are used to provide as full of a picture as possible to the participant. Goals and objectives are developed to help the participant manage steps to overcome when necessary.

► Workforce system continually evaluates economic/workforce data, with our ecosystem to provide strategic services. Services are marketed to areas that have been identified via Census data as populations most in need.

Region 7 will support new approaches to training, such as a regional work-based learning summit for workforce agencies, organizations and employers, determine the gaps in training across the region and develop a regional strategy to fill the gaps, develop career pathways on a regional basis, as well as apprenticeships, work-based learning and other new methods, including delivery of training via technology.

#### ***H. Provide a description of training policies and activities in the local area, including:***

With limited exceptions, the Individual Training Account (ITA) will be the primary method for accessing training services, except for Employer-Based Training. Training services will be directly linked to occupations that are in-demand on Louisiana's Statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). ITAs will be provided to eligible individuals through the One-Stop Delivery System. Training services may be available to individuals including who:

- Have met the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) eligibility requirements;
- Have been determined, after an interview, evaluation and/or assessment, and case management, to be in need of training services;
- Achieve a minimum passing grade to be eligible for continued funding under the ITA system;
- Any participant who discontinues the training activity prior to completion may be ineligible for further ITA services. However, the re-enrollment of any participant will be reviewed for continued funding on a case-by-case basis.

Region 7 strives to ensure that training funds are invested in programs linked to in-demand industries and occupations. Funds for individual training accounts, on-the-job training, customized training, and incumbent worker training are focused on programs that provide training in occupations In-Demand.

Region 7's staff also works with business services staff at LWC and with industry partnerships to continuously engage employers in key industries, assessing their hiring needs and coordinating a variety of training opportunities (on-the-job training, incumbent workers training, etc.) to meet those needs. Information and feedback obtained from employers helps to ensure workforce and training services successfully prepare individuals and connect them to the credentials needed for jobs in high demand industries.

LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 exclusively utilizes the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) as its source for access to skills training for WIOA eligible participants. LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 will notify training providers in the local area of the opportunity to apply for status as an approved training provider on the statewide ETPL. The Boards will advocate for entry level training that meets the needs of local employers and provide career pathways in high demand/high growth industries.

LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 will continuously monitor the completion rate, employment rate, and wages of individuals placed in training to ensure that training providers receiving WIOA funding assist job seekers with obtaining employment that leads to family supporting wages and provides opportunities for career advancement.

Staff will ensure all of the following requirements are met before approving the provider for local funds:

- ▶ The program is listed on the Louisiana ETPL.
- ▶ Training-related job placements of past graduates equal the entered employment, retention and wage performance rate required of Region 7 for the current Program Year. This requires the training provider to collect job placement data on its graduates.
- ▶ Staff will check local in-house logs to see if individuals with similar training/credentials are coming into the Job Center due to their inability to earn a living wage with that training or credential (To insure we are not paying to train individuals for occupations that do not move them out of poverty).
- ▶ Local WIOA staff will keep data of the number of participants starting each program versus the number of participants completing the program.
- ▶ Staff will compare the cost to complete the program to ensure it is not higher than twice the amount of completing the equivalent program at other local training providers on the State ETPL within a reasonable distance.
- ▶ If the above criteria are met, staff will reach out to the training provider to verify contact information and explain the vendor packet required to receive WIOA tuition payments from the Jefferson/Franklin Region. No employment and training activity is approved without appearing on the ETPL.

Local Workforce Development Boards 70 and 71 ensure they will:

1. Collaborate with the State to ensure sufficient numbers and types of providers of training services are accessible in each local area, including eligible providers with expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities and adults in need of adult education and literacy activities described under WIOA sec. 107(d)(10)(E), sec.122, 134;
2. Work with their local and regional employers and education providers to ensure there are training programs that provide credentials, certificates and/or skills that are valued by employers within priority industry sectors identified in the local strategic plan.
3. In partnership with the state, make available through Region 7 American Job Centers the list of eligible providers of training services and accompanying information.

To determine subsequent eligibility, the Local Workforce Development Boards, Region 7's Staff and LWC will verify that the training provider continues to meet or exceed the negotiated state-level Title I Adult performance goals for Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter, Credential Attainment, and Measurable Skill Gains.

Local Boards follow the performance calculations for each program are based on WIOA-funded participants only and is verified using the federal ETP report published by the state.

Local Workforce Development Boards 70 and 71 will remove ETPs that fail to meet local performance standards (if applicable) from the local ETP list, in accordance with state and local policies and procedures. This process must allow for appeals in accordance with the state's appeals procedure for providers of training to appeal a denial of eligibility from the local list of eligible training providers. LWDB procedures are outlined in each local areas Individual Training Account policy, 20 CFR 680.482(e), 683.630(b).

The Local Boards within Region 7 will comply with the State Training Expenditure Requirements on training-related services and activities as outlined in the State policy. This requirement will be met by providing a combination of the calculable services in that policy, with a majority of expenditures anticipated in the areas of occupational skills training (Individual Training Accounts-ITAs) and work-based learning (Incumbent Worker Training- IWT, On-the-Job Training- OJT, Apprenticeships, Work Experience/Internships.) Funds will be transferred between Adult and Dislocated Worker streams on an as needed basis during the program year.

***I. Describe if the local workforce board will authorize the transfer of WIOA Title IB workforce funds, including the maximum dollar amount and/or percentage that is authorized to be transferred on an annual basis:***

► To transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams.

Funds will be transferred between Adult and Dislocated Worker streams on an as needed basis during the program year. State policy will limit the maximum allowable transfer to 75 percent. A local board 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, local boards may send written notification requesting up to an additional 25 percent.

► To use funds for incumbent worker training as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(4)(A)(i).

Up to 20% of Adult and/or Dislocated Worker funds may be used on Incumbent Worker Training. The amount diverted for this purpose will be based on the overall budget, with priority being given to ITAs and OJTs in times of moderate to high unemployment. Preference will be given to IWT projects that demonstrate any/all of the following: a clear avenue toward layoff aversion, demonstrable position and/or pay upgrades for trainees, the use of an apprenticeship model, attainment of industry-recognized credentials, significant impact on the company's competitiveness.

► To use funds for transitional jobs as outlined in WIOA Sec. 134(d)(5).

Up to 10% of combined Adult and Dislocated Worker allotments may be used on transitional jobs for Adult clients. Target populations for transitional jobs include, but are not limited to, ex-offenders, long-term unemployed, and individuals with disabilities.

► To use funds for pay for performance contracts as outlined in WIOA Sec. 133(b)(2-3).

No funds will be expended on performance contracts, without Board approval.

**CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION - LOCAL COMPONENT**

The plan must include information on the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board (WIOA Sec.101(d)(6)) and (§ 679.560(b)(17)).

*A. Local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official consistent with WIOA Sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the Local Board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I Subtitle B and the one-stop delivery system (core and required partners as applicable) in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(16)).*

The Region's Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) performance levels have been negotiated with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC).

LWDA 70 and 71 utilizes HiRE and FutureWorks to ensure that performance measures are being met. Both of these online software systems allows us to monitor the progress In order to meet performance.

**LWDA 70 AND LWDA 71 WIOA PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

<b>Adult</b>	<b>LWDA 70 Program Year 2020-2021</b>	<b>LWDA 71 Program Year 2020-2021</b>
Entered Employment Rate, 2nd Quarter After Exit	72%	75%
Entered Employment Rate, 4th Quarter After Exit	70%	73%
Median Earnings, 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,060	\$7,000
Credential Attainment	67.5%	70%
Measurable Skills Gain	60%	60%
<b>Dislocated Worker</b>		
Entered Employment Rate, 2nd Quarter After Exit	78%	72%
Entered Employment Rate, 4th Quarter After Exit	75%	72%
Median Earnings, 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,800	\$8,200
Credential Attainment	71%	70%
Measurable Skills Gain	61.4%	60%
<b>Youth</b>		
Entered Employment Rate, 2nd Quarter After Exit	80%	67%
Entered Employment Rate, 4th Quarter After Exit	75%	78%
Median Earnings, 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,000	\$3,400
Credential Attainment	60%	70%
Measurable Skills Gain	45%	50%
<b>Wagner-Peyser</b>		
Entered Education/Employment Rate, 2nd Quarter After Exit	61%	60%
Entered Education/Employment Rate, 4th Quarter After Exit	63%	60%
Median Earnings, 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,700	\$4,300

***B. Provide a description of the current and planned evaluation activities and how this information will be provided to the local board and program administrators as appropriate.***

The Region 7 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) through their administrative staff will conduct continuous oversight, monitoring, and evaluation of the One-Stop Delivery System to ensure that the following services are being provided:

- ▶ Provide the career services described in Section 134 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA);
- ▶ Provide access to training services, including serving as the point of access to training services for participants described in Section 134;
- ▶ Provide access to the employment and training activities described in Section 134;
- ▶ Provide access to programs and activities carried out by One-Stop partners described in Section 134;
- ▶ Provide access to the data, information, and analysis described in Section 15(a) of the Wagner-Peyser (WP) Act, and all job search, placement, recruitment, and other labor exchange services authorized under the WP Act (29).

## **CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSURANCES - LOCAL COMPONENT**

This section includes the technical requirements and assurances that are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Sec. 121 (c)(2)(iv)).

### ***A. Fiscal Management***

The Region 7 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) are established in accordance with Section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The mission of the Region 7 LWDBs is to support the development of an employer-led, demand-driven workforce development system based on occupational forecasts in which training, education, and services for jobseekers prepare residents for high-wage, high-demand career opportunities.

The Regional Boards achieve this mission by:

- ▶ Recommending policy actions to public and private institutions and creating coalitions to achieve their implementation.
- ▶ Working with workforce development system partners to integrate workforce development into the decision-making of businesspeople, economic developers, educators, and human resource professionals.
- ▶ Raising public awareness of the importance of workforce development for Region 7's economic future.
- ▶ Ensuring public accountability by evaluating the effectiveness of the overall workforce development system.

Region 7's Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) operate with a high degree of flexibility for service delivery design and partner with Local training and educational institutions to ensure employment and training opportunities meet area employment needs.

In Region 7 there are two comprehensive American Job Centers (AJCs), and ten satellite Centers. AJCs provide a variety of online, in-house, and on-site services, including employer services, job search resources, labor market information, and referrals for Customized Training.

In addition to traditional brick-and-mortar offices, in Region 7, the State has mobile workforce units that are available to each Region in the State which offer on-site Rapid Response assistance to area employers and communities.

The Coordinating & Development Corporation is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds for LWDA 70. The City of Shreveport Finance Department is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds for LWDA 71.

The competitive process used to award subgrants and contracts in Region 7 for WIOA Title I activities are pursuant to each LWDB's Procurement Policy.

The competitive process that will be used at the local level to award grants and contracts for activities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) includes:

- ▶ Adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain them;
- ▶ The ability to meet the program design specifications at a reasonable cost, as well as the ability to meet performance standards;
- ▶ A satisfactory record of past performance (in job training, basic skills training, or related activities), including demonstrated quality of training; reasonable drop-out rates from past programs, the ability to provide or arrange for appropriate support services as specified in the ISS, retention in employment and earning rates of participants;
- ▶ A satisfactory record of integrity, business ethics, and fiscal accountability;
- ▶ The necessary organization, experience, accounting, and operational controls;
- ▶ The technical skills to perform the work.

The Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) may form a Standing Committee to assist in the selection of Youth Service Providers.

Potential bidders are made aware of the availability of contracts through public notice on the appropriate websites of the Region's Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs). LWDA's 70 and 71 may hold a pre-bidder's conference to discuss elements of the Request for Proposal (RFP).

The selection of Youth Service Providers may be done by the LWDBs and may be based upon the recommendations of the Standing Committee. Potential service providers of projects will be required to submit an RFP, and in the RFP will include certification of targeted industry advice, input on training design, and training based on industry standards where applicable.

This certification will provide the LWDBs with business and industry input into the training curriculum. Each proposal is reviewed and is given a numerical ranking by the staff based on the following criteria:

- ▶ Adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain them;
- ▶ The ability to meet the program design specifications at a reasonable cost, as well as the ability to meet youth performance standards;
- ▶ A satisfactory record of past performance (in job training, basic skills training, or related activities), including demonstrated quality of training; reasonable drop-out rates from past programs, the ability to provide or arrange for appropriate support services as specified in the ISS, retention in employment and earning rates of participants;
- ▶ A satisfactory record of integrity, business ethics, and fiscal accountability;
- ▶ The necessary organization, experience, accounting, and operational controls; and
- ▶ The technical skills to perform the work.

### ***B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility***

Recognizing the high unemployment rate among this population, and the qualified-employee shortage businesses are facing, Region 7 is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and access to all programs, services and facilities. The American Job Centers (AJCs) utilize the One-Stop Disability Access Checklist to self-evaluate its current level of accessibility.

The Region's American Job Centers (AJCs) are designed to provide a full range of assistance to job-seekers under one roof. Established under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and further refined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), these Centers offer training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and similar employment-related services. Customers can visit a Center in person or connect to the Center's information through PC remote access. Budgetary realities and restrictions combined with the refocus and expansion of services under WIOA require Region 7 to take a comprehensive look at the way it conducts business in providing support to its service partners.

For the purposes of operation under this Plan regarding services provided in the Comprehensive AJCs, each member of the partnership shall agree to core hours, core services, individualized services, supportive services, data sharing, of costs for business operations.

The following will be taken into consideration in determining each One-Stop partner's contributions:

- ▶ Who will be physically present in the Center full or part-time.
- ▶ When not physically present will Center staff be required to supply support and provide customer guidance when using an Online tool, etc.
- ▶ What services will be offered, and how do those services support a Career Pathway.
- ▶ Defined interface with partner programs to provide seamless services.
- ▶ Method of supervision and guidance provided to staff.
- ▶ Defined administrative or other support required to be successful.
- ▶ Facility costs.
- ▶ Operational delivery, how services are delivered, by whom and when.

The presence and increased use of desktop computers with Internet connections located at all of Region 7's American Job Centers (AJCs) is one of the primary means by which services are provided to customers (job seekers). The development and continual addition of the capabilities and features of Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE) under the direction of the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) will be the primary means by which intake and case management activities will be undertaken at all of Region 7's AJCs. Through HiRE, progress will be made in implementing a paperless intake and case management system for AJCs customers with the ultimate objective being their placement in employment or enrollment in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funded training activities that will lead to their employment in demand occupations.

The two LWDAs in the Region have developed MOU's that are in compliance with the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Recognizing the high unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities and the qualified-employee shortage businesses are facing, the Region 7's LWDAs are committed to providing reasonable accommodations and access to all programs, services, and facilities. Each American Job Center (AJC) utilizes the One-Stop disability access checklist to self-evaluate its current level of accessibility.

In the past, with support of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Grant (2012-2015) Region 7's LWDAs worked to ensure the physical, communication, and programmatic accessibility of all AJCs by conducting staff training for all Center staff on topics including accessibility for all, disability etiquette, awareness, and identifying and assisting job-seekers with hidden disabilities. Region 7's LWDAs continue to maintain these investments in staff training and technology to make certain AJC staff serve job-seekers with disabilities effectively.

Region 7's LWDA's will incorporate accessibility criteria as part of the One-Stop certification criteria in collaboration with its disability partners and advocacy groups. Additionally, all AJCs will be monitored onsite annually to ensure compliance with this requirement.

Region 7's Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) will ensure compliance with all Federal and State regulations, and upon request, each office offers Language Line Services who can assist with service delivery for job seekers of Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

The Region's LWDAs continue to ensure all materials and delivery methods are appropriate to diverse cultures, languages, and education. This program accommodation includes, as appropriate upon request, the provision of interpreters, through Language Line Services, and for those individuals that have hearing and visual impairment, referral to the appropriate partner agency. Region 7's Equal Opportunity (EO) Coordinators will provide technical assistance to the American Job Centers if necessary and monitor the system for compliance.

*Provide copies of executed cooperative agreements (as applicable) which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop system, with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities (§679.560(b)(13)). This may include cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.*

At this time, Region 7 currently does not have any cooperative agreements.

### **C. Plan Development and Public Comment**

Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) 70 and 71 will provide the thirty (30) day opportunity for public comment by advertising a legal notice in a variety of (6) official parish newspapers with Region 7. The notices will indicate the availability of the draft plan for review and how to access the document. A draft of the 2020-2024 Regional/Local Plan will be placed on the respective websites of Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) 70 and 71. The websites will provide an opportunity for public comment and input into the development of the Plan.

LWDA 70 - <https://cdconline.org/wioa-bod-70>

LWDA 71 - <https://shreveportla.gov/240/community-development>

These measures will allow for formal comments on the Plan from the public, representatives of business and Regional labor organizations required Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core and partner agencies, educators, community organizations, Regional economic development agencies, colleges, universities, and technical schools, social service agencies, and faith-based organizations.

Draft copies will also be provided to the Region's two Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) for comment and final approval.

Following the conclusion of the public comment period, any comments collected during the public comment period will be presented to the board for review and consideration. Disagreements or concerns received during the public comment period will be addressed following the Board's review of said concerns. Those concerns will also be included in the attachments of this plan.

The Region 7 WIOA Regional/Local Plan will be reviewed through a 30-day public comment period in October of 2020 through November 2020.

Additional refinement of the Plan will continue through the public comment period. This includes a final review by each core partner in Region 7 engaged in the planning process to ensure that the Plan complies with the final Federal regulations issued by Federal partner agencies including: the US Department of Labor; US Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education and Rehabilitation Services Administration, and the Administration of Children and Families, Community Service Block Grant.

► Provide information regarding the regional and local plan modification procedures. Each WBD will obtain approval from the board of directors and, if required, the chief elected officials, and obtain required signatures, then Submit the plan(s) to the Governor for review and approval. Any modifications needed or requested over the term of this Plan will be made available for public comment and be brought to the Partners and Local Boards for consideration and approval.

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

The method used for joint Regional planning and coordination of programs within Region 7, was to hold a joint planning meeting with the Region's two Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs); however, do to COVID-19 restrictions and office closures, the two LWDA's corresponded over the phone and via email. The plan was sent to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core partners, and One-Stop partner programs for comment and review. Through collaboration between these agencies a draft of the 2020-2024 Regional/Local Plan was developed and included the following components:

- A method to use forecasting information, labor market information, and employer surveys to identify demand occupations, identify academic/workplace competencies needed, and jointly prioritize or rank training needs in Region 7.
- A commitment to focus all publicly funded education, employment, and training programs on educating and training clients for jobs with career advancement pathways and higher levels of compensation.
- The negotiation of Regional performance measures will be part of the required Regional/Local planning process and documented in the Regional/Local Plan developed by representatives of LWDA 70 and 71.
- A process for the coordination of multiple American Job Centers (AJCs) within Region 7.
- A commitment to align training programs and examine program consolidation.
- A plan for working with other agencies and organizations to coordinate transportation, childcare, and other support services.
- A Regional leadership strategy to identify emerging issues, develops Regional support strategies as needed, and keeps pace with Federal and State regulations on changes.
- A plan for developing uniform criteria, performance standards, and application procedures in Region 7 to insure easy access to programs by business.

**APPENDIX I: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES  
CERTIFICATION FOR LWDA 70**

**BOARD ACTIVITIES**

Consistent with WIOA Section 108(d) the Local Board has submitted a local plan to the Governor, held at least one public comment period of no less than 30 days to obtain input into the development of the Local Plan; and, the final Local Plan is available and accessible to the general public. **20 CFR § 679.550**

The Local Board has established policies/procedures to ensure public access (including persons with disabilities) to board activities, such as board membership, meetings and minutes. **20 CFR § 679.390**

The Local Board complies with restrictions governing the use of federal funds for political activities (**29 CFR § 93.100**) and the applicable board certifications, conflict of interest and disclosure requirements. **§ 200.112**

**SELECTION OF OPERATIONS AND PROVIDERS**

The Local Board has copies of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Local Board and each American Job Center partner and has provided the State with the latest versions of their MOU. **20 CFR § 678.715(a)**

The Local Board ensures it completes quarterly reconciliations of the MOU with its partners. **OWD 1117-04**

**INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING AGREEMENTS**

The Local Board has procurement policies and procedures for selecting One-Stop operators, awarding contracts under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funding provisions, and awarding contracts for Youth services under WIOA Title I in accordance with applicable state and local laws, statutes, rules, and regulations. **20 CFR § 678.605**

The Local Board has established at least one comprehensive, full-service American Job Center and has a written process for the local Chief Elected Official and Local Board to determine that the center conforms to the definition therein. **20 CFR § 678.305**

**PRIORITY OF SERVICE, EOC, ADA**

The Local Board has a written policy for priority of service at its American Job Centers and, as applicable, affiliate sites and for local workforce providers that ensures veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and provided information on the array of employment, training and placement services and eligibility requirements for those programs or services. **20 CFR § 680.650.**

The Local Board has written procedures for resolving grievances and complaints alleging violations of WIOA Title I regulations, grants, or other agreements under WIOA; and written policies or procedures for assisting customers who express interest in filing complaints at any point of service. **20 CFR § 683.600**

The Local Board complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188, and assures that Supportive Methods of Administration are developed and implemented. **29 CFR Part 38**

The Local Board implements universal access to programs and activities to individuals through reasonable recruitment targeting, outreach efforts, assessments, service delivery, partner development, and numeric goals. **29 CFR Subpart B**

The Local Board ensures that American Job Center staff, along with the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) program partner agency, will continue to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFWs. **20 CFR § 685.300**

The Local Board follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records and has policies and procedures in place for ensuring personally identifiable information is protected including, but not limited to, 20 CFR 603, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, WIOA, and applicable State laws, Statutes and Departmental regulations and policies. **TEGL 39-11**

### **FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Local Board has accounting systems that follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures that ensures such procedures are followed to make certain 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. **20 CFR § 683.220**

The Local Board has a written policy and procedures for ensuring proper management and inventory of all equipment obtained using WIOA funds in accordance with WIOA law and state and local rules/regulations. **2 CFR § 200.313**

### **MONITORING**

The Local Board ensures compliance with WIOA uniform administrative requirements through local continuous monitoring of compliance with WIOA laws, regulation and Statutes, State policy, and local policies and procedures. **20 CFR § 667.400(c)(1)**

### **ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICES**

The Local Board conducts oversight of local youth workforce investment activities, local employment and training and the one-stop delivery system in the local area; and ensures the appropriate use, management and investment of funds in activities that maximize performance outcomes. **20 CFR Subpart A, 20 CFR § 679.370**

Local Board have youth policies defining "attending school" and "not attending school"; including the 5% exception stating all other barriers must be met, and "requires additional assistance" barrier. **20 CFR § 681.230, 20 CFR § 681.250(c), 20 CFR § 681.300**

The Local Board ensures that all 14 elements for Youth are made available and provided. **20 CFR § 681.420**

The Local Board has written policy and procedures that ensure adequate and correct determinations of eligibility and funding of training and supportive services, with limits and in coordination with other community resources, for enrollment of Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth in WIOA- funded individualized career and training services, consistent with state policy on eligibility and priority of service. **20 CFR Part 681, 20 CFR Part 663, 20 CFR § 680.650, OWD 2-21.2, OWD 2-24.1**

**LEVERAGING WIOA**

The Local Board analyzes regional labor market information, partners with local workforce development system stakeholders to assist in the development of the local plan and engages employers to assist with the development and implementation of programs that meet their workforce needs. **20 CFR § 679.130**

The Seventh Planning District Consortium Workforce Development Board (LWDA name) certifies that it has compiled all of the required components of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The workforce development area also assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and its regulations, written U. S. Department of Labor guidance implementing this Act, and all other federal and state laws and regulations.

_____ Richard "Mike" McCormic Chief Elected Official or CEO Chair	_____ Date
_____ Matt Wheeler Workforce Development Board Chair	_____ Date
_____ Candle Sattler Workforce Development Board Interim Director	_____ Date

**STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES  
CERTIFICATION FOR LWDA 71**

**BOARD ACTIVITIES**

Consistent with WIOA Section 108(d) the Local Board has submitted a local plan to the Governor, held at least one public comment period of no less than 30 days to obtain input into the development of the Local Plan; and, the final Local Plan is available and accessible to the general public. **20 CFR § 679.550**

The Local Board has established policies/procedures to ensure public access (including persons with disabilities) to board activities, such as board membership, meetings and minutes. **20 CFR § 679.390**

The Local Board complies with restrictions governing the use of federal funds for political activities (29 CFR § 93.100) and the applicable board certifications, conflict of interest and disclosure requirements. **§ 200.112**

**SELECTION OF OPERATIONS AND PROVIDERS**

The Local Board has copies of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between the Local Board and each American Job Center partner and has provided the State with the latest versions of their MOU. **20 CFR § 678.715(a)**

The Local Board ensures it completes quarterly reconciliations of the MOU with its partners. **OWD 1117-04**

**INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING AGREEMENTS**

The Local Board has procurement policies and procedures for selecting One-Stop operators, awarding contracts under WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funding provisions, and awarding contracts for Youth services under WIOA Title I in accordance with applicable state and local laws, statutes, rules, and regulations. **20 CFR § 678.605**

The Local Board has established at least one comprehensive, full-service American Job Center and has a written process for the local Chief Elected Official and Local Board to determine that the center conforms to the definition therein. **20 CFR § 678.305**

**PRIORITY OF SERVICE, EOC, ADA**

The Local Board has a written policy for priority of service at its American Job Centers and, as applicable, affiliate sites and for local workforce providers that ensures veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and provided information on the array of employment, training and placement services and eligibility requirements for those programs or services. **20 CFR § 680.650**

The Local Board has written procedures for resolving grievances and complaints alleging violations of WIOA Title I regulations, grants, or other agreements under WIOA; and written policies or procedures for assisting customers who express interest in filing complaints at any point of service. **20 CFR § 683.600**

The Local Board complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188, and assures that Supportive Methods of Administration are developed and implemented. **29 CFR Part 38**

The Local Board implements universal access to programs and activities to individuals through reasonable recruitment targeting, outreach efforts, assessments, service delivery, partner development, and numeric goals. **29 CFR Subpart B**

The Local Board ensures that American Job Center staff, along with the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) program partner agency, will continue to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFWs. **20 CFR § 685.300**

The Local Board follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records and has policies and procedures in place for ensuring personally identifiable information is protected including, but not limited to, 20 CFR 603, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, WIOA, and applicable State laws, Statutes and Departmental regulations and policies. **TEGL 39-11**

### **FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Local Board has accounting systems that follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures that ensures such procedures are followed to make certain 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. **20 CFR § 683.220**

The Local Board has a written policy and procedures for ensuring proper management and inventory of all equipment obtained using WIOA funds in accordance with WIOA law and state and local rules/regulations. **2 CFR § 200.313**

### **MONITORING**

The Local Board ensures compliance with WIOA uniform administrative requirements through local continuous monitoring of compliance with WIOA laws, regulation and Statutes, State policy, and local policies and procedures. **20 CFR § 667.400(c)(1)**

### **ELIGIBILITY AND SERVICES**

The Local Board conducts oversight of local youth workforce investment activities, local employment and training and the one-stop delivery system in the local area; and ensures the appropriate use, management and investment of funds in activities that maximize performance outcomes. **20 CFR Subpart A, 20 CFR § 679.370**

Local Board have youth policies defining "attending school" and "not attending school"; including the 5% exception stating all other barriers must be met, and "requires additional assistance" barrier. **20 CFR § 681.230, 20 CFR § 681.250(c), 20 CFR § 681.300**

The Local Board ensures that all 14 elements for Youth are made available and provided. **20 CFR § 681.420**

The Local Board has written policy and procedures that ensure adequate and correct determinations of eligibility and funding of training and supportive services, with limits and in coordination with other community resources, for enrollment of Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth in WIOA- funded individualized career and training services, consistent with state policy on eligibility and priority of service. **20 CFR Part 681, 20 CFR Part 663, 20 CFR § 680.650, OWD 2-21.2, OWD 2-24.1**

**LEVERAGING WIOA**

The Local Board analyzes regional labor market information, partners with local workforce development system stakeholders to assist in the development of the local plan and engages employers to assist with the development and implementation of programs that meet their workforce needs. **20 CFR § 679.130**

The \_\_\_\_\_ (LWDA name) certifies that it has compiled all of the required components of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The workforce development area also assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and its regulations, written U. S. Department of Labor guidance implementing this Act, and all other federal and state laws and regulations.

_____ Chief Elected Official or CEO Chair	_____ Date
_____ Workforce Development Board Chair	_____ Date
_____ Workforce Development Board Director	_____ Date

**APPENDIX ITEM I  
LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE GOALS**

**Performance Goals for the Core Programs**

LWDA 70 and LWDA 71 expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators of performance described in Section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

*LWDA 70 - Coordinating & Development Corporation  
LWDA 71 - City of Shreveport*

<b>Adult</b>	<b>LWDA 70 Program Year 2020-2021</b>	<b>LWDA 71 Program Year 2020-2021</b>
<b>Entered Employment Rate, 2nd Quarter After Exit</b>	72%	75%
<b>Entered Employment Rate, 4th Quarter After Exit</b>	70%	73%
<b>Median Earnings, 2nd Quarter After Exit</b>	\$6,060	\$7,000
<b>Credential Attainment</b>	67.5%	70%
<b>Measurable Skills Gain</b>	60%	60%
<b>Dislocated Worker</b>		
<b>Entered Employment Rate, 2nd Quarter After Exit</b>	78%	72%
<b>Entered Employment Rate, 4th Quarter After Exit</b>	75%	72%
<b>Median Earnings, 2nd Quarter After Exit</b>	\$7,800	\$8,200
<b>Credential Attainment</b>	71%	70%
<b>Measurable Skills Gain</b>	61.4%	60%
<b>Youth</b>		
<b>Entered Employment Rate, 2nd Quarter After Exit</b>	80%	67%
<b>Entered Employment Rate, 4th Quarter After Exit</b>	75%	78%
<b>Median Earnings, 2nd Quarter After Exit</b>	\$5,000	\$3,400
<b>Credential Attainment</b>	60%	70%
<b>Measurable Skills Gain</b>	45%	50%
<b>Wagner-Peyser</b>		
<b>Entered Education/Employment Rate, 2nd Quarter After Exit</b>	61%	60%
<b>Entered Education/Employment Rate, 4th Quarter After Exit</b>	63%	60%
<b>Median Earnings, 2nd Quarter After Exit</b>	\$4,700	\$4,300



**Signature Page**

City of Shreveport's Local Workforce Development Board Chairperson

**Ms. Katrina Early**

Signature and Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Katrina Early Date

Address: 8216 Jewella Avenue

Telephone Number: 318-688-8312

Facsimile Number: 318-300-1450

E-Mail Address: [katrina.early192r@statefarm.com](mailto:katrina.early192r@statefarm.com)

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**Signature Page**

City of Shreveport's Local Workforce Development Board #71 Chief Elected Official

**The Honorable Adrian Perkins, Mayor of the City of Shreveport**

Signature and Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Adrian Perkins Date

Address: 505 Travis Street  
Shreveport, LA 71101

Telephone Number: 318-673-5050

Facsimile Number: 318-673-5099

E-Mail Address: [Adrian.perkins@shreveportla.gov](mailto:Adrian.perkins@shreveportla.gov)

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**Signature Page**

Seventh Planning District Consortium Local Workforce Development Board #70  
Chief Elected Official

**The Honorable Richard "Mike" McCormic, President of the  
Sabine Parish Police Jury for LWDA 70**

Signature and Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Richard "Mike" McCormic Date

Address: 400 South Capitol St., Room 101  
Many, LA 71449

Telephone Number: 318-256-2624

Facsimile Number: 318-256-9652

E-Mail Address: rmichealmccormic@hotmail.com

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# SHREVEPORT LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

401 TEXAS, SHREVEPORT, LA 71101 • P.O. BOX 31109, SHREVEPORT, LA 71130



**KATRINA EARLY**  
CHAIRPERSON

Phone (318) 673-7500

**ADRIAN PERKINS**  
MAYOR

## **Title: Procurement Policies**

**Purpose:** To establish regulations, procedures and guidelines relating to procurement, management, and property control.

### **Purchasing**

Local Workforce Development Board #71 will adopt the City of Shreveport Purchasing Regulations and Procedures with the following exception:

- All equipment purchased with the cost on excess of \$2,500 utilizing WIOA grant funding requires prior permission obtained from the Louisiana Workforce Commission.

Workforce Development Board will follow the City of Shreveport Purchasing Policies.

### **Procurement**

The Uniform Administrative Requirements (2 CFR 200.317) requires states to follow the same policies and procedures it uses for its non-federal funds. The state will comply with 2 CFR 200.322 Procurement of recovered materials and ensure that every purchase order or other contract includes any clauses required by section 2 CFR 200.326 Contract provisions. Local Workforce Development Board will also follow the requirements regarding the competitive award of One- Stop Operators, and Youth Service Providers.

Workforce Development Board #71 in order to comply with the Federal Register 2 CFR 200.318, 20CFR 678.610(a) (b) and the Uniform Guidance set out at 2 CFR 200.320. This system takes into consideration past performance such as program design, adequacy of fiscal controls, and ability to meet contract objectives.

**Procurement system includes the following requirements:**

#### **I. Workforce Development Board #71**

These standards do not relieve LWDB of any contractual responsibilities under its contracts. LWDB #71 is responsible, in accordance with good administrative practice and sound business judgement for the settlement of all contractual and administrative issues

arising out of procurements entered in support of a grant. These include but not limited to source evaluation, protests, disputes, and claims. Violations of law are to be referred to the local, State, or Federal authority having proper jurisdiction.

## **II. Code of Conduct**

The Workforce Development Board # 71 maintain written code or standards of conduct which governs the performance of their officers, employees or agents engaged in award and administration of contracts supported by Federal funds.

## **III. Selection Procedures**

A. All procurement transactions, regardless of whether by sealed bids or by negotiation and without regard to dollar value, shall be conducted in a manner that provides maximum open and free competition consistent with this Section. Procurement procedures shall not restrict or eliminate competition. Examples of what shall be considered to be restrictive of competition include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Placing unreasonable or different requirements on various firms in order for them to qualify for the same procurement;
- 2) noncompetitive practices between firms;
- 3) organizational conflicts of interest;
- 4) Unnecessary experience and bonding requirements (i.e., request for qualifications or experience that are not related to the services to be procured).
- 5) Noncompetitive awards to consultants that are on retainer contracts.
- 6) Specifying only a "brand name" product instead of allowing an "equal" product to be offered and describing the performance of other relevant requirements of the procurement.
- 7) These procedures will be subject to monitoring at least once during the program year. Violations will be identified and examined in accordance with the monitoring review procedure established for the Local Workforce Area.

B. Workforce Development Board #71 and its Fiscal Agent shall adhere to the following procedural requirements:

- 1) Solicitations of offers, whether by competitive sealed bids or competitive proposals shall incorporate a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the service to be procured. Such description shall not, in competitive procurements, contain features which restrict competition. The description shall include a statement of the qualitative nature of the service to be procured and set forth these standards to which the service shall conform in order to meet the program purpose. Solicitation of offers shall clearly set forth all requirements which service providers/contractors must fulfill and all other

**factors to be used in evaluating proposals pursuant to Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR part 3016 or 7 CFR part 3019).**

- 2) Awards shall be made only to service providers/contractors that demonstrate the ability to meet objectives of the proposed procurement. Examples of how the ability to meet the procurement of objects can be demonstrated include, but are not limited to: financial resources, technical qualifications, experience, organization and facilities adequate to carry out the project; resources to meet the completion schedule contained in the contract; a satisfactory performance record for completion of contracts; and accounting and auditing procedures adequate to control property, funds and assets, pursuant to (7 CFR part 3016 or CFR part 3019).**
- 3) Appropriate education agencies in the service delivery area shall be provided the opportunity to provide educational services, unless the administrative entity demonstrates that alternative agencies or organizations would be more effective or would have greater potential to enhance the participants' continued occupational and career growth.**

**C. The Board's Service Providers shall conduct a review of proposed procurements to avoid unnecessary or duplicative items. Consideration will be given to consolidating or breaking out procurements to obtain a more economical purchase. Where appropriate, an analysis shall be made of lease versus purchase alternatives, and any other appropriate analysis to determine the most economical approach. To foster greater economy and efficiency, LWDB#71 if prudent will enter into inter-grantee agreements for procurement or use of common goods and services. The LWDB#71 when possible shall use Federal excess and surplus property in lieu of purchasing new equipment and property whenever such use is feasible and reduces project costs.**

**D. The Board's Service Providers shall take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible. Affirmative Steps include:**

- 1) placing qualified small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises on solicitation lists; assuring that small and minority businesses, and women's business enterprises are solicited whenever they are potential sources;**
- 2) dividing total requirements, when economically feasible, into smaller tasks or quantities to permit maximum participation by small business enterprises;**
- 3) establishing delivery schedules, where the requirement permits, which encourage participation by small and minority business, and women's business enterprises;**
- 4) using the services and assistance of the Small Business Administration.**
- 5) Requiring the prime contractor, if subcontracts are to be let, to take the affirmative steps.**

## E. Contract Cost and Price

1) The LWDB#71 will perform cost or price analysis in connection with every procurement action including contract modifications. The method and degree of analysis is dependent on facts surrounding the particular procurement situation, but as a starting point, grantees must make independent estimates before receiving bids or proposals. A cost analysis must be performed when the offeror is required to submit the elements of his/her estimated cost, e.g., under professional, consulting, and architectural engineering services contracts. A cost analysis will be necessary when adequate price competition is lacking, and for sole source procurements, including contract modifications or change orders, unless price reasonableness can be established on the basis of a catalog or market price of a commercial product sold in substantial quantities to the general public or based on prices set by law or regulation. A price analysis will be used in all other instances to determine the reasonableness of the proposed contract price.

The LWDB #71 shall negotiate profit as a separate element of the price for each contract in which there is no price competition and in all cases where cost analysis is performed. To establish a fair and reasonable profit, consideration will be given to the complexity of the work to be performed, the risk borne by the contractor, the contractor's investment, the amount of subcontracting, the quality of its record of past performance, and industry profit rates in the surrounding geographical area for similar work.

2) Costs or prices based on estimated costs for contracts under grants will be allowable only to the extent that costs incurred or cost estimates included in negotiated prices are consistent with the cost principles as shown in Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR part 3016 or 7 CFR part 3019).

3) The cost plus a percentage of cost and percentage of construction cost methods of contracting shall not be used.

4) Additionally, in the case of fixed unit price/performance based contracting; all contracts must conform to the provisions of Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR part 3016 or 7 CFR part 3019).

F. The Board Service Provider contracts will contain the following provisions:

- 1) Administrative, contractual, or legal remedies in instances where contractor violate or breach contract terms, and provide for such sanctions and penalties as may be appropriate.

- 2) Termination for cause and for convenience by the grantee or sub-grantee including the manner by which it will be effected and the basis for settlement.
- 3) Compliance with Executive Order 11246 of September 24, 1965 entitled "Equal Employment Opportunity," as amended by Executive Order 11375 of October 13, 1967 and as supplemented in Department of Labor regulations (41 CFR 60).
- 4) Compliance with the Copeland "Anti-Kickback" Act (18 U.S.C. 874) as supplemented in Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR 3).
- 5) Compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. 276a to a-7) as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR 5)
- 6) Compliance with Sections 103 and 107 of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. 327-330) as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations (29 CFR 5).
- 7) Access by the Board, and the contracting Administrative Entity, the Comptroller General of the United States, or any of their duly authorized representatives to any books, documents, papers, and records of the contractor which are directly pertinent to that specific contract for the purpose of making audit, examination, excerpts, and transcriptions.
- 8) Special conditions specific to individual contracts as deemed necessary for efficient program operations.

**G. The Board Service Providers shall conduct procurements in a manner that prohibits the use of statutorily or administratively imposed in-State or local geographical preferences in the evaluation of bids or proposals, except in those cases where applicable Federal statutes expressly mandate or encourage geographic preference.**

#### **IV. Methods of Procurement (See City of Shreveport Procurement Policy also)**

**Procurement under grants shall be made by one of the following methods: Procurement by small purchase procedures, procurement by sealed bids, Procurement by competitive proposals and very small procurements.**

**A. Small purchase procedures (See OPPJ purchasing Policy attached).**

**B. If sealed bids are to be used, the following requirements apply:**

- 1) the invitation for bids will be publicly advertised and bids shall be solicited from an adequate number of known suppliers as evidenced by documentation of an attempt to identify and obtain three bids, providing them sufficient time (a minimum of Thirty days (30)) prior to the date set for opening the bids. Workforce Development Board will only publicize their Requests for Proposal (RFP in the local papers;**
- 2) the invitation for bids, which will include any specifications and pertinent attachments, shall define the items or services in order for the bidder to properly respond;**
- 3) All bids shall be publicly opened at the time and place prescribed in the invitation for bids;**
- 4) A firm fixed price contract award will be made in writing to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. Where specified in bidding documents, factors such as discounts, transportation cost, and life cycle costs shall be considered in determining which bid is lowest. Payment discounts may only be used to determine the low bid when prior experience indicates that such discounts are usually taken.**
- 5) Any or all bids may be rejected if there is sound, documented reason.**

**C. Procurement by competitive proposals is normally conducted with more than one source submitting an offer, and either a fixed price or cost reimbursement type contract is awarded. It is the following requirements apply;**

- 1) Requests for proposals will be publicized and identify all evaluation factor and their relative importance. Any response to publicized requests for proposals shall be honored to maximum extent possible;**
- 2) Proposals will be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources;**
- 3) The LWIA #71 has a method for conducting technical evaluations of the proposals received and for selecting awardees;**
- 4) Award will be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the program, with price and other factors considered;**
- 5) The LWIA #71 may use competitive proposal procedures to negotiation of fair and reasonable compensation.**
- 6) All proposals submitted will be handled in a confidential manner, in accordance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200.318 and 200.319, by the Board, as well as Board staff to ensure that no potential entity that may compete under the procurement has unfair access to any procurement developed or drafted specification, requirements, statement of works, requests for proposals or evaluated proposals.**

**D. Procurement by noncompetitive proposals is procurement through solicitation of a proposal from only one source, or if after solicitation of a number of sources competition is determined inadequate.**

- 1) Procurement by noncompetitive proposals may be used only when the award of a contract is infeasible under small purchase procedures, sealed bids, or competitive proposals and one of the following circumstances applies: the item is available only from a single source; the public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation; the awarding agency Department authorizes noncompetitive proposals: or after solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.
- 2) Cost analysis, i.e., verifying the proposed cost data, and the specific elements of costs and profit, is required.

## **ONE-STOP COMPETITIVE PROCESS**

The One Stop Operator will be procured through a competitive process. The Board will issue Request for Proposal that will include a funding level for performance of the stated One Stop Operator functions. The stated funding level will be based on historical costs to operate the center.

After the One Stop Operator procurement has been completed, the Board will submit a One Stop a Memorandum of Understanding One-Stop Operator Agreement.

The one-stop operator will be selected consistent with the requirements of section 121(d) of WIOA (20 CFR 678.600 through 678.635, 34 CFR 361.600 through 361.635, 34 CFR 463.600 through 463.635). WIOA requires the selection of a one-stop operator through a competitive process, consistent with the Uniform Guidance. Local WDBs will use a competitive process consistent with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR part 200, including the DOL-specific requirements at 2 CFR part 2900, and the Fiscal Agent's procurement policies and procedures that are consistent with the Uniform Guidance. The Uniform Guidance may be found here: <http://www.ecfr.gov>. The requirement to use a competitive process for one-stop operator selection is found in section 121(d)(2)(A) of WIOA.

### **Noncompetitive Procurement:**

Noncompetitive procurement refers to "sole source procurement." A true sole source procurement involves a situation in which the Workforce Area can reasonably demonstrate that there is only one entity truly qualified to fulfill the provision of goods and/or services. Noncompetitive procurement or sole source procurement is to be distinguished from a method of competitive procurement that solicits bids, quotes, and/or proposals from multiple sources, but in the end, only one entity responds to the same.

### **Sole Source Procurement.**

The Workforce Area may use noncompetitive procurement methods only when the award of a contract is infeasible under the micro-purchasing threshold, small purchase procedure, competitive sealed bidding or competitive proposals, and one of the following conditions applies:

1. The item is available only from a sole source. This type of noncompetitive proposal means only one source exists for the goods or services being procured; an example being the procurement of proprietary products. Business justification or long-term relationships with a

particular contractor does not constitute justification as sole source procurement. Sole source procurements do not require prior approval.

2. The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation. This type of noncompetitive procurement is mainly reserved for emergencies caused by natural disasters. Public exigency or emergency procurements do not require prior approval.

3. The federal awarding agency or authorizes noncompetitive procurements.

4. The purchases are for equipment or services where the prices are established by law for technical equipment requiring standardization and interchangeability of parts with existing equipment.

Noncompetitive proposals require the mutual discussion and arrangement of terms of a transaction or agreement for the purpose of arriving at a common understanding of contract essentials such as technical

## **PROCUREMENT FOR YOUTH ACTIVITIES**

The Board will solicit proposals from interested organizations to operate a comprehensive education and employment opportunities to eligible youth ages 16 through 24.

All entities responding to the local board for the Youth Program will explain in their proposal which of the required activities defined in **WIOA Section 129(c) (1) (A-N)** are to be directly delivered through their agency or organization.

### **Request for Proposal**

All providers of activities shall be held under the same laws, policies, and guidelines as Workforce Development Board #71 and their sub-contractors. **SELECTION OF YOUTH PROVIDERS.** —Consistent with section 123, the Federal Register—

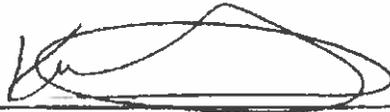
- (i) shall identify eligible providers of youth workforce development activities in the local area by awarding grants or contracts on a competitive basis (except as provided in section 123(b)), based on the recommendations of the youth standing committee, if such a committee is established for the local area under subsection (b)(4);
- (ii) (ii) may terminate for cause the eligibility of such providers.

**Property Management**

LWDA # 71 adopts will adopt the City of Shreveport property Management policy, attached to this response.

**City of Shreveport Purchasing Regulations is listed at [www.shreveportla.gov](http://www.shreveportla.gov)**

Approved



Date

3-11-21

**Katrina Early, LWBD #71 Chairperson**

**Equal Opportunity Employer/Program Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities**

# SHREVEPORT LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

401 TEXAS, SHREVEPORT, LA 71101 • P.O. BOX 31109, SHREVEPORT, LA 71130



**KAREN McDONALD**  
CHAIRPERSON

Phone (318) 673-7500

**OLLIE S. TYLER**  
MAYOR

## Shreveport Workforce Development Board

**Title:** Operating Policy and Procedures for Individual Training Account

**Purpose:** This policy outlines the process for the Individual Training Account (ITA), a system established under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to purchase training from a certified eligible provider of training services on behalf of an eligible participant.

**Background:** The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) establish the Individual Training Account (ITA) as one of the principal methods for WIOA-eligible participants to access needed training services. Career Planners at the One Stop Centers will provide eligible participants with access to training provider information so that participants can make an informed decision in regards to training providers thereby focusing on a customer choice driven philosophy.

**Policy:** The Shreveport Workforce Development Board may provide eligible WIOA participants with training services according to local provisions. *ITA funding is not guaranteed to any participant and is contingent on availability of funds.*

### **Basic Procedural Expectations:**

WIOA provides a focus on serving "individuals with barriers to employment," defined in WIOA section 3(24) and seeks to ensure access to these statutory populations on a priority basis. WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to local areas for adult employment and training activities and must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of training services. Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs based upon the statutory priority.

Training services can be critical to the employment success of many adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Under WIOA, training services may be provided if Region 7 WDB career planner determine, after an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning, that the individual:

- Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment, that leads to self-sufficiency, or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone;
- Is in need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous

employment, through career services alone; and

- Has the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services (*TEGL WIOA NO.3-15*).

ITA's are designed to get people back into the labor force quickly, therefore, participants who meet the priority of service guidelines, will be given preference.

#### **Use of Previous Assessments**

If program staff choose to use a previous interview, evaluation or assessment it must be noted in case notes and or included in the participant file.

#### **Time Limits**

An ITA is limited to six (6) semesters to include two summers or eight (8) quarters in a two or four year post-secondary year program. The limit of an ITA is limited to a maximum of two (2) years. Specific training courses will only be funded once. Participants can repeat a failed course at their own expense. Individuals who receive ITA funding can only reapply every 3 years.

A participant seeking a Bachelor's degree is not eligible to receive ITA funding, unless the degree can be completed within the two year timeframe of an ITA.

Advanced degrees beyond a Bachelor's Degree will not be considered for funding.

#### **Funding Limits**

WIOA funding for classroom training activities will be limited to the cost of the training minus 100% of available grant/financial assistance received, excluding loans.

Training costs, reimbursable by WIOA, shall not exceed a total of \$5,000 to include tuition, fees, books, supportive service payments, and if required by the program, supplies, tools and special equipment.

*ITA funding is not guaranteed to any participant and is contingent upon priority of service and availability of funds.*

#### **Participants Must Apply for Financial Aid**

Program staff must confirm that participants have applied for financial aid each year and a copy of the award or denial notification must be placed in the file. WIOA assistance may be in addition to, not in place of, other grant assistance.

#### **How ITAs are Authorized**

Before any WIOA Title I training funds are expended, an ITA request must be approved by WIOA program staff.

#### **Demand Occupation Requirement**

Program staff must confirm the ITA program of training is for a demand occupation as designated on the Louisiana State Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Verification that the occupation is in demand must be included in the file along with the ITA request.

#### **Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Requirement**

Program staff must confirm the ITA program of training and training provider is on the Louisiana State ETPL for the local Workforce Development Area (WDA) or another LA State WDA( if the participant is able and willing to commute or relocate).

#### **Training Programs Removed from an ETPL**

Program staff may not modify or extend an ITA when a program of training is removed from the

Eligible Training Provider List however, a participant may continue and complete their program of training, as originally approved.

#### **Time Limit to Enroll**

Program staff need to inform and must confirm participants are enrolled in school within 30 days of the approval of their ITA.

#### **Coordination of WIOA Training Funds and other Federal Assistance**

Program operators are to consider other sources of funding for training (excluding loans) to pay for training costs so that WIOA funds are used to supplement but not supplant other sources.

An exception to this is educational funding for Veterans. According to TEGL 10-09, the GI Bill and other education and training benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs are not required to be coordinated with WIOA training (i.e., veterans and eligible spouses cannot be required to exhaust their VA benefits prior to gaining access to WIOA Training).

Participants are required to demonstrate satisfactory progress in training, except for good cause, to access payments through their ITAs. "Good cause" for failure to make satisfactory progress in training includes specific factors that would cause a reasonably prudent person in similar circumstances to fail to make satisfactory progress. Good cause includes:

- Illness, injury or disability of the participant or a member of the participant's immediate family (pending medical documentation);
- Severe weather conditions or natural disaster precluding safe travel;
- Destruction of the participant's school records due to a natural disaster or other catastrophe not caused by the participant;
- Acting on advice received from an authority, such as the training provider, instructor, or case manager;
- Training is delayed or cancelled.

#### **WIOA Program Operators - Staff Responsibilities**

Program staff must first assess an individual's situation to determine whether or not training is needed for the individual to obtain/retain employment that would provide a self-sufficient wage. An individual may be eligible for WIOA funded adult or dislocated worker program services; however, training is not an entitlement and must be necessary.

The assessment should provide information for staff to determine:

- If the individual already has marketable skills for an occupation that will provide a self-sufficient wage; and for which there are job openings.
- If Occupational skills training, On-The-Job or Apprenticeship training would be more appropriate for the individual.

If the participant is already in training that is being paid for by other program(s):

- Determine if the training is appropriate for the individual by providing an orientation (Comprehensive Assessment, Labor Market Information, ETPL and Financial Plan). Even if the WIOA program is not paying for tuition/fees, the program must be able to justify supporting the training decision before providing supportive and other services.
- If the training is appropriate, coordinate funding and services with the other program(s).

A copy of other comprehensive assessment, print out of demand occupation and approved ETPL should be placed in participant file for documentation. If Comprehensive Assessment is not available then administer to client before enrollment.

If appropriate the WIOA Staff will provide information to the participant in cases such as:

- When there are only a few employers in the area that hire for a specific occupation with limited opportunities.
- If local trends in the labor market are changing quickly and/or the information found on-line is already out of date.

The WIOA Staff Person must review the completed Financial Plan to make sure that:

- The form is complete and the participant has provided required documentation to satisfactorily show enrollment in training.
- The adult, dislocated worker or youth program operator must maintain regular contact with each ITA participant, preferably on a monthly basis.

#### **Participant Responsibilities**

An individual must be actively enrolled in the WIOA funded adult or dislocated worker program to be awarded an ITA. An individual who is interested in receiving WIOA funded training could inquire about the process to be awarded an ITA before actually being enrolled in a program; however, s/he must understand the enrollment requirements.

A participant must complete orientation assignments for the purpose of gathering sufficient information for him/her to make an informed decision in choosing occupational training that they will be likely to complete successfully and in which they will be likely to find

employment. For that purpose, the ITA Request contains orientation assignments that include:

- a. Comprehensive Assessment
  - b. Labor Market Information
  - c. Research of Training Providers (ETPL), and
  - d. Financial Plan.
- The participant must attend school full-time.
  - The participant must enroll in classes within 30 days from the approval of the ITA.
  - The participant must attain satisfactory performance which is generally considered to be maintaining a grade of a "2.0" or a "C" or better. The participant must provide the adult or dislocated program operator with transcripts for each school term or a summary of progress from a training provider that does not use letter or number grades. A participant who does not achieve satisfactory performance will forfeit further ITA funding.
  - The participant must maintain monthly contact with the adult or dislocated program operator. Contact information must be kept up to date.
  - If a participant is having difficulty in training, they must inform the adult or dislocated worker program operator; and are responsible to set up and participate in tutoring or other services that may assist them.
  - Participants who are receiving services and funding from other programs such as federal or state financial aid, worker retraining, TAA/NAFTA, DVR, etc., must remain in good standing with those programs. Failure to do so could result in the forfeiture of continuing ITA funding.
  - Participants must be willing to apply for federal or other financial aid through the School / training provider each year. A copy of the award or denial notification must be placed in the file.

**Note:** WIOA programs cannot require participants to take out loans for school; however, participants do have the right to take out a loan on their own accord.

#### **Approval of an ITA Request**

An ITA Request will be approved or denied based upon the following criteria:

- The ITA Request form is complete.
- The participant's justification for choosing the program of training and occupational goal

is reasonable and appropriate (based upon comprehensive assessment).

- The occupation is in Demand (copy from Demand /Decline List)
- The training program & provider are on the Eligible Training Provider List.
- Upon completion of the training, the participant will be qualified for an occupation that can provide a self-sufficient wage.

The participant also agrees to:

- Attend school full-time.
- Enroll in classes within 30 days from the approval of the ITA.
- Enrollment includes:
  - pre-registered for classes
  - have a start date that is not more than 30 days away
- Maintain satisfactory progress (2.0 or better).
- Maintain regular contact with the WIOA program operator and notify the program operator of any issues affecting their ability to finish the training program.
- There is a clear and realistic plan to pay for the participant's cost for training and other expenses. This may include funds from other sources of funding (Pell Grants, Workforce funds, TAA, DVR, and other grant sources).

**Note:** WIOA programs cannot require participants to take out loans for school; however, participants do have the right to take out a loan on their own accord.

#### **Other Considerations**

#### **Employed Participants:**

- A currently employed participant could request an ITA for training that:
  - Is related to their current employment and will help them to advance on the job or to retain their job,
  - Will qualify him/her for an occupation that could provide a self-sufficient wage (if s/he is not currently earning a self-sufficient wage)

#### **Distance Learning:**

- Distance learning programs in LA State are listed on the Eligible Training Provider List

(www.laworks.net).

- Distance learning is not for everyone so it would be important for a WIOA program operator to interview a participant to determine if distance learning is appropriate for him or her. The following factors, at a minimum, should be discussed with the participant:
  - Why does the participant want to take classes on-line instead of attending regular classes on Campus? Do they have issues such as transportation, child care, work or school scheduling problems?
  - Is the participant a self-starter and disciplined enough to do the work on their own? Can they give you any examples that demonstrate this?
  - Do they have a computer that meets the requirements of the distance learning course?
  - Do they have high speed internet services for the computer? Is there a chance that they will not be able to continue the service?

#### **Persons with Disabilities:**

Participants with a documented disability, physical or sensory, may have the duration of their training extended beyond the time or financial limits and may attend school part time if needed to accommodate their disability. The disability must be documented by a licensed professional and information regarding the disability must be kept in the participant's locked file. A waiver must be approved by the Director of Workforce Development.

#### **Fiscal Issues**

- When calculating the amount of the ITA award, include only the cost for tuition ,fees, books and supplies.
- A participant shall not be required to take out a loan to pay for their training costs. However, a participant may choose to take out a loan on their own to help them get through their training.
- If a participant wants to attend a private school that charges more than a comparable program at a state funded school, the ITA award should only include allowable training limit per the board. The participant must take this expense into consideration in planning their training costs and document in their ITA request how these expenses will be paid for.
- Payments for tuition and fees are to be made incrementally based upon the participant maintaining satisfactory progress. An exception is made when the training provider requires that all of their students pay tuition according to the school's established policy.
- Program operators will use their established fiscal method to make payments directly to the training provider.
- Participants who receive financial aid such as the PELL Grant or other Grants are expected to

use these funds first for tuition, fees and books.

- Participants must be informed that program operators obligate funds program year to program year. ITA funds awarded to a participant are contingent upon the federal funds provided to the WIOA funded program. Participants will be informed as soon as possible if a WIOA program will have insufficient funds to continue payments for tuition and fees.

#### Required Forms:

Adult and dislocated worker program operators shall use the Financial Plan Form to document the cost of training and other financial grant sources awarded.

#### Priority of Service:

*The Department of Labor (DOL) Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 10-09 provides information regarding the implementation of Priority of Service for Veterans (effective 11/17/02) and Eligible Spouses in all Qualified Job Training Programs funded in whole or in part by the U.S. DOL at: [http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr\\_doc.cfm?DOCN=2816](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2816)*

*Typically, in the Shreveport Workforce Development Board (SWDB) dislocated worker program, enrollment is on-going and occurs on a "first come, first served" basis without any need to maintain a waiting list. However, if a waiting list does occur, priority of service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses must be given before serving non-covered persons.*

*Priority of Service is not intended to allow a Veteran or Eligible Spouse who is identified subsequently to "bump" the non-covered person who is enrolled and is already approved for or in a training program. If there is a waiting list of applicants to be enrolled, Veteran Priority applies. If enrolled participants are on a waiting list for the formation of a training dais, Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses applies.*

#### **HIRE System Data Entry Requirements (Helping Individuals Reach Employment)**

For all applicable and required WIOA and or Wagner-Peyser applicant or participant Career Services, Training or Follow-Up Service data entry requirements, to include but not be limited to the following:

- Applicant or Participant Registrations,
- Program Enrollments/Intake,
- Eligibility Determinations,
- IEPs,
- ITA's and Training Program Enrollments/Service Delivery
- Training paid by others,
- Training/Program Completions,
- Support Services,
- Exits,

- Follow-Up Services, and
- Case Note Entries.

Please follow all current and future Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE), System guidance, training, instructional materials and direct departmental or program supervisor instruction and policies developed.

If applicant or participant information is already entered in the HiRE System, staff must verify that the information is current and/or make updates. If required by program, print out the applicable or necessary document, obtain signatures and place in the hard copy file. Please note all system data updates or changes in case note.

To deliver Career or Training Services, the program staff person is required to enter participant and program specific data which will create an Individual Employment Plan/Service Plan.

**Data Validation Note:**

The date of dislocation entered must be documented in the file with:

- Verification from employer
- Rapid Response list
- Notice of Layoff
- Public announcement
- Self-attestation for transitioning military by the Army Career Alumni Program(ACAP)
- Self-certification from military applicant

Applicants who identify them self as a veteran must have a copy of their DD214 in their participant file. The dislocation date must have the month, day and year.

*Any discrepancies arising between Shreveport Workforce Development Board policy and or procedures with federal and state provisions due to current or future revisions will default to the current minimum federal and state regulations and guidance available. SWDB policy and or procedures may set forth stricter requirements than provided by federal and state guidance, but in no case will SWDB policy and or procedures not meet minimum federal and state policy.*

**Funding**

Funding is contingent upon the availability of WIOA funds.

**NOTE: Future modifications to the Board's ITA Policy may be approved by the WIB Director. The WIB Director may also waive conditions contained in this policy for extraordinary circumstances and funding considerations.**

Approved Karen McDonald  
Karen McDonald, LWDB #71 Chairman

Date 12-5-17

**References**

20 CFR 680.200

20 CFR 680.300

Training and Employment Guidance Letter