

Capital Area Workforce Development Board

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Comprehensive Four-Year Title I Plan

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2028

North Carolina Department of Commerce
Division of Workforce Solutions
313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120
4316 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4316

Introduction and Instructions

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires each Local Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) to develop and submit, in partnership with the chief local elected official (CLEO), a comprehensive four-year plan.

The WIOA Comprehensive Four-Year Title I Plan is to provide current information and be effective July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2028 and will include required current local policies. The Local Area Plan will support the alignment strategy described in the 2024-2025 NC Unified State Plan in accordance with WIOA Section 102(b)(1)(E), and otherwise be consistent with the NC Unified State Plan. North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's mission is to ensure North Carolinians are better educated, healthier, and have more money in their pockets so that they can live more abundant, purposeful lives. The cornerstone to achieving this goal is to help people get good-paying jobs to support themselves and their families. Through NC Job Ready, Governor Cooper's workforce development initiative, North Carolina is working to build a stronger and better workforce. NC Job Ready is built on three core principles: education and skills attainment are the foundation to a strong and resilient workforce; an employer-led workforce development system is key to the growth of a highly skilled and job ready workforce; and local innovation is critical to a dynamic and effective workforce system. In addition, Local Area WDBs shall comply with WIOA Section 108 in the preparation and submission of the plan.

The NCWorks Commission developed the strategic vision and mission for North Carolina's Workforce System based on Governor Cooper's NC Job Ready Initiative. This vision is to build a job-ready workforce to strengthen North Carolina companies, attract new businesses, and ensure our state can adapt to a changing economy. The mission of the state's workforce development system is to ensure North Carolina has an innovative, relevant, effective, and efficient workforce development system that develops adaptable, work-ready, skilled talent to meet the current and future needs of workers and businesses to achieve and sustain economic prosperity, and to ensure North Carolinians are ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow by increasing access to education and skills training, fostering employer leadership to prepare workers, and supporting and scaling local innovation.

Plans are reviewed by the Division of Workforce Solutions and NCWorks Commission staff. Upon completion of Plan reviews and the resolution of any concerns, as applicable, fully compliant Plans will be given Final Approval. Approval letters are distributed through Workforce Information System Enterprise (WISE). Local WDBs must have a compliant workforce board in place to receive Final Plan Approval and distribution of formula WIOA program year funding. [WIOA Section 108(e)]

Federal and State Requirements for Local Administration of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Local Area WDBs should reference the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Public Law 113-128, enacted July 22, 2014. Additional information is available at the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration website: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta>.

North Carolina policy information is available at: <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/jobs-training/workforce-professionals-tools-resources/workforce-policies>. Local Area WDBs should reference the North Carolina WIOA Unified State Plan to be posted March 2024.

Local Area Plan Submission and Due Date

The Local Area Plan must be submitted through Workforce Information System Enterprise (WISE), the Division's web-based financial system.

**The Program Year 2024 - 2028 Plan is Due:
May 1, 2024**

Each attachment must be clearly labeled in either Word or PDF format. Forms requiring original signatures may use DocuSign® (or similar) and may be uploaded in WISE.

If original signatures are obtained, forms may be mailed (and must be uploaded in WISE) to the Local Area WDB's assigned Planner at:

Division of Workforce Solutions
313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120
4316 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4316

I. Local Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) Overview

The Local Area WDB Overview provides important contact information that is used throughout the Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS). It is important that this section remain current during the Program Year. Updates should be submitted to the Local Area WDB's assigned DWS Planner when changes occur.

In the first section and anywhere else in the Local Area Plan, please include the appropriate salutation along with Titles such as Dr., The Honorable, Chairperson, and Judge.

1. Provide the **Local Area WDB's** official (legal) name as it appears on the local Consortium Agreement established to administer the WIOA or, if not a Consortium, in the formal request for Local Area designation.

Capital Area Workforce Development

- If the Local Area is a Consortium, attach a copy of the current Consortium Agreement.
 - Name document: Capital Area Workforce Development Consortium Agreement.
- If the Local Area is not a Consortium, attach a copy of the formal request for Local Area designation.
 - Name document: Capital Area Workforce Development Local Area designation letter.
- If the Local Area WDB officially changed its name, please attach a copy of the Status of Incorporation, attorney's letter, or other document.

2. List the counties served by the Local Area WDB.

Wake, Chatham, Johnston, Lee, and Orange

3. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, phone number, and email address of the **Local Area WDB Director**.

Name: Patricia E. Sturdivant

Title & Salutation: Executive Director & Ms.

Organization Name: Capital Area Workforce Development

Address: 5942 Six Forks Road, Raleigh, NC 27609

Phone Number: 919-856-6048

Email Address: pat.sturdivant@wake.gov

4. Provide the name, elected title, local government affiliation, address, phone number, and email address of the **Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO)**.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Name: Shinica Thomas | Elected Title & Salutation: Chair, Wake County Board of Commissioners; The Honorable |
| Government Affiliation: Wake County | Address: P.O. Box 550, Raleigh, NC 27602 |
| Phone Number: 919-856-5566 | Email Address: shinica.thomas@wake.gov |

5. Provide the name, title, business name, address, phone number, and email address of the **individual authorized to receive official mail for the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO)**, if different than question 4.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Name: Yvonne Gilyard | Title & Salutation: Clerk of the Board & Ms. |
| Business Name: Wake County Government | Address: P.O. Box 550, Raleigh, NC 27602 |
| Phone Number: 919-856-7573 | Email Address: yvonne.gilyard@wake.gov |

6. Provide the name, address, phone number and email address of the **Administrative/Fiscal Agent responsible for disbursing Local Area WIOA grant funds**. This is the entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds. [WIOA Sections 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) and 108(b)(15)].

| | |
|---|--|
| Name: Pat E. Sturdivant | Title & Salutation: Executive Director & Ms. |
| Organization Name: Wake County Government | Address: P.O. Box 550, Raleigh, NC 27602 |
| Phone Number: 919-856-6048 | Email Address: pat.sturdivant@wake.gov |

7. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, phone number and email address of the **Administrative/Fiscal Agent’s signatory official**.

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: Pat E. Sturdivant | Title & Salutation: Executive Director & Ms. |
| Organization Name: Wake County Government | Address: 5942 Six Forks Road, Raleigh, NC 27609 |
| Phone Number: 919-856-6048 | Email Address: pat.sturdivant@wake.gov |

8. Attach a copy of the **Administrative Entity/Fiscal Agent’s organizational chart** with an ‘effective as of date’.

- Name document: *Wake County Government Organizational Chart*.

9. Provide the **Administrative Entity's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)** number and assurance that the 'System for Award Management' (SAM) status is current. Administrative Entities must register at least annually on the SAM website <https://sam.gov/content/home> to receive Federal funding [required by Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Section 4.11 and Section 52.204-7].

UEI: MBQVYH61TEJ1

10. Provide the name of the **Local Area WDB's Equal Opportunity Officer** who shall be responsible for assuring that discrimination does not occur in its programs or projects. (CPS 10-2021, Change 1)

Jessica Locklear McLeod, One-Stop System Director/Equal Employment Officer

- Composition of the Local Area WDBs shall comply with WIOA Section 107. Local Area WDB Membership Requirements have been provided as a reference at [Appendix D](#).

11. Provide each **Local Area WDB members'** name, business title, business name and address, phone number and email address on the provided form. The first block is reserved to identify the Local Area WDB chairperson (*form provided*). Indicate all required representation and indicate if vacant. [WIOA Section 107(b)(2)].

- Name document: *Capital Area Workforce Development Board List*.
- If a Local Area WDB list is not in compliance, please provide the current list and state the expected date that a compliant list will be provided (detailing vacant positions). Do not change required category names except to clarify those representing multiple categories. When determining the total number of members, representatives serving in more than one category must be counted and listed only once on the form. Identify any names representing a dual category with an asterisk (*).

Notes:

- *Please complete the entire form. Check the block on the last page of the form certifying compliance with required WIOA Local Area WDB business nomination process.*
 - *Representatives with expired terms will not be included in the counted list of Board members. Board member terms must stated in a month/date/year format.*
 - *Plans that do not have a compliant workforce Board will not receive Final Approval. Formula funds will not be awarded until the Local Area WDB has a compliant workforce Board. Exceptions are allowed only when realignment is occurring in the upcoming program year.*
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12. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB works with local elected officials to ensure viable local business representatives are appointed to the Local Area WDB in compliance with WIOA Section 107.

Capital Area Workforce Development (CAWD) has a Consortium Agreement between Chatham, Lee, Johnston, Orange, and Wake Counties which specifies that the Chair of the Wake County Board of Commissioners serves as the Consortium's Chief Elected Official. The Chief Elected Official has the appointing authority for members of the Capital Area Workforce Development Board and ensures that viable business representatives comply with WIOA requirements.

The Chief Local Elected Official must establish by-laws consistent with applicable local procedures, state, and federal laws to include WIOA Final Rules and Regulations 679.310(g). The Local Area WDB shall submit by-laws that clearly demonstrate all WIOA and North Carolina required elements described in [Appendix A](#). Additional by-laws guidance/template and electronic meeting formats have been provided in [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#).

13. Attach the Local Area WDB By-Laws including date adopted/amended. By-Laws must include the required elements found in [Appendix A](#).

- Name document: *Capital Area Workforce Development Board By-Laws*.

14. To demonstrate that the attached Local Area WDB By-Laws comply, complete By-Laws Required Elements – Crosswalk chart (form provided).

Sunshine Provision – The Local Area WDB shall make available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information regarding the activities of the Local Area WDB, including information regarding the Local Area Plan prior to submission of the Local Area Plan, and regarding membership, the designation and certification of one-stop operators, and the award of grants or contracts to eligible providers of youth workforce investment activities, and on request, minutes of formal meetings of the Local Area WDB. [WIOA Section 107(e)]

15. Describe how the Local Area WDB will make copies of the proposed Local Area Plan available to the public. If stating the Local Area Plan will be on the Local Area WDB website, provide link, as well as individual's contact information for distribution of Plan. [WIOA Section 108(d) and 108(b)(20)]

CAWD will publish the Local Area Plan on its website at <http://www.capitalareancworks.com>, inviting the public to provide feedback and suggestions. Comments and suggestions will be accepted from April 23, 2024, through May 23, 2024. Following the conclusion of the comment period, CAWD will submit any remarks expressing disagreement with the Plan.

Public Comment – The Local Area WDB shall make copies of the proposed Local Area Plan available to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media; allow for public comment not later than the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date the proposed Local Area Plan is made available; and, include with submission of the Local Area Plan any comments that represent disagreement with the Local Area Plan. [WIOA Section 108(d) and 108(b)(20)]

16. Attach a copy of the Local Area WDB’s organizational chart with an ‘effective as of date.’ Include position titles, names, and contact information.

- Name document: *Capital Area Workforce Development Board Organizational Chart.*

17. Complete the following chart for the PY2024 Local Area WDB’s planned meeting schedule to include, date, time, location, and virtual link (if applicable). (Expand form as needed)

| Date | Time | Location (include address, room # and virtual link) |
|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| September 26, 2024 | 8:30 am – 10:30 am | Zoom meeting https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85391552847?pwd=ODYwdXRXR3NtZk9rVDF2SzRoT0phdz09 |
| December 5, 2024 | 8:30 am – 10:30 am | Park Alumni Center, 2450 Alumni Dr., Raleigh, NC 27606 |
| March 27, 2025 | 8:30 am – 10:30 am | Zoom meeting https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85391552847?pwd=ODYwdXRXR3NtZk9rVDF2SzRoT0phdz09 |
| June 26, 2025 | 8:30 am – 10:30 am | Zoom meeting https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85391552847?pwd=ODYwdXRXR3NtZk9rVDF2SzRoT0phdz09 |

***Note:** All Local Area WDB meetings shall be held in accessible facilities. All materials and discussions should be available in an accessible format upon request as indicated under North Carolina specific requirements detailed in [Appendix A](#).*

The Comprehensive Four-Year Plan is developed in partnership with the chief local elected official and approved by the Local Area WDB. This approval should be reflected in the Local Area WDB meeting minutes as an Action item.

18. Provide the Month and Date of the Local Area WDB meeting that the Comprehensive Four-Year Plan was approved. Attach a copy of the Local Area WDB minutes that reflect this action item.

The Comprehensive Four-Year Plan was approved on April 18, 2024.

- Name document: *Capital Area Workforce Development Board Plan Approval Minutes*.

19. Attach a copy of the signed ‘Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and other Responsibility Matters – Primary Covered Transactions’ Form (*form provided*). [Required by the Regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 2 CFR 180, participants’ responsibilities.]

- Name document: *Capital Area Workforce Development Certification Form*.

Document must have the original signature or DocuSign® (or similar) of the Administrative Entity signatory official. If using original signatures, mail the signed Certification form to the assigned DWS Planner at:

N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions
313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120
4316 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4316

20. Submit the original Local Area WDB and Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) Signatory Page (*form provided*), bearing the original signatures of the CLEO(s) and the Local Area WDB Chairperson, and attach a copy of the signed document if not using DocuSign® (or similar).

- Name document: *Capital Area Workforce Development Signatory Page*.

If using original signatures, mail the Signatory Page to the assigned DWS Planner at:

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II. Local Area WDB Strategic Planning

*The Local Area WDB is required to keep the Local Area Plan up to date and adaptable as events and funding changes occur, which may require local area responses. Local Area Plans will require an annual modification. North Carolina has implemented integrated services delivery with an enhanced emphasis on regional planning and services. This approach is consistent with federal, state, and regional initiatives and opportunities. North Carolina's workforce development system includes businesses, organizations, agencies, employed and unemployed persons, training and educational institutions, adults, and youth. To enhance services to all constituents, aligning workforce development planning and services with regional labor markets is both effective and productive. North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper's NC Job Ready Initiative is built on three core principles: **skills and education attainment** are the foundation to a strong and resilient workforce; an **employer-led** workforce development system is key to the growth of a highly skilled and job ready workforce; and **local innovation** is critical to a dynamic and effective workforce system.*

At the local level, the Local Area WDBs are creatively working to address the new challenges of job growth and expansions. Employers in Local Area WDB areas continue to have a shortage of lower-wage, entry-level and middle-skilled level workers. As a Local Area WDB and workforce system, Local Area WDBs are leveraging resources and engaging in new partnerships that include the business community, economic developers, chambers of commerce, NCWorks Career Centers, community colleges, public schools, and community partners. Working together, Local Area WDBs are paving the way for an even stronger economy through sector partnerships and career pathways initiatives.

1. Provide a description of the Local Area WDB's strategic vision and goals for preparing an in-demand industry-driven, educated, and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment. Include goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance and how it aligns with regional economic growth, industry sectors, and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(E)]

Capital Area Workforce Development Board (CAWDB) considers itself a public-private partnership that focuses on economic development by ensuring that the local workforce has the skills, training, and education to meet the needs of local employers. CAWDB oversees workforce solutions in Wake, Johnston, Lee, Chatham, and Orange Counties. CAWDB services are designed to serve businesses and individuals of all ages. CAWDB believes in economic development through workforce excellence.

From an operational perspective, CAWDB ensures that all Career Centers follow established board processes and protocols to ensure ongoing customer services. Whenever a state policy or state process is implemented, CAWDB ensures that a local policy is written to include state requirements as well as outline any local area additional requirements.

As part of Capital Area’s strategy, the Board applies for non-WIOA funding to support targeted initiatives as well as its overall mission.

The MISSION of the Capital Area Workforce Development Board is to create a highly effective workforce system. This system will provide employers with productive, skilled workers and offer citizens training and employment opportunities that promote job satisfaction and economic stability. The accomplishment of this mission will enable all citizens to contribute to the prosperity of the community. The VISION of the CAWDB is to be the leader in providing innovative solutions to match workforce skills with employer needs.

CAWDB creates a new strategic plan every three years and reviews the strategic plan yearly to ensure it is still relevant. Our latest strategic plan will expire on June 30, 2025. Through the Board’s strategic planning process, it was determined that the Board and staff’s focus would be on economic mobility and strengthening the tight labor market. It is with these two focus areas in mind that CAWD settled on the following strategic goals for the new strategic plan, for 2022 to 2025:

1. By 2027 we will provide marginalized and underserved individuals enhanced access and support to secure competencies and credentials required for in-demand careers supporting economic mobility. (Customer Success)
2. By 2025 we will deepen our relationship with employers at the local level and establish CAWD as a thought partner. (Employer Engagement)
3. By 2025 we will demonstrate the value, services, and outcomes that CAWD provides to employers, job seekers, influencers, and community partners. (Branding & Outreach)

CAWDB’s Workforce Board Committee structure is based on the Board’s strategic priorities. Each of the Committees is assigned one of the GOALS and charged with recommending to the full Board a final GOAL STATEMENT, identifying STRATEGIES, and establishing SUCCESS INDICATORS for their respective GOAL. The committees are continuing to fine-tune strategies, activities, and metrics. The three Board Committees and the high-level strategies are listed below:

Customer Success

- Identify target populations
- Identify careers
- Identify skills, competencies & credential needed for careers
- Identify the gaps to success
- Benchmark practices that successfully serve the targeted communities

Employer Engagement

- Identify employer needs
- Activate employer relationships
- Address needs with partnership and solutions and share best practices

Branding & Outreach

- Educate local, state, and federal officials on a regular cadence about CAWD and our support for emerging issues
- Leverage messaging from other committees to reach employers and others involved in hiring
- Enhance Ambassador Program
- Utilize community partners as a referral source for sharing information to job seekers, or special groups as underserved/marginalized

The strategic goals for CAWDB are all-inclusive and include youth as well as individuals with barriers. However, from an operational perspective, we do provide unique operational strategies for our youth and young adult populations, as well as individuals with barriers.

In addition to addressing the 14 elements required by WIOA, CAWD has developed a service delivery framework that governs our work with our youth and young adult participants.

The purpose of the WIOA youth and young adult framework is to ensure that CAWD's service providers provide a baseline of services and a guideline for delivering those services to prepare youth and young adults for educational and employment opportunities.

All youth and young adults have essential needs that must be met if they are to make a successful transition to life and the workforce. These core needs fall into five (5) categories: mental health, physical health, civic and social involvement, intellectual health, and employability.

In order for the framework to be successful, CAWD is accountable and responsible for ensuring programs, policies, and services are in place to help youth and young adults move towards self-sufficiency in all five categories. CAWD service providers will utilize support from other community programs whose primary responsibility is meeting the needs of alienated and disengaged youth and young adults. These five core areas must also be considered when designing any program or framework for our target population.

The fundamentals of the WIOA Youth program are Intake, Objective Assessment, Individual Service Strategy (ISS)/Individual Employment Plan (IEP), and Information and Referrals. Based on individual needs identified through the Objective Assessment and the ISS/IEP, youth, and young adults are served through a comprehensive array of workforce development services that fall within the 14 required program elements of WIOA. By implementing the 14 elements within the necessary strategies and tools provided in this framework and considering the five essential needs for youth and young adults, CAWD will be able to ensure that they:

- Align youth and young adult's education with jobs in high-demand industries
- Improve youth and young adult's employability skills for success in the workplace
- Focus on career processes, services, and programs for youth and young adults
- Address through partnerships and referrals, holistic needs of youth and young adults' mental health, physical health, civic and social involvement, intellectual health, and employability

- Leverage resources and opportunities through strengthened NCWorks partnerships which may include, but are not limited to NCWorks Career Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Department of Social Services (DSS), Adult Basic Education (ABE), Community Colleges, Universities, and community organizations.

This framework equips CAWD with a standard working system through which to provide workforce development services for youth and young adults. It provides the necessary strategies and tools to assist youth and young adults in identifying their interests and skills, as well as being prepared to succeed in post-secondary education and in a competitive workforce.

CAWD's framework includes five components for WIOA youth and young adult programming that should be used to interconnect the 14 WIOA youth elements, to ensure participants are prepared for employability success. (WIOA youth and young adult funding can only be expended on eligible and enrolled participants.)

Education

Educational opportunities are readily available to youth and young adults to help them achieve long-term goals, as well as access resources, tools, and services. Occupational skills training, high school equivalency, classes, and tutoring are focused on preparing youth and young adults for high-demand occupations.

Career Pathways

Career pathways versus "jobs" are the focus for youth and young adult employment and training. A clear path from education into the workforce is provided through career pathways that include integrated services, diverse training, career readiness, partnerships, and other unique features.

Career Experience

Career opportunities, entrepreneurship, and work-based learning must be available to each youth and young adult in the program. Local businesses are engaged to provide internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training.

Leadership Development

Leadership development must be a strong aspect of the local Workforce Development Board's youth and young adult program design. Opportunities for youth and young adults to participate in community service, peer-centered activities, classroom development, mentoring, and soft skills training are available.

Wrap Around Services

CAWD will work with state and local organizations to ensure that wrap-around services are available to meet the needs of their youth and young adults in different ways. Partnerships must include VR, DSS, Adult Basic Education, and juvenile justice.

Guiding principles are the foundation of the CAWD's youth and young adult service delivery system. They define what is truly important for its success and serve as a template for building and growing our system. Essential to the foundation of the framework is to establish resources and training for staff that administer career development for youth and young adults.

The following represents guiding principles for NC youth and young adult programs: Accountability.

CAWD will set and track local accountability measures that align with USDOL-WIOA performance indicators and the NCWorks Commission on Workforce Development performance accountability measures. The WDB will monitor and provide technical assistance to ensure that these measures are met or exceeded.

This will result in high-quality services being provided to meet the needs of youth and young adults. Data related to performance accountability and all other aspects of WIOA youth program operations are captured in the NCWorks.gov online system.

Staff Development

Ongoing professional development for workforce system staff is critical to stay relevant and to better serve youth and young adults. All staff performance is supported by specific organizational and management practices that ensure that the best people are retained and adequately trained and supported on the job.

Case Management

The WDB's ensure that extensive one-on-one interaction between staff and participants is a part of service delivery. Case management will require long-term commitments to effectively create positive outcomes for youth and young adults. This activity must connect youth and young adults to the right resources and services to improve education and training outcomes and to establish pathways to employment.

Local Area Assessment

CAWD will have a clear understanding of its target youth population. Prior to program design of the Board's youth and young adult program, the local Board will research and have a clear picture of the following:

- Labor market data (high-growth, high-demand industries/sectors)
- Youth and young adult demographics
- Available resources (funding, services, tools...etc.)
- Local youth and young adult issues (gangs, high poverty, English language proficiency, etc.)
- Other youth and young adult programs

CAWD is aware that some job seeker customers have more barriers to employment than others which is why one of our key strategic goals is focused on "Customer Success" and assisting the untapped workforce in gaining the skills competencies and credentials required for in-demand, family-supporting careers. While CAWD's philosophy is to "meet the customer where they are" and design a workforce plan that is tailored for the individual, CAWD does have several programs that provide enhanced services for individuals with significant barriers to employment as outlined below.

CAWD has a strong reentry program serving individuals who have been formerly incarcerated and have significant barriers to employment. CAWD has enhanced its Reentry program through funding through the Department of Public Safety, the US Department of Labor, and Wake County Government.

- Wake Local Reentry Council (LRC): CAWD serves as the intermediary for the Wake County LRC. The Wake LRC is a collaborative of organizations working to help men and women transition back into the community after leaving incarceration. Wake LRC is located within an NCWorks Career Center for direct connections to education, training, and employment so that candidates are well-prepared for the workplace.
- Community Grants: Through Wake County ARPA funds, CAWD provide grants up to \$25,000 for community-based organizations that support formally incarcerated individuals. The support ranges from cell phones for employment assistance to training classes for high-demand industries.
- PROWD - North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions received a U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) and the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) collaborative grant named Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD) Grant. Capital Area Workforce Development (CAWD), Kerr-Tar (KTWDB), and Durham Workforce Development Boards (DWDB) are subrecipients to deliver the core work of the grant—provide career awareness, education, and training, and reentry support to individuals exiting the Butner Federal Correctional Complex and returning to the region.

Another population that has significant barriers to employment is the older worker. In support of older workers, CAWD partnered with AARP to establish a “Back to Work 50+” program in the NCWorks Career Center. The program provides training, coaching, and job search tools to help older workers compete with confidence for today’s in-demand jobs.

To support visually challenged individuals, CAWD recently had the CAWD NCWorks Career Center Brochure translated into Braille as well as Spanish.

As mentioned earlier, CAWD’s approach to serving customers is to meet them where they are versus a cookie-cutter approach to service delivery. One of the first things that is done when a person visits the Center for the first time is to do an assessment to determine barriers to employment. At that point, an individual plan is put in place to address the barriers for the individual. That includes connecting them to community partners, if needed. CAWD will continue to assess who comes into our center and determine if there are specific populations that need more expansive support outside of our normal process. If so, CAWD will design service delivery programs for that specific group.

2. Provide a description of how the Local Area WDB, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the Local Area WDB will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and

improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable. Include how these strategies will be a result of regional economic and employer-driven priorities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(3)]

WIOA fosters new opportunities for innovation and collaboration across Federal, State, and local agencies, private organizations, and businesses. CAWD will continue to meet with our core partners to:

1. Implement WIOA with other core programs, including the design of the One-Stop Career Center System and the integrated performance accountability system.
2. Efficiently provide services.
3. Implement universal design principles into the workforce development system's facilities and operations.
4. Establish and expand partnerships with community rehabilitation service providers and businesses within the Capital Area region.
5. Continually review services, programs, and partnerships of core WIOA programs to reduce duplication of efforts, as well as to identify the gaps between programs and services.
6. Implement continuous improvement measures.
7. Meet with partners regularly to communicate, strategize, and execute agreed upon methods of meeting the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, as well as recruitment of targeted individuals.
8. Identify and implement any best practice opportunities to expand services/programs to meet ongoing needs of individuals with disabilities.

Over the last several years, CAWD has collaborated with its educational partners to increase its understanding of career pathways and strategically align its resources to support short-term training options focused on middle-career occupations in high-growth industries. Career Advisors intentionally work with individuals to identify career choices that offer competitive wages and opportunities for advancement. Our One-Stop Operator regularly reviews its training opportunities and analyzes completion and placement rates to ensure training meets the needs of industry partners, and that job seekers are obtaining the skills needed to be competitive. In the past, CAWD has convened education and business partners to develop customized training options if a training need is identified and will continue this practice going forward. CAWD also recognizes the need to cultivate community collaborations to address the need for additional support for eligible individuals.

The Board continues to work with a diverse network of community providers who have resources available to address housing, mental health and substance abuse, and legal needs. Many CAWD communities have significant resources to assist with these needs, however, in the region's most rural areas, addressing these needs may be challenging and will require the Board to advocate and encourage collaborative discussions to find solutions to support employment and training efforts.

CAWD will continue to provide the highest quality of service to job seekers and businesses by addressing these challenges through well-coordinated approaches with its partners (mandatory and others) at the local level. Access to services will be enhanced using technology. Examples of enhanced technology include: an active Contact Center, virtual reality for career exploration, provisions of remote services for both the

employer and customer via virtual career fairs, and platforms for customer and employer services. CAWD will continue to explore technology that supports service delivery.

Additionally, CAWD will continue to explore creative partnerships with community organizations and other service providers, such as the Job Reentry program, for those that have criminal records, the Mature Worker program for those older workers who are looking for meaningful work, etc. While access will be improved for all job seekers, the provision of services and training will be focused on those most in need and hardest to serve. Career services are customer-driven and assist individuals in finding and retaining gainful employment. These services focus on training related to careers aligned with the skills needs of the area's in-demand employment opportunities. CAWD aims to connect individuals with the following in-demand industry sectors using up-to-date Labor Market Information (LMI):

1. Healthcare
2. Advanced Manufacturing
3. Information Technology
4. Hotel
5. Skilled Trades

CAWD has four regional career pathways representing four of our target industries. Our Career Centers will continue to use these pathways to guide job seeker customers for access to family-sustaining careers. With the challenges in the Hospitality industry, CAWD received funding in Wake County to lead a hotel initiative with a focus on supporting area hotels with recruiting, work-based learning, and outreach. This initiative is funded by Wake County Government and CAWD will be promoting other counties in the CAWD region to fund similar efforts for their counties. The Work in Wake County is funded through December 2024; However, CAWD will maintain the relationships built with hotel businesses and continue targeted efforts to support their workforce needs.

“Job Ready” recipients in Capital Area NCWorks Career Centers will be co-enrolled in WIOA (Title I) and Wagner-Peyser (Title III) as appropriate, and there is an increased emphasis in our service provider contracts on industry-recognized credentials that enhance movement along established career pathways.

Additionally, CAWD is an active partner in the work of myFutureNC recognizing that many new jobs will require education beyond a high school diploma and supports the work by promoting North Carolinians in obtaining a high-quality post-secondary degree. CAWD partners with three (3) local community colleges, Wake Technical Community College (WTCC), Central Carolina Community College (CCCC), and Johnson Community College (JCC), which will assist the Board in moving forward with designated career pathways that lead to employer-recognized credentials. CAWD will continue to enhance its relationship with Durham Technical Community College (DTCC) as we lead workforce efforts in Orange County.

The above-mentioned strategies and efforts are the result of regional economic and employer-driven priorities. Our career pathways are based on regional labor market information that identifies the high-growth/high-demand industries for our region. As we developed the career pathways, we engaged employers with industry

round tables to validate our assumptions and the labor market data. Our pathways were developed regionally to include the Durham Workforce Development Board and Kerr-Tar Workforce Development Board.

3. Considering the analyses described in the Regional Strategic Planning Section III, describe strategies to work with the entities that carry out the core programs that align resources available to the Local Area to achieve the strategic vision and goals. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(F)]

The strategies for this section do not change much from the strategy in question 2 of this plan. As a Workforce Board, we convene core program partners as well as non-traditional program partners on a scheduled quarterly basis to discuss strategies on how to align resources as well as other workforce topics. These quarterly sessions will continue to include relevant topics as listed below but may vary based on the system's and partners' perceived needs.

1. Implement WIOA with other core programs, including the design of the One-Stop Career Center System and the integrated performance accountability system
2. Efficiently provide services
3. Implement universal design principles into the workforce development system's facilities and operations
4. Establish and expand partnerships with community rehabilitation service providers and businesses
5. Continually review services, programs, and partnerships of core WIOA programs to reduce duplication of efforts, as well as to identify the gaps between programs and services
6. Implement continuous improvement measures
7. Meet with partners regularly to communicate, strategize, and execute agreed-upon methods of meeting the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, as well as recruitment of targeted individuals
8. Identify and implement any best practice opportunities to expand services/programs to meet the ongoing needs of individuals with disabilities.

As well, CAWD will continue to strengthen relationships with core partners and non-traditional partners to leverage resources and make use of each partner's area of focus. One partner example, CAWD will continue to work with the community college to ensure students going through training programs have access to WIOA and other resources to support employment. An example of this is CAWD partnering with Wakee Tech so that students in the Propel Program are co-enrolled in NCWorks. The Propel Program is a training initiative to help students obtain workplace skills and certifications for jobs that are in high demand. While Wake Tech uses its resources to cover the cost of training for students, CAWD can use its resources to cover work-based learning as well as support student's employment. Another partner example is CAWD NCWorks Career Center partnering with Human Services to conduct career fairs and develop assessment tools for their employment process.

There are many opportunities for partners to take advantage of the resources available to CAWD. CAWD will continue to seek these opportunities through outreach and partner convenings.

4. Provide a description of strategies concerning maximizing coordination of services provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act and services provided in the Local Area through the NCWorks Career Center system. Include how this coordination of services improves service delivery and avoids duplication of services. [WIOA Section 108(b)(12)]

CAWD ensures Centers in its local area operate using an integrated service model to deliver services to customers. Therefore, there is no wrong door and all customers that enter a CAWD Center have access to and knowledge of all the services available to them via WIOA, WP, as well as other partner services.

For any new customer, the first step is for them to receive an orientation that highlights the different services available to them through the CAWD NCWorks Center. CAWD does not divide WP and WIOA staff by funding source. They are organized based on the function they are carrying out in the center. CAWD's system is organized around three interrelated functions to serve customers (businesses and job seekers). These functions can be and often include WP as well as WIOA staff. Each function has a functional supervisor that can be WIOA or WP who leads each function.

The three functions are:

1. Talent Engagement welcomes the customer, conducts a basic assessment of needs, collects registration information, and directs the customer to center services based upon need.
2. Talent Development assists the job seeker with work readiness activities. Activities include but are not limited to, skills analysis, assessment testing, supportive services assistance, career counseling, soft skills training, partner services, and occupational skills training referrals.
3. Talent Employment Solutions provides services to employers and work-ready job seekers. Provides services to connect employers and job seekers through a variety of activities including recruitment, labor market data, rapid response, career fairs, interview days, and many others.

The hierarchical structure of the CAWD Career Centers is CAWD Board > One-Stop Operator > Center Managers > Functional Supervisors. While CAWD's strategy is to always have the One-Stop Operator as Contract staff, its Center Operators vary based on the need and staff availability for each center. For example, for one of the Raleigh locations, the Center Manager is a WP-funded DWS employee. However, for the Johnson County Center Manager, the person is a WIOA-funded Contract staff.

Using CAWD's integration service delivery model ensures services are not duplicated and ensures all customers have access to all the services available regardless of who funds the staff that they see when they come to the Center.

5. Describe how the Local Area WDB implements **each** of the following initiatives: incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, layoff aversion, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other employer services and strategies, designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the regional strategy to meet the needs of businesses. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(B)]

Capital Area's Business Engagement and Business Services activities are built, foundationally, around the expressed needs and demands of the business community. The Workforce Board has accomplished our primary understanding of business needs through direct business meetings, and business surveys, as well as leveraging local and regional data via EMSI, O*NET, NC Department of Commerce's LEAD, and other data resources.

Our Workforce Board will continue to convene and be a part of meetings with area Business Resource partners, such as economic development, chambers of commerce, and the local community colleges, in which we will strategically identify joint business visits as well as other opportunities for collaboration.

CAWD currently uses incumbent worker training with 250 or less employees and as a tool to support economic development recruitment projects; on-the-job training is used primarily to support high-demand/high-growth occupations; customized training can be used to support class size training to support an employer with volume hiring needs; industry and sector strategies guide where dollars are allocated as well. CAWD will continue to have industry round tables and other convenings that are sector-focused; career pathways will continue to be part of service delivery for our NCWorks Career Centers as well as our youth centers. We have a regional career pathway for each of our high-growth/high-demand industries.

CAWD received a State Fiscal Recovery Fund ARPA grant for Small Business Workforce Development that focuses on businesses with 25 employees or less. This grant prioritizes those small businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

While CAWD cannot mandate that an employer hires a student who has completed a CAWD class size customized training, CAWD will require employers to at least interview students who completed training that has been customized for a specific employer or a group of employers. CAWD will continue to have industry round tables and other convenings that are sector-focused.

In 2023, CAWD partnered with Central Carolina Community College to launch AdvanceNC. AdvanceNC focuses on advanced manufacturing hiring and training in support of several large economic development projects in Lee and Chatham counties. This initiative is an integrated approach to address the workforce development needs of the major advanced manufacturing companies moving to the area.

Capital Area's Business Engagement Director serves as the key contact for layoff aversion activities. Through ongoing engagement with the Engagement Director and NCWorks Outside Business consultants, CAWD has a view of the challenges employers in the region have and in turn, ensures that they are aware of the services of the NCWorks Career Center to support layoff aversion. CAWD is also a member of many of the Chambers

of Commerce in the Capital Area Region and regularly supports and participates in workshops and work groups to keep in touch with business needs and challenges.

CAWD will continue to put more emphasis on small businesses with a particular focus on those owned by minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and veterans. CAWD's Business Engagement Director's work plan includes a goal to implement workforce development programs focused on small businesses and to increase the number of small businesses that receive assistance. CAWD continues to increase its focus on entrepreneurship through its "Pathway to Entrepreneurship" initiative funded by Wake County. This initiative includes a full-time staff member and an end-to-end process that identifies resources and training to support job seekers and individuals interested in starting or growing their businesses. A comprehensive website, marketing resources, and mini-grants are available to entrepreneurs participating in CAWD's "Pathway to Entrepreneurship" initiative. Because this effort is funded by Wake County Government, the mini-grants can only be used for Wake County entrepreneurs; however, CAWD has made other counties aware of the value of the program and will continue to seek additional funding to scale Pathway to Entrepreneurship across the CAWD region.

6. Provide a description of how the Local Area WDB coordinates workforce investment activities – including strategies enhancing services, promoting participation in training programs, and avoiding duplication of services – is carried out in the Local Area with the provision of Adult Education and Literacy activities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(13)]

Capital Area will continue to work closely with the agencies that provide Adult Education and Literacy activities in the local area including WTCC, JCC, CCCC, Triangle Literacy Council (TLC), and Durham (DTCC). These organizations are included in our quarterly partner meetings where information is shared, and common workforce challenges are addressed. Partner meetings will continue every quarter to ensure continued dialogue takes place regarding the coordination and strategic planning of service provision among all these agencies. Capital Area will also continue to convene these agencies to provide training, additional information, and technical assistance as needed. Wake Technical Community College Basic Skills provides an instructor specifically for WIOA NextGen participants in Wake County. As well, Capital Area is partnering with Wake Tech Basic Skills to continue a new service delivery model for our youth program in Wake County which focuses on pre-apprenticeships. CAWD and Wake Tech will use their formal referral process to refer students between programs for this Apprenticeship Prep Program (APP).

In Johnston County, adult basic skills training continues to be provided by Johnston Community College.

Capital Area will work closely with CCCC to strengthen the relationship and identify more ways that the two organizations can partner for adult basic education services. Currently, participants are referred to CCCC if they need basic skills training. CAWD is currently partnering with CCCC, WTCC, JCC, DTCC, and 7 other community colleges to address the training and hiring needs of advanced manufacturing employers.

Capital Area will continue to strengthen its relationship with DTCC to build on the relationships already established through the current service providers for Orange County.

To understand what all our partners are doing as it relates to workforce development, CAWD hosts partner meetings every quarter. Adult Education and Literacy partners are included in these partner meetings. This allows partners to share priorities as well as collaborate when appropriate. This not only allows better service for our customers, but it also ensures that the Board's activities complement partners' activities versus duplicates. However, duplication of services is not an issue for CAWD. Our approach to workforce development is understanding the core services of our partners and working to leverage each other's resources and expertise. This is accomplished by having regular communication with our partners.

7. Describe the Local Area's workforce development system. Identify the following: the programs that are included in the system, how the Workforce Development Board will work with the entities administering core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment and provision of services, and the programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.). [WIOA Section 108(b)(2)]

The strategies for this section do not change much from the strategy in questions 2 and 3 of this plan. As a Workforce Board, we convene core program partners as well as non-traditional program partners on a scheduled quarterly basis to discuss strategies on how to align resources as well as other workforce topics. Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education leaders are invited to these sessions. These quarterly sessions will continue to include relevant topics as listed below but may vary based on the system's and partners' perceived needs.

1. Implement WIOA with other core programs, including the design of the One-Stop Career Center System and the integrated performance accountability system.
2. Efficiently provide services.
3. Implement universal design principles into the workforce development system's facilities and operations.
4. Establish and expand partnerships with community rehabilitation service providers and businesses.
5. Continually review services, programs, and partnerships of core WIOA programs to reduce duplication of efforts, as well as to identify the gaps between programs and services.
6. Implement continuous improvement measures.
7. Meet with partners regularly to communicate, strategize, and execute agreed-upon methods of meeting the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, as well as recruitment of targeted individuals.
8. Identify and implement any best practice opportunities to expand services/programs to meet the ongoing needs of individuals with disabilities.

CAWD will continue to explore options on how it can better partner with Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. These programs are part of our MOU and IFA agreements and all organizations agree to. Each required partner, including Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education, agree to:

- a) Provide access through the One-Stop delivery system, including making the career services or activities that are applicable to the program (eligibility determination, outreach, initial assessment, labor exchange service, job search, recruitment, referrals, job listings, training provider information, local area performance, supportive service information, financial aid assistance, career planning, financial literacy, and more) available at the One-Stop centers.
- b) Use a portion of the funds available for the program and activities to maintain the One-Stop delivery system, including payment of the infrastructure costs of One-Stop centers.
- c) Enter a local MOU (shown by signature on this document) with the local Board, relating to the operation of the One-Stop system.
- d) Participate in the operation of the One-Stop system consistent with the terms of this MOU, the requirements of this title, and the requirements of the federal laws authorizing the program or activities.
- e) Use a common One-Stop delivery system identifier (in North Carolina, this is NCWorks).
- f) Identify strategies to meet the needs of individuals with barriers to employment.
- g) Use customer service features such as common intake and referral procedures, customer databases, and resource information, as appropriate.
- h) Coordinate business services activities through the Capital Area NCWorks Career Center's Business Services Team.
- i) Provide opportunities for staff to participate in education and cross-training activities as needed.
- j) Provide a representative to participate in the CAWD partner meetings on a regular basis.

Carl Perkins program will partner with the NCWorks Career Centers and NCWorks NextGen programs to ensure there is a seamless referral between programs.

8. Provide a description of (a) cooperative agreements, as defined in WIOA Section 107(d)(11), between the Local Area WDB and other local entities described in Section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of service to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts to include cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Section 108(b)(14)]

Capital Area will continue to work with the local Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) offices in Wake, Lee, Chatham, Orange, and Johnston Counties and other local entities to ensure individuals with disabilities have access to services at NCWorks Career Centers and NextGen Centers.

CAWD will partner with Vocational Rehabilitation to host hiring events exclusive to VR customers. The hiring events will be hosted throughout the region at various Career Centers throughout the area at different times. Our business service team will work in partnership with the regional VR staff to recruit and identify employers to participate in these exclusive hiring events. Our goal is to increase awareness and employment

opportunities for VR customers. We also will have a VR staff representative provide an annual overview of VR services to Career Center staff and offer technical assistance; the availability and benefits of, and information on, eligibility standards for, vocational rehabilitation services; and the promotion of equal, effective, and meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities.

Capital Area will also coordinate with the required partners to implement a service strategy that best meets the needs of customers and avoids duplication of service whether or not they are on-site at the Center.

Communication and referral processes have been formalized in a manner that is streamlined and efficient for all parties and to better serve the customers. Capital Area NCWorks Career Centers, NextGen Centers, and partner agencies have adopted NCCARE360 as the referral tool in the Capital Area.

The Capital Area Executive Director has been a part of the “Disability:IN North Carolina” steering committee and will continue to provide leadership and guidance in ensuring that Career Centers have access to relevant information. Through the efforts of this team, a series of training courses were developed specifically for career center staff.

9. Provide a brief description of the actions the Local Area WDB will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing Local Area WDB, consistent with the factors developed by the NCWorks Commission. [WIOA Section 108(b)(18)]

The NCWorks Commission does not have standards or guidelines for high-performing Workforce Boards. Once the NCWorks Commission develops criteria for high-performing Workforce Boards, Capital Area Workforce Development will meet all the criteria outlined.

However, even without the criteria, Capital Area will continue to be a high-performing Board by meeting or exceeding federal measures and implementing its strategic plan which focuses on addressing workforce issues in the Capital Area.

Capital Area Workforce Development Board continuously measures itself against its principles for a high-performing Board:

1. Be the community’s “champion” for workforce development
2. Be the catalyst for creating a diverse and higher-quality workforce
3. Develop a strategic vision for the local and regional workforce issues
4. Convene the relevant organizations and individuals to address workforce issues
5. Create and promote workforce policy
6. Be an accountability and change agent

Capital Area has an extensive monitoring and quality assurance program, attached to this plan, that helps to ensure that the Board is meeting all requirements and providing quality services. The monitoring program ensures the Board:

- Meets state monitoring requirements to collect sufficient data to review WIOA activities
- Analyze how services are provided through the NCWorks Career Center(s) and NextGen Centers
- Determines any compliance issues in one or more of the WIOA funding streams

Centers will have at least one monitoring review a year. Additional reviews are contingent on center designation (Comprehensive, Tier 2, Specialized, or Partner sites) and performance.

Capital Area Workforce Development Board will continue to focus on its core principles which epitomize the work of a high-performing Board:

- Build robust business connections and supporting networks
- Enhance job seeker services and the One-Stop System
- Enhance youth service and resources.

10. Discuss the increase and expansion of service delivery and awareness efforts to reengage individuals with barriers to include dislocated workers, opportunity youth/high school dropouts, women, people of color in hard-to-reach communities, individuals with disabilities, and justice involved individuals to help reconnect the disconnected workforce. More importantly, clarify how success is measured.

CAWD is committed to and has an extensive history of working closely with partners and community groups to increase resources and opportunities for individuals residing in vulnerable and historically marginalized communities, disconnected youth, women, people of color, and people with disabilities. CAWD will continue to leverage existing resources, as well as seek outside funding resources to fill gaps and ensure that these groups are engaged or re-engaged.

CAWD has several grants and initiatives that are focused on reaching individuals with barriers. CAWD was awarded a \$1,927,284 CAREER National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) in August 2021 that will end in August 2024. The primary focus of the grant is serving individuals from historically marginalized communities or groups. This includes low-income communities and people of color that have been disproportionately impacted by lay-offs during the pandemic. This grant enables CAWD to provide the employment-related resources needed for this population. Additionally, this grant allows CAWD to focus on individuals who have been unemployed or underemployed for an extended period or who have exhausted UI or other Pandemic Unemployment Insurance programs. Through the grant, a Community Engagement Outreach Specialist was added to the NCWorks Career Center. The primary focus of the Community Engagement Outreach Specialist is to engage customers and organizations in marginalized communities by hosting information sessions, assisting CAWD staff with community events such as resource fairs, attending community events, conducting workshops, and providing services in the community.

CAWD has implemented an extensive outreach plan which is inclusive of proven strategies to reengage customers, individuals who registered in the NCWorks platform (via self-service) who aren't employed or are

underemployed. This strategy includes drilling down data from NCWorks Online by zip codes of marginalized communities within our region. CAWD worked with Wake County Long Range Planning to determine if our services were being provided in communities with the most need. Wake County tracks five major indicators to determine vulnerability. They are:

- % of persons living below the federal poverty rate
- % of unemployed civilians ages 16 and over in the labor force
- % of youth under age 18 + % of adults ages 65 and over
- % of vacant housing units
- % of adults ages 25-64 who did not earn a high school diploma or equivalent (GED)

Communities are given a score based on these indicators. These scores determine the level of community vulnerability. CAWD provided data on all job seekers served in the NCWorks Career Centers and it was overlaid onto a Vulnerable Communities map. Through these maps, CAWD could pinpoint what vulnerable communities are being served and which communities need more support. While the other counties do not have vulnerable community scores like Wake County, the staff is using census data to create a map of poverty and unemployment rates throughout the region and comparing it to where individuals live that receive NCWorks Career Center services. These maps help CAWD and partners to be strategic in developing outreach strategies.

CAWD uses a multi-pronged approach to provide outreach to customers in need throughout the community in an effort to make a difference in people's lives. Success will be measured by monitoring engagement and community penetration as well as tracking individual services provided by demographic data. Some examples of programs specifically being implemented:

Women: A recent Lightcast, a global market analytics company, labor market report indicates that construction jobs in the Triangle region are expected to grow by 6% between now and 2026. This was supported by the last Triangle Talent Regional Skills Analysis survey where 59% of Construction and Skilled Trades employers expected to grow in the next three years. In response to this statistic, CAWD also recently started a collaboration with Hope Innovation, Hope Renovations, a 501c3 nonprofit based in Chapel Hill, that was launched in the Summer of 2020 to address this gap and has experienced significant success toward that goal. Their tagline is "Building futures, Transforming lives". They accomplish this goal by empowering women and non-binary individuals into careers in construction through a combination of hands-on, classroom-based training, comprehensive career development support, and on-the-job experience, gained alongside Hope's construction crews, carrying out repairs and renovations for seniors in the community. The goal is to serve 40 women.

Reentry: CAWD serves as an intermediary agency for the Wake Local Reentry County which is a collaborative of organizations working to help men and women transition back into the community after leaving incarceration. Wake LRC is located within an NCWorks Career Center for direct connections to education, training, and employment so that candidates are well-prepared for the workplace.

Reentry Community Grants: Through funds received from Wake County, CAWD provides up to 25k to community-based organizations to provide support and services to reentry individuals. This helps reach individuals in their communities but builds a connection to the Wake LRC and NCWCC.

All the counties in the CAWD service area are part of the *NC PROWD Program*. This program directly serves individuals serving in the Federal Correctional System and returning to North Carolina. The program provides education/training for in-demand careers both in the facility and in the community. Job seekers receive support returning to the community including housing, physical and mental health, transportation, and ultimately employment.

Disconnected youth: CAWD's apprenticeship prep program targets disconnected youth to connect them to a registered apprenticeship, work-based learning, and employment. CAWD has had two (2) cohorts for its electrical apprenticeship program with all students moving into established internships with an IBEW employer after the apprenticeship prep program. CAWD has had one cohort for CDL with 9 out of the 12 participants earning their CDL and participating in work-based learning. CAWD currently is developing apprenticeship prep opportunities in IT and Advanced Manufacturing and hopes to expand to healthcare in the upcoming years.

CAWD has also received a grant to connect youth with or at risk of substance use disorder to workforce development services. CAWD staff has partnered with youth-serving agencies such as Haven House, LINC, Boys and Girls Club, and Alliance Health to provide career awareness events. Youth interested in careers are then enrolled in NextGen to start their career journey.

Hotel Initiative: Over 40% of the job losses during the pandemic were in retail and hospitality. These job losses disproportionately impacted women, young adults, and people of color. Although the job losses were distributed unevenly, it has also provided an opportunity to reach those who could most benefit from retraining into new careers with family-sustaining wages. CAWD's Hotel initiatives support hotels in the Wake County area to connect to talent.

CAWD targets industry sectors in the region that have talent needs and provide careers with good wages and opportunities for growth. CAWD plans to reach those dislocated workers, especially those from lower-paying industries, and help connect them to the education, training, and support they need to attain and succeed in new careers.

11. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the Local Area with:
 - a. statewide rapid response activities as described in WIOA Section 134(a)(2)(A).
 - b. specifically describe the coordination and delivery of services to businesses to include systems that are used to determine economic trends and partners within your Early Warning Network to help identify those businesses that are expanding and/or struggling. [WIOA Section 108(b)(8)]

CAWD is committed to delivering timely and customized services to our business community. The role of workforce development is critical not only in times of growth and hiring but equally as important in times of business slowdown and/or economic downturn. To effectively serve our business community, the Board relies on multiple sources of data and information to determine our role and appropriate course of action in Rapid Response activities. These sources of business intelligence include formal WARN notices provided by the state, labor market data, partner referrals, and direct customer conversations.

Each circumstance requires high levels of confidentiality, coordination, communication, professionalism, and responsiveness to ensure business needs are successfully met. Trust and accountability are also critical as we work through highly sensitive business needs. CAWD serves as the initial local point of contact for outreach to the business and assesses the appropriate agencies and representatives to involve for next steps.

In the case of WARN notices, layoffs, and/or closures, CAWD and DWS will involve key partner agencies such as DES, NCWorks, Community College, and any others who may play a pivotal role in outplacement support at the appropriate time. Businesses find tremendous value in learning about the resources available and are highly engaged in creating a transition plan. The goal through this collaboration is to ensure businesses and their impacted workers have access to critical information and resources. This collective team has successfully conducted onsite and virtual employee information sessions and job fairs. We've connected dislocated workers to our local Career Centers, made referrals to new job opportunities, and helped these workers retrain to gain the necessary skills and credentials.

As CAWD and NCWorks recognize businesses that may be at risk (i.e., potential business downturn, layoffs, and/or closure), our team is skilled at asking probing questions, uncovering needs, and assessing what resources and/or partners may be needed. We ensure we stay current on programs and support providers, such as local partner funding sources, consulting services such as Business Edge, and other resources of support so that we remain knowledgeable and a valuable partner to our business community.

12. Provide an overview of how the region partners with NC Community Colleges, UNC institutions, and independent colleges in the local areas to prepare workers to succeed by using skills and education attainment with a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Capital Area Workforce Development employs a variety of methods to ensure that workers are equipped for success through skill development and educational attainment, with a specific focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. This is achieved through collaboration and partnerships with NC Community Colleges, UNC Institutions, and local independent colleges. The coordination and partnerships are nurtured during regional grant applications, employer engagement activities, and the customization of training programs to provide advanced talent aligned with employer needs.

Additionally, CAWD collaborates with Wake County Economic Development and other agencies to conduct a regional skills survey. This survey aims to gather data identifying the skills required by employers, including their short and long-term hiring needs. The collected data enables CAWD, along with its colleges and institutions, to integrate the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility into the training design.

This ensures transparency, fairness, and equal opportunities for employment for all members of the community. The survey covers a 15-county region and covers 5 workforce boards.

13. Based on the history of economic development projects in the Local Area, how many projects does the Local Area WDB expect to engage in during the upcoming program year? Please indicate the type of services the Local Area WDB expects to provide.

CAWD provided Letters of Support/Workforce Plans for nine (9) economic development projects estimating 1,856 new jobs in PY23. (July 1, 2023, through February 29, 2023) and participated in five (5) workforce discussions at the request of economic development partners. The Business Engagement Director is engaged in workforce meetings to support the major economic development projects including Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies, VinFast, and Wolfspeed.

The workforce support plan includes services related to recruitment, incumbent worker training as well as work-based learning opportunities with the NCWorks Career Centers. For other economic development efforts, the Economic Developer engages CAWD's Business Engagement Director in a workforce discussion with the Employer as a means of introduction and an opportunity to inform and support the Employer with any relevant workforce development services available to them.

Based upon this information, CAWD expects to engage in fifteen to twenty projects in addition to the work necessary to support the major economic development projects.

14. Provide a description of how the WDB is employing sector strategies by creating industry-led sector partnerships to facilitate engagement of employers and better coordinate workforce development services, training, and economic development activities. Include a brief example(s) of existing industry sector initiatives / partnerships or describe the strategy to implement them for evidence-based in-demand industry sectors for the region [WIOA Section 106 (c)(1)(C), Section 107 (d)(4)(D)]

CAWD identifies high-growth and high-demand industries/sectors to determine and drive where the major focus for effort and funding is allocated. This includes requiring service providers to allocate 80% of their training dollars to the high-growth sectors and the creation of career pathways to support each CAWD high-growth sector. CAWD continues work on its healthcare collaborative.

CAWD partnered with Central Carolina Community College to establish AdvanceNC. AdvanceNC is a collaborative group of 11 Community Colleges, 3 Universities, and 7 Workforce Boards in central North Carolina working with regional employer stakeholders to support the development of a robust talent pipeline through awareness, recruitment, training, and retention. In all of these cases, CAWD is working with Community Colleges, State Organizations and collaborating with employers.

15. Identify the Career Pathways developed by the Local Area. Complete the chart below.

| Pathway Name | Partner WDBs | Year the pathway was developed | Number of trainees (to date) who have utilized the pathway |
|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Information Technology | Durham, Kerr-Tar | 2016 | 1,189 |
| Advanced Manufacturing | Durham, Kerr-Tar | 2016 | 125 |
| Health/Life Sciences | Durham, Kerr-Tar | 2016 | 990 |
| Construction/ Skilled Trades | Durham, Kerr-Tar | 2017 | 350 |

16. In addition to facilitating the development of career pathways, also describe the review process for in-demand career pathways to determine if new pathways are needed, or if current pathways should be updated or removed based on the needs of the industry.

- a. Include plans for new career pathways.
- b. Explain how career pathways in the local area are in alignment with other partners/stakeholders' (Department of Public Instruction (DPI), community colleges, myFutureNC, universities, etc.) existing pathways or if they are duplicates.
- c. Describe the strategy to avoid duplication efforts.
- d. Describe the strategy to promote pathways and recruit participants.

a. CAWD uses Labor Market Data and economic development plans to determine high-growth high-demand industries in our local area. Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Health/Life Sciences, and Construction/Skilled Trades continue to be the pathways that include careers with good wages and growth potential in the Capital Area region. While CAWD is not currently looking to new sectors, there are occupations within the current industries that we are expanding. With the rise of more biopharma and EV operations in the region, there are advanced manufacturing career opportunities that could benefit from creating career pathways tools for employers, career advisors, and job seekers. We are working with the employers in these industries to better understand the occupations, the education & training needed, and the career ladders connected to those occupations.

b. The pathways were created with stakeholders at the table. The public schools created articulation agreements with the local community colleges and the community colleges have similar agreements with universities. While some partners have their own internal pathways, they are aligned with the larger NCWorks Certified Pathway. Alignment is maintained through referrals to programs and through the articulation agreements. They are also maintained through ongoing partnerships and programs. Programs such as Building Hope, pre-apprenticeships in Information Technology, Construction/Skilled Trades, and the Department of Labor CAREER grant (NDWG) provide opportunities for pathway implementation.

Individuals receive career guidance and partners provide their piece of the pathway that ultimately leads to employment. CAWD is updating the Career Pathway documents with feedback from partners and employers. These updates will be completed by the end of 2024.

c. Employment, education, and community stakeholders meet quarterly through CAWD Partners Meetings. At these meetings partners share their current and developing programs. This provides an opportunity to learn about new programs and discuss how they can support or partner with the programs. CAWD also seeks out partners when developing new programs to build on strengths and reduce duplicative efforts. When partners do offer similar programs, they are usually serving different audiences, such as different parts of the region or different demographics.

d. CAWD has two primary ways to promote pathways and recruit participants. The first is through prioritizing the four pathways in training funds. 80% of training dollars target these high-growth industries. NCWorks Career Center staff stay informed on the industries and help job seekers explore if these careers are right for them. This helps encourage job seekers to pursue careers that are well-paying with growth. The second way CAWD promotes pathways is through industry-specific grants and programs. CAWD seeks projects that help grow and support the pipeline for our career pathways. This includes grants for the Apprenticeship Prep Program that encourages and supports youth pursuing apprenticeships and careers in the career pathways. Building Hope specifically recruits women into careers in construction and skilled trades. Through these specific programs, CAWD can bring more attention, outreach, and training dollars to these targeted pathways.

17. Provide a description of the Local Area WDB's capacity to provide workforce investment activities to address (a) education attainment and skill needs of high-demand fields (b) strategies for awareness and cultivation efforts to increase access to education and postsecondary credentials and certificates, availability of learn-and-earn opportunities (internships, apprenticeships, summer employment) and (c) supportive services for hard-to-reach communities. (d) Explain strategies that include NextGen, NCCareers.org and any awareness models for success. (e) Explain strategies to align work across the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) and (DPI) to increase youth apprenticeships or assist businesses in hiring youth apprentices.

a. Through the Career Pathway and Industry Sector designations, CAWD has prioritized industries that provide well-paying careers with growth opportunities and in growing industries for the region. This priority means that 80% of all training funds go toward training in our high-growth industries-- IT, Health/Life Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing, and Construction/Skilled Trades. This ensures that the majority of job seekers are being trained for careers in high-demand fields. CAWD cultivates partnerships with education and training providers that offer certifications and training that are recognized and requested by our local employers.

b. Career Advisors at NCWorks and NextGen Centers as well as at partner schools and community colleges utilize tools such as NCCareers and Triangle Career Pathways tools to help guide students and job seekers into career pathways that include work-based learning, stackable credentials, and On-the-Job Training. Specifically, CAWD has developed a Pre-Apprenticeship Prep program to guide young people into careers that offer pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and direct employment. The NextGen Center has

partnered with training providers to hold information sessions, get hands-on experience, and hear from workers in the field. Interested candidates then enroll in the pre-apprenticeship program and earn entry-level certificates that can lead to a Registered Apprenticeship, direct employment, or continued education.

CAWD develops relationships with employers to provide a spectrum of work-based learning opportunities from job shadowing to Registered Apprenticeships, to employment. These work-based learning opportunities are the ultimate way to help job seekers both learn about a career and give them experience that leads to employment.

- c. CAWD has several programs that utilize supportive services to help vulnerable communities overcome barriers to education and employment. The Apprenticeship Prep Program is directly targeted to youth with barriers. These barriers include transportation, childcare, access to technology, tools, and uniforms, and the loss of income when attending classes (even if the job is part-time or low pay). The support services in this program directly address the barriers that hard-to-serve young adults face. Participants receive support for transportation, limited childcare, tools, equipment, and technology such as Chromebooks and hotspots. The program also provides incentives based on the completion of milestones. This encourages training completion and helps mitigate any loss of income to participate in the education components.

CAWD also has a strong Reentry program to help stabilize individuals recently released from jail or prison and then help them attain the education or training needed for family-sustaining employment. Justice-involved individuals often have multiple barriers to employment - criminal record, lack of formal education, lack of transportation, and insecure housing to name a few. CAWD often brings several programs together to provide the resources individuals need to overcome those barriers. The Wake LRC may provide transitional housing funds and transportation support, the community college provides education and training, Legal Aid assists in record expungement, and NCWorks assists with employment placement.

CAWD first works to understand the barriers to employment for hard-to-reach communities and then works actively to establish the resources, partners, and processes to overcome those barriers.

- d. CAWD uses a range of awareness strategies to reach youth and adults. CAWD has always worked in communities to reach individuals that are harder to reach due to transportation, childcare, awareness, or other barriers. Through the DOL CAREERS grant, CAWD has been able to further expand outreach into harder-to-reach communities. NCWorks Career Center staff have held office hours in harder-to-reach communities. Staff have held and participated in community events to inform residents about the NCWorks services. To reach youth, the NextGen program has been utilizing Virtual Reality tools to give youth a hands-on experience in different careers. These VR tools not only provide realistic experiences but appeal to youth that are more tech-savvy. Staff have also worked closely with community-based youth programs to reach youth where they are. Staff have provided career awareness presentations at schools, foster care programs, behavioral health providers events, and anywhere youth may be open to learning more about career pathways. All of CAWD's career awareness strategies involve having a presence in the community and presenting career information in a format that is understanding and appealing to our diverse audiences.

- e. CAWD has established partnerships with local school systems and community colleges to provide more apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities for youth. The NextGen program has recruited youth for Wake Technical Community College's Wake Works Apprenticeship program and created connections to local employers. In Lee County, the NextGen Program partnered with Central Carolina Community College to support youth from an area high school in a summer pre-apprenticeship program with a local general contractor. CAWD's plan is to expand these programs to create an ongoing pipeline of youth to pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities in all four pathways. A core component of this is to recruit more employers that are willing to provide these meaningful opportunities for young adults. CAWD also plans to continue working with Title I schools to provide career information for graduating seniors.

III. Regional Strategic Planning:

North Carolina is defined by an expansive geography that covers over 53,000 square miles and spans from the mountains in the west, to the piedmont region in the state's center to the coastal plain region in the east. This expansive geography contributes to the state's diverse mix of rural communities, small towns, cities, metropolitan areas, and regional economic centers, each with its own unique industrial composition. Part of North Carolina's economic development strategy includes organization of the state's 100 counties into eight multi-county regions called Prosperity Zones, which are intended to help ensure economic growth across all areas of the state, by leveraging regional economic, workforce, and educational resources. Overlaying the eight prosperity zones are North Carolina's 20 Local Area WDBs that facilitate the delivery of workforce services to the state's citizens and employers.

Local Area WDBs are to continue, or begin, formal interaction based on these regional geographies. The following regional configurations will be used for submission of this Regional Plan:

- *Western Region: Southwestern, Region C (Foothills), and Mountain Area WDBs;*
- *Northwest Region: High Country, Western Piedmont, and Region C (Foothills) WDBs;*
- *Piedmont Triad Region: Piedmont Triad Regional and GuilfordWorks WDBs;*
- *Southwest Region: Centralina, Charlotte Works, Region C (Foothills), and Gaston County WDBs;*
- *North Central Region: Kerr-Tar, Durham County, Turning Point, Mid-Carolina, and Capital Area WDBs;*
- *Sandhills Region: Cape Fear, Lumber River and Mid-Carolina WDBs;*
- *Northeast Region: Rivers East, Northeastern, and Turning Point WDBs; and*
- *Southeast Region: Eastern Carolina and Cape Fear WDBs.*

1. Provide an analysis of the regional economic conditions to include: a) existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; as well as conditions that contribute to potential layoffs and closures and, b) knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. Include sources used and business involvement in determining needs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(1)(A)(i)(ii) and (B)].



Source: Lightcast, Economy Overview

As of 2023, the region's population increased by 7.4% since 2018, growing by 183,795. Population is expected to increase by 6.5% between 2023 and 2028, adding 172,712. From 2018 to 2023, jobs increased by 10.4% in the North Central Prosperity Zone from 1,226,021 to 1,353,664.

This change outpaced the national growth rate of 3.6% by 6.8%. As the number of jobs increased, the labor force participation rate increased from 62.0% to 64.1% between 2018 and 2023.



Source: Lightcast, Industry Diversification

In 2017, a Regional Skills Analysis was conducted by RTI in partnership with Capital Area Workforce Development, Durham Workforce Development Board, Kerr-Tar Workforce Development Board, Wake County Economic Development, and the City of Raleigh. This study surveyed over 500 businesses across 15 counties and 10 industry sectors to uncover projected growth, skills and education requirements, and workforce challenges. One significant finding this study revealed was that 73% of companies surveyed expected to grow in the next 3 years, resulting in between 22,000-36,700 new jobs – not considering new economic development growth that was likely to also be entering our market.

Companies revealed their greatest source of talent is through friends and networks, highlighting the challenges many in our region’s workforce face with barriers to access these industries and occupations. The research also demonstrated the need for degrees and technical education. Companies value employees with a 4-year college degree, but there is variation in education expectations across industries. Some industries place a

higher value on education, while others focus on technical training. Respondents across all industries have a pressing need for employees who can take initiative and think critically.

The results of the 2017 study have provided much-needed guidance to workforce and education partners. This critical data has helped to drive decisions on programs, initiatives, and funding and has been cited regularly in grant applications, sector partnership discussions, and broader workforce development programs and initiatives. Private and public partnerships have been created and strengthened as a result of this data gathering and alignment of services.

In 2023, the Regional Skills Analysis survey was updated for the 15-county area with almost 1,000 responses and 11 industry sectors. 77.5% of the companies surveyed expect to grow their workforce in the next three years. There are four key themes from the survey:

1. Company hiring expectations are the highest we have seen in our survey, with few industries planning to downsize.
2. Healthcare and the public sector have consistently high demand, driven by growth in both sectors.
3. Four-year degrees remain top of mind for employers, but they are considering more options and looking for additional, specialized credentials.
4. Small and medium-sized businesses are underutilizing many resources available for sourcing talent.

Our region's economic developers have continued to receive interest inquiries from prospective employers looking to relocate to our region, demonstrating the strength and value of our market – including our workforce and educational system.

An analysis of the regional economic conditions by the numbers is listed below for an existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Existing Industry

Instead of looking at specific industries, cluster analysis catches the potential spillovers of technology, skills, and information that cut across industries, workers, and resources.

Industry clusters most important to the region are Education and Knowledge Creation, Information Technology & Analytical Instruments, Biopharmaceuticals, Local Financial Services, Financial Services, and Local Health Services. "Importance" considers earnings, growth, regional competitiveness (regional job growth exceeds the national average job growth), location quotient (workforce specialty), and GRP and assigns a *Score. The top industries within each cluster are shown.

(This data is not a benchmark against other regions; it only compares the relative performance of clusters to each other.)

Education and Knowledge Creation

69

You have 16 industries in this cluster:

+ Create Group

Jump To ▾

| <input type="checkbox"/> | NAICS | Industry | Jobs | Score |
|--------------------------|--------|--|--------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 902612 | Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools (State Government) | 46,821 | <u>100</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 541714 | Research and Development in Biotechnology (except Nanobiotechnology) | 12,008 | <u>65</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 541715 | Research and Development in the Physical, Engineering, and Life Sciences (except Nanotechnology and Biotechnology) | 11,988 | <u>49</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 611310 | Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools | 24,365 | <u>38</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 541713 | Research and Development in Nanotechnology | 251 | <u>36</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 611430 | Professional and Management Development Training | 1,328 | <u>35</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 813920 | Professional Organizations | 1,636 | <u>33</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 541720 | Research and Development in the Social Sciences and Humanities | 1,148 | <u>32</u> |

Information Technology and Analytical Instruments

64

You have 18 industries in this cluster:

+ Create Group

Jump To ▾

| <input type="checkbox"/> | NAICS | Industry | Jobs | Score |
|--------------------------|--------|---|--------|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 334118 | Computer Terminal and Other Computer Peripheral Equipment Manufacturing | 8,082 | <u>81</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 513210 | Software Publishers | 16,622 | <u>73</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 334111 | Electronic Computer Manufacturing | 940 | <u>48</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 334610 | Manufacturing and Reproducing Magnetic and Optical Media | 107 | <u>48</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 334413 | Semiconductor and Related Device Manufacturing | 4,020 | <u>42</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 334515 | Instrument Manufacturing for Measuring and Testing Electricity and Electrical Signals | 1,239 | <u>41</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 334510 | Electromedical and Electrotherapeutic Apparatus Manufacturing | 404 | <u>40</u> |

Biopharmaceuticals

60

You have 4 industries in this cluster:

+ Create Group

Jump To ▾

| <input type="checkbox"/> | NAICS | Industry | Jobs | Score |
|--------------------------|--------|--|--------|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 325412 | Pharmaceutical Preparation Manufacturing | 10,497 | <u>62</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 325414 | Biological Product (except Diagnostic) Manufacturing | 3,981 | <u>55</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 325411 | Medicinal and Botanical Manufacturing | 268 | <u>33</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 325413 | In-Vitro Diagnostic Substance Manufacturing | 53 | <u>26</u> |

| Local Financial Services | | | | | 51 |
|--|--------|---|--------|---------------------|--|
| You have 6 industries in this cluster: | | | | | + Create Group Jump To ▾ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | NAICS | Industry | Jobs | Score | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 522110 | Commercial Banking | 11,637 | .65 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 524210 | Insurance Agencies and Brokerages | 10,142 | .47 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 522130 | Credit Unions | 5,387 | .40 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 541213 | Tax Preparation Services | 1,523 | .33 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 524292 | Pharmacy Benefit Management and Other Third Party Administration of Insurance and Pension Funds | 847 | .30 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 561440 | Collection Agencies | 337 | .25 | |

| Financial Services | | | | | 48 |
|---|--------|--|-------|---------------------|--|
| You have 17 industries in this cluster: | | | | | + Create Group Jump To ▾ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | NAICS | Industry | Jobs | Score | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 523150 | Investment Banking and Securities Intermediation | 7,902 | .56 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 523940 | Portfolio Management and Investment Advice | 3,812 | .49 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 522292 | Real Estate Credit | 1,249 | .38 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 523160 | Commodity Contracts Intermediation | 80 | .37 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 523910 | Miscellaneous Intermediation | 174 | .37 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 525990 | Other Financial Vehicles | 61 | .34 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 522390 | Other Activities Related to Credit Intermediation | 209 | .33 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 522320 | Financial Transactions Processing, Reserve, and Clearinghouse Activities | 220 | .32 | |

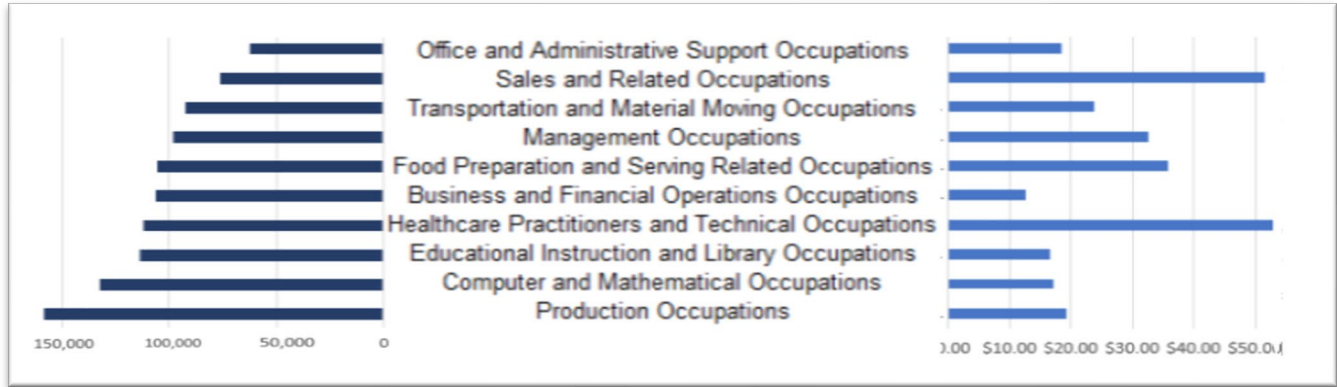
| Local Health Services | | | | | 47 |
|---|--------|--|--------|---------------------|--|
| You have 37 industries in this cluster: | | | | | + Create Group Jump To ▾ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | NAICS | Industry | Jobs | Score | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 622110 | General Medical and Surgical Hospitals | 46,372 | .79 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 621111 | Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists) | 19,188 | .53 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 621511 | Medical Laboratories | 4,926 | .42 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 621210 | Offices of Dentists | 8,848 | .35 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 902622 | Hospitals (State Government) | 12,628 | .33 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 621512 | Diagnostic Imaging Centers | 643 | .31 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 623990 | Other Residential Care Facilities | 1,802 | .31 | |

Source: Lightcast Industry Cluster Identification

*Our average cluster score is 32 (out of 100) points. Clusters ranked higher than 32 are above average. Top clusters must have a score of at least 40, while bottom clusters must have a score of 17 or less. These thresholds are determined by applying the average deviation (plus or minus 7) to the average cluster score 32.

Occupations

Below are the largest occupations in the region; the types of work people are performing. They are ranked by 5-year job growth and do not consider the industry where work is being performed.



Occupations

Below are the largest occupations in the North Central Prosperity Zone: the types of work people are performing.

They are ranked by 5-year job growth and do not consider the industry where work is being performed.

| Description | 2023 Jobs | 2028 Jobs | 2023 - 2028 Change | 2023 - 2028 % Change | Median Hourly Earnings |
|--|-----------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Office and Administrative Support Occupations | 151,997 | 158,609 | 6,612 | 4% | \$19.26 |
| Sales and Related Occupations | 126,557 | 131,970 | 5,413 | 4% | \$17.19 |
| Transportation and Material Moving Occupations | 104,891 | 113,382 | 8,491 | 8% | \$16.59 |
| Management Occupations | 101,506 | 111,612 | 10,106 | 10% | \$52.90 |
| Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations | 100,433 | 106,051 | 5,618 | 6% | \$12.56 |
| Business and Financial Operations Occupations | 94,894 | 105,219 | 10,325 | 11% | \$35.74 |
| Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations | 89,950 | 97,584 | 7,634 | 8% | \$32.69 |
| Educational Instruction and Library Occupations | 85,500 | 92,055 | 6,555 | 8% | \$23.77 |
| Computer and Mathematical Occupations | 67,327 | 76,001 | 8,675 | 13% | \$51.64 |
| Production Occupations | 59,600 | 61,788 | 2,187 | 4% | \$18.38 |
| Construction and Extraction Occupations | 57,689 | 61,235 | 3,546 | 6% | \$21.54 |
| Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations | 48,731 | 52,296 | 3,565 | 7% | \$23.78 |
| Healthcare Support Occupations | 47,237 | 51,501 | 4,264 | 9% | \$15.66 |
| Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations | 43,195 | 45,897 | 2,702 | 6% | \$14.90 |
| Personal Care and Service Occupations | 33,736 | 36,387 | 2,651 | 8% | \$13.94 |
| Architecture and Engineering Occupations | 26,437 | 29,206 | 2,769 | 10% | \$39.54 |
| Protective Service Occupations | 26,621 | 27,447 | 826 | 3% | \$18.93 |
| Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations | 24,234 | 26,620 | 2,386 | 10% | \$25.85 |
| Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations | 22,248 | 24,423 | 2,175 | 10% | \$32.85 |
| Community and Social Service Occupations | 21,482 | 23,412 | 1,929 | 9% | \$23.99 |
| Legal Occupations | 10,134 | 10,984 | 850 | 8% | \$39.68 |
| Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations | 6,225 | 6,353 | 129 | 2% | \$14.46 |
| Military-only occupations | 3,041 | 3,052 | 11 | 0% | \$16.10 |

Fastest Growing Occupations

Ranked by 'Change in Jobs' from 2023 to 2028

| SOC | Description | 2023 Jobs | 2028 Jobs | 2023 - 2028 Change | 2023 - 2028 % Change | Median Hourly Earnings |
|---------|--|-----------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 15-1252 | Software Developers | 25,625 | 29,729 | 4,105 | 16% | \$62.16 |
| 25-1099 | Postsecondary Teachers | 23,353 | 27,175 | 3,822 | 16% | \$38.40 |
| 11-1021 | General and Operations Managers | 26,573 | 29,097 | 2,525 | 10% | \$51.88 |
| 53-7062 | Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand | 27,084 | 29,223 | 2,138 | 8% | \$15.90 |
| 29-1141 | Registered Nurses | 31,583 | 33,564 | 1,981 | 6% | \$32.87 |
| 31-1128 | Home Health and Personal Care Aides | 17,065 | 18,901 | 1,836 | 11% | \$12.63 |
| 35-2014 | Cooks, Restaurant | 11,814 | 13,481 | 1,668 | 14% | \$15.06 |
| 13-2011 | Accountants and Auditors | 13,956 | 15,487 | 1,531 | 11% | \$37.34 |
| 53-7065 | Stockers and Order Fillers | 21,650 | 23,151 | 1,501 | 7% | \$14.97 |
| 53-3032 | Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 15,474 | 16,955 | 1,481 | 10% | \$22.60 |
| 35-3023 | Fast Food and Counter Workers | 16,599 | 18,035 | 1,436 | 9% | \$11.51 |
| 13-1161 | Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists | 9,016 | 10,367 | 1,351 | 15% | \$34.29 |
| 13-1111 | Management Analysts | 7,559 | 8,677 | 1,119 | 15% | \$44.83 |
| 11-3031 | Financial Managers | 5,581 | 6,597 | 1,016 | 18% | \$68.16 |
| 13-1199 | Business Operations Specialists, All Other | 12,160 | 13,175 | 1,015 | 8% | \$32.65 |
| 49-9071 | Maintenance and Repair Workers, General | 12,312 | 13,320 | 1,007 | 8% | \$21.17 |
| 41-2031 | Retail Salespersons | 27,036 | 28,038 | 1,003 | 4% | \$14.00 |
| 11-3021 | Computer and Information Systems Managers | 8,077 | 9,079 | 1,002 | 12% | \$76.46 |
| 37-2011 | Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping | 16,687 | 17,676 | 989 | 6% | \$14.15 |
| 13-1082 | Project Management Specialists | 8,833 | 9,795 | 962 | 11% | \$46.28 |

Occupations Shedding Jobs

Below are the occupations decreasing in number. Many of these occupations are related to the industries projected to lose jobs in Table 3 so they are vulnerable to layoffs and closing as companies make workforce decisions.

| SOC | Description | Avg. Hourly Earnings | 2023 Jobs | 2028 Jobs | 2023 - 2028 Change | 2023 - 2028 % Change | 2028 Employment Concentration | 2023 Hires | 2023 Separations |
|---------|--|----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| 41-2011 | Cashiers | \$12.51 | 30,324 | 29,559 | (764) | (3%) | 1.10 | 51,350 | 51,905 |
| 35-2011 | Cooks, Fast Food | \$11.53 | 21,636 | 21,273 | (362) | (2%) | 3.48 | 42,559 | 45,597 |
| 33-3012 | Correctional Officers and Jailers | \$19.43 | 3,370 | 3,187 | (184) | (5%) | 1.09 | 1,209 | 1,338 |
| 11-9013 | Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers | \$25.47 | 2,899 | 2,801 | (97) | (3%) | 0.62 | 2,110 | 2,093 |
| 43-9021 | Data Entry Keyers | \$17.82 | 1,534 | 1,452 | (82) | (5%) | 1.19 | 1,713 | 1,998 |
| 43-6011 | Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants | \$28.80 | 4,294 | 4,230 | (64) | (1%) | 1.10 | 3,131 | 3,563 |
| 43-9022 | Word Processors and Typists | \$21.56 | 333 | 283 | (50) | (15%) | 0.80 | 190 | 247 |
| 43-6012 | Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants | \$23.66 | 1,006 | 969 | (36) | (4%) | 0.81 | 653 | 680 |
| 51-6021 | Pressers, Textile, Garment, and Related Materials | \$12.86 | 228 | 195 | (33) | (15%) | 0.86 | 406 | 432 |
| 25-3011 | Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as a Seco | \$28.98 | 1,016 | 987 | (30) | (3%) | 2.69 | 655 | 760 |
| 51-3022 | Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers | \$16.12 | 641 | 614 | (27) | (4%) | 0.52 | 956 | 932 |
| 43-4151 | Order Clerks | \$16.35 | 1,048 | 1,025 | (23) | (2%) | 1.12 | 953 | 1,060 |
| 51-8013 | Power Plant Operators | \$38.69 | 254 | 232 | (22) | (9%) | 0.83 | 65 | 66 |
| 43-5053 | Postal Service Mail Sorters, Processors, and Processing Machine Operator | \$25.59 | 839 | 822 | (17) | (2%) | 0.92 | 291 | 317 |
| 51-9011 | Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders | \$27.58 | 1,807 | 1,791 | (17) | (1%) | 1.85 | 589 | 607 |
| 51-3023 | Slaughtering and Meat Packers | \$15.51 | 610 | 594 | (17) | (3%) | 0.86 | 669 | 670 |
| 43-2011 | Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service | \$16.40 | 240 | 225 | (15) | (6%) | 0.64 | 185 | 248 |
| 27-1023 | Floral Designers | \$18.20 | 279 | 265 | (14) | (5%) | 0.64 | 227 | 210 |
| 45-4022 | Logging Equipment Operators | \$20.26 | 372 | 359 | (13) | (3%) | 1.20 | 514 | 520 |
| 51-6052 | Tailors, Dressmakers, and Custom Sewers | \$15.15 | 228 | 218 | (10) | (4%) | 0.82 | 151 | 147 |
| 41-9041 | Telemarketers | \$15.55 | 1,174 | 1,165 | (9) | (1%) | 1.65 | 1,907 | 2,124 |
| 27-3011 | Broadcast Announcers and Radio Disc Jockeys | \$38.82 | 241 | 232 | (9) | (4%) | 0.97 | 124 | 129 |
| 25-2032 | Career/Technical Education Teachers, Secondary School | \$26.00 | 972 | 964 | (8) | (1%) | 1.34 | 243 | 255 |
| 47-3011 | Helpers-Brickmasons, Blockmasons, Stonemasons, and Tile and Marble S | \$16.40 | 235 | 226 | (8) | (3%) | 1.58 | 1,200 | 1,356 |
| 33-1011 | First-Line Supervisors of Correctional Officers | \$29.01 | 389 | 381 | (8) | (2%) | 0.83 | 126 | 130 |

2. Describe how the regional strategic vision aligns with the NCWorks Commission’s 2023-2025 Strategic Plan.

The five Boards identified as a regional area have not traditionally needed to work regionally to address employer needs or job seeker needs. Traditionally, CAWD, Kerr-Tar, and Durham have partnered to work together because of the proximity and shared businesses in Research Triangle Park. However, as a Workforce Board System, Workforce Boards across NC meet every month virtually and face-to-face quarterly to address common needs, share best practices, and more. CAWD will continue to use this forum to determine when it is necessary to partner with Turning Point and Mid-Carolina to meet the needs of employers and job seekers in the region.

The three CAWD, Kerr-Tar, and Durham Workforce Boards’ Business Engagement staff meet regularly to better understand what is happening from an employer perspective. This provides an opportunity for them to identify common challenges and work on solutions as well as share best practices. The Boards will continue regular joint meetings and regional employment engagement when appropriate and plan to include Turning Point and Mid-Carolina. Three Boards (CAWD, Kerr-Tar, and Durham) utilize the same Incumbent Worker Brand (Catalyst 2020), and application, with the only variance being the amount each Board allocates per application and lifetime maximum. The rationale is that if labeled the same when an employer has operations in more than one of the contiguous workforce Boards, there is uniformity causing less confusion (except for the number of reimbursements for the employer). This template will be shared with Turning Point and Mid-Carolina if they wish to use it; however, because they are also part of other regions, this may not be possible.

CAWD, along with Wake County Economic Development sponsored 2023 Skills Survey which included Economic Development, has also served as a source to ensure that Boards understand the skills needs of the employers in our region. The skills survey included a 15-county region which includes all the Workforce Boards identified in the North Central region. Despite challenges related to the pandemic, the survey revealed that a high percentage of businesses plan to continue to grow and many expect to hire for new jobs. The high percentage reflects the strong local economy and suggests that while economic growth will remain slow, a recovery will occur in the Research Triangle region.

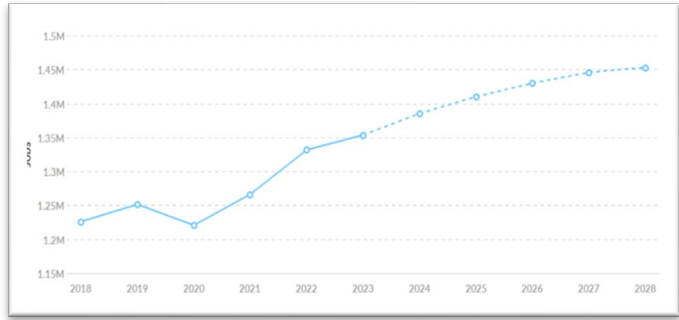
3. Provide an analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(1)(C)].

Labor Force

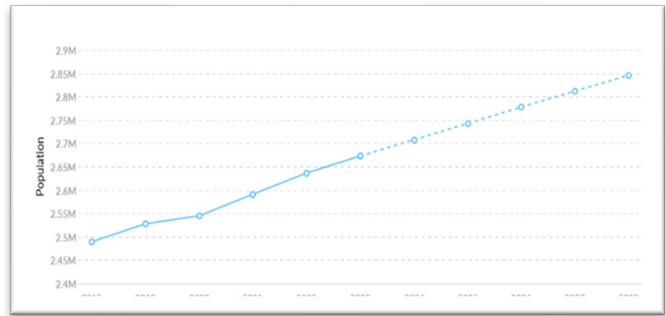


Source: Lightcast.io

As of 2023 the population of the North Central Prosperity Zone (NCPZ) increased by 7.4% since 2018, growing by 183,795. The population is expected to increase by 6.5% between 2023 and 2028, adding 183,795 people.



Over the same period, jobs increased by 10.4%, from 1,226,021 to 1,353,664. This change outpaced the national growth rate of 3.6% by 6.8%. The labor force participation rate increased as the number of jobs increased, growing from 62% to 64.1% between 2018 and 2023.



At the end of 2023, the region’s unemployment rate was 3.0%, less than the state (3.2%) and nation (4.1%). Only the Western Region Prosperity Zone was lower at 2.7%.

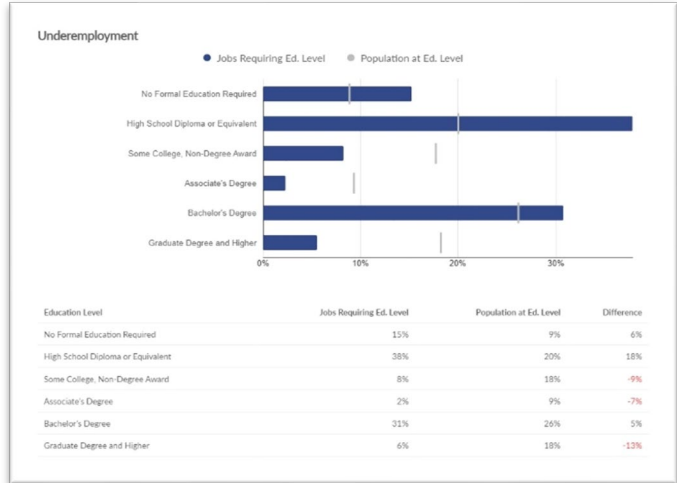
| UNEMPLOYMENT RATE | EMPLOYED | UNEMPLOYED | LABOR FORCE |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3.0% December 2023 | 1,319,544 December 2023 | 41,356 December 2023 | 1,360,900 December 2023 |

Concerning educational attainment, 26% of the region’s residents possess a bachelor’s degree (5% above the national average), and 9.3% hold an associate degree (0.3% above the national average). High school diplomas are held by 20% and 18% have some college education. Just over 5% only have a 9th-12th grade education and 3.7% have less than a 9th grade education.

Data provided by the Department of Public Instruction to MyFutureNC, a statewide nonprofit focused on educational attainment, indicates that 77.3% of postsecondary degrees and credentials conferred by education institutions in the North Central Prosperity Zone are aligned with labor market needs. They are earned in the region’s top industries: Health Care and Social Assistance, Professional Scientific and Technical Services, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, and Manufacturing. They also reported that 5,644 individuals participated in an ApprenticeshipNC program in 2020 and that 60% of adults (ages 25-44) in North Central earned a family sustaining wage in 2022.

The region has several outstanding educational institutions that contribute to its reputation of having a highly skilled, educated, and motivated workforce and helps to create a strong talent pipeline. The population exceeds minimum education requirements for jobs requiring some college, an associate degree, or graduate degree. The percent of population with bachelor's degrees is only 5% under the percentage of jobs that require it.

| Institution | Completions (2022) | Growth % YOY (2022) | Market Share (2022) |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| North Carolina State University at Raleigh | 10,279 | -3.4% | 24.5% |
| University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | 9,997 | 0.5% | 23.8% |
| Duke University | 6,863 | 3.1% | 16.3% |
| Wake Technical Community College | 6,278 | -25.3% | 14.9% |
| North Carolina Central University | 1,734 | 7.3% | 4.1% |
| Johnston Community College | 1,184 | -14.3% | 2.8% |
| Central Carolina Community College | 1,151 | 17.3% | 2.7% |
| Durham Technical Community College | 987 | -45.9% | 2.3% |
| Nash Community College | 758 | 2.0% | 1.8% |
| Vance-Granville Community College | 594 | -1.2% | 1.4% |
| Meredith College | 567 | 0.9% | 1.3% |
| Wilson Community College | 450 | -3.8% | 1.1% |



Below is data reflecting the skills on individual job profiles of individuals that have updated their work histories since 2021. The information is ranked by how frequently the skill shows up in the top 10 Specialized Skills group, and the 10 Common Skills group.

| Associate Degree | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Top Specialized Skills | | |
| Skill | Frequency in Profiles | Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2024) |
| Project Management | 7% | 328 / 4,395 |
| Marketing | 7% | 303 / 4,395 |
| Data Entry | 7% | 302 / 4,395 |
| Inventory Management | 5% | 227 / 4,395 |
| Merchandising | 5% | 222 / 4,395 |
| Accounting | 4% | 172 / 4,395 |
| Warehousing | 4% | 172 / 4,395 |
| Technical Support | 4% | 169 / 4,395 |
| Event Planning | 4% | 160 / 4,395 |
| Billing | 3% | 152 / 4,395 |

| Top Common Skills | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Skill | Frequency in Profiles | Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2024) |
| Customer Service | 36% | 1,577 / 4,395 |
| Sales | 24% | 1,049 / 4,395 |
| Microsoft Office | 17% | 758 / 4,395 |
| Management | 17% | 733 / 4,395 |
| Leadership | 16% | 710 / 4,395 |
| Microsoft Excel | 14% | 627 / 4,395 |
| Communication | 13% | 591 / 4,395 |
| Microsoft Word | 13% | 579 / 4,395 |
| Operations | 12% | 542 / 4,395 |
| Microsoft PowerPoint | 10% | 459 / 4,395 |

Bachelor's Degree

Top Specialized Skills

| Skill | Frequency in Profiles | Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2024) |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Marketing | 15% | 5,025 / 33,204 |
| Project Management | 10% | 3,384 / 33,204 |
| Data Analysis | 8% | 2,625 / 33,204 |
| Social Media | 7% | 2,360 / 33,204 |
| Event Planning | 6% | 1,945 / 33,204 |
| Python (Programming Language) | 6% | 1,872 / 33,204 |
| Undergraduate Research | 5% | 1,540 / 33,204 |
| Data Entry | 5% | 1,506 / 33,204 |
| Social Media Marketing | 4% | 1,469 / 33,204 |
| Accounting | 4% | 1,397 / 33,204 |

Top Common Skills

| Skill | Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2024) |
|------------------|--|
| Customer Service | 9,881 / 33,204 |
| Research | 8,830 / 33,204 |
| Sales | 7,817 / 33,204 |
| Leadership | 7,581 / 33,204 |
| Communication | 7,010 / 33,204 |
| Microsoft Office | 6,052 / 33,204 |
| Management | 5,700 / 33,204 |
| Microsoft Excel | 5,565 / 33,204 |
| Operations | 4,722 / 33,204 |
| Microsoft Word | 4,420 / 33,204 |

Master's Degree

Top Specialized Skills

| Skill | Frequency in Profiles | Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2024) |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Project Management | 19% | 4,028 / 25,008 |
| Marketing | 17% | 4,187 / 25,008 |
| Data Analysis | 16% | 4,107 / 25,008 |
| Event Planning | 11% | 2,810 / 25,008 |
| Python (Programming La | 9% | 2,337 / 25,008 |
| Social Media | 8% | 1,975 / 25,008 |
| SQL (Programming Langs | 8% | 1,919 / 25,008 |
| Community Outreach | 7% | 1,815 / 25,008 |
| Auditing | 7% | 1,740 / 25,008 |
| Finance | 6% | 1,608 / 25,008 |

Top Common Skills

| Skill | Frequency in Profiles | Profiles with Skill / Total Profiles (2021 - 2024) |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Research | 40% | 10,030 / 25,008 |
| Leadership | 33% | 8,283 / 25,008 |
| Customer Service | 31% | 7,635 / 25,008 |
| Microsoft Office | 30% | 7,425 / 25,008 |
| Management | 28% | 7,064 / 25,008 |
| Microsoft Excel | 26% | 6,591 / 25,008 |
| Communication | 25% | 6,155 / 25,008 |
| Public Speaking | 21% | 5,348 / 25,008 |
| Microsoft PowerPoint | 21% | 5,331 / 25,008 |
| Sales | 21% | 5,268 / 25,008 |

Barriers

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) focuses on serving “individuals with barriers to employment” and aims to provide quality services for these populations. Barriers include:

Lack of Educational Attainment

Despite the education positives in region, the pandemic had a profound effect on overall educational attainment that is ongoing, especially in the more rural counties of the region. A new report analyzing the performance of North Carolina K12 students found that learning progress slowed across all grades and subjects. Students made less progress on average than students in the same grades and courses in previous

years. Youth represent the next generation that will drive the workforce and inform innovative developments. They influence societal developments in many ways and have grand contributions to make. But improvements in educational attainment have to be made, especially in the region's rural areas.

MyFutureNC reported the following for the NCPZ workforce areas:

Turning Point

- 37% of students are chronically absent from school compared to 32% statewide.
- 10,105 less are needed to meet state goal of 11%
- In 2022, 3% of students dropped out of high school (374 total students), compared to 2% statewide.

Kerr-Tar

- 44% of students are chronically absent from school compared to 32% statewide.
- 8,946 less is needed to meet state goal of 11%
- In 2022, 3% of students dropped out of high school (271 total students), compared to 2% statewide.

Durham

- 41% of students are chronically absent from school compared to 32% statewide.
- 10,045 less is needed to meet state goal of 11%
- In 2022, 4% of students dropped out of high school (492 total students) compared to 2% statewide.

CAWD

- 24% of students are chronically absent from school compared to 32% statewide.
- 31,528 less are needed to meet state goal of 11%
- In 2022, 2% of students dropped out of high school (1,193 total students) in line with 2% statewide.

The disruption to postsecondary education caused by the pandemic caused young people to have to rapidly adjust to unexpected circumstances. According to Strada Education, the number of students attending college continues to drop resulting in a 6.5 percent decline in undergraduate enrollment and a 12.3 percent decline in first-year enrollment since 2019. Communities of color have been disproportionately affected, with Native American and Black students experiencing the steepest enrollment drops.

Reconnecting students using a range of modalities, from virtual communication to in-person events, can help provide students with the guidance they need to navigate education and decisions. According to Strada's research, short-term and career-focused training options can offer an entry point into postsecondary education for students who are focused on starting their careers. Integrating resources and support from community-based services, designating aid programs for specific student populations, are also effective practices. The workforce and education systems must continue to partner with education and community organizations to develop and deliver practices that engage disconnected youth, and continually reassess and refine what works.

| | NCPZ County | Total Population | Foreign-Born Population | % Foreign-Born Population | Population of People Living in Non-English-Speaking Households |
|---------------|------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| CAWD | Wake County, NC | 1,112,883 | 150,006 | 13.5% | 182,985 |
| | Johnston County, NC | 211,320 | 15,753 | 7.5% | 26,972 |
| | Chatham County, NC | 75,070 | 7,623 | 10.2% | 10,370 |
| | Lee County, NC | 62,676 | 5,420 | 8.6% | 10,585 |
| | Orange County, NC | 147,376 | 18,565 | 12.6% | 22,499 |
| | Durham County, NC | 320,146 | 45,816 | 14.3% | 55,121 |
| KERR-TAR | Franklin County, NC | 67,598 | 3,573 | 5.3% | 4,532 |
| | Granville County, NC | 60,854 | 2,818 | 4.6% | 4,618 |
| | Vance County, NC | 42,650 | 2,098 | 4.9% | 2,874 |
| | Person County, NC | 38,999 | 1,067 | 2.7% | 1,633 |
| | Warren County, NC | 18,889 | 498 | 2.6% | 764 |
| TURNING POINT | Nash County, NC | 94,628 | 4,056 | 4.3% | 6,278 |
| | Wilson County, NC | 78,844 | 4,844 | 6.1% | 8,386 |
| | Halifax County, NC | 49,291 | 1,055 | 2.1% | 1,605 |
| | Edgecombe County, NC | 49,609 | 1,395 | 2.8% | 2,529 |
| | Northampton County, NC | 17,917 | 337 | 1.9% | 421 |
| | Harnett County, NC | 122,074 | 7,765 | 5.8% | 14,305 |

Source: Lightcast.io Community Indicators/2020 U.S. Census

I. English Language Proficiency

Over a quarter million people make up the region’s foreign-born population. Every effort is being made to eliminate, to the maximum extent possible, limited English proficiency as a barrier to full and meaningful participation in the workforce. The NC Department of Commerce posits that immigration will play an ever-increasing role in alleviating worker shortages.

The number of people living in non-English speaking households exceeds 342,000. Being able to overcome language barriers is important to ensure accessibility to services for all residents. The workforce system must prioritize having forms and other documents in multiple languages and invest in technologies that ease communication between staff and non-English speakers. Hiring bilingual staff is also critical.

II. Previous Incarceration

| PRISON EXITS BY COUNTY | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| CAWD | Wake | 1064 |
| | Johnston | 299 |
| | Chatham | 59 |
| | Lee | 112 |
| | Orange | 109 |
| | 1643 | |
| KERR-TAR | Vance | 116 |
| | Granville | 82 |
| | Person | 109 |
| | Franklin | 102 |
| | Warren | 28 |
| | 437 | |
| T. POINT | Edgecombe | 185 |
| | Nash | 233 |
| | Wilson | 227 |
| | | 645 |
| | Durham | 461 |
| | Harnett | 216 |
| | REGION TOTAL: | 3402 |

The North Carolina Department of Adult Corrections (DAC) reports that 19,559 individuals were released from North Carolina prisons between February 1, 2023, and January 31, 2024. For the NCPZ, exits totaled 3,420, about the same as the previous year’s total of 3,424.

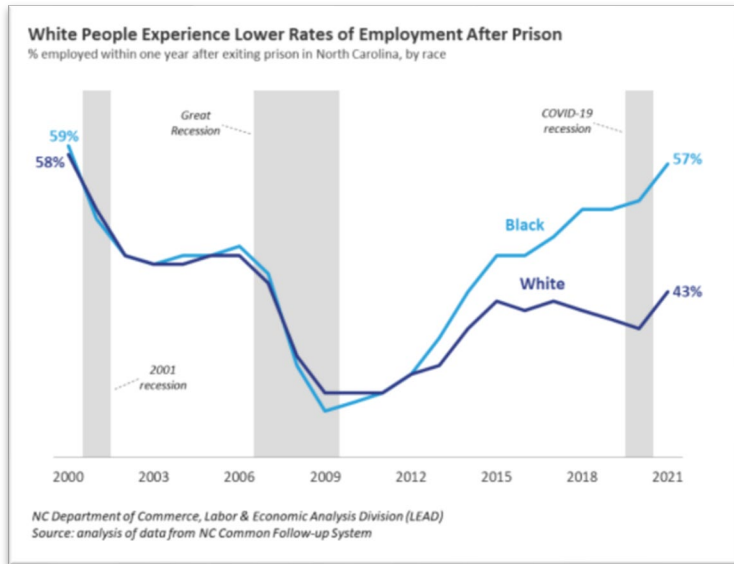
Successful reintegration is paramount for those returning from prison and it is also a matter of public safety and economic necessity. A criminal justice system that emphasizes incarceration but does not support the journey home does a disservice to everyone.

Effective rehabilitation and skill development for those incarcerated and formerly incarcerated is critical to reducing recidivism and strengthening households and the economy. However, returning citizens face tremendous barriers when it comes to gainful employment.

According to LEAD at NC Department of Commerce, even amid North Carolina’s hot labor market of 2021, when job opportunities were plentiful and businesses were desperate to hire workers, fewer

than half of people exiting state prisons in North Carolina were employed within a year after release, and those lucky enough to land a job earned a median of only around \$7,500 per year.)

LEAD offers several explanations for why the employment outcomes of people exiting prison have gotten worse over the years, including: (a) the changing composition of the prison population, (b) the increased prevalence of pre-employment criminal background checks, (c) the loss of employment opportunities for blue-collar workers and (d) racial disparities.



Yet, though Black people are disproportionately represented in our prison system, making up 51% of those incarcerated in state prisons, double their 20% share of the overall statewide population, black people getting out of prison were more likely to find work than their white counterparts. Declining employment rates has been almost entirely accounted for by the deteriorating outcomes of white people leaving prison!

III. Vulnerable Communities

Vulnerable communities are groups of individuals or geographic locations that are disadvantaged and susceptible to negative outcomes in a variety of areas. Three areas known to be barriers to employment are disabilities, low income, and poverty.

| INDICATORS FOR VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | County | Population | Disabled Population | % Disabled Population | % Children Under 18 Poverty Level | Per Capita Income | % Poverty Level |
| CAWD | Wake County, NC | 1,105,378 | 94,776 | 8.6% | 10.6% | \$45,425 | 8.5% |
| | Johnston County, NC | 209,927 | 28,217 | 13.4% | 18.4% | \$31,585 | 12.5% |
| | Orange County, NC | 146,803 | 11,888 | 8.1% | 10.2% | \$45,681 | 12.6% |
| | Chatham County, NC | 74,534 | 10,056 | 13.5% | 15.4% | \$48,143 | 10.5% |
| | Lee County, NC | 61,642 | 10,629 | 17.2% | 20.3% | \$27,488 | 15.1% |
| KERR-TAR | Vance County, NC | 42,279 | 7,701 | 18.2% | 27.0% | \$25,248 | 19.4% |
| | Franklin County, NC | 66,809 | 10,967 | 16.4% | 17.7% | \$29,580 | 11.3% |
| | Granville County, NC | 58,143 | 9,036 | 15.5% | 20.5% | \$29,340 | 14.4% |
| | Person County, NC | 38,670 | 7,761 | 20.1% | 34.0% | \$31,026 | 18.3% |
| | Warren County, NC | 18,156 | 3,790 | 20.9% | 32.3% | \$27,823 | 19.4% |
| T-POINT | Nash County, NC | 93,565 | 14,567 | 15.6% | 20.5% | \$29,082 | 14.7% |
| | Wilson County, NC | 77,985 | 12,022 | 15.4% | 27.9% | \$26,186 | 18.9% |
| | Edgecombe County, NC | 49,106 | 7,980 | 16.3% | 37.0% | \$23,048 | 22.8% |
| | Durham County, NC | 315,267 | 30,733 | 9.7% | 19.1% | \$39,602 | 13.2% |
| | Harnett County, NC | 127,148 | 19,084 | 15.0% | 20.8% | \$26,962 | 14.9% |
| | REGIONAL AVERAGES: | | | 14.9% | 22.1% | \$32,415 | 15.1% |

Source: Lightcast.io / American Communities Survey Data

Several counties within the North Central Prosperity Zone have concentrations of disabled individuals and poverty rates that are higher than the regional average and have below-average income per capita.

People with disabilities, seen or unseen, are less likely to be able to access resources and are more vulnerable to long-term unemployment and pay disparities.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for people with a disability (7.2 percent) was little changed in 2023. They further state that for all age groups, employment was much lower for people with a disability than for those with no disability. Unemployment rates were much higher for people with a disability than for those with no disability across all educational attainment groups. Workers with a disability were nearly twice as likely to work part-time as workers with no disability, and workers with a disability were more likely to be self-employed than those with no disability.

Advancing Economic Mobility for Low-Income Families: Policy Options for Governors states that low-income individuals experience significant barriers to achieving upward economic mobility because participation in work or education may not be logistically or financially feasible, or because an individual has not been able to establish a solid financial foundation to build upon. Though the link between poverty and education is complex, children who live in poverty perform at a lower level in school, have lower high school and college graduation rates, and lower college enrollment rates than children who are not living in poverty.

For low-income families, many of whom historically have been marginalized, post-pandemic economic recovery outcomes have been uneven, increasing the need for people-focused and sustainable practices to advance economic security, mobility, and resilience. It is within this context that WIOA is designed to help adults and youth access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market.

Resources:

<https://lightcast.io/>

<https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/county-data-and-resources>

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/03/do-people-with-disabilities-earn-equal-pay.html>

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/disabl.pdf>

<https://www.commerce.nc.gov/news/the-lead-feed/nc-post-prison-employment-outcomes>

<https://webapps.doc.state.nc.us/apps/asqExt/ASQ>

<https://www.nga.org/publications/advancing-economic-mobility-for-low-income-families-policy-options-for-governors/>

4. Describe strategies, used to facilitate engagement of businesses and other employers, including small employers and in-demand industry sector occupations. Describe methods and services to support the workforce system in meeting employer needs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(i)(ii)].

Workforce Boards and our NCWorks Career Center Business Services staff utilize a highly collaborative and consultative approach to engage and serve our region's businesses and industries. By leveraging technology and data, partner relationships, outreach and awareness events, and other traditional methods, we create and foster an innovative and effective workforce system that strives to fully meet employer needs. Technology plays a vital role in our ability to identify and connect with employers, including but not limited to our use of the NCWorks Online System and our social media platforms.

As an example, in the Capital Area, employer-specific reports are generated through NCWorks Online to quickly identify companies who are newly registered onto the system as well as existing employers who are

utilizing the system to post job openings and source new talent. Our staff uses these reports and updates to plan targeted employer outreach within their designated territories. In addition, our access to EMSI helps to identify prospective customers within our targeted counties. As a result of these outreach efforts, we can initiate and strengthen relationships with businesses and provide consultative support.

The staff regularly references tools within NCWorks and EMSI to obtain critical labor market data that is valuable in conversations with employers regarding wages, talent supply, educational attainment and more. Our use of social media has greatly increased our capacity to reach a broad and diverse audience and positions our organization as subject matter experts for workforce development. Through these channels, we have raised awareness of job opportunities in our communities, promoted and significantly increased attendance at our sponsored events and workshops, and kept our business community informed of valuable resources, programs, and initiatives that strengthen our region and workforce.

With the involvement and commitment of our Business Services team, our region has built an incredibly robust partner network that is an excellent source of referrals for business customers and job seekers. Our relationships with economic development, local chambers of commerce, industry associations, educational institutions, and other community partners have been invaluable in helping our team establish high-quality connections with business leaders and elevate our service delivery and impact.

The Business Services team gets actively involved in the communities they serve - regularly attending local and regional networking events, serving as exhibitors and community sponsors for job fairs and career awareness events and conducting speaking engagements for workforce-related events and conferences. Being active and engaged in our region helps staff gain critical business intelligence on current challenges and opportunities, workforce needs, gaps in resources, growth trends and more. We develop relationships and interactions with employers of all sizes and across multiple industry sectors.

These employer relationships have been instrumental in our various sector partnership initiatives, employer roundtables, career awareness events, and professional development for our staff. Having access to their insights and expertise helps to ensure that our full team stays on top of our growing sectors and regional workforce needs.

CAWD also takes advantage of a small business grant from the Division of Workforce Solutions to provide workforce support services to businesses with 25 employees or less. As well as a grant from Wake County Government to provide workforce services to businesses with 50 employees or less.

In summary, the Business Services team partners with employers to deliver high-quality talent and workforce solutions. This includes but is not limited to: Recruitment and Screening; Training and Education; Retention and Up-Skilling; Transitional Services; and access to Workforce Information and Data. Additionally, work-based learning incentives such as On-the-Job Training, Work Experience, Incumbent Worker Training, and Registered Apprenticeship programs are also utilized to ensure that the vast needs of employers are met.

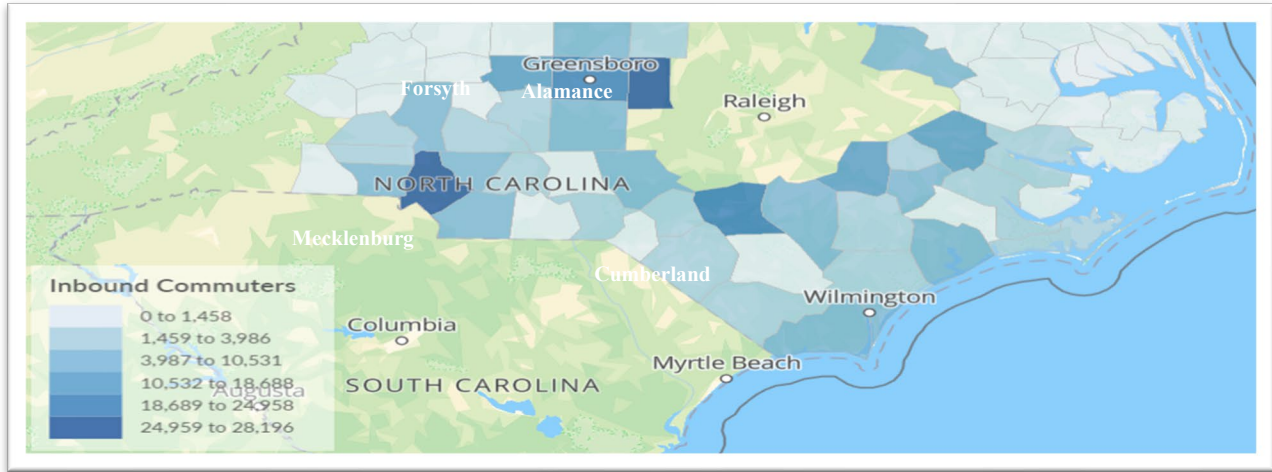
5. Describe strategies and services used to coordinate workforce development programs and economic development. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(iii)].

Regionally, The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) continues to leverage our local and regional economic development partners for recruitment retention and expansion opportunities. The local and regional economic development teams pull local Boards to the table, with targeted partners, to present information on the labor pool that we must support their company should they choose to (re)locate or expand their business in our area.

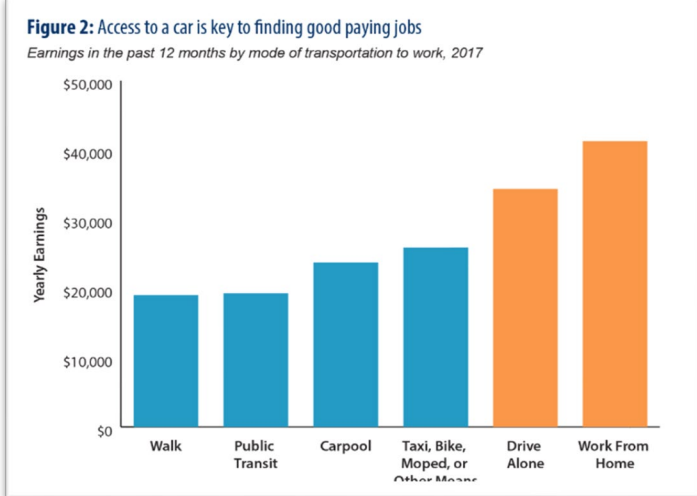
The Capital Area region has been recognized as one of the strongest economies in the nation and a top market for new and existing industry investments. This success is due in large part to the collaboration efforts that exist between our private and public sectors. This collaboration is thriving and evident throughout our partner ecosystem - comprised of economic and workforce development, education, government, chambers of commerce, and community partners. This partner network is led and shaped by business and industry and shares a common goal of driving growth and prosperity for our community and citizens. Capital Area's Business Engagement Director meets regularly with Economic Development for Wake, Johnston, and Lee Counties to collaborate on strategies to ensure we are meeting the needs of employers in our region. CAWD continues to work to strengthen the relationships with its new Counties, Lee, Chatham, and Orange.

Capital Area will continue to engage with Boards in the North Central region as well as other regions based on employer needs and demand. For example, because of the large presence of advanced manufacturing in the Triangle as well as Piedmont Triad, CAWD is partnering with Durham WDB, Kerr-Tar WDB, Mid-Carolina WDB, Greensboro WDB, and Piedmont Triad WDB to address the growing demand of training and employment related to advanced manufacturing. So, while CAWD will continue to meet regularly with workforce Boards in our region, we will also continue to meet with all Workforce Boards as the collaboration needs to be based on the needs of employers, not a geographically drawn line.

6. Outline regional transportation issues related to workforce development and ways the region is/will address needs identified. Include a description *and* map of the regional commuting patterns. [WIOA Section 108(b)(11)].



The 15 counties of the North Central Prosperity Zone, shown above anchored by the city of Raleigh, had a total of 34,227 net commuters for 2023 according to Lightcast.io. Inbound commuters totaled 244,248 and outbound commuters 210,211. Mecklenburg and Alamance, shown in dark blue, have the most inbound commuters of 28,196 and 24,959 respectively. Cumberland, Guilford (anchored by Greensboro), and Forsyth round out the top five with 18,896, 18,689, and 12,170 respectively.



According to a 2019 report by the NC Department of Justice, access to a car is key to finding good paying jobs. Jobs are increasingly concentrated in metropolitan areas where housing is higher.

Many working North Carolinians often can't afford to live anywhere near where jobs can be found and those that do bridge the live-work divide face long commutes and onerous transportation costs.

More than 7 percent of residents in rural counties face at least an hour-long commute, a nearly 50 percent larger share of commuters than in urban

counties. Counties with majority non-white populations also face long commutes at higher rates than majority white counties. In both cases, these long commutes affect communities that already contend with a range of other economic barriers.

Public transit is key to employment opportunities. The share of low-income North Carolinians who rely on public transit is much higher than the national and regional average, a clear sign that access to public transportation is important. Of the three Boards serving the majority of the NCPZ, Kerr-Tar had the most outbound commuters, net -31,839 followed by Turning Point at -8,844. They also have counties with household incomes lower than the region's average and poverty levels higher than the regional average.

The Kerr-Tar area doesn't have public bus service, though the Kerr Area Transport Authority (KARTS), a public, rural transportation system providing scheduled/reserved rides, does service residents in Franklin, Granville, Vance, and Warren Counties. Fares vary by the mile and can run \$8.00 roundtrip for a rider within 10 miles to \$14 for 30-40 miles. Fares to destinations out of the KARTS service area to job centers such as Chapel Hill, Durham, or Raleigh, are \$20-\$25 round trip. This can really add up and be cost-prohibitive for some families.

The region's urban centers are not without transportation issues. With unprecedented population growth and traffic congestion, improving public transportation is at the heart of infrastructure discussions. Chief among the discussion is commuter rail that passes through employment centers such as downtown Durham, downtown Raleigh, downtown Cary, Research Triangle Park, Duke University and Medical Center, North Carolina State University and Clayton's expanding pharmaceutical manufacturers.

Resources

<https://www.ncjustice.org/publications/the-budget-story-transportation-infrastructure-connects-people-business-and-communities/>

<https://www.readyforrailnc.com/feasibility/>

7. Briefly provide a description of how the Local Area WDB will coordinate education and workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. [WIOA Section 108(b)(10)].

The region coordinates with secondary education, community colleges, and universities to align strategies, enhance strategies, and avoid duplication of services through coordinating regional applications for career pathways certification through NCWorks Commission, and by regional coordination between Board Business Services staff for employer engagement activities currently for Kerr-Tar, CAWD, and Durham. The Region has collaborated with Incumbent Workers application to ensure with seamless strategies, as well as in past years Job Driven Initiative Strategies coordinating with regional Boards. Community colleges, and WDB Board staff have made this a seamless process. CAWD will include Turning Point and Mid-Carolina in these conversations as they impact their region. AdvancedNC serves as another good example of Workforce Boards working regionally to coordinate education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services. The AdvancedNC includes community colleges as well as 2 land grant universities. While secondary education is not part of the partnership today, there has been a conversation about adding them in the future.

8. Briefly describe how the NCWorks Career Centers serve military veterans.

For the Capital Area, NCWorks Career Centers provide Priority of Service to veterans and eligible spouses and immediately work to assess their needs and provide services. Career Center staff provide in-person services during scheduled hours at each location. As part of Priority of Service, veterans are also allowed to view and apply for newly posted positions within NCWorks before the posting is made available to all other job seekers. The Center hosts job fairs targeting veterans and, typically, veterans are also given priority during recruitment events, job fairs, and training opportunities. The Center also presents to community agencies, chambers of commerce, and employers to attract veterans to our local Career Centers as well as enhance services in the community. Both CAWD Tier 1 NCWorks Career Centers have either a Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) or a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) located on staff to help veterans with significant barriers overcome their barriers to employment.

9. Explain the strategic plan for how the region will respond to national emergencies or weather-related disasters to serve victims (such as lay-off aversion activities) and utilize special grants efficiently throughout the recovery period.

As a region, we stand ready to respond to national emergencies or weather-related disasters to serve victims and businesses. How each Board services its region varies based on the need and the funding available. For example, CAWD has traditionally not had to apply for special funding for cleanup and other disaster relief in Wake County because the County and the City of Raleigh are usually responsive before Workforce Development Board funds are available. However, in Johnston County, Capital Area did apply for emergency funds as requested by Johnston County to help clean up after a major storm. CAWD's strategy is to reach out to the counties in our region after an emergency to determine how we can help and based on the need, apply for available funding if the service is not allowed with the funding CAWD already has on hand.

IV. NCWorks Commission

The NCWorks Commission recommends policies and strategies which value diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility while enabling the state's workforce to compete in the current and future global economy. The commission leads, builds partnerships, forms alliances, and is accountable for strengthening North Carolina's innovative, inclusive, relevant, effective, and efficient workforce development system.

The Commission is designated as the state's WDB under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Led by a private sector chair, the 37-member Commission includes representatives from the business community, heads of state workforce agencies, educators, and community leaders. All members are appointed by the Governor.

Mission of the NCWorks Commission: To ensure North Carolina has an innovative, relevant, effective, and efficient workforce development system that develops adaptable, work-ready, skilled talent to meet the current and future needs of workers and businesses to achieve and sustain economic prosperity; and to ensure North

Carolínians are ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow by increasing access to education and skills training, fostering employer leadership to prepare workers, and supporting and scaling local innovation.

After extensive stakeholder work and programmatic reviews, the following systemwide goals and objectives were created for the workforce development system:

- *Prepare workers to succeed in the North Carolina economy by increasing skills and education attainment.*
- *Create a workforce system that is responsive to the needs of the economy by fostering employer leadership.*
- *Promote replication of creative solutions to challenging workforce problems by supporting local innovation.*
- *Promote system access, alignment, integration, and modernization.*

1. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB engages with local employers and informs them of the wide array of business services offered. Include how the Local Area WDB (a) ensures collaboration with other employer-facing workforce program representatives, such as (b) Vocational Rehabilitation, (c) Agriculture Services, (d) Foreign Labor, (e) Re-Entry, and (f) Veterans Services, through processes and procedures for information sharing and efficient employer customer service delivery.

To ensure that local employers are well-informed about the comprehensive range of business services offered, the business services team at CAWD actively engages in outreach initiatives within the catchment area. These activities encompass various strategies, including standard promotional and follow-up calls, participation in employer-focused events at the local Chamber of Commerce, attendance at networking events, involvement in job fairs and career expositions, participation in strategic planning and economic development, and the utilization of social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Facebook.

Moreover, CAWD conducts quarterly meetings with representatives from partner agencies including but not limited to DWS, Capital Area Re-entry programs, NextGen Centers, NCWorks, Vocational Rehabilitation, Literacy Councils, Telamon Corporation, Community Colleges, school systems, and community-based organizations. During these meetings, detailed information about available employer services, hiring events, regional labor market information is shared with partners, including Vocational Rehabilitation, Agriculture, and Foreign Labor staff. Performance updates are provided, and partner agencies also share progress, changes, and needs related to technical assistance. This meeting also serves as a platform to discuss current topics of concern and any topics that will help strengthen our relationship.

Most employer-facing workforce program representatives are located in the Career Centers and physically located with the Business Services team. This proximity aids in collaborative work with referrals to each other. They are included in CAWD's Annual Kick-Off meeting where training and information is provided as well as meetings throughout the year to stay informed. CAWD has an Agriculture Services Consultant co-located in our Clayton Career Center. The Wake Local Re-Entry Council's Re-Entry Employment Engagement Consultant is located in the Raleigh Career Center and is co-managed by the Business Services Manager and

the NC PROWD Employer Engagement Consultant reports to the CAWD Business Engagement Director. There are two LVERs in the CAWD service area located in the Raleigh and Clayton Centers and a third LVER working out of the Orange County Career Center part-time. Business Services Consultants make employer referrals to Agricultural Services and Foreign Labor partners. There is a designated Business Services staff that serves as the point of contact for Foreign Labor Certification (FLC)/PERM job orders. As needed, this staff person works in partnership with the Foreign Labor team to assist these PERM employers with services such as account creation, verification and creating, reviewing, posting, and referring candidates to the PERM job order(s).

Finally, Capital Area works to enhance the effectiveness of the NCWorks system in identifying employers that could benefit from business services. Business services staff generate NCWorks employer-specific reports to swiftly identify both newly registered and returning employers using NCWorks to post job openings and discover new talent. These reports are then used to plan targeted outreach to employers within their assigned territories, allowing the assessment of individual business needs and the provision of information on available business services.

2. Please provide a brief overview of the business services team within the local area. Please identify the individual staff roles the Local Area WDB utilizes to conduct business services (that is Business Services Representative (Local Area WDB staff), contractor staff, Business Engagement Coordinator, NCWorks Career Center Manager, DWS staff, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, identify who makes regional and local employer referrals to Agricultural Services and/or Foreign Labor staff, etc.).

CAWD employs a two-pronged approach to business support, consisting of Business Engagement led by WDB staff and Business/Employer Services held by Service Provider staff within Talent Employment Solutions (TES).

The Business Engagement Director focuses on strategic partnerships and employer initiatives. Strategic partnerships include sector-focused collaborations and economic development-related activities such as providing workforce plans and labor market data and participating in workforce discussions. Specific employer initiatives are supported by the following CAWD staff: the Small Business Manager (Entrepreneurship), the Small Business Program Coordinator (Small Business WBL), and the NC PROWD Employer Engagement.

The Business/Employer Services team, operating in the TES function at the NCWorks Career Center, contains a Business Services Manager, five Business Services Outside Consultants, two Job Seeker Consultants, and two Inside Recruiting Consultants. Additionally, there is one Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) in Wake County, one hybrid LVER (combining half LVER and half DVOP) in Johnston County, LVER divided between Orange and Durham Counties, three DVOPs divided between Henderson, Wake, and Orange counties, and two hybrid Veteran staff (half DVOP and half LVER) divided between Lee, Chatham, and Harnett counties.

The Business Services Manager oversees the TES function, with Business Services Consultants providing direct one-on-one support to employers and making referrals to Agricultural Services and/or Foreign Labor

staff. Job Seeker Consultants collaborate with job-ready individuals to align them with jobs identified by the Business Consultants, while Inside Recruiting Consultants are responsible for sourcing and screening candidates based on employer specifications. LVER staff engage in outreach to local businesses and employers, advocating for the hiring of veterans. Members of the TES team are drawn from either the service provider staff or DWS.

3. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB plans to increase NCWorks brand awareness at the local level (consult NCWorks Commission 2023-2025 Strategic Plan).

The goal of CAWD’s comprehensive outreach plan is to demonstrate the value, services, and outcomes to employers, job seekers, influencers, and community partners. Strategies within the plan are to convey the impact of workforce development on emerging issues related to talent and the labor market, increase word-of-mouth sharing to personalize the work of CAWD and NCWorks, and to utilize community partners as a referral source for information to job seekers or special groups such as under-served/marginalized populations.

A framework of key messages was created that identifies six target audiences, the problems NCWorks can help each to solve, how NCWorks solves them, and what the target audience gains or avoids by utilizing NCWorks services. Communication with potential customers requires aligning messages with their preferences and needs rather than simply dictating facts about NCWorks. Therefore, our messaging utilizes the "Voice of the Customer" which leverages feedback from customer surveys about their experiences and expectations. For example, an analysis of over 500 job seeker satisfaction survey responses uncovered NCWorks' unique selling proposition: the staff. Customers consistently describe them as helpful, professional, knowledgeable, and personable. If prospects believe they will receive unparalleled support from the staff, they are more likely to embrace the offerings. Using this framework in outreach materials, websites, and social media ensures relevance to the reader. Highlighting NCWorks solutions that address their pain points positions the brand as the definitive solution to their problem.

One-on-one relationship building with potential youth and adult customers has proven to be the most effective method of communicating the NCWorks brand and converting prospects to customers. Therefore, CAWD now has outreach specialists specifically for community outreach. One is housed at the career center and performs community outreach to adults. CAWD houses two youth outreach specialists focused on building relationships with young people through activities like participating in school events, visiting community centers and recreational facilities, and other places youth may congregate (the positions are covered by non-WIOA funds). Since NextGen has seen a decrease in youth participation and an increase in those with substance use disorders, one of the youth outreach specialists is focused on enrollments in our “Recovery to Work” initiative that seeks to help young people at-risk or facing issues with substance use. The other is focused on helping all youth understand various career options and pathways, driving participation in work-based learning programs, and building authentic relationships with educators and youth-focused organizations.

A new website was also launched to increase brand awareness for NCWorks NextGen. The site covers program information and receives referrals from young people, parents, educators, agencies and community partners.

CAWD is also expanding its Business Ambassador Program. Members are businesses that have utilized NCWorks services and are passionate about workforce development. The struggle to find and keep talent is

universal. Ambassadors amplify the brand message by sharing how NCWorks impacted their business within their professional circles, aiding others facing talent challenges.

Digital outreach in the form of search engine marketing (SEM) is also being tried for the first time. This is a highly targeted outreach effort to adults who are unemployed or looking for new employment that reside in CAWD's service area. Over 450 search terms have been identified. Users searching those terms online are served an NCWorks ad that links to a new career center landing page where they can submit a form to get assistance. SEM is known to generate quality leads that are more likely to become real customers because the brand meets their needs.

Communities across North Carolina are developing strong local models of workforce development. North Carolina should build on those successes and replicate them in more places to continue building and expanding innovative solutions.

4. Describe how the Local Area WDB and the partners identify, address, and provide new and innovative solutions to support the job growth and business expansions of the local workforce system while including Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.

The Local Area WDB and its partners adopt a comprehensive and collaborative approach to identify, address, and provide innovative solutions supporting job growth and business expansions within the local workforce system. This commitment is grounded in a strong emphasis on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA). Here's an overview of our strategic initiatives and practices:

In our engagement with Business and Partner Agencies, we actively seek input from local businesses and collaborate with partner agencies to understand their needs and challenges. This continuous collaboration ensures that our services and initiatives remain aligned with the dynamic demands of the job market, effectively addressing local workforce needs. Quarterly Partner Meetings serve as a crucial platform for dialogue, collaboration, and coordination among various stakeholders. These meetings foster communication and enable collective strategizing to address challenges and optimize opportunities.

Data-Driven Decision-Making is a cornerstone of our approach. Prioritizing research and data collection allows us to make informed decisions regarding priorities, programs, funding, and initiatives. This utilization of data enhances our understanding of the local market, encompassing industry growth, educational attainment, valuable skills and credentials, and wage trends.

Strategic Planning Sessions, conducted both internally and collectively with partner agencies, are instrumental in shaping our efforts to grow, recruit, and retain a highly skilled and competitive workforce. These sessions align our initiatives with overarching goals identified through collaborative discussions.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) principles are integrated into our services and initiatives to ensure transparency and fairness. We actively work to remove barriers to employment for persons with disabilities and strive for equal access to opportunities for all community members.

A Regional Skills Analysis is undertaken to highlight critical skills needed in growing industries such as IT, life sciences, construction, and skilled trades. This analysis guides our efforts in tailoring training programs and support services to meet the specific needs of the local workforce.

Engagement with Local Leaders and Community Partners is a cornerstone of our approach, involving regular interaction with local business leaders and community partners. This ensures our strategies remain responsive to evolving needs, fostering innovation, flexibility, and inclusivity in our workforce development initiatives.

The U.S. Departments of Commerce and Labor have jointly identified Recruitment and Hiring; Benefits; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility; Empowerment and Representation; Job Security and Working Conditions; Organizational Culture; Pay; and Skills and Career Advancement as the eight key principles of a good job. Refer to Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 07-22 for details.

5. Describe the Local Area WDB's strategy for:

- a. incorporating job quality principles into ongoing workforce development activities, to assist with identifying and creating long-term partnerships with employers offering good jobs;
- b. creating strategic, flexible career pathways to good jobs that respond to local labor market needs.

The CAWD strategy for integrating job quality principles into continuous workforce development activities, aiming to identify and establish long-term partnerships with employers offering quality jobs, involves a three-pronged approach. Firstly, CAWD staff reviews internal and external data, including regional Labor Market Data and the employment success of customers. Secondly, the staff conducts extensive research on best practices in workforce development at the local, national, and international levels. Finally, the team remains vigilant about funding opportunities.

When data reveals a specific need and validates it with employers, the staff proactively seeks out best practices that effectively address that need. They then adapt these practices to suit the local environment. Subsequently, the staff actively seeks partners or funding to implement these innovative solutions, ensuring a strategic and flexible approach to creating career pathways leading to quality jobs that align with the demands of the local labor markets.

6. Describe how the Local Area WDB ensures that individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities have equitable access to the services of the workforce system and the jobs created in the economic growth spurred by federal investments.

CAWD has implemented an extensive outreach plan that is inclusive of proven strategies to ensure individuals from underserved and underrepresented communities have equitable access. This strategy involves extracting data from NCWorks Online by zip codes in marginalized communities within our region.

CAWD collaborated with Wake County Long Range Planning to assess the provision of our services in Wake communities with the highest needs. Wake County monitors five key indicators to gauge vulnerability. These indicators include:

- % of persons living below the federal poverty rate
- % of unemployed civilians age 16 and over in the labor force
- % of youth under age 18 + % of adults age 65 and over
- % of vacant housing units
- % of adults ages 25-64 who did not earn a high school diploma or equivalent (GED)

Wake Communities are given a score based on these indicators. These scores determine the level of community vulnerability. CAWD provided data on all clients served in the NCWorks Career Centers and it was overlaid onto a Vulnerable Communities map. Through these maps, CAWD can pinpoint what vulnerable communities are being served and which communities need more support. While the other counties do not have vulnerable community scores like Wake County, staff are using census data to create a map of poverty and unemployment rates throughout the region and comparing it to where individuals live that receive NCWorks Career Center services. These maps help CAWD and partners to be strategic in developing outreach strategies.

Johnston County did not have the same indicators identified, so CAWD used a different model. CAWD looked at census data, NC Performs data, and NCWorks to determine where the most poverty, unemployment, and education to determine vulnerable communities. Through these efforts, it was determined that the most vulnerable community in Johnston County was Selma. CAWD will conduct a similar detailed analysis to include Lee, Chatham, and Orange Counties in PY24.

CAWD has strategically worked with partners throughout its region to provide employment-related resources to rural, underserved, and vulnerable communities to ensure that job seekers have access to resources, center services, and employment opportunities. Some of the partners that we have worked with include but are not limited to the Salvation Army in Chatham County, the libraries in Johnston, Wake, and Chatham counties, Johnston Community College, Wake Technical Community College, Central Carolina Community College, Lee, Johnston, Wake, and Orange County Public School Systems, Department of Social Services in Chatham, Orange, Johnston, and Wake Counties and Vocational Rehabilitation in all counties.

Examples include: CAWD partnered with the library in Selma NC to provide onsite NextGen and NCWorks Career Center services and to host Resource Fairs. Our partners JCC and Johnston Public Schools joined us in providing onsite services as well. In the coming year, CAWD will continue to place more emphasis on

collaborating with libraries to offer employment-related services such as workshops, training sessions, and educational programs tailored to the needs of underserved communities. In Wake, an example CAWD partnering with several partners such as Wake County Social Services, Family Resources Center, Voc. Rehab, Wake Tech, and others to host community events in vulnerable communities. Again, we will continue to look for opportunities for our new Counties in PY24 to do similar activities.

In addition, Capital Area has a Board Committee known as Customer Success. This committee is responsible for developing career opportunities for underserved communities. To determine which communities to focus on, they analyze Census data, vulnerable communities' data, and NCWorks performance data concerning underserved and underrepresented communities. Specifically, they examine these communities' level of engagement at the NCWorks Centers in comparison to the general population, assessing their access to these Centers. Additionally, the committee evaluates their achievements in obtaining certificates, securing employment, and their wages. The information gathered serves as a basis for the committee to identify which communities to prioritize in developing new programs and support initiatives.

Between 2019 and 2022, the Customer Success Committee focused on enhancing opportunities for individuals aged 50 and above. This initiative resulted in a partnership with AARP to offer career awareness and job coaching services tailored to older job seekers. In the period from 2023 to 2025, their attention is directed towards women who have exited the workforce or are experiencing wage disparities. This effort led to a collaboration with Hope Renovations aimed at recruiting women into construction and skilled trades, which typically offer better pay compared to many fields dominated by women.

7. Describe how the Local Area WDB is engaged in work-based learning projects with local employers.

The Business Services Consultants at Capital Area are organized based on industry for Wake County and by county for Johnston, Lee, Chatham, and Orange Counties. This organizational structure ensures that each Business Consultant possesses a comprehensive understanding of their respective industry or geography, enabling them to address the specific challenges employers face in talent development. Within their work plans, each Consultant is tasked to execute work-based learning contracts. Work-based learning initiatives facilitate employers in filling their openings with qualified and ready candidates and share some of the associated costs linked to new hires.

To enhance engagement, the Business Engagement Director collaborates with businesses and incorporates work-based learning information in presentations to businesses and business organizations to heighten awareness about the benefits and opportunities.

8. Briefly describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, and workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(A)]

Capital Area ensures the continuous improvement of eligible service providers through annual monitoring reviews. These reviews, coupled with quarterly meetings, serve to assess the progress of providers, and ensure they align with the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers. Technical assistance is provided when areas of improvement are identified during monitoring's. Additionally, systematic data collection is conducted to identify both strengths and challenges. Finally, annual reviews of provider contracts are conducted to guarantee that organizations are effectively addressing the employment needs of employers, workers, and jobseekers.

In certain cases, a training provider may face suspension, probation, or expulsion based on the frequency and/or severity of their failure to meet obligations. These instances include but are not limited to:

- Submit performance data and meet performance goals on an annual basis.
- Provide quality training to customers (if the program falls below a three-star rating (meets expectations) on the Capital Area NCWorks Training Provider Customer Satisfaction Survey.
- Input program data in NCWorks Online properly, i.e., data discrepancies, incomplete program data, supplying inaccurate information.*
- Comply with local policies and procedures.
- Comply with Federal and State statutes and regulations for workforce programs.
- Complete corrective actions in the time frame outlined.
- Respond to correspondence from Capital Area staff.

When a training provider is either suspended, placed on probation, or expelled, the Capital Area Workforce Development Board Executive Director shall notify the WIOA training provider in writing, of the action to be taken.

Training providers have the right to appeal a suspension, probation, or banishment, and must follow the appeal processes as outlined in CAWD's Eligible Training Provider Policy in Section H.2. *Capital Area's Appeal Process*.

V. NCWorks Career Centers

North Carolina's workforce system includes multiple agencies, programs, and funders. Collaboration, policy alignment, systemic communication, integration, and modernization of the workforce system will ensure a strong and healthy workforce system that can adapt to a changing economy.

For any documents that are missing or are unnecessary based on the response provided, please state, "No document is loaded and/or it will be loaded by a specific date".

1. Identify PY 2024 NCWorks Career Center location(s) including Comprehensive and Affiliate Sites; On-site partners; how NCWorks Career Center operator(s) are designated; provider(s) of WIOA career services and method of selection; whether youth service provider is on-site and, if so, youth services offered. Use the PY 2024 NCWorks Career Center Chart. [WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B)]

- Name document: Capital Area Workforce Development PY 2024 NCWorks Career Centers.

2. Provide the name(s) of the current One-Stop provider(s), date, and process for when the competitive procurement of the One-Stop Operator(s) occurred. Include the expected length of the contract(s) (one to four years and the current year the contract is (e.g., two of three years). [WIOA Section 108(b)(16)]

Capital Area solicits proposals for the One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Provider through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process every four years for Wake, Lee, Chatham, & Johnston Counties and for the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Services in Orange County and NextGen Youth/Young Adult every three years.

Equus Workforce Solutions was awarded the One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider contract in Wake, Johnston, Lee, and Chatham Counties. Orange DSS was awarded the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker service provider contract in Orange County. The competitive RFP process took place from December 2022 to March 2023. The contract award began on July 1, 2023, and was for one year. Contract extensions for the One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider in the Capital Area are available for up to three additional years for Equus and up to two additional years for the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider in Orange County based on performance, quality of services, responsiveness of providers, and the ability to meet contract expectations. This is year one of three years. Contract extensions for the One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider contract took place for PY23. A solicitation for proposals may be released sooner due to circumstances including, but not limited to, termination of a contract due to contractor performance, and funds availability.

The goal of CAWD is to ensure fair and lawful award of public funds to eligible service providers. Procurement of the One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Provider, to conduct Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act activities, is accomplished through a competitive procurement process, as follows:

- 1) The competitive procurement process starts with the release of the Request for Proposal. To ensure that the notification is viewed by the public as well as local, state, and federal employment and training agencies, the notice is posted in newspapers (including at least one minority publication), Capital Area Workforce Development's website, Wake County Government's website, National Association of Workforce Development Boards' website, and emailed electronically to an established list of adult employment and training agencies across the country.
- 2) After the notification release, a Pre-Proposal Information Session is then conducted by Capital Area and Wake County Procurement Service staff to discuss the RFP and answer any questions. Attendance at the session is recommended, but not required for agencies responding to the proposal. Questions, other than those addressed in the session, must be submitted to Capital Area before the established due date. The RFP provides clear guidelines on the submission requirements and the proposal deadline date and time. Proposals are not accepted after the deadline.
- 3) The Proposal Review Panel consists of Capital Area Board members and Capital Area staff. In selecting an organization for One-Stop Operator/Adult and Dislocated Worker services, primary consideration is given to the demonstrated effectiveness of the organization in delivering comparable services, the overall quality of the proposed plan of services, the likelihood of meeting or exceeding federal Performance Indicators, and cost. In addition, consideration is given to a strong record of integrity, business ethics, fiscal management, and accountability; staff qualifications and technical skills to perform the work; and the ability of the organization to meet service delivery requirements at a reasonable cost. As part of the proposal review and selection process, the top 3-5 respondents, based on the reviewers' ratings, are required to meet with the Proposal Review Panel to briefly discuss their proposal and answer questions.
- 4) After the review process is completed by the Proposal Review Panel, the Panel presents a recommendation to the Board at the scheduled Board meeting for Board approval. The selected respondent receives written notification of the award. The non-awarded respondents will also receive written notification with the instructions on how to request a debriefing or appeal, as follows.
 - a) The debriefing must be requested in writing to the CAWD Executive Director within ten (10) working days of notification of non-award. In a debriefing, the discussion will be limited to a critique of the RFP response, i.e., specific information as to factors where the proposal manifested weaknesses and strengths. Comparisons between proposals or evaluations of the other proposals are not considered.
 - b) The appeal request must be submitted in writing to the CAWD Executive Director within five (5) working days following a debriefing. An appeal request must identify an issue or fact concerning a matter of bias, discrimination, conflict of interest, or non-compliance with procedures described in the RFP document. Appeal requests not based on those conditions are not considered. Appeal

requests are rejected as without merit if they address such issues as professional judgment on the quality of a proposal or the CAWD's assessment of Local Area needs, priorities, or requirements. The CAWD Executive Director will issue a decision within five (5) working days of receipt of a written appeal. The decision will be final.

Funds for One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Services are provided under a cost reimbursement contract, for the services provided during program delivery, between Capital Area and the service provider. CAWD also uses a pay-for-performance model for all service providers that include profit in their budget.

3. Provide a brief description of how Career and Training Services are provided. [WIOA Section 121(e), 134(c)]
 - a. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to adults.
 - b. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to dislocated workers.
 - c. Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to youth.

a. The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are two of three core Title I programs authorized under WIOA designed to assist individuals in gaining skills and attaining employment. The Adult program serves individuals ages 18 and older, in need of training, employment, and career advancement, and who meet the participation criteria. The Dislocated Worker program assists workers who have been displaced due to loss of work or other circumstances and can include activities such as on-the-job training and work experience to facilitate rapid re-employment. As part of its process, Career Advisors meet with customers to understand individuals' employment or career goals, assess skills, both soft skills and technical skills, and interest in skill development or career placement options. Staff utilize a variety of formal and informal methods to assess individuals' strengths, opportunities, interest in skill development, career interest and aptitude, and workplace behaviors.

CAWD offers a variety of training activities for adults and dislocated workers that include career counseling and planning, job search and employment services, training, and work-based learning opportunities such as internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeship. CAWD has evaluated its policies, procedures, and strategies to better address the talent gaps identified by employers and industry groups. This involved adjusting minimum salary requirements for On-the-Job training to guarantee equitable compensation for participants, along with aligning Work Experience pay rates with industry standards for the positions in which individuals will gain experience. Furthermore, the Career Centers host Ask the Recruiter sessions where HR reps speak directly with interested candidates to help them get through the application process.

b. The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are two of three core Title I programs authorized under WIOA designed to assist individuals in gaining skills and attaining employment. The Adult program serves individuals ages 18 and older, in need of training, employment, and career advancement, and who meet the participation criteria. The Dislocated Worker program assists workers who have been displaced due to loss of work or other circumstances and can include activities such as on-the-job training

and work experience to facilitate rapid re-employment. As part of its process, Career Consultants meet with customers to understand individuals' employment or career goals, assess skills, both soft skills and technical skills, and interest in skill development or career placement options. Staff utilize a variety of formal and informal methods to assess individuals' strengths, opportunities, interest in skill development, career interest and aptitude, and workplace behaviors.

CAWD offers a variety of training activities for adults and dislocated workers that include career counseling and planning, job search and employment services, training, and work-based learning opportunities such as internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeship.

- c. The NextGen service model of the Capital Area is tailored to meet young individuals at their stage of development. Integral to this model are career and training services, which are aligned with North Carolina's framework consisting of five interconnected components: Education, Career Pathways, Career Experience, Leadership Development, and Wrap Around Services. These components collectively support the transition of youth in our area into employment, post-secondary education, military service, or continued apprenticeship.

Upon enrollment, NextGen participants undergo various assessments to identify their service needs, academic levels, goals, interests, barriers, and strengths. Additionally, assessments determine participants' basic and occupational skills, prior work experience, work readiness, and developmental needs.

For those requiring training, NextGen staff evaluate available options such as occupational skills training, job readiness training, and work-based learning opportunities like internships, on-the-job training, and pre-apprenticeships to determine the best fit.

Furthermore, CAWD emphasizes the Capital Area Apprenticeship Prep program, which offers pre-apprenticeship training to NextGen participants needing additional support before embarking on their careers. This program combines classroom instruction with hands-on work experience, equipping participants with the foundation to pursue various paths, whether it be higher education, full-time employment, or a combination of both.

4. Describe how Local Area WDBs determine the need for enrollment in Training Services.

Training Services are available to individuals who have been determined to need specific occupational skills training or skills upgrading to obtain employment, and who possess the requisite skills and abilities necessary to successfully complete the selected coursework, and who select occupational training directly linked to employment opportunities. All customers interested in receiving training services must complete orientation, registration, an assessment, and meet one-on-one with Career Center staff to determine the need for training. Each customer interested in receiving training services must complete a scholarship application. This application includes a process for the customer to research the occupation of interest through labor market data to determine if it will provide them with sustainable employment. Once the scholarship application is completed and returned to the Center it will go through a review process and may be approved.

A customer, who has been interviewed, evaluated, or assessed by a Career Center staff, is eligible for training if he/she meets one of the following conditions:

- Condition 1- Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment, that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through the career services alone;
- Condition 2- 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;
- Condition 3- Has the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services;
- Condition 4- Has selected a program of training services that is directly linked to employment opportunities in the local area or planning region, or in another area to which the individual is willing to commute or relocate;
- Condition 5- Is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training, including such sources as State-funded training funds or Federal Pell Grants, or requires assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance, including Federal Pell Grants;
- Condition 6- Is determined eligible in accordance with the State and local priority system in effect for adults if training services are to be provided through the adult fund stream; or,
- Condition 7- TAA Petition Pending - Is a member of a worker group covered under a petition filed for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and is awaiting a determination.

5. Describe how follow-up services are provided through the NCWorks Career Centers. [WIOA Section 134(c)(2)(xiii)]

Follow-up services are provided, as appropriate, for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. While follow-up services must be made available, not all adults and dislocated workers who are registered and placed into unsubsidized employment will need or want such services. Follow-up is viewed as an extension of the program during which staff help participants create their own solutions to the challenges they may continue to face as they transition to employment.

The type of appropriate follow-up services may vary based on the needs of each individual. Participants who have multiple employment barriers and limited work histories may need significant follow-up services to ensure long-term success in the labor market. Other participants may identify an area of weakness in their skills prior to placement that will affect their ability to progress further in their occupation or to retain their employment.

Follow-up services will help support each participant in maintaining employment and will provide a continuous link to the workforce system, including referral networks and partner programs.

In the Capital Area, follow-up services may include, but are not limited to:

- additional career planning and counseling
- counseling regarding the workplace
- contact with the participant's employer, including assistance with work-related
- problems that may arise
- peer support groups
- career pathway development
- information about additional educational opportunities
- information and referrals to supportive services available in the community
- case management administrative follow-up
- assistance in securing better paying jobs
- other services

The frequency of follow-up will align with the needs of the individual. Additional contacts will occur if the participant initiates them or if staff identifies a need for them. A consistent message during each follow-up contact will ensure participants know the NCWorks Career Center services are available to support them, even after the follow-up ends.

6. Describe how:

- a. New NCWorks Career Center staff (DWS, service providers, and partner staff) are trained in the integrated service delivery system model (include a training timeline).
 - b. How long after the initial start date does staff have full access to NCWorks.gov?
 - c. The staff development activities reinforce and improve the initial training efforts.
 - d. Describe the specific training that staff receive around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.
- a. The Instructional Coordinator provides oversight and conducts training that includes an overview of NCWorks online, integrated service delivery (ISD) along with one week of job shadowing a high-performing staff in all functional areas to gain a broad understanding of service delivery. The initial onboarding training must be completed within fifteen days of hire. All new hires with the CAWD Career Center system are required to complete the training and sign off on the onboarding checklist within fifteen days of their hire date. Once that is completed, staff can gain access to NCWorks Online. Afterward, Center staff is provided 2-3 weeks of one-on-one training with the Team Lead or Senior staff person and functional manager on their job-specific role and responsibilities to ensure they are equipped and well prepared. Daily check-ins and recaps are held with the functional manager to ensure adequate progress is occurring. State-mandated training must be completed within the required timeframes. Volunteers and partner staff complete a one-day training session before they begin working in the Resource Area. During the session, they are provided an overview of NCWorks.gov, the ISD model, and an overview of programs and services offered at the center. Additional in-person and virtual training is available for volunteers. The volunteers only assist customers in the Resource Area (RA).

The Operator is responsible for ensuring training takes place as required. Training schedules may vary depending on the staff, the trainer(s), the environment, and the Center's activities.

b. Staff have full access to NCWorks.gov after two weeks of onboarding.

c. CAWD is committed to ensuring that NCWorks staff have access to a variety of ongoing training and professional development options including attending workforce conferences, NCWorks Training Center online courses (including customer service, Equal Opportunity, etc.), The Academy and LinkedIn Learning courses, IBM SkillsBuild, Workforce GPS, industry roundtable events, etc. Some Career Center completed the Facilitating Career Development (FCD) training course. Recently the NCWorks Training Center recently launched its new website, and the Foundations training and Career Center staff will be taking advantage of the training. Additional cross training occurs at the Career Center located at Tillery Place in person or through a virtual platform. For instance, training on Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion, BioPharma, Windmills: Reasonable Accommodations, Customer Service, Working with Special Populations, Reentry Simulation, Mental Health, etc.

d. The Department of Commerce provide all staff and partners DEI training. The training is also available on the NCWorks Training Center website.

7. Briefly explain coordination with the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) to maximize resources and prevent duplicative services. Please include specific details on how case managers for WIOA and TAA programs coordinate to provide seamless services to eligible participants.

All TAA cases in the Capital Area Region have been transferred to the Division of Workforce Solutions as of March 2024. Although TAA cases are not being managed in the local office, CAWD's process below outlines how both programs worked together to prevent duplication of services as well as maximize resources. CAWD is anticipating receiving State guidance on when TAA will officially end. Although TAA cases have been transferred, CAWD will leave its processes in place until official guidance has been released by the State.

As of March 2024, the One-Stop Career Centers provided Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) services through the Tier I NCWorks Career Centers. All TAA customers were co-enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program to ensure the timely provision of individualized career services and improve the overall effectiveness of the TAA program. TAA staff also worked closely with WIOA staff in the Capital Area Region to best serve the customers with their job search and training needs. When possible, WIOA staff and TAA staff worked together to share common forms to avoid duplication of efforts. All documentation, including Individualized Employment Plans, Objective Assessments, employment, and training goals were uploaded into NCWorks Online. TAA funds were utilized first to pay for training costs and WIOA DW funds are used to supplement services as needed beyond what is available through TAA. For Level II centers, Customers who were eligible for TAA were referred to the Tier I centers, or they received needed services virtually through the contact center.

8. Briefly describe how the NCWorks Career Center serves persons with disabilities.

The NCWorks Career Center provides an array of career services to serve persons with disabilities including providing specific tools to assist this population with their job search and employment-related needs:

- Screen enlargement and magnification features are used for customers with vision difficulties (magnifying glasses/full page magnifiers)
- Specialized software (ZoomText, JAWS, Kurzweil 3000 software (Learning Disability),
- Headphones are made available for customers with hearing difficulties
- TSS telephone available for use
- Emergency lights / well-lit space and amplified fire/smoke alarms
- Staff available to read screens/forms as needed
- Referrals to organizations such as DHHS-Division of Services for the Blind and NC Center for the Blind, DHHS – Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

In an effort to strive for greater collaboration with organizations that serve persons with disabilities, the NCWorks Career Centers has connected with Community Workforce Solutions and Vocational Rehabilitation to champion the referral process between the two agencies to strengthen its relationship and create strategies to effectively serve customers. This will continue to include facilitating job clubs and an annual job fair hosted by the Centers. Customers are registered in NCWorks and are referred appropriately to available services and resources. Peer-to-peer training is offered to ensure center staff are aware of the best possible resources available for the job seeker and employment opportunities that will meet the individual needs of each job seeker.

CAWD will partner with organizations to educate and better serve persons with disabilities. For example, CAWD was instrumental in working with Disability:IN North Carolina to explore best practices and incorporate cultural changes, which resulted in North Carolina Employment Collaborative (NCEC) staff developing virtual tools and training for Workforce Development Boards to Expand Disability Employment and Inclusion. The Capital Area Executive Director is part of the “Disability: IN North Carolina” steering committee and will continue to provide leadership and guidance in ensuring that Career Centers have access to relevant information. The Director worked with this team to identify training needs for Career Centers across the state related to serving individuals with disabilities. In addition, a representative attends the Quarterly partner meetings and provides updates and valuable resources for customers with disabilities.

The NCWorks Career Center continues to seek opportunities to collaborate with organizations that service persons with disabilities.

9. Briefly describe the integrated service delivery strategy for serving employers and how the Local Area WDB staff and staff within the NCWorks Career Center coordinate outreach strategies and services to maximize resources and prevent duplicative services.

CAWD has a two-pronged approach to our service delivery strategy for serving employers: business engagement and business services.

CAWD Business Engagement focuses on the strategic aspects of serving Employers such as working with economic development, local business, and industry groups such as Chambers of Commerce or a regional alliance. The Business Engagement Director is the initial point of contact for an Employer. After an introductory call or meeting, the Business Engagement Director does a warm handoff introduction to the Business Services Manager with specific needs of the Employer highlighted in the introduction. The only service directly supported by the Business Engagement staff is Incumbent Worker Training. All other services are directly supported by the Business Services Team.

Business Services at the NCWorks Career Center falls under the Talent Employment Solutions Function. Direct Business Services are provided by the Business Services Manager and a team of Business Services consultants. The Business Services consultants are assigned to a specific industry and work directly with Employers. Employers are assigned to a Business Services consultant familiar with the needs of their specific industry/sector.

Outreach strategies are discussed and coordinated between the Business Engagement Director and Business Services Manager to avoid any duplication of efforts. As an example, when performing outreach for an event, Business Engagement will set the objectives and timeline while Business Services will perform the necessary activities to achieve that objective.

10. Describe Local Area WDB strategies and services that will be used to strengthen linkages between Local Area WDBs and the NCWorks Career Center system and unemployment insurance programs. [WIOA Section 108(b)(4)(A)(iv)]

Capital Area currently has a strong linkage with the Division of Employment Security regarding the unemployment insurance (UI) program. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) programs mandate that unemployed customers that are able and available for work meet with NCWorks Career Center staff for career counseling and job placement services. As a part of the integrated process, all our customers, including RESEA, and the universal population, will receive orientation on available services and resources, including partner services and any other pertinent resources to ensure a successful return to employment.

In addition to providing UI Fact Sheet information, an initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes and abilities will be conducted to determine appropriate supportive service needs and potential next steps of services. Based on the initial assessment, an appropriate combination of services will be considered in response to the individual needs of the customer as they move through needed career and training services to achieve their career objectives. Center staff will also conduct follow-up appointments as required by the RESEA program. The Career Center also works limitedly with the NC Division of Employment Security on issues involving unemployment insurance claims and potential cases of fraud.

CAWD will continue to work to strengthen the linkages between our Board, the NCWorks Career Center system and unemployment insurance programs.

11. Attach a flowchart for services – flowchart must include:

- a. initial one-on-one interviews with customers,
- b. skills assessments, and
- c. determination of the need for further services.

- Name document: *Capital Area Workforce Development Services Flowchart 2024.*

12. Attach the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Local Area WDB and partners concerning operation of the NCWorks Career Center
13. system. [WIOA Section 121(c)(1)(2)(A)]

- Name document: *Capital Area Workforce Development NCWorks Career Center MOU.*

14. Describe the Local Area WDB’s method for providing oversight to include:

- a. the review process and the frequency of review for the NCWorks Career Center system in the Local Area, including processes for ensuring quality customer service; and
- b. the roles and any resource contributions of the NCWorks Career Center partners. [WIOA Section 121(a)(3)] [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(D)]

CAWD, as the oversight entity under the WIOA for Wake, Johnston, Lee, Orange and Chatham Counties, takes seriously their role of ensuring WIOA funds are spent in an efficient and effective manner as prescribed by the Act. This responsibility includes conducting objective quality assurance reviews and providing technical assistance to all centers and service providers.

Capital Area will utilize its enhanced Quality Assurance (QA) Review process for WIOA activities. All reviews will be conducted by the CAWD Review Team. Members of this team include the Adult Workforce Development Program Consultant, Youth Workforce Development Program Consultant, Workforce Development Program Consultant, Accountability Specialist, and the Accountant. Centers will have at least one review a year. Additional reviews are contingent on center designation (Tier 1, Tier 2, Specialized or Partner sites) and past performance. The review may be announced or unannounced. Full reviews will include four (4) components: Programmatic, Center Operations, Fiscal, and Equal Opportunity. Partial reviews will only include the Center Operations component. All Centers will be included in the QA process at some level.

Tier I Centers & NextGen Centers will be monitored with a full announced review at least once per year. Additional reviews will occur as determined necessary by a risk assessment conducted at the end of the

previous year. Partial reviews and unannounced visits will take place throughout the year to ensure services are being provided as required by CAWD.

Tier II Centers will be monitored using the Center Operations component only and may be announced or unannounced.

At the beginning of the year, a schedule of the announced visits will be sent out to the Centers so they will know in advance. The full QA process will take place over a month. A desk review is conducted during the first two weeks of the review and will include an on-site visit. The exit will take place during the third week and a final report is sent to the Center. If there are items to be addressed, the center is given five (5) days to correct eligibility items and ten (10) days to correct all other items. A follow-up check is conducted to ensure everything is addressed as requested.

The partial QA review will take place over a few weeks. The site visit will be either a half-day or full day depending on the size of the location. A final report is sent to the Center Manager and may include items to be addressed. The Center is given ten (10) days to correct all items. A follow-up check is conducted to ensure everything is addressed as requested.

For each review a Prime is assigned to handle the review process. This staff person from the QA team ensures everything is being done according to the QA guidelines from the beginning to the end of the review process.

15. Describe how the Local Area WDB facilitates access to services provided through the NCWorks Career Center delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(B)]

CAWD provides access to services in remote areas through partnership access points such as the Salvation Army and various access points throughout its system. Additionally, CAWD offers services throughout the region via Access NCWorks which is our virtual contact center. Job seekers have the ability to use chat features, email, webform, or call and receive services virtually via our Zen Desk software. Additionally, we use Microsoft Teams to conduct virtual appointments with job seekers. Job Seekers receive the same level of service using convenient technology.

16. Describe how NCWorks Career Centers are using virtual technology to provide integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information systems for programs carried out under WIOA including youth programs, and programs carried out by NCWorks Career Center partners. What software are NCWorks Career Centers using? [WIOA Section 108 (b)(21)]

CAWD has been proactive in implementing a Contact Center called Access NCWorks. Access NCWorks is a multi-channel contact center that provides comprehensive career center services to individuals in its area. The original goal of the contact center was to complete virtual Wagner-Peyser enrollments and provide services to those individuals who may not be able to come into the center due to disabilities or transportation issues. However, we have found these services have superseded our expectations and customers are now using virtual services for many other reasons, including career services just for the convenience of it. Just as you may contact a call center when you are ordering something online, you can contact Access NCWorks for assistance with your job search and do it all by phone or computer via chat or web form.

Access NCWorks has been exceptionally beneficial during inclement weather conditions, emergency situations, and other times when CAWD have had to close the NCWCC physical offices. NCWCC staff can provide services virtually using technology.

In addition to completing Wagner-Peyser enrollments and providing those services virtually, the NCWorks Career Center has expanded its capabilities to complete WIOA enrollments virtually as well as providing WIOA services. Capital Area provided strict guidance and approved a Standard Operational Procedure (SOP) for its Career Center system surrounding virtual enrollments. The purpose of the guidance is to establish a standard process for enrolling customers virtually into WIOA, which may lead to WIOA-funded Work-Based Learning services (OJT, Work Experience), Training, and/or Supportive Services. The SOP addresses four critical areas noted as follows which encompasses the end-to-end process for virtual enrollments and recording services virtually:

1. Preparing a Customer for a Virtual WIOA Enrollment
2. Pre-WIOA Enrollment
3. WIOA Enrollment
4. Reference Documents

Capital Area has adopted MS Teams as its video conferencing tool as well as DocuSign. Each customer that is virtually enrolled in WIOA must have their identity verified visually, documents must be uploaded into NCWorks Online per guidance, and staff must record appropriate services.

When career center staff are speaking to customers by phone, at least one of the conversations (prior to signing the application) must be done with video conferencing. Their identity must be verified visually using their image online against a state-recognized photo ID (i.e., Driver's License, State or local government-issued ID) and confirmed by comparing their face with their photo ID. Also, Career Center staff must confirm the last four digits of their Social Security Number and their Date of Birth. After confirming their identity, staff will enter a case note with the following:

1. A statement that you confirmed their identity visually
2. Online platform used to confirm their identity
3. Photo ID used to confirm their identity
4. Date and Time identity was confirmed

Each time Career Center staff speak to the customer virtually, they must verify their identity by asking the following questions:

1. What are the last four digits of your Social Security number,
2. What is your date of birth, and
3. What is your mailing zip code?

If the mailing zip code does not match, staff will ask for the mailing address used when creating their NCWorks account. Once confirmed staff can obtain the most up-to-date mailing address and update the NCWorks records accordingly. This process is critical to confirm career center staff are speaking to the correct person for security and confidentiality reasons.

In addition, Career Center staff encourage participants to upload a scanned copy or photograph of PII information directly into NCWorks.gov but should not email or text that scanned copy or photograph to Career Center employees. However, sometimes this poses a challenge for some customers who are not computer savvy or have low technology skills. To combat this challenge the NCWorks Career Center has identified specific staff that can receive documents from customers in person. Center Staff must continue to follow CAWD's redacting policy for any documents uploaded into NCWorks Online and they must rename documents (per Capital Area's policy) that are uploaded by individuals into NCWorks Online.

17. Describe how entities within the NCWorks Career Center system, including Career Center operators and partners, will comply with Section 188, if applicable, and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(C)]

The Centers have been inspected and meets all ADA requirements. A variety of assistive technologies are available in the Center. These include enlarged screens and magnifiers, adjustable desk heights, closed captioning services for video, TDD telephone, interpretive services, headphones, speakers, and private areas for customer use. If a job seeker indicates they have a disability, staff will inquire if they are working with Vocational Rehabilitation with the goal ensuring that job seekers are aware of the services Vocational Rehabilitation provides. If desired, the customer can be referred to VR by Career Center staff. Services available for individuals with disabilities include career assessments and counseling, education and career training, job-readiness training, assistive technology evaluations, equipment and training, job placement

assistance, job coaching, self-employment assistance, online job assistance, assessments, resume support, labor market information and all other virtual and in-person services.

The goal is to provide increased access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training, and supportive services often needed to succeed in the workplace. By partnering with the local agencies such as Community Workforce Solutions, Alliance of Disability Advocates and The Arc of North Carolina, peer mentoring and job training opportunities are available which assists the individuals with disabilities to take full advantage of any training or job placement opportunities. Additionally, Vocational Rehabilitation hosts onsite Job Club workshops in the computer lab for their customers.

Additionally, annual staff training on sensitivity, and ADA compliance is provided to ensure staff are well informed of all services and accommodations made available to job seekers with disabilities.

VI. Employer Services

1. Please describe the efforts of the Local Area WDB staff, Employer services staff and Career Center staff have made to deliver business services on a regional basis in the following areas:
 - a. Utilizing regional and local economic data to inform priorities [WIOA Section 108 (b)(1)(A)(i)(ii) and (B)].
 - b. Collaborating with employer-facing partners such as Agricultural Services, Foreign Labor and Veteran Services to meet employer needs and jobseeker recruitment efforts.
 - c. Providing local and regional Rapid Response services, including identifying struggling and at-risk businesses and providing services to help avert layoffs. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(8)]
 - d. Coordinating with DWS TAA and Business Services staff to provide Rapid Response assistance and appropriate career and training services to workers for whom a petition has been filed. (20 CFR 618.816)
 - e. Including Historically Underutilized Businesses (OG 20-2021)

- a. CAWD and our NCWorks Career Center Business Services staff utilize a highly collaborative, consultative, and data-driven approach to engage and serve our region's businesses and industries. CAWD's use of labor market data to study trends, projections, and impact, positions us as trusted advisors and subject matter experts to our business customers and partners in workforce development. CAWD and our NCWorks Career Centers currently use Lightcast (formerly EMSI) Labor Market analysis software to inform about local and regional labor market data.

CAWD uses a combination of reports sourced from Lightcast and NC LEAD to determine the High-Growth In-Demand sectors that the Board will prioritize. These sectors are Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Skilled Trades.

Labor market data is compiled for economic development projects to help recruit new businesses. The data brings an understanding about the local economy, industry strengths, and provides a workforce

overview. Information often includes the number of jobs in certain occupations, applicable wages, job growth, and educational completions that influence talent availability.

CAWD's labor market subscription service allows us to identify skills needed for various occupations. Career center staff compare this information to the existing skills of customers to identify skill gaps and to justify sending the customer through training. By leveraging technology, partner relationships, outreach and awareness events, and other traditional methods, we have played a significant role in the promotion and growth of innovative and effective workforce development strategies across our region.

Business Services Consultants' primary role is to engage and listen to our business community and the needs and challenges they face. The real-time business intelligence they gain is critical to ensure continued alignment of our programs, services, and priorities. This includes promoting the use of employer services such as work-based learning. As mentioned, CAWD's approach to business services is solution-based; therefore, work-based learning is a resource in our business services toolbox.

- b. CAWD has an Agriculture Services Consultant co-located in our Clayton Career Center. The consultant provides job referrals to the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker population. The consultant visits farms and agricultural employer sites to register employers in the NCWorks online system. Agriculture positions are shared with center staff during office huddles. The consultant also provides training for center staff on assisting job seekers with applying for agriculture positions listed in NCWorks.

In addition, the business services team is trained annually by the Department of Commerce Agricultural Services team. For employers seeking information on finding qualified foreign labor, local staff refer them to the US Department of Labor Application Gateway site to create an account. This site contains tutorial videos and many of the required forms including the ETA790 Clearance order.

<https://flag.dol.gov/>. For more information on the Permanent ("PERM") and H-2B Temporary Non-agricultural Labor Certification Programs, staff direct employers to Foreign Labor Certification | U.S. Department of Labor (dol.gov).

Employers are required to advertise and list a job order with our NCWorks Career Center. Employers must complete a job order form and submit it via email to h2b.joborders@nccommerce.com. Employers can find the Job Order Submission Form at ncworks.gov. The NCWorks team will ensure that employers understand the requirements for listing Foreign Labor Certificate (FLC) job orders and will manage the screening and referral procedures for PERM and H-2B Temporary FLC job orders, just as with other job orders. This is typically handled by a member of the Business Services team or the Center Manager.

As employers express an interest in tapping into available Veteran's Services, they are connected to a Local Veteran's Employment Representative (LVER) for further assistance. LVERs have a focused priority of service regarding employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans. Additionally, LVERs engage with local employers to advocate and increase employment opportunities for veterans, particularly veterans with barriers to employment. The Business Services Manager or the Center Manager typically assigns these employer referrals based on an employer's communicated interest

in hiring or working specifically with veterans. Additionally, LVERs conduct employer outreach calls to promote the advantages of hiring veterans. This targeted outreach is aimed at identifying employers that may be able to benefit from services such as hiring events and recruitment services.

- c. CAWD is committed to delivering timely and customized services to our business community. The role of workforce development is critical not only in times of growth and hiring but equally as important in times of business slowdown and/or economic downturn. To effectively serve our business community, the Board relies on multiple sources of data and information to determine our role and appropriate course of action in Rapid Response activities. These sources of business intelligence include formal WARN notices provided by the state, labor market data, partner referrals, and direct customer conversations.

Each circumstance requires high levels of confidentiality, coordination, communication, professionalism, and responsiveness to ensure business needs are successfully met. Trust and accountability are also critical as we work through highly sensitive business needs. CAWD serves as the initial local point of contact for outreach to the business and assesses the appropriate agencies and representatives to be involved in next steps.

In the case of WARN notices, layoffs and/or closures, CAWD and DWS will involve key partner agencies such as DES, NCWorks, Community College and any others who may play a pivotal role in outplacement support at the appropriate time. Businesses find tremendous value in learning about the resources available and are highly engaged in creating a transition plan. The goal through this collaboration is to ensure businesses and their impacted workers have access to critical information and resources. This collective team has successfully conducted onsite and virtual employee information sessions and job fairs. We've connected dislocated workers to our local Career Centers, made referrals to new job opportunities and helped these workers retrain to gain necessary skills and credentials.

As CAWD and NCWorks recognize businesses who may be at risk (i.e., potential business downturn, layoffs and/or closure), our team is skilled at asking probing questions, uncovering needs, and assessing what resources and/or partners may be needed. We ensure we stay current on programs and support providers – such as local partner funding sources, consulting services such as Business Edge and other resources of support so that we remain knowledgeable and a valuable partner to our business community.

- d. Once a WARN notice has been received, Business Services staff work in conjunction with the CAWD Business Engagement Director and the Center Manager to establish contact with the company and assess the situation to develop a transition plan. To offer intentional and tailored services to the business and impacted employees, data is collected on information on the types of workers impacted positions and salaries, as well as any known official layoff/closure dates. With this information, CAWD Business Engagement Director will collaborate with the DWS TAA Consultant if appropriate and our consultants create a customized plan that includes transitional services for those employees affected. During Rapid Response sessions, employees receive relevant information that includes, but is not limited to how to access unemployment benefits, training resources, specialized assistance programs available, and

developmental workshops. Contact is initiated with companies in the region that hire workers with similar skills to set up onsite or virtual hiring events for the impacted employees. The hiring events are geared to assist impacted employees with returning to work quickly. The Business Services staff works with the employer to host onsite and offsite Rapid Response, transitional job fairs, or hiring events for the affected workers.

- e. Business Services has a strong connection with the Office for Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB). Annually, Business Services downloads a list of businesses with HUB certification to perform outreach to those businesses to communicate NCWorks employer services available to them. The Business Engagement Director receives referrals from the HUB office's Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA). In PY23, CAWD NCWorks participated in a Chavis Community Center event located in Southeast Raleigh. Business Services and the CAWD Small Business Manager attended and engaged with Southeast Raleigh residents and entrepreneurs. Almost all the small business owners in attendance were HUB-certified. Services included connecting to employers, informing about work-based learning opportunities, learning about recruitment support, and sharing entrepreneurial resources available through CAWD's Pathway to Entrepreneurship.

2. Please describe employer-focused partnership efforts in the areas of education and training and economic development in the following areas:

- a. Enhancing the use of On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities to support the regional economy and individuals' career advancement.
- b. Coordinating and promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(5)]
- c. Participating in regional economic strategic planning and economic development recruitment, retention and expansions with employers, education partners and economic developers. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(4)(A)(iii)].

- a. CAWD's Business Engagement and Business Services activities are built, foundationally, around the expressed needs and demands of the business community. The Workforce Board has accomplished our primary understanding of business needs through direct business meetings, and business surveys, as well as leveraging local and regional data via Lightcast (EMSI), O*NET, NC Commerce's LEAD, and other data resources.

CAWD will continue to convene and be a part of meetings with area Business Resource partners, such as economic development, chambers of commerce, and the local community colleges, in which we will strategically identify joint business visits as well as other opportunities for collaboration.

CAWD currently uses incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, work

experience, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, and career pathways initiatives as part of its business services portfolio.

CAWD puts more emphasis on small businesses with a particular focus on those owned by minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and veterans. CAWD's Business Engagement Director's work plan includes a goal to implement workforce development programs focused on small businesses and to increase the number of small businesses that receive assistance. In further support of its small business focus, CAWD added a staff position to coordinate and perform outreach activities to businesses with 25 or fewer employees in support of the State ARPA Work-Based Learning Grant received in 2023. CAWD Business Services Consultants' annual goals also include a target for small business work-based learning. CAWD continues to increase its focus on Entrepreneurship through the expansion of marketing services and mini-grants provided by its Pathway to Entrepreneurship program.

b. CAWD developed an entrepreneurship initiative titled: 'Pathway to Entrepreneurship' and launched this program in Program Year 2022. CAWD's goal is to support aspiring entrepreneurs to create successful, sustainable micro-businesses. CAWD's designed an end-to-end model to support entrepreneurs at any stage of their business. As part of this model, a workshop is offered to guide interested individuals through the Ideation process and communicate expectations of what is involved in starting a business. The objective of the model is to provide relevant, needed support when the entrepreneur needs it: whether through the CAWD Small Business Manager or a referral to a subject matter expert. This initiative was piloted in Wake County and will leverage the current entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region to convene and engage key resources. Key resources include the Small Business Center, the Small Business and Technology Development Center, Chambers of Commerce, and others. An interactive website and marketing support were launched in 2023, and in 2024, mini-grants were launched to mitigate the costs of starting and growing a business to support the efforts of the Pathway to Entrepreneurship program and its participants. CAWD will continue to assess the program and if successful and funded, plans to scale the program to Johnston, Lee, Chatham, and Orange counties.

c. CAWD has a strong partnership with our local government and economic development agencies. In considering our region's economic and workforce development needs, it's critical that we seek ways to align efforts and fully leverage available resources. In the development of the CAWD strategic plan, CAWD made the commitment to connect our strategic priorities to that of our county commissioners/local government, economic development partners, and education partners.

CAWD has strong partnerships with workforce partners, including community colleges, economic development, and many more. Some examples of how we partner with Economic Development and Community Colleges:

Economic Development - Wake County Economic Development (WCED) is represented on our Board. When economic development partners from Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, Wake, Johnston, Chatham, Orange Counties or Sanford Area Growth Alliance reply to proposals for site

locations in our service area, CAWD provides a workforce support plan to support the proposal when requested. The Board's Business Engagement Director connects with representatives of economic development groups on a regular basis and serves on several committees of economic development organizations. As an example, CAWD participates in the WCED Partner meeting that is held bi-monthly. CAWD is a partner in the Johnston County Business and Industry Alliance and partnered with Johnston County Economic Development in program year 2022 on the development of a strategic workforce development plan for Johnston County and implementation began in program year 2023. In Lee, Chatham, and Orange Counties, the CAWD Business Engagement Director meets with the economic development staff who are focused on business retention to identify potential opportunities to support businesses in the area and keep staff current on CAWD initiatives that may benefit their area.

Community College - Johnston Community College is represented on the CAWD Board. Johnston, Wake, Central Carolina, and Durham Technical Community Colleges are represented on the CAWD Partnership Collaboratives that meet once per quarter to address regional workforce issues.

The CAWD director meets regularly with the president and other leadership at WTCC and CCCC. CAWD developed a joint brochure with WTCC for expanding businesses to address their talent recruitment and training needs. CAWD also regularly meets with CCCC to discuss workforce development support for the recruitment and training of the workforce needed by the major economic development projects in Chatham County. CAWD partners with these Community Colleges to apply for grants to expand workforce capacity in the Capital Area.

CAWD partnered with CCCC to create AdvanceNC. AdvanceNC is a collaborative group of community colleges, universities, and workforce partners in central North Carolina to support the talent pipeline needs of major manufacturing employers. The objectives of AdvanceNC include Awareness and Engagement of career opportunities, Recruitment, Training, and Retention through upskilling.

CAWD also participates in the Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies (FDB) recruitment and training committees. These committees were created to support FDB's economic development project and include North Carolina Central University, NC Community College System, Wake Technical Community College, NCSU Biomanufacturing Training and Education Center, NC Biotechnology Center, Wake County Economic Development, Town of Holly Springs and FDB representatives.

VII. Performance

U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) has the following WIOA Performance Indicators:

- Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter After Exit
- Employment Rate – 4th Quarter After Exit
- Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter After Exit
- Credential Attainment Rate

- Measurable Skill Gains
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers (system-wide measure, not program specific)

1. Examine the Local Area WDB's current Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth performance on the Federal Primary Indicators of Performance for PY 2022-2023 and prior Program Years. (Reports available via FutureWorks BI.) What are some factors that have impacted performance levels both positively and negatively in the current program year?
 - a. Provide at least two examples of positive factors and two examples of negative factors with an explanation of each. Some examples to consider include:
 - unemployment rate
 - factory closures/openings
 - economic development recruitment
 - retention and expansion efforts
 - regional industry growth priorities
 - weather events and natural disasters that may have impacted the area
 - internal operational factors
 - b. Are there any factors that you anticipate will impact your performance during the upcoming program year(s) either positively or negatively?

Understanding the intricacies of CAWD's performance requires an examination of factors influencing its outcomes. In analyzing these factors, it becomes evident that both positive and negative elements play crucial roles, each interacting with the contextual landscape in unique ways. By delving into specific examples of both positive and negative influences, a comprehensive understanding of CAWD's performance levels emerges, shedding light on the complexities inherent in its operations.

Below are two examples each of positive and negative factors related to CAWD's performance levels, considering various contextual elements:

Positive Factors:

Economic Development Recruitment:

With the Capital Area region experiencing successful economic development recruitment efforts, attracting new businesses or industries, it can be a positive factor. This influx of businesses often leads to increased job opportunities and a higher demand for a skilled workforce. CAWD leverages this positive trend by aligning credential programs with the specific needs of the newly established businesses, creating a win-win situation for both employers and job seekers. Economic development activity in the region will provide entry-level opportunities for job seekers with the most volume in advanced manufacturing.

Regional Industry Growth Priorities:

Positive regional industry growth priorities significantly impact the success of CAWD's credential attainment goals. When there is a concerted effort to prioritize and support industries that are thriving or have growth potential, CAWD can tailor credential programs to align with the skills required in these sectors. This strategic alignment enhances the employability of individuals completing these programs, contributing to the overall success of the workforce development initiatives. All sectors are forecasting growth as reported in the Triangle Talent Survey taken in Summer 2023. This positions the region to promote economic mobility for job seekers.

Negative Factors:**Unemployment Rate:**

The unemployment rate for CAWD's service area is 2.8% and it has been below 4% for two years. The unemployed job seekers who are now coming to the NCWorks Career Centers face more challenges and require more support and services. This leads to challenges in achieving positive employment outcomes for participants, as there may be a mismatch between the number of qualified individuals and the available job opportunities.

Factory Closures:

The closure of factories or large-scale employers in the area can have detrimental effects on the local workforce. When significant employers shut down operations, it can result in a sudden surge of unemployed individuals with specific skill sets. CAWD's service area can face challenges in retraining or retooling this workforce to meet the evolving needs of other industries in the region. The number of WARN notices CAWD received last year doubled over the prior year.

Understanding and responding effectively to these positive and negative factors is crucial for CAWD to adapt its strategies and initiatives. Proactive measures, such as realigning programs with emerging industries and providing targeted support during economic downturns, can help mitigate the impact of negative factors and maximize the benefits of positive ones during the upcoming program year.

2. What strategies and methods are in place to meet or exceed performance goals? Include information about tracking performance, ensuring accountability of positive performance outcomes, and training.

Consider including the following information:

- Who is responsible for tracking performance?
- Which reporting resources are used?
- Is FutureWorks BI employed? If so, how, and how often?
- How often is training provided to staff?

CAWD's Accountability Specialist tracks performance monthly to ensure CAWD meets its federal performance goals. FutureWorks BI is used in conjunction with NCWorks predictive and federal reports. FutureWorks BI is helpful with providing the performance data downloads. The downloads are currently behind, and it is challenging to manually determine the performance outcomes. The performance data downloads are sent out monthly with the most recent data, via email, by CAWD's Accountability Specialist to all service providers, along with strategies for improvement. Since NCWorks federal reports directly feed the FutureWorks BI reports, the NCWorks federal reports are a valuable tool to provide more insight regarding the customer pools. NCWorks predictive reports are also a valuable tool, specifically around tracking Credentials, as FutureWorks BI does not provide a program year view of the Credential pool of customers.

Training regarding federal performance and data validation elements is provided to service provider staff on an ongoing basis throughout the program year to positively contribute to the overall success of CAWD in meeting its federal performance goals. Monthly performance data meetings are conducted for the Youth Service Providers by CAWD's Accountability Specialist and CAWD's Youth Workforce Development Program Consultant. Quarterly performance data meetings are conducted for the Adult Service Providers by CAWD's Accountability Specialist and CAWD's Adult Workforce Development Program Consultant.

3. Discuss what corrective action steps are in place if, at any point during the program year, the Local Area WDB is not on track to meet or exceed yearly performance indicator goals.

This question is intended to be hypothetical and is seeking what plan the Local Area WDB has in place to address failing performance, if it were to occur. Answers should address how the Local Area WDB:

- monitors performance,
- communicates with staff,
- makes changes to Local Area WDB performance and training strategies based on reporting data,
- and utilizes follow-up accountability measures.

In the hypothetical scenario where CAWD is not on track to meet or exceed yearly performance indicator goals, there would likely be a set of corrective action steps in place to address the situation. Below is a generalized overview of how CAWD would handle such a situation:

1. Performance Monitoring:

- Regularly Monitor Performance: CAWD has a robust system in place to regularly monitor performance indicators throughout the program year. This involves continuous data tracking, analysis, and comparison against established benchmarks and goals.

2. Communication with Staff:

- Internal Communication: CAWD has established clear channels of communication with staff to keep them informed about performance metrics. This includes regular meetings, reports, and updates to assist in facilitating transparent communication.

- Identify Challenges: Work with staff to identify any challenges or issues that are contributing to the underperformance. This opens dialogue would aid in uncovering root causes..

3. Changes to Performance and Training Strategies:

- Data-Driven Decision Making: Utilize the reporting data to make informed decisions. The Accountability Specialist would identify specific areas where CAWD is falling short and adjust strategies accordingly.
- Training and Professional Development: Provide additional training or professional development opportunities for staff to address identified weaknesses. This may involve bringing in external experts, offering workshops, or implementing targeted training programs..

4. Follow-Up Accountability Measures:

- Action Plans: Develop detailed action plans outlining the specific steps that will be taken to address performance issues. These plans would include timelines, responsibilities, and measurable outcomes.
- Performance Improvement Teams: Establish teams or task forces focused on implementing corrective actions. These teams would consist of staff with expertise in the identified problem areas.

5. Feedback Loops and Continuous Improvement:

- Establish Feedback Mechanisms: Create mechanisms for ongoing feedback from Service Provider staff. This would include surveys, focus groups, and/or regular check-ins to gauge the effectiveness of implemented changes.
- Continuous Improvement Culture: Foster a culture of continuous improvement within CAWD. CAWD would encourage staff to share insights, propose solutions, and contribute to the overall enhancement of program strategies.

6. External Support and Collaboration:

- Seek External Assistance: If necessary, CAWD would seek external assistance, such as partnering with other Workforce Development Boards, consulting with industry leaders, or collaborating with other successful programs for guidance.

7. Performance Improvement Plan:

- Performance Letter: If a Youth and/or Adult Service Provider within Capital Area is falling short of meeting federal performance indicators within six months of the program year, CAWD would issue a performance letter requesting a comprehensive performance improvement plan to ensure deficiencies are corrected in a timely manner.

Ultimately, the goal is to have a flexible and adaptive approach to performance management, ensuring that CAWD can respond promptly and effectively to challenges and continuously improve outcomes.

8. How is performance information shared throughout the hierarchy of staff? Please detail how the Local Area WDB addresses performance data in its relationship with its service provider(s) and how case managers are using performance data to drive Local Area WDB performance.

Consider including the following information:

- a. How is performance tracked in your organization?
- b. How is performance information communicated with staff?
- c. How are staff/contractors held accountable?
- d. How is training provided in your organization?

Within CAWD, the ability to effectively track and measure performance is essential for driving progress and achieving performance goals. Within CAWD's organizational framework, a robust system is in place to monitor performance, particularly concerning Federal Performance Indicators. By leveraging an array of tools and software platforms, including NCWorks Online predictive reports, NCWorks federal reports, FutureWorks BI monthly performance data downloads, and Smartsheets, a comprehensive approach has been established to track performance. These tools not only provide insights, but also facilitate informed decision-making and proactive interventions to optimize performance outcomes. Through this systematic tracking process, CAWD ensures accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement across all facets of our operations.

CAWD meets with its Youth service providers monthly and its adult service providers on a quarterly basis to discuss performance and strategies for improvement. Pay-for-performance for the for-profit service providers and real-time measures for the non-profit service providers is tracked on a quarterly basis to effectively impact CAWD's overall federal performance measures. Performance is also discussed during the monthly Operations and quarterly Manager's meetings.

Since FutureWorks BI does not currently have Predictive Rosters available for Employment Q2, Employment Q4, and Credential Rate, CAWD's Accountability Specialist runs NCWorks predictive and federal reports on a monthly basis and shares this information with the service providers via Smartsheet, including Measurable Skill Gains, to ensure the pool of customers are identified and they can be a focal point throughout the program year to in an effort to ensure CAWD meets its federal performance goals by the end of the program year.

CAWD continuously monitors performance throughout the program year and meets with the service providers regularly. If a service provider is not meeting performance, CAWD issues a letter and requests an improvement plan. This letter requests a strategy for improvement of performance to correct the deficiencies.

Performance and data validation training is provided throughout the program year to service provider staff. CAWD's Accountability Specialist and Workforce Development Program Consultants provide quality assurance of NCWorks customer files for the Capital Area region to ensure service provider case managers are properly inputting activities, case noting, and uploading the proper documentation.

9. Discuss the factors that contribute to the Local Area WDB's credential attainment indicator.
 - a. What are the challenges that the Local Area WDB faces in achieving its credential attainment goal?
 - b. What are some of the strategies that contribute to the Local Area WDB's success in achieving its credential attainment goal?
 - c. How do case managers make use of NCcareers.org and the NC Workforce Credentials list?

As a new program year begins, the Credential pool is already set, and obtaining documentation that will satisfy the Federal Credential measure can be challenging. The following key points expound upon challenges in achieving the credential attainment goal:

GED Program Completion and Documentation:

Individuals who were enrolled in GED programs but did not complete the program or did not pay for a diploma present a documentation challenge. GED programs are often seen as a pathway to obtaining a recognized high school equivalency credential, and lack of completion or payment may hinder the acquisition of necessary documentation to upload into NCWorks to satisfy the credential federal measure.

FERPA Regulations:

FERPA regulations, designed to protect the privacy of student education records, restrict the ability of organizations to provide copies of diplomas or transcripts without explicit consent. This creates a legal and procedural hurdle in obtaining the required documentation for individuals.

Documentation Process:

The process of obtaining the necessary documentation can be arduous due to various reasons, such as loss of contact with the customer or non-completion of training programs (i.e., GED programs) and FERPA restrictions. The complexity involved in navigating these factors makes it challenging for Career Advisors to obtain the required credentials efficiently and effectively.

Criticality of Timely Documentation:

The statement emphasizes the critical nature of obtaining documentation within a specific timeframe, either while the customer is still enrolled in a training program (active) or within one year after exit. This urgency is tied to the Federal Credential measure, which has a direct impact on compliance and performance metrics.

Communication Challenges with Exited Customers:

Career Advisors face additional difficulties in successfully reaching out to customers who have already exited their training program. Contacting individuals who are no longer active in NCWorks can be more challenging, as they may have moved, changed contact information, or become disengaged from their case manager.

In summary, the difficulties in obtaining documentation for training program participants who did not complete the program, coupled with FERPA restrictions, create additional barriers as they relate to meeting or exceeding credential attainment goals.

Achieving success in the credential attainment goal requires the implementation of effective strategies. For example, NCWorks predictive reports have proven to be a valuable tool, specifically around tracking Credentials, as FutureWorks BI does not provide a cumulative program year view of the Credential pool of customers. The Credential pool of customers is then shared with the Service Providers, so they are aware of the customers that are in the numerator and denominator of the Federal Credential measure. Below are some additional key strategies that contribute to CAWD's success in achieving its credential attainment goal:

Strategic Partnerships with Education Providers:

Foster strong partnerships with local educational institutions, training providers, and community colleges. Maintain those relationships to ensure customers enroll into industry-aligned credential programs that meet the demands of the local job market.

Targeted Outreach and Awareness Campaigns:

Implement comprehensive outreach efforts to raise awareness about the importance of specific credentials. This includes targeting communities, schools, and local organizations to inform individuals about available programs, benefits, and pathways to obtaining credentials.

Technology Integration and Accessibility:

Invest in technology and ensure infrastructure supports the delivery of modern, accessible training. Transfr and Be More Colorful/CareerViewXR have been and continue to be effective virtual reality solutions and an aid in leveraging technology to reach a broader audience, specifically targeting individuals from historically marginalized communities. CAWD is an advocate for meeting the customer where they are.

Individualized Case Management:

Career Advisors assist customers with navigating challenges, connecting individuals to supportive services, and ensuring timely submission/uploading of required documentation.

Community Engagement and Supportive Services:

Engage with the local community to understand specific needs and barriers within the community. Provide supportive services such as transportation assistance, exam and testing fees, and needs-related payments to address individual challenges and enhance the likelihood of program completion.

Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:

Establish mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation of credential programs. Assess program effectiveness through customer satisfaction surveys and gather feedback from participants, making necessary adjustments, as needed.

Data Sharing and Collaboration with Organizations:

Collaborate with relevant agencies and organizations to streamline the documentation process. Implementing solutions within legal frameworks, such as FERPA, to facilitate the sharing of necessary credentials without compromising privacy.

By implementing a combination of these strategies, CAWD elevates its ability to achieve credential attainment goals, maintains a supportive environment for participants, and contributes to the overall success of workforce development efforts in the community.

The Career Advisors use NCcareers.org to provide additional assessments and career exploration tools, such as the Reality Check assessment for Individuals seeking a career change, a location change, or someone who is just entering the workforce. Other assessments include the career track to include wage data for certain career pathways, interest surveys, and skills matcher. NCcareers.org can also be used for job searches as a supplement to NCWorks.

The NC Workforce Credentials list will be used by leadership to request that a credential is added to the list of NC Workforce Credentials. (Career Advisors do not use this feature.)

Overall, Career Advisors leverage NCcareers.org to empower customers to make informed decisions about their careers, develop skills and credentials, and achieve their professional aspirations.

10. When selecting an eligible training provider from the State Eligible Training Provider List to certify for local use, what is the review process the Local Area WDB uses to make this decision? How does the Local Area WDB ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training providers? In other words, how are customers advised that they have options in choosing their provider? [WIOA Section 108(b)(19)]

Customers work one-on-one with their NCWorks or NextGen Advisors to determine a training provider and training provider program that best suits their needs.

When selecting an eligible training provider from the State Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to certify for local use, CAWD follows its Eligible Training Provider policy. Per the CAWD ETPL policy:

“WDBs must work in conjunction with the State to:

- Ensure there are sufficient numbers and types of providers of career services and training services (including eligible providers with expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities and eligible providers with expertise in assisting adults in need of adult education and literacy activities) serving the local area and providing the services involved in a manner that maximizes consumer choice and leads to competitive integrated employment for individuals.

- Confirm the State’s Eligible Training Provider List is disseminated publicly through NCWorks Online, and its partner programs.
- Inform the State ETP Coordinator in cases where termination of an eligible provider should be considered using the State’s Complaint and Appeals procedure set forth in this policy
- Inform the State ETP Coordinator of any changes reported by the training provider that ultimately affect their corresponding approved programs.
- Assist, when specifically requested by the State, in the collection of participant and non-WIOA participant performance information for the purposes of managing individual and ETP program performance. The State is still solely responsible for the collection of performance data, but in rare instances where communication is lost between the State and a provider, the WDB may be asked to assist in reestablishing communication and aiding the exchange of performance data.
- As determined by each WDB, set additional information requirements and minimum performance levels for local providers beyond what is required by DWS’s procedure. WDB’s may also provide comment and input into the DWS’s development of the eligible training provider procedure by contacting the ETP Coordinator. Any additional requirements established by the WDB will only affect a program’s eligibility and performance level eligibility requirements within the local area and must be monitored accordingly to ensure compliance.
- In instances where a WDB chooses to put in place more strenuous performance requirements than are required by the state, the WDB must remove any providers that fail to meet those local performance standards from the local ETP list. There must also be an appeal process in accordance with the State’s appeal procedure for providers of training to appeal a denial of eligibility from the local list of eligible training providers.

In addition to the items listed above, Capital Area WD is also responsible for:

- Review training provider information to ensure Capital Area’s minimum criteria are met.
- Review program information to ensure Capital Area’s criteria are met.
- Approve or deny programs based on information submitted in NCWorks.
- Conduct site visits, as deemed necessary.
- Hold training providers responsible for information provided in NCWorks.”

Customers are advised by NCWorks and NextGen Center staff that they have options in choosing their provider by following the CAWD ETPL policy, as it states below.

“Informed Customer Choice refers to the knowledge of the choices available to job seekers necessary for them to make sound career decisions. NCWorks staff will provide access to the following: skills assessment tools; career planning resources; updated labor market information identifying industry sectors and occupational clusters that are high-growth, high-demand, projecting skills shortages, and/or vital to the regional economy; and access to the ETPL through the NCWorks Online system (www.ncworks.gov), to ensure that job seekers can make an informed customer choice and are prepared with the skills needed to fill hiring opportunities in in-demand sectors and career pathways in high wage occupations. The NCWorks Online system provides relevant information on available training programs, including performance and cost.”

11. Indicate whether the Local Area WDB has additional requirements for training providers above and beyond those requirements stated in the State ETPL policy. Does the Local Area WDB make use of USDOL's trainingproviderresults.gov website in its evaluation of which training providers to certify for local area use? If so, how?

CAWD does have additional requirements for training providers above and beyond those requirements stated in the State ETPL policy. Capital Area has established the following additional criteria for approval programs:

- As part of the review process, program(s) of study are evaluated based on student performance. CAWD reserves the right to not approve program(s) of study that lack or maintain an overall program completion rate of at least seventy-five percent (75%) or higher. CAWD may reevaluate the program of study when the completion rate increases to 75% or higher. New program(s) of study that have never been offered may be approved, based on meeting CAWD general guidelines and will be contingent until performance is available.
- CAWD will not approve programs that are considered to be remediation, professional conduct, motivational classes, and/or pre-employment skills, (courses that do not provide occupational skills training) for WIOA training funds through Individual Training Accounts. Courses and/or programs in human resource development (HRD), Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) preparation, professional conduct, workforce preparation activities, etc. may be provided through WIOA Career Services and do not require program approval in NCWorks Online.
- If a particular type of training is readily available at an eligible training provider located within the Capital Area local area, CAWD will not approve, for WIOA training funds, programs offered by training providers located outside of the Capital Area local area. Exceptions will be considered and may include online courses, training sites in adjacent counties and/or those programs approved based on special circumstances and/or special needs of a Capital Area NCWorks Career Center customer. Exceptions may also include programs that are full, have wait lists, or programs that are not offered during the needed semester.
- CAWD has additional regulations for individuals that can affect eligibility and/or suitability for WIOA training funds. For these additional regulations such as student performance and other student requirements, please refer to the ITA/Voucher policy for WIOA Adult/DW participants and the Occupational Skills Training (OST) policy for WIOA Youth participants.
- Programs may periodically be purged from the NCWorks Online system if the program has not been recently WIOA funded. This process is done at the State level and CAWD is not responsible for which programs are, or are not, purged. It is each training provider's responsibility to keep track of their programs in NCWorks Online.
- Training Providers must agree not to use the Capital Area Workforce Development name or logo on their web site or on printed materials without the expressed written consent from the Capital Area One-Stop System Director.
- Training Providers must agree not to use the NCWorks name or logo on their web site or on printed materials without the expressed written consent from the Capital Area One-Stop System Director.
- Training Providers must agree not to promise or imply that individuals will receive funding through WIOA. (There is an eligibility process, and no one is guaranteed funding for training.)
- Training Providers may appeal a denial or termination of eligibility for programs at any time. See Section IV. *Appeals Process* for more details on the appeals process.

Please Note: At least eighty percent (80%) of WIOA training dollars spent must lead to an occupation in an in-demand industry as defined by CAWD with an emphasis on the high-growth, in-demand, hard-to-fill occupations, and no more than twenty percent (20%) of WIOA training dollars may be for other occupations. CAWD's target industries are provided in the ITA/Voucher policy for WIOA Adult/DW participants and the Occupational Skills Training (OST) policy for WIOA Youth participants.

CAWD uses the Secretary of State website to determine whether a training provider has been in business for at least two years, prior to approving the training provider for Capital Area. Currently, CAWD has not used the USDOL’s trainingproviderresults.gov website, but will refer to the USDOL website, in conjunction with the CAWD ETPL policy to certify training providers for Capital Area.

- Name Document: *Capital Area Workforce Development Eligible Training Provider Policy.*

VIII. Equal Opportunity

1. Describe processes to ensure individuals are not discriminated against based on age, disability, sex, race, color, or national origin. [WIOA Section 188]

Individuals who successfully complete the WIOA Application Intake process and are enrolled in the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth program will be notified of their equal opportunity and nondiscrimination rights as well as protections under federal law. NCWorks staff will, in conjunction with the WIOA applicant, read through the “Equal Opportunity is the Law” notice and ensure understanding of rights and processes for filing complaints for discrimination. If there are no concerns the customer will sign the document at the bottom of the page and on the line marked Participant Signature. This is to indicate the customer acknowledges he/she has been informed of their rights. Center staff will then sign the EO Notice form on the line adjacent to the participant's signature and marked Subrecipient Signature. Parents/Legal Guardian are required to sign for any youth under the age 18. A signed copy of the EO Notice will be saved in the NCWorks Online participant file. In cases where a WIOA Applicant has a disability, such as visual or hearing impairment, or has limited English proficiency, an interpreter or other suitable accommodations will be provided as necessary to meet this requirement.

Capital Area offers Equal Opportunity training as part of the onboarding process for new hires and as a refresher yearly. This strategy has been implemented by CAWD to ensure all staff receive training and no individuals are discriminated against.

Equal Opportunity is also incorporated in Capital Area’s Quality Assurance Review process, and includes a review of Equal Opportunity 29 CFR, the Methods of Administration, file reviews and customer and staff interviews. The Quality Assurance reviews occur on an annual basis.

2. Attach the Local Area WDB’s current Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint Grievance Procedure to address EO requirements [29 CFR 38.35].

- Name document: *Capital Area Workforce Development EO Complaint Grievance Procedure.*

3. Describe the methods used to ensure local Equal Opportunity procedures are updated.

Capital Area ensures the regular review and updating of all local Equal Opportunity (EO) procedures on an annual basis. The Equal Opportunity Officer is responsible for conducting periodic reviews and monitoring the activities, records, and data collected by contracted service providers in Lee, Chatham, Orange, Johnston, and Wake Counties. This oversight aims to guarantee nondiscrimination and equal opportunity in all activities and is conducted as part of the Quality Assurance reviews held throughout the year. Additionally, the Equal Opportunity Officer serves as the liaison for the Capital Area with the North Carolina Division of Workforce Solutions and the Civil Rights Center. Upon receiving new or relevant information, the EO promptly reviews and disseminates it to the Capital Area One-Stop system.

In addition, the One-Stop team including the Equal Opportunity Officer, conducts an annual review and analysis of all policies and procedures within CAWD. The team provides recommendations on elements of the policy that may need updating. Subsequently, any necessary policy changes are implemented and communicated throughout the Capital Area One-Stop system.

IX. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

1. Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing Adult and Dislocated Worker education and training services.
 - a. Include how services are provided and the capacity to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers.
 - b. Describe plans to address any weaknesses identified. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(D)]

CAWD ensures Centers in its local area operate using an integrated service model to deliver services to customers (business and job seekers). CAWD's system is organized around three interrelated functions to serve customers. The services are individualized and tailored to meet the specific needs of both businesses and job seekers.

The three functions are:

- Talent Engagement welcomes the customer, conducts a basic assessment of needs, collects registration information, and directs the customer to center services based upon need.
- Talent Development assists the job seeker with work readiness activities. Activities include but are not limited to, skills analysis, assessment testing, supportive services assistance, career counseling, soft skills training, partner services, and occupational skills training referrals.
- Talent Employment Solutions provides services to employers and work-ready job seekers. Provides services to connect employers and job seekers through a variety of activities including recruitment, labor market data, rapid response, career fairs, interview days, and many others.

CAWD is fortunate to have a strong education and training system available to the Adult and Dislocated Workers in its region. We have Wake Technical Community College in Wake County, Johnston Community

College in Johnston, Durham Technical Community College for Orange County, and Central Carolina Community College in Chatham and Lee Counties as a foundation. Combined, all four colleges offer 436 courses both in the classroom and online. In addition, Capital Area has over 111 training providers that have been approved to offer training in our area.

Capital Area relies on input from businesses through roundtable discussions about the education and skill needs of the workforce and the talent needs of the employers. Based on information collected, labor market data, and input from area employers, our target industries are still: Healthcare, Information Technology, Skilled Trades, and Manufacturing. As a result of this data, discussions, and information gathered, we require that 80% of WIOA training funds are spent in these industries. CAWD has also increased the wage requirement for work-based learning activities.

CAWD strengths are noted as follows:

- Applies for and has obtained local, state and federal grants that enhances and builds capacity of our workforce delivery system
- Strong connection with local employers allows Center staff to stay abreast of changing workforce skill needs
- Strong collaboration with required and community partners, stakeholders and economic development organizations
- Robust Contact Center
- Enhanced accessibility of apprenticeship opportunities for youth through our pre-apprenticeship program

CAWD has identified the following areas of weakness:

- Difficulty obtaining credentials and documentation directly from some training providers due to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) restrictions.
- Limited training resources in our rural counties (Johnston, Lee, and Chatham Counties).

CAWD plans to address weaknesses by taking the following steps:

- Implement a FERPA Release of Information form to offset challenges faced with receiving required documentation to satisfy the Measurable Skill Gains and Credential Federal Performance Indicator goals and added specific language surrounding performance to the NCWorks Career Center Memorandum of Understanding
- CAWD will continue to work closely with the Community Colleges in its region to ensure the local workforce has the skills, training, and education to meet the needs of employers within the catchment area.

CAWD will continually analyze the employment, education, and training activities within its five counties to ensure relevance to business needs – current and future. As part of the strategic planning process, the One Stop Operator and leadership team will continue to analyze the services provided throughout the region and identify deficits that will be addressed in the upcoming year.

2. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area. [WIOA Section 108(b)(7)]

CAWD and the One-Stop Operator engage in data-driven decision-making processes to evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of programs. This approach enables CAWD to pinpoint gaps in service delivery and make informed decisions aimed at enhancing the availability and quality of employment and training activities. In doing so, CAWD can offer individualized services, in-person or virtual, tailored to meet the specific needs of job seekers. In addition, Career Centers also utilize calendars to showcase scheduled employment and training activities available monthly.

Furthermore, Adult and Dislocated Worker's career and training activities offer a range of services to support individuals in securing and advancing in employment. These services include, but are not limited to job search, skills analysis, assessments, supportive services assistance, career counseling, soft skills training, partner services, occupational skills training, workshops, hiring events, and the provision of additional assistance when necessary.

CAWD has at least one brick-and-mortar location in each of our five counties in addition to a contact center that covers all counties. CAWD will continue to evaluate the need for brick-and-mortar locations, but always ensuring the jobseekers and businesses have access to workforce services.

While our urban county of Wake has a wide variety of training providers, some of our rural counties have to rely heavily on the community college or providers in other counties.

Overall, CAWD continues to be committed to providing comprehensive Adult and Dislocated Worker employment and training activities, as well as ensuring job seekers have access to the resources they need to obtain and retain sustainable employment.

3. Provide the date and process for the competitive procurement of the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs that ensures an arm's-length relationship between the Local Area WDB and service delivery. Include the expected length of the contract(s) (one to three years and the current year status of the contract (e.g., two of three years). Identify any service provider contract extensions. [WIOA Section 108(b)(16), CPS 04-2022]

Capital Area solicits proposals for the One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Provider through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process every four years.

Equus Workforce Solutions was awarded the One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider contract in Wake, Johnston, Lee, and Chatham Counties. Orange DSS was awarded the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker service provider contract in Orange County. The competitive RFP process took place from December 2022 to March 2023. The contract award began on July 1, 2023, and was for one year. Contract extensions for the One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider in the Capital Area are available for up to three additional years based on performance, quality of services, responsiveness of providers, and the ability to meet contract expectations. This marks the first year of a potential three-year contract extension for Equus Workforce Solutions as the One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider. This marks the first year of a potential two-year contract extension

for Orange County DSS. Contract extensions for the One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider contract took place for PY23. A solicitation for proposals may be released sooner due to circumstances including, but not limited to, termination of a contract due to contractor performance, and funds availability.

The goal of CAWD is to ensure fair and lawful award of public funds to eligible service providers. Procurement of the One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Provider, to conduct Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act activities, is accomplished through a competitive procurement process, as follows:

The competitive procurement process starts with the release of the Request for Proposal. To ensure that the notification is viewed by the public as well as local, state, and federal employment and training agencies, the notice is posted in newspapers (including at least one minority publication), Capital Area Workforce Development's website, Wake County Government's website, National Association of Workforce Development Boards' website, and emailed electronically to an established list of adult employment and training agencies across the country.

After the notification release, a Pre-Proposal Information Session is then conducted by Capital Area and Wake County Procurement Service staff to discuss the RFP and answer any questions. Attendance at the session is recommended, but not required for agencies responding to the proposal. Questions, other than those addressed in the session, must be emailed or faxed to Capital Area before the established due date. The RFP provides clear guidelines on the submission requirements and the proposal deadline date and time. Proposals are not accepted after the deadline.

The Proposal Review Panel consists of Capital Area Board members and Capital Area staff. In selecting an organization for one-stop operator/adult and dislocated worker services, primary consideration is given to the demonstrated effectiveness of the organization in delivering comparable services, overall quality of the proposed plan of services, the likelihood of meeting or exceeding federal Performance Indicators, and cost. In addition, consideration is given to: a strong record of integrity, business ethics, fiscal management, and accountability; staff qualifications and technical skills to perform the work; and the ability of the organization to meet service delivery requirements at a reasonable cost. As part of the proposal review and selection process, the top 3-5 respondents, based on the reviewers' ratings, are required to meet with the Proposal Review Panel to briefly discuss their proposal and answer questions.

After the review process is completed by the Proposal Review Panel, the Panel presents a recommendation to the Board at the scheduled Board meeting for Board approval. The selected respondent receives written notification of the award. The non-awarded respondents will also receive written notification with the instructions on how to request a debriefing or appeal, as follows.

The debriefing must be requested in writing to the Capital Area Workforce Development Executive Director within ten (10) working days of notification of non-award. In a debriefing, the discussion will be limited to a

critique of the RFP response, i.e., specific information as to factors where the proposal manifested weaknesses and strengths. Comparisons between proposals or evaluations of the other proposals are not considered.

The appeal request must be submitted in writing to CAWD Executive Director within five (5) working days following a debriefing. An appeal request must identify an issue or fact concerning a matter of bias, discrimination, conflict of interest, or non-compliance with procedures described in the RFP document. Appeal requests not based on those conditions are not considered. Appeal requests are rejected as without merit if they address such issues as professional judgment on the quality of a proposal or the CAWD's assessment of Local Area needs, priorities, or requirements. The CAWD Executive Director will issue a decision within five (5) working days of receipt of a written appeal. The decision will be final.

Funds for One-Stop Operator/WIOA Adult and DW Services are provided under a cost reimbursement contract, for the services provided during program delivery, between Capital Area and the service provider. CAWD now also uses a pay for performance model for all service providers that include profit in their budget.

Note: While Final Regulations Section 679.410 (b) and (c) provide exceptions to the competitive procurement process, Local Area WDBs must have an arm's-length relationship to the delivery of services.

4. Attach the Local Area WDB's Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider list effective July 1, 2024 using the PY 2024 Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider List provided.

- Name document: *Capital Area Workforce Development PY 2024 Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider List.*

5. Describe the Local Area WDB's vision for serving the WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers to include (a) high level goals, (b) outreach strategies, (c) services delivery, and (d) expected outcomes.

In addition to WIOA core services and requirements, CAWDB develops a strategic plan every three years that outlines CAWD's priorities for service delivery to both job seekers and employers within our local community. As defined in this plan the high-level goals are defined as:

1. By 2027 we will provide marginalized and underserved individuals enhanced access and support to secure competencies and credentials required for in-demand careers supporting economic mobility. (Customer Success)
2. By 2025 we will deepen our relationship with employers at the local level and establish CAWD as a thought partner. (Employer Engagement)
3. By 2025 we will demonstrate the value, services, and outcomes that CAWD provides to employers, job seekers, influencers, and community partners. (Branding & Outreach)

One of the committees within the CAWDB is the Branding & Outreach Committee, responsible for devising strategies. Building upon these strategies, CAWD has implemented a comprehensive outreach plan for the Career Centers utilizing various approaches to reach out to community members in need, with the aim of making a meaningful impact on their lives.

Our focus remains on maintaining an integrated service delivery model at our NCWorks Career Centers, ensuring that job seekers receive the necessary assistance to secure sustainable employment. The anticipated outcomes, as articulated in our mission statement, revolve around establishing a highly efficient workforce system. This involves preparing both unemployed individuals and incumbent workers to meet the present and future economic demands effectively.

6. Describe the Local Area WDB's method for ensuring that a sufficient number of adults receiving individualized career and training services in the Local Area are from one of the following priority of services categories: public assistance, low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient. [134(c)(3)(E), 3(24)]

Under WIOA with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities, priority shall be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient for receipt of career services and training services. CAWD has implemented the following safeguards to ensure enough adults receiving individualized career and training services are from one of the priority of services categories:

1. Instituted a pay-for-performance measure for our service provider. Details of the priority of services measure is outlined below. The service provider is required to meet or exceed the State's 75% goal for priority of service. If the goal is not met or exceeded by the end of the program year, then the service provider will not receive the profit dollars allotted for the measure.
2. Capital Area's Accountability Specialist runs the NCWorks Online data integrity report monthly and shares the data with the service providers. The data is analyzed, and action steps are put in place to ensure the goal is met.
3. Capital Area has trained key NCWCC staff and leadership on the Data Integrity Measures and provided technical assistance on how to complete fields in NCWorks.

7. Describe follow-up services provided to Adults and Dislocated Workers. [WIOA Section 134(c)(2)(xiii)]

Follow-up services are provided, as appropriate, for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. While follow-up services must be made available, not all adults and dislocated workers who are registered and placed into unsubsidized employment will need or want such services. Follow-up is viewed as an extension of the program during which staff help participants create their own solutions to the challenges they may continue to face as they transition to employment.

The type of appropriate follow-up services may vary based on the needs of each individual. Participants who have multiple employment barriers and limited work histories may need significant follow-up services to ensure long-term success in the labor market. Other participants may identify an area of weakness in their skills prior to placement that will affect their ability to progress further in their occupation or to retain their employment.

Follow-up services will help support each participant in maintaining employment and will provide a continuous link to the workforce system, including referral networks and partner programs.

In the Capital Area, follow-up services may include, but are not limited to:

- additional career planning and counseling
- counseling regarding the workplace
- contact with the participant's employer, including assistance with work-related problems that may arise
- peer support groups
- career pathway development
- information about additional educational opportunities
- information and referrals to supportive services available in the community
- case management administrative follow-up
- assistance in securing better paying jobs
- other services

The frequency of follow-up will align with the needs of the individual. Additional contacts will occur if the participant initiates them or if staff identifies a need for them. A consistent message during each follow-up contact will ensure participants know the NCWorks Career Center services are available to support them, even after follow-up ends.

Per Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 19-16 and Section 134(C)(2)(A), funds described shall be used to provide career services, which shall be available to individuals who are adults or dislocated workers through the one-stop delivery system and shall, at a minimum, include - (xiii) follow-up services, including counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in workforce investment activities authorized under this subtitle who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for not less than 12 months after the first day of the employment, as appropriate.

8. Please describe the process for monitoring the service provider(s) in the Local Area WDB. Include details such as how it is conducted, who is involved, and how often.

Capital Area Workforce Development (CAWD), as the oversight entity under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for Wake, Johnston, Lee, Chatham, and Orange Counties, takes seriously their role of ensuring WIOA funds are spent in an efficient and effective manner as prescribed by the Act. This

responsibility includes conducting objective quality assurance reviews and providing technical assistance to all centers and service providers.

Capital Area utilizes its enhanced Quality Assurance (QA) Review process for WIOA activities. All reviews will be conducted by the Capital Area Workforce Development Review Team. Members of this team include the Adult Workforce Development Program Consultant, Youth Workforce Development Program Consultant, Workforce Development Program Consultant, Accountability Specialist, and the Accountant. Centers will have at least one review a year. Additional reviews are contingent on center designation (Tier 1, Tier 2, Specialized or Partner sites) and past performance. The review may be announced or unannounced. Full reviews will include four (4) components: Programmatic, Center Operations, Fiscal, and Equal Opportunity. Partial reviews will only include the Center Operations component. All Centers will be included in the QA process at some level.

The Tier I Center & NextGen Centers are monitored with a full announced review at least once per year. Additional reviews will occur as determined necessary by a risk assessment conducted at the end of the previous year. Partial reviews and unannounced visits will take place throughout the year to ensure services are being provided as required by Capital Area.

Tier II Centers are monitored using the Center Operations component only and may be announced or unannounced.

At the beginning of the year, a schedule of the announced visits is sent out to the Centers so they will know in advance. The full QA process will take place over a month. A desk review is conducted during the first two weeks of the review and will include an on-site visit. The exit will take place during the third week and a final report is sent to the Center. If there are items to be addressed, the center is given five (5) days to correct eligibility items and ten (10) days to correct all other items. A follow-up check is conducted to ensure everything is addressed as requested.

The partial QA review will take place over a few weeks. The site visit is either a half-day or full day depending on the size of the location. A final report is sent to the Center Manager and may include items to be addressed. The Center is given ten (10) days to correct all items. A follow-up check is conducted to ensure everything is addressed as requested.

For each review, a Prime is assigned to handle the review process. This staff person from the QA team ensures everything is being done according to the QA guidelines from the beginning to the end of the review process.

X. Youth Services

USDOL provides funds to states who in turn provide local workforce areas resources to deliver a comprehensive array of youth services that focus on assisting out-of-school youth and in-school youth with one or more barriers to employment, prepare for post-secondary education and employment opportunities, attain educational and/or skills training credentials, and secure employment with career/promotional opportunities. USDOL and North Carolina's priorities are:

- *Out-of-School Youth (OSY) – A minimum of 75% of the Youth funds allocated to Local Area WDBs, except for the Local Area WDB expenditures for administration, must be used to provide services to OSY;*
- *Work Experience – Not less than 20% of Youth funds allocated to the Local Area WDB, except for the Local Area WDB expenditures for administration, must be used to provide paid and unpaid work experiences; and a*
- *Focus on Partnering – Co-enrollment encouraged where appropriate with Title II and IV.*

1. Provide a general overview of the local current total population (within five years) of the Title I WIOA eligible youth by Local Workforce Development Board area. Include the following general information:

In-School Youth Analysis

- a. Approximately, what number of the Youth are ages 14-21?
- b. Approximately, what percentage of these youth are low-income (eligible for WIOA In-school program)?
- c. Approximately, what number of these Youth are in the current school dropout statistics?

Out-of-School Analysis

- a. Approximately what number of Youth ages 16-24 of the current total population (within five years) make up the population?
- b. Youth ages 16-24 represent what % of the population?
- c. What are the general educational levels of this age group?
- d. What is the general employment status of this age group?

For PY22, CAWD's NextGen program served 294 of which 143 of these were new enrollments. The analysis for both in-school (ISY) and out-of-school (OSY) youth is as follows:

In-School Youth Analysis:

- A. Out of the 143 enrollments, 14 ISY are within the age range of 14 -21.
- B. 100% of all ISY enrollments were low-income.
- C. None of these youth are in the current school dropout statistics.

Out-of-School Analysis:

- A. Out of the 143 enrollments, 129 OSY are within the age range of 16-24.
- B. 90% of the total enrollments were enrolled as OSY.
- C. See the table below for the general educational levels:

| OSY Educational attainment for 16-24-year-old | | |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| | Number | Percentage |
| PY22 OSY Enrollments | 129 | 90% |
| Less than High School | 48 | 37% |
| High School Graduate (includes equivalency) | 74 | 57% |
| Some College or Associate's Degree | 5 | 4% |
| Bachelor's degree and Higher | 2 | 2% |

- D. The general employment status for OSY ages 16-24 is 85 unemployed and 58 employed.

Source: NCWorks Online Executive Program Management WIOA Participant Summary and Eligibility Enrollments Reports.

**NC Division of Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) is a data resource.*

2. Based on the analysis in question 1, does the local Workforce Development Board plan to serve In-School Youth?

Yes, Capital Area’s NextGen program will serve at most 25% for ISY. The majority of the ISY population are young adults who have barriers that are unaddressed in the school system. We will also continue to work with the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) student population at the public school system offering WBL opportunities.

3. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce activities in the Local Area WDB, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. Include identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities being used and/or planned. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(9)]

| Youth Workforce Activity | Activities For Persons with Disabilities? | Brief Assessment/Model Used | Success Rating |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Paid and unpaid Work Experience (WEX) | Yes | O*NET, Mid-point/Final Evaluation, Interest Inventory tools, i.e. My Next Move, etc. | PY22 - 64% completion rate (25 of 39 successfully completed the WEX) |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|---|---|
| Pre-Apprenticeship | Yes | O*NET, Mid-point/Final Evaluation, Interest Inventory tools, i.e. My Next Move, etc. Capital Apprenticeship Prep Model. | PY22 - 83% completion rate (5 of 6 successfully completed the pre-apprenticeship) |
| On-the-Job Training (OJT) | Yes | O*NET, Mid-point/Final Evaluation, Interest Inventory tools, i.e. My Next Move, etc. | PY22 - 75% completion rate (3 of 4 successfully completed the pre-apprenticeship) |
| Job Shadowing | Yes | O*NET, Mid-point/Final Evaluation, Interest Inventory tools, i.e. My Next Move, etc. | PY22 - 100% completion rate (13 of 13 successfully completed the pre-apprenticeship) |

Young adults with disabilities engage in the aforementioned components and activities, receiving tailored accommodations to facilitate their participation and success. Another facet of the youth program catering to individuals with disabilities is the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) program, established in partnership with the public school system. As part of the OCS program, participants are required to complete school and community-based work-hour requirements to graduate. Capital Area NextGen Centers have collaborated with these in-school youth to ensure they fulfill these requirements and graduate punctually.

4. Describe how the Local Area WDB’s Young Adult (NextGen) Program design is unique to include:
- a. providing objective assessments;
 - b. supportive services needed; and
 - c. developmental needs of each participant, for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants. [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(A)]
- Capital Area’s NextGen service model meets young people where they are in their development and helps them engage in the 14 WIOA youth program elements according to their needs. Our program aligns with North Carolina’s Framework, comprising five components:
1. Education
 - Young people have easy access to education to reach their long-term goals and access resources, tools, and services. Training in occupational skills, high school equivalency classes, and tutoring are geared toward preparing them for in-demand jobs.
 2. Career Pathways

The emphasis is on career pathways rather than just jobs for youth and young adults in employment and training. These pathways offer a clear route from education to the workforce, incorporating integrated services, various training options, career readiness support, partnerships, and other distinctive features.

3. Career Experience

For every young person in the program should have access to career opportunities, entrepreneurship, and hands-on learning experiences. Local businesses are involved to offer internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training.

4. Leadership Development

Leadership development is crucial in the design of our NextGen program for youth and young adults. NextGen participants can engage in community service, peer activities, classroom learning, mentoring, and soft skills training.

5. Wrap Around Services

Capital Area's NextGen program collaborates with community partners and organizations to provide wrap-around services tailored to the diverse needs of youth and young adults. Some of these partnerships are Vocational Rehabilitation, Dept. of Social Services, Local Community Colleges, and Juvenile Justice providers.

These components are interconnected and support young people in our area as they transition into employment, post-secondary education, military service, or continued apprenticeship.

CAWD will also continue to highlight the Capital Area Apprenticeship Prep program. This program offers pre-apprenticeship training to NextGen participants who may need extra assistance before starting their careers. This program blends classroom learning with hands-on work experience, paving the way for participants to enter an apprenticeship program. It gives NextGen participants the foundation to pursue various paths, whether it's college, full-time employment, or a mix of both.

5. How does the Local Area WDB ensure the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) identifies appropriate services based on the objective assessment and is linked to youth performance indicators, career pathways, and program elements? [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(B)] How does the provider ensure the ISS is unique to the individual?

As a part of the enrollment process, all NextGen participants undergo an objective assessment, and an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is developed to identify their abilities, barriers, strengths, needs, and goals. NextGen staff use this information to understand the youth better and determine the services required for their educational and career success. This also ensures services and activities assigned are unique to the participant. Working in partnership with the participants, staff develop an ISS detailing the steps needed to achieve short-term and long-term goals. This ISS guides every aspect of the participant's journey in the program and is reviewed every 90 days to ensure they are on track and can be adjusted if necessary to meet their needs.

6. Describe the Local Area WDB's strategy to ensure Youth (NextGen) Program activities lead to a high school diploma or its equivalent or a recognized post-secondary credential and post-secondary education and training opportunities. [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(C)]

CAWD uses several strategies to ensure NextGen participant training activities lead to a recognized credential:

- Partner with local community college partners in their Adult Basic Education (ABE) program to aid participants in the completion of a High School diploma or GED.
- For NextGen participants who do not have their HS/GED at the time of enrollment, obtaining their HS/GED will be their first activity. Supports for this activity will be added as needed.
- Support in navigating the financial aid process, provide information on accessibility services offered by institutions, and offer guidance on other advising services.
- Collaborates with post-secondary institutions and other training providers to offer career exploration activities aimed at facilitating the transition from high school to post-secondary options.
- We offer industry-focused programs to expose young adults to high-growth career opportunities, aiming to inspire them to pursue these roles. We'll also explore additional activities to further enhance career exploration and awareness.

As part of Capital Area's new Apprenticeship Prep program, Youth will be able to concurrently take courses directly related to the apprenticeship field in addition to their required high school equivalency coursework. Then, upon completion of the Apprenticeship Prep program, youth will be referred to applicable apprenticeship, further education, or employment.

7. Describe how follow-up services will be provided for (NextGen) youth. [WIOA Section 134(c)(2)(xiii)]

Building relationships is crucial for keeping young adults engaged during enrollment in WIOA. Equally important is providing ongoing support even after they leave the program. We'll use various methods like mail, email, phone calls, texting, and social media to follow up regularly and ensure they stay on track for success. Those who complete the program successfully will be invited back to share their experiences and mentor current participants.

If we can't reach the NextGen participant through the mentioned channels, we'll actively reach out to their family, friends, employers, and schools. NextGen staff will maintain monthly contact for the first 90 days, then switch to quarterly check-ins for the remainder of the follow-up year.

- Services offered during follow-up may include:
- Assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise;
- Supportive services;
- Adult mentoring;

- Financial literacy education;
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and,
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

Note: All youth participants must receive some form of follow-up for a minimum duration of 12 months.

8. Where does the Local Area WDB plan to serve the young adults (NextGen): NCWorks Career Centers Specialized Centers, Services Provider Offices, or Hybrid situations? Explain if it is both NCWorks Career Centers and Provider Offices or some other option.

NextGen participants will be supported at our specialized Youth Centers: one NCWorks NextGen Center in Wake County and another in Johnston County. Additionally, young adults can access workshops, job fairs, and events at the NCWorks Career Centers. In Lee, Chatham, and Orange counties, NextGen participants are served at the NCWorks Career Centers located there.

9. Attach the Local Area WDB Youth Service Provider’s chart, effective July 1, 2024, using the PY 2024 Youth Service Provider List provided. Complete each column to include specifying where Youth Services are provided.

- Name the document: *PY 2024 Capital Area Workforce Development Youth Service Provider List.*

10. Provide the date and process for the competitive procurement of the Youth Programs that ensures an arm’s-length relationship between the Local Area WDB and service delivery. Include the expected length of the contract(s) (one to three years and the current year status of the contract (e.g., two of three years). Identify any service provider contract extensions. [WIOA Section 108(b)(16), CPS 04-2022]

CAWD has a competitive procurement process for all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Services. CAWD solicits proposals for WIOA Youth Services Providers through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process every three years. The goal of CAWD is to ensure fair and lawful award of public funds to eligible service providers.

The competitive RFP process took place from December 2022 to March 2023. The competitive procurement process starts with the release of the RFP. To ensure that the notification is viewed by the public as well as local, state, and federal employment and training agencies, the notice is posted in newspapers (including at least one minority publication), CAWD’s website, Wake County Government’s website, National Association of Workforce Development Boards’ website, and emailed electronically to an established list of adult employment and training agencies across the country.

After the notification release, a Pre-Proposal Information Session is then conducted by Capital Area and Wake County Procurement Service staff to discuss the RFP and answer any questions. Attendance at the session is recommended, but not required for agencies responding to the proposal. Questions, other than those addressed in the session, must be submitted to Capital Area before the established due date. The RFP provides clear guidelines on the submission requirements and the proposal deadline date and time. Proposals are not accepted after the deadline.

The Proposal Review Panel consists of Capital Area Board members and Capital Area staff. In selecting an organization for Youth services, primary consideration is given to the demonstrated effectiveness of the organization in delivering comparable services, the overall quality of the proposed plan of services, the likelihood of meeting or exceeding federal Performance Indicators, and cost. In addition, consideration is given to a strong record of integrity, business ethics, fiscal management, and accountability; staff qualifications and technical skills to perform the work; and the ability of the organization to meet service delivery requirements at a reasonable cost. As part of the proposal review and selection process, the top 3-5 respondents, based on the reviewers' ratings, are required to meet with the Proposal Review Panel to briefly discuss their proposal and answer questions.

After the review process is completed by the Proposal Review Panel, the Panel presents a recommendation to the Board at the scheduled Board meeting for Board approval. The selected respondent receives written notification of the award. The non-awarded respondents will also receive written notification with the instructions on how to request a debriefing or appeal, as follows.

The debriefing must be requested in writing to the CAWD Executive Director within ten (10) working days of notification of non-award. In a debriefing, the discussion will be limited to a critique of the RFP response, i.e., specific information as to factors where the proposal manifested weaknesses and strengths. Comparisons between proposals or evaluations of the other proposals are not considered.

The appeal request must be submitted in writing to the CAWD Executive Director within five (5) working days following a debriefing. An appeal request must identify an issue or fact concerning a matter of bias, discrimination, conflict of interest, or non-compliance with procedures described in the RFP document. Appeal requests not based on those conditions are not considered. Appeal requests are rejected as without merit if they address such issues as professional judgment on the quality of a proposal or the CAWD's assessment of Local Area needs, priorities, or requirements. The CAWD Executive Director will issue a decision within five (5) working days of receipt of a written appeal. The decision will be final. Funds for WIOA Youth Services are provided under a cost-reimbursement contract, for the services provided during program delivery, between Capital Area and the service provider. CAWD also uses a pay-for-performance model for all service providers that include profit in their budget.

The youth service provider awardees are as follows:

- EDSI was awarded the WIOA Youth Service Provider contract for Wake, Lee, and Chatham Counties.
- Johnson County Industries was awarded the WIOA Youth Service Provider contract for Johnston County.
- Orange DSS was awarded the WIOA Youth Service Provider contract for Orange County.

The contracts started on July 1, 2023, for a duration of one year. For the WIOA Youth Service Providers within CAWD, contract extensions are permissible for up to two additional years contingent upon factors such as performance, service quality, provider responsiveness, and the ability to meet contractual expectations. Presently, this marks the first year of a potential two-year extension. However, circumstances such as contract termination due to inadequate contractor performance or funding availability may prompt an earlier release of solicitation for proposals. Contract extensions for the WIOA Youth Service Providers were executed for PY23 for EDSI and JCI. The contract will start on July 1, 2024, for a duration of one year.

A sole-source contract was awarded to the Orange County Department of Social Services (OCDSS) until CAWD could issue a new Request for Proposal (RFP) in December 2023. The Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS), as the WIOA state administrator, along with Wake County Government Procurement Management, permitted CAWD to grant this contract outside of the RFP process to maintain services for Orange County citizens until a new RFP was issued and a Service Provider was selected through a competitive process. The primary reasons for granting the sole-source contract were twofold: (1) Ensuring continuous services for youth and young adults in Orange County, and (2) OCDSS's deep integration within their community. The competitive RFP process took place from December 2023 to March 2024 for Orange County Youth Services. Orange County DSS was awarded a contract with conditions. The contract will start on July 1, 2024, for a duration of one year. For the WIOA Youth Service Providers within CAWD, contract extensions are permissible for up to two additional years contingent upon factors such as performance, service quality, provider responsiveness, and the ability to meet contractual expectations. Presently, this marks the first year of a potential two-year extension. However, circumstances such as contract termination due to inadequate contractor performance or funding availability may prompt an earlier release of solicitation for proposals CAWD followed the process noted above.

USDOL granted North Carolina a waiver for Program Years 2022 and 2023, which reduced the minimum Title I Youth expenditure rate requirement for OSY from 75% to 50% and allowed the maximum expenditure rate for in-school youth (ISY) to be increased from 25% to up to 50%. NC is requesting the same waiver for Program Year 2024.

11. Provide the Local Area WDB's approach to meeting the required 75% minimum (NextGen) youth expenditures on out-of-school youth and include special outreach efforts and highlight planned program design.

- a) State how the WDB will achieve the 75% OSY expenditure rate and describe the steps that will be taken to comply with the WDB's programmatic goals and outcomes.

- b) Describe why there is a need to serve additional ISY in the local area region and state how the WDB will achieve the 25% ISY expenditure rate.
- c) Describe how the local area region will be able to meet the demand for youth services by using the waiver.

[WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A)] (CPS 09-2021, Change 1) (OG 07-2022, Change 1)

Capital Area’s NextGen program has been successful in achieving the 75% OSY expenditure rate. NextGen service providers employ diverse strategies to recruit Out-of-School Youth (OSY), including partner referrals, word-of-mouth recommendations, social media outreach, participation in community events, distribution of marketing materials in local agencies and youth-centric places, and outreach in communities with high numbers of disconnected youth. An annual enrollment target is set at the start of each year and closely monitored monthly.

Although Capital Area has not implemented the 50% waiver for In-School Youth (ISY), there is still a need to serve this population. NextGen service providers actively engage in continuous outreach with our public school system and community college partners to support ISY. These educational institutions consistently refer students who could benefit from participation in the NextGen program. Moreover, NextGen has fostered a strong partnership with the public schools’ Occupational Course of Study (OCS) program. This collaboration regularly directs students seeking work experience opportunities to meet their high school diploma requirements towards NextGen.

NextGen service providers will further build on their relationships with community partners including Vocational Rehabilitation, NC Division of Social Services (DSS), behavioral health agencies, NCWorks Career Centers, juvenile probation offices, and Haven House, among others, to attract participants to the program.

12. How does the Local Area WDB ensure that the minimum of 20% of funds is spent on work experience and is the Local Area WDB expending the 20% minimum on work experience, to include an estimate of expenditures that will be paid wages to youth? If the Local Area WDB has not been meeting the minimum of 20% of funds, please explain additional measures to be taken this year. [WIOA Section 129(c)(4)] (CPS 09-2021, Change 1)

CAWD consistently refines its strategy for offering work-based learning activities as part of its training options, which include paid and unpaid work experiences, on-the-job training, pre-apprenticeships, and apprenticeships. WIOA requires that local areas allocate at least 20% of youth funds to work experience, but CAWD stipulates that youth service providers must allocate 25% of their funds to work-based learning activities. CAWD firmly believes in the vital role of such activities in the success of NextGen participants.

Our service providers have prioritized these efforts and will continue to do so, supported by NextGen Business Services staff and CAWD’s Business Engagement staff. Together, they will closely collaborate to engage

local businesses, establish partnerships, develop career pathways, and broaden opportunities for young adults in the programs. Service providers will emphasize a diverse range of work-based learning opportunities, particularly in high-growth industries within the CAWD region.

CAWD has been expending the 20% minimum on work experience and does not include estimated expenditures that will be paid wages to youth. Our finance and One-Stop teams work diligently to ensure that service providers incorporate all permissible work experience expenditures, as outlined in NCWorks Commission Policy: CPS 09-2021, Change 1, which contribute towards fulfilling the 20% requirement.

13. Does the Local Area WDB have a dedicated full-time Youth Business Services Representative (or similar title) at the Local Area WDB level or at the Provider level. If so, state at which level, how many representatives, and how this impacts the Youth Program Design?

CAWD currently employs two full-time NextGen Business Services Representatives: one serving NextGen Wake, Lee, and Chatham, and another based in the NextGen Center in Johnston County. Both representatives operate at the service provider level. As we have expanded our region to include Orange County in PY23, the provision of business services will be provided by the Orange County service provider staff.

14. Does the Local Area WDB have special programs for young adults that are Justice-Involved or have a substance use disorder? If yes, please briefly describe them.

CAWD received the DWS ARPA Recovery to Work grant in PY22. This project aims to help youth and young adults with or at risk of substance use disorders (SUD) develop and implement career plans leading to successful employment. This will involve building a strong partnership network comprising behavioral health providers, community organizations, employers, and workforce staff to offer comprehensive guidance, support, and encouragement to youth. Youth will be provided workshops in practical life skills and building resilience to help youth achieve positive outcomes. Both objectives aim to enhance wrap-around support for youth with SUDs, improving their recovery and employment outcomes.

Currently, CAWD does not offer a re-entry program for young adults. However, justice-involved young people will still receive services through community partners and other reentry partners available in our region.

15. Describe how the Local Area WDB partners, aligns, and leverages, as appropriate with:

- a. Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program resources and policies.
- b. Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program resources and policies.
- c. Integrates adult education with occupational education and training and workforce preparation, as Local Area WDB's and the creation of career pathways for youth. [USDOL TEGL 8-15]

CAWD continuously works with Adult Education and Family Literacy partners who are well positioned to fill the gaps in academic knowledge needed by individuals who want to transition to careers and secure better paying jobs. Collaborative efforts have been focused on increasing referrals to services, providing financial support to NextGen participants, and working with GED graduates to support their efforts to enter employment and/or enroll in post-secondary education or training. Work is continually happening to collaborate on efforts to increase access to adult literacy activities, connect graduates to career pathways, and support increased high school diploma education attainment rates.

CAWD coordinates with the Adult Education and Literacy providers in the following ways:

- Provides on-site GED courses for NextGen participants in the NextGen Johnston Center. NextGen participants receive GED services through the community college via their campus or online.
- Provides cross-referrals of students that could benefit from the services offered by NextGen.
- Shares information for mutual customers to include attainment of credential (GED), attendance verification, exam readiness, changes in testing requirements, and financial resource information for exam costs.
- Conducts regular outreach with Adult Education partners to highlight additional services provided by NextGen.

We partner with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to foster fair opportunities for every young adult. Regular meetings between NextGen and VR staff are held to assess potential referrals, business services outreach, lower barriers to employment, such as those related to assistive technologies, and share resources. VR offers case management and employment services to participants enrolled in both NextGen and VR. These services include paid internships, employment placement, and employment support. By convening regularly, NextGen and VR guarantee that there's no overlap in services for the youth participants.

CAWD collaborates closely with our local community colleges to offer adult education and literacy programs in conjunction with workforce preparation activities and specialized occupational training. These initiatives are designed to support educational and career advancement opportunities for our community members. An example of this is our Capital Area's new Youth Apprenticeship Prep model where participants can concurrently take courses directly related to the apprenticeship field in addition to their required high school equivalency coursework.

16. Specify if the Local Area WDB plans to offer incentives for (NextGen) youth. If yes, attach the Youth Incentive Policy, which should include:

- a. criteria to be used to award incentives;
- b. type(s) of incentive awards to be made available;
- c. whether WIOA funds will be used; and
- d. the Local Area WDB's internal controls to safeguard cash/gift cards.

Yes, CAWD plans to offer incentives for youth.

- Name document: Capital Area Workforce Development Youth Incentive Policy.

Note: Federal funds may not be spent on entertainment costs. Youth Incentive Policies should include: compliance with the Cost Principles in 2 CFR part 200; identify types of items that may be awarded (gift cards, plaques, certificates, checks); identify types of achievements/completion of activities (an inclusive list is required); practices for internal controls for safeguarding incentives, and provide a sample list of required documentation for reimbursement (diploma, evaluations).

17. If the Local Area WDB does not offer incentives for (NextGen) youth, please explain why.

N/A

18. Describe the local strategy to prepare the youth (NextGen) for unsubsidized employment, including with small employers, specifically those that include in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the local and/or regional labor markets. [WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(C)(v)]

NextGen Service providers prioritize preparing young individuals for prosperous careers through comprehensive programs that include career exploration, educational support, work-based learning, and employment pathways. Before connecting participants with employment opportunities, NextGen staff offer an array of preparatory services, such as resume assistance, mock interviewing, work readiness training, and the development of durable skills. Additionally, they provide supportive services, help with completing onboarding documents, and more. The NextGen Business Services team and program staff collaborate closely with employers to ensure the availability of work-based learning opportunities and direct placement for participants.

NextGen staff provide ongoing job readiness and soft skills workshops and activities to NextGen participants. Through the completion of these workforce activities, staff will encourage the participants to consider employment with small employers, specifically those that are in the Capital Area's in-demand industry sectors, which are Information Technology, Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, and Construction / Skilled Trades.

19. Please complete the Youth Program Elements chart provided to demonstrate how the Local Area WDB ensures each of the 14 youth program elements is made available to youth participants. Be certain to complete both columns of the chart to demonstrate partnerships and potential use of shared funding. Please specify partners. [WIOA Section 129(c)(2)(A)]

- Name document: Capital Area Workforce Development Youth Program Elements Chart.

20. Does the Local Area WDB have a standing committee to provide information to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth? [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)]

a. If no, describe how oversight to planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth will be provided.

Currently, Capital Area does not maintain a standing committee specifically dedicated to advising on the planning, operational, and other pertinent matters associated with delivering services to the NextGen participants. CAWD’s NextGen Program Consultant and One-Stop System Director oversee the NextGen programs on a consistent basis. The NextGen service providers are provided with training and technical support throughout the year, while CAWD’s Accountability Specialist monitors performance. NextGen providers submit monthly reports outlined by CAWD staff to monitor the progress of service delivery.

Capital Area started Youth Advisory Councils at the beginning of 2020, one in Wake and one in Johnston. The committees worked on county-wide outreach and support strategies. Johnston County developed a youth mentoring program for at-risk youth. Both committees struggled with participation during Covid. With the addition of Chatham, Lee, and Orange, Capital Area is developing a new strategy to engage youth partners in the work of the NextGen Center, create shared youth goals in the region while recognizing the limited capacity of partners. Currently the strategy is to incorporate a youth component to the Partners Circles. This would allow partners to provide input and support to regional youth efforts without adding an additional meetings and responsibilities.

b. If yes, please provide a response to the following

a) Provide the committee’s purpose/vision.

N/A

b) Provide the youth committee’s top three goals or objectives for PY 2024.

N/A

N/A

N/A

c) Provide a list of youth committee members to include members’ agency/organization, one of which must be a community-based organization with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth. Provide the Committee’s Chair information in the first block (*who must be a Local Area WDB member*).

- Name document: Local Area WDB Name Youth Committee Members [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)]

c. Complete the following chart for the PY 2024 Youth Committee’s planned meeting schedule to include dates, time, and location. (Expand form as needed or mark Not Applicable.)

| Date | Time | Location (include address and room #) |
|------|------|---------------------------------------|
| N/A | N/A | N/A |

| Date | Time | Location (include address and room #) |
|------|------|---------------------------------------|
| N/A | N/A | N/A |
| N/A | N/A | N/A |

XI. Local Area WDB Innovations

1. List all additional funding received by the Local Area WDB (for example, to include but not limited to, special grants, NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants, Business Services funds, National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) (disaster), YouthBuild, Foundations, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD), NCWorks Commission Local Innovation Fund Grant, and/or outside funding to include a brief description of the source and the amount received).

| Grant Name/Kind | Brief Description | Beginning and End date | Source and Amount | Partner Organization (if applicable) |
|--|--|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Intermediary Agency for the Wake Local Reentry Council | To serve as the operator of the Wake Local Reentry Council. Provide intake and referrals to recently released individuals. Coordinate and recruit partners that provide support to returning citizens. Strengthen the network of support for returning citizens in Wake County. | 12/01/2023 11/30/2026 | N.C. Department of Adult Corrections \$150,000 per year for regular programming | |
| Small Business Workforce Development | To provide On-The-Job (OJT) Training, Work-Based Learning, and Incumbent Worker Training to small businesses with a priority focus on those businesses | 11/08/2021- 12/31/2026 | Wake County ARPA Funds \$347,047 | |

| Grant Name/Kind | Brief Description | Beginning and End date | Source and Amount | Partner Organization (if applicable) |
|--|---|------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| | owned by minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities. | | | |
| Microbusiness-Entrepreneurship (Pathway to Entrepreneurship) | To develop a comprehensive model to support entrepreneurs at every stage from idea to expansion, especially those who may need extra assistance in taking their next step. | 11/08/2021-12/31/2026 | Wake County ARPA Funds \$395,890- Program \$967,000- Small Business Marketing and Mini-Grants | |
| NextGen Youth Career Exploration | To provide youth in Wake County the tools and resources to explore different careers through improved technology & education setting, and pre-apprenticeship opportunities. | 11/08/2021-12/31/2024 | Wake County ARPA Funds \$257,889 | |
| Reentry Expansion | To expand the Wake Local Reentry Council to provide more comprehensive case management, employment & education support, mentoring, and support to community partners. | 11/08/2021-12/31/2024 | Wake County ARPA Funds \$2,760,175 | |

| Grant Name/Kind | Brief Description | Beginning and End date | Source and Amount | Partner Organization (if applicable) |
|--|--|------------------------|--|---|
| CAREER Dislocated Worker Grant | To provide outreach, career guidance, education & training, and employment support to dislocated workers in underserved communities. | 08/20/2021-08/19/2024 | U.S. Department of Labor, Education and Training Administration \$1,927,284 | |
| Hotels Workforce Initiative (Five Stars Hotel Employment Initiative) | To address the workforce needs of the hotel industry in Wake County through recruitment, training, placement and employer support | 7/1/2022-12/31/2024 | Wake County and City of Raleigh ARPA funds \$812,500 | NCRLA |
| NC PROWD (Partners for Reentry in Workforce Development) | To provide career advising and planning, reentry support, education & training, and employment to individuals exiting Federal Correctional Facilities and returning to the region. | 10/1/2022-3/30/2026 | U.S. DOL and DOJ, subrecipient of NC DWS \$3,238,171 | NC LEAD, Kerr-Tar and Durham Workforce Boards |
| Business Outreach for Support and Services | To provide workforce support to small and micro businesses, especially those that are women, minority, veteran owned, to improve | 1/1/2023-12/31/2026 | NC Division of Workforce Solutions \$850,000 | |

| Grant Name/Kind | Brief Description | Beginning and End date | Source and Amount | Partner Organization (if applicable) |
|---|---|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| | employee retention and long-term success of the businesses | | | |
| Recovery to Work, Substance Use Disorder Recovery Grant | To assist youth with/or at risk for substance use disorders develop and carry out a career plan that leads to successful employment. | 1/1/2023- December 31, 2026 | NC Division of Workforce Solutions \$200,000 | |
| Building Hope, NCWorks Local Innovation Fund | To increase the number of women and gender non-conforming individuals in the skilled trades through outreach, training, support, and employment | 7/1/2023- June 30, 2025 | NC Division of Workforce Solutions \$225,000 | Hope Renovations |

2. Provide a clear and detailed example of the Local Area WDB’s best or promising **Adult/Dislocated Worker** program practice that has yielded positive results with evidence, which affirms this practice is effective.

CAWD recently began piloting an innovative solution to enhance customer service and improve service delivery and communication with non-English speaking customers. CAWD has introduced the language translator pens to two Centers for piloting purposes. These pens facilitate efficient communication between Career Advisors and customers who are bilingual, offering translation services in over 112 languages. The device allows for text translation, text-to-speech translation, photo translation, and phonetic translation, with a built-in dictionary available if needed. This technology enables clear understanding and effective communication between staff and customers, enhancing the overall improvement of the customer service experience. This tool is not to replace any of the LEP features that are available to customers.

For example, imagine a scenario where a Career Advisor needs to immediately assist a customer who speaks a language different from their own. With the language translator pen, the Advisor can quickly and accurately

communicate with the customer, ensuring that they fully understand each other and can effectively address the customer's needs.

Evidence of the effectiveness of this practice can be observed in the improved accessibility and quality of services provided by CAWD. By using technology to overcome language barriers, CAWD has created a more inclusive and supportive environment for all customers, regardless of their linguistic background.

CAWD's focus on tools like the language translator pen highlights the dedication to better customer service and successful program outcomes. By constantly improving and adopting new methods, CAWD continues to lead in providing effective workforce development services locally.

3. Provide a clear and detailed example of the Local Area WDB's best or promising **Youth** program practice that has yielded positive results with evidence, which affirms this practice is effective.

One of the fourteen elements within the WIOA youth program is the provision of labor market information services. This component delivers vital employment and labor market data regarding high-demand industry sectors and occupations. In an effort to introduce NextGen participants to opportunities in the skilled trades industry, the NextGen team organized a Skilled Trades Career Day. The primary objective of this event was to spotlight various skilled trades, which are certified pathways within CAWD. The event showcased three prominent employers: Lane Construction, Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractor (PHCC of NC), and Streamline Services Plumbing, Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) & Electrical. Through this collaborative effort, NextGen participants had the opportunity to schedule interviews with these employers or enroll in PHCC's Pre-Apprentice program.

A notable attraction at the event was the Be Pro Be Proud skilled trades virtual reality and career simulator truck, offering immersive experiences and hands-on simulations in areas such as commercial driving, welding, CNC machining, and heavy equipment operation. The event drew significant interest, evidenced by a steady stream of attendees. Additionally, the NextGen team also received positive feedback from participating employers.

4. Provide a clear and detailed example of the Local Area WDB's best or promising **regional strategy** that has yielded positive results with evidence, which affirms this practice is effective.

CAWD has a strong partnership with our local government and economic development agencies in the immediate CAWD service region and the larger region. In considering our region's economic and workforce development needs, it's critical that we seek ways to align efforts and fully leverage available resources. In developing the CAWD strategic plan, CAWD committed to connecting our strategic priorities to that of our county commissioners, economic development partners, and local Governments.

CAWD has worked regionally with Durham and Kerr-Tar Workforce Boards on several initiatives to serve the entire Triangle. Most recently, CAWD, Kerr-Tar, and Durham have come together with the NC Division of Workforce Solutions and NC LEAD to secure a grant from US DOL and US DOJ called NC PROWD (Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development). This grant allows for the three Boards to create a system for individuals at the Butner Federal Facility to create career goals, connect to education & training, and receive ongoing support after exiting and returning to our region. This program builds on the best practices of the three Boards' work on assisting returning citizens to find employment and successfully reestablish themselves in their communities. Both Durham and CAWD Boards have had successful US DOL and local grants that have led to living-wage employment and reduced recidivism to participating returning citizens. Successful elements that are replicated in the NC PROWD design include career planning during the last year of incarceration, creating a cohort of back-ground friendly employers, and providing wrap-around support for recently released individuals. This program started serving job seekers in mid-2023. The program will track the success of jobseekers (educational attainment, employment, wages, recidivism) through a national client tracking system and this information will be shared regularly with local, state, and national partners.

In the larger region, CAWD has partnered with Wake County Economic Development, the Raleigh Chamber, and the 15 counties of the Triangle Region to conduct Triangle Talent, A Regional Skills Analysis. The goal of this every three-year survey is to understand the talent needs of employers throughout the region and the NCWorks Career Pathways to create a uniform, employer-informed career pathways for students and job seekers across the region. This information is used also to create regional conversations and collaborations around labor needs. The results of this analysis have been used in regional grant applications and economic development strategies.

5. Provide a clear and detailed example of the Local Area WDB's best or promising **virtual services strategy** that has yielded positive results with evidence, which affirms this practice is effective.

CAWD purchased Virtual Reality (VR) headsets and software modules as a virtual enhancement for the NCWorks Career Centers within the Capital Area region. VR is used in workforce development due to its ability to provide immersive and realistic training experiences. VR has allowed customers to engage in lifelike simulations that replicate actual work environments. This realism enhances the learning experience, providing a safe and controlled space for customers to practice and develop skills.

Traditional training methods often involve significant costs for materials, travel, and equipment. VR offers a cost-effective alternative by centralizing training programs in a virtual space, reducing the need for physical resources. VR simulations can be repeated as many times as necessary, ensuring that customers can practice and refine their skills until they achieve proficiency. This consistency is challenging to achieve with traditional training methods.

CAWD launched Transfr and Be More Colorful/CareerViewXR as VR solutions in early 2023 to the Capital Area NCWorks Career Center. NCWorks Career Center staff are continuing to administer Transfr and Be More Colorful/CareerViewXR to assist customers with career exploration opportunities. There have been approximately 30 careers explored by customers through the Be More Colorful/CareerViewXR platform. The most preferred occupations completed by customers utilizing the Transfr headsets are Robotics Specialist and Automotive Service Technician. Below is the Transfr data from through December 2023:

- 87 unique users have utilized the Transfr headsets
- 111 simulations have been explored
- 23 simulations have been completed

The VR solutions CAWD has instituted have proven to be a valuable resource to customers within the Capital Area region. The immersive and interactive nature of VR makes it a powerful tool for enhancing workforce development, providing a practical and effective means of training customers in a variety of high-demand industries.

6. Provide a clear and detailed example of the Local Area WDB's innovative **business services strategies** and engagement practices that demonstrated employers taking charge and driving the agenda that has yielded positive results with evidence, which affirms this practice is effective.

One of the CAWD Board Committees is Employer Engagement. This Committee is focused on the alignment of initiatives in high-growth sectors with the workforce system and economic development needs. This Committee was charged with identifying the top high-growth, in-demand sectors that CAWD will emphasize in its work over the next three years. The Committee collected and analyzed data from NC LEAD, Lightcast (EMSI), and economic developers from each county in the CAWD service area. The Committee discussed the data and projections and made a recommendation to CAWD's Executive Committee to prioritize Advanced Manufacturing, Information Technology, Healthcare, and Construction/Skilled Trades. The CAWD Board voted to adopt this recommendation.

The Employer Engagement Committee then selected one of these prioritized sectors to focus its work on. Due to the economic development growth, the Committee members decided to focus on the workforce needs in the Advanced Manufacturing sector as it is a high-growth sector with significant workforce needs in the Capital Area.

The Committee discussed various strategies to address this issue including career awareness, creating a talent pipeline in partnership with CAWD's community college partners, and training for staff. The innovative and strategic ideas of our Employer Engagement Committee resulted in partnering with NC Biotech to train the NCWorks Career Center staff on Biopharma Manufacturing career opportunities.

Board members on a second Board Committee, Branding and Outreach, supported this initiative with information session flyers for jobseekers and have planned a podcast to support career awareness in Biopharma Manufacturing.

XII. Program Year 2024 Local Area WDB Plan Required Policy Attachments

1. The following policies are *required* to be attached as separate documents in WISE as part of the PY 2024 Local Area Plan. The Local Area Plan is not complete without these documents.

- Name Each Document: Capital Area Workforce Development, Policy Name.

- In the first column, state if the policy is attached or why it is missing and when it can be expected. If two of the policies have been combined, please make a notation.
- In the second column mark “Yes” **only** if the policy has been changed/revised for the PY 2024 Plan and has not been previously submitted to the DWS.
- Revised policies should be submitted with a highlight or summary of the changes made to the local policy.
- Do not add an empty document in WISE as a “placeholder”.

| Required Local Area WDB Policies | Attached (Yes/No). If no, why? | Revised for PY 2024 (Yes/No) and needs review |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Adult/Dislocated Worker Experience Policy | Yes | No |
| 2. Competitive Procurement Policy | Yes | No |
| 3. Conflict of Interest Policy | Yes | No |
| 4. Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Standards and Complaint Procedures | Yes | No |
| 5. Financial Management Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I | Yes | No |
| 6. Individualized Training Account Policy | Yes | No |
| 7. On-the-Job Training Policy | Yes | No |
| 8. Oversight Monitoring Policy, Tool and Schedule | Yes | Yes |
| 9. Priority of Service Policy | Yes | Yes |
| 10. Youth Work Experience Policy | Yes | Yes |
| 11. Supportive Services Policy | Yes | Yes |
| 12. Local Area WDB WIOA and TAA Co-enrollment Policy | Yes | No |
| 13. Eligible Training Provider Policy | Yes | Yes |

| Required Local Area WDB Policies | Attached (Yes/No). If no, why? | Revised for PY 2024 (Yes/No) and needs review |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 14. Non-Criminal Complaint Procedures | Yes | Yes |

2. Designate whether the following local *Optional Policy* is included and used at the Local Area WDB and is included in the Local Area Plan or write “N/A” implying “Not Applicable”, if the Local Area WDB does not have this policy and; therefore, does not use these services.

In the second column mark “Yes” *only* if the policy has been changed for PY 2024 and has not been previously submitted to the DWS.

- Do not add a blank document in WISE as a “placeholder”.
- These policies are required to operate/offer these services
- If “Yes”, load the policy as a separate document.
- Name document: *Local Area WDB Name, Policy Name*. (Example: IWT Policy – Yes. Attached as *Board Name IWT Policy*.)

| Optional Local Area WDB Policies | Yes- the Local Area WDB has a policy or N/A (Not Applicable) | Revised for PY 2024 (Add Yes or N/A for this column) |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Local Area WDB Guidance for Local Incumbent Worker Grants | Yes | Yes |
| 2. Local Area WDB Needs-Related Policy | N/A | N/A |
| 3. Local Area WDB Transitional Jobs Policy | N/A | N/A |
| 4. Local Area WDB Youth Incentive Policy | Yes | N/A |

3. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are required [Regulations Section 680.300] to pay the cost of training provided with Adult and Dislocated Worker funds and limitations on duration and amount may be included [Regulations Section 680.320]. Please provide the following ITA elements in summary:

| Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary | |
|--|--|
| Dollar Amounts | \$3500 for tuition only (does not include books, etc.) |
| Time Limits | Up to 2 years, however, exceptions are available. |

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Degree or Certificates allowed (Associate, Bachelor’s, other)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate degree • Completion of Bachelorette Degree (within the 2-year timeframe previously stated) • Occupational Licensure • Occupational certification, including Registered Apprenticeship and Career and Technical Educational certificates • Other recognized industry-specific certificates for entry-level positions or employment career advancement. |
| <p>Procedures for determining case-by-case exceptions for training that may be allowed</p> | <p>The process for case-by-case exceptions for training that may be allowed are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for exceptions must be in writing and sent to Jessica Locklear McLeod via email at Jessica.locklearmcleod@wake.gov • Documentation should clearly state the justification/reason for the exception request, and must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Name of participant ○ NCWorks Online User ID ○ Enrollment date ○ Date of last service ○ Type of exception being requested <p>A Capital Area staff will respond in writing, indicating if the request is approved or denied, within five business days.</p> |
| <p>Period for which ITAs are issued (semester, school year, short-term, etc.)</p> | <p>Capital Area ITAs/vouchers are issued either on a temporary basis or for the duration of a specific short-term training program. Furthermore, students undergo term-based assessments to ascertain the necessity for continued scholarship funds.</p> |

| Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary | |
|---|---|
| Supportive Services covered by ITA (provide examples such as uniforms, tools, physical exams, etc.) | Supportive Services covered by ITA include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books • Uniforms • Certifications • Exams • Supplies • Student activity fees • Campus access fees • Criminal background checks • Physicals • Shots |
| Other | At least eighty percent (80%) of training dollars spent must lead to an occupation in an in-demand industry as defined by CAWD with an emphasis on the high-growth, in-demand, hard-to-fill occupations, and no more than twenty percent (20%) of training dollars may be for other occupations. |

4. Provide a description of how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B will be provided in accordance with section 134(c)(3)(G), including if contracts for the training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided. [WIOA Section 108(b)(19)]

CAWD recognizes it is permissible and noted that the WIOA Law does not require training to be delivered through the use of an ITA. That is, non-ITA alternatives are permitted in specified circumstances.

ITAs have been the most common method of paying for training services for WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers. CAWD is presently not implementing Training Contracts; however, should it be determined to be advantageous for our local area in the future, their usage will be considered in a limited capacity and only under appropriate circumstances, as outlined in Section 134(c)(3)(G) of WIOA.

Center staff in the Talent Development functional area assists job seekers with work readiness activities. Activities include but are not limited to, skills analysis, assessment testing, supportive services assistance, career counseling, soft skills training, partner services, and occupational skills training referrals. A job seeker

customer, who has been interviewed, evaluated, or assessed by a Career Center staff, is eligible for training if they meet the criteria outlined in CAWD's ITA policy. The policy has been submitted with this Plan.

CAWD service providers utilize a standard operating procedure for issuance and completion of the FAA/ITA. The process outline below is a high-level procedure that includes an end-to-end process for Center staff to follow but is not limited to the following:

- Completion of the Financial Award Analysis (FAA) - completion of FAA document, updating IEP, providing career counseling, and conducting business on behalf of the customer with the training provider.
- Completion of the Individual Training Account (ITA) - completion of an internal WIOA ITA Voucher Certificate for, staff initiates training justification in NCWorks, TD Managers approves it training justification, TD manager approves ITA, ITA scanned into NCWorks and updated, customer is updated.
- NCWorks 300 Activity Code for Training - NCWorks updated to include case noted, training code, and verified customer started training.
- Training Providers Invoice - payment in accordance with ITA Invoicing Process

Informed Customer Choice is tremendously important in the Capital Area Region. They need to have all the information necessary for them to make sound career decisions. Customers are informed by staff when they meet with them one-on-one. This is done during not only the enrollment process but also during the scholarship application process. Customers are introduced to the scholarship application and shown individually on NCWorks Online how to research training they may be interested in. They are shown how to look up the courses and what information can be found including course length, cost, type of credential received, type of training (onsite, online), location, etc. Customers are required to use the information they find in the NCWorks Online system to complete the scholarship application. This ensures staff that the customer has done their research about the training they are seeking.

NCWorks Career Center staff will continue to provide access to the following: skills assessment tools; career planning resources; updated labor market information identifying industry sectors and occupational clusters that are high-growth, high-demand, projecting skills shortages, and/or vital to the regional economy; and access to the ETPL through the NCWorks Online system (www.ncworks.gov), to ensure that job seekers can make an informed customer choice and are prepared with the skills needed to fill hiring opportunities in in-demand sectors and career pathways in high wage occupations. The NCWorks Online system provides relevant information on available training programs, including performance and cost.

Whether training is delivered through an ITA or a Training Contract, CAWD is committed to honoring the value of informed customer choice. Therefore, when an eligible participant has been properly determined to have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in training services, CAWD will always provide an opportunity for the consumer to make an informed choice of training programs/providers. Additionally, if CAWD decides to offer training contracts, we will implement safeguards and uphold the same customer choice philosophy and process.

5. Please specify the supportive services provided by the Local Area WDB Supportive Services Policy. List specific items under Supplies, Emergency, and Other, as identified in the Local Area WDB policy. (Expand form as needed.)

| Transportation | Childcare | Supplies <i>(include examples)</i> | Emergency <i>(include examples)</i> | Other <i>(include examples)</i> |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| Youth - One-time transportation-related expenses for: North Carolina Vehicle Registration Fee, Vehicle Inspection Fee, Vehicle License Plate, and North Carolina Driver's License | Youth – Childcare costs of \$50 per child per or the actual cost per day if less than \$50 per day. | Youth - Clothing needed for an interview, Clothing and other items (tools, etc.) required for employment and/or training, Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities (special services, supplies, assistive technology, etc.), Records required for employment (birth certificate, background check, etc.), Other employment related needs | Youth – Emergency housing, Utility payments, Car repairs, etc. | Youth – Added a provision about providing Food assistance |
| Adult/DW/Youth - Ongoing transportation-related expenses that may be paid with WIOA funds, which include: Public/private bus tickets, Carpool/Van fees, Taxi/Uber/Lyft Fares (limited basis only, as a last resort, maximum | Adult/DW – Only allowed through special approval | Adult/DW – Clothing and other items (tools, etc.) required for an interview, employment and/or training, Reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities (special services, supplies, assistive technology, etc.) Records required for | Adult/DW – Only allowed through special approval. | Adult/DW – Exam and Testing fees, if an individual does not pass a test/exam on the first try, supportive service funds can be used for them to retake the test/exam one time. Participants can be reimbursed for additional exam and testing fees if they pass and provide |

| Transportation | Childcare | Supplies <i>(include examples)</i> | Emergency <i>(include examples)</i> | Other <i>(include examples)</i> |
|---|-----------|--|--|--|
| \$30 per day), Parking fees, Mileage reimbursement | | employment (birth certificate, background check, etc.) other employment related needs | | verification of the credential or certification received. |

***Note:** The Local Area WDB must adequately safeguard all forms of supportive services payments (i.e., gas cards, cash, gift cards, etc.) and assure that they are used solely for authorized purposes. The Supportive Services Policy must include the Local Area WDB’s internal controls to safeguard supportive services. The internal controls must address issuance, storage, and reconciliation of supportive services throughout the area and be clearly stated within the policy.*
