



Gaston County

Gaston County
Board of Commissioners
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DHHS - Social Services Division

Board Action

File #: 24-162

Commissioner Brown - DHHS - Social Services Division - To Approve the Gaston County Workforce Development Program/Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WDB/WIOA) Comprehensive Four-Year Title I Plan

STAFF CONTACT

Angela Karchmer - Social Services Division Director - 704-862-7930

BUDGET IMPACT

N/A

BUDGET ORDINANCE IMPACT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) helps adults, dislocated workers and youth to become more employable through employment services, work experience, job placement and training activities for new careers.

POLICY IMPACT

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

WIOA Comprehensive Four-Year Title I Plan; Four-Year Title I Plan Signatory Form

DO NOT TYPE BELOW THIS LINE

I, Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the County Commission, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Board of Commissioners as follows:

NO.	DATE	M1	M2	CBrown	CCloninger	AFraley	BHovis	KJohnson	TKeigher	RWorley	Vote
2024-142	04/23/2024	KJ	BH	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	U

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A=AYE, N=NAY, AB=ABSENT, ABS=ABSTAIN, U=UNANIMOUS

Gaston County 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.

Gaston Workforce Development Local Area

- If the Local Area is a Consortium, attach a copy of the current Consortium Agreement.
 - Name document: Local Area WDB Name Consortium Agreement.
- If the Local Area is not a Consortium, attach a copy of the formal request for Local Area designation.
 - Name document: Local Area WDB Name 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.

Gaston County

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

Name: Angela C. Karchmer	Title & Salutation: Gaston County Workforce Development Board Director-Mrs.
Organization Name: Gaston County Government	Address: 330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28053
Phone Number: 704-862-7930	Email Address: angela.karchmer@gastongov.com

4. Provide the name, elected title, local government affiliation, address, phone number, and email address of the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) .	
Name: Chad Brown	Elected Title & Salutation: Gaston County Board of Commissioners-Chairman Mr.
Government Affiliation: Gaston County	Address: PO BOX 1578 Gastonia, NC 28053
Phone Number: 704-516-8017 cell	Email Address: chad.brown@gastongov.com

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: Donna Buff	Title & Salutation: Clerk to the Board of Commissioners
Business Name: Gaston County Government	Address: PO BOX 1578 Gastonia, NC 28053
Phone Number: 704-866-3196	Email Address: donna.buff@gastongov.com

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: Gaston County Finance Office	Title & Salutation: N/A
Organization Name: Gaston County Government	Address: PO BOX 1578 Gastonia, NC 28053
Phone Number: 704-866-3037	Email Address: N/A

7. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, phone number and email address of the Administrative/Fiscal Agent's signatory official .	
Name: Angela C. Karchmer	Title & Salutation: Gaston County DHHS Director/Mrs.
Organization Name: Gaston County DHHS	Address: 330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052
Phone Number: 704-862-7930	Email Address: anglea.karchmer@gastongov.com

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

- Name document: *Gaston County DHHS 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].

QKY9R8A8D5J6 Active Registration SAM.GOV attached

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)

Danyale Williams

- 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 member's** 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: *Gaston County WDB 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.*
-

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.

Merissa Mitchell-Clerk to the Gaston County Workforce Development Board works directly with the Gaston County Board of Commissioners Office & Clerk to the Board of Commissioners - Donna Buff, as well as the Gaston County WDB Business Services Representative- Chelsea Valentine to make necessary referrals, for vacant board seats, to our Chief Elected Official - Chad Brown, Chair for the Gaston County Board of Commissioners. The referrals received are for potential board member candidates who possess decision making power, HR level authority, etc. within local businesses and can complete the necessary application for serving on their company's behalf as a Gaston Workforce Development Board Member.

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: *Gaston County WDB 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)]

The Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) will make hard copies of the draft Local Area Plan available to the public at Gaston County DSS Building first floor lobby. The LA Plan will also be made available via the GWDB website at www.gastongovworks.com under the resources tab. The link for the plan will also be made available via GWDB social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) for public comment.

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: *Gaston County WDB 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)
July 18, 2024	12:00 noon	330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 (Auditorium)
October 17, 2024	12:00 noon	330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 (Auditorium)
January 16, 2025	12:00 noon	330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 (Auditorium)
April 17, 2025	12:00 noon	330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 (Auditorium)

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.

- Name document: Local Area WDB Name 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: Gaston County WDB 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: Local Area WDB Name Signatory Page.

If using original signatures, mail the Signatory Page 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

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)]

The GWDB has continued a vision of enhancing skills with the existing and emerging workforce to meet the needs of regional employers and improve the economic conditions of its residents while encouraging business development and expansion through entrepreneurship and innovation. Participants are provided with intensive case managers for assistance with individualized career services and training services. With emphasis on educating the emerging workforce, Gaston County will enable its workforce to be more skilled and increase employers' competitiveness in the global job market while meeting the changing needs of employers. Gaston is focusing on better career exploration through interest assessment testing prior to enrollment in training. Additionally, expanding the number of individuals receiving supportive services to enable existing students to remain in school, thus producing a higher number of post-secondary credential completers that will have an easier time finding self-sufficiency employment that meets performance requirements. Apprenticeship and Work based learning programs are an integral part of the student with barriers to employment having

successful outcomes in finding a job after completion of their training, as well as job retention and self-sufficiency.

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)]

The GWDB follows federal and state guidelines to execute a Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with all required Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act partners, as well as other community partners of the career center. The Gaston Local Area MOU allows core title programs to jointly develop, provide, and sustain career services to residents through One-Stop career centers. Local area residents who receive one-stop center career services may be enrolled in partner provided employment or education training which results in co-enrollment between WIOA core titled partner programs. Partners work together to avoid duplication of services and to exhaust all other resources before utilizing WIOA funds. Through linkage and referral, other partners such as faith-based or community-based organizations may also provide services to meet the needs of residents that WIOA core programs cannot. Gaston County has an extensive referral system with its partners including (but not limited to) NC Services for the Hearing Impaired, NC Services for the Blind, the Vocational Rehabilitation office, the DSS agency, etc. as well as many other community-based organizations for WIOA participants or individuals seeking information through the NCWorks Career Centers. Information pertaining to these entities is also included in Rapid Response Session Packets as requested or expressed by the employer with an interest in providing the information to their labor force. Targeted populations continue to be a dedicated focus in the Gaston Local Area.

Business Services Staff, Secondary and Postsecondary Institutions, and employers from our region are collaborative partners in regional career pathways exploration, development, and/or implementation processes. By working jointly with these collaborative partners, we can determine and address the needs of the local employers by identifying and developing classroom-based curriculum courses that address gaps in knowledge and skills. Work-based learning is introduced to ensure applied skills, related to their jobs, are developed, and evaluated by local employers. Pre & Post Skills Assessments are completed, and training plans are developed jointly between the BSR, Employer, and participant to gage the effectiveness of training plans administered and the level of skills progression by the participant. Our regional career pathways are designed with on and off ramps that allow for individuals to attain certifications or degrees within a career field through classroom-based training.

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)]

Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) hosts regular meetings and WDB staff attend and hold positions in external meetings and boards that keep us in constant communication with partner agencies and resources. Meetings regularly hosted by GWDB are: Youth Committee where youth facing agencies meet quarterly to discuss youth barriers and resolutions, NCWorks Leadership and Management Partner meetings where NCWorks Career Center partners meet every other month to discuss Career Center objectives and resources, and Gaston's BEST Team where business solutions agencies meet quarterly to discuss resolutions to business's needs. The vision statement is shared at the beginning of every meeting and the agenda and discussion is focused around meeting all objectives. This provides a sense of unity between all partnering agencies in attendance.

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)]

Gaston County has developed an extensive referral system within the NCWorks Career Center and community partner entity offices for WIOA participants or individuals seeking information through the NCWorks Career Centers. Information pertaining to these entities is also included in Rapid Response Session Packets as well as any other community service that the requesting party has expressed an interest in providing to their labor force. The NCWorks Career Center houses multiple partnering agencies daily and weekly, in order to provide efficient and integrated service delivery to our customers, without duplication. Partners that spend hours each week at the Career Center include, but are not limited to: Work First, NextGen, WIOA-AD/DW, Re-Entry, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Veteran Rep. Upon completion of Wagner-Peyser, Career Center staff are to make referrals to any of the above-mentioned partners, should the customer request or exhibit a potential need that may be fulfilled by a partner agency. Career Center staff also provide customers with job fair, recruitment event, workshop and training information that is tailored to the individual needs of each customer.

The Gaston WDB staff, along with representation from all Career Center Partners within our Local Area, have bi-monthly Career Center Leadership and Career Center Management Team meetings to strategize and share needs, services, and events information. Additionally, periodic training is offered and arranged by career center partners and providers. Cooperation, collaboration, and coordination can be developed, reviewed, monitored, and/or addressed at these bi-monthly meetings.

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)]

Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) collaborates with neighboring counties and South Carolina to meet the needs of our employers, especially larger employers that need to pull talent and resources from all surrounding

areas. Local BSRs and other workforce staff work together to coordinate in-person, virtual, and hybrid hiring events. The incumbent Worker Training program is in high demand by the employers in Gaston County. GWDB uses the Incumbent Worker Program to meet the demand of employers for business expansion, employee retention and/or employee upward mobility. The program can be used to upskill the current workforce with technical training all the way to leadership training. This also allows employers to backfill their entry level roles.

GWDB utilizes an On-the-Job Training program as a hiring incentive for employers. This program is best used for an employer who identifies a candidate that is still in need of training and development to obtain the necessary skills to fulfill the job efficiently. The employer receives 50-75% reimbursement for the trainee's wages during a 6-month (or 1040 hour) timeframe.

Work Experience (WEX) is also used as a hiring incentive for an employer. This is utilized for candidates that lack the skill and work history to be a qualified candidate. The trainees' wages will be 100% paid through GWDB contractor. With a successful WEX position completion, the objective is the employer desires to hire the candidate full-time as a permanent employee.

GWDB works with employers, educators, other workforce partners and community partners to identify and address workforce issues and create ongoing solutions. The GWDB also works with the same partners to create career pathways. The GWDB works closely with the Economic Development Commission to provide up to date labor market information, wage data studies etc. to help employers better understand our current market conditions.

GWDB also leads a local team called Gaston's BEST (Business Employer Services Team). This team is made up of staff from GWDB including the Business Services Representative and NCWorks Career Center Manager, Gaston County EDC, Gaston Business Association, Gaston College, Vocational Rehabilitation, Gaston Literacy, Gaston County Schools, DWS, and other valuable partners to work together on projects, workforce issues/solutions, hiring events, and creating new and utilizing existing relationships with employers to expand the footprint of services to businesses in our region. We maintain a catalog of all our team members, information on services, etc.

The GWDB maintains positions and memberships in local groups to maintain business relationships and build new business relationships to broaden our service offerings. Some groups consist of; Gaston County Schools Business Advisory Council, Gaston HR, GCAM (Gaston Co Association of Manufacturers), Gaston Business Association, other Chambers, etc.

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)]

Adult Education and Literacy partners attend bi-monthly Management and Leadership Team partner meetings with the Gaston County WDB and NCWorks Career Center-Gaston. During these meetings Adult Education and Literacy provides updates about their current programs and services. Through the updates provided, GWDB is able to avoid duplication of services provided, partner with the program on similar activities, and provide referral resources for both programs to utilize each other's services for the needed participants. On several occasions Adult Education and Literacy has been able to provide continued services for individuals who are English deficient, skilled deficient, and financially inexperienced that is outside WIOA services offered.

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)]

Gaston County WDB (GWDB) provides services for Adults, Youth, and Businesses through the NCWorks Career Center system and has implemented a demand-driven, integrated service delivery model. The center has staff with salaries funded through the Wagner-Peyser and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding streams. These staff members have the integrated function of delivering career services for eligible clients and businesses. Youth programs are offered through NCWorks Career Center with programs from other partners supporting Justice Involved Individuals, Veterans, Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF, and Financial Literacy.

Core services offered as an integrated unit and may be provided by NCWorks Center staff or NCWorks Career Center partners. GWDB works directly with training providers and supports efforts such as providing input for the comprehensive plan submitted in support of the reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Program. GWDB will co-enroll clients in WIOA programs with other stacked services to provide the greatest outcomes.

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)]

Gaston County has developed an extensive referral system with NC Services for the Hearing Impaired, NC Services for the Blind, Vocational Rehabilitation offices and other community partners for WIOA participants or individuals seeking information through the NCWorks Career Centers. Information pertaining to these entities is also included in Rapid Response Session Packets as well as any other community service that the requesting party has expressed an interest in providing to their labor force. All Centers (certified and non-certified) including the Youth Center are ADA accessible. The Gaston WDB staff, along with representation from all Career Center Partners within our Local Area, have bi-monthly Career Center Leadership and Career Center Management Team meetings to strategize and share needs, services, and events information.

Additionally, periodic training is offered and arranged by career center partners and providers. This is especially helpful to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals through training offered by Vocational Rehabilitation, Services for the Blind, and Services for the Hearing Impaired. Cooperation, collaboration, and coordination can be developed, reviewed, monitored, and/or addressed at these bi-monthly meetings.

There are cooperative efforts through the Gaston County WDB, with local employers, which are established by the existing Gaston County WDB Member representation by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), VR Employer Services representative for Gaston's BEST member representation at employer-based events, and collaborative employer site-visits arranged by the Gaston Co WDB & VR Employer Services representatives with employers to hear their needs and highlight available local/regional/state workforce solutions/resources. Each of these Gaston County WDB facilitated points of connection puts VR representatives in contact with local Employers who are looking to tap into various talent pools to meet their workforce needs.

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 need to ensure relevant services are provided timely and efficiently is managed via goals and performance requirements located in each WIOA Service Provider and One Stop Operators contract, as well in the MOU for the NCWorks Career Center – Gaston. This has proven to be a productive maneuver and has allowed ISD to work within the Career Centers in a more seamless fashion while increasing the % of met performance measures and serving the most disadvantaged populations. The contracts have a provision that allows the Board to base profit payments paid out on performance outcomes met on a quarterly basis. If quarterly performance goals are not met, the contractor is allowed the opportunity to receive those profit dollars at year end if the annual negotiated performance measures are met. The contract requirements for WIOA services and

One Stop Operator Services shall be consistent with the factors developed by the NCWorks Commission and Strategic Planning.

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.

The increase and expansion of service delivery and awareness efforts to reengage include increase of outreach efforts including, Department of Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, Probation and Parole, Middle and High Schools (orientations), Community Centers, Low Income Housing Developments, Department of Health and Human Services, Health Department, College and Career Readiness at Gaston College, other agencies, and community events. From these outreach efforts we plan to enroll participants so they can earn a credential and in turn be ready to be reconnected to the workforce. Success will be measured by tracking these targeted individuals during and after exiting the NextGen program to track the connection back to the workforce.

WIOA staff will engage in every opportunity to provide outreach to those with barriers through Job Fairs, information sessions at other partner agencies or other community events, Dislocated workers are targeted through Rapid Response events, and RESEA referral. GWDB partners with Vocational Rehabilitation to better serve those with disabilities. We provide information sessions at such agencies as Catherine's house and Hope United on a routine basis. Success is measured through the end of the month (EOM) report as we gather data from customers enrolled that meet priority of service or who have significant barriers to employment such as the groups listed above.

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)]

When a business closure or downsizing occurs, an official notification known as a WARN notice is sent to the state to announce it. In response, the State's Rapid Response unit or the LA Gaston WDB Business Services Representative (depending on the number of affected employees) initiates contact with the company. The Gaston WDB Business Services Representative compiles Rapid Response packets containing both state and local resources, including:

Retirement and Health Care Coverage information

Financial Survival Strategies after Job Loss

Coping with Layoffs

Job Dislocation guidance

NCWorks online snapshot

No-cost workshops offered by NCWorks Career Center-Gaston

Top 10 Things You Should Know About the UI System When Filing Your Claim

Job Fair Flyers

WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program information

Work First Assistance details

Food Stamps, Medicaid, Child Care, and FNS benefits information

Local college resources, and more.

In addition to distributing packets to affected employees, we organize on-site Rapid Response sessions where representatives from each of the aforementioned resources are available for one-on-one discussions with employees. We also bring local employers on-site (if the company wishes to do so) that are hiring to help place the impacted employees into employment.

We maintain strong partnerships with businesses in Gaston County and rely on their communication regarding potential layoffs or closures. By keeping us informed early, we can offer timely assistance and intervention if needed. Our collaboration with the Gaston County Economic Development Commission ensures a flow of information regarding closures or layoffs. Businesses and partners understand the resources we provide in such situations and often reach out to us promptly for support. Additionally, we conduct proactive visits to companies with whom we have less familiarity, delivering informational packets to ensure they are aware of our resources and know where to turn if they encounter difficulties or wish to prevent them.

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.

The Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) has a strong partnership with Gaston College in several aspects. Gaston College is the contractor for the GWDB Youth NextGen program. This allows WIOA Youth enrollees full access to the colleges services as the NextGen program is housed on campus.

Gaston College provides staff members to hold job readiness workshops to participants on-site at the NCWorks Career Center-Gaston.

In matters concerning Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), GWDB regularly collaborates with the college.

Whenever a business expresses interest in specific training programs, GWDB partners with Gaston College's Customized Business Department to deliver these courses at no cost to the business. In instances where the desired course isn't offered by the college, GWDB can tap into IWT funds to cover the training costs, potentially leveraging Gaston College as the training provider.

Furthermore, GWDB collaborates with local high schools in tandem with Gaston College to streamline the transition from high school to community college and four-year institutions, ensuring a seamless educational trajectory for students.

GWDB works with Gaston College to also offer Career Awareness Events to middle and high school students. Our Board works with Gaston College's Apprenticeship 321 program to provide the OJT portion for the salary wages for a candidate attending the apprenticeship program.

Gaston College's Workforce Director serves as a member of the GWDB to provide that key piece of insight

and knowledge that comes with the community college. Gaston College representatives are also members of the GWDB Youth Committee and regularly attend bi-monthly GWDB Management Partner meetings. Other local higher education institutions such as Belmont Abbey College and Gardner-Webb University have attended GWDB job fairs to reach the local area job seekers.

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.

The Gaston Workforce Development Board (GWDB) aims to participate in a minimum of three new or expansion economic development projects to support both new and existing companies in their growth. The Gaston County Economic Development Commission (EDC) has engaged the GWDB in initial meetings with prospective employers, offering an overview of available workforce development services tailored to companies based in Gaston County. GWDB staff members actively participate in groundbreaking events for new companies and advocate for emerging businesses and vacant positions. The GWDB collaborates with all hiring initiatives for both new and existing companies, offering services such as job fairs and vacancy advertisements once the hiring process commences. GWDB staff work closely with the EDC and other partners to establish a robust business pipeline, whether by identifying skilled talent or facilitating the training of local individuals to meet specific business needs.

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)]

The Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) recognizes the critical role of partnerships in delivering comprehensive workforce services to Gaston County businesses. In our commitment to fostering and expanding partnership engagement, GWDB is actively involved in various initiatives: GWDB leads Gaston's BEST (Business Employer Services Team), a local coalition comprising GWDB staff, including the Business Services Representative and NCWorks Career Center Manager, alongside partners such as Gaston County EDC, Gaston Business Association, Gaston College, Vocational Rehabilitation, Gaston Literacy, Gaston County Schools, DWS, and other valued collaborators. Together, we collaborate on projects, tackle workforce challenges, organize hiring events, and cultivate and leverage relationships with employers to enhance service offerings to businesses across our region. We maintain a comprehensive catalog of team members and information on services provided. Additionally, GWDB's Business Services Representative actively participates in GCAM (Gaston County Association of Manufacturers) meetings hosted monthly by Gaston County EDC, offering timely updates on Gaston County's dynamic manufacturing landscape. Furthermore, the Gaston County Workforce Development Board holds a seat on the Gaston County Schools Advisory Board, with a specific focus on Career and Technical Education (CTE) students.

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
Advance Manufacturing-Mechatronics	Southwestern PZ	2018	2
Healthcare/Nursing	Southwestern PZ	2018	73
Energy	Southwest, Northwest, & Western Carolina Alliances of WDB's	2019	0

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. The needs for additional or new career pathways can be explored and evaluated annually when JobsEQ and LMI data are used to update the Local/Regional OID Lists with careers that are in demand. The GWDB also gathers this information from employer surveys. Gaston County WDB has plans in creating a daycare career pathway to assist local daycares in obtaining licenses for teachers. This pathway will include partnerships with Gaston College and Gaston County Department of Social Services Child Daycare Services Program to utilize courses and resources readily available.

b. The pathways are developed in conjunction with both local area partners and businesses, on a regional level. This is beneficial due to current commuting patterns of residents traveling between Gaston County and the surrounding counties in both Centralina and CharlotteWorks Local Areas for work.

c. The pathways are developed in conjunction with both local area partners, school systems, colleges, and businesses to be an all-inclusive collaboration. The Gaston County WDB utilizes partner meetings, Board meetings, Youth Committee meetings, and other communication efforts as platforms to discuss career pathways with other agencies. During these meetings, all partners discuss their current actions and objectives to promote partnership and remove any duplicated services.

- d. Gaston WDB is a partner to our local community college and together we work closely with employers and industry partners to align pathway programs with current and future workforce needs. Encourage them to provide input on curriculum development, offer internships and apprenticeships, and participate in career fairs and networking events.

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. The Gaston Workforce Development Board (GWDB) maintains an active connection with local training providers and promotes the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) through informative sessions held at community colleges, partner agencies, job fairs, and community events. During pre-intake consultations, we assist customers by providing career pathway information, labor market insights, and details on local opportunities for training, retraining, or employment in high-demand sectors. We strongly encourage customers to thoroughly explore their fields of interest before committing to training, thereby ensuring that credentials, measurable skill gains, and overall success become more attainable.

b. Our capacity to provide workforce investment activities addressing the educational attainment and skill needs of high-demand fields involves engaging in intensive, personalized career and training counseling. This includes administering career cluster and Holland Code assessments, as well as consistently reviewing local area job markets and in-demand careers offering sustainable wages. Additionally, strategies to raise awareness and increase access to education and postsecondary credentials include providing consistent exposure to 'learn and earn' opportunities (such as internships, apprenticeships, and summer employment) through community organizations and partners. We also offer guidance on training providers and educational programs to our participants.

c. From recruitment to program participation, participants are made aware of the supportive services available to help eliminate barriers they may face when pursuing employment and educational goals. At NextGen, we prioritize self-awareness among participants by offering ongoing resources and support for personal development. We recognize the importance of personal motivation and help individuals recognize their own value as they work toward sustainability.

d. The Business Services Representative (BSR) collaborates closely with the college system, high school system, vocational rehabilitation services, NCWorks Career Center-Gaston, and other partners to identify skills and education gaps that may act as barriers. Once these gaps are identified, we work with individuals to ensure they are matched with appropriate training providers or college programs to address these gaps.

e. Additionally, the BSR conducts surveys of Gaston County businesses to gather data on skills and education gaps they are experiencing. This information is shared with the college system to ensure they offer courses in demand and connect participants with the necessary resources to enroll in these courses/training programs, preparing them for success in their chosen industries.

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)].

a) Existing and Emerging In-demand Industry Sectors and Occupations:

1. Manufacturing: Gaston County has a strong manufacturing base, particularly in industries like textiles, automotive parts, and machinery manufacturing. Emerging sub-sectors within manufacturing include advanced manufacturing and robotics.
2. Healthcare: With an aging population, healthcare services continue to be in demand. This includes occupations such as registered nurses, medical assistants, and healthcare administrators.
3. Information Technology (IT): As technology becomes increasingly integrated into various industries, there is a growing demand for IT professionals such as software developers, network administrators, and cybersecurity specialists.
4. Construction: Gaston County is experiencing growth in the construction sector, including residential and commercial construction projects. This creates demand for carpenters, electricians, and construction managers.
5. Logistics and Distribution: Due to its proximity to major transportation routes, Gaston County serves as a hub for logistics and distribution companies. Occupations in demand include truck drivers, logistics coordinators, and warehouse workers.

Conditions Contributing to Potential Layoffs and Closures:

1. Economic Downturns: Like many regions, Gaston County is susceptible to economic downturns that can lead to layoffs and closures, particularly in industries heavily reliant on consumer spending such as retail and hospitality.
2. Technological Advancements: Automation and technological advancements in manufacturing and other sectors may lead to workforce displacement and layoffs if workers do not possess the necessary skills to adapt to these changes.
3. Global Competition: Global competition can impact industries such as manufacturing, where companies may face pressure to lower costs or increase efficiency, potentially resulting in layoffs or closures.

b) Knowledge and Skills Needed to Meet Employment Needs:

B. Key skills and knowledge areas identified include:

1. Technical Skills: Employers in manufacturing, IT, and healthcare sectors may require workers with specific technical skills relevant to their industry, such as machine operation, programming, or medical terminology.
2. Soft Skills: Soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork are valued by employers across industries and are essential for success in the workplace.
3. Adaptability and Continuous Learning: Given the pace of technological change and evolving industry trends, workers need to be adaptable and willing to engage in continuous learning to remain competitive in the labor market.

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

Gaston County WDB (GWDB) is continuously working to create pipelines for accessible and relatable trainings, offer diverse resources to remove any individual barriers by working with partner agencies, building rapport with local area employers, and upskill and train individuals to increase the knowledgeable and experienced applicant pool to fill vacancies. All GWDB hosted meetings have an objective included on the agenda for all in attendance to recognize the focus and direction of the meetings. GWDB works closely with other Boards in our region to provide a larger scale of programs and support.

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)].

1. Current Labor Force Employment and Unemployment Data:

- As of March 6, 2024, the labor force participation rate in Gaston County, NC, was 96.8%, with 113,268 (out of 116,997) individuals actively employed.

- The unemployment rate in Gaston County was 3.2%, below the national average of 3.7%.

2. Labor Market Trends:

- Emerging industries in the region may include manufacturing (14,570 at 18.8%), healthcare (12,591 at 16.3%) and retail trade (10,270 at 13.3%), which are contributing to job growth and economic development.

3. Educational and Skill Levels of the Workforce:

- The educational attainment levels of the workforce vary, with a significant portion holding 29.4% having attained a high school diploma or equivalent, 22.0% having some college education, and 25% holding bachelor's degrees or higher.

4. Individuals with Barriers to Employment:

- There are individuals within the workforce who face barriers to employment, such as lack of education, skills mismatch, criminal backgrounds, disabilities, transportation, childcare barriers, substance abuse issues etc.
- Programs and services aimed at addressing these barriers may include local workforce development programs, vocational rehabilitation services, community support services, partners behavior health, etc.
- Collaborative efforts involving government agencies, educational institutions, nonprofits, and employers are crucial in providing support and opportunities for individuals facing barriers to employment.

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)].

Gaston County WDB's targeted outreach endeavors focus on cultivating relationships through networking events, industry-specific gatherings, and personalized interactions. GWDB has forged partnerships with industry associations, chambers of commerce, and economic development organizations, facilitating deeper connections with employers across diverse sectors. Collaborative initiatives, such as sector-based partnerships or industry advisory boards, convene employers, workforce development agencies, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to tackle workforce challenges and devise solutions.

GWDB extends job matching and recruitment services to link employers with qualified candidates, utilizing various avenues like job fairs, recruitment events, online job boards, and resume databases. Alongside monthly job fairs, sometimes held more frequently, Gaston WDB collaborates with our Career Center Manager to host bi-monthly On-Site Recruitment events at the Center. Additionally, occasional cold visits to local businesses enable the distribution of informational packets, ensuring awareness of available resources in Gaston County for businesses.

The provision of work-based learning opportunities, such as on-the-job training programs, empowers employers to actively engage with potential employees, assessing their skills and organizational fit effectively.

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

Gaston WDB often collaborates with economic development organizations, educational institutions, industry associations, chambers of commerce, and other stakeholders. By forming partnerships, these entities can share resources, expertise, and networks to better understand and address local workforce and economic needs. We work to conduct thorough analyses of the local labor market to help identify current and projected workforce demands. This involves examining industry trends, skills gaps, and employment projections to inform the development of targeted workforce programs and training initiatives.

We utilize our Work-Based Learning programs to equip individuals with the skills and competencies needed in high-demand industries is essential for economic growth. These programs may include on-the-job training, work experience, internships, and incumbent worker training. These are all tailored to the needs of the employers.

GWDB works hard to keep our local employers informed on incentives and tax credits that businesses are eligible for. This might include incentives for hiring and training local workers, investing in employee

education and development, or participating in industry-specific workforce programs.

By implementing these strategies and services in a coordinated manner, our community continues to foster economic growth, enhance workforce competitiveness, and create sustainable for all residents.

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)].

Regional transportation issues in Gaston County encompass various challenges, including limited public transportation choices, incomplete bus routes servicing major business parks, inadequate options for night shift workers, and a general scarcity of transportation services. Recognizing the validity of employers' concerns, Gaston County is actively seeking solutions.

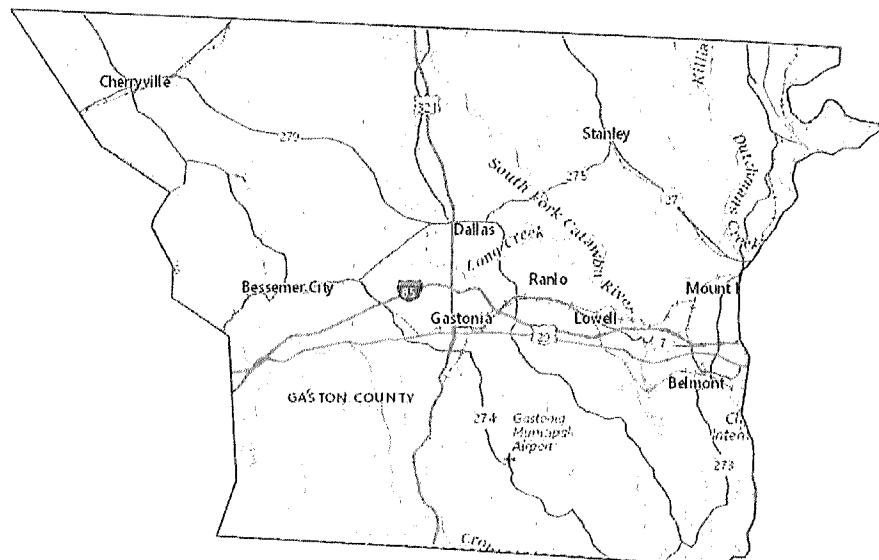
One such solution involves expanding public transportation services. Collaborating closely with the City of Gastonia, Gaston County's local government is exploring avenues to enhance public transportation accessibility. For instance, the introduction of micro transit buses is being considered. Efforts are underway to extend existing bus routes in diverse directions to better serve the community.

Engagement with local employers, particularly within the manufacturing sector, is a regular feature of these discussions. Monthly dialogues ensure that the perspectives of key stakeholders are integrated into decision-making processes.

Additionally, employers are encouraged to adopt flexible work arrangements to accommodate employees facing transportation challenges. Telecommuting or remote work options are suggested to reduce the necessity for daily commuting, where feasible. Employers are urged to consider implementing transportation programs like vanpooling or employer-sponsored shuttles. Financial incentives or subsidies are proposed to incentivize employers to provide transportation benefits to their workforce.

In essence, Gaston County is committed to addressing these pressing transportation issues through collaborative efforts and innovative solutions.

Gaston County has several major highways and interstates that provide accessible commuting routes for both county and out of county residents. Per NC Department of Commerce LEAD information from 2021 35,802 out of county individuals commute to Gaston County for work, 65,416 Gaston County residents commute out of the county for work, and 28,584 Gaston County residents commute within the county for work. Commuters utilize major roadways such as I-85, U.S. Route 74 (joining U.S. 29), U.S. Route 321, and other local highways for work.



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)].

Gaston County Workforce Development Board follows federal and state guidelines to execute a Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with all required Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act partners, as well as other community partners of the career center. The Gaston Local Area MOU allows core title programs to jointly develop, provide, and sustain career services to residents through One-Stop career centers, including Gaston County CTE program and Gaston College. The MOU details what services are being offered, which naturally removes any duplication of services.

Additionally, Gaston College is the contractor for the GWDB Youth NextGen program. This allows WIOA Youth enrollees full access to the colleges services as the NextGen program is housed on campus.

Gaston College provides staff members to hold job readiness workshops to participants on-site at the NCWorks Career Center-Gaston.

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

Veterans are identified at the front desk based on self-identification. Veterans are thanked for their service and made a priority to be seen by appropriate staff to meet their needs. Each veteran fills out a Veterans' Services Intake Form to assess needed services. The DVOP at the NC Works Career Center - Gaston receives the assessed intake form from staff members and follows up with the Veteran to determine if "Special Barriers to Employment" exist. If barriers (such as lack of housing) are identified, the DVOP will serve this customer through their program but at any point can refer the customer to WIOA or other partner services for further assistance if requested. The customer can be dual enrolled in services and coordinate appointments with the DVOP and WIOA case manager to avoid inefficient service. Veterans are provided with career development services, job search assistance, and community resources. Active Military personnel who are transitioning back into the civilian workforce can also receive assistance with their resume to correlate their skills and training received in the military to the training and skills requested by employers for job positions. They are also provided with both individual comprehensive guidance and career counseling.

The Career Center serves veterans under Priority of Service.

LA Priority of Service Order:

1. First - covered persons with an additional barrier to employment that meets 'status of priority' requirements (public assistance individual, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient) for WIOA Adult formula funding.
2. Second - non-covered persons who have an additional barrier to employment that meets 'statutory priority' requirements (public assistance individual, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient) for WIOA Adult formula funding.

3. Third - covered persons without an additional priority to employment that meets 'statutory priority' requirements (public assistance individual, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient) for WIOA Adult formula funding.
4. Fourth - additional priority populations established by either the Governor and/or the Local WDB including (in order):
 - a. Disabled
 - b. Offender
 - c. Not Self-Sufficient
5. Fifth- additional non-covered persons who are "individuals with barriers to employment" identified in WIOA sec. 3(24)
6. Last, non-covered persons who do not have an additional barrier to employment that meets 'statutory priority' requirements (public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient) for WIOA Adult formula funding ... in the order specified by the Local WDB.

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.

The Southwest Region utilizes special grant funds for national disaster recovery purposes to allow individuals the opportunity for Disaster Relief Employment or Career and Training Services. This enables individuals who are temporarily or permanently dislocated, due to a national disaster, to obtain paid work experience positions in areas related to Humanitarian Assistance or Clean Up and Recovery efforts. Each of the Workforce Development Boards in our region maintains a list of emergency contact organizations across the area for quick assimilation of needed services and solutions utilized when a crisis happens. Dislocated Workers can also be served, utilizing dislocated worker funds, for those needing financial assistance with training or upskilling and meet dislocated worker eligibility criteria.

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.

The Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) Business Services Representative actively engages with employers through various avenues. This includes participation in networking events, leading local task forces, and serving on committees such as Gaston HR, GCAM, GBA, and the Gaston County Schools Business Advisory Council. Additionally, the GWDB BSR leads Gaston's BEST team, which is focused on addressing employer needs.

Gaston's BEST team maintains an updated catalog of services and contact information, which is distributed at events and readily available to businesses. Utilizing the Board's website and social media accounts, GWDB ensures broad outreach to employers. Moreover, GWDB collaborates with Veteran specialists at events like Veteran Stand Down Events and Veteran's preferred hiring events. Representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation regularly attend GWDB partner meetings, facilitating referrals for wrap-around services for WIOA participants.

While agriculture employers are not typically encountered, GWDB is prepared to make appropriate connections and referrals if needed. Gaston County is still experiencing a high volume of Haitian population, GWDB provides workforce services with the assistance of translators and the Gaston Literacy Council.

Gaston County has several Re-Entry specialists through DWS staff that are located at our local NCWorks Career Center. Furthermore, partnerships with re-entry specialists from the Foothills Area enable GWDB to offer advice and services to citizens seeking re-entry into the workforce. GWDB also assists employers in hiring justice-involved individuals by facilitating documentation and providing support services.

Job fairs serve as platforms for GWDB to connect with employers and share available workforce services. All GWDB flyers are regularly updated to reflect the programs and services offered. Furthermore, all of our job fair flyers are in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole to help alleviate the language barrier. Additionally, the

BSR conducts drop-in visits to inform disconnected employers about GWDB's services and increase awareness.

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.).

In Gaston County, we have a single Business Services Representative (BSR) who takes the role in coordinating efforts among various local workforce partners within the NCWorks Career Centers. This includes collaborating with Employer Services Team Members, the Contracted Career Center Manager, Career Center Functional Team Leaders, as well as their respective teams, and DWS staff.

The BSR facilitates local Industry Sector-Based employer groups, creating an environment conducive for employers to address queries related to training, tax incentives, recruitment, and economic development.

Furthermore, the BSR works closely with the DWS Career Employment Services Manager and Career Center Manager to encourage businesses to leverage the available workforce services effectively.

Additionally, NCWorks Career Center-Gaston Manager actively engages in outreach initiatives at community events and committees, aiming to promote the services offered by the NCWorks Career Center to employers.

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 Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) is continuing to partner with our local community college and school systems to bring awareness to the students and their families or friends about local career centers (both adult and youth career centers), services, and opportunities attached to the NCWorks brand. We have created and implemented a social media-based campaign, which will proudly display the NCWorks brand, and will revolve around different parts of Gaston County's workforce and include the many opportunities that exist for its citizens and businesses, especially those that receive public assistance, are low-income, and/or are considered be an at-risk youth. Career awareness events will be sponsored by the GWDB and/or its partners with event assistance offered by the career centers and/or workforce partner staff.

Therefore, printable materials and outreach efforts will include the NCWorks brand. These events will be targeted toward Gaston County High Schools' seniors and local college students. The purpose of these events is to bring awareness to the different career opportunities that are available locally - in addition to the associated education, formal training, and/or direct skills that employers require for each.

Our current partnership with Gaston County Public Library also affords us the opportunity to provide career services in an environment that is frequented by customers, some of whom do not utilize the NCWorks Career Center. This allows us to promote the NCWorks system and brand through career center services provided to library patrons and sharing orientation materials and outreach pintables containing the NCWorks Brand with these individuals.

The GWDB maintains temporary and/or permanent signage, for branding purposes, at all certified career centers. The GWDB conducts outreach to promote services available to customers and businesses alike through several avenues including (but not limited to): Board-Sponsored Websites; Social Media Outlets (including Facebook, Twitter, & Instagram); through delivery of our Business Solutions Catalog to new

employers, ongoing collaboration with local WIOA partners and Gaston's BEST (Business and Employer Services Team) members, and partnerships with EDC to meet with new and expanding businesses to link them to the NCWorks Career Center and services available there.

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 Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) collaborates closely with its partners across various sectors including the local NCWorks Career Center, community colleges, universities, local public-school systems, Social Services, Vocational Rehab, Goodwill, EDC, and other community organizations. Together, they identify and tackle challenges pertaining to job growth and business expansion in the region. GWDB employs employer surveys to pinpoint specific needs, gathering crucial data to inform targeted solutions. These solutions encompass a range of initiatives such as recruitment drives, job fairs, collaborative events with neighboring counties/regions, and tailored support for businesses within the county's Business Park. Additionally, GWDB hosts bi-annual employer breakfasts, facilitating dialogue among employers to address their needs and explore potential solutions or partnerships.

Furthermore, GWDB leverages resources such as grants from the EDC to aid expanding companies, offering hiring incentives like On-the-Job Training (OJT), Work Experience (WEX), and Apprenticeship programs to offset hiring and training costs. The board also partners with neighboring counties like Mecklenburg, York (South Carolina), Lincoln, and Cleveland to organize large-scale job fairs, attracting diverse pools of applicants from across regions.

To ensure competitiveness, GWDB assists companies in analyzing wage statistics and aligning their wages with industry standards. Moreover, Incentive Wage Training (IWT) funds are available to train employees, enabling businesses to meet their expansion needs while hiring entry-level positions.

Encouraging collaboration, employers are urged to tap into resources available in neighboring counties, including attending job fairs. Through active participation in GWDB meetings, committees, and teams, staff ensure that employers have a strong presence in high schools and the college system, fostering a seamless transition for students into the workforce.

To enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, both the Board and Career Center staff regularly undergo DEI trainings. Our commitment extends to ensuring that our job fairs are held at venues accessible to all, thereby removing barriers to participation. Moreover, we ensure that job fair flyers are available in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole to cater to diverse linguistic needs.

The Board and Career Center staff are dedicated to serving all individuals, particularly those facing various obstacles. We offer comprehensive support services tailored to individuals encountering barriers to employment, including those from marginalized or underrepresented backgrounds such as refugees, people with disabilities, and individuals from low-income communities.

In addition, we collaborate with several partners who share our focus on DEI initiatives. These partnerships

include but are not limited to Partners Behavioral Health, which assists individuals dealing with substance abuse issues. Vocational Rehabilitation, represented on both our Board and Leadership team, advocates for individuals with disabilities or other employment barriers. Furthermore, Services for the Blind and Gaston Literacy Council are also valued members of our Board and Leadership team.

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 Gaston County Workforce Development Board (GWDB) has been steadfast in refining its hiring and recruitment strategies by actively listening to employers' feedback regarding their requirements for qualified candidates and diligently seeking out these individuals through various channels. Collaborating closely with employers, GWDB has assessed their benefits packages and enhanced their salary structures to align with local standards, ensuring competitiveness in attracting both existing and prospective employees, thereby expanding their applicant pool and fostering high morale and retention rates among staff. Additionally, GWDB prioritizes skill development and career progression, offering Individualized Worker Training (IWT) funds to empower employers in upskilling their workforce, facilitating salary raises, and facilitating promotions.

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.

The GWDB team consistently participates in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training sessions available to local employers. Furthermore, GWDB actively partners with employers to tap into specialized labor pools, particularly targeting underserved job seekers. For instance, GWDB provides employers with valuable resources and incentives, such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), to encourage the hiring of ex-offenders. Given that many employers may be unaware of the benefits of WOTC, it serves as an invaluable tool to facilitate targeted population recruitment efforts. In collaboration with probation officers and reentry specialists, GWDB extends support to both employers and job seekers, equipping them with resources aimed at facilitating successful transitions for these individuals.

We always ensure that workforce centers and services are physically accessible to individuals with disabilities. We help offer language support services for individuals with limited English proficiency. This involve providing bilingual staff (at DSS, the library and other partners), interpreter services (language line access), translated materials, and we refer individuals to language classes to help individuals improve their English skills through Gaston Literacy Council.

Through our WIOA program we can help with financial assistance programs, such as tuition assistance or

stipends, to help individuals from low-income backgrounds access training and education programs that lead to higher-paying jobs.

Our staff welcomes any opportunity that we have to participate in cultural competency training or simulations, such as Racial Wealth Gap and Re-Entry Simulations, so we can better understand the unique challenges faced by individuals from different backgrounds.

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

The Business Services Representative cultivates strong partnerships with employers to deeply understand their training requirements. Once identified, the Business and Employer Services Team (BEST) in the Gaston Local Area actively pursues resources to fulfill employers' needs. Gaston's BEST members distribute the Gaston's BEST Business Solutions Catalogue (sponsored by the Gaston County WDB) to all relevant employers, both new and existing, in Gaston County. This catalogue serves as a comprehensive reference for employers, providing solutions for various workforce challenges, including contact details for each resource along with a concise overview of offered solutions.

Regardless of which member(s) of Gaston's BEST engage with an employer, any member can smoothly transition the company and its needs to another member who can offer additional solutions. If Gaston's BEST does not currently have a solution for an employer's needs, they collaborate to develop one tailored to the employer's requirements. The Business Services staff member at the Gaston County WDB places significant emphasis on work-based learning, utilizing various avenues such as Work Experience (WEX), On-the-Job Training (OJT), Transitional Jobs for individuals with inconsistent work histories, Apprenticeships for Adults, and Pre-Apprenticeships for Youth/Young Adults through partnerships with Gaston College's Apprenticeship 321 Program, local employers, and training providers. Additionally, Job Shadows and Internships are available for those pursuing training or work-based learning opportunities.

As employers embark on their work-based learning projects, the BSR conducts regular check-ins to monitor progress and remains invested in the success of both participants and employers.

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)]

Training providers must offer and maintain focus on trainings that provide quality outcomes, not only for the participants, but for the communities and employers in the area. By aligning their programs with the goals and expectations of the GWDB, they are focusing their programs on skills and needs most relevant to local employers. The GWDB reviews performance of training and communicated industry needs to training providers so that programs can be developed or modified to meet industry demand. Providers must supply a variety of program-specific information, including a program description, program length, program delivery methods, tuition/costs, prerequisites, and credentials offered.

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: *Gaston County WDB 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)]

Competitive Procurement:

- OSO Provider: Two Hawk Employment Services
- Released Request for Quote: 3/6/2023
- Question Submittal Deadline: 3/29/2023
- Q&A Document- provided at Virtual Bidder's Conference- 3/20/2023 1:30pm
- Quotes due- 4/11/2023 11:00am
- Quote Evaluation Committee Meeting- 4/11/2023
- Gaston Workforce Development Board Vote on Recommendation- 4/20/2023
- Notification of Award to Awardee- 4/28/2023
- Posted to Board Website for Public Comment- 3/6/2023
- Proposed start date for contract/services- 7/1/2023
- Length of contract is 1 year due to performance

3. Provide a brief description of how Career and Training Services are provided. [WIOA Section 121(e), 134(c)]

- Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to adults.
- Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to dislocated workers.
- Provide a description of how Career and Training services are provided to youth.

The NCWorks Career Center-Gaston is a resource for both individuals seeking employment and training as well as to employers seeking qualified job candidates. Our career center is a user-friendly facility providing job seekers with opportunities to attend workshops, meet with career advisors (virtually as well as in-person) for one-on-one job search assistance, explore funding for training, and to discuss Work-Based Learning opportunities such as On-the-Job Training, Transitional Jobs, Work Experience, Job Shadowing, and Internships. The career center offers access to career advisors, computers, faxes and copying at no cost aiding job seekers in their search. Services are delivered according to the one-stop delivery system's provision of career and training services. Integrated services are offered by three major functional teams: Welcome, Skill

Development, and Employment services. Customers are served based on priority of service with Veterans given the highest priority. Career services begin with a registration in NCWorks online and an initial assessment, which could lead to basic career services including (but not limited to) resume, virtual recruiter, 3 job referrals, interest and/or skill assessments, job development, career counseling, workshops, or job readiness activities via a Wagner Peyser application entered in NCWorks Online. All customers receive referrals to appropriate career centers and community-based partners that can assist the customers with barriers and goals. Customers are informed about WIOA Individualized & Training services and offered the opportunity to talk with a WIOA staff member and/or attend a WIOA orientation. WIOA case managers meet with customers to discuss the availability of Adult/DW /Youth training opportunities or intensive job search assistance. If training services are requested, the case manager assists with exploring training providers, providing course information, registration, and program costs, in addition to TABE testing for Youth and/or interested Adults. To receive WIOA funded training, the customer must meet eligibility requirements, the training provider's requirements and be determined to need training as outlined in the training justification form. The case manager is required to develop an individualized plan with the participant, identify the participants goals along with appropriate objectives, and the decide (with the participant) which combination of services is most appropriate for him/her to achieve his/her goals. Individual counseling, career planning, case management, and job readiness activities are key components to aid in a participant's success. The selection of a training program, training provider, and/or type of WIOA services should always consider the goals and interests of the participant, as well as the demand for the specified occupation in the local area. Training providers and programs are linked to occupations in demand and provided in a manner that maximizes informed consumer choice in selecting an eligible training provider. ITA's are issued for those seeking training- related financial assistance not covered by financial aid. Career and Training Services are provided until the customer has successfully reached their employment goal and/ or self-sufficiency.

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

When a customer is referred to WIOA by DWS, walk-in's, community college or other partner agencies we invite them to attend an Orientation session. We verify if they have registered with NCWorks and if not, we require that they complete the registration process. We request the customer complete a WIOA application and an interview is scheduled concurrently. This allows case managers to have an open dialogue with the customer about work experience and training interests to see if the customer is a good fit for training. We request that the customer complete a Training Request packet to explore costs of the requested program, school of choice, duration of training, support while in training, transportation, childcare barriers, or any other issues that may cause the customer to not be successful. The review team studies each case to make sure that the customer has provided all necessary WIOA documentation and would be a suitable fit for training based on family situation, current employment, and if training is necessary or if the customer already possesses marketable skills.

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

Case managers follow up with all WIOA participants for an additional 12 months upon the customer's exit from the WIOA program. Each WIOA case manager will complete their own case follow-up calls to ensure quality and consistency. The customer is contacted via phone or email once a quarter and follow up is attempted. If customer has received a raise, promotion, or job change, a new Employment Verification is requested and if the customer needs further services such as job search, arrangements are made to conduct an appointment with that customer to complete a new NCWorks, resume and job search for customer. This process and outcome are also documented in each person's case file.

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 onboarding process begins with a review of all LA Policies and Procedures, followed by an extensive overview of the NCWorks Online System and how it is used to track customer activities, services, and documents. The staff member receives an overview of programs, and an introduction to Integrated Service Delivery via the NC Workforce Training Center's Welcome to Workforce Module and by observing the welcome team, skills team, and employment team services. After that, the Career Center Manager is responsible for providing an overview of WIOA, DWS, and partner services such as RESEAs, EAs, Front Desk Greeting, and Career Resource Center. The Career Center Manager provides LA Policy and procedures training for the front desk, Career Resource Center, and VOS Greeter. The Career Employment Services Manager for DWS provides RESEI/EAI training for Career Center staff withing their first 90 days of employment. Once complete, certain programs have their specific onboarding training plan initialed and signed by the Program Manager, Career Center Manager, and/or Super User depending on which part of the training plan is being completed. Once the training record is submitted to the WDB, NCWorks Online training is set up for WIOA contracted trainees with WDB staff. This training is usually scheduled for the next week and is completed within 1-2 days.
 - b. NCWorks Online Access is given by the WDB Super user after the LA Policy & Procedures and NCWorks Online training has been completed.
 - c. Beyond initial training, staff are asked to participate in training site webinars/workshops, local area training or other pertinent staff development provided throughout the program year. Verification of staff training for new hires and seasoned staff is provided to the Gaston WDB WIOA Coordinator and kept on file for future reference, should the need arise.
 - d. Training of staff is provided through the NC Works Training Center to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion is held a high priority during service delivery, as well as during other interactions. Additionally, board staff are given an additional opportunity to receive DEI training through DSS.

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.

A list of TAA participants is provided to the WIOA AD/DW case managers so that the customer can be contacted and begin the co-enrollment process. The customer does have to be approved into NCWorks as well as the training provider they are requesting. Once the customer is enrolled in WIOA the case manager coordinates with the TAA case manager to arrange appointments for the same day so that the customer is not inconvenienced. We would discuss what TAA is covering so no duplication of funds occurs and plan accordingly for each customer. For example, if TAA covers tuition, but cannot cover transportation, WIOA can pick up to supplement while the customer is in training.

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

All Career Centers are ADA compliant and have access to auxiliary aides upon request. Center Staff have a quick reference guide which includes contacts and phone numbers for organizations that are certified to assist individuals with disabilities. Additionally, staff are trained annually to comply with EO mandates by providing equal opportunity to consumers and are cognizant of serving all consumers accordingly. As a part of the state Career Center Certification process, the NCWorks Career Center must pass an ADA compliance inspection of both the parking lot and building with regards to appropriate access for customers with disabilities. Customers self-identify disabilities and if reasonable accommodation is needed (such as large print or hearing-impaired services, etc.) those are provided. Career Center staff provide partner referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation. WIOA serves persons with disabilities under the LA Priority of Service.

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.

In the Gaston Local Area, our integrated service delivery strategy for serving employers is accomplished through the collaboration efforts of the local workforce team called Gaston's B.E.S.T. Gaston's BEST is led by the Gaston WDB and members are identified and chosen if they are partners/contributors to the development of the local workforce. Members include employer/business-based representative(s) from such agencies as Gaston Community College, Apprenticeship 321, Small Business Center, Gaston County Schools, Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS), GBA (Chamber of Commerce), NCWorks-Gaston, Goodwill Industries, and Gaston County Economic Development Commission. This employer/business focused team meets quarterly (or more often if necessary) to strategize regarding the state of the local workforce, forecast future changes in the local economy, identify new or existing companies in addition to addressing their needs with existing business solutions or (when necessary) developing new business solutions. Members routinely go out to meet employers in groups of 2-3 (on behalf of the entire team), to interview them, assess their needs one-on-one, and give them a Business Solutions Catalogue to reference when the business has additional needs in the future. This practice was developed in previous response to past

Employer Needs Surveys and the 1000 in 100 campaign, where employers identified their desire to have their needs addressed by a group/team of workforce representatives rather than by each individual organization calling on them separately.

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)]

All Center staff who are responsible for Wagner-Peyser and WIOA services will assist in the completion of scheduled RESEA and EAI appointments. These customers are provided assessments, resume updates, job placement services, information on workshops and skills upgrades specific to UIB recipients and information on the use of the NCWorks system. UIB recipients are encouraged to follow up with more intensive job placement assistance available at the Career Centers or independently access NCWorks from their mobile devices or home computers.

The NCWorks Career Center-Gaston schedules and conducts Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) and Employability Assessment Interviews (EAI) for individuals who are collecting unemployment insurance. RESEA/EAI customers are required to report to the career center, via virtual or in-person avenues, to ensure that their benefits are not affected. The avenue used for the customer's attendance of the RESEA/EAI interview is determined by their level of personal comfort with virtual services and the level of accessibility they have to technology resources at their disposal. If a customer reports in person to conduct the appointment, they must sign the Attestation of Request for In-Person Appointment which is then scanned into NCWorks online. During the assessment interviews, staff provides the individual with job leads and refers them to other services including orientation to programs and services, workshops to assist them in their employment search, or career advisors for potential funding to return to school. Job seekers who participate in RESEA/EAI appointments go through the same experience/client flow process as all the other job seekers entering the NCWorks Career Center and this ensures all job seekers receive the same services and opportunities. NC Works Career Center-Gaston and Gaston WDB staff participate in monthly NCWorks Career Center leadership team meetings to ensure the NCWorks Career Center team (onsite & off-site career center partners) and the Gaston WDB staff have a strong linkage of communication and that all staff have access to consistent and regular technical assistance, guidance, labor market intelligence, etc. This supports alignment between the workforce board, NCWorks Career Center team, and unemployment insurance programs. To ensure alignment, the DWS Regional Operations Director has an open invitation to participate in any of these activities, meetings, trainings, etc. - as often as time allows scheduling constraints will permit.

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

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

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB Services Flowchart 2024.*

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

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB NCWorks Career Center MOU.*

12. 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)]

GWDB conducts NCWorks Career Center management Team Meetings on a bi-monthly basis with all center partners represented at the table. Discussion is focused on improvement of services, maintaining high customer approval, initiatives and opportunities within the Local Area that would allow for increased exposure of Career Center services and enhance public awareness of the extensive services offered and ensuring that services and activities conducted within the centers or by center staff is meeting job seeker and employer needs.

To ensure an efficient customer service flow at the NCWorks Career Center and service provider locations, GWDB conducts every other month unplanned visits. During these visits, staff focuses on customer flow, cleanliness, organization, updated signage, and compliance of all WIOA policies and protocols.

The Local Area conducts a monitoring of their WIOA Service Providers at least annually and including areas such as financial accuracy, programmatic implementation, WIOA & LA Policy Adherence, data validation & program eligibility, E.O. Compliance, and ISD service delivery. One Stop Operations is also reviewed for compliance.

Additionally, the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Service Providers & Career Center Management/Functional Leaders are expected to complete monthly (at minimum) random quality checks of each of their team member activities (WP & WIOA Intakes, Active Cases, Exits, and Follow-up Cases).

To improve the Board's understanding and ability to ensure services are meeting consumer and employer needs, it has procured a survey platform to capture customer (both participant & business) and partner responses. The Gaston WDB, along with the Career Center Manager, will review the responses and take appropriate action as needed for areas of identified concern or where additional adjustments need to be made in offerings and/or availabilities.

The GWDB Coordinator holds monthly one-on-one meetings with the Career Center Manager and program managers to ensure customer service, LA Policy, and financial procedures are being followed effectively and timely. GWDB management and Career Center management also hold a combined monthly meeting to have honest conversations of any concerns and provide guidance to ensure timely resolutions.

13. 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)]

Customers are given the option to complete WP, WIOA and follow up services virtually or in person or a hybrid of these depending on their individual needs. Appropriate space and equipment are provided based on customer need and traffic including:

Access to NCWorks Online (internet access including Wi-Fi)

Computers/laptops for public use

Phone, and printer/fax/copier for public use

Space for workshops and/or group trainings

Centers have a phone/voicemail system supported by trained staff so that call-in customers can quickly and efficiently access information and services. The Career Center utilizes the Amazon Web Services (AWS) telephone for outgoing calls when conducting virtual appointments. NCWorks Online offers a Live Chat feature to customers for quick correspondence with staff, as well as the internal messaging feature. Staff are also able to utilize other virtual meeting platforms to conduct customers' pre-intake, enrollment and follow up services, such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom.

14. 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)]

Customers are given the option to complete WP, WIOA and follow up services virtually or in person or a hybrid of these. We also utilize MS Teams and texting if needed for quick assistance. NCWorks Online offers a Live Chat feature to customers. The Career Center utilizes the Amazon Web Services (AWS) telephone for outgoing calls when conducting virtual appointments. The two statewide AWS operators answer incoming calls through the NCWorks Vanity number and provide the career center telephone number based on the customer's county of residence. VOS greeter has also been added to provide electronic sign-in and allow staff to run reports for those being served and reasons service is rendered.

WP, WIOA services can also be completed off site if a customer cannot come to the Career Center due to transportation barriers. Public places such as the library or community college could be used if traveling to the Career Center proves to be difficult. WIOA staff are using Adobe to sign pre-intake documents, ITAs, and supportive service requests. Virtual meeting platforms can be utilized to conduct customers' pre-intake, enrollment and follow up services, if the customer prefers that over in-person services. Both in-office phones and work cell phones also allow for quick and efficient engagement with customers whether in the office or working from a different location. Remind app is utilized to provide a free, safe, and private messaging system for staff and participants. Outreach, recruitment, and workshops can also be provided in-person or using virtual platforms. If a Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Title Partner is not available on-site to assist a customer with the desired partner service, a soft hand-off of the customer to the partner agency is completed by the career center staff or management member to ensure that customer receives appropriate customer service. Desk space, computers, signature pads, and printers are provided on a scheduled basis to career center

partners who are interested in providing their services onsite or virtually to the career center customers. WIOA Title Partners are given scheduling priority.

15. 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)]

All Career Centers are ADA compliant and have access to auxiliary aides upon request. Center Staff have a quick reference guide which includes contacts and phone numbers for organizations that are certified to assist individuals with disabilities. Additionally, staff are trained annually to comply with EO mandates by providing equal opportunity to consumers and are cognizant of serving all consumers accordingly.

As a part of the state Career Center Certification process, the NCWorks Career Center must pass an ADA compliance inspection of both the parking lot and building with regards to appropriate access for customers with disabilities.

Customers self-identify disabilities and if reasonable accommodation is needed (such as large print or hearing-impaired services, etc.) those are provided. Career Center staff provide partner referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation if necessary or upon request, and work with Vocational Rehabilitation to develop strategic outreach plans that reach people across the spectrum of disabilities and other underserved populations. All Career Center staff and partners operate with customer satisfaction in mind, and all customers are encouraged and allotted an opportunity to complete a survey at any point during their interaction with staff to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction. WIOA and partners serve persons with disabilities under the LA Priority of Service.

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. Our Business Services Representatives, Employer Services Team, and other members of Gaston's BEST work diligently on behalf of all Gaston Local Area employers/businesses to listen to their challenges first and provide or develop appropriate solutions to their needs. A part of being prepared to do so is by insuring we are educated on local and regional employment and occupational related data and statistics including labor market information, trends, occupational outlooks, commuting patterns, etc. The Gaston WDB utilizes NCWorks LMI data, JobsEQ data, US Census Reports and Maps, as well as additional other resources. The Gaston County WDB and other boards in the Southwestern Region have collaborated with regional employers, educators, and other applicable partners to develop and effectively implement three Career Pathways that are relevant to our region and will continue to do so when it is appropriate. We are working with one of our Gaston's BEST Team Members, from the Gaston Business Association (GBA), along with our other workforce partners to utilize local and/or regional data from industry sector-based groups of employers to offer solutions that addresses the employers' most significant needs with their indicated highest priorities being given the most significant importance.
- b. Career Center Staff can make referrals to Agricultural Services Employment Service Consultant for employers requesting Ag Services and/or Foreign Labor. The Career Center staff have a Veterans Rep on staff to work with our veteran population as well as a Vet Rep to work with employers.
- c. GWDB collaborates with neighboring regions to offer comprehensive services to businesses, aiming to prevent potential layoffs through initiatives such as training funds and other cost-free resources. Additionally, the Board engages the expertise of IES from the state level, particularly for training needs that may mitigate the occurrence of layoffs. Furthermore, the GWDB BSR strategically utilizes data on businesses receiving economic development grants and those with outstanding back taxes to prioritize assistance for vulnerable businesses, thus mitigating potential layoffs stemming from financial instability. At times we can offer Incumbent Worker Training funds to mitigate the possibility of a layoff occurring.
- d. Adults and dislocated workers covered by a certified petition filed for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) will be granted approval for training and may be eligible for dual enrollment between TAA and WIOA. Upon petition filing, all Rapid Response services are coordinated between DWS TAA and WIOA to support these participants effectively.
- e. GWDB is dedicated to advancing economic opportunities for historically underutilized businesses by actively engaging in contracting and procurement initiatives to support their expansion and profitability. Leveraging the HUB website, we effectively advertise our bidding opportunities for construction, goods, and services contracts to members of the Historically Underutilized Businesses group. This ensures that notifications reach our targeted audience, encouraging them to submit relevant proposals or bids in response to solicitations that align with their business interests. Additionally, we engage in personalized outreach efforts, reaching out directly to local historically underutilized businesses, vendors, and service providers located in Gaston County. This initiative-taking approach underscores our commitment to fostering growth within this identified local area.

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. The Business Services Representative (BSR) for the Gaston County Workforce Development Board has curated a comprehensive packet of flyers and resources. This packet serves as an informational compendium detailing all Work-Based Learning Programs and additional services available. During meetings or on-site visits, the BSR distributes these packets and engages various groups, providing elucidation on the breadth of services and programs offered. Through close affiliations with numerous training providers, the BSR facilitates heightened utilization of Individualized Worker Training (IWT). Local trainers collaborating with multiple companies within the county enable a streamlined referral process for companies to access IWT funds.

b. The BSR directs individuals exploring entrepreneurship opportunities to the Gaston College Small Business Center.

c. GWDB plays a crucial role in fostering employer-focused partnerships within the realms of education, training, and economic development. Some of the ways these partnerships are cultivated during regional economic strategic planning and development initiatives: A. Gaston WDB collaborates with employers, education partners, and economic developers to conduct comprehensive needs assessments. By identifying skill gaps and industry demands, we then work with educational and training programs to meet the workforce needs of local businesses. B. In partnership with economic developers and employers, Gaston WDB engages in workforce recruitment and retention initiatives. By promoting the region's workforce capabilities and facilitating talent acquisition strategies, we help attract businesses to the area and support existing employers in retaining skilled employees. C. Gaston WDB helps establish sector-based partnerships (such as manufacturing), bringing together employers, education partners, and economic developers within specific industries or sectors. These partnerships facilitate targeted workforce development efforts, ensuring that training programs align with the needs of key sectors driving the regional economy. D. Collaboration between Gaston WDB, employers, and economic developers involves the sharing and analysis of labor market data. By understanding industry trends, workforce demographics, and economic forecasts, stakeholders we can make informed decisions regarding workforce development strategies and economic planning initiatives.

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?

Performance factors that have impacted performance levels positively are recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, increased walk-in traffic, referrals from partner agencies, and word of mouth from current and past participants that have been positively impacted by the NextGen Program. Negatively, factors include the local area offerings of programs that are not inclusive of what is being requested by potential participants, a narrow range of short-term training providers within the local area. The local area is a strong manufacturing area, and many potential participants are seeking more entrepreneurial career paths that are not manufacturing or medical.

Positive Factors: Gaston County continues to grow in the manufacturing area with new companies that offer competitive salaries and benefits. Companies have elected to locate to Gaston County due to the workforce system, economic development system, our education system and much more.

Negative factors: The COVID-19 epidemic has a lasting effect on the workforce in Gaston county. Although the unemployment rate is relatively low, some factories closed and did not re-open. This has made it difficult to recruit and retain individuals, causing employers to increase their wages and incentives to recruit and retain workers. Companies continue to find themselves unable to recover after the pandemic due the inability to compete with local, county, state, regional and national salary increases.

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?

Our LA Performance Accountability Specialist (PAS) is responsible for tracking performance with our contracted staff. Our PAS utilizes FutureWorks at the minimum monthly to compare NCWorks Reports to ensure accuracy of data. Any deficiencies identified are communicated to the contractors. In addition, all contractors are required to track performance and submit monthly reports. The PAS will review these reports as they are submitted to ensure they stay on top of performance issues and that we are on track to maintain or improve performance for all goals. The PAS will work closely with the contractors, providing technical assistance, including training, one-on-one meetings, and constant communication with staff as needed. The Specialist requires our program managers to run quality checks on their staff's intake and case management activities at least monthly and the WDB monitors at least annually. WIOA contracted staff and/or career center staff participate in at least monthly strategic meetings with their management at the career centers to discuss performance, outreach efforts, and enrollments. These staff are also provided quarterly program performance data and trained as needed on procedures related to entering performance data in NCWorks Online by their management. Program managers submit a yearly performance plan that details their action plan on meeting performance measures and contract goals for the upcoming program year. The Specialist will meet regularly with contractors to discuss performance measures as needed, as these strategies are essential in order to maintain and improve performance in our local area. Our WDB performance is positively impacted by awareness at all staff levels. Training is provided by the board to program and career center management when policies are implemented and/or updated, or as needed due to performance or other issues. Career Center staff training, and refreshers are provided by Career Center and/or Program Managers throughout the program year and as needed when performance issues arise in order to ensure staff is properly entering information in NCWorks Online and are aware of how the system modules correlated to Federal Performance Indicators. All WDB Career Center staff have been formally trained on the Federal Primary Indicators of Performance and are provided a handout/summary to keep at their desk. NCWorks related training is conducted by the Performance Accountability Specialist for all Career Center and Board staff as well as new hires.

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.

The Performance Accountability Specialist monitors performance monthly and tracks each contractor's performance measures to ensure contractors are meeting their annual negotiated performance measures and contract goals. If performance or goal issues arise, the WDB Coordinator will be made aware and board staff will meet with the contracted program management to discuss the issue, to put corrective actions in place to improve performance levels. Failing to meet yearly negotiated performance rates directly affects the Adult/DW contractor's profit payments. They are paid profit only for each performance measure that is successfully achieved at 100% of the negotiated performance rate at each quarterly interval. At the end of the program year, if the contractor achieves 90% of the state negotiated annual performance rate, a profit payment adjustment can be issued for that performance measure at year-end. The Youth Contractor is the community college system and is not a "for-profit" business, therefore they do not earn profit payments. Where contractor deficiencies are identified with performance measures or contract goals, required improvements will be implemented by board staff under existing contract mandates. Achieving contract goals is set in their signed service contract and can also affect their ability to continue receiving contracts to provide services. Non-Profit/Public contractors (example- the community college system) do not earn profit payments. Where deficiencies are identified, board staff schedules time to discuss the deficiencies with the contracted program management and/or contracted career center management. Any available reports, local guides, and trainings are provided to contracted program management and/or staff to assist in all necessary changes being made within 30 days (or other timeframes, if specified) that will result in the required improvements being accomplished. If the required results are not achieved, the local board can place the contracting entity on a corrective action plan. If the contracted program management fails to provide required training to staff; fails to implement required changes; fails to make adequate corrections; and/or fails to accomplish required performance improvements, the local board can evaluate the program contract for potential modifications. If the deficiency is egregious in manner, the program contractor can be given notice to end the current contract immediately or within 30 days- whichever the Workforce Development Board Director (or designee) feels is most appropriate give the situation.

4. 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?

Gaston has a designated Performance Accountability Specialist (PAS) whose primary function is to review activities within NCWorks and oversee adherence to performance goals and outcomes. The WIOA Coordinator and PAS review performance outcomes in FutureWorks as the updated data becomes available monthly. The performance reports are emailed and printed out, then shared at least quarterly with its contracted program managers and one stop operator (career center manager) at their in-person/virtual monthly manager meetings. The contracted management would then relay the reports to WIOA

(Adult/DW/Youth) & WP career center staff members. This allows staff to be aware of the progression toward our performance goals and focus on areas where there could potentially be issues. Additionally, program managers are highly encouraged to utilize NCWorks predictive reports on a regular basis to further focus in areas of weakness and address it with their staff.

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

The challenges that contribute to the credential attainment indicator are life events such as the birth of a child, incarceration, lack of determination, change of career interest, lack of financial support to sustain monthly budgets; therefore, they quit training to go to work, and living displacements. In some cases, we have discovered the training provider did not provide adequate training and testing preparation to pass the required test, therefore, the credential was not obtained. Strategies that contribute to the achievement of credentials include strong case management support, hard work of case managers as a liaison and advocate for the participant in the cases where supportive services are needed/required, and clear, constant communication with the training provider in tracking participant progress. Case managers use NCcareers.org with all customer/participants to determine career interests, matches, and clusters to assist the customer/participant in the discovery of what career path matches their interests, skills, and abilities.

6. 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)]

Training Providers and Programs are reviewed by a NC ETP representative at the state level when one of two situations arises: the WIOA customer chooses a training provider that is not currently on the ETPL and the training provider wants to apply to be added or a local area provider contacts the GWDB directly and requests to apply to be added to the NC ETPL. The LA ETPL representative refers the training provider to the NC ETP representative to be moved through the state's ETP application & approval process. Once the training provider is approved and added to the NC ETPL, the Training Provider can submit any training programs that it chooses to be evaluated for approval to be added to the LA ETPL. Apprenticeship providers can be evaluated to be added to our local ETPL, as well. The Gaston LA WDB has a "Provider Review Team" that consists of the Provider Specialist & WDB's WIOA Coordinator. To submit training programs for LA ETPL certification, the provider must have completed program descriptions in NCWorks Online for each program that they are seeking approval for. Training providers may submit programs for review at any time, this creates an opportunity to submit in-demand training programs as the needs of the local employers, workers, jobseekers change and/or grow.

For Gaston WDB Certification, the training provider must provide proof of the following:

- List of partnerships with specific local area employers (optional)
- Proof that the training program has been in existence for one year,
- Leads to an occupational skill resulting in a national and/or industry recognized credential identified by the Gaston WDB as in high demand.
- A list of employers who have hired graduates
- Description of how the program is different than others (time, cost, quality, and outcomes).

The following documentation is also requested by the local area, but is not considered a requirement:

- Graduation/completion rate of the program for the last calendar year
- Job placement rate of graduates in the program for the last calendar year
- Percentage of graduates that obtained employment related to the program.

The Gaston LA Provider Review Team will review and either approve or deny the provider's programs for the local area based on the WDB's criteria. Program approvals for BCTPs are completed by the Gaston WDB switching the program "on" (under the provider certification section in NCWorks Online – click the LWIA button). Approval notifications are sent by the method in which the training provider selected (NCWorks Online internal messaging or email) when initially registering in NCWorks Online.

If all application steps are completed correctly, and the Gaston LA Provider Review Team approves, the program shall be designated as a BCTP within thirty days of application approval. If the Local WDB has required additional forms to be completed, these forms must be submitted prior to certification as a BCTP.

Training providers have the option to either submit the application documents electronically by mail to the following:

Gaston Workforce Development Board
330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way
Gastonia, NC 28052
Attn: Angela Karchmer

Once the Training Provider receives approval for its program(s) to be add to the LA ETPL, a member of the local Provider Review Team notifies the NCWorks-Gaston Career Center Manager, WIOA Adult/DW Program Manager, and the WIOA Youth Nextgen Program Manager. If the Training Provider is new to our local area, a presentation to career center staff and management at the adult and youth career centers can be arranged with the provider by the provider specialist.

If any of the provider's programs are denied, a provider case note is added to NCWorks, and a notice is sent to the provider. The provider has rights to appeal the decision, should they choose to do so.

1. 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?

Yes. Please refer to our ETP Policy 22017-03. Gaston WDB does not utilize the trainingproviderresults.gov website at this time.

- Name Document: *Gaston County WDB ETPL 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]

GWDB staff conducts EO training for all center staff annually and as needed. GWDB staff operates its program, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws. No person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), disability, religion, sex, or age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any of our programs. GWDB staff completes random case monitoring monthly to ensure that individuals are being provided proper access to services without discrimination. The WDB also requires that it be provided with a copy of any claims of discrimination by consumers within two business days and follow up immediately to investigate and/ or resolve any issues. Each Career Center staff must post EO guidance and information for consumers to follow should they feel that discrimination has occurred. The GWDB does not tolerate discriminatory conduct of any kind. The GWDB require all staff to adhere to EO policy and would recommend disciplinary action up to and including discharge of any individual or contractor determined to have willfully engaged in discriminatory actions.

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

- Name document: *Gaston County WDB EO Complaint Grievance Procedure*.

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

Danyale Williams – Gaston Local Area Equal Opportunity Officer.

Mose Dorsey – The State EO Officer

Mose provides the Gaston County WDB Staff and NCWorks Career Center – Gaston Staff with Annual EO & LEP Training each year either in person or through the NCWorks Training Center. Mose advises the board if any changes have been made to the state or federal EO Requirements so that Local Area Policies and Procedures are updated with the most recent EO criteria for providing participants with services in a manner that supports EO compliance.

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)]

a. The services are provided in a timely and efficient way from the start of the pre-intake process to the time of review team and WIOA enrollment. If there are issues with training providers, the case manager notifies the Program Manager who sends information to the WDB to look into and contact service provider. Our WIOA team tries to ensure that each customer feels heard and taken care of through the training period and following through monthly counsel and follow up.

b. Any weaknesses of training providers are identified and forwarded to the WDB Clerk to the Board. Additionally, any weaknesses that are identified by the Program Manager regarding case managers is addressed through counseling, group and individual training or retraining.

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)]

Basic training is provided through the local college and other providers i.e., RN and LPN, CDL, Phlebotomy, Dental Assistance, CNA, Human Services etc. The training is extensive to ensure the customer is prepared to meet the demands of the labor market.

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]

Competitive Procurement:

-Released Request for Proposal: 3/6/2023

-Question Submittal Deadline: 3/29/2023

-Q&A Document- provided at Virtual Bidder's Conference- 3/20/2023 1:30pm

-Proposals due- 4/11/2023 11:00am

-Proposal Evaluation Committee Meeting- 4/11/2023

-Gaston Workforce Development Board Vote on Recommendation- 4/20/2023

-Notification of Award to Awardee- 4/28/2023

-Posted to Board Website for Public Comment- 3/6/2023

-Proposed start date for contract/services- 7/1/2023

-Length of contract is 1 year due receiving one bid

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: *Gaston County WDB 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.

GWDB vision for servicing the WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers are that each strive to reach goals to ensure that adults seeking more prominent careers and dislocated workers aiming to regain employment in our workforce is completed successfully. We help guide the efforts of public and community resources to enhance North Carolina's workforce capabilities by partnering with Gaston County DHHS to refer TANF recipients, Non-custodial Parents of active child support cases, Foster Care Youth and the Food and Nutrition Services for staff assisted services at the NCWorks Career Centers.

The vision we have is to continue implementing a seamless, integrated service environment, where jobseekers, workforce partners, business/industry, training providers, economic development, community organizations, and the faith community can collaborate to provide meaningful workforce related service and assistance delivered with a quality customer service focus. We intend to maximize the concepts of the One Stop as we introduce, guide, counsel, and coordinate with existing staff and partners on integrating service focus and incorporating Board expectations for Center relevance and productivity.

We have greatly increased our outreach and social media presence so that individuals can find and be referred to our services on a frequent basis. We have built relationships with our partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Gaston College, Cathy Mabry Cloninger Center, Hope United, Catherine's House, Recovery Court, and many others to ensure growth and exposure to groups that have not been reached in the past. Coordination with Division of Workforce Solutions is paramount to reach dislocated workers as this customer base is supported through the Career Center and Rapid Response sessions. Customers that are currently receiving UI are provided WIOA service information through the welcome team.

Through continuous outreach and quality services provided, we expect WIOA to meet the following outcomes: attain employment, improved retention, increased credentialing, improved penetration in employer market, increased usage of Centers by customers, and relevance and high value perception by communities.

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)]

We ensure that those that are low income, receiving public assistance, or have basic skills deficiencies are served in a variety of ways. We partner closely with the SNAP and TANF programs with the Department of Social Services and complete WPs as a requirement for those receiving TANF. This allows us to speak further into our WIOA services for those customers. We also work closely with Gaston College for those who need to receive TABE testing to gauge BSD status and provide proper referrals upon completion of TABE for ABE, GED, or AHS services. We also work with Gaston Literacy Council for BSD or those with language barriers that could affect their job search process. GWDB monitors the Adult & Dislocated Worker service provider is meeting performance measures through monthly reporting. An action plan is put in place for any performances that are lacking.

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

The Gaston LA provides the following during participants' 12 months of follow-up:

- o Additional Job Search Assistance
- o Job Retention Information
- o Conflict Resolution/Workplace Counseling
- o Individual Counseling
- o Supportive Services

Follow-up Services are provided to all Gaston County WIOA participants who have soft exited, to ensure that the participant remains successful in meeting their long-term goal – self-sufficiency employment that lasts 12 months or longer. When appropriate, the case manager schedules the customer to meet with them so the case manager can determine if the customer is still working in unsubsidized employment or still in post-secondary education and whether the participant needs additional assistance. The case manager scans the necessary proofs of contacts made into the participant's Staff Documents Tab in NCWorks.

Follow-up results are keyed into NCWorks, within 15 days from the last day of the each required quarter.

In Gaston LA, we do not require follow-up services on participants who meet the requirement(s) for hard exit (due to global exclusion). Neither do we require follow-up services on participants who soft-exit due to at least two "unsuccessful attempts to locate" in writing.

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.

The WIOA Program Manager monitors 100% of cases over a set period by completing monitoring checklist and notifying case managers of any corrections needed. Review Team, WIOA enrollment, and case exit procedures are also times when cases are checked for quality and accuracy. The Contractor has an internal monitor that checks cases and provides instruction for case managers and the Program Manager for corrections quarterly. GWDB Performance Accountability Specialist also monitors programmatic cases and prepares those results monthly so that case files are accurate and organized.

The service providers provide a quality control aspect on both the fiscal and programmatic monitoring through an in-house monitor. They regularly review cases and expenditures to ensure policy and protocols are being followed. The GWDB Performance Accountability Specialist thoroughly examines each monthly invoice for allowable costs and proper documentation from the program providers.

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?

In-School Youth Analysis:

No ISY enrollments for PY2022.

Out-of-School Analysis:

- a. 42
- b. 76.19%
- c. High School Diploma/GED
- d. Underemployed

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

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

Yes. Program Year 2023-2024 marked the beginning of the inclusion of serving In School Youth. ISY is an untapped population in high poverty areas that are low income and in Title I schools that could benefit from the services offered by the NextGen Program. Outreach efforts are in place to gain present in all the local area high schools and middle schools. We strive to provide a better foundation for soft skills, technical skills, and career success. The effort has slow traction currently; however, we hope to change this.

2. 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
Holland Code-Career Match	Yes	Classification of jobs into job categories, interest clusters, or work personality environments	Successful
Career Cluster	Yes	Groups occupations with similar features. Defines if someone enjoys a job in a particular cluster, they are more likely to enjoy related occupations in the cluster group.	Successful

Talent SHL Assessment	Yes	Evaluates job related behaviors, skills, and competencies with patented assessments	Successful
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3. 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)]

The Local Area WDB's NextGen Program is unique to include an in-depth objective assessment summary to identify needs and appropriate services which in turn is utilized to create the individual services strategy which maps a path for success. Participants receive 1:1 intensive case management services which assist in the navigation of the path to success and self-sufficiency. Participants in the program have an extra level of support via a welcoming, inclusive safe space.

4. 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?

GWDB ensures the Individual Service Strategy identifies appropriate services based on the objective assessment and is linked to youth performance indicators, career pathways, and program elements through individualized case management services and comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skills levels and service needs for the youth. ISS is unique to everyone as each youth meets with their case manager in a one-on-one setting to build a unique relationship based on the needs of the participant. In addition, the ISS is reviewed on continually and updated to reflect additional goals and objectives as they are identified.

5. 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)]

The strategy to ensure youth activities lead to a high school diploma, its equivalent, or a recognized post-secondary credential and post-secondary education and training opportunities includes the provision of intensive case management services including monthly workshops, supportive services, and referrals to outside community agencies as needed. Case managers will stay in communication with training providers, to monitor and track attendance, and address any issues that may lead to a participant's failure.

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

The Gaston LA provides the following during participants' 12 months of follow-up:

- o Additional Job Search Assistance
- o Job Retention Information
- o Conflict Resolution/Workplace Counseling
- o Individual Counseling
- o Supportive Services

Follow-up Services are provided to all Gaston County WIOA participants who have soft exited, to ensure that the participant remains successful in meeting their long-term goal – self-sufficiency employment that lasts 12 months or longer. When appropriate, the case manager schedules the customer to meet with them so the case manager can determine if the customer is still working in unsubsidized employment or still in post-secondary education and whether the participant needs additional assistance. The case manager scans the necessary proofs of contacts made into the participant's Staff Documents Tab in NCWorks.

Follow-up results are keyed into NCWorks, within 15 days from the last day of the each required quarter. In Gaston LA, we do not require follow-up services on participants who meet the requirement(s) for hard exit (due to global exclusion). Neither do we require follow-up services on participants who soft-exit due to at least two "unsuccessful attempts to locate" in writing.

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

7. 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.

GWDB NextGen program provides Hybrid services to youth and young adults, with the majority of services housed at Gaston College. The NextGen program also provides services regularly at the NCWorks Career Center-Gaston by having a NextGen case manager provide services at the Career Center daily. NextGen also has the capability to work at satellite locations such as the library and community agencies to reach individuals who may not frequent Gaston College or NCWorks Career Center-Gaston.

8. 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 Gaston County Youth Service Provider List.*

9. 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]

Competitive Procurement:

-Released Request for Proposal: 3/6/2023

- Question Submittal Deadline: 3/29/2023
- Q&A Document- provided at Virtual Bidder's Conference- 3/20/2023 1:30pm
- Proposals due- 4/11/2023 11:00am
- Proposal Evaluation Committee Meeting- 4/11/2023
- Gaston Workforce Development Board Vote on Recommendation- 4/20/2023
- Notification of Award to Awardee- 4/28/2023
- Posted to Board Website for Public Comment- 3/6/2023
- Proposed start date for contract/services- 7/1/2023
- Length of contract is 1 year due receiving one bid

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.

10. 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)

The Gaston WDB requires that our WIOA NextGen Youth contractor enroll 50% of OSY and 50% of ISY. Currently, the Gaston Local Area has a limited number of ISY enrolled. Outreach efforts are achieved through social media, websites, communications across the college campus and at the Life Skills Building where GED classes are offered. Additionally, the Youth program manager is in the process of contacting all principles and guidance counselors in the local area to provide outreach to ISY and provide resources to the schools. Gaston College also allows a NextGen Youth Staff member to attend the GED Orientation session to promote the NextGen WIOA program and recruit interested individuals.

GWDB has found it challenging to target, enroll, and maintain participation for the OSY. With the decrease of the expected OSY to be served and the increase of ISY to be served, GWDB anticipates meeting programmatic goals. GWDB has implemented a relationship with DSS Child Protection Services to make automatic referrals for all Foster Care Youth to WIOA. Our local area Foster Care youth and young adults are primarily considered ISY and with the referral process in place, we are expecting a natural increase of in school youth served.

GWDB will rely on the partnerships that already exist with other agencies to continue the referral process for all youth to WIOA. GWDB is fortunate in its close relationship with Gaston County schools and DSS Child Protection Services. GWDB staff will continue to hold refresher training to promote WIOA services offered with partner agencies that assist youth to remind them of the services that are available.

11. 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)

The Local Area has made great strides and has improved on reaching the 20% minimum. With current trends the Local Area is on track to meeting the minimum 20% requirement. The Local Area will continue its outreach efforts to secure additional work experience sites, however participants are needed to work at those sites. GWDB actively seeks businesses that are interested in holding WEX positions and matches participants interested and in need of work experience with those businesses. We key not only participant wages but also WEX staff wages and fringe benefits to the 20%. The contract for Youth specifies and maintains a WEX Specialist position to ensure these opportunities are maintained and properly filled.

12. 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?

The Gaston Count Workforce Development Board has one Business Services Representative that provides services to Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

13. 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.

GWDB does not have special programs for young adults that are Justice-Involved or have a substance disorder, however youth needing these specialty programs are referred to community agencies for such services resulting in collaborative partnerships.

14. 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]

The Gaston WDB partners with Gaston College's GED & AHS Programs, as well as the Gaston Literacy Council and Vocational Rehabilitation to do co-enrollments and provide services to individuals with basic skills deficiencies, learning disabilities and other barriers to employment. Gaston College leverages resources by providing TABE testing to anyone with a potential basic skills deficiency or learning disability including individuals who could potentially be WIOA eligible. The GWDB is able to align employment, training, education, and supportive services with Title II youth that have barriers to employment – which meets requirements for developing and implementing career pathways for youth through alignment of employment, training, education, and supportive services. We are able to do this by continuing to nurture our partnerships with Gaston College ABE, the Gaston Literacy Council, and Vocational Rehabilitation partnerships and achieving co-enrollments of youth in our partnering programs. Our WIOA Youth Program contractor partners with Gaston College Life Skills Programs. This is accomplished by Gaston College allowing WIOA staff to attend the AHS/GED/ABE Orientation classes to present WIOA Youth Program information to youth and young adults who may potentially be WIOA OSY eligible, in an effort to achieve co-enrollment of Title II youth who may need financial assistance with education, training, and/or support services. Additionally, the WIOA Youth Program provides financial and supportive service assistance to Gaston College's GED students who co-enroll to take college level classes while finishing their GED.

15. 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
- a. the Local Area WDB's internal controls to safeguard cash/gift cards.

- Name document: *Gaston County 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).

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

GWDB does offer incentives for NEXTGEN youth.

17. 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)]

The local strategy to prepare the youth (NextGen) for unsubsidized employment includes work readiness skill training which includes a set of skills and behaviors that are necessary for any job. Youth are engaged in such trainings with both their case manager and the WEX specialist. The types of services may be provided through instruction, or other activities where the student can learn and apply knowledge. Additionally, youth are provided with job training services, search techniques and knowledge on local jobs in demand along with wage data.

18. 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: *Gaston County WDB Youth Program Elements Chart.*

19. 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.

Yes. The Gaston County Workforce Development Board has a Youth Committee.

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

a) Provide the committee's purpose/vision.

The committee's purpose is to provide a holistic approach to lifting youths' barriers by facilitating the sharing of information, opportunities, and resources that are available in the community for youth between local agencies and partners including law enforcement, DSS Foster Care Program, Gastonia Housing Authority, and a youth who can share a youth participant perspective. Information is shared by the WIOA NextGen Service Provider regarding opportunities that available through the WIOA Youth Program and also to provide the WIOA Next-Gen Youth Contractor with the regular opportunity to provide input into local planning as well as seek information from local partners that can benefit their youth.

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

Increase Youth Outreach

Enroll more In-School Youth

Enroll disabled youth and more Foster Care and aged out of Foster Care

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*).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name document: <i>Gaston County Youth Committee Members</i> [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 #)
August 15, 2024	12:00 noon	330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 Auditorium
November 21, 2024	12:00 noon	330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 Auditorium
February 20, 2025	12:00 noon	330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 Auditorium
May 15, 2025	12:00 noon	330 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052 Auditorium

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)
Employer Services Grant	Support the increase in the number of businesses and employers utilizing the NCWorks Workforce system	1/9/2023-12/31/2023	NC Department of Commerce/DWS \$20,000.00	N/A
Virtual Reality Grant	Provides VR equipment to NCWorks Career Center to assist in participant training pathways.	12/19/2024-6/30/2024	NC Department of Commerce/DWS \$5,000.00	N/A

Grant Name/Kind	Brief Description	Beginning and End date	Source and Amount	Partner Organization (if applicable)
Industry Sector Partnerships Planning Grant	Assist with planning and development of strategies to further engage and enhance the manufacturing industry	1/12/2024-12/31/2024	US DOL \$35,000.00	EDC

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.

A promising practice that the Adult/Dislocated Worker program has initiated this year is offering WIOA informational orientations to those interested in learning more about what the program has to offer. This has allowed interested individuals a more personable counseling experience to ask any questions to ensure WIOA is a good fit for their needs. During the orientation, NCWorks registration is offered, and WP applications are offered to all. Upon completing the WP application, the interested participant will also schedule a future interview for the WIOA program. The orientations have expanded from twice a month to weekly as the need of interested individuals has increased.

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 examples of the Local Area WDB's best practices or promising Youth program practice that has yielded positive results is the incorporation of activities for the children of our participants during workshops through partnership with Union Road Branch Library. Activities include music, dance, story time and crafts. Upon implementation of this program practice, our parenting participants can attend workshops and concentrate on the workshop content. In turn, their children are having a joyful time instead of being bored. In addition, this provides some stress relief and an extra level of support.

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.

The development of regionally aligned Career Pathways and Regional Occupations In Demand Lists allows for better participant access to common training providers, programs, and pathways shared by neighboring counties. Additionally, the development of regional job fairs between multiple partners and employers.

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.

Virtual Face-to-Face services and supportive services provided through the utilization of virtual service platforms and Adobe Sign Software for those that prefer virtual services, to include those with disabilities, phobias, and transportation or daycare issues.

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.

1. **Employer-Led Sector Partnerships:** Gaston WDB is an integral part of GCAM (Gaston County Association of Manufacturers), an employer-led sector partnership, facilitated by EDC where businesses within specific industries collaborate to address common workforce challenges. By allowing employers to take the lead in identifying needs and driving strategies, these partnerships ensure that workforce development efforts are directly aligned with industry demands. Positive results include increased employer satisfaction, improved workforce retention rates, and a better match between available skills and job requirements.

2. **Customized Training Programs:** WDBs work closely with employers to help fund customized training programs tailored to their specific needs with the use of Incumbent Worker Training Funds. Employers take charge by defining the skills and competencies required for success in their industry, while leveraging WDB funding. Positive outcomes include improved employee productivity, reduced training costs for employers, the ability to stay competitive, the ability to promote from within and back-fill entry level positions, and overall, a more skilled workforce that meets industry standards.

3. **Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Initiatives:** WDBs partner with employers to expand apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities. Employers drive the agenda by offering apprenticeship positions, defining skill requirements, and providing mentorship to participants. Gaston WDB will often refer employers to Gaston College's App 321 program or direct them to our State Apprenticeship rep so they can build their own program. Positive outcomes include increased employee retention, reduced recruitment costs for employers, and a pipeline of skilled talent trained to industry specifications.

4. **Recruitment and Hiring Events:** WDBs organize recruitment and hiring events that empower employers to connect directly with job seekers. Employers play a significant role in these events by showcasing career opportunities, conducting interviews, setting up future interviews, and making on-the-spot job offers at times. Employers also offer feedback through our survey to find out what days/times and location works best for them. Positive results include streamlined hiring processes, reduced time-to-fill vacancies, and increased access to qualified candidates for employers.

5. **Workforce Data Analysis and Planning:** WDBs collaborate with employers to collect and analyze workforce data, enabling evidence-based decision-making. Employers contribute by sharing information about their hiring needs, skill requirements, and workforce trends, which informs the development of targeted workforce strategies. Positive outcomes include a better understanding of labor market dynamics, improved alignment between education and workforce systems, and increased responsiveness to employer needs.

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: Local Area WDB Name, 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	Included in Financial Mgmt. Policy	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	No
9. Priority of Service Policy	Yes	No
10. Youth Work Experience Policy	Included in AD/DW WEX	No
11. Supportive Services Policy	Yes	No

Required Local Area WDB Policies	Attached (Yes/No). If no, why?	Revised for PY 2024 (Yes/No) and needs review
12. Local Area WDB WIOA and TAA Co-enrollment Policy	No	Gaston County WDB is working on implementing policy PY24
13. Eligible Training Provider Policy	Yes	No
14. Non-Criminal Complaint Procedures	Yes	No

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	N/A
2. Local Area WDB Needs-Related Policy	N/A	N/A
3. Local Area WDB Transitional Jobs Policy	Yes	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	\$8,000 per year/ \$12,000 Lifetime
Time Limits	Seven semesters
Degree or Certificates allowed (Associate, Bachelor's, other)	Certificate, Degree, Diploma, Last year of a bachelor's degree
Procedures for determining case-by-case exceptions for training that may be allowed	Training can be approved, even if not on OID list, if written promise of employment is received from the employer
Period for which ITAs are issued (semester, school year, short-term, etc.)	Semester
Supportive Services covered by ITA (provide examples such as uniforms, tools, physical exams, etc.)	None-GWDB does not count Supportive Services toward the participants lifetime max or Tuition, Books, Fees, and School Supplies.
Other	Semester

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)]

Customer choice is the top priority and most customers come in with an idea of who they would like to train with or what program they would like to pursue. If the customer does not have a training provider in mind, they are provided a list of eligible training providers and are able to make the decision without any bias from the case manager.

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>
Bus Tickets, Gas Cards, Mileage Reimbursement,	\$95 per week with a total family max of \$190 per week	Any additional school supplies required by the class	Vehicle Expenses (Car repairs, Car Insurance), Utility	Educational or work related: Testing fees, Accommodations for

Transportation	Childcare	Supplies <i>(include examples)</i>	Emergency <i>(include examples)</i>	Other <i>(include examples)</i>
Contracted Transportation		instructor, on the class syllabus, and are not disposable (Ex: Texas Instrument Calculator)	Costs (cut off notice for power), Housing Expenses (deposit, first month rent, or amount on eviction notice), Other Items (as approved)	individuals with disabilities, Tools, Equipment, Uniforms, Work/Interview Attire, Work Boots/Shoes, and Other required items to complete activities.

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.*

Attachment Checklist from Local Area Plan Instructions

- ☐ Local Area WDB Signed copy of Consortium Agreement (if applicable)
- ☐ Local Area WDB Administrative Entity Organizational Chart
- ☐ Local Area WDB Board Members (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area WDB By-Laws
- ☐ Local Area WDB By-Laws Required Elements Crosswalk (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area WDB Organizational Chart
- ☐ Local Area WDB Administrative Entity Certification Regarding Debarment* (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area WDB Workforce Development Area Signatory Form* (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area WDB NCWorks Career Centers (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area WDB Adult and Dislocated Worker Service Provider (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area WDB Eligible Training Provider Policy
- ☐ Local Area WDB 14 Youth Program Elements Chart (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area WDB Youth Committee Meeting Schedule (*optional*)
- ☐ Local Area WDB Youth Committee Members (*optional*)
- ☐ Local Area WDB Youth Service Provider (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area WDB Youth Incentive Policy (*optional*)
- ☐ Local Area WDB WIOA and TAA Co-enrollment Policy (*required*)
- ☐ Local Area Adult/Dislocated Worker Work Experience Policy
- ☐ Competitive Procurement Policy
- ☐ Conflict of Interest Policy
- ☐ Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Standards and Complaint Procedures
- ☐ Financial Management Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I
- ☐ Local Area WDB Individualized Training Account Policy
- ☐ On-the-Job Training Policy
- ☐ Local Area WDB Oversight Monitoring Policy, Tool, and Schedule
- ☐ Priority of Service Policy
- ☐ Youth Work Experience Policy
- ☐ Local Area WDB Supportive Services Policy
- ☐ Local Area WDB Incumbent Worker Training Policy (*optional*)
- ☐ Local Area WDB Needs-Related Policy (*optional*)
- ☐ Non-Criminal Complaint Procedures
- ☐ Local Area WDB Transitional Jobs Policy (*optional*)
- ☐ Memorandum of Understanding
- ☐ Customer Flow Chart

*Mail signed and unfolded originals to assigned DWS Planner at:

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

DocuSign® (or similar) signature pages may be uploaded in WISE.

GASTON COUNTY Workforce Development Board By-laws

Article 1

Name and Purpose

Section 1. Name

The name of this organization shall be the GASTON COUNTY Workforce Development Board (hereinafter referred to as the "Board").

Section 2. Purpose and Responsibilities

The purpose for which the Board is organized is to perform all functions of a Workforce Development Board and Local Workforce Development Area as set forth in the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 ("WIOA"), or the corresponding provision of any applicable federal or state laws of related purpose and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, and Section 143B-438.11 of the North Carolina General Statutes and to perform such functions with the GASTON COUNTY Workforce Development Board.

The Board service area shall encompass GASTON COUNTY only.

The Board responsibilities shall include:

1. Develop and submit local plan annually to the Governor, a comprehensive 4-year local plan, in partnership with the Chief Elected Official;
2. Perform workforce research and regional market analysis;
3. Convene local workforce development system stakeholders to assist in the development of the local plan and identify non-federal expertise and resources to leverage support for workforce development activities;
4. Lead efforts to engage with a diverse range of employers and with entities in the region involved;
5. Lead efforts with representatives of secondary and postsecondary education programs in the local area to develop and implement career pathways within the local area by aligning the employment, training, education, and supportive services that are needed by adults and youth, particularly individuals with barriers;
6. Lead efforts in the local area to identify proven and promising strategies and initiatives for meeting the needs of employers, and workers and jobseekers in the local workforce system, and to identify and disseminate information on promising practices carried out in other local areas;

7. Develop strategies for using technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the local workforce development system for employers, workers, and jobseekers;
8. Conduct program oversight;
9. Negotiate and reach agreement on local performance accountability measures;
10. Designate or certify one-stop operators and, in appropriate circumstances, terminate for cause the eligibility of such operators;
11. Coordinate activities with education and training providers in the local area;
12. Develop a budget for the activities of the local Board consistent with the local plan and the duties of the local Board and subject to the approval of the Chief Elected Official;
13. Annually review the physical and programmatic accessibility provisions of all one-stop centers in the local area, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

Article 2 Board Members

Section 1. Appointment

There shall be a Board of no more than NINETEEN (19) Board members, unless decided otherwise by the CEO, Board Chairperson, and the Workforce Development Board Director. In which a unanimous decision must be reached, in writing and signed by each of the three. Members of this organization shall be appointed by the following procedure: The Chief Elected Official (Chairman of the Gaston County Board of Commissioners, hereinafter referred to as the CEO) shall appoint members based on nominations from the following: local business organizations; local education agencies; vocational education institutions, community-based organizations, and higher educational institutions; and private and proprietary schools; state or local labor organizations and other interested organizations.

The number of business sector nominees shall be at least 51 percent of the number of individuals to be appointed and are appointed from amongst individuals nominated by local business organizations and business trade associations. The nominated candidate or company must be a member of the nominating organization. A majority of the Members shall be representatives of businesses in the local area (including small businesses or organizations representing businesses that, at a minimum, include high-quality, work-relevant training and development in in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area) and are owners, chief executives or operating officers, or other business executives or employers with optimum policy making or hiring authority. The members of the local Board shall represent diverse geographic areas within the local area.

Section 2. Composition

Organized Labor and Community Based Organizations: Not less than 20 percent of the Members shall be representatives of the workforce within the local area, who:

- (i) shall include representatives of labor organizations, who have been nominated by local labor federations, or other representatives of employees;
- (ii) shall include a representative, who shall be a member of a labor organization or a training director, from a joint labor-management apprenticeship program, or if no such program exists in the area, such a representative of an apprenticeship program in the area, if such a program exists.
- (iii) may include representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including organizations that serve veterans or that provide or support competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities; and
- (iv) may include representatives of organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth;

Education and training activities: The Board shall include representatives of entities administering education and training activities in the local area, who:

- (i) shall include a representative of eligible providers administering adult education and literacy activities under Title II of the WIOA;
- (ii) shall include a representative of institutions of higher education providing workforce investment activities (including community colleges);
- (iii) may include representatives of local educational agencies, and of community-based organizations with demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the education or training needs of individuals with barriers to training;

The Board shall include representatives of governmental and economic and community development entities serving the local area, who:

- (i) shall include a representative of economic and community development entities;
- (ii) shall include an appropriate representative from the state employment service office under the Wagner-Peyser Act serving the local area;
- (iii) shall include an appropriate representative of the programs carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, serving the local area;
- (iv) may include representatives of agencies or entities administering programs serving the local area relating to transportation, housing, and public assistance, and
- (v) may include representatives of philanthropic organizations serving the local area; and

This Board may include such other individuals or representatives of entities as the Chief Elected Official determines appropriate.

Section 3. Tenure

Members shall be appointed to a three year fixed and staggered term, as specified in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). For the purpose of formulating the first Board after implementation of WIOA - Program Year 2015, and to stagger the terms: one-third of the initial appointments were for one year; one-third were for two years; and one-third were for three years. Thereafter, all appointments shall be for three years. An individual whose's initial appointment is to fill the remainder of an exiting member's unexpired term OR an initial staggered term of less than three years, shall be eligible to serve an additional full-length term. Members may be re-appointed at the discretion of the Chief Elected Official and their desire to serve an additional term(s). The Board shall not compensate Board Members for their services, but by resolution of the Board, a fixed sum and expenses, if any, may be allowed for attendance at each regular or special meeting of the Board.

Section 4. Termination for Cause

By two-thirds majority vote of the membership or by action of the Chief Elected Official, a member may be removed for cause from the Board. Cause would be for such actions as malfeasance, misfeasance, misconduct, or any action which would be deemed not in the best interest of the Board; or 60% absences from regular scheduled meetings within the preceding twelve calendar months. Notice of a removal vote that may be taken for "cause" must be included on the agenda of said meeting. The Chair shall send a precautionary letter to the said Board member upon two (2) unexcused absences within the preceding twelve calendar months prior to the next meeting.

Section 5. Resignation

Letters of resignation must be submitted to the GASTON COUNTY Workforce Development Board Chair. Three consecutive absences without justification will be considered defacto resignation. Justification must be submitted in writing. The Board Chair has the authority to accept or deny justification.

Section 6. Vacancies

Upon vacancy of any position on this Board, the procedure in Article II, Section 1, will be followed to provide replacement representation to complete the remainder of that term of appointment.

Section 7. Active Participation of Board Members

The Gaston County Workforce Development Board members shall actively participate in convening the Gaston County Workforce Development System's stakeholders, broker

relationships with a diverse range of employers, and leverage support for workforce development activities. As members of the Gaston County Workforce Development Board, it is encouraged for each sector representative to participate in local and regional endeavors that support the understanding, expansion, and impact of Workforce Development activities. Through their volunteer efforts, they shall support and promote the ever increasing need to market and partner with current and future employers, community organizations, and institutions of higher education to create a vibrant and meaningful workforce program. Board members are expected to attend or participate in no less than 2 board sponsored initiatives each calendar year and are encouraged to attend the annual NCWorks Partnership Conference or other meaningful activities

Article 3 Meetings

Section 1. Regular Meetings

The Board shall meet at such time and place as determined by the Chairperson in an accessible facility. The Board will meet no less than four times per program year. Regular Board meetings are face to face; however, Board members may access meetings via conference call, video communications and other alternative methods with an advance request in writing made at least 3 days prior to the meeting date to the Clerk to Board via email notification.

Five working days' notice shall be delivered to each member stating a reasonable time, date and place of the meeting and the meeting's purpose unless deemed an emergency by the Chair or Executive Committee calling for said special meeting.

Section 2. Special Meetings

The Chair of the Board may, when deemed necessary, call a special meeting of the Board via conference call, video communications, or alternative media sources for transacting any business designated in the call.

Section 3. Quorum

At all meetings (regular or special) of the Board, a majority of the Board members present constitutes a quorum for transacting business. A quorum shall require the participation of the Board Chair or Vice Chair and Board members constituting 51% of the total board positions. Proxy representatives, if unable to cast votes, shall not count toward meeting the quorum requirement. Votes may be cast via electronic medium for remote attendees. The act of the majority of the Board members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board. However, a two-thirds vote of those present or represented via voting proxy shall be required to amend any provision of these By-laws.

Section 4. Conduct of Meetings

All meetings of this Board shall be conducted in accordance with the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 5. Open Meetings

The Gaston County Workforce Board Conducts Business Openly: The local Board conducts its business in an open manner as required by WIOA sec. 107(e), by making available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic, audio, or virtual means and open meetings, information about the activities of the local Board. (20 CFR 679.390) This includes:

- a. Information about the Local Plan, or modification to the Local Plan, before submission of the final version of the plan;
- b. List and affiliation of local Board members;
- c. Selection of one-stop operators;
- d. Award of grants or contracts to eligible training providers of workforce investment activities including providers of youth workforce investment activities;
- e. Minutes of formal meetings of the local Board; and
- f. Local Board by-laws, consistent with § 679.310(g).

The Board, in all of its meetings will comply with the provisions of the Sunshine Provision.

Additionally, the Board hereby adopts Remote Attendance and Meeting Policies, to be used when needed, to make use of the capabilities for conferencing by electronic means or any other type of audio or video conferencing for its meetings or any of the standing committee and ad hoc committee meetings as set forth and adopted according to the following rules as applicable:

Remote Attendance -

- A. All pertinent provisions of the Sunshine Provision must be complied with, including specifically the proper notice of any regular or special meeting, the proper record keeping or minutes of each meeting, the appropriate agenda preparation for each meeting, which in addition shall be posted along with the notice of the meeting; and, in particular, any use of closed sessions shall be in compliance with the provisions of WIOA.
- B. All Board and Committee members attending meetings by electronic conferencing shall be entitled to vote as if they were personally and physically present at the meeting site so long as a quorum is, in total, present and accounted for, and their votes shall be recorded by the Board Director.
- C. A Board or Committee member who attends a meeting by electronic, video, or audio conference must provide notice to the Board Director at least 24 hours prior to the meeting unless such advance notice is impracticable.
- D. The location of the meeting included on the notice shall be equipped with a suitable transmission system in order that the public audience, the members in attendance and any staff in attendance will be able to hear any input, vote, or discussion of the conference

and that the member attending by electronic means shall have a similar capability of hearing and participating in such input, vote, or discussion.

- E. As the Board or its committees begin each new matter of business, the Chair will check with all remote location(s) where members are to ensure that each such connection is active.
- F. When a motion is made, and seconded, and discussion regarding the motion begins, the Chair will check that the connection with remote location(s) where members are present is active. Prior to closing discussion and taking any vote, the Chair will ask all remote location(s) where member(s) is(are) present whether there are any additional comments, questions, or information to be added to the discussion.
- G. All decisions will be made using majority rule except when a higher vote is required. There will be no muting of any connections with remote location(s) where members are present at any time. There will be no sidebar discussions.

Remote Meetings –

Remote Public Meetings: In Response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Crisis, (S.L. 2020-3, SB 704) the General Assembly has *enacted modifications* to the laws governing meetings of public bodies, and voting and quorum rules for city and county governing boards. The new law modifies those rules and provides specific guidance regarding *remote* meetings, including quorum, notice, voting, public comment, and public hearings. *These provisions are in Section 4.31 of the Act*. The new provisions for *remote* public meetings became effective on May 4, 2020, and only apply when there is a declaration of a state of emergency by the Governor or General Assembly under GS 166A-90.20. They are not triggered by city or county emergency declarations. The new law also provides that any electronic meeting undertaken via remote participation between March 10, 2020 and the effective date of the new law is not deemed invalid due to the use of electronic communication to conduct that meeting.

The Board will adopt this *remote meeting policy*, to be used when needed, to make use of the capabilities for conferencing by electronic means or any other type of audio or video conferencing for its meetings as set forth and adopted according to the following rules as applicable:

- A. Before Remote Meetings: Additionally, the Gaston County WDB will continue to provide advanced meeting notice, following existing guidance for notifying the public under G.S. 143-318.12. The notice will also contain detailed information on how the public can access remote meetings. The Gaston WDB will continue to provide all documents to all board members in advance of any meetings. If applicable, presentation capabilities will be restricted to designated individuals and may be recorded
- B. Launching Remote Meetings: The Gaston WDB will insure that meetings are simultaneously available to the public by an audio stream, dial-in conference line, or video live stream. It is essential that all board members are able to hear all

communications from fellow board members and the public during remote meetings. Remote Meeting Attendance Guidelines will be reviewed with all attendees before the Board Meeting starts, including roll call, identifying actions, votes, chat box discussion, mute, etc.

- C. During the Remote Meetings: First thing at the beginning of any meeting, roll call will be taken. During roll call, each member must clearly state their name, the name of the company or agency they represent, and lastly they must also state how they are joining the meeting (telephone & their telephone #, virtual conference meeting via visual or virtual conference meeting via audio only. Board Staff and Guests will follow the same protocol,

The individual leading each section of the agenda, will reference the specific item and/or section of the agenda that is being discussed or acted on. Votes will be taken by roll call. Board Members will count for quorum/votes only while active on the remote meeting. No votes may be taken by written or secret ballot. Any board members that are calling in via telephone or cannot be seen during the conference meeting **MUST** say their name during the following times: roll call; prior to any action taken; and prior to voting.

Closed sessions –

Closed sessions may be held in accordance with G.S. 143-318.11; access to the public is not required during this time

Additional Remote Meeting Information –

The Gaston County WDB will insure that meeting minutes reflect that the meeting was done by simultaneous communication, which board members participated by simultaneous communication, and the board members who entered or left during the meeting. All chats or other written communications between members of the public body regarding the transaction of the public business during remote meetings are deemed public record. Any technical challenges that occur during the meeting shall also be noted in the minutes for future reference.

Section 6. Proxy Representation and Voting

A member may designate a representative to attend a meeting of the Board in his/her absence. The proxy must meet the membership criteria for the member's affiliation type. The proxy will count toward the appointed member's attendance, may participate in discussions by the board, and may vote *so long as the member provides written voting instructions to the Chair allowing his/her proxy representative to cast votes in accordance with the written voting instructions.*

The Chair shall not vote except in the case of a tie, in which event he/she shall cast the deciding vote. Each Board member present shall be entitled to one (1) vote on each matter for which a vote is taken. Votes may be cast telephonically, via electronic medium, and/or virtually.

Section 7. Conflict of Interest and Voting

GASTON COUNTY Board members shall not cast a vote, or take interest in, any decision-making capacity on the provision of services by such Individual (or any organization which that Individual directly represents), nor on any issue which would provide any direct financial benefit to that Individual.

No Board member shall participate in a governmental decision including voting on a matter (including recommendations, appointments, obligating, or committing the GASTON COUNTY Board to a course of action) when such action influences a decision or exercises judgment in making a decision.

Any Board member with a potential or actual conflict of interest shall comply with requirements for public disclosure and recusal.

Each Board member shall annually confirm a statement that affirms such person:

1. Has received a copy of the Board's Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct Policies in accordance with state policy;
2. Has read and understands the policy; and
3. Has agreed to comply with the policy.

Article 4 Organization

Section 1. Officers

The officers of this Board shall be a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary.

Section 2. Election of Officers

Officers of this Board shall be elected in June for two-year terms. The Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected from among the members who are representatives of the business sector. The secretary will be elected from among all members.

The Chair shall appoint a nominating committee to recommend officers who shall be elected from the Board's business sector membership and shall begin their term at the beginning of the new program year effective July 1. These officers shall serve until their successors are elected and qualified or until they are no longer Board members. If an officer is unable to complete his/her term the Board shall elect a successor to complete the remaining portion of the original

term. The Vice-Chair shall not be required to succeed the Chair at the end of the Chair's term of office.

Section 3. Chair

The Chair shall preside at Board meetings, designate standing and ad hoc committees (if necessary) and deemed appropriate and appoint their Chair and members.

Section 4. Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair shall assume all duties and responsibilities of the Chair in his/her absence from meetings. In the event that the office of Chair is vacated before the end of the term, the Vice Chair shall assume the office in an acting capacity until such time as the Board elects a new Chair.

Section 5. Clerk to the Board

The Clerk to the Board shall be responsible for proper notification of meetings, review and submission of the minutes to the Board, and shall carry out any other duties deemed appropriate by the Chair. Local Area staff will serve as support personnel in performing these duties.

Section 6. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chair, Vice Chair, and (if needed) the previous Chair or Vice Chair. As determined by the Chair of the Board, the chairs of Board committees (if any) will attend Executive Committee meetings. Responsibilities of the Executive Committee are as follows: make standing committee assignments and coordination among committees, prepare recommendations to Board on state and national issues, act as needed between regularly scheduled Board meetings, and develop immediate and long-range goals for Board concurrence.

Section 7. Vacancy

If an office becomes vacant, the Board shall elect a successor at its next meeting.

Article 5 Committees

Section 1.

The Chair of the Board shall have the power, except as otherwise provided in this Article, to appoint the members of any Committee for a term of two (2) years. No Committee, except as elsewhere provided in this Article, shall take any action or position on behalf of the Board, bind the Board or exercise the authority of the Board in the management of the Corporation. The Chair of all the Committees shall be members of the Board. The Executive Committee of the Board shall meet at the call of the Chair of the Board or the written request of any two (2)

members of the committee. The Board's other Committees shall meet at the call of their respective Chair or the Chair of the Board.

Section 2.

Electronic meetings shall be permissible in lieu of face-to-face committee meetings at the discretion of the Committee Chair. An electronic meeting of the Committee occurs when Board members are in different locations, connected by electronic means, through audio, video or both. All votes taken during an electronic meeting shall be by roll call. All scheduled electronic meetings shall be held in such a way that all members participating can hear each other at the same time. When speaking, each member will be asked to clearly identify himself, so that proper recognition is given and recorded. All Board policies, administrative practices, and by-laws shall apply equally to electronic meetings.

Section 3.

The local workforce development board may establish standing committees to provide information and assist the Board in carrying out its responsibilities (20 CFR 679.360).

Article 6 Amendments

Section 1. Amendment Procedure

Board By-laws can be amended at any regular Board meeting or via electronic means provided the proposed amendment(s) has been submitted in writing via hard copy or electronic means to the Board members at least 5 work days prior to the meeting or deadline for electronic response.

Section 2. Vote Needed

The By-laws shall be amended upon affirmative vote by a two-thirds majority of the Board.

Article 7 Severability

In the event that any of the rules, regulations, restrictions, covenants, or conditions of these By-laws are held to be partially or wholly invalid or unenforceable for any reason, such holding shall not affect, alter, modify, or impair in any manner any of the other terms, provisions, rules, regulations, restrictions, covenants, or conditions contained herein.

Adopted: This, 16th day of July, 2020 - By vote of the Gaston Co Workforce Development Board Members at its quarterly meeting on this date.

Signed:

Angela C. Karchmer

Angela C. Karchmer
Angela C. Karchmer (Dec 17, 2020 16:41 EST)

Dec 17, 2020

Board Director Printed Name and Signature

Date

Tom Keefe

2/3/2021

Chief Elected Official Printed Name and Signature

Date

Larry J Garland

Larry J Garland
Larry J Garland (Dec 17, 2020 17:30 EST)

Dec 17, 2020

Board Chair Printed Name and Signature

Date



Gaston County

Gaston County
Board of Commissioners
www.gastongov.com

DHHS - Social Services Division Board Action

File #: 20-582

Commissioner Keigher - DHHS (Social Services Division) - To Accept as Information the Revised Workforce Development Board By-Laws

STAFF CONTACT

Angela C. Karchmer - DHHS (Social Services Division) - 704-862-7930

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Development Board met on July 16, 2020 and approved the revised by-laws in accordance with Resolution 2009-313, Appointment Policy. The Workforce Development Board is submitting the attached by-laws for approval by the Board of Commissioners.

ATTACHMENTS

Workforce Development Board By-Laws

DO NOT TYPE BELOW THIS LINE

I, Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the County Commission, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Board of Commissioners as follows:

NO.	DATE	M1	M2	CBrown	AFraley	BHovls	KJohnson	TKelgher	TPhilbeck	RWorley	Vote
2021-023	01/26/2021	CB	AF	A	A	A	A	A	AB	A	U

DISTRIBUTION:

Laserfiche Users

A=AYE, N=NAY, AB=ABSENT, ABS=ABSTAIN, U=UNANIMOUS

Local Area WDB By-Laws Required Elements – Crosswalk

Insert WDB Name here: Gaston County Workforce Development Board

Elements 1-7 are the Required Elements Designated at WIOA Final Rule 679.310(g).	The Article/Section Where the Required Elements are Located Within the <i>Current</i> By-Laws.
1. The nomination process used by the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) to elect the Local Area Workforce Development Board (WDB) Chair and members.	Article 2 Section 1
2. The term limitations and how the term appointments will be staggered to ensure only a portion of membership expires in a given year.	Article 2 Section 3
3. The process to notify the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) of a Local Area WDB member vacancy to ensure a prompt nominee within 90 days of the vacancy.	Article 2 Section 6
4. The proxy and alternative designee process that will be used when a Local Area WDB member is unable to attend a meeting and assigns a designee as per the requirements of 20 CFR 679.110(d)(4).	Article 3 Section 6
5. The use of technology such as phone and web-based meetings, that will be used to promote Local Area WDB member participation (20 CFR 679.110(d)(5)).	Article 5 Section 2
6. The process to ensure Local Area WDB members actively participate in convening the workforce development system's stakeholders, brokering relationship with a diverse range of employers, and leveraging support for workforce development activities.	Article 2 Section 7
7. A description of any other conditions governing appointment or membership on the Local Area WDB as deemed appropriate by the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs); (20 CFR 679.310(g)(1-7)). Note: Answer may be N/A.	Article 2 Section 4

Local Area WDB By-Laws Required Elements – Crosswalk

Insert WDB Name here: Gaston County Workforce Development Board

North Carolina Specific Requirements That Must be Specified Within the By-Laws.	The Article/Section Where the Required Elements are Located Within <i>Current</i> By-Laws.
8. The adopted generally accepted parliamentary procedure, such as Robert's Rules of Order, chosen by the Local Area WDB.	Article 3 Section 4
9. Whether an appointee filling a vacancy will serve the remainder of the unexpired term or be appointed for a new full term.	Article 2 Section 6
10. The Local Area WDB's policy assuring attendance and participation of its members.	Article 2 Section 7
11. Quorum requirements to be not less than 51% constituting 51% of the total filled Local Area WDB positions.	Article 3 Section 3
12. Any standing committees the Local Area WDB has established shall be included in the by-laws.	Article 5 Section 3
13. The Local Area WDB's conflict of interest policy, which may not be any less stringent than the requirements of the Commission's Policy Statement, shall be referenced in the by-laws.	Article 3 Section 7
14. The process the Local Area WDB will take when expedient action is warranted between Local Area WDB meetings, such as calling a special meeting or allowing the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the Local Area WDB.	Article 3 Section 2
15. Local Area WDB meetings will be held in accessible facilities with accessible materials available upon prior request.	Article 3 Section 1
16. The Local Area WDB will meet no less than four times per program year.	Article 3 Section 1

PY 2024 Gaston County Workforce Development Board Members
Effective July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Category	Name and Business Title	Business Name and Address	Phone Number	Email Address	Term Start and End Dates (month/date/year)
1. Business, Chair	Selina Lee Owner	WD Lee & Company PO BOX 12157 Gastonia, NC 28053	(704) 864-0346 (o) (704) 866-0722 (fax)	slee@wdlee.com	06/01/2023 to 05/31/2026
2. Business	Michael Collins HR Manager	R-Anell Housing 235 Anthony Grove Road Crouse, NC 28033	(704) 445-9610	mcollins@r-anell.com	06/01/2024 to 05/31/2027
3. Business	Donna Wagner HR Manager	Dole Fresh Vegetables 220 Southridge Parkway Bessemer City, NC 28016	(704) 869-7451 (o) (610) 908-5964 (cell)	donnawagner@dole.com	06/01/2022 to 05/31/2025
4. Business	Jameese Guess HR Manager	Firestone Fibers & Textiles 1101 2nd Street Kings Mtn. NC 28086	(704) 734-2181 (o) (313) 3329486 (cell)	guessjameese@contractor.bfusa.com	06/01/2024 to 05/31/2027
5. Business	Ronald Grenier President/CEO	MSI-Manufacturing Services Inc. 725 E. Maine Ave. Bessemer City, NC 28016	(704) 629-4163 (o) (704) 718-1107 (cell)	rgrenier@msicarolina.com	06/01/2023 to 05/31/2026
6. Business	Crystal McCabe HR Manager	Dixon Valve 2925 Chief Court Dallas, NC 28034	(704) 334-9175 (o)	cmccabe@dixonvalve.com	06/01/2023 to 05/31/2026
7. Business	Susan Farmer HR Manager	Mannington Mills 200 Saxony Drive McAdenville, NC 28101	(704) 823-2584 (o)	susan.farmer@mannington.com	06/01/2024 to 05/31/2027

PY 2024 Gaston County Workforce Development Board Members
Effective July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Category	Name and Business Title	Business Name and Address	Phone Number	Email Address	Term Start and End Dates (month/date/year)
8. Business	Brandon Love Employee Relations	Caromont Health 2525 Court Drive Gastonia, NC 28054	(704) 834-2512 (o)	brandon.love@caromonthhealth.org	06/01/203 to 05/31/2026
9. Small Business	Wes Styers President	Gastonia Plumbing and Heating 2721 Robinwood Road Gastonia, NC 28052	(704) 867-7215 (o) (704) 913-1090 (h)	wesstyrs@gphco.com	06/01/2024 to 05/31/2027
10. Small Business	Justin Grindstaff VP	BTJ Doors 3800 Little Mountain Rd Gastonia, NC 28056	(704) 813-0747 (cell)	justin@btjdoors.com	06/01/2023 to 05/31/2026
11. Labor Organization	Brandon Price Treasurer	Teamsters Union/UPS International Brotherhood #71 2529 Beltway Blvd. Charlotte, NC 28799	(704) 363-6492 (o) (704) 289-7601 (cell)	hotdogba71@gmail.com	06/01/2023 to 05/31/2026
12. Labor Organization UNION	Daniel Styers Jr. Sr. Maintenance Tech.	Daimler Trucks 1400 Tulip Drive Gastonia, NC 28053	(704) 868-5792 (o)	daniel.styers_jr@daimler.com	06/01/2022 to 05/31/2025
13. Registered apprenticeship program	Donna Caskey HR Manager Apprenticeship Coordinator	Gaston Sheet Metal 1535 West May Ave Gastonia, NC 28052	(704) 864-0344 (o)	donna@gastoniasheetmetal.com	06/01/2023 to 05/31/2026
14. Community Based Organization	Steve Eaton Director DHHS Teen Parenting Program, Teen Wellness Center,	Gaston County Dept. of Health & Human Services	(704) 853-5271 (o)	stephen.eaton@gastongov.com	06/01/2024 to 05/31/2027

PY 2024 Gaston County Workforce Development Board Members
Effective July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Category	Name and Business Title	Business Name and Address	Phone Number	Email Address	Term Start and End Dates (month/date/year)
	Teen pregnancy prevention, TOP Teens	991 W. Hudson Blvd. Gastonia, NC 28052			
15. Adult Education and Literacy eligible under WIOA Title II	Linda McConnell Executive Director	Gaston Literacy 116 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way Gastonia, NC 28052	(704) 868-4815 (o)	l.mcconnell@gastonliteracy.org	06/01/2022 to 05/31/2025
16. Higher Education	Greg Smith VP for Economic & Workforce Development	Gaston College 201 Hwy 321 South Dallas, NC 28034	(704) 922-6226 (o) (336) 401-1881 (cell)	Smith.greg@gaston.edu	06/01/2022 to 05/31/2025
17. Vocational Rehabilitation Program	Vaness Trapp-Spann Director	NC Vocational Rehabilitation 109 W. Eighth Ave. Gastonia, NC 28054	(704) 853-6226 (o) (704) 877-3434 (cell)	vanessa.trapp.spann@dhhs.nc.gov	06/01/2024 to 05/31/2027
18. Economic Development	Richard Randall Existing Manager	Economic Development Commission 620 N. Main Street Belmont, NC 28012	(704) 825-4046 (o)	richard.randall@gastongov.com	06/01/2022 to 05/31/2025
19. Wagner-Peyser Act	Claudette Argrabrite Office Manager III	NCWorks Career Center 1391 Bessemer City Road Gastonia, NC 28052	(704) 853-5328 x218	claudette.argabrite@nccommerce.com	06/01/2023 to 05/31/2026
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mark (X)	By submission of this form, the WDB certifies its compliance with the appointment and nomination process of business representatives from among local business organizations and business trade associations. [WIOA Section 107(b)(2)(A)]				

PY 2024 Gaston County Workforce Development Board Members
Effective July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Notes:

- *Use the form provided and identify categories as indicated on the form.*
 - *Do not change required category names, but clearly indicate the category by making the font bold or by highlighting.*
 - *Clearly identify members if they are providing a dual role in one box by using an asterisk (*) and the word "dual". Dual role Board members should be listed only once.*
 - *If the Local Area WDB has more than 19 total members: add lines to chart and complete all columns for additional members.*
 - *Representatives with expired terms will not be included in the counted list of Board members. Board member terms must be stated in a month/date/year format.*
 - *Be sure to signify that the Board membership is in compliance by marking an "X" in the box supplied.*
-

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014

Program Year 2024 - 2028 Comprehensive Four-Year Title I Plan

Signatory Page

[Click Here to Enter WDB Name WDB](#)

Boards affirm that the Local Area Workforce Development Board and the Chief Local Elected Official(s) of the Local Area, in partnership, have developed and now submit this update to the Comprehensive, Strategic Regional and Local Area Plan in compliance with the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and instructions issued by the Governor under authority of the Act.

Submission Date

Workforce Development Board Chair

Chief Local Elected Official

Selina Lee
Typed or Printed Name

Chad Brown
Typed or Printed Name

Gaston Co Workforce Development Board Chair
Typed or Printed Title

Chairman, Gaston County Board of Commissioners
Typed or Printed Title

Selina Lee
Signature

Chad Brown
Signature

03/28/2024
Date

4/23/2024
Date

Attest:

Donna S. Buff
Donna S. Buff
Clerk to the Board

Commission Policy Statement: CPS: 01-2024
Attachment 2
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