



Gaston County

Gaston County
Board of Commissioners
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DHHS - Social Services Division Board Action

File #: 22-280

Commissioner Brown - DHHS (Social Services Division) - To Approve the North Carolina Modification for Gaston County Workforce Development Program/Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WDB/WIOA) Title I Plan for PY 2022

STAFF CONTACT

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

BUDGET IMPACT

N/A

BUDGET ORDINANCE IMPACT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (formerly known as the Workforce Investment Act - WIA) 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

WDB/WIOA PY 2022 Title I Plan

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	BHovis	KJohnson	TKeigher	TPHilbeck	RWorley	Vote
2022-222	07/26/2022	BH	RW	A	AB	A	A	AB	AB	A	U

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Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014

Program Year 2022 Local Area Plan Signatory Page for

Gaston County Workforce Development Board

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

Typed or Printed Name

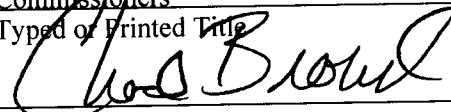
Chad Brown

Typed or Printed Name

Chairman, Gaston County Board of
Commissioners

Typed or Printed Title

Typed or Printed Title



Signature

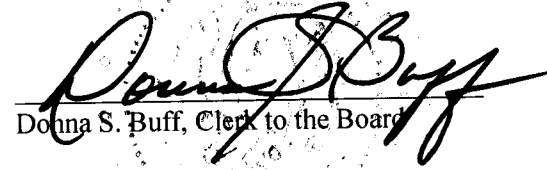
Signature

7/26/2022

Date

Date

Attest:



Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the Board

Gaston County Workforce Development Board

North Carolina Modification for Local Area Workforce Development Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Plans

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

*North Carolina Department of Commerce
Division of Workforce Solutions
4316 Mail Service Center
313 Chapanoke Road, Suite 120
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, a comprehensive four-year plan. Four-Year Plans were submitted in May 2020.

In North Carolina, annually, each Local Area WDB, in consultation with the chief local elected official, is to provide updates to the Comprehensive Four-Year Plan. The WIOA Program Year (PY) 2022 Plan is to provide current information and be effective July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023 and will include required current local policies. The Local Area Plan will support the alignment strategy described in the 2020-2024 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.

Through its strategic planning efforts, the NCWorks Commission developed a vision and mission for North Carolina's Workforce System. 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.

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: www.doleta.gov.

North Carolina policy information is available at <https://www.nccommerce.com/jobs-training/workforce-professionals-tools-resources/workforce-policies>. Local Area WDBs should reference the North Carolina WIOA Unified State Plan.

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 **due date is May 6, 2022.** **Each attachment must be submitted and labeled separately in either Word, Excel, or PDF format.** Attachments not submitted separately will not be accepted. **Forms requiring original signatures may use DocuSign® (or similar) and may be uploaded in WISE. If original signatures are obtained, forms must be mailed (and uploaded in WISE) to the Local Area WDB's assigned Planner at: N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions, 4316 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4316.**

I. Local Area WDB verview

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. Thank you.

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.
 - If the Local Area is a Consortium, attach a copy of the current Consortium Agreement. Name document: Local Area WDB Name Consortium Agreement. N/A
 - 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.
2. Provide the Local Area WDB's official name. **Gaston County Workforce Development Board**
 - If the Local Area WDB officially changed its name, please attach a copy of the Status of Incorporation, attorney's letter, or other document.
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: Workforce Development Board Director - Ms.
Organization: Gaston County Government	Address: 330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way, Gastonia, NC 28056
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 Local Area WDB's Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO).

Name: Chad Brown	Elected Title & Salutation: Gaston County Board of Commissioners – Chairman
Government: Gaston County	Address: P.O. 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 CLEO, if different than question 3.

Name: Kim Eagle	Title & Salutation: County Manager – Dr.
Business Name: Gaston County Government	Address: P.O. Box 1578, Gastonia, NC 28053
Phone number: (704) 866-3101	Email address: kim.eagle@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 disbursement 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: Gaston County Government	Address: P.O. 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 Karchmer	Title & Salutation: Gaston Co DSS Director – Ms.
Organization: Gaston County DHHS	Address: 330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way, Gastonia, NC 28052
Phone number: (704) 862-7930	Email address: angela.karchmer@gastongov.com

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

See attachment #1 – DHHS-Social Services Division Organizational Chart vApril 2022

9. Provide the Administrative Entity’s Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and assurance that the ‘System for Award Management’ (SAM) status is current. Administrative Entities must register at least annually on the SAM website www.sam.gov to receive Federal funding [required by Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Section 4.11 and Section 52.204-7].

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)
David Gunderman 704-862-7536

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 C.

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

*See Attachment #2 – Gaston WDB Board List

Note: *Please complete the entire form. Check the block on the form provided certifying compliance with required WIOA Local Area WDB business nomination process.*

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).

Use and identify categories as indicated on the form. Do not change required category names except to clarify those with multiple categories and do not count those names twice. Identify any names representing a dual category with an asterisk (*).

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.

Our Clerk to the Board-Merissa Mitchell 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 Hawley 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.

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: Local Area WDB Name By-laws.

*See Attachment #3 – Gaston WDB By-Laws

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

*See Attachment #4 – Gaston WDB By-Laws Required Elements Crosswalk

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. [WIOA Section 108(d)]

The Gaston Co Workforce Development Board makes copies of the proposed (draft) Local Area Plan available to the public through hard copy at the Gaston County DHHS Building – 1st Floor for the period established as the “Public Comment Period”, after approval by the DWS planner, for public comment. It also makes copies of the proposed (draft) Local Area Plan available through electronic means, after approval by the DWS planner, by posting a link to the document on the Gaston County WDB website: www.gastonworks.com AND when possible, a link to the document on the applicable Gaston County WDB social media accounts (ie: facebook) for public comment. The plan will be posted under the NEWS & RESOURCE tab.

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)]

16. Attach a copy of the Local Area WDB's organizational chart with an 'effective as of date.' Include position titles. Name document: Local Area WDB Name Organizational Chart.

*See Attachment #5 – Gaston WDB Organizational Chart

17. Complete the following chart for the PY2022 Local Area WDB's planned meeting schedule to include time, dates, and location. [*Expand form as needed*]

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. All onsite Workforce Development Board meetings are held in DSS Auditorium – 1st Floor.

Date	Time	Location – DSS Auditorium- inside 1 st Floor Entrance Way
July 21, 2022	12:00	330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way, Gastonia,
October 20, 2022	12:00	330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way, Gastonia,
January 19, 2023	12:00	330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way, Gastonia,
April 20, 2023	12:00	330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way, Gastonia,

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

*See Attachment

Note: 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, 4316 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4316.

19. Submit the original Local Area WDB and Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) Signatory Page (*form provided*), bearing the original signatures of the Chief Local Elected Official(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.

*See Attachment

Note: If using original signatures, mail the Signatory Page to the assigned DWS Planner at N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions, 4316 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4316.

*Note: Gaston WDB Signatory Page with signatures is “Pending” the County Board of Commissioners July 26, 2022 meeting to vote on the *Final Version of the PY2022 Local Area Plan Modification with state DWS changes requested and completed*.

**Signatory page will also be mailed to DWS Planner once signatures are obtained.

II. Local Area WDB Strategic Planning

The Local Area WDB is required to keep the Local Area Plan up to date and fluid 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: education and skills development 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.

Locally, 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 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 Gaston County WDB 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 also 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 FLG supportive services to enable existing students to remain in school, thus producing a higher number of post-secondary credential completers that will have a 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 service 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 Gaston Co WDB 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.

The WDB works closely with the Gaston County Department of Health and Human Services-Social Services Division to provide job search assistance and skills assessment for TANF and FNS recipients. p

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 are able to determine and address the needs of the local employers by identifying and developing classroom-based curriculum courses that addresses 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. Likewise, the individual may also advance through the use of work-based learning programs to include On-the-Job Training, Registered Apprenticeships or Pre-Apprenticeships. Skills development that leads to completion of secondary or postsecondary credentialing results in employers having skilled workers. Skilled workers are able to secure or advance in employment with self-sufficiency wages/benefits. This is especially important for target populations with barriers to employment, so that they are able to alleviate their dependency on government assistance to provide for themselves and/or their families. Gaston WDB staff and WIOA program staff collaborate with Continuing Education program staff at our local community college for referrals and partnerships between WIOA programs, Human Resource Development (HRD) programs and Post-Secondary educational programs. WIOA program staff attends GED orientation sessions also to identify eligible students who are interested in starting the WIOA program enrollment process and furthering their education/training.

3. Describe the Local Area WDB's use of **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)]

The Southwestern Region has numerous large employers who could not possibly get their entire workforce from just the local area where there business is physically located. Some of these regional businesses include Daimler Trucks, Amazon, Charlotte Premium Outlets, Duke Energy. Therefore, our BSRs in the region work in unison while collaborating to the meet the employers' needs for skilled talent through activities such as development of OJT,

WEX, or Apprenticeship opportunities, as well as specialized employer-specific recruiting events and multi-employer job fairs via virtual, drive-thru, and in-person venues.

Businesses also need professional development and continuous improvement opportunities for existing employees to support employee opportunities such as pay increases (wage gains) and promotions (skills progression), while supporting the company's expansion opportunities and insuring they stay competitive in the global market. The Southwestern Region accomplishes this through incumbent worker trainings that are sponsored by the workforce development boards and reimburse the employers for dollars they paid to training providers for employee training. The Southwestern Region also accomplishes this through customized trainings, most of which are offered to employers through partnerships with local colleges and/or private training providers in the region.

The Southwestern Region has collaboratively developed several Career Pathways including Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare/Nursing, and Energy. Regional employers, educators, economic developers, and other essential workforce partners are invited to participate and encouraged to give needed input during Regional Career Pathway developments. The success of the Career Pathways relies heavily on all workforce partners receiving invaluable buy-in from the regional employers through hearing what their struggles are, what level of un-met demand they have for talent, and whether or not the talent that is being sent to them by the career centers and workforce partners possess the knowledge and hands-on skills that are needed to for them to be a high-performer for the business(es).

Industry and Sector Strategies will be achieved through the creation and development of small sector-based groups, developed with similar industry sector employers, who are brought together for an initial meet-and-greet session. The initial meeting between the employers is arranged as an Employer Chat Breakfast Session. It is our hope that these meetings will eventually evolve in to Industry-led Sector-based "Think-Tank Sessions" on a regular scheduled basis, if employers are interested in driving their ongoing sector-based discussions.

The Gaston County WDB will continue moving forward with its Gaston's BEST members and utilize each of their common connections with regional employers. Each partner at the table, whether from the Gaston County Workforce Development Board, Gaston County Economic Development Commission, the Gaston Regional Chamber, Gaston College, Vocational Rehabilitation, Gaston Literacy, or other valuable partners will solidify new and existing relationships with employers to expand the foot print of services to business in our region.

4. 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 - 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 monthly Management Team & Leadership Team partner meetings with the Gaston County WDB / NCWorks Career Center - Gaston. During these meetings, NCWorks - Gaston and Adult Education & Literacy share partner updates about current initiatives (and the potential for future development). Additionally, all partners share updates regarding the status of their available programs & services, co-enrollments, success stories, and participant & employer customer needs. The Gaston County WDB partners with Gaston Community College, Gaston Literacy Council, and others to coordinate and provide GED access for older youth and adult learners. We partner with Gaston College's GED & AHS Programs, as well as the Gaston Literacy Council and Vocational Rehabilitation to do co-enrollments and coordinate programs & support services to individuals with basic skills deficiencies, learning disabilities, language barriers, and/or other barriers to employment. Gaston College provides TABE testing to any adult, dislocated worker, or youth with a potential basic skills deficiency or learning disability. Contracted WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker staff and WIOA NextGen Youth staff partner with the Gaston College ABE program during their GED and Adult High School orientation classes.

Gaston College allows WIOA staff to share the opportunities that are available through the WIOA programs with GED/AHS Orientation students. The Pre-WIOA intake process can be initiated, if the student is willing and makes the choice to receive this type of WIOA service. Once eligibility for WIOA has been determined and a WIOA enrollment in to NCWorks completed, the participant receives career guidance, counseling, assessments, supportive services, and additional tutoring (if needed) to make an appropriate measurable skill gain and eventually be able to successfully complete their Adult Education and/or Literacy component.

Additionally, the WDB collaborates with Gaston County Schools to provide support for career exploration activities such as an annual career expo which focuses on STEM/STEAM careers and targets middle school students. In part, the goal of the collaborations is to encourage the older youth/adult learner to take advantage of other career-based offerings available through the community and college system (such as apprenticeship programs) or even training programs available through other providers, as well as achieve their adult high school diploma or GED credentials if applicable. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and programs that encourage parents to read to their children are additional offerings made available through the Literacy Council.

5. Provide a description of 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 trainings are 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. Partner programs also assist customers in the career resource center a scheduled number of hours each week. They can also provide technical assistance and/or sharing of information with other partner program staff while on-site, if needed. Weekly career center meetings on Friday afternoons facilitate cross training of staff and can include partners, when appropriate. To ensure consistency in staff training access and messaging, NCWorks – Gaston and Vocational (VR) staff are able to utilize materials from the NCWorks Training Center and additional training provided by the Gaston County WDB Performance Accountability Specialist or Career Center Management to support training for new partners, continuous improvement efforts, and ongoing cross training & staff development. These types of training may take place on the scheduled day that the VR staff is providing services to customers at NCWorks – Gaston or during scheduled staff development trainings when the center is closed on Friday afternoons. VR staff may also initiative and lead training for all other NCWorks – Gaston center staff, other career center partners, and/or the Gaston County WDB staff to ensure awareness of the most up-to-date practices for serving customers with disabilities.

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. VR has presented to the Gaston County WDB members & guests, as well as to Gaston's BEST members who include Economic Development and Gaston Business Association (GBA) (Chamber of Commerce).

6. 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 insure 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 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

Gaston has a designated Performance Accountability Specialist whose primary job function is to review activities within NCWorks and oversee adherence to contract goals, performance measures, and outcomes. Both the Performance Accountability Specialist and the WIOA Coordinator announced and/or unannounced monitoring of contracted services. Additionally, the WDB is updated at each monthly Contracted Program Manager meeting on the current performance data.

As follow up to each monitoring, WDB staff meets with Contracted Program Managers and Contracted Career Center Managers to review the findings and, if needed, makes recommendations for improvement and or additional training needs.

7. Explain the strategic plan for how the region will respond to national emergencies (such as the Covid-19 pandemic) or weather disasters to serve victims (such as 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 maintain and 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.

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

The Gaston County WDB continues working toward expanding community awareness of WIOA / NCWorks-Gaston partner services to individuals with barriers. The Gaston WDB and partners utilizes soft-hand off cross-referrals to insure that all local customers are aware of and receiving access to all applicable services available through each workforce partner and/or program. Additionally, the Gaston WDB requires all career center staff to appropriately assess dislocated workers when they complete their scheduled RESEA & EAI appointments and refer them to all appropriate partner services, as well as career center program orientations and available workshops. All career center partners refer their own customers (with barriers to employment) to all other appropriate partner services available locally/regionally. The Gaston WDB consistently works to connect our partners from the community colleges, universities, social services, Vocational Rehabilitation, and community-based organizations with each other to increase our service delivery and awareness efforts and re-engage individuals with barriers. The Gaston WDB sponsors monthly job fairs at different accessible sites (such as DSS and the library, and also virtually when appropriate) to reach different populations in different areas of the community. Gaston WDB works toward continuous improvement of services by increasing the avenues in which information and services is made available. The Gaston WDB has / continues to make investments in technology and other resources with the intention of making WIOA services more accessible to all demographics including dislocated workers, disconnected out-of-school youth, women, people of color with life barriers, and individuals with disabilities. Technology / resource investment examples include: • Go-To-Meeting video conferencing platforms used to host face-to-face virtual meeting with Career Advisors for WIOA services, including enrollments, individual career counseling, and group orientations. • Simple Texting is a tool that allows registered individuals to be reminded of job fairs, workshops, orientations, and other appointments as determined appropriate. Additionally, this tool will allow for additional outreach efforts by notifying customers of career awareness events, job fairs, employer recruiting sessions, work-based learning opportunities, workshops, and much more. • NCWorks-Gaston satellite locations are being developed for underserved communities that lack adequate transportation / digital access. • Social Media accounts including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are utilized for purposes of reaching our local & surrounding communities regarding WDB/Career Center/Partner event notifications, employer job & event announcements, procurement opportunities for vendors or services providers

We measure our success by running monthly reports, based upon feedback from partners and employers.

9. 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 equity and inclusion.

With collaboration in mind, our region is focusing on providing non-traditional job-training programs for the purpose of supplying the local job market with a modern labor force. We have formed beneficial bilateral relationships with local community colleges; for example, Charlotte Works will pay for prospective employees to attend Central Piedmont Community College to obtain a certificate for a specific skill such as advanced welding or project management. Central Piedmont Community College will also volunteer its facilities and personnel for Charlotte Works' career-enhancement seminars (workshops) that, among other areas, focus on resume building and interview skills. Similar arrangements occur in the Centralina WDB with their five community colleges. Likewise, Gaston WDB has a partnership with Gaston College in which they provide instructors to come on-site and teach job readiness workshops. Gaston WDB also has a partnership with the Gaston Literacy Council to come on-site to provide a Financial Literacy workshop to customers, some of which have been recently dislocated from their job or who have never had to manage money & bank accounts or apply for credit. These skills are a necessity for individuals so that, once employed, they will have the potential to retain employment by having the skills necessary to appropriately budget their wages for gas/transporation, shelter, and other essentials.

Our local education partners continue to work toward streamlining of the transition from high school to community colleges and four- year institutions. Also innovations like early-college arrangements with community colleges and four-year institutions, a whole variety of STEM and STEAM program articulations, magnet schools and charter schools are setting a new standard of cooperation along the whole continuum of educational preparation. The community colleges in our region work with their workforce development boards, employers, and other partners to provide career awareness events to middle schoolers and high schools in an effort to increase the exposure of

students (especially those in the target populations) to local careers. The careers that are explored with these students are those that are in demand in our region, that provide a self-sustaining wage and/or benefits, and are available within a commutable distance.

Gaston College has member representation on the Gaston County Workforce Development Board in an effort to continually strengthen the level of engagement and also to continue to grow our understanding of arrangements along the preparation continuum. The result is relevant responsiveness where the community college system engages the business and industry members of the Gaston WDB about their talent needs which translates to the community college developing training and education programs that lead to in-demand career pathways which is then reflected in the partnership with the Gaston WDB / NCWorks-Gaston to support the skill development of job seekers / WIOA participants. Gaston WDB also has active participation from the Gaston College and other education partners through their monthly attendance at the NCWorks-Gaston Leadership Team and Management Team partner meetings at our local NCWorks Career Center. During these meetings, Gaston College and other education partners offer leadership, insight, and guidance about availability of current and future skills and education training for customers. These meetings also present the opportunity for other career center partners to communicate about what skills and education local employers are currently requesting for their workforce needs. Key Initiatives The Gaston WDB maintains partnership initiatives with the Gaston College and other education providers. Some examples include: • Finish Line Grant Grant for community college students who are more than 50% completed toward their education or training credential AND are faced with an unanticipated financial hardship that may prevent them from doing so. • Re-Build Your Future Local Innovation grant that offers training for in-demand jobs in the construction and trucking industries with a focus on justice-involved individuals. • Career Expo - A collaboration between private and public sector partners to offer middle school & high school students an opportunity for virtual and/or hands-on exploration of in-demand careers that are offered by local employers. focus on the support of WIOA priority populations and demographics to ensure in equity and inclusion. Additionally, we will continue to evaluate industry sectors on a regional level for Career Pathways development, with maximum attention given to the in-demand and non-traditional careers - as well as these same occupations, which are primarily utilized by women and minority owned small businesses and other small business that place an enfaces on maximizing the success of minorities and/or priority/target populations in their hiring practices and employee advancement opportunities.

10. Please describe how the Local Area WDB engages with local and regional Economic Developers.

Gaston WDB engages with local Economic Developers by being engaged along side them in various groups. Gaston County EDC is a member of our Gaston's BEST (Business Employer Services Team) that is lead by our Gaston WDB. The Gaston WDB is a part of the local GCAM (Gaston County Association of Manufacturers) group that is lead by EDC. Gaston WDB is also in the process of assisting EDC to recruit more businesses and help grow the GCAM group. Our local EDC visits our monthly job fairs to assist in any way they can and also to network with our local Businesses that are attending the job fairs. Gaston WDB is also working with EDC (and other partners) to plan a Employer's Breakfast. EDC and Gaston WDB are also apart of the WSAT group together, which partners together to host an annual Career Expo for High School students held at our local community college.

11. How many new/expansion economic development projects has the Local Area WDB engaged in during the previous program year? Please indicate the type/number of services provided.

Our local WDB has been engaged with 2 new economic development projects in the last year. We have been apart of the initial meeting to give an overview of all of our services that we provide in this local area and/or region, as well as give each business a color copy of the Gaston's BEST Business Solutions Catalogue, which contains all Gaston's BEST members' services and contact information.

12. 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	2017	Pending NCWorks data
Healthcare/Nursing	Southwestern PZ	2017	Pending NCWorks data
Energy	Southwest, Northwest, & Western Carolina Alliance of WDB's	2019	Pending NCWorks data
Note: Number of Trainees can't be determined until NCWorks online available again. NCWorks has been down for over a week.			

13. 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.

Moving in to the future, the need 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.

- b. Explain how career pathways in the local area are in alignment with other partners/stakeholders' (DPI, community colleges, myFutureNC, universities, etc.) existing pathways or if they are duplicates.

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 & CharlotteWorks Local Areas for work.

- c. Describe the strategy to avoid duplication efforts.
- The pathways are developed in conjunction with both local area partners, school systems, colleges, and businesses in an effort to be an all inclusive collaboration.

14. Provide a description of Local Area WDB's capacity to provide workforce investment activities to address education attainment and skill needs of high-demand fields - 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 supportive services for hard-to-reach communities.

- a. Explain strategies that include NextGen, NCCareers.org and any awareness models for success.

The Gaston County WDB partners with Gaston Community College, Gaston Literacy Council, and others to coordinate and provide GED access for older youth and adult learners. We partner 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/or other barriers to employment. Gaston College provides TABE testing to any adult, dislocated worker, or youth with a potential basic skills deficiency or learning disability. Contracted WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker staff and WIOA NextGen Youth staff partner with the Gaston College ABE program during their GED and Adult High School orientation classes. This allows WIOA staff to share with students the opportunities that are available through the WIOA program. The Pre-WIOA intake process can be initiated, if the student is willing and makes the choice to receive this type WIOA service. Once eligibility for WIOA has been determined and a WIOA enrollment in to NCWorks completed, the participant receives career guidance, counseling, assessments, supportive services, and additional tutoring (if needed) to make an appropriate measurable skill gain and eventually be able to successfully complete their Adult Education and/or Literacy component. This opens up new avenues for secondary education completers to proceed forward in to post-secondary education opportunities in demand career fields. Incentives are also awarded to Youth/Young Adults upon completion of their education, career, and/or employment goals to provide extra motivation to those who need it most.

Additionally, the WDB collaborates with Gaston County Schools to provide support for career exploration activities such as the annual Career Expo which focuses on STEM/STEAM careers and targets middle school students. In part, the goal of the collaborations is to encourage the older youth/adult learner to take advantage of other career-based offerings available through WIOA, the community and the college systems (such as apprenticeship programs, internships, and job shadowing) or even training programs available through other providers. Achievement of adult high school diplomas or GED credentials is encouraged and supported. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and programs that encourage parents to read to their children are additional offerings made available through the Literacy Council.

When needed and appropriate, summer employment opportunities are made available to secondary and post-secondary students, to support their career path and/or interests - determined by NCWorks Online Interest Assessments results for each participant. The majority of Nextgen Youth are enrolled as "Out-of-School" Youth participants and are already given the opportunity to be enrolled in work-based learning on a year-round basis. Gaston WDB acknowledges the myFutureNC initiative and its goal for 2 million residents to have a high-quality postsecondary degree or credential by 2030 and the Board is committed to doing our part to contribute. Proactively, Gaston WDB uses the in-demand industries identified for the local area to guide the type of training and education opportunities we approve for the local NCWorks Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). These industries include: • Advanced Manufacturing • Healthcare • Logistics & Distribution • Energy. Gaston WDB uses labor market information (LMI) tools such as NCWorks Online, NCCareers.org, and JobsEQ to inform decisions about training opportunities and potential training that may fall outside of the already identified industries in demand. NCWorks-Gaston staff are able to utilize NCCareer.org for features like "A Day in the Life" videos that provides a real-life overview of the occupation, Reality Check, a feature that allows customers to estimate the income of their chosen career against their desired lifestyle, and the Education and Training feature that provides information about additional resources for post-secondary education. When a customer requests and/or is assessed to need additional education / skill development to obtain or retain sustainable, gainful employment, NCWorks-Gaston staff can utilize NCCareers.org's Explore Occupations feature to evaluate the demand, wage, growth rate, and job openings. The data can then used to help justify training requests and to support the development of the customers' Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and service delivery going forward. Tools utilized by NCWorks-Gaston staff are accessible online to all customers. If the customer does not

have access to a computer or Wi-Fi, they can visit their local NCWorks Career Center where these tools are furnished and ready for use. If the customer has transportation or scheduling barriers, they may visit one of the NCWorks-Gaston partner locations that may be more convenient for them. The Gaston County Public Library partners with NCWorks-Gaston to offer basic career services to jobseekers visiting the library. Information about all Gaston WDB / NCWorks-Gaston resources and services are made available in the community and on the NCWorks Career Center website (www.ncworksgaston.com), the Nextgen Youth Center website (www.gastonyouthworks.com), and the Gaston WDB website (www.gastonworks.com). The Nextgen Youth program participants and staff participate in a monthly outreach project to reach the "hard-to-reach" youth in our community. Additionally, the Nextgen Youth program partners with Foster Care program and with Adult Daycare Center, in addition to other applicable programs at DSS that provide access to the hard to reach & priority populations (including Services for Blind and Hard of Hearing, FNS, and TANF). Supportive services for transportation are made available to these populations either through Mileage Reimbursement or Contracted Transportation. Due to liability issues for the WIOA programs & safety concerns for minors, youth under age 18 are not encouraged to utilize Uber or Taxi. Daycare assistance is also made available to participants, once they have applied for assistance through the local DSS Daycare Assistance Program – if they are put on a waiting list.

III. NCWorks Commission

The NCWorks Commission recommends policies and strategies that enable the state's workforce and businesses to compete in the global economy.

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 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.

Employer-led job training programs have the best career outcomes. Employers know best what skills their workers need, and employer involvement is key for workforce development and job readiness. Businesses that invest in developing North Carolina's workforce will benefit from well-trained employees and a more innovative and diverse workplace that better reflects its community.

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 ensures collaboration with other employer-facing workforce program representatives, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Agriculture Services, Foreign Labor, Re-Entry, and Veterans Services, through processes and procedures for information sharing and efficient employer customer service delivery.

Our Business Services Representative engages with local employers by participating in networking events, participating on local task forces, and serving/leading committees or teams in which employers are involved. One such local workforce team that is led by the Gaston County WDB is the Gaston's BEST (Business and Employer Services Team). This team consists of all workforce partners' employer-facing staff members that can offer and provide services to Gaston County employers. This team produced a Business Solutions Catalogue that is printed

in color, with a magazine styling, and distributed by each of its members to local employers on behalf of the entire team - either in digital form or through delivery of the printed version. In this catalog the team has listed the array of solutions they offer to address employers' needs. The contact person's information for each solution source is also provided. Additionally, we utilize our websites and social media platforms to promote programs, services, solutions, events, job openings and resources.

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 the Gaston County Local Area, we have one Business Services Representative (BSR) due to the reduction in allocations effective PY2021. The BSR takes the lead role of coordinating efforts of local employer-facing workforce partners operating within the NCWorks Career Centers including: Employers Services Team Members; the Contracted Career Center Manager, Career Center Functional Team Leaders and their team members (outreach purposes only), and DVOP(s). Local Industry Sector-Based Employer Groups cultivate the appropriate environment and space for employers to have their questions answered regarding training, tax incentives, recruitment, and economic development. Additionally, Career Center Staff can make referrals to Ricky Boyd - Agricultural Services Employment Service Consultant for employers requesting Ag Services and/or Foreign Labor.

3. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB plans to increase NCWorks brand awareness at the local level (consult NCWorks Commission new 2021 Strategic Plan).

WDB is planning 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 will proceed with the creation of 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 Gaston County WDB 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 kinds of career opportunities that are available here locally - in addition to the associated education, formal training, and/or hands-on 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 printables containing the NCWorks Brand with these individuals.

The Gaston County WDB maintains temporary and/or permanent signage, for branding purposes, at all certified career centers.

The Gaston Co WDB 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.

4. Describe how the Local Area WDB and the partners identify and address local challenges for job growth and business expansions.

The Gaston County WDB gathers and analyzes local & regional data annually (but more often if necessary based on economic conditions) utilizing key data sources of labor market information, trends, projections, and statistics through such sources as: JobsEQ; various NC Commerce (LEAD) Labor Market Data & Tools; US Census Bureau Reports & Maps; Employer Needs Surveys, and more which helps in identifying the outlook of occupational areas, industries/sectors with anticipated job growth, as well as areas projected to be of current or future concern with potential adverse impacts on our local economy. With the easing of the COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions on in-person contact, Gaston's BEST is planning to arrange meetings with small groups of interested employers - each by different industry sector. The initial meeting will be organized by the Gaston Co WDB as a breakfast "chat session" just to get the industry employers talking about their own challenges, as well as industry-wide challenges. At the conclusion of the initial meeting the employers can decide if they want to move forward and meet together on a regular basis by industry and/or sector. If they do, they would also decide which employer/employers want to assume the responsibility(s) for continuing the scheduling of these meeting ongoing. Employers can decide if they want to develop their own strategies for solving industry-wide needs or if they want Gaston's BEST to assist them through offering local and regional solutions for those needs. Current employer challenges continue to be: skill gaps including lack of soft skills (good communication & customer service skills); lack of basic employability skills (dependability, honesty, punctuality, strong work ethic); lack of required education or training; and lastly, succession plans for their seasoned employees who are planning to retire over the next 5 years in the "Baby Boomer" generation.

Communities across North Carolina are developing great 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.

5. Briefly describe how the Local Area WDB provides new and innovative solutions to support the growth of the local workforce system.

The Gaston County Workforce Development Board has always been a significant supporter of solutions that allow for our county to be innovative in its approach to offering job seeker and training assistance to its citizens as well as solutions to businesses for challenges they face or needs that are identified.

The COVID-19 Pandemic, which began in early 2020, still presents residual impacts to our communities today which is over 2 years later. In 2020, the Gaston County WDB was able to lead the local career centers, onsite program partners, and associated contractors away from an in-person model of integrated service delivery and pivot to a virtual integrated service delivery model for all including their customers, on-site partner programs' participants, and local employers. This was accomplished by completing research and testing of virtual meeting platforms, electronic signature platforms, and even e-supportive service sources - all while maintaining compliance with existing federal and state policy. The COVID-19 Pandemic has dissipated quite a bit and in-person services have once again returned to career centers across NC while virtual services continue to be available also. While there continues to be greater utilization of virtual services by new customers and existing partner program participants than in-person services, there are still other fragile pieces of the local population that need in-person opportunities to be able to either use the technology equipment or receive staff-assisted services. Not everyone feels comfortable utilizing virtual services or has the personal technology equipment necessary to receive services through virtual means and we must continue to be sensitive to the needs of all in our community.

We utilize social media strategies and some virtual events to provide additional support of local workforce and its growth. Our local area continues to display a gap between the existing workforce system's knowledge, the ability to use the technology, and the level of understanding of the technology - that the system needs to have in order to remain competitive. We plan to continue addressing this area of deficiency through partnerships with the local community college and/or other providers to offer technology-based workshops to customers through our career centers. These workshops will teach customers and participants how to utilize virtual platforms for attending and successfully maneuvering through virtual job interviews and virtual job fairs or virtual career awareness related events.

The Gaston Co WDB has always encouraged utilization of Incumbent Worker Training by local employers to teach leadership skills to those employees that can advance within the company, allowing the entry level positions to be backfilled and continuing to strengthen the workforce.

The Workforce Development Boards support innovative initiatives and the replication of good ideas, with an enfaces on those that are results-based. Participation in the biweekly Executive Director Council meetings and Annual Retreats leads the way for monthly best practice sharing, group development of solutions for problematic areas of regional or statewide concern for WDB Directors. Attendance at Quarterly Regional Superuser meetings allows for additional idea and best practice sharing for Performance Accountability Specialist related to NCWorks Online, performance, reporting and/or trainings. Statewide Youth Leads Meetings are utilized for sharing best practices, event information, trainings, and many other youth-based resources. Business Services also meet on a regular basis to plan, evaluate data, share ideas & best practices, discuss problematic areas, forecast the needs of employers regionally and statewide, and access trainings & resources for themselves or that they can utilize to offer solutions to needs of local employers.

Continual decreases in annual Federal WIOA allocations has been challenging for the Gaston Co Local Area, particularly in 2021-22. It continues to impact our ability to maintain adequate staffing, fund large career awareness events for middle schoolers & high schoolers, continue developmenting career pathways, and providing other extensive employer-based services.

6. Is the Local Area WDB engaged in work-based learning? If so, please describe how the Local Area WDB is engaged in work-based learning projects with local employers.

The Gaston WDB regularly evaluates the various industry sectors in our Local Area and the Southwestern Region for sectors that are anticipated to see an increase in demand, using their 5 year outlook for growth. Once identified, the Business and Employer Services Team in the Gaston Local Area actively seeks out new and existing employers.

Gaston's BEST members share the Gaston's BEST Business Solutions Catalogue (sponsored by the Gaston County WDB) with all appropriate employers (new and also existing) in Gaston County. This allows the employer to refer to it anytime they have a need or are experiencing a challenge, in particular those where work-based learning may prove to be an appropriate solution. The Business Solutions Catalogue provides an employer with a list of various solutions to a multitude of workforce related needs including contact information for each specific resource, as well as a brief synopsis of each solution offered. No matter which member(s) of Gaston's BEST meet(s) with an employer, any member can provide a "soft hand off" of the company and its need(s) to another member who can provide the additional needed solutions. If Gaston's BEST doesn't already have a current solution for an employer's need, they will work together to develop one that is appropriate and beneficial to the employer. The Business Services staff member for the Gaston County WDB, places a significant enfaces on work-based learning through different avenues including Work Experience (WEX), On-the-Job Training (OJT), Transitional Jobs for those with a inconsistent work history, Apprenticeships for Adults & Pre-Apprenticeships for Youth/Young Adults through partnerships with Gaston College's Apprenticeship 321 Program, local Employers, and training providers. Job Shadows and Internships can also be utilized for those seeking to enter/complete training or work-based learning.

IV. 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 the XX date".

1. Identify PY 2022 NCWorks Career Center location(s) including Tier 1, Tier 2, Affiliate, and Specialized 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 2022 NCWorks Career Center Chart. [WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B)]
Name document: Local Area Name PY 2022 NCWorks Career Centers.

*See Attachment

2. Provide the name(s) of the current service 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).

Current Service Provider:

Two Hawk Workforce Services – OneStop Operator/Career Center Manager for our NCWorks Career Center - Gaston

Competitive Procurement:

- Released request for proposal - 9/22/2020
- Question submittal deadline - 10/2/2020 Noon
- Q & A document - provided at Virtual Bidder's Conference - 10/6/2020 10am
- Proposals due - 10/21/2020 4pm > Amended - Proposal Due Date 11/6/2020 4pm
- Proposals Evaluation Committee Meeting – 11/10/2020
- Gaston Workforce Development Board Vote on Recommendation – 12/4/2020 12pm
- Notification of Award to Awardee– 12/4/2020
- Posted to Board Website for Public Comment – 12/10/2020
- Proposed Start date for contract /services - 1/11/2021

Process:

On 9/22/20 an RFP was released to the public with a due date for proposals being set for 10/21/2020. Interested entities were asked to submit a request for the link and password for the virtual Proposer (Bidders) Conference and to also submit any questions related to the proposal package no later than noon on 10/2/2020. Numerous individuals from two entities requested access to the virtual Proposer's Conference and also attended it at 10am on 10/6/2020. Written answers to the questions, submitted by the deadline, were provided to the conference attendees. On the proposal due date of 10/21/2020 at 4pm, no proposals were received. The maximum contract amount allowable was \$45,500. Both entities that attended the conference had submitted questions regarding what period of time the \$45,500 would normally be intended to cover – just the remaining 7 month period (12/1/2020-6/30/2020) left in the current program year or an entire 12 month program year period. Originally, the Gaston County WDB had responded to the question and stated that the maximum contract amount would be for a period of 12 months, which meant that the monthly billable maximum would be much lower than if it were to be for just the 7 month period remaining in the current contract year. After no bids were received, the board

reconsidered the response given. The Gaston County WDB contacted state DWS staff and obtained approval to contact the two entities that attended the conference, clarify the answer to the question would be that the \$45,500 would be the maximum contract amount for a 7 month period not a 12 month period, therefore increasing the "monthly" maximum payment allowable under the contract. Both entities said that they would consider submitting a proposal with this new information presented. Intention to bid was established, insuring a competitive procurement process was completed – see DWS Policy Statement PS 19-2017 Procurement & Contracting – Attachment (Competitive Procurement Options – Intention to Bid - Sec B, #5 (pg 6 & 7). An amended proposal due date of 11/6/2020 at 4pm was issued and amended instructions given for the Proposal Packages. On 11/6/2020 at 4pm, only Two Hawk Services followed through with submitting a proposal for the One-Stop Operator-Career Center Manager. The RFP Review Team reviewed the 1 bid on 11/10/2020 that was received. The Gaston County WDB approved the committee's recommendation of Two Hawk Workforce Services for the One-Stop Operator-Career Center Manager Contract. The awardee was notified 12/4/2020 and the public announcement was made on 12/10/20 with a request for public comments to be provided by 1/11/2021. No public comments were received.

The initial period of one-stop operator performance under this contract/award could have commenced on December 2020 to end June 2021 - subject to availability and appropriation of funds. However, Two Hawk Workforce Services had to secure the appropriate candidate for their Career Center Manager position first. They were able to hire a career center manager to begin work February 2021. This required an adjustment to the total amount of the contract, in the contract negotiations, that would be needed due to the shorten period of time the contract would need to cover. Two Hawk also decided to only charge indirect cost and not profit payments, due to prior history with the board and knowledge of our limited funding available for a One-Stop Operator-Career Center Manager. The Gaston County Workforce Development Board had the option to extend this award previously for Program Year 2021 (July 1, 2021 thru June 30, 2022), as well as for Program Year 2022 (July 1, 2022 thru June 30, 2023), and chose to do so. The Gaston Workforce Development Board will not exceed a total of 3 years in the overall award under the executed contract - contingent upon contractor meeting established performance measures and/or contract goals (as appropriate). Note: The One-Stop-Operator was a competitive procurement process due to the initial "Intention to Bid" made by two entities – Two Hawk Workforce Services & Eckerd when they contacted the board with interest to bid, confirmed by their request & attendance of the Proposers (Bidders) Conference.

** Note: The OSO contract period will be extended to its 3rd allowable year and will be for the contract period of 7/1/2022 thru 06/30/2023. Negotiations and Contract Amendments documents are pending.

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

The NCWorks Career Center-Gaston is for individuals seeking employment and training as well as a resource to employers seeking qualified job candidates. Our career center is a user-friendly facility that provides job seekers with the opportunities to attend workshops and meet with career advisors (virtually as well as in-person) to get one-on-one job search assistance, explore funding for training, as well as discuss Work-Based Learning opportunities such as On-the-Job Training, Transitional Jobs, Work Experience, Job Shadows, and Internships. The career center offers access to career advisors, computers, faxes and copying at no cost to aid job seekers in their job 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 center 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 in person or virtually 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 take in to account the goals and interests of 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. ITAs 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.

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

Training services shall be made available to Adults, Dislocated Workers, or Out-of-School youth who:

- 1) Have met the eligibility requirement for training services, met the LA definition of self-sufficient for seeking training, and who are unable to obtain or retain employment. For customers wanting retraining, under a new career path, he/she must lack marketable skills in an OID related field.
- 2) After a case manager completed interview, WIOA initial assessment, and career planning, the participant is determined (by a WIOA service provider) to be in need of training services and possess the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected training program. A Training Justification Form is completed on all WIOA Training Service recipients to ensure that participants meet the conditions for WIOA funding.
- 3) Select programs of training on the ETPL that are directly linked to occupations in demand in the local area or in another area in which the workers (receiving such services) are willing to relocate.
- 4) Meet the education provider's minimum qualification requirements, and
- 5) Are determined to be eligible in accordance with the priority system (Adult Only), or
- 6) Are members of a worker group covered under a petition filed for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and are awaiting a determination. If the petition is certified the worker may transition to TAA approved training. If the petition is denied, then the worker will continue training under WIOA.
- 7) Are determined to be in need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to, or higher than, wages from previous employment.

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

The provision of follow up services is reviewed with customer at or before WIOA enrollments. A WIOA "Follow-Up Agreement Form" is signed by both the customer and case manager. Follow-up Services are provided at least once quarterly to all WIOA participants who have soft exited, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment or entrance in to post-secondary education, to ensure that the participant remains successful with their long-term goal. When appropriate, the customer is scheduled to come in monthly to meet with their case manager to allow the case manager to determine if the customer continues to work in unsubsidized employment or continues to participate in post-secondary education AND whether or not the participant needs additional assistance. If the participant is working or not able to meet with his/her case manager through traditional means, the case manager is allowed to utilize un-conventional methods to follow-up with the participant: NCWorks Internal Message, Fax, Mail, Email or virtual meeting (through an approved source/platform). A copy must be scanned in to the participant's Staff Documents Tab in NCWorks.

Follow-up services in the Gaston LA may include: additional job search assistance, job retention information, conflict resolution/work place counseling, individual counseling, and/or supportive services in some cases (refer to LA Policy for Support Services to see what is available and to which program's participants)

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

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. 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, and inclusion.

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. Then, 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 reviewing policies and procedures for completing RESEAs, EAls, Front Desk Greeting, and Career Resource Center. Once complete, the onboarding training plan is 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 Onlinetraining is set up for trainee with WDB staff. This training usually scheduled for the next week and is completed within 1-2 days. NCWorks Online Access is given by the WDB Super user after the LA Policy & Procedures and NCWorks Online training has been completed. 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 are provided to the Gaston WDB WIOA Coordinator and kept on file for future reference, should the need arise. Training of staff is provided through the NCWorks Training Center to insure diversity, equity, and inclusion is held to 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.

Trade Adjustment Act customers are referred by the TAA Career Advisor to the WIOA Case Manager for dual enrollment. TAA and WIOA staff coordinate appointments to avoid inefficient service delivery for the customer. The student's training documents are uploaded in NCWorks online and may be used by both programs. TAA will sponsor the participant's training cost such as tuition, books, and school fees while WIOA assists with transportation or other supportive services, if they are not already covered by the TAA program. The participant's case remains open in NCWorks until the last program keys the last date of service is received by the participant.

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 Intake Form to assess needed services. The DVOP at the NCWorks Career Center - Gaston receives the intake form to assess eligibility for services under "Special Barriers to Employment". If barriers (such as lack of housing) is 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 'statutory 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. Briefly describe how the NCWorks Career Center serve persons with disabilities.

All Career Centers are ADA compliant and have access to auxiliary aides upon requests. 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 is trained annually to comply with EO mandates by providing equal opportunity to consumers and is 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 accommodations are 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.

The NextGen Youth Center at Gaston College is ADA accessible and also refers to Vocational Rehab for co-enrollment.

10. 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 lead by the Gaston WDB and members are identified & 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, Apprenticeship321, Small Business Center, Gaston County Schools, Vocational Rehabilitation, 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, access 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 responsive 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.

11. 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 enrollments. 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-Gaston career center 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 insure 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. 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. NCWorks - Gaston and Gaston WDB staff participate in monthly NCWorks Career Center leadership team meetings as well as monthly NCWorks Management 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 and scheduling constraints will permit.

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

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

Name document: Local Area WDB Name Services Flowchart 2022.

*See Attachment.

13. Attach the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Local Area WDB and partners concerning operation of the NCWorks Career Center system. [WIOA Section 121(b) (A (iii))] Name document: Local Area WDB Name NCWorks Career Center MOU.

*See Attachment

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

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

The WDB conducts NCWorks Career Center Leadership and 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.

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 & employer need, 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.

15. 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, and programs carried out by NCWorks Career Center partners. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(21)]

COVID-19 created obstacles for communicating and serving our customers while working remotely. We were tasked with finding new ways to interact with potential customers, providers, participants, employers and partners. Due to the need to telework and provide virtual services, we had to rework almost every aspect of our service delivery and outreach strategies. We quickly adjusted our perspective on how to best serve our customers with the use of technology and with each case manager having a laptop, scanner, document signing software and video conferencing technology, WIOA services can be provided wherever there is a need. The primary goal is to provide services to each of its customers in a manner that is most conducive to meeting the customer's needs and expectations for receipt of a valued service. If a customer presents themselves in-person at the NCWorks-Gaston career center, management and/or staff inquire with the customer as to whether they are computer comfortable. If the customer is not computer comfortable, other methods of providing services can be utilized. It is the customer's choice to utilize either virtual technology or in person activities. Virtual technology is used to provide basic and intensive intake/enrollment services, counseling and career services, monthly workshops and the sharing of community resources. Customers are instructed on how to upload documents correctly into NCWorks to avoid PII information being shared through email for virtual services. 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. Outreach, recruitment, and workshops can also be provided in-person or using virtual platforms. NCWorks Online Common Intake will be utilized, when applicable & available, to determine all partner services that a customer may want to consider. 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 insure 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.

16. How does the Local Area WDB use data to monitor and track performance measures for serving individuals and business? Be specific about what systems are used, how regularly the Local Area WDB looks at these sources, and how the Local Area WDB might change the strategies based on the data.

The Gaston WDB utilizes a variety of data pulled at varying appropriate intervals from NCWorks Online Reporting, Future Works Reports, JobEQ & LMI Data/Reports, Job Fair Results Reports, Employer Needs Survey Results, Customer Services Surveys for participants, employers, and/or partners to determine if goals are on target to be met and to determine if collaborative efforts are effective.

More specifically, the Gaston WDB collects End-Of-the-Month (EOM) Progress Reports from contracted WIOA Service Providers each month, which is used to determine if they are on track to meet quarterly benchmarks, thus enabling the successful completion of contract goals which inevitably leads to a higher probability that they will achieve the state negotiated performance rates for each federal WIOA Performance Indicator. NCWorks Online and Future Works Reports are run at the beginning of each month to track customer numbers served at each career center location (both Adult and Youth Career Centers) as well as determine the progress achieved toward obtainment of performance measures and contract goals. If there are any areas of deficiencies, they are reviewed with the Career Center Manager (if applicable), Program Manager, and (if necessary) Business Services Staff. Job Fair Results Reports & Customer Survey Results will be reviewed monthly and used to determine if the content, location, and attendance of Job Fairs is meeting the needs of local employers and job seekers. Annually, JobsEQ & LMI Reports/Data are reviewed along with the results of the most recent annual Employer Needs Survey so that the Gaston WDB can adjust the Occupations considered to be "in demand" for our local area employers. Additionally, the Gaston WDB and other workforce partners can meet as often as needed to adjust to the changes in our local economy and to address the needs of local industry sectors or individual businesses. Both NCWorks-Gaston Leadership Team meetings, as well as Gaston's B.E.S.T member meetings and Sector Strategy meetings, can also be utilized to collaboratively strategize about local changes that are impacting our local economy, to collectively develop new methods that can be used to create a more skilled workforce, to share best practices in innovation between employers (as well as partners), and most importantly – continually establish new ways to uniformly address areas of employer and job seeker concern.

V. Employer Services

1. Please briefly describe the efforts of the Business Services Representative and/or Employer Services staff in the following areas:
 - a. Utilizing regional and local employer data to inform priorities.
 - b. Making regional and local employer referrals to Agricultural Services, Foreign Labor and Veteran Services.
 - 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)].
 - d. Including Historically Underutilized Businesses.

Utilizing Local & Regional Data:

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 and others. 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.

Making referrals to Agricultural Services and/or Foreign Laborstaff:

Gaston's BEST members partnered with our local Economic Development Commission to create an industry-based group called GCAM (Gaston County Advanced Manufacturing). It is comprised of local manufacturing companies and workforce development partners. Our goal has been to create a space for employers to have questions answered for such items including training, tax incentives, recruitment, and economic development. Additionally, Career Center Staff can make referrals to Ricky Boyd, Agricultural Services Employment Service Consultant for employers requesting Ag Services and/or Foreign Labor. Ricky Boyd has provided a program overview and staff training to Career Center Staff.

Partnering for strategic planning and economic development:

The Gaston WDB makes it a priority to participate in economic development recruitment, retention and expansions with employers, education partners and economic developers.

Gaston's BEST members meet quarterly to strategize and discuss: local/regional priorities; needs of local businesses which require solutions to be provided or developed; new business solutions available through workforce or community partners; and organizing/sponsoring career or employer-related events. Gaston's BEST members also participate in the Apprenticeship 321 quarterly meetings at Gaston College where employers, Gaston & Centralina Workforce Development Boards, and Economic Developers from various local areas meet. The Gaston County WDB has presented previously at these meetings and discussed how the partnership between Gaston College's Apprenticeship321 and the Gaston WDB's On-the-Job Training (OJT) program works and benefits both apprentices and employers.

Historically Underutilized Businesses:

The Gaston County WDB supports promoting economic opportunities for historically underutilized businesses, through contracting and procurement efforts, to foster their growth and profitability. We utilize the HUB website to advertise our bid opportunities for construction, goods, and services contracts to members of the Historically Underutilized Businesses group. This sends a notification to their members and encourages them to submit appropriate proposals/bids when we have made a solicitation for such that is applicable to the business. We also reach out personally and/or make direct requests for bids/proposals to local historically underutilized businesses/vendors/services providers located in Gaston County when it is appropriate to do so, in a special effort to increase growth in this local identified area.

2. 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)].

The Gaston County other boards in the Southwestern Region have collaborated to effectively to implement three Career Pathways that are relevant to our region and will continue to do so as needed. Employer Services, Business Services, and other Employer-facing Partners work together both locally and within our region for the benefit it brings to local & regional businesses. The Gaston County WDB and Career Center Staff partnered with those in Cleveland and Lincoln Counties to develop and host our first Tri-County virtual job fair in January 2022. The job fair was a regional effort with employers from multiple counties that needed immediate assistance with Talent Acquisition and the event was quite successful. The next event is scheduled for May 18th, 2022. The Gaston WDB also partnered with another workforce development board, CharlotteWorks and our bordering neighbor – York County, South Carolina to host the annual (hybrid) “Job Fair of the Carolinas” event, which included participation by 55 employers. There were 138 in-person attendees and 355 virtual attendees and/or candidates.

When new or expanding businesses are identified, our BSR will utilize Gaston’s BEST members and provide solutions needed by the business for locating to Gaston County or successfully expand it’s business. If it is determined that a particular need of a business is extensive, the Gaston County WDB will expand its reach outward to contacts of surrounding workforce boards who will partner in assisting the business in achieving its opening or expansion goal(s). Economic data is a key resource used to identify where workforce development is and where future priorities need to be in order for local and regional areas to achieve desired workforce outcomes and economic vitality.

- b. Collaborating with employer-facing partners such as Agricultural Services, Foreign Labor and Veteran Services to meet employer needs and jobseeker recruitment efforts.
Same as answer to 1.b.
- 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)]

When a Business Edge Report is received that indicates that a business is struggling, our BSR reaches out to the business to see if there is a time that the Local Business Edge Team can come and meet with the business to see what issues they are experiencing and/or what solutions they need. Business Edge Services can be provided to include Incumbent Worker Training, Customized Training, No-Cost Business and Industry Classes, Financial Evaluation by SBTDC, WEX, and sometimes OJT – depending on the condition of the company and whether they have laid off or owe back taxes. When a Gaston’s BEST team member identifies or learns of a business who may benefit from local, regional or state level support, they reach out to the other members and begin the process of pulling together all available resources or to develop new resources (if appropriate) to assist the business and reduce the risk of layoffs or closures being necessary.

If a business is already scheduled to close down rather than just lay off staff, and wants our team to provide assistance to their employees, we offer to facilitate a Rapid Response Session(s). We bring in all applicable partners as a resource for their employees, including the community college’s different area representatives, Economic Services/Support Services through DHHS-DSS (Medicaid, FNS, Workfirst, Daycare, etc), WIOA contracted program staff to speak with employees about potential education or training opportunities or enrollment in to basic/intensive job search assistance. We may also bring in other businesses from around our county, that are hiring for the same or similar positions, to offer interviews and/or employment opportunities to these employees if the Rapid Response/Business Edge Business customer choses to allow this this option for existing staff. We provide the Rapid Response session in whatever manner is going to be the most conducive for getting the most appropriate information out and in the quickest manner possible, to their affected staff

3. 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.

Incumbent Worker Training is utilized to provide needed training to employers' existing staff members, when it is not available through the local community college's Customized Training Program. Completing these trainings typically results in pay increases and/or promotions for the staff as well as the employer being able to remain competitive in the global market. Additionally, the Gaston WDB partners with Apprenticeship 321 at Gaston College to co-enroll interested individuals in to WIOA Training Services to pay for the classroom training portion of a registered apprenticeship program and to reimburse the employer for a percentage of the students trainee wages through WIOA's OJT program for a set period of time/hours.

- b. Coordinating and promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(5)]

The Business Services Representative refers individuals who's employment goal is to start or own their own business or microenterprise, to the Small Business Center at Gaston College. There, potential entrepreneurs can receive many different services to assist them with the necessary steps to set up their business.

- 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)].

We participate in growing partnerships with regional training providers including our local community college as well as universities to participate in state/regional collaborations for green energy and other areas of focus. We make it a priority to participate in all regional economic strategic planning and recruitment meetings or sessions as invitations are extended from Economic Development organizations.

VI. 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 Workforce Board's current Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth performance on the Federal Primary Indicators of Performance for PY 2020 and prior Program Years. (Reports available via FutureWorks).

- a. What are some of the factors in the Local Area that impact performance levels (both positively and negatively)? Be sure to consider factors such as the unemployment rate, factory closures/openings, weather events and natural disasters that may have impacted the area, as well as internal operational factors that may impact the Local Area's performance.

(Note: Provide at least two examples of positive factors and two examples of negative factors that have impacted the performance levels in your Local Area, with an explanation of each.)

Positive Factor:

Gaston County continues to see an increase in manufacturing companies locating here. Applecreek Corporation in Gaston County has recently opened, and is welcoming several new companies, to their 330-acre business park. These companies bring high paying jobs for Gaston County residents. Applecreek is projected to bring in the same volume of jobs as the Gastonia Technology Park did, which was a total of 539 jobs. GNT USA, Knoll America, Rankin USA, and Premix have already invested in Apple Creek and additional tenants will be announced at a later date. In addition to Apple Creek, Newell Brands is coming to Gaston County and has made a large investment in the Gateway85 Industrial Development. Newell has invested \$135 million, and plans to create 128 jobs. In the past 2-3 years there have been numerous other companies that have chosen Gaston County as the location for their business. Swedish company Polykemi AB made an \$11.8 million investment and the location of its North American headquarters is the Gastonia Technology Park, which is north of downtown Gastonia. This had been anticipated to bring 22 new jobs within the first year with company plans to add up to 100 more within the first five years with salaries averaging \$50k and up. DYMAX Corporation, based in Connecticut, purchased approximately 16 acres of land located on Chief Court in the Gastonia Technology Park. The company planned a \$21.5 million investment here to create approximately 59 new jobs within the first five years and will pay an average salary of \$59,814 per year. As low unemployment rates continued in Gaston County throughout 2021 and so far in 2022, companies continue to be open to hiring candidates with inconsistent work history, criminal backgrounds, and low levels of education in order to fill the existing staffing gaps. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic companies began offering incentives including sign-on bonuses, more competitive hour pay rates, teleworking, and all-shift working hours, which continues today even though the pandemic is winding down.

Positive Factor:

Case managers have provided exemplary service during both the in-person and virtual pre-intake processes, which was implemented in 2020-2021 during the pandemic. If a customer was seeking training or intensive services the case manager helped guide the customer through obtaining eligibility documents, completing pre-intake, career assessments and discussing any barriers that could lead to a customer not being successful in the future. They also have been successful in providing virtual counseling post-enrollment. This allows for any hurdles on the part of the participant, especially those caused by COVID related issues, to be identified and addressed quickly so that supportive services or proper referrals can be given and the participant can still have the opportunity to be successful. With the help of the career advisors/case managers, most customers have adapted well and even prefer virtual services. Some customers also prefer online formats for occupational skills training or education now.

Negative Factor:

During the pandemic, many people became unemployed, and numerous local businesses closed temporarily and/or permanently. Companies such as Bi-Lo and Gastonia-based yarn manufacturer Parkdale Mills laid off thousands. For a period of time there was a employer/employee disconnect, as many individuals continued to draw unemployment even after the employers started hiring again, thus making it difficult for employers to fill positions in a timely manner. Supplemental unemployment checks were offered by the federal government, in addition to state unemployment benefit amounts, which resulted in unemployment income exceeding some weekly wage amounts that workers would normally bring home in their paychecks. Now, the unemployment rate in Gaston County is back below 4%. However, through the pandemic many individuals close to retirement age decided to go ahead and retire instead of continuing their career for a little longer or to not seek new employment when their company closed down due to the pandemic. Additionally, the closing of schools during the pandemic and remote learning, forced some families to stop working and/or stop going to training. It also spurred families to re-evaluate the necessity to have both parents involved in full-time work or training at one time, so that one parent is always available to care for the children. After the pandemic started lifting, many decided not to go back to work or training. The result is less individuals who got a job and kept their job through the 2nd and 4th quarters after their hire date in addition to more students dropping out of training to care for school aged children or elder parents due to COVID related issues.

Negative Factor:

Negative factor-The center was closed to the public for close to a year and was slowly able to open on a very restricted basis for a long period afterwards. The inability to "walk-in", and without an appointment, to receive services lowered the community's dependency on it's "in-person" services that are not available through Indeed, Facebook, Linked-in and other virtual jobseeker platforms. This has also served as a barrier for those with limited computer or other technology access, limited English proficiency customers without an interpreter wherever they were located, or lack of computer knowledge. As we moved into utilizing virtual platforms, it made it hard for youth to keep in touch due to lack of access to technology-related equipment and accesses, such as computers and internet services. A lot of youth were socially isolated, which affected their level of motivation. Additionally, a lot of youth began to see virtual services as the new norm and did not realize that the youth center has now opened back up to the public. This has increased the need for outreach to an even higher level than before. With youth having limited or no in-person access to our Youth program case managers, the youth program saw a drop in both enrollments

and completion of credentials. The full spectrum of comprehensive services and programming went through a short period, almost at a stand-still, while the state, board staff, and program managers worked together to implement a plan for virtual services. Our youth were also limited to access to work experiences needed to obtain higher educational skills and wages for permanent employment placement due to the Stay At Home Order caused by the pandemic.

(Note: Provide at least two examples of positive factors and two examples of negative factors that have impacted the performance levels in your Local Area WDB, with an explanation of each).

- b. Discuss whether or not participants that have been served and/or enrolled as a result of COVID-19 differ in characteristics as compared to participants who have historically been served by the Local Area WDB. If so, how do these differences impact service delivery and performance?
COVID-19 brought about a need for a Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker grant which targeted individuals who have lost employment due to the pandemic. The grant funds were only used to provide temporary employment through WEX opportunities with three local employer sites and the supportive services needed to begin that employment such as uniforms, shoes, etc. They were also provided a one-time gas stipend.

We do see a difference in participants that were enrolled due to being impacted by COVID-19. We are still serving many customers who are seeking career changes due to COVID related reasons. We are serving individuals with employment barriers due to new types of issues including: daycare issues (shortage of daycare workers resulting in daycare closures and less available daycare enrollment slots or less daycare shifts available) and transportation issues (increase in fuel prices which have doubled in the past 2 years, inflation and increasing interest rates which is impacting car loans/leases, shortage of used cars & new cars and/or parts for sale) and shortage of affordable housing for rent or for purchase. We continue to have customers interested in the medical field and also truck driving, as both of these fields have continued to be in high demand despite the pandemic.

COVID-19 had brought unique challenges requiring a shift in service delivery. Between March and June 2020, the majority of training services were interrupted by the training providers. This caused participants to not to be able to complete their courses or graduate on time. We have also seen participants are more apt to withdraw from training or employment services which have subsequently affected our performance.

As a result of COVID-19, enrollments had been different largely because offices had to be closed during the height of the pandemic and ALL services were transitioned to online ONLY. Prior to the pandemic, the career centers/youth centers had an open door walk-in policy to allow for potential participants to inquire about program services and/or start the enroll process in programs at any time.

- c. Discuss how your Local Area WDB's industries and business sector have been impacted by COVID-19.

(Note: Include which industries and businesses have been permanently affected, which are recovering or perhaps are expected to recover, and how these industry changes may impact how the Local Area approaches serving its participants).

2. What strategies and methods are in place to maintain or improve performance?

(Note: 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 reports are reviewed? Are Future Works reports used? If so, how often? How are staff held accountable? How often is training provided to staff?)

Our LA Performance Accountability Specialist is responsible for tracking performance with our contractors. Our Specialist utilizes NCWorks Performs (FutureWorks) and predictive rosters to compare to 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 Performance Accountability Specialist 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 specialist 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 weekly 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 arises in order to ensure staff is properly entering information in NCWorks Online and are aware of how the system modules correlate 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.

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The following Youth Specific Data is tracked by the contracted Youth Program Manager:

Intake Appointments

WP-Appointments

WIOA Youth Enrollment –Individualized Applications Completed

Inquiries (Youth Interest Forms)

Individualized Case Management (Work Experience)

Youth Completed a Credential – GED/AHS/HS Diploma (Credential Obtained/Date/Next Steps)

Entered Training (OJT, Apprenticeship, Truck Driving, CNA etc.)

Completed a Credential – GED/AHS/HS Diploma (Credential Obtained/Date/Next Steps)

Entered Post-Secondary (Name/Enrollment Date/Institution/Course of Study/Method of Paying Tuition)

Gained Employment – Employer, Start Date, Position, Rate of Pay

Attained Measurable Skills Gains

Active Caseload

#Youth in Follow up

#Youth Exited & Entered Follow-Up (Youth Goal, Reason for Exit, Outcomes-Successful/Unsuccessful)

3. In the event the Local Area WDB is not on track to meet yearly performance indicator goals, please discuss what corrective actions/steps would be undertaken to address this situation.

(Note: 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, strategies for training and/or addressing potential issues, and follow-up accountability measures).

The Performance Accountability Specialist monitors performance on a monthly basis monitor and tracks each contractor 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 (and one stop operator - if applicable) to discuss the issue, in order 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 measures 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 a 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. If performance issues arise, the WDB Director will be made aware and board staff will meet with the all contracted management including the contracted one stop operator to discuss the issue, in order to put a corrective action plan in place to improve performance levels. Failing to meet annual negotiated performance goals can directly affect the For-Profit contractor's profit payments. In Gaston, contracted service providers are only paid profit on the amount of WIOA dollars they spend AND if they are on target and/or achieving performance measures. Achieving contract goals is set in their signed service contract and can also affect their ability to continue receive 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 deficiency(ies) with contracted program management and/or contracted career center management. Any available reports, local guides, and training are provided to contracted program management (and career center staff – if necessary) to assist in all necessary changes being made within 30 days (or other timeframes, as specified) that will result in the required improvements being accomplished. If 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 given 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.

(Note: This question should address how frequently [monthly, quarterly, etc.] performance information is shared and by what method/medium [e.g. print-out, electronically, verbally through meetings, etc.], how the performance information shared may differ for the various levels of staff at the Local Area WDB, and specifically for case managers, how performance data is shared with them and how they, in turn, use this information in their roles.)

Gaston has a designated Performance Accountability Specialist whose primary function is to review activities within NCWorks and oversee adherence to performance goals and outcomes. The WIOA Coordinator and Performance Accountability Specialist 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 (but most often monthly) with its contracted program managers and one stop operator (career center manager) either at their in-person/virtual monthly manager meetings or via electronic means. 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. The Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) measure is a real-time indicator denoting participants who are making demonstrable progress on a track toward Credential Attainment. Please describe how the Local Area WDB makes use of the information the MSG measure provides as a means of ensuring the Local Area WDB achieves its Credential Attainment indicator goal.

(Note: For this question, describe the methods and/or strategies in using the MSG measure as a means of tracking Credential Attainment. Who is responsible for tracking the MSG performance indicator? Are the Roster Reports in FutureWorks utilized? If so, how? Who is this information provided to, and then used by, career advisors, the Local Area WDB, or other staff.)

The measurable skill gains measure is an early indication of the student's probability of successfully completion of their credential. The measurable skill gain indicator help disclose any issues the student may be experiencing. The information from the Measurable Skill Gains has helped our service providers be more accountable for our students' progress while in training. Each Career Advisor must enter at least one Measurable Skill Gains for every year the participant is active in WIOA Title I. Participants enrolled in occupational skills training will be required to enter Measurable Skill Gains each semester in order to monitor the progress the participant is making toward successfully completing training. This will allow the Career Advisor to provide additional services in the event the student is not attaining Measurable Skill Gains in an effort to assist them so they can successfully complete training and attain their credential. Case managers are required to meet or connect virtual due to Covid with students monthly for counseling services. During the meetings, the case managers are responsible for addressing any issues with the student and to go over the student's progress. Doing monthly meetings allows the case managers to assist and address any concerns or issues the student may have to avoid the student dropping out of school or fails a class, which may lead to a negative performance for the credential attained measure. If additional resources are needed, they can be provided ahead of time. The Gaston WDB diligently records as many MSGs as possible throughout the course of the participant's training and when work-based training milestones reached. This allows Case Managers to keep track of the participant's benchmarks established in the IEP/ISS.

6. Describe how and when eligible training providers are reviewed at the local level and how customers are informed they have choices in choosing their providers.
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 Gaston WDB 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 Supervisor. The LA Provider Review Team meets weekly to review and approve/deny training providers requests to have their programs certified and added to the ETPL.

In order 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 anytime, this creates an opportunity to submit in-demand training programs as the needs of the local employers, workers, and jobseekers change and/or grow.

It is up to the Local WDB's discretion to issue any additional application/questionnaire/screening document(s), to be completed by the training provider, at this point.

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 added 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.

7. Define what "significant number of competent providers" means in the Local Area WDB. Include whether the Local Area WDB uses more strict performance measures to evaluate eligible training providers. Attach if a separate policy. Local Area WDB Name ETPL Policy.
There is more than 1 community college and/or private training provider (who is approved to be on the NCWorks ETPL) within a 30 minute driving distance of the NCWorks Career Center – Gaston and/or Gaston County and thus the Local Area considers that we have a "significant number of competent providers" for our local area. Competency of providers and their programs is proven when the provider meets the local area's training provider and program requirements, which states: they must be a proven legitimate provider; in existence for at least one year; possesses liability insurance; its programs are completed by a significant percentage of its students, resulting in credentials and employment. Additionally, a specified percentage of program completers should obtain employment related to their training field.
The Gaston Local Area requires that Approved Training Provider's "programs" must be in demand in our local area/region and have been in existence for at least 1 year before they can be approved here.

VII. 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]
Gaston County WDB staff conducts EO training for all center staff annually and as needed. Gaston County WDB 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. WDB staff completes random case monitoring on a monthly basis 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 WDB does not tolerate discriminatory conduct of any kind. The WDB 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: Local Area WDB Name EO Complaint Grievance Procedure.
See attached Gaston County WDB EO Complaint Grievance Procedure
3. Describe the methods used to ensure local Equal Opportunity procedures are updated.
Dave Gunderman - Gaston Local Area Equal Opportunity Officer.
The State EO Officer – Mose Dorsey.

Mose provides the Gaston County WDB Staff, NCWorks Career Center – Gaston Staff, and DHHS Career Resource Center 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.

2. 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)]

The skill and education needs of our local area and regional employers is assessed annually during the development or modification of the local area plan using local and/or regional LMI and JobsEQ data, the results of the annual statewide Employer Needs Survey, as well as any additional information received during the development of career pathways with employers. The work to develop industry sector strategies in the Gaston Local Area has been relatively slow, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also due to decreased federal and statewide funding allocations. The Gaston Local Area workforce partners are working toward the identification of in-demand industry sectors and their associated employers. We plan for “Chat” sessions to be arranged, in an effort to guide initial conversations between similar employers about industry needs and best practices. Industry needs addressed would include education, skills, and experience. It is our hope that these chat sessions will evolve in to regular meetings scheduled between groups of industry employers, with guidance from workforce partners when requested. When local/regional deficiencies in skills or education are identified, the local and/or regional workforce partners will convene to strategize and/or develop a plan of action to address concerns or needs. Once this is complete, the workforce partners will re-convene with the employers to seek additional feedback from employers before implementation of any plan of action at the workforce partner agency level.

Case managers meet with customers to discuss interest in WIOA training, education, or employment services. If an adult customer is interested in completing their secondary level education, the case manager will also discuss TABE testing and GED/AHS orientation. For those interested in education or training that leads to employment, the Case manager determines need and also ability to complete training through interview, assessments and career counseling during the pre-intake process. Case managers will also assess and determine whether customers already possesses marketable skills, collect eligibility documents, and complete all WIOA documents with the customer. The customer completes a training checklist to include program information and how he or she plans to be self-sufficient during training. Transportation, childcare and other barriers are also addressed during this time. Customers are required to apply for Federal Pell Grant if the training they are requesting qualifies for Pell. The training that is being requested must be in demand in the local area and the provider that the customer chooses must be approved & listed on the ETPL. If not, the training request is forwarded for approval. If approval is given, the customer continues in pre-intake process. If training is not approved, the customer may pursue other training options or individualized services. Customer must provide proof of acceptance into a training program as well as information concerning length, cost, books, and required supplies for the program.

Once TABE scores are received (if applicable), eligibility has been established, and WIOA enrollment completed the customer who is interested in completing their secondary education will begin GED/AHS classes. Students are met with by their case manager at least monthly, or more often if necessary, for the

student to receive individual guidance and counseling which allows them to address and areas of concern and stay on target with their grades and class attendance. This significantly increases the probability of the student achieving their goals.

For the training customer, an ITA is completed based on the registration and program cost information provided by the training provider. Training Cost Analysis, Student Handbook, and any supportive services that are required are also completed before the start of training. A Training Justification Form is completed through NCWorks before a training code can be entered. If a customer is TAA eligible, they can be dual enrolled in WIOA, with TAA paying tuition and WIOA paying transportation supportive services. Students enrolled in training are also met with by their case manager at least monthly, or more often if necessary, for the student to receive individual guidance and counseling which allows them to address any areas of concern and stay on target with their grades and class attendance. This significantly increases the probability of the student achieving their goals.

For On-the-Job Training, assessment testing is required before referral form can be completed and forwarded to Business Services Representative. If the customer is selected for interview, the case manager will help prepare customer through mock interview and resume assessment. If the customer is offered the OJT position, the case manager will work the customer and the BSR will coordinate with employer to make sure all supportive services are addressed, contracts are signed, and customer is prepared to start position. Once the customer starts, he or she will meet with case manager monthly to assess issues/questions concerning training. Once the training is completed, if customer stays with employer, job retention tips will be provided and if they do not stay Individualized services will be provided until customer enters other employment. We feel our methods of meeting with customers and providing counselling is strong and we will continue to be thorough with our customers from pre-intake to follow up.

2. 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.

- a. Identify any service provider contract extensions.

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. The Gaston WDB released a Notice of Request for Proposal Announcement on April 22, 2021 and a the RFP Package on 4/23/2021, which included program requirements and advised of a Virtual Proposer's Conference to be held on Friday, April 30th, 2021 at 11am. Attendees were provided with program related information & detailed information on submission requirements. Request for questions was presented but no questions were asked by the attendees, following the structured presentation. Several individuals from 2 entities attended the Proposer's conference. There was only intention to bid made by 1 entity for each of the two WIOA Programs (1 for Adult/Dislocated Worker – Two Hawk Workforce Services and 1 for Youth – Gaston College). Therefore, this was a failed competitive procurement process. DWS Policy Statement PS 19-2017 Attachment was followed for a non-competitive procurement. The deadline to submit additional questions was May 7th, 2021 and the deadline to submit a proposal for consideration was May 14, 2021 at Noon. Any submissions that failed to meet the deadline were not considered for funding. Only 1 Adult WIOA Program proposal was received by the Board. Only 1 Youth WIOA Program proposal was received by the Board. The proposals were reviewed by the Proposal Review Team and were scored. An additional RFP solicitation was placed on the NC HUB website on 5/21/2022, with a Proposer (Bidder) Conference scheduled for Tuesday June 8th at 1:30 and a deadline of 6/22/2021 being set for acceptance of proposals. There were no attendees for the Proposer Conference and no proposals received by the deadline. Approval of recommendations by the board members, Announcement of award, and Notice of acceptance of public comments has been completed for contracts with Two Hawk Workforce Services (WIOA Adult DW Programs) and Gaston College (WIOA Youth Program). A waiver was requested and received from the state through DWS which will allow the Gaston County WDB to extend the current contract period of WIOA Adult DW Programs to 7/1/2022-6/30/2023 through completion of a contract amendment. A waiver was also requested and received from the

state through DWS which will allow the Gaston County WDB to extend the current contract period of the WIOA Youth Program to 7/1/2022 thru 6/30/2023 through completion of a contract amendment. At the end of the contract extension period, a competitive procurement process, along with RFP, will need to be completed for PY2023 contracts for WIOA Youth, Adult and Dislocated Programs as well as OSO.

3. Provide the date and process for when the competitive procurement of the One-Stop Operator(s) occurred. Include the expected length of the contract (one-four years).
The Gaston WDB released a Notice of Request for Proposal Announcement on April 22, 2021 and a the RFP Package on 4/23/2021, which included program requirements and advised of a Virtual Proposer's Conference to be held on Friday, April 30th, 2021 at 11am. Attendees were provided with program related information & detailed information on submission requirements. Request for questions was presented but no questions were asked by the attendees, following the structured presentation. Several individuals from 2 entities attended the Proposer's conference. There was only intention to bid made by 1 entity for each of the two WIOA Programs (1 for Adult/Dislocated Worker – Two Hawk Workforce Services and 1 for Youth – Gaston College). Therefore, this was a failed competitive procurement process. DWS Policy Statement PS 19-2017 Attachment was followed for a non-competitive procurement. The deadline to submit additional questions was May 7th, 2021 and the deadline to submit a proposal for consideration was May 14, 2021 at Noon. Any submissions that failed to meet the deadline were not considered for funding. Only 1 Adult WIOA Program proposal was received by the Board. Only 1 Youth WIOA Program proposal was received by the Board. The proposals were reviewed by the Proposal Review Team and were scored. An additional RFP solicitation was placed on the NC HUB website on 5/21/2021, with a Proposer (Bidder) Conference scheduled for Tuesday June 8th at 1:30 and a deadline of 6/22/2021 being set for acceptance of proposals. There were no attendees for the Proposer Conference and no proposals received by the deadline. Approval of recommendations by the board members, Announcement of award, and Notice of acceptance of public comments was completed for contracts with Two Hawk Workforce Services (WIOA Adult DW Programs) and Gaston College (WIOA Youth Program).
4. Attach the Local Area WDB's Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider list effective July 1, 2022 using the PY 2022 Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider List provided. Name document: Local Area WDB Name PY 2022 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 high level goals, outreach strategies, services delivery, and expected outcomes.
Gaston WDB vision for servicing the WIOA eligible Adults, Dislocated workers and our Youth services are that each strive to reach goals to ensure that adults seeking more prominent careers, dislocated workers aiming to regain employment in our workforce, and youth focused on starting on the right part in life by getting proper training and job skills that are needed for the real world. We also work close with other boards in our region, and training providers including Gaston College, and make connections with employers from a broad range of leading industries that need workers with the training, skills, and dedication to produce important products and services for a global marketplace. For both, 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. In addition, through the partnership with DHHS, the Gaston WDB operates a career & resource center located at DSS which serves the targeted populations listed above. The center staff works closely with local judicial offices to connect former offenders to re- entry services offered at the career centers.

The vision we have is to continue further 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 recognize the need and benefit of expanding partnerships to other mandated and non-mandated partners to develop a better employment opportunity center for all customers. We have established relationships with Social Service organizations to increase employment opportunities for their Non-Custodial Parents. We work directly with their organization to provide initial appointments for assessment and service. We have developed outreach efforts with Community Economic Development Centers (CBO) to better connect their customers with adult education and training opportunities, as well as more efficient access to WIOA services. We have also developed working relationships with training providers tying emerging graduates to work-based learning opportunities in their educational related fields of study, which provided greater WIOA outreach to the community and connection to businesses that were not presently aware of the Career Center system and services.

We have greatly increased our outreach and social media presence so that customers can find and be referred to our services on a frequent basis. We have partnered with the library to have an off-site presence that offers WIOA services and WP services during non-traditional hours. 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 in order to reach dislocated workers with this outreach to this customer base occurs in the Career Center and Rapid Response sessions. Customers that are currently receiving UI are provided WIOA service information through the welcome team.

We offer you the illustration below of our general concept of customers and outcomes in a successful Center.

Target Customers	Integrated Connective Services	System Outcomes & Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All Job Seekers ▪ Individuals w/barriers to employment ▪ Youth ▪ Business/industry customers ▪ Economic Development groups ▪ Local officials, CBO’s, Chambers of Commerce, etc. ▪ GCWDB ▪ Educational Systems/Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ WIOA Career & Training Services ➤ Supportive Services ➤ Business Services & Outreach ➤ Public Relations/marketing ➤ Labor Market Information ➤ Outreach & coordination with communities ➤ WIOA Youth Services ➤ Partner Services & cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Employment ✓ Improved Retention ✓ Increased credentialing ✓ Improved penetration in Employer Market ✓ Better recruitment opportunities through the Centers ✓ Increased usage of Centers by customers ✓ Relevance & 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)]

See Priority of Service Policy

7. Describe follow-up services provided to Adults and Dislocated Workers.

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

- Additional Job Search Assistance
- Job Retention Information
- Conflict Resolution/Work Place Counseling
- Individual Counseling
- Supportive Services (refer to LA Policy for Support Services to see what is available)

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 of self-sufficiency employment that lasts 12 months or longer. When appropriate, the the case manager schedules the customer to come in monthly 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 or not the participant needs additional assistance. If the participant is working and cannot meet with their case manager, the case manager is allowed to use un-conventional methods to follow-up with the participant: NCWorks Internal Message, Fax, Mail, or Email. The case manager scans the necessary proofs of these contacts in to the participant's Staff Documents Tab in NCWorks.

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

In the 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 in the Local Area WDB. Include details such as how it is conducted, who is involved, and how often.

The Local Area conducts a formal monitoring of their WIOA Service Providers at least annually. This formal monitoring may include an on -site visitation and/or off-site desk reviews. The Local Area will monitor all Service Provider activities to include data collection, data entry, customer files, data validation elements, financial records, work-based learning, exits, outcomes, equal employment opportunities, integrated service delivery and/or other items deemed necessary by the Workforce Development Board Director or designee. The Local area will monitor in areas of financial accuracy and records, programmatic implementation, WIOA & LA Policy Adherence, data validation & program eligibility, E. O. compliance, and ISD processes. The WIOA Coordinator and Performance Accountability Specialist (LA Superuser) and/or any other designated board staff are involved in the monitoring processes. The Performance Accountability Specialist does conduct montly random quality checks for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Service. The Performance Accountability Specialist does provide monthly feedback on all findings with suggested trainings. The Gaston LA WDB uses monitoring review documents to ensure that all

staff are reviewed on the same type of WIOA service provider activities. Monitoring summary reports are then completed along with recommendations for any improvements and/ or training to be completed by the contracted program managers. Additionally, the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Service Providers & Career Centers will be expected to complete monthly (at minimum) random quality checks of each of their team member activities (WP & WIOA Intakes, WIOA Active Cases, WIOA Exits and Follow-up Cases. They must be prepared to show documented proof, the results of these required quality assurance checks, when requested, and at a minimum at least annually, to the Gaston WDB Staff.

3. 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 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)]

****See below Table****

Youth Workforce Activity	For Persons with Disabilities?	Brief Assessment/Model Used	Success Rating
Work Experience	yes	<i>Talent Central Skills Assessments – complete prior to the start and at the end of a work experience opportunity, to determine the participant's initial level of applicable skills, and the amount/kinds of training needed to be included in the participant's training plan. Also used to determine if the participant and employer's</i>	Successful

		training partnership resulted in the anticipated skills progression level for the participant, before & after entering a work experience opportunity <i>Pre-Ansel Casey - Assesses behaviors and competencies</i>	
Training - Interest Assessments	yes	Holland Code used to determine areas of interest Career Cluster Match -Career/Job matching to customer interest	Successful
Job Shadowing	yes	Offered to participants prior to entering work experience or training	Planned – new implementation
TABE Testing	yes	Required prior to youth entering education activities, to identify current skill level and/or any learning disabilities, that could pose a barrier to employment.	Successful

The WDB, via WIOA Service Contractor, provides career exploration service to youth through short term Summer Youth Employment, Year-Round Employment, and Work Experience opportunities such as OJT and apprenticeships, leadership opportunities, and community volunteer activities, workshops on relevant topics such as personal health, post-secondary educational opportunities, college tours and job shadowing. Employment and training opportunities for Youth participants are identified by the Board as service priorities for the contractor, who is Gaston Community College at present. With the extensive availability of on-campus and technology enhanced programs, this contractor is a good fit for the WIOA Next-Gen Youth Program. With Gaston College being a state supported school, all facilities are ADA compliant. If a youth has additional disabilities, the board will work with the Youth Contractor to insure that all reasonable accommodations possible are made to assist the youth to meet his her training and employment goals. The Gaston Workforce Development Board has been a supporter of virtual learning and services for some time. It is the vision of our board to continue to provide virtual face-to-face services, even though the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided, in an effort to accommodate individuals with disabilities or mental health conditions including but not limited to PTSD, Social Phobia's, Sight limitations, and other impairments (as deemed necessary).

Each youth that applies for enrollment in to the WIOA program is TABE tested, if they have not finished their secondary education. This helps to identify the customer's current skill level and/or any learning disabilities that could pose a barrier to them obtaining employment. If a learning disability is identified, the case manager will encourage co-enrollment in Vocational Rehabilitation Services and ensure that the customer receives accommodations if necessary to provide the customer a greater opportunity for achieving his/her education and/or employment goals .

Each year the Gaston WDB sponsors up to 8 youth participants and youth case managers to attend the NC Youth Summit in Greensboro. In order for a youth participant to be eligible to attend, they must complete agreed upon goals as discussed with their case manager including attending class, completing volunteer hours or work experience activities and keep their regularly scheduled appointments with their case manager.

Additionally, interested youth participants are required to be placed in paid work experience sites that mirror their employment/career goals and/or areas of interest from their interest assessment(s)

2. Describe how the Local Area WDB's broad 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)]

Gaston LA is committed to providing high quality services for all eligible youth and young adults. The LA's NextGen program is designed to assist youth with one or more barriers towards self-sufficiency; including preparation into secondary education, skills training, credential attainment, work place experience, financial literacy, knowledge of labor market info, etc.

To ensure seamless deliver of program services for program participants, each youth shall receive an Objective Assessment of the academic levels, skill levels and serviceneeds for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways. The assessment will include a review of:

- Basic Skills
- Occupational Skills
- Prior Work Experience
- Employability
- Interests
- Aptitudes
- Supportive Service Needs
- Developmental Needs

Furthermore, these assessments should also consider a youth's strengths rather than just focusing on areas that need improvement.

This objective assessment will help build the framework of the ISS which is jointly developed between the case manager and youth.

To relieve barriers and to receive a comprehensive array of youth services (14 elements), supportive services are made available to youth participants. To the extent possible, support services will be provided by referral through linkages to area human service agencies. Where these resources are unavailable, WIOA funds may be used for Youth. Supportive services may include assistance with transportation, Child Care & Dependent Care, Housing, Educational Testing, Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities, Uniforms or other work related attire and tools, Items Necessary for Students who are Enrolled in Post-Secondary, Payments and fees for employment and training related applications, tests, and certifications

Each youth that applies for enrollment in to the WIOA program is TABE tested, if they have not finished their secondary education, to determine the developmental need of each youth. This helps to identify the customer's current skill level and/or any learning disabilities that could pose a barrier to them achieving their education/training goals and/or obtaining employment. If a learning disability is identified, the case manager will encourage co-enrollment in Vocational Rehabilitation Services and ensure that the customer receives accommodations (if necessary) to provide the customer a greater opportunity for achieving his/her education and/or employment goals as well as provide additional services and appropriate career pathways for the customer.

3. 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?

The local area ensures that the ISS identifies appropriate services based on the OAS by having short term, intermediate, and long term goals which steers the direction of services. It also assists the youth in achieving overall self-sufficiency. The ISS is unique to the individual from the start of intake and is revised(as applicable) as the customer is integrated into program services and activities Desired career paths are determined through interest assessment testing before plans for classroom or work-based training are solidified. This, as well as job shadowing, will help to insure that the youth participant is fully aware of what is involved in his/her career path. Being educated about the career path of their choice helps to insure completion of the training and the obtainment of employment, which will inevitably help the participant meet the required performance measures.

4. 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)]

Youth who enter the WIOA NextGen Youth Program are offered a TABE test to assess their education level. Additionally, they are offered an interest assessment test to determine their area of career interest which can lead to youth enrolling in post- secondary education after completion of GED or AHS. If a youth's first priority is obtaining employment, we support the customer's choice of activity while providing them with every opportunity to further explore career development options. Thus encouraging their continued education without pushing the participant in to something they may not be ready for or willing to commit.

5. Describe how follow-up services will be provided for (NextGen) youth.

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

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

- Additional Job Search Assistance
- Job Retention Information
- Conflict Resolution/Work Place Counseling
- Individual Counseling
- Supportive Services (refer to LA Policy for Support Services to see what is available during follow-up)

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 come in to meet with them (or meet virtually 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 or not the participant needs additional assistance. If the participant is working and cannot meet with their case manager, the case manager is allowed to use unconventional methods to follow-up with the participant: NCWorks Internal Message, Fax, Mail, or Email. The case manager scans the necessary proofs of these contacts in to the participant's Staff Documents Tab in NCWorks.

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

In the 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.

6. Where does the Local Area WDB plan to serve the young adults (NextGen): NCWorks Career Centers Tier 1, Tier 2, Specialized Centers, Services Provider Offices, or Hybrid situations? Explain if it is both NCWorks Career Centers and Provider Offices or some other option.

The Gaston County WDB requires youth services be provided at both the NCWorks Career Center and its Provider Offices. The Next-Gen Youth Contractor provides 1 Full-time (or equivalent) Next-Gen Youth Staff Member to provide One-Stop Basic Career Services to youth at the NCWorks Career Center – Gaston once they have been screened by a Career Center Staff member and determined to fall in the Age 16-24 with Barriers category. The board also requires that the Next-Gen youth staff member provide Basic Career Services, Intensive Youth Intake Services and Youth Case Management Services at the Gaston College – Dallas Campus.

7. Attach the Local Area WDB Youth Service Provider's chart, effective July 1, 2022, using the PY 2022 Youth Service Provider List provided. Complete each column to include specifying where Youth Services are provided. Name the document: *PY 2022 Local Area WDB Name Youth Service Provider List*.

8. Provide the date and process for when the competitive procurement of the Youth Programs was completed, to include any contract extensions.

The Gaston WDB released a Notice of Request for Proposal Announcement on April 22, 2021 and a the RFP Package on 4/23/2021, which included program requirements and advised of a Virtual Proposer's Conference to be held on Friday, April 30th, 2021 at 11am. Attendees were provided with program related information & detailed information on submission requirements. Request for questions was presented but no questions were asked by the attendees, following the structured presentation. Several individuals from 2 entities attended the Proposer's conference. There was only intention to bid made by 1 entity for each of the two WIOA Programs (1 for Adult/Dislocated Worker – Two Hawk Workforce Services and 1 for Youth – Gaston College). Therefore, this was a failed competitive procurement process. DWS Policy Statement PS 19-2017 Attachment was followed for a non-competitive procurement. The deadline to submit additional questions was May 7th, 2021 and the deadline to submit a proposal for consideration was May 14, 2021 at Noon. Any submissions that failed to meet the deadline were not considered for funding. Only 1 Adult WIOA Program proposal was received by the Board. Only 1 Youth WIOA Program proposal was received by the Board. The proposals were reviewed by the Proposal Review Team and were scored. An additional RFP solicitation was placed on the NC HUB website on 5/21/2022, with a Proposer (Bidder) Conference scheduled for Tuesday June 8th at 1:30 and a deadline of 6/22/2021 being set for acceptance of proposals. There were no attendees for the Proposer Conference and no proposals received by the deadline. Approval of recommendations by the board members, announcement of award, and notice of acceptance of public comments has been completed for contracts with Two Hawk Workforce Services (WIOA Adult DW Programs) and Gaston College (WIOA Youth Program).

9. 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. [WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A)] (CPS 09-2021)

The Gaston WDB requires that our WIOA NextGen Youth contractor enroll a minimum of 90% of OSY and a maximum of 10% of ISY. Currently, the Gaston Local Area does not have any 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, monthly community service projects take current Youth participants out in the community and are able to share their experiences in the Youth program with other youth in the community. 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.

10. 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)

Through competitive procurement, the Gaston WDB selected the youth service provider, Gaston Community College, to deliver services to both in-school and out-of-school youth. The contract with Gaston College includes the requirement to expend 20% of their budget for work experience and these funds are set aside for that purpose. They have a WEX specialist on staff to assist with subsidized placement in work experience opportunities. The amount that Gaston College bills to the Gaston County WDB for reimbursement in the Work Experience section of the invoice is keyed in to WISE to account for expenses identified as work experience by the contractor. Additionally, half of the WEX Specialist Salary & Fringe is also counted as a Work Experience related expenditure. The other 50% of her time that is spent on follow up cases is not counted as work experience expenditures nor is the time that she spends completing basic career service applications for youth. Youth incentives related to work experience opportunities will count effective 7/1/2022 forward, once the updated youth incentive policy is implemented

11. 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, and if so, state which level and how many? The Gaston Co WDB's BSR provides services to both Adults, DWs, and Youth that are interested in OJT. However, if the youth is interest in WEX, the Nextgen Youth Contractor employees a WEX specialist that focus's half of her time on basic career service enrollments and half of her time on career advisor duties to include basic career services enrollments and WIOA Youth Followup Services.
12. Does the Local Area WDB have a re-entry program for young adults? If yes, please briefly describe it. All re-entry services for both Youth and Adults/DW's are provided through the NCWorks Career Center – Gaston on Bessemer Cith Rd by their designated re-entry specialist. If he/she is not available, all career center staff are cross trained to provide re-entry services to the customer.
13. 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 Gaston Co WDB 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.
14. Specify if the Local Area WDB plans to offer incentives for (NextGen) youth.
If yes, attach the Youth Incentive Policy to include:

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

The Gaston Local Area does provide Youth Incentives for achievements of goals.

The LA WDB requires that the Youth Contractor offer incentives to Youth participants when achieving goals on their ISS. The Youth Contractor uses WIOA funds to purchase incentives including gift cards. However, the Youth Program is also allowed to solicit donations of items that can be used for incentives also and is not required to provide the Gaston WDB record of these donations. The Youth Program case managers are required to have their program manager to sign off and approve this issuance of incentives for each participant. The participant has to sign the same Incentive Form when an incentive is received from his/her case manager. Thus showing the flow of the incentive or gift card from the Program Manager to the Case Manager and then to the customer.

Note: Federal funds may not be spent on entertainment costs.

Name document: Local Area WDB Name Youth Incentive Policy.

15. If the Local Area WDB does not offer incentives for (NextGen) youth, please explain why. **N/A**
16. 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 NextGen Youth Program strategy begins with job readiness activities with both the WEX Specialist and Case Managers. NextGen youth have the opportunity to participate in several workbased learning opportunities, including Work Experience, On-the-Job Training, Job Shadowing, Internships, and Apprenticeship. Business Services Representatives and Work Experience Specialists both develop these opportunities with employers have the potential to turn these positions in to unsubsidized self-sufficiency employment and are in careers that are in demand in our local area.
17. 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 to demonstrate partnerships and potential use of shared funding. [WIOA Section 129(c)(2)(A)] Name document: Local Area WDB Name Youth Program Elements Chart
18. 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)]
 Yes...The Gaston County WDB has a Youth Committee.
 - a. If no, describe how oversight to planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth will be provided.
 - b. If yes, please provide a response to the following:
 Provide the committee's purpose/vision.
 To provide a holistic approach to lifting youths' barriers by sharing of information, opportunities, and resources that are available in the community for youth.

- a) Provide the committee's top three goals or objectives for PY 2022.
1. Youth Outreach
 2. Virtual location for Youth-based news, events, and resources for all Gaston County youth and young adults ages 16-24.
 3. Increase number of youth committee members from private business & cbo's
- b) List of members to include members' agency/organization, one of which must be a community-based organization with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth. Provide the Committee's Chair information in the first block (who must be a Local Area WDB member.) Name document: Local Area WDB Name Youth Committee Members. [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)] and,
- c. Complete the following chart for the PY 2022 Youth Committee's planned meeting schedule to include dates, time, and location. *[Expand form as needed.]*

Date	Time	Location (include address and room #)
July 20, 2022	12 noon	Gaston County DHHS Building – 330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way, Gastonia, NC - 4 th floor Board Room
October 20, 2022	12 noon	Gaston County DHHS Building – 330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way, Gastonia, NC - 4th floor Board Room
January 19, 2023	12 noon	Gaston County DHHS Building – 330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way, Gastonia, NC - 4th floor Board Room
April 20, 2023	12 noon	Gaston County DHHS Building – 330 Dr Martin Luther King Jr Way, Gastonia, NC - 4th floor Board Room

4. Local Area WDB Innovations

- List additional funding received by the Local Area WDB to include special grants (Finish Line, Youth Initiative), NC Job Ready Workforce Investment Grants, National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) (disaster), YouthBuild, Foundations, NCWorks Commission, and outside funding to include a brief description of the source and the amount.

Grant Name/Kind	Brief Description	Beginning and End date	Source and Amount	Partner Organization (if applicable)
FLG	Provides emergency assistance to students, who have completed 50% or more of their training, with an immediate need that could interrupt their ability to continue with their classes.	12/14/21 – 12/31/22	SW Activity Funds \$6000 FLG \$3645 FLG Ops	Gaston College
NDWG	Provides funding for WEX or training opportunities to individuals who have been dislocated temporarily or permanently due to a national disaster	6/11/20-3/31/23	National Disaster Funds \$90,000 Program \$10,000 Admin	N/A

- Describe one of the Local Area WDB’s best or promising Adult/Dislocated Worker program practices that has yielded positive results. Provide any evidence that you have collected or plan to collect to suggest this practice is effective.

One of the ways we have shown innovation and creativity in the Gaston Adult/DW Program was through developing our new partnership with the Gaston County Library-Main location. We have assigned a WIOA staff member to be onsite each day during traditional and non-traditional hours to provide basic career services, WP services, and WIOA information. We have space available there as well for case management and WIOA orientation. This allows us to serve those with limited transportation who can't come to our Career Center as it is on the bus line. It also is good for those who frequented the DHHS site that has been closed due to the pandemic to have the library as an option. We have offered our partners and their clients the opportunity to meet with WIOA staff at the library if that is more convenient for them. Our future is exciting as we have met with Library staff and discussed ways we could expand our services to include placing WIOA staff at the other branches of the Gaston County Library.

- Describe one of the Local Area WDB’s best or promising youth program practices that has yielded positive results. Provide any evidence that you have collected or plan to collect to suggest this practice is effective.

One of the NextGen's best youth program practice is the ongoing network and partnerships with local area small businesses. Even despite the COVID-19 pandemic, NextGen still managed to eventually be able to place customer's in WEX placements again to work and sharpen their job readiness skills which aligned with their goals and objectives. Some placements started virtual and slowly transitioned to in-person but every attempt was made to

insure that customers who were interested in WEX placements were able to be placed at some point. While waiting for placements they engaged in job readiness training with both their assigned case manager and WEX Specialist.

4. Describe one of the Local Area WDB's best or promising regional strategy that has yielded positive results. Provide any evidence that you have collected or plan to collect to suggest this practice is effective.

The development of regionally aligned Career Pathways and Regional Occupations In Demand Lists which 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. Describe one of the Local Area WDB's innovative business services strategies. Provide any evidence that you have collected or plan to collect to suggest this practice is effective.

We have produced flyers for Incumbent Worker Training that give a short summarization of what Incumbent Worker Training is, and how a business can benefit from it and We have included an Incumbent Worker Training section in our Gaston's BEST Business Solutions Catalog, that way if an employer needs training at any time, they can find our contact information in the catalog and utilize IWT. When we have chances to speak in front of the community, whether it be at a Rotary Meeting, Chamber meeting, etc. we speak about this program in front of these employers and other community leaders to educate them on these resources available. We share these resources on our social media pages in hopes to reach a bigger audience.

Incumbent Worker Training is a great resource for all local businesses, at some point in time. All businesses are encouraged to apply for skills enhancement. Incumbent Worker Training is especially great for employers that are categorized in our Business Edge group, as necessary training needs can be met with the assistance of the Board. Example: A company may be losing business due to not being able to produce their product in a timely manner, reason being – their setup time on a machine is much slower than it should be. The company can use IWT to train employees and decrease setup time on said machine, therefore getting their product to consumer in the appropriate time. IWT can also put employees through training and earn certificates or certifications in their industry, therefore making them more competitive and earning them more business.

Incumbent Worker training is great for hiring new entry level employees, as they train their incumbent workers to progress into a higher position, therefore allowing room for entry level candidates to backfill these positions.

Incumbent Worker Training is great for keeping a company competitive, as they train their employees to retain their job or to gain new skills to move into a new position with better pay.

6. Describe one of the Local Area WDB's best or promising virtual services strategies that has yielded positive results. Provide any evidence that you have collected or plan to collect to suggest 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.

7. Describe how the Local Area WDB's inform other Local Area WDB's of best or promising regional workforce practices.

The Gaston Local Area shares best practices during the following: statewide Executive Director Council meetings, regional super user meetings, statewide business services meetings and statewide Youth Leads Team meeting.

8. Describe one of the Local Area WDB's business engagement practices that demonstrated employers taking charge and driving the agenda.

In Gaston Local Area, monthly GCAM meetings are led by EDC and local Gaston County Advanced Manufacturing employers. The Gaston Local Area also has a Manufacturing Collaborative through one of the Gaston's BEST members – GBA and it is recently gotten underway and is gaining transaction. This week is the first meeting that GBA and the employer group are inviting us in to attend to work on employer-based solutions to their needs.

5. Program Year 2022 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 2022 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 since PY 2021 and requires a review for PY 2022 and has not been previously submitted to the DWS.
- 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 2022 (Yes/No) and needs review
1. Adult/Dislocated Worker Experience Policy	Y	N
2. Competitive Procurement Policy (*included in Financial Mgmt)	Y	N
3. Conflict of Interest Policy	Y	N
4. Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Standards and Complaint Procedures	Y	N
5. Financial Management Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I	Y	N
6. Individualized Training Account Policy	Y	N
7. On-the-Job Training Policy	Y	N
8. Oversight Monitoring Policy, Tool and Schedule	Y	N
9. Priority of Service Policy	Y	Y
10. Youth Work Experience Policy (*included in Adult/DW WEX)	Y	N
11. Supportive Services Policy	Y	N
12. Sampling Policy/Self-Attestation Procedures & Monitoring Schedule	Y	N

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/revised since PY 2021 and requires a review for PY 2022 and has not been previously submitted to the DWS.
 - Do not add a blank document in WISE as a “placeholder”.

If “Yes”, load the policy as a separate document. Name documents: *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 2022 (Add Yes or N/A for this column)
1. Local Area WDB Guidance for Local Incumbent Worker Grants	Y	Y
2. Local Area WDB Needs-Related Policy	N/A	N/A
3. Local Area WDB Transitional Jobs Policy	Y	N
4. Local Area WDB Youth Incentive Policy	Y	Y
5. Local Area WDB Guidance for Finish Line Grant *See Support Services Policy*	Y	N

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	\$8000 per Year / \$12,000 Life Time
Time Limits	7 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

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary	
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 – The Gaston Co WDB does not count Supportive Services toward the participants life time max for Tuition, Books, Fees & School Supplies.
Other	Semester

4. 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 Contracted Trans	\$95 per week with a total family max of \$190 per week	Any additional school supplies required by the class instructor, on the class syllabus, and are not disposable. Exp: Texas Instrument Calculator.	Vehicle Expenses (Car Repairs, Car Insurance) Utility costs (cut off notice for power) Housing Expenses (Deposit, First month rent, or Amt on Eviction notice) Other Items (as appvd)	Educational or work-related: Testing fees Accommodations for indivs w/ disabilities Tools Equipment Uniforms Work/Interview Attire Work Boots/Shoes Other req'd 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.

Attachment Checklist from Local Area Plan Instructions

Please confirm all attachments are loaded in WISE. If not, provide an expected date of arrival for required documents. **See Attachment**

- 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 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 Sampling Policy/Self-Attestation Procedures and Monitoring Schedule
- Local Area WDB Incumbent Worker Training Policy *(optional)*
- Local Area WDB Needs-Related Policy *(optional)*

- Local Area WDB Transitional Jobs Policy (*optional*)
 - Local Area WDB Youth Incentive Policy (*optional*)
 - Local Area WDB Guidance on Finish Line Grants (*optional*)
 - Memorandum of Understanding
 - Customer Flow Chart
 - Local Area WDB Guidance for Finish Line Grant (*optional*)
- * Mail signed and unfolded *originals* to assigned DWS Planner at N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions, 4316 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4316. DocuSign® (or similar) signature pages may be uploaded in WISE.

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters

This certification is required by the regulations implementing Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, 2 CFR 180, Participant's Responsibilities.

(Before completing this certification, read the instructions on the following page which are an integral part of the certification.)

- 1) The prospective primary participant certifies, to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it and its principals:
 - a) are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded by any federal department or agency;
 - b) have not within a three-year period preceding this certification been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;
 - c) are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state, or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1)(b) of this certification; and
 - d) have not within a three-year period preceding this certification had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default.
- 2) Where the prospective primary participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

Printed Name and Title of Authorized Administrative Entity Signatory Official

Signature

Click or tap to enter a date.

Date

Instructions for Certification

1. By signing and submitting the certification signature page with this proposal, the prospective primary participant is providing the certification set out above.
2. The inability of a person to provide the certification required above will not necessarily result in denial of participation in this covered transaction. The prospective participant shall submit an explanation of why it cannot provide the certification set out above. The certification or explanation will be considered in connection with the department or agency's determination whether to enter into this transaction. However, failure of the prospective primary participant to furnish a certification or an explanation shall disqualify such person from participation in this transaction.
3. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when the department or agency determined to enter into this transaction. If it is later determined that the prospective primary participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency may terminate this transaction for cause or default.
4. The prospective primary participant shall provide immediate written notice to the department or agency to which this proposal is submitted if at any time the prospective primary participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
5. The terms covered transaction, debarred, suspended, ineligible, lower tier covered transaction, participants, person, primary covered transaction, principal, proposal, and voluntarily excluded, as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of the rules implementing Executive Order 12549. You may contact the department or agency to which this proposal is being submitted for assistance in obtaining a copy of those regulations.
6. The prospective primary participant agrees by submitting this proposal that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR Part 9, Subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction.
7. The prospective primary participant further agrees by submitting this proposal that it will include the clause titled "A Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transaction," provided by the department or agency entering into this covered transaction, without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.
8. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that is not proposed for debarment under 48 CFR Part 9, Subpart 9.4, debarred, suspended, ineligible or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals. Each participant may, but is not required to, check the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Non-Procurement programs.
9. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
10. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 6 of these instructions, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is proposed for debarment under 48 CFR Part 9, Subpart 9.4, suspended, debarred, ineligible or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency may terminate this transaction for cause or default.

PY 2022 WIOA Workforce Development Board Members
Effective July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

	Category	Name and Business Title	Name and Business Address	Phone Number	Email Address	Term
1	Business, Chair (Can be one of the required small business seats.)					
2	Business					
3	Business					
4	Business					
5	Business					
6	Business					
7	Business					

**PY 2022 WIOA Workforce Development Board Members
Effective July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023**

	Category	Name and Business Title	Name and Business Address	Phone Number	Email Address	Term
8	Business					
9	Business					
10	Small Business					
11	Small Business					
12	Labor Organization, or where none exists, other representative of employees (<i>Identify representative's affiliation- select one and delete other choices</i>)					

**PY 2022 WIOA Workforce Development Board Members
Effective July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023**

	Category	Name and Business Title	Name and Business Address	Phone Number	Email Address	Term
13	Labor Organization, or where none exists, other representative of employees <i>(Identify representative's affiliation- select one and delete other choices)</i>					
14	Joint Labor-Management, or union affiliated, registered apprenticeship program. Or where none exists, representative of registered apprenticeship program <i>(Identify representative's affiliation- select one and delete other choices)</i>					
15	Adult Education and Literacy eligible under WIOA Title II					
16	Higher Education					
17	Vocational Rehabilitation Program					

**PY 2022 WIOA Workforce Development Board Members
Effective July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023**

	Category	Name and Business Title	Name and Business Address	Phone Number	Email Address	Term
18	Economic Development					
19	Wagner-Peyser Act					

***Notes:**

-Use the form provided and identify categories as indicated on the form. Do not change required category names, but clearly indicate the category.

-If Local Area WDB has more than 19 total members: 1) add lines to chart and complete all columns for additional members; 2) ensured required percentages are still met, 3) do not count individuals serving dual roles more than once.

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)]

Use attachments sent separately.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014

Program Year 2022 Local Area Plan Signatory Page for

Gaston County Workforce Development Board

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

Typed or Printed Name

Typed or Printed Name

Typed or Printed Title

Typed or Printed Title

Signature

Signature

Date

Date

Directions for Completing Attachment NCWorks Career Center System

Complete the **Attachment** on the next page to describe the Local Area WDB's One-Stop Career Center system.

Column A- include each One-Stop Career Center(s)' name and street address, host facility, and hours of operation.

Column B- specify the type of Career Center and list all counties served by site. Type of Center Designation: Tier 1, Tier 2, Specialized, Affiliates.

Add location of Youth Sites if not included with above designations.

Column C- list the on-site partners, identify funding source and agency name such as Title I (Adult and Dislocated Worker, Youth, Job Corps, YouthBuild, National Farmworkers and Native American Programs), Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act, Career and Technical Education. Career Center Partners should, at a minimum, reflect required WIOA partners (WIOA 121(b)(1)(B)).

Column D- list the Career Center Operator (agency name) and Method of Selection (Competitive, Sole Source to include if contract was extended).

Column E- list the WIOA Providers of Title I Adult and Dislocated Career Services (agency name) and method of selection. (Method of Selection: Competitive Procurement/Sole Source/Contract Extended).

Column F - Functional Manager (manages the day-to-day operations).

Column G- indicate whether WIOA Title I youth services provider are provided on-site (and list provider). Indicate other on-site youth services providers.

Column H- indicate additional on-site partners.

PY 2022 WIOA [WDB Name] NCWorks Career Center Locations

(Effective July 1, 2022)

A. One-Stop Location(s) (Address, Phone number and Hours)	*B. Tier 1 or Tier 2 Specialized or Affiliate	C. On-site Partners	**D. Career Center Operator and Method of Selection	E. Provider(s) of WIOA Title I Adult/DW Career Services and Method of Selection	F. Functional Manager (manages the day-to- day operations)	G. Provider(s) of On-site WIOA Title I Youth Services (and other youth service provider)	H. Additional Partners

*Type of Center Designation:

- Tier 1
- Tier 2
- Specialized
- Affiliates – At locations where A, DW and WP services are provided

**Method of Selection:

- Competitive Procurement
- Sole Source
- Contract Extended

*See directions on the page above if needed.
Use attachments sent separately.*

PY 2022 WIOA [WDB Name] Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider List

Complete all columns.

WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Service Provider (Organization Name, Address and Phone Number)	Contact Person (Name, Title and Email Address)	County/Counties Served and where services are provided** (One-Stop, Office, and/or Both)	Type of Organization (State Agency, For-profit, Non-profit, other-specify)	Type of Contract (Cost Reimbursement, Fixed Price, Performance Based, Hybrid, other-specify)

(RFP Conducted: date here)

****Note where Services are provided: at the One-Stop Centers, the Office location provided, and/or combination. Be specific**

Use attachments sent separately.

PY 2022 WIOA [WDB Name] Youth Service Provider List

WIOA Youth Service Provider (Organization Name, Address and Phone Number)	Contact Person (Name, Title and Email Address)	County/Counties Served and where services are provided** (One-Stop, Office, Both)	Type of Organization (State Agency, For-profit, Non-profit, other-specify)	Type of Contract (Cost Reimbursement, Fixed Price, Performance Based, Hybrid, other-specify)

Complete all columns.

(RFP Conducted: date here)

****Note** where Youth Services are provided: at the One-Stop Centers, the Office location provided, combination. Be specific.

Use attachments sent separately.

PY 2022 WIOA Youth Program Elements Chart

In order to support the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, entry into postsecondary education, and career readiness for participants, the WIOA Youth Program shall provide elements consisting of the following program elements.

20 CFR §681.470 states that it is not required for local programs to use funds for each program element. Local Area WDB programs may leverage partner resources to provide program elements. However, if the program is not funded with WIOA youth funds, the Local Area WDB must have an agreement in place with a partner organization to ensure that the program element will be offered. If offered by a partner, the program element must be connected and coordinated with the WIOA youth program.

Please denote whether the required WIOA Program Element will be WIOA funded by the Local Area WDB, provided by referral, or both.

	WIOA Youth Program Elements	WIOA Funded (Specify Provider)	Referral by Agreement (Specify Provider)
1.	Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential		
2.	Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate		
3.	Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include (i) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; (ii) pre-apprenticeship programs; (iii) internships and job shadowing; and (iv) on-the-job training opportunities		
4.	Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include (i) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; (ii) pre-apprenticeship programs; (iii) internships and job shadowing; and (iv) on-the-job training opportunities		
5.	Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster		

PY 2022 WIOA Youth Program Elements Chart

	WIOA Youth Program Elements	WIOA Funded (Specify Provider)	Referral by Agreement (Specify Provider)
6.	Leadership development opportunities, which may include community services and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate		
7.	Supportive services		
8.	Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months		
9.	Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate		
10.	Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate		
11.	Financial literacy education		
12.	Entrepreneurial skills training		
13.	Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the Local Area WDB, such as career awareness, career counseling and career exploration services		
14.	Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training		

Local Area WDB By-laws Required Elements – Crosswalk

NOTE: 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 Current 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.	
2. The term limitations and how the term appointments will be staggered to ensure only a portion of membership expires in a given year.	
3. The process to notify the CLEO(s) of a Local Area WDB member vacancy to ensure a prompt nominee within 90 days of the vacancy.	
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).	
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)).	
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.	
7. A description of any other conditions governing appointment or membership on the Local Area WDB as deemed appropriate by the CLEO(s); (20 CFR 679.310(g)(1-7)). Note: Answer may be N/A.	

Local Area WDB By-laws Required Elements – Crosswalk

North Carolina Specific Requirements That Must be Specified Within the By-laws.	The Article/Section Where the Required Elements are Located Within the Current By-laws.
8. The adopted generally accepted parliamentary procedure, such as Robert’s Rules of Order, chosen by the Local Area WDB.	
9. Whether an appointee filling a vacancy will serve the remainder of the unexpired term or be appointed for a new full term.	
10. The Local Area WDB’s policy assuring attendance and participation of its members.	
11. Quorum requirements to be not less than 51% constituting 51% of the total filled Local Area WDB positions.	
12. Any standing committees the Local Area WDB has established shall be included in the by-laws.	
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.	
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.	
15. Local Area WDB meetings will be held in accessible facilities with accessible materials available upon prior request.	
16. The Local Area WDB will meet no less than four times per program year.	

Appendices

NC Local Area WDB By-laws Required Elements

A

By-laws Guidance

B

Local Area WDB Membership Requirements

C

NC Local Area WDB By-laws Required Elements

At a minimum the Local Area WDB by-laws must include the following items for DWS approval.

When submitting the Local Area WDB by-laws, please specify the section (provide a clear crosswalk) where the following required elements are located within the submitted by-laws.

NOTE: Elements 1-7 are the *required* elements designated at WIOA Final Rule 679.310(g).

1. The nomination process used by the CLEO(s) to elect the Local Area Board Chair and members.
2. The term limitations and how the term appointments will be staggered to ensure only a portion of membership expire in a given year.
3. The process to notify the CLEO(s) of a Board member vacancy to ensure a prompt nominee within ninety (90) days of the vacancy.
4. The proxy and alternative designee process that will be used when a Board member is unable to attend a meeting and assigns a designee as per the requirements of 20 CFR 679.110(d)(4).
5. The use of technology such as phone and web-based meetings, that will be used to promote Board member participation (20 CFR 679.110(d)(5)).
6. The process to ensure Board 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.
7. A description of any other conditions governing appointment or membership on the Board as deemed appropriate by the CLEO(s); (20 CFR 679.310(g)(1-7)).

North Carolina specific requirements that must be specified within the by-laws:

8. The adopted generally accepted parliamentary procedure, such as Robert's Rules of Order, chosen by the Board.
9. Whether an appointee filling a vacancy will serve the remainder of the unexpired term or be appointed for a new full term.
10. The Board's policy assuring attendance and participation of its members.
11. Quorum requirements to be not less than 51% constituting 51% of the total filled Board positions.
12. Any standing committees the Board has established shall be included in the by-laws.
13. The Board's conflict of interest policy, which may not be any less stringent than the requirements of the DWS's Policy, shall be referenced in the by-laws.
14. The process the Board will take when expedient action is warranted between Board meetings, such as calling a special meeting or allowing the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the Board.
15. Board meetings will be held in accessible facilities with accessible materials available upon prior request.
16. The Board will meet no less than four times per program year.

Note: This template is provided for guidance purposes only. It contains sample language that may be used in by-laws development. It is not required that Boards utilize this template or language within.

This template reflects multiple counties within a Consortium. Single-county Boards and non-Consortia will need to adjust their by-laws accordingly.

NAME HERE WDB by-laws

**Article 1
Name and Purpose**

Section 1. Name

The name of this organization shall be the NAME HERE 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 WDB 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 NAME HERE WDB.

The Board services area shall encompass the counties of COUNTY NAME(s) HERE.

The Board responsibilities shall include:

1. Develop and submit Local Area Plan annually to the Governor, a comprehensive 4-year Local Area Plan, in partnership with the Chief Local 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 Area 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, contractors, and service providers 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 Area WDB consistent with the Local Area Plan and the duties of the Local Area Board and subject to the approval of the Chief Local Elected Official.
13. Annually review the physical and programmatic accessibility provisions of all one-stop centers, as well as locations for contractors and service providers, 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 NUMBER HERE Board members. Members of this organization shall be appointed by the following procedure: The Chief Local Elected Official (of the XXXX County Board of Commissioners, hereinafter referred to as the CLEO) 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% 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% 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 Local Elected Official determines appropriate.

Section 3. Tenure

All appointments will be for a two-year term to expire on June 30 of each respective term. No member shall serve more than three (3) consecutive terms (6 years) or a total of five (5) terms (10 years) in any one appointed position. An individual whose initial appointment is to fill an unexpired term or an initial staggered term of less than two years, shall be eligible to serve the number of full-length terms other members are eligible to serve, unless, prior to the time for reappointment that individual has already served six consecutive years. Members may be re-appointed at the discretion of the Chief Local Elected Official subject to the term limitations outlined in this section.

Terms shall be staggered to ensure that at any given time a percentage of the members are experienced in WDB functions.

The Board shall advise the Consortium Counties of potential Board member vacancies prior to the end of the term. In the case of a midterm vacancy, an immediate replacement shall be requested of the Consortium County represented by the departing Board member. The appointed Board member shall fill the remaining term of office.

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 Local Elected Official, a member may be removed for cause from the Board. Cause would be for such actions as malfeasance, misconduct, or any action which would be deemed not in the best interest of the Board; or three (3) unexcused absences from regular scheduled meetings within the preceding twelve calendar months. Notice that 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 NAME HERE WDB Chair. Three consecutive absences without justification and no response to the above referenced letter from the chair will be considered acceptable terms for 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.

Article 3 **Meetings**

Section 1. Regular Meetings

The Board shall meet at a public location at such time and place as determined by the Chairperson. All meetings must be held in an accessible facility, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. All materials must be in an accessible format (i.e., large print, Braille, interpreter, etc.), as needed or indicated.

The Board will meet no less than four times per program year. Regular Board meetings are face to face; however, Board members may attend meetings via conference call, video communications and other alternative methods.

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 and Committee Chair 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 Board members constituting 51% of the total filled Board positions. Proxy representatives who are 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 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

Local Area Board Conducts Business Openly: The Local Area Board must conduct 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 means and open meetings, information about the activities of the local Board. (20 CFR 679.390) This includes:

- a. Information about the Local Area Plan, or modification to the Local Area Plan, before submission of the Local Area Plan;
- b. List and affiliation of Local Area WDB 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 Area Board; and
- f. Local Area Board by-laws, consistent with § 679.310(g).

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. The representative may participate in discussions 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.

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 or via electronic medium.

Section 7. Conflict of Interest and Voting

No WDB member (whether compensated or not) shall engage in any activity, including participation in the selection, award or administration of a sub-grant or contract supported by WIOA funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent would be involved. Such a conflict would arise when:

- i. The individual,
- ii. any member of the individual's immediate family,
- iii. the individual's partner, or
- iv. an organization which employs, or is about to employ any of the above, has a financial interest in the firm or organization selected for the award.

No WDB member, member of his/her immediate family, officers, employees, or agents of the WDB member's agency or business, shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of value from contractors, potential contractors, or parties to sub agreements.

A WDB member shall not cast a vote on, or participate in, any decision-making capacity on the provision of services by such member (or any organization which that member directly represents), nor on any matter which would provide any direct financial benefit to that member.

No WDB members shall participate in a governmental decision including voting on a matter (including recommendations, appointments, obligating or committing the WDB to a course of action) when such action influences a decision or exercises judgement in making a decision. Any member with a potential or actual conflict of interest shall comply with requirements for public disclosure and recusal.

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 deemed appropriate and appoint their Chair and members. The Chair shall not vote except in the case of a tie, in which event he/she shall cast the deciding vote.

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. Secretary

The Secretary 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, Secretary (from a sector other than business), and the previous Chair or Vice-Chair. As determined by the Chair of the Board, chairs of Board committees 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 Area WDB 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 provided the proposed amendment(s) has been submitted in writing to the Board members at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

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 NUMBER DATE Day of MONTH, YEAR.

Signed:

Board Director Printed Name and Signature

Date

Chief Local Elected Official Printed Name and Signature

Date

Board Chair Printed Name and Signature

Date

Guidance Regarding Meetings and Conferencing via Electronic Means

All public WDB meetings and Committee meetings will be held at specified times and places which are convenient and open to the public.

The Board believes it is in the best interest of its members, systems, and customers that the fullest participation and attendance in all meetings be achieved whenever possible. Furthermore, it recognizes that the use of electronic, audio or video conferencing for meeting attendance and

voting requirements is permissible so long as the meeting is conducted in accordance with the Sunshine Provision.

The Board in all of its regular and special, standing committee, and ad hoc committee meetings complies with and intends to comply with the provisions of the Sunshine Provision. Therefore, the Board hereby adopts this 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 or any of the standing committee and ad hoc committee meetings as set forth and adopted according to the following rules as applicable:

- 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 (e.g., a speakerphone) 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.
- H. The procedures outlined above shall also apply to each Board and its Committee members.

Local Area WDBs Membership Requirements

Representative of Business (WIOA Section 107(b)(2)(A))	Who May Satisfy the Requirements
	<p>The majority of the members of the Local Area WDB must be representatives of private sector business in the local area. At a minimum, two members must represent small business as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration. Business representatives serving on Local Area WDBs may also serve on the State Board. Each business representative must meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be an owner, chief executive officer, chief operating officer, or other individual with optimum policy making and hiring authority; • provide employment opportunities in in-demand industry sectors or occupations, as those terms are defined in WIOA section 3(23); and provide high-quality, work-relevant training and development opportunities to its workforce or the workforce of others (in the case of organizations representing business as per WIOA Sec. 107(b)(2)(A)(ii); and • are appointed from among individuals nominated by local business organizations and business trade associations. <p><i>[In North Carolina, examples of allowable business organizations may include chambers of commerce, trade organizations, large non-profit organizations, such as Rex Hospital, and for-profit organizations, such as Duke Hospital, depending on the specific circumstances. Examples of unallowable business organizations include the N.C. Department of Public Safety or other state or municipal agencies.]</i></p>
Representative of Workforce (WIOA Section 107(b)(2)(B))	<p>Not less than 20% of the members of the Local Area WDB must be workforce representatives. These representatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must include two or more representatives of labor organizations, where such organizations exist in the local area. Where labor organizations do not exist, representatives must be selected from other employee representatives; <p><i>[Employee representatives must come from organizations that advocate, enhance, or protect the rights of a group of employees. In North Carolina, such examples include the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), the State Employees Association of North Carolina (SEANC), and the National Guard Association). The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is an example of an organization that is not allowable as a labor organization.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must include one or more representatives of a joint labor management, or union affiliated, registered apprenticeship program within the area who must be a training director or a member of a labor organization. If no union affiliated registered apprenticeship programs exist in the area, a representative of a registered apprenticeship program with no union affiliation must be appointed, if one exists, and may include:

	<p>In addition to the representatives enumerated above, the Local Area WDB may include the following to contribute to the 20% requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one or more representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including organizations that serve veterans or provide or support competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities; and <p><i>[In North Carolina, examples of allowable community-based organizations include organizations such as Goodwill and community action agencies.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one or more representatives of organizations that demonstrated experience or expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs or eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth. <p><i>[Community College representatives would not be appropriate for this category.]</i></p>
<p>Representatives of Education and Training (WIOA Section 107(b) (2)(C))</p>	<p>The balance of Local Area WDB membership must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one eligible provider administering adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II; • At least one representative from an institution of higher education providing workforce investments activities, including community colleges; and • At least one representative from each of the following governmental and economic and community development entities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and community development entities; • The State Employment Service Office under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S. C. 49 et seq.) serving the local area; and • The programs carried out under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, other than Sec. 112 or part C of that title. <p>In addition to the representatives enumerated above, the CLEO may appoint other appropriate entities in the local area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entities administering education and training activities who represent local educational agencies or community-based organizations with demonstrated expertise in addressing the education and training needs for individuals with barriers to employment; • Governmental and economic and community development entities who represent transportation, housing, and public assistance programs; • Philanthropic organizations serving the local area; and • Other appropriate individuals as determined by the CLEO.

Note: The Division of Workforce Solutions may request additional information from Local Area WDBs on representatives and the organizations they represent at any time in order to determine compliance with these requirements. The final determination on whether requirements are met is made by the Division of Workforce Solutions.