

**North Carolina Instructions
for Local and Regional
Workforce Development Area Plans**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Title I

**Four-Year Plan
July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2020**

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

Instructions

Introduction

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires each workforce development board to develop and submit, in partnership with the local chief elected official, to the state a comprehensive four-year plan. The WIOA four-year plan will be effective July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2020.

The local and regional plan will support the alignment strategy described in the draft NC Unified State Plan in accordance with WIOA Section 102(b)(1)(E), and otherwise be consistent with the NC Unified State Plan. Workforce Development Boards shall comply with WIOA Sections 106 through 108 in the preparation and submission of the plan.

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

Local Workforce Development Boards 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 www.nccommerce.com/workforce. Local Workforce Development Boards may reference the draft North Carolina WIOA Unified State Plan. WIOA Title I Acronyms and WIOA Title I Helpful Definitions have been provided as Appendices A and B to this document for easy reference.

Plan Submission and Due Date

The Local Plan must be submitted through WISE. ***The due date is May 9, 2016.*** Each attachment is provided as an individual Word document and should be submitted separately. Forms requiring original signatures may be mailed to the assigned Planner at: N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions, 4316 Mail Services Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4316.

I. Local Area Outline

A. Local Area Overview

The Local Area Overview provides important contact information that is used throughout the Division. It is important this section remain current. Updates should be submitted to the Division Planner when changes occur especially to contact names and addresses in questions Section A 1-10.

1. Provide the Local Area's official (legal) name as it appears on the local Consortium Agreement established to administer the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (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 Name Consortium Agreement. **Western Piedmont Jobs Training Consortium. Uploaded**
2. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Workforce Development Director. **Wendy Johnson, Director Workforce Development, Western Piedmont Council of Governments, PO Box 9026 Hickory NC, 28603; wendy.johnson@wpcog.org**
3. Provide the name, elected title, local government affiliation, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Local Area's Chief Elected Official. **George Holleman, Mayor Town of Taylorsville, PO Box 685, NC 28681, (828) 632-2218, mayor@taylorsvillenc.com**
4. Provide the name, title, business name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the individual authorized to receive official mail for the Chief Elected Official, if different than question 3. **N/A**
5. Provide the name, address, telephone number 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)]. **Western Piedmont Council of Governments, PO Box 9026, Hickory, NC 28603 (828) 322-9191.**
6. Provide the name, title, organization name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of the Administrative/Fiscal Agent's signatory official. **Anthony Starr, Executive Director, Western Piedmont Council of Governments, PO Box 9026, Hickory, NC 28603, (828) 322-9191, anthony.starr@wpcog.org**
7. 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. **Uploaded**

8. 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 (<https://www.sam.gov/ccr/>) to receive Federal funding [required by Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Section 4.11 and Section 52.204-7].
DUNS # 602653529, our SAMs Status is current March 2016 - March 2017.

Composition of the local Workforce Development Boards shall comply with WIOA Section 107. Local Workforce Development Board Membership Requirements have been provided as reference at Appendix C.

9. Provide the Workforce Development Board member's name, business title, business name and address, telephone number and e-mail address. The first block is reserved to identify the Board chairperson. Indicate all required representation and indicate if vacant. [WIOA Section 107(b)(2)]. Name document: Local Area Name WDB List.

Note: Check the block on provided form certifying compliance with required WIOA local Workforce Development Board business nomination process.

* Use form provided and identify categories as indicated on the form. Do not change required category names.

10. Attach the Workforce Development Board By-laws including date adopted/amended. Name document: Local Area Name WDB By-laws. **Uploaded**

Sunshine Provision - The local board shall make available to the public, on a regular basis through electronic means and open meetings, information regarding the activities of the local board, including information regarding the Local Plan prior to submission of the 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 board. [WIOA Section 107(e)]

11. Describe how the Workforce Development Board meets the Sunshine Provision. **The Western Piedmont Workforce Development holds open board meetings. The board meeting calendar is located on the local area workforce website: [www.westernpiedmontworks.org](http://www.westernpiedmontworks.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/WDB-Calendar-PY15.pdf), <http://www.westernpiedmontworks.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/WDB-Calendar-PY15.pdf>. Activities such as RFP's and the local plan are made part of the boards meeting agenda items and/or listed on www.westernpiedmontworks.org.**

Public Comment - The workforce development board shall make copies of the proposed Local 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 plan is made available; and, include with submission of the Local Plan any comments that represent disagreement with the Plan. [WIOA Section 108(d)]

12. Describe how the workforce development board will make copies of the proposed Local Plan available to the public. [WIOA Section 108(d)]

The local plan is made part of the boards meeting agenda items and will be listed on www.westernpiedmontworks.org for the required 30 days for public comment.

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

Uploaded

14. Provide the Local Workforce Development Board's planned meeting schedule to include time, dates and location. <http://www.westernpiedmontworks.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/WDB-Calendar-PY15.pdf>, all meetings begin at 8:30am, at **WPCOG, 1880 2nd Ave., N.W., Hickory NC 28603**

15. List the county/counties that comprise the Local Area. List the July 1, 2016 population estimates by county (ies) in the Local Area. (Reference: North Carolina State Demographics "County/State projections," found at www.demog.state.nc.us or, if another source is used, identify source.)

Alexander 46,026. Burke 89,196. Caldwell 82,047. Catawba 163,183.

16. 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, 29 CFR Part 98, Section 98.510, participants' responsibilities.] Name document: Local Area Name Debarment Form. **Uploaded**

Note: Document must bear the original signature of the Administrative Entity signatory official. Mail the signed Certification form original to Division Planner.

17. Submit the original Workforce Development Board and Chief Elected Official (CEO) Signatory Page (form provided), bearing the original signatures of the Chief Elected Official(s) and the Workforce Development Board Chairman and attach a copy of the signed document. Name document: Local Area Name Signatory Page. **Forthcoming**

Note: Mail the signed original Signatory Form to Division Planner.

B. Local Area Planning

Each local Workforce Development Board shall develop and submit a comprehensive four-year local Plan. The local Workforce Development Board is encouraged to keep the Plan up to date and fluid as events and funding changes occur which may require local area responses. Local Plans will require a modification at least every two years to reflect labor market changes and economic conditions.

1. Provide a description of the Workforce Development Board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an 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 in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(E)]

The WDB has worked diligently over the past year and half to create social media resources as a means to highlight available recruitment events, hot jobs, current labor market information, educational training, and many other workforce opportunities in our four counties (www.westernpiedmontworks.org). This is especially important to the strategy of reaching our youth and young adults, as well as people outside our region. During the recession our area saw a steep decline in population so it is imperative that we seek new ways to reach people to entice them to come back, or to come live for the first time in our area. The Workforce Development Board Director currently sits on workforce taskforce in all four counties. The focus varies by county ranging from Furniture, Manufacturing and/or Healthcare training to direct employer engagement, and K-12/parenting outreach. Goals relating to performance accountability measures are an ongoing integrated service delivery (ISD) leadership team topic. Now that we have two separate sets of goals to monitor and strive to meet, this requires another level of involvement and monitoring. One set of WIOA-DOL goals and another set from the Division of Workforce Solutions that sets local measures. This year (PY16) through our RFP process for Youth Services, we evaluated four respondents, and selected a new service provider that we hope will bring new innovative processes to reach our youth and young adults and help us improve our performance measures in those areas. Board staff will continue to work with all of our service providers and career center staff to provide technical assistance as we too, gain insight and direction for WIOA.

One key goal we are working towards is to inform all career center staff that the local performance accountability measures apply to all of us, not just workforce board staff and board service providers. It will take all workforce team members contributing to the goals in order to meet the expectations. This is new for the workforce system in regards to the boards versus DWS. In the past we have had separate goals to meet, and there was little communication with each other on what these were, or how collaboration would help us all be successful. Through ISD as we empower staff and involve everyone we know this will only improve our customer services levels to each other and to the community.

We are striving to strengthen our workforce partnerships with K-12, community colleges, local universities, vocational rehab., chambers, EDC's, and behavioral health to help where we can, in upgrading the skills of the workforce and better understand the needs of employers. (This is currently being done by engagement with SHRM groups, employer taskforce, rejuvenated HIRE meetings (formerly joblink mtgs) and both local and regional business services team meetings. The Workforce Board Director is the facilitator for the WPWD local team meetings, which are held every 6-8 weeks.

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

The strategies to work with the entities that carry out the core programs that align resources available to the Local Area to achieve the strategic vision and goals are supported through the analysis of the following: regional economic conditions, the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, the employment needs including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, information on labor market trends, the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, utilizing two crucial reports that are spearheaded by the WPCOG and the WPWDB. Those two analytical studies are the 2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) report and the 2014 Industry Growth Analysis (IGA). The data from these reports guide us in addressing the employment needs of employers in the industry sectors and occupation identified in the [CEDS](#) and [IGA reports](#) . Discussions for the 2016 CEDS, and 2017 IGA is already taking place. The relationships with our community college partners, vocational rehabilitation, and the department of social services and/or other local workforce taskforce teams like the Innovate Catawba, [Workforce Connectivities](#) group helps strengthen core programs and services, and brings to the surface any weaknesses that need to be addressed. The WPWD Director along with several WPWDB members participate in the Innovate Catawba Workforce initiative.

Current labor force employment and labor market trends is provided monthly by LEAD and shared via the www.westernpiedmontworks.org website so that the local area can stay informed. The employment needs of employers in the region is extracted and analyzed from www.ncworks.gov along with face to face meetings with employer groups and educational institutions to tweak and make changes as demanded by growth in automation and the demand for enhanced skill levels.

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

Our WIOA core programs for Adult and Dislocated Workers is contracted with Clay Wilson & Associates in all four counties. Currently our WIOA In-School Youth programs is contracted with Burke Public School and Hickory City Schools. Our WIOA Out of-School Youth program is contracted with Clay Wilson & Associates in all four counties. After the release of our PY16 RFP for Youth Services our Workforce Board approved a new recommended service provider, Ross Innovative Employment Solutions. We hope with Ross we will see improved

performance for our youth service measures. In PY15 we have worked to expand and strengthen our relationship and involvement with all the Career and Technical Education directors within our K-12 schools. The CTE Directors from our local area school districts consistently attend our WDB meetings, and are specifically involved in team meetings for the Certified Work Ready Communities initiative, and the establishment of Career Pathways.

Career Center monthly HIRE/Partner Meetings (formerly Joblink mtgs) help us readily identify and share other core program services and changes with our workforce system partners. At these meetings workforce partners such as the Community College, VR, DSS, Public Health, Goodwill...etc., attend so we are aware of who is administering other workforce programs and services so as not confuse the process for the community, and more importantly the businesses.

4. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the Workforce Development Board 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. [WIOA Section 108(b)(3)]

The WPWDB has worked diligently to expand our social media, newsletter, and website outreach including our core program & services and workforce partner updates. We have seen a large increase in our in-center recruitment events for employers. Our local area staffing agencies recruit through us, as we assist them with their recruitment, advertising and getting jobseekers to their events. Within this outreach we are expanding public awareness of employment, training, education, and support services that are available in our career centers. We have increased core program cross-training for all career center staff and workforce partners, while also seeking the prospect from them to be trained and have knowledge on their programs and training opportunities. Understanding partners agency resources provides staff with the knowledge to assist those with barrier to employment in a more efficient and effective process. Staff can use this knowledge to make better referrals for the customer which removes a level of frustration for everyone involved. The Northwest Priority Zone just engaged with our recently hired Career Pathways Coordinator, Patty Thompson, who we expect will help us move forward with a more specific plan. We know that Mechatronics, Furniture Mfg., Healthcare, Transportation, Electrical Lineman, and Supervisor Roles are the key in-demand occupations for our area. The training certification process for these occupations have been addressed and the classes remain full with waiting list growing. Our relationship with our local community colleges is very strong, which allows us to provide information about access to post-secondary credentialing to our workforce through an easy streamlined process at our NCWorks Career Centers.

5. Describe how the Workforce Development Board coordinates and promotes entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services. [WIOA Section 108(b)(5)]

WPWDB promotes entrepreneurial skills training based on knowledge from the community college's Small Business Center and promotion from our website about the trainings. Entrepreneurial skills training is an area where we need to gain knowledge and secure Product Box offerings. We have been striving to make better contact with microenterprises and learn who and where those entities are located. Through OJT we have been able to provide several job placements with small companies and promote that fact to other apprehensive small businesses.

6. Describe how the Workforce Development Board enhances the use of apprenticeships to support the regional economy and individuals' career advancement.

The WDB works closely with Catawba Valley Community College, who has the only focused apprenticeship program in our local area. We provide information to businesses about the apprenticeship benefits and know where to direct them for the specifics for getting involved. We are continuously looking for ways to enhance and grow apprenticeships programs to support the regional economy and career advancement. Our regional BSR teams have had an informational training from a participating employer on how to coordinate Apprentice program

7. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the Local Area with statewide rapid response activities as described in WIOA Section 134(a)(2)(A). [WIOA Section 108(b)(8)]

The NC Dept of Commerce Rapid Response unit will contact the Workforce Board Director and the Career Center Manager upon receiving a WARN notice from a company located in the local area. A meeting with company management is arranged to discuss the services available to affected employees of the company. A WDB staff member, NCWorks Career Center Manager, a member of the Dept of Commerce Rapid Response team and any other partners who have services which may be of interest, attend the meeting with the management team from the company. At this point, we discuss how the information should be shared with employees. This happens in a variety of ways from large employee meetings on the company site to small meetings at the NCWorks Career Center and any options in between. Prior to the employee meetings, the company will have employees complete a survey. This survey gives the Rapid Response team data to determine what resources need to be presented at the employee meetings and what partners should be present. In cases where less than 100 employees are affected, the NCWorks Career Center manager or WDB Director reaches out to the company to offer services. They then coordinate with the company management to arrange meetings or some way to relay information to the employees.

8. Provide a description of plans, strategies and assurances concerning maximizing coordination of services provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act and services provided in the Local Area through the NCWorks Career Center system. Include how improved service delivery and avoidance of duplication of services are/will be achieved. [WIOA Section 108(b)(12)]

Through Integrated Service Delivery the NCWorks Career Centers in the WP local area hold monthly ISD Leadership team meetings to keep the flow of communication open. Leadership shares ideas on how to improve the career center system and services in order to provide solid customer service and avoid duplication of services. We also use these meetings to discuss performance measures, networks.gov data entry, and continuous improvement opportunities for both Ad/DW/Youth and Wagner-Peyser services. Each staff person is assigned to a team (Welcome, Employment, Skill Development or Employer). These teams function in a manner where the employer of record is irrelevant and the goal is to meet the needs of the customers who enter the NCWorks Career Center. When the service is customer focused instead of agency focused, ISD becomes very natural. Through several years of implementation, the goal has been to eliminate duplication and let staff members perform functions best related to their expertise. The Welcome team consists of staff that has a welcoming demeanor and makes customers feel comfortable. Dual enrollment for WP and WIOA occurs in the welcome function. However, all other teams should always confirm the dual enrollment with customers whom they are working to ensure that all customers are dually enrolled. This creates a system of checks and balances. Those who are strong in Career development and coaching work closely with the customer to determine what they need in order to regain employment whether it is skills training, understanding their transferable skills or resume/ job search preparation. Those whose strength is matching a customer to the appropriate job will work with customers who are job ready and need to find employment. This group serves as the connector between the job seeking customer and the business Staff that is strong at building relationships with the business customers will work to recruit hiring events to the NCWorks Career Center as well as uncover job openings and bring them back to the Center. In PY16 we will be working to add specific career center policies to help drive consistency and teamwork. For example, the skill development team shares the names of customers who have completed training and are ready to job search with other center staff who might be aware of jobs which would be a good fit for them. Likewise, the employer team shares upcoming recruitment events for other teams to share with customers which they are working. Having more specific team related policies assures we are maximizing coordination of services.

9. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the Local Area with the provision of Adult Education and Literacy activities. [WIOA Section 108(b)(13)]

Due to changes to WIOA Adult Ed/Literacy performance measures, WPWD staff have had more conversations with this group to discuss future opportunities. We anticipate with further clarification from DOL we will see a more concerted effort of Adult Ed/Literacy staff participating in the ISD model by spending some dedicated time in the NCWorks Career Center. Currently the Caldwell ABE

coordinator spends dedicated time the Career Center. Recently we met with our local area Adult Ed/Literacy representatives to provide them with information and guidance for their annual plan. We will continue to strengthen this partnership and build a consistent referral process to each other's programs/services.

10. Provide a description of cooperative agreements, as defined in WIOA Section 107(d)(11), between the Workforce Development Board 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 services 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 at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. [WIOA Section 108(b)(14)]

At this time WPWD does not have a specific cooperative agreement with local workforce entities such as VR, but in our draft NCWorks Career Center System MOA will have partner agency signatures and shared accountability. For PY16 we will be working to complete a MOU with our workforce partners. VR provides all NCWorks Career Center staff with Disability Awareness training on a consistent basis. Currently VR staff spend varying hours in the WP NCWorks Career Centers. The VR business service representatives also attend our monthly local business services meetings so we ensure we have plans in place for good communication when contacting employers.

11. Provide a detailed description of the competitive process used to award subgrants and contracts in the Local Area for activities carried out under WIOA Title I. [WIOA Section 108(b)(16)]

Uploaded: Local Area Procurement Policy. (updates to reflect WIOA changes will be incorporated into new policy, which will be forthcoming by July 1, 2016 and updated in WISE once done so.)

12. Describe methods used to track Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth performance measures throughout each Program Year and plans for continuous improvement of performance.

There are several ways the Local Area tracks WIOA-DOL performance:

1. **The Local Area Program Administrator reviews WIOA Adult/ Dislocated Worker & Youth Performance within the NCWORKS online system, as well as through the new Futureworks.**
2. **Edit check reports are ran regularly and corrections made where known to assure the integrity of the data.**
3. **As the local area and the State become better versed with the benefits of NCWorks.gov and FutureWorks, our methods and tools used to track performance will become more systematic and streamlined, which will guide us presently and with continuous improvement opportunities.**

In PY16 we should have a baseline for the other set of Local Performance Accountability Measures (not from DOL, but DWS) to track and then communicate with staff to determine areas of improvement. These performance measures will require the interest and input of all career center staff, not just Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth like in the past. In regards to the Youth measures, WPWDB has chosen a new Youth Service Provider beginning PY16, Ross Innovative Employment Solutions, with expectations that our Youth measures will improve and new opportunities will be provided. We are excited about this new partnership.

13. Provide a brief description of the actions the Workforce Development Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the NCWorks Commission. [WIOA Section 108(b)(18)]

The informative and collaborative relationships that WPWDB has worked to develop with service providers, Wagner-Peyser staff, community colleges, Voc Rehab, Economic Development, Chambers, Goodwill, and employers will continue to sustain us as a high performing board. Through our HIRE meetings, and ISD leadership conversations we will work to improve all services within the NCWorks Career Centers. Further training and understanding of NCworks.gov and Futureworks will also be of benefit to help us be a high-performing workforce area because we can use this data to share with staff to address any areas of concern.

14. Describe how Performance Data, Data Validation, and NCWorks Online oversight is provided by the local Workforce Development Board?

We receive dashboard performance data from the Quality Improvement Team of DWS, and quarterly performance data from Futureworks. This information is shared with all NCWorks Career Center staff and is used as a point of focus and discussion in center team meetings. Currently the Local Area provides oversight for program performance, data validation and NCWorks online through regular monitoring of the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth files. The Program Administrator reviews files within 15 days of exit for all programs for correct activity coding, appropriate case notes and to ensure that the IEP has been closed as well as the goals and objectives. The Program Administrator also reviews for maximum performance outcomes. If anything is discovered, staff is made aware and changes are made at that point. Participant eligibility and required documentation is monitored through NCWorks online. Staff verifies and uploads documents into NCWorks online according to the Workforce Investment Act Eligibility Overview and most recently the draft of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Overview documents. These documents identify acceptable documents when verifying eligibility for Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs. Data Validation is monitored according to Issuance 2011-06, ensuring that documents are verified and uploaded in NCWorks online as appropriate. (Issuance 2011-06 references Workforce Plus and is not currently updated for NCWorks online) The Local Area also conducts a thorough, formal monitoring of each contracted service provider according to the Western Piedmont Program

Monitoring Policy. Any issues found in the annual monitoring are reported to the contractor in a written report.

C. NCWorks Career Centers (One-Stop Delivery System)

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) establishes a one-stop workforce delivery system and requires there be at least one One-Stop location (NCWorks Career Center) in each local workforce development area. These NCWorks Career Centers provide workforce development services as well as access to other programs and activities carried out by One-Stop partners identified in the WIOA.

A Tier 1 NCWorks Career Center is a physical location, open full-time as defined by the local Workforce Development Board, at which integrated services delivery is fully implemented and where services on-site include at least Trade Adjustment Act, Veterans Employment Services, Wagner-Peyser, Title I WIOA Adult and Title I WIOA Dislocated Worker.

A Tier 2 NCWorks Career Center is a physical location, open to the public at least 16 hours a week, at which paid, trained staff are available to serve customers during all hours of operation. These are locations whose primary purpose is to provide workforce services and are considered by the workforce development board to be a part of their one-stop delivery system. These locations are staffed by at least two paid, trained staff personnel who are paid by a federal workforce funding stream.

WIOA authorizes career services for adults and dislocated workers. There are three types of “career services”: basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services. These services can be provided in any order; there is no sequence requirement for these services. Career services under this approach provide local areas and service providers with flexibility to target services to the needs of the customer.

In addition to providing career and training services to individuals who are unemployed, there remains a significant population of job seekers who are underemployed. Individuals who are underemployed may include:

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

Individuals who are underemployed and meet the definition of low-income individual may receive career and training services under the Adult program on a priority basis (Also reference Priority of Services pages 16-17).

Basic career services must be made available to all individuals seeking services served in the one-stop delivery system, and include initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gap), supportive service needs, and more.

If one-stop center staff determine that individualized career services are appropriate for an individual to obtain or retain employment, these services must be made available to the individual. These services must be available in all one-stop centers.

Individualized Career Services include outreach, intake and orientation, initial assessment of skills levels, labor exchange services (job search and placement, in-demand occupation information); business services for employers; and appropriate referrals to partners and workforce programs. Additional services include specialized assessment, in-depth interviewing, development of an individual employment plan, career planning; internships and work experiences; financial literacy services; English language acquisition and follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the first day of employment.

Follow-up services must be provided as appropriate for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. Counseling about the workplace is an appropriate type of follow-up service.

After receiving an interview and evaluation, adults and dislocated workers who are determined unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment, that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, through the career services, or 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; or have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services; and who select programs of training services that are directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the adults or dislocated workers are willing to commute or relocate; and who are determined to be eligible in accordance with the priority system may be enrolled for Training Services.

Training Services may include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, skill upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training; transitional jobs or job readiness training, adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition, and more.

1. Provide a brief description of the NCWorks Career Center system and include how Career and Training Services are provided. [WIOA Section 121(e), 134(c)]

The NCWorks Career Center system administers a statewide system of workforce programs that prepare our local area citizens for employment. Work within the NCWorks Career Center is focused on the following functional areas:

Welcome, Skill Development, Employment Services, and Employer Services. The NCWorks Career Centers are also comprised of partner organizations including the Community Colleges, Vocational Rehab, Winston Salem Urban League, and Veterans Services which brings together resources that individuals, employers and workforce professionals need to prosper in the global economy.

The Western Piedmont Local Area NCWorks Career Center system is made up of three comprehensive centers (Burke, Caldwell, & Catawba Counties) of which all three are Certified NCWorks Career Centers and then there is one small branch office in Alexander County housed in one office space in the Alexander DSS Office. Two WIOA service provider staff are housed at the CVCC Alexander Center for Education (ACE) to help assist customers. Each of the NCWorks Career Centers offers service to our customers through an integrated service delivery model. Staff offer comprehensive Career Services to customers who visit the NCWorks Career Center. They receive a NCWorks Orientation which covers the services available within the Center. The orientation further discusses training/scholarship opportunities available through the Center. Once the customers understand the services of the Career Center they are then able to discuss options with staff. Staff can provide a thorough assessment of the customer's situation and their immediate needs. When the assessment shows that the customer has skills, abilities and aptitudes for work, they proceed to resume preparation and job search activities. If the assessment shows a lack of experience, skills and/or abilities to find self-sustaining employment, then the customer will be referred to training opportunities. Once eligibility and suitability for training is determined, the customer will enter more intensive evaluations and assessment to find the training that best suits the customer. Training opportunities are available for occupations that are in high demand in the local area. They may also be available in other areas if the customers are willing to relocate to an area where the occupation is in demand.

2. Describe how local Workforce Development Boards determine the need for enrollment in Training Services.

When an individual comes to the NCWorks Career Center, staff will assist them with basic career services. If staff determines through working with the individual that additional skills are needed and training may be required, they then refer them to WIOA for WIOA staff to determine eligibility and suitability for the program. Staff determines the need due to the inability of the individual to obtain employment or to obtain employment at a self-sufficient wage or at a wage equal to what they were making prior to their unemployment. Staff may also refer individuals who are under-employed or who have been long-term unemployed to WIOA for training services as well. However, a staff referral is not required. An individual may self-refer if they deem themselves as unable to obtain employment that will lead to self-sufficiency or if they have been long-term unemployed.

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

Customers utilize Career Center services for job search and placement. They may attend workshops which provide employability skills training and job search assistance. They may utilize staff assisted services for resume preparation and job search and referral. These services may be utilized if the customer is unemployed and searching for a job or if they are currently employed and need additional counseling to improve their employment situation. WPWD has requested that each Career manager meet with staff and put together a call back plan for in center

customers. (For example: On Friday afternoons when the center is closed to the public, each staff person will take time to call back two customers each to see how their visit was and how we can be of continued assistance.) We plan to make this process part of the upcoming development of Career Center collaborative policies.

4. Describe how new NCWorks Career Center staff are trained in the integrated services delivery system, dual enrollment of customers in WIOA Titles I & III and have full access to NCWorks.gov and the timeline for accomplishing the training for new staff. Describe the staff development activities that reinforce and improve the initial training efforts.

The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Area put together an integrated quality assurance team to develop a training guide for new employees to the NCWorks Career Centers. This training guide includes detailed information about the functional teams and how they operate in the Career Center. It includes a checklist for each team that identifies critical activities of each team which can be used by a new staff person until they are comfortable with the activities of a particular team. The guides are made part of the WP NCWorks Career Center Integrated Service Delivery Procedures Manual. The procedures manual also includes step by step guide to dual-enrolling customers into NCWorks.gov. In addition to having the manual, new staff work side by side with more seasoned staff to learn the NCWorks.gov system, allowing them to properly assist customers. For the WIOA case management system part of NCWorks.gov, the WPWD Program Administrator will provide initial training as well as on-going training.

A New Staff Training List is found in the ISD procedures manual. When a new staff person is hired, they receive the training list and they check off items as they complete them. There is a general section to be signed off by the Center Manager which includes; introductions to staff, phone coverage, how to answer phones, take messages, overview of forms used in the office, emergency procedures. There is a section for each functional team which is to be signed by the team leader. Items in these sections include; directions on sign-in process, list of community partners, referral process for partners, basic orientation to the WIOA/TAA program, Scholarship committee process, dual enrollment in Wagner Peyser and WIOA, virtual recruiter, and how to complete/review customer profile and background information in NCWorks.gov. Once it is signed off by the Center Manager and Functional Team Leaders, the new staff signs and dates it and it is held by the Center Manager. This should be completed within the first two (2) weeks on the job. After completing the New Staff Training List, the new staff should spend time working in each functional team to learn the basics before settling into the team in which they are assigned.

The employer of record will provide staff development opportunities including on-site training, off-site training and conference attendance as related to the position for which they are hired. In addition to employer of record training, each Friday

the Career Centers close at Noon to allow for Career Center staff training and team building activities. The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board holds staff development in high regard. The Board provides training once or twice a year on topics that are important to the integrated delivery model such as team building, customer service, conflict management, etc. The Board celebrates successes during these trainings as well.

5. Describe how the Workforce Development Board works to improve Career Center operations by working with state and regional Division of Workforce Solutions staff. **Through our HIRE meetings, and ISD leadership conversations we work to improve all services within the NCWorks Career Centers. In 2014 the Western Piedmont Local Area received approval from DWS staff to close the NCWorks Career Centers to the public at 12:00pm on Fridays. This time has allowed leadership and staff the capacity to have trainings and focused, constructive team meetings where challenges and successes can be discussed and solutions provided where necessary. The Northwest Regional leadership team meets regularly to establish consistency in services, and determine area for continuous improvement across the twelve NW counties. The WD staff engage with their DWS planner and monitor, on a regular basis to ensure policies and quality improvement are being established in such a way it aligns WIOA requirements.**
6. Describe how the Workforce Development Board holds the NCWorks Career Center operator and contractors accountable for activities and customer outcomes in the Center. **Currently through monthly ISD Leadership team meetings, which include DWS and Service Contractors, we discuss performance and customer service improvements. The ISD leadership then ensures that the center works to implement those improvements. The WDB staff also has quarterly technical assistance meetings with the service providers to ensure contractor activities are being carried out as stated in their proposal. By July 1, 2017 the WPWDB will have in a place a procured NCWorks Career Center one-stop operator. The RFP will require a detailed statement of work along with goals and objectives of the proposed activities and from this accountability measures will firmly established.**
7. Describe how the Workforce Development Board facilitates access to services provided through the NCWorks Career Center delivery system, including remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(B)] **The WPWDB and the NCWorks Career Center ISD teams have worked together to facilitate remote services available in DSS offices where applicable, Community Colleges, and outreach agencies such as Yokefellow in Caldwell County, the county/city libraries, and the Goodwill Career Connection offices. The WPWDB also has an up to date website that is business and jobseeker driven. Local recruitment events, hot jobs, success stories, and business, jobseeker, youth and veteran resources can be found via this media option. With ncworks.gov being a virtual one-stop system, remote access requires little to no involvement from the NCWorks Career Center staff.**

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

The linkages are strengthened through the RESEA/EAI programs being carried out in the NCWorks Career Centers and the Ad/DW service providers working to be cross-trained on those programs. Unemployment Insurance issues and questions should be directed to <https://www.ncesc1.com/main/login.asp> or the DES Customer Call Center at [1-888-737-0259](tel:1-888-737-0259)

9. Describe how the Local Workforce Development Board connects NCWorks integrated services to:

a) **persons with disabilities; The Career Center staff receives disability awareness training, and at varying times Voc Rehab staff have a presence in the centers. Voc Rehab staff also consistently attend the career center HIRE/Partner meetings, and their Business Service Reps participate in our Local Area Employer Services meetings.**

b) **returning veterans and skilled military retirees; Our local area career centers have two DVOPS and One LVER. The LVER covers our four counties and consistently shares information with staff. The LVER and DVOPS are also heavily engaged with the community and are key in planning and helping carry out our local Homeless Veterans Stand Downs.**

c) **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients; We have a strong relationship with our DSS agencies and they have staff that attend the career center HIRE/Partner meetings. We are also in the process of developing a referral card that will be comprehensive yet basic enough to share and utilize with our workforce partners to ensure that clients are not getting lost in the process.**

d) **Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) and Rapid Response Activities; Both of these activities are already integrated services within our career centers. As more center staff cross-train and better understand these services, this will enhance the service to the customer.**

e) **individuals with other barriers to employment; Through customer one-on-one's in the career center, individuals with barriers can be more quickly assessed and specifically directed to the best integrated service that will help them with employment. If barriers exist that our staff are not equipped to handle the customer is referred to appropriate agency to assist them effectively.**

f) **additional specific populations, if applicable; We work closely with our regional Former Offender specialist, Vanessa James. Vanessa attends both our local and regional employer services meetings to share with us her insight and skills and she in turn gains support from career center staff with integrated services for the former offender population. We also have staff that attend the local Interagency**

Council meetings where many populations are represented from Domestic Violence, Women's Shelter, Salvation Army, Family Guidance Center,...etc.

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

Both WIOA and Wagner-Peyser are held to strict compliance ensuring that physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities are adhered to. The WIOA staff is required to receive EEO/ADA training annually, and do so with the help from the DWS Equal Opportunity Officer.

11. Describe the integrated customer service process for participants. Attach a flow chart for services to include initial one-on-one interviews with customers, including NCWorks.gov dual registration, skills assessments, and determination of further services. Name document: Local Area Name Service Flow Chart 2016. **Uploaded**

Upon entrance to a career center the customer is greeted and asked a small series of introductory questions (ex: Hi How are you today, and what brings you into the career center?) to best determine next steps. The next steps based on customer feedback may be that they are taken to the resource area to receive help with networks.gov registration and resume building, or they may need to complete a REA/EAI assessment, or if other barriers are determined skills training and/or partner assistance may be needed, or they may be attending a workshop within the career center. The service flow chart is attached.

12. Attach the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the local Workforce Development Board and partners concerning operation of the NCWorks Career Center system. (A MOU guide is attached for your reference as Appendix D). [WIOA Section 121(b)(A)(iii)]. Name document: Local Area Name NCWorks Career Center MOU.

In development stage, upload forthcoming

13. Describe how the Workforce Development Board uses a portion of funds available to the Local Area to maintain the NCWorks Career Center system, including payment of the infrastructure costs of Career Centers. [WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A)(ii) and (h)]

The WDB uses portions of its funds to maintain and provide the following equipment and infrastructure at the Career Centers in our local area:

- **Caldwell Career Center-**
 - **In PY13-14 – Three iPads to quickly assist customers in the resource area; Two touch screen desktops for staff and customers; two wireless printers to make printing access quicker in the resource area; lockers for staff to secure their belongings; four sets of office furniture to allow for desk furniture for DWS staff that were relocating at Caldwell.**

- In PY15 six new laptops at the Caldwell Career Center to better serve customers within the center.
- **Burke Career Center-**
 - In PY15-16 the WDB set up Wi-Fi at the Burke Career Center so that employers would have available access during recruitment events; two desktop computers (moved from Catawba) with Wi-Fi capability for customers and employer use.
 - In PY 16-17 WDB has budgeted for updated conference room tables & chairs for the Burke Career Center Conference rooms.
- **Catawba Career Center –**
 - On April 4th 2016, the Catawba County NCWorks Career Center opened in a new location to an office setting that is more 21st Century professional and more efficient for integrated service delivery in that it offers a more inviting, innovative work space for staff and customers. The WDB now pays the lease to the City of Conover for this new office space. The WDB also provided funding for all the new furniture and audio/visual equipment for the center.
- **Alexander Career Center –** Alexander is not defined as a Tier 1 or Tier 2 center. Staff vacate an office at DSS twice a week. Ad/DW staff vacate two spaces at the Alexander Learning Center which is a satellite campus of Catawba Valley Community College. There is currently discussions with Alexander EDC to develop a more set career center in Alexander county where NCWorks would be housed in the same office space as the EDC.

The WDB has also been providing funding for various printed material like the new NCWorks Career Center signage, folders for customers, business cards, banners, and there will be more to come as the state branding team approves for more marketing material.

14. Describe the roles and any resource contributions of the NCWorks Career Center partners. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(D)]

Both WIOA and Wagner-Peyser Career Center partners are co-located, and cross-training is continuous. All staff rotates to cover the different ISD areas such as Welcome, Skill Development, Employment and Business Services. Resources vary from consumables, to rent, to equipment. Partner agencies like Voc Rehab and/or Winston Salem Urban league may have dedicated people at a career center, working in Welcome and/or assisting customers with resume writing and ncworks.gov registration. DWS-Wagner Peyser provides computers, printers, copiers, paper at no cost at the Catawba Career Center. WDB service contractors lease computers for their staff from DWS at Burke. The community college provides service contractors with computers at Caldwell and Alexander.

Note: Per USDOL FAQ January 28, 2016, local agreements for funding one-stop infrastructure costs must be in place by Program Year 2017 and must satisfy the requirements of WIOA Section 121(h).

15. Describe the Workforce Development Board's method for planning oversight, review process and frequency of review for the NCWorks Career Center system in the Local Area, including processes for ensuring quality customer service. [WIOA Section 121(a)(3)]

The three comprehensive WPWD NCWorks Career Centers have an Integrated Service Delivery Leadership team that meets weekly and/or bi-weekly based on county, to determine the success of the career center and ensure that quality customer service and continuous improvement are reviewed in a consistent manner. Customer feedback, employer feedback and recruitments events are discussed as well as ongoing performance measure reports sent from DWS.

The WPWDB Director and the DWS Regional Ops Director meet with the career center managers bi-monthly to ensure communication is consistent and staff and customer feedback is addressed. In PY16 we will be adding Career Center Customer Service monitoring as part of the required programmatic monitoring policy and checklist.

16. Describe how NCWorks Career Centers are using the integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and programs carried out by NCWorks Career Center partners. [WIOA Section 108 (b)(21)]

Since www.ncworks.gov is a shared job search and data management tool of both required Wagner-Peyser staff and Ad/DW/Youth staff, all the NCWorks Career Center staff utilize it for intake and case management for all customers, jobseekers and businesses. Career Center partners such as Voc Rehab, Goodwill Career Connections staff and the Community College HRD staff have received ncworks.gov training and can help assist center customers with resumes and job search opportunities.

17. Identify NCWorks Career Center location(s) including Tier 1 and Tier 2 sites; on-site partners; how NCWorks Career Center operator(s) are designated; provider(s) of WIOA career services and method of selection; whether youth services provider is on-site and, if so, youth services offered. Use form provided. [WIOA Section 121(b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B)] Name document: Local Area Name Career Centers. **Uploaded**

D. WIOA Title I Programs

Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

1. Describe the local Workforce Development Board's vision for serving the WIOA eligible Adults and Dislocated Workers to include high level goals, outreach strategies, service delivery and expected outcomes. Describe how this vision will improve the employment outcomes for this population.

It is the WDB's vision to serve Adults and Dislocated Workers who are eligible and in need of the WIOA program to utilize the funds for training in order to improve their economic situation and become self-sufficient. The WDB has changed the

language to raise expectations and improve the outcomes of our future participants. We have implemented a scholarship review team which reviews and discusses each application for WIOA funding. This removes the subjectivity of one person and replaces it with a group, making it more objective as it broadens the scope of view based on the experience of each team member. The review team contains WIOA staff as well as partner staff. Our goal is for everyone to succeed in their training and employment goals. In order to do that, our staff must be diligent in their evaluation and assessment of the needs of the individual. They also must consider their past experiences, career goals and the career path that becomes part of their future. While there are sometimes obstacles or difficulties that derail the best laid plans, the Career Coach becomes the voice of reason to help the participant through difficult times. The Career Coach should be a cheerleader and celebrate the successes with the participant, small and large. Each participant is unique and will require a unique employment plan with varying goals and objectives. Our services should be customer centric. The outcomes will include the completion of a training program resulting in a certificate, diploma or degree, finding employment in the training area, and making a wage that will provide self-sufficiency for themselves and their families. In addition, they should be aware of the career path for the job and what the opportunities for the future are within it.

It is the goal of the WDB to reach out of those who are in the most need of services. This is done for Adults by developing relationships and partnerships with agencies that these individuals may frequent. This may include but not be limited to the Department of Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education, Probation and Parole, etc. For Dislocated Workers, we work with the Rapid Response unit to get information to those that are being affected by lay-offs or closures. However, the Rapid Response unit only gets notifications if a larger number of employees are affected. Staff develop relationships with employers in the local area, as well as with other public agencies, so that they are aware of our dislocated worker services should they ever need them. Often, when a company becomes aware of a need to downsize or layoff, they will contact the WDB or the Career Center to seek those services for their employees who are being affected. It is WDB's desire for the community to be aware of all that we can offer to employers and individuals.

In PY16 in collaboration and with feedback we anticipate more staff training on customer service, assessments, career coaching and networks.gov just to name a few. Continued staff development will always be key to service delivery and positive outcomes.

2. Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing Adult and Dislocated Worker education and training services. 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. Describe plans to address any weaknesses identified. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(D)]

Western Piedmont Workforce Development Area has a history of providing quality WIOA programs for Adults and Dislocated Workers. The staff does not just

manage their case or coach their participants, but they develop and grow a relationship with them. This is important to keeping the participants engaged and being able to maintain contact and collect information that we need to collect on a regular basis. Another strength found in the WIOA programs is being able to place our participants who have received training into a training related job. Our staff is diligent in trying to get those who have received training services placed in full-time employment.

Areas in which we can improve include promoting training for the most in-demand jobs in the area. There is a huge demand for advanced manufacturing and furniture workers in the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Area. Our Adult/DW staff do a good job career coaching for those who are receiving training, but as a whole, the career center continues to be challenged with having the difficult conversations and selling the services available at the career center to customers who are not necessarily seeking out the services that they need. All our staff should be promoting in-demand industries and jobs for training and employment by understanding the environment in which they work, the required skills and/or education, wage potential, and career path opportunities. This would benefit our local employers, our participants and our economy. The training needs for this area have been addressed with the development of short term training classes at the local community colleges. We have the ability to build capacity in these programs by promoting these training programs to our participants. Our goal is to provide training for all career center staff on more comprehensive career coaching with customer and when and how to provide more intensive career services. In an economic environment where there are many jobs available, it has become challenging to engage customers with the training opportunities available to them. This is where developing the “sales skills” for staff will help us to show the customer what is available to them at the skill/education level where they are currently versus the opportunities available to them with additional training in their areas of interest plus the career pathway that can evolve as more training and/or experience is achieved. We need to instill the value of life-long learning in our customers. If this can be accomplished, we will be able to connect employers with the candidates that they are desperately seeking and improve the economic situation of our customers.

3. Provide the date and process for the competitive procurement of the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs that insures an arm’s length relationship between the Workforce Development Board and service delivery. Include any service provider contract extensions.

Western Piedmont released a public notice of competitive procurement for the Adult and Dislocated Worker services on January 23, 2014 followed by a bidder’s conference on Friday, February 7th. Requests for Proposals were due March 7, 2014 and the recommendation was made on April 24, 2014 with services to begin on July 1, 2014 should negotiations be successful. Contracts were extended for program year 2015 and again for program year 2016. Services included in the Request for Proposal were client-facing Adult and Dislocated Worker education and training services operated within an integrated One-Stop delivery model. Western

Piedmont will release full RFP's for Adult/Dislocated Worker in PY17. WP will adhere to state and local procurement policies when procuring Adult and Dislocated Worker contracts

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

4. Provide the date and process for the competitive procurement of the One-Stop Operator(s).

The WPWDB is currently working on developing a RFP for the one-stop operator in our local area. WP will adhere to state and local procurement policies when procuring a one-stop operator(s). The plan for release a letter of intent will be by October 1, 2016. This will ensure that the operator is in place by July 1, 2017.

Note: By June 30, 2016, every Local Board must demonstrate it is taking steps to prepare for competition of its one-stop operator. [NPRM Sec. 436.635(b)]

5. Attach the Local Workforce Development Board's Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) service providers chart effective July 1, 2016. Name document: Local Area Name Adult and DW Providers 2016. **Uploaded**

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. Define what "significant number of competent providers" means in the local area. Include whether the local Workforce Development Board uses more strict performance measures to evaluate eligible training providers. Attach if a separate policy. Name document: Local Area Name Eligible Training Providers. [Division Policy Statement 21-2015]

Uploaded

Potential WIOA participants are referred to NCWorks on-line to search for training providers. If they are interested in a training provider or program that is not approved by the local area, they may request that the training provider/program be added and/or approved by the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board according to the WPWDA Policy Statement "Approval of [Additional Training Providers/Programs](#)" dated July 1, 2015. The WPWDB maintains a list of approved Occupational Training. This list is reviewed bi-annually and updated as needed for new jobs that are in-demand in the local workforce development area. The WPWDA has three (3) community colleges in addition to, for-profit training providers. With this level of coverage, the WPWDB finds that we have a significant number of competent providers. Should a particular training area not be covered by an already approved training provider, there is a policy to add training providers and/or programs.

Training providers who have been approved in NCWorks on-line come up for review in neworks.gov on-line every two (2) years. At this time, the provider and program are reviewed for demand for jobs in the local area and past successes of the program.

7. Provide a description of how the Workforce Development Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers. [WIOA Section 108(b)(6)(A)]

The WDB staff will monitor the programs and training providers that are being utilized in the Adult, Dislocated Worker and/or Youth programs to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the workforce and employers in our local area. The WDB keeps a list of training programs that are in demand in our local area. This list is periodically updated to ensure that we are training for jobs that are in demand in our local workforce development area. Once approved in NCWorks.gov, training provider programs must be reviewed and re-approved at least every two (2) years. When the programs come up for review, they are reviewed for job demand within the local area, graduation rate, and successful job placement for completers/graduates of the program. If those criteria are met, the program gains re-approval. If there are issues with any one of those areas, the provider would be contacted for information prior to re-approval and the re-approval is in jeopardy. If multiple programs for the same provider are not re-approved, then the provider could be removed from the approved provider list.

8. Describe how the Workforce Development Board will meet all federal and state Adult and Dislocated Worker performance outcomes and training expenditure requirements. **As Discussed above in Section D., #2. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services, training for staff to provide more comprehensive career coaching and more intensive career services, in addition, to being able to sell training services will help us in meeting the training expenditure requirements. Staff must be able to help customers see what they need, and not just tell them what they need. The customer must take ownership of their career plan. If a customer is able to land a career, not just a job, then they are more likely to be successful. Success would be job placement and then maintaining a job as they move within the career pathway, which leads to more challenging positions and increased wages. The WD Staff will carefully monitor ncworks.gov case management activity codes, monthly and quarterly reports, as well as overall staff data entry and job coaching to ensure a positive impact with federal and state performance measures.**

Youth Services

Note: A reference to Youth Services and Activities is provided as Appendix E.

9. Provide an analysis of Title I WIOA eligible youth by Local Workforce Development Board area. Include the following information for the local Workforce Development Board area:
 - a) **Number of Youth ages 14 – 21: (34,982)**
 - b) **Youth ages 14-21 represent what % of the population: (9.6%)**

- c) What percentage of these youth are low-income (eligible for WIOA In-school program)?: (18%)
- d) Current school dropout statistics: (1.38%)

Out-of-School Analysis

- a) Number of Youth ages 16 – 24: (40,141)
- b) Youth ages 16-24 represent what % of the population: (11%)
- c) What are the general educational levels of this group?: (Less than High School Diploma, High School Diploma or equivalent, some college, associate's degree, bachelor's degree)
- d) What is the general employment status of this age group?: (18.8% unemployed, working part-time, full-time)

10. Describe the local Workforce Development Board's new vision for serving the WIOA eligible Youth to include high level goals, outreach strategies, planned interactions, service delivery, concepts and expected outcomes. Describe how this vision will improve the employment outcomes for this population.

It is the vision of the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board to serve WIOA eligible youth by providing tools, information and encouragement for them to realize a way to become self-sufficient by overcoming the obstacles they face. Each youth comes to us with a different story and it is important to have staff that can listen to the youth or young adult, conduct a thorough assessment of needs and develop a plan with them and not for them. The youth or young adult must have a desire to participate in the plan in order to be successful. Our youth and young adult staff will need to provide comprehensive career counseling, case management and intensive career services to the youth and young adults in the WIOA program. The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Area has many opportunities for our youth and young adults. Many of the opportunities are available for those with a high school diploma or equivalent and a short technical training. They also provide good starting wages and an opportunity for advancement. It is our vision to develop the youth and young adults in our area so that they can take advantage of the opportunities and in turn build, grow and expand the talent pipeline in our area and improve the employment outcomes for those we serve.

We expect the youth and young adults to develop the tools and skills they need to find employment with self-sustaining wages and benefits in the local area. They need to increase their educational attainment level, gain some work experience and job seeking and job keeping skills. Our program will provide, either through the contractor or partners, the fourteen (14) program elements which will help our youth and young adults to reach and exceed the expectations. Some of the elements will be built into the program design and others will be available by referral to partner agencies. Success will require further developing partnerships with other agencies to support and provide for the needs of these youth. Working together to coordinate services is critical to our success. Our youth staff must be aware of the other services available to help the WIOA youth. One of the largest barriers in our workforce development area is transportation. For those youth who live in the rural

areas, transportation is a huge issue. It is a support service that WIOA can provide for those in our program, but being successful after leaving our program will require continued access to transportation. For PY16 the WPWDB is recommending a new Youth Service Provider, Ross Innovative Employment Solutions. Ross has over 9 years of Youth Service and TANF experience in other States such as Michigan, West Virginia, and in PY15 they began services in Georgia. Ross brings a clear plan for achieving performance and has the experience to back it. Ross takes an organized and careful approach of working with at-risk youth to ensure the youth is ready to be enrolled and be successful.

We understand and take serious the refreshing focus that WIOA brings to Youth Services and its success. We are also excited that NC-DWS has heard our frustration of not having a state level subject matter expert and is working to address that need. We anticipate PY16 to be a year of great change and great accomplishments.

11. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce activities in the Local Area, 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)]

The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board has selected a new contractor for youth services beginning July 1, 2016. The new contractor is Ross Innovative Employment Solutions Corp. They will provide both in-school and out-of-school services for youth in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba counties. This is an expansion of services as currently all four counties are covered with out-of-school services, but only two (2) school systems are covered with in-school services. An innovative partnership with social service agencies in all the counties will provide referrals for the in-school program. In Catawba County, the Department of Social Services has showed a very strong interest in providing for the in-school youth who are at risk of dropping out and are interested in developing a plan to serve these youth. These same partnerships can be developed in the other counties in the local area for referrals.

In the WIOA youth program, the case managers/career coaches complete a thorough objective assessment to determine the eligibility of the student for WIOA and if there are any additional needs to be addressed. They also conduct reading and math assessments to determine the students' basic skill level. Other assessments may be completed as necessary. For in-school youth who are in the public school system, they are held to strict compliance ensuring that physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities are provided as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Out-of-school youth will be involved in classes at the local community college who are also held to strict compliance ensuring that physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities are provided as required by the ADA. All

WIOA staff is required to receive EEO/ADA training annually, and do so with the help from the DWS Equal Opportunity Officer.

12. Will the Workforce Development Board have a standing committee to provide information and to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth? [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)]

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

The WPWDB will continue to have a formal Youth Council to promote youth development as a broad public responsibility and to seek ways to serve youth in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba counties. The WPWDB will provide oversight and approval of all activities of the Youth Council. The WPWDB will provide oversight to planning, operational, and any issues relating to the provision of services to youth. Youth Council updates and activities will be part of WPWDB discussions and agenda items throughout the year.

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

1) Provide the committee's purpose/vision.

2) Provide the planned Program Year meeting schedule.

3) List the 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.

4) Provide the Committee's Chair information (who must be a Workforce Development Board member.) [WIOA Section 107(b)(4)(A)(ii)]

13. Provide the Workforce Development Board's approach to meeting the required 75% minimum youth expenditures on out-of-school youth and include special outreach efforts and highlight planned program design. [WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A)]

The WPWDB has been spending 60% of the total youth budget on Out-of-School youth for a number of years. The move to 75% expenditure is not an issue, especially considering the expansion of the eligibility criteria and age of out-of-school youth that may be served. The increase to 24 years old in itself allows us to offer services to more individuals and the dropping of the low - income requirement for some of the eligibility barrier groups will allow us to serve more individuals as well. Marketing and recruiting will be the challenge. The upper age bracket will be recruited through the career centers in addition to referrals from partner agencies for certain barrier groups like offenders, high school dropouts and parenting youth. Having youth/young adult career coaches in the centers to talk to customers who may fall into the youth age range and meet the eligibility criteria and discuss the services which are available to help them become job ready will be the most crucial step for recruiting those in the 21-24 age range.

Ross Innovative Employment Solutions will be our provider for youth services beginning July 1, 2016. They have shifted their focus, in the programs they operate in other states, to out-of-school. The WPWDB believe that they will bring new outreach and marketing strategies for this population.

WPWDB will track 75% of OSY expenditures through its Gazelle finance/voucher system. Updates about expenditures will be sent to the service provider monthly.

14. Provide the Workforce Development Board's approach to meeting the required 20% minimum for work experience to include an estimate of expenditures that will be paid wages to youth. [WIOA Section 129(c)(4)]

Work experiences will help youth acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment. The purpose is to provide the participant with the opportunities for career exploration and skill development and is not to benefit the employer, although the employer may, in fact, benefit from activities performed by the youth. Youth funds may be used to pay wages and related benefits for work experiences in the public, private, for-profit or non-profit sectors when an employee/employer relationship has been established (as determined under the Fair Labor Standards Act), and where the objective assessment and Individual Service Strategy indicate that a Work Experiences element is appropriate.

Work experiences may be subsidized or unsubsidized and may include the following:

- Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities throughout the school year;**
- Pre-apprenticeship programs;**
- Internships and job shadowing;**
- On-the-Job training opportunities. In most cases, on-the-job training is not an appropriate work experience for youth participants under age 18. Local program operators may choose, however, to use this service strategy for eligible youth when it is appropriate based on the needs identified by the objective assessment of an individual youth participant.**

The job developer, career coaches, and/or case managers are responsible for securing the positions for work experience opportunities. They also plan activities to allow exposure to various industry sectors of in-demand jobs in the area. In addition, they either lead classes in employability skills or secure a community partner to assist. For the older OSY who are eligible for WIOA, services are available at the career centers and at the community college through Human Resource Development. Those older OSY who need more intensive services will work with the youth career coaches at the Career Center. They can provide labor market information, career assessments and information on training and/or jobs available in the area. Program development is in the planning stages with the providers for PY2016. At this time the newly approved Youth Service Provider for Western Piedmont, Ross Innovative Employment Solutions has budgeted \$230,700 for work

experience. The stipend/wages will range from \$7.50 - \$10.00 per hour based on In-school or Out-of-school participant designation and individual service strategy.

15. Describe how the local Workforce Development Board partners, aligns, and leverages, as appropriate with:

- Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program resources and policies; **The WPWD has a strong relationship with our local area Title II partners. Even before WIOA some AEFL staff spent set hours in the career center, which has only enhanced our alignment and allowed us to leverages subject matter experts where applicable with appropriately identified clients. Our referral process across the partnership has also benefited both parties and clients. We worked together to complete an executive summary for the AEFL plan.**
- Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program resources and policies; **The WPWD has built a strong collaborative partnership with our local VR offices over the years. The VR business services representatives actively participate in our local business services meetings; assist with recruitment events; utilize NCWorks.gov with their clients and a constant attendee at our HIRE meetings.**
- Integrates adult education with occupational education and training and workforce preparation, as well as the creation of career pathways for youth. [USDOL TEGL 8-15]
Integrating adult education with occupational education, training and workforce preparation, as well as the creation of career pathways for youth is an on-going goal for WPWDB. These areas are built into the WIOA 14 elements which will streamline the service delivery to youth. As we strive to certify our areas industry specific career pathways, leveraging occupational education, training and workforce preparation will be easier to implement and demonstrate success.

16. Describe how each of the required fourteen program elements will be made available to youth. Complete the Youth Program Elements chart on the provided form. Name document: Local Area Name Youth Program Elements.

Uploaded: The 14 elements will be made available based on individual, careful assessment of each youth to identify which of the 14 element(s) will best fit their individual service strategy and plan, to ensure success for them.

17. Describe how follow-up services will be provided for youth.

After exit from all programs, all youth participants are required to receive 12 months of follow-up services. The type of follow-up and the frequency of follow-up should be based on the needs of the participant during the one year following exit from the program. Follow-up services continue to support the participant as they move forward and take on the roles and responsibilities of an adult. The follow-up services should be provided as needed to provide a successful transition for the

participant and the completion of program goals for successful performance outcomes.

Some youth and young adults will need more frequent and intensive follow-up services than others. Follow-up should occur quarterly at a minimum. All follow-up services are recorded in NCWorks.gov by adding “F” activities and case notes as appropriate. These activities include: referral to community resources, tracking progress on the job, assistance securing better paying job, and assistance with job/work related problems, etc.

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

18. Provide the date and process for when the competitive procurement of the Youth Programs were completed to include any contract extensions. Add the RFP timeline and review process.

RFP Release Date	January 29, 2016
Bidders Conference	February 5, 2016
Proposal Deadline	March 4, 2016 by 4:00pm
Formal Review of Proposals	Begins March 7, 2016
WPWDB Notice of Selection	April 29, 2016
Contract Negotiations	May 2, 2016
Contract Start Date	July 1, 2016

Overall services and strategies proposed by Clay Wilson & Assoc., Burke Public Schools, and Hickory Public Schools did not address the fact that performance was not met in PY14, nor how they each plan to meet performance going forward with the new legislation of WIOA. In many areas the answers were complacent and vague, particularly lacking in innovative strategies to engage youth within critical areas such as career pathways, financial literacy, post-secondary education and/or work experience.

WPWD Youth Service providers in PY13 technically did not meet the three measures (one of the measures was within 80% of the state recognized achievement), PY14 none of the three Youth measures were met, and we are on track after the first two quarters of PY15 to see that same negative result.

Four Workforce Board staff objectively reviewed the RFP's and worked individually to carefully review each of the four RFP's that were submitted. The WD staff discussed and provided further review with the WD Board Executive Committee which represented the RFP review committee. After the review and evaluation of the information we came together as a group to objectively compare evaluation criteria and notes. It was unanimous that Ross Innovative Employment Solutions had the most successful and comprehensive RFP, providing innovative strategies to engage youth within critical areas such as career pathways, financial literacy, post-secondary education and/or work experience, and the required WIOA 14 elements.

19. Attach the Local Workforce Development Board youth service providers chart, effective July 1, 2016 using the provided form. Complete each column to include specifying where Youth Services are provided. Name the document: Local Area Name Youth Providers. **Uploaded**
20. Describe how the Workforce Development Board will meet all federal and state Youth performance outcome requirements.
The WPWDB has recently awarded a new contractor with youth services for the area. This particular contractor has been successful meeting federal performance measures in other states in which they have worked. In addition, a quarterly meeting with our contractors has been added during which we discuss performance in addition to challenges, issues and celebrations related to the previous quarter. This allows us to be proactive. Once we see an issue, we can discuss solutions right away and put in place actions which can get us back on track.
A youth leads group has been established in NC which will allow all areas to discuss and develop some consistent practices across the state related to performance and accountability.
21. Specify if the Local Workforce Development Board plans to offer incentives for 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; c) whether WIOA funds will be used and d) the Local Workforce Development Board has internal controls to safeguard cash/gift cards. Name document: Local Area Name Youth Incentive Policy.
Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board does offer incentives for youth as a means to encourage the attainment of individual goals that lead to the completion of a high school diploma or its equivalent, an occupational skills credential, a Career Readiness certificate or other programmatic goals. The Western Piedmont Youth Incentive Policy is to be followed for the administration of youth incentives.

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

E. Policies

1. Provide a description of the Local Workforce Development Board oversight and monitoring process including processes for program and fiscal monitoring. [WIOA Section 107(d)(8)]. Attach a copy of the monitoring policy and tools. Name document: Local Area Name Oversight and Monitoring PY 2016.
Uploaded
The Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board staffs monitor WIOA programs annually and review for fiscal and programmatic compliance inclusive of technical assistance and corrective actions as required by the Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions. While annual monitoring is required, the WPWDB conducts periodic monitoring throughout the year as well. Thorough monitoring of

the programs ensures that the programs are in compliance year round. The WPWDB staff meets quarterly with contractors to provide feedback and/or technical assistance and discuss corrective actions when necessary.

2. Describe processes to ensure individuals are not discriminated against on the basis of age, disability, sex, race, color or national origin. [WIOA Section 188]
Service providers shall make efforts to provide employment and training opportunities and services on an equitable basis throughout all WIOA funded programs or activities. Such efforts shall include but not be limited to outreach efforts to broaden the composition of the pool of those considered for participation or employment, to include members of both sexes, the various race/ethnicity and age groups, and individuals with disabilities. Service providers must maintain sufficient records to document that programs and participants are selected equitable. All programs, to the maximum extent possible, shall contribute to the elimination of sex stereotyping, architectural barriers, and artificial barriers to employment and training. All Job Training Plans and applications will be evaluated for compliance with these requirements and for any adverse effects on equal opportunity.

Outreach efforts may include, but are not limited to: 1) advertising the programs and/or activities in media, such as newspapers or radio programs that specifically target various populations; 2) sending notices about openings in programs and/or activities to schools or community service groups that serve various populations; and 3) consulting with appropriate community service groups about ways to improve outreach and service to various populations.

3. Attach the Local Workforce Development Board's current Equal Opportunity (EO) Complaint Grievance Procedure to address EO requirements [29 CFR Part 37.71]. Name document: Local Area Name *EO Complaint Grievance Procedure 2016*.
Uploaded
4. Provide the Workforce Development Board policy(ies) on supportive services for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth (i.e., amount, duration, qualifying criteria). [WIOA Section 134(d)(2)]. Name document: Local Area Name *Supportive Services Policy*.
Uploaded Childcare and Transportation Policies
5. Does the Workforce Development Board provide Needs-Related Payments? If yes, provide the Workforce Development Board policy(ies) on Needs-Related Payments for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth. The policy should include amount, duration, qualifying criteria. [WIOA Section 134(d)(3)]. Name document: Local Area Name *Needs-Related Payments Policy*.
The Western Piedmont WDB does not have a Needs-Related Payments policy at this time as the WDB does not offer needs-related payments.

6. Does the Workforce Development Board provide local Incumbent Worker Training? If yes, provide the Workforce Development Board policy for local Incumbent Worker Training. The policy should include eligibility and the non-Federal share for employers. [WIOA Section 134(d)(4)]. Name document: Local Area Name Incumbent Worker Policy.

Yes. The WPWDB provides Incumbent Worker Training grants. The Western Piedmont WDB does not have a local area Incumbent Worker Policy. The WPWD local area utilizes the state policy.

Note: The Workforce Development Board may use not more than 20 percent of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to pay for the federal share of the cost of training through a training program for incumbent workers.

7. Does the Workforce Development Board provide local Transitional Jobs Training? If yes, provide the Workforce Development Board policy for local Transitional Jobs. [WIOA Section 134(d)(5)]. Name document: Local Area Name Transitional Jobs Plan.

WPWD does not have a Transitional Jobs Plan. See #8 for our successful and planned use of OJT.

Note: The Workforce Development Board may use not more than 10 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to provide Transitional Jobs Training.

8. Describe the Local Area's planned use of On-the-Job Training (OJT). Provide the Local Area's On-the-Job Training policy(ies). [WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)]. Name document: Local Area Name OJT Policy. **Uploaded**

On-the-Job Training (OJT) is recognized as one of the most effective programs that contributes to the objectives of WIOA. It insures that training is relevant to business while helping a participant gain transferable skills. OJT training is a vital part of the ISD product box of services provided in the Western Piedmont Local Area. WPWDB Business Services Representatives manage OJT, while the employer is the Training Provider. It is an excellent service to offer to new, or expanding businesses.

WIOA OJT funds are utilized to reimburse employers for the extraordinary expenses incurred while training those who might otherwise be excluded from the job opportunity. Training time for a contract is determined by the employer's specific job description, the candidate's experience and *Prove It* Assessments given to the candidate to determine skill gaps. An OJT contract may not be written for occupations requiring less than 240 hours of training or for more than a maximum of 1040 hours of training.

Priority of Services - Section 134(c)(3)(E) of WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities. Under this section, one-stop center staff responsible for these funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services.

Individuals who are underemployed and meet the definition of a low-income individual may receive career and training services under the Adult program on a priority basis. Additionally, individuals who meet the definition of an individual with a barrier to employment (WIOA 3(24)) who are underemployed may also be served in the Adult program. [USDOL TEGL 3-15]

Individuals who are underemployed may include:

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

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all USDOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, as described in TEGL 10-09, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority described above, priority must be provided in the following order:

- i. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.*
- ii. Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.*
- iii. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.*
- iv. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.*

Priority for services does not preclude service to individuals who are not low-income or not receiving public assistance or not a veteran, but rather establishes the order of precedence for service as provided at WIOA and section 134(b)(3)(E).

Note: *When past income is an eligibility determinant for Federal employment or training programs, any amounts received as military pay or allowances by any person who served on active duty, and certain other specified benefits must be disregarded for the veteran and for other individuals for whom those amounts would normally be applied in making an eligibility determination. Military earnings are not to be included when calculating income for veterans or transitioning service members for this priority, in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 4213.*

With respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities priority shall be given to recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient for receipt of career services and training services. In

addition, Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all USDOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs.

Under WIOA, an individual may receive training services after an interview, evaluation, or assessment, and career planning if the one-stop operator or partner determines the individual is unlikely or unable, by only receiving career services, to retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment. Additionally, the one-stop operator or partner must also determine that the training the individual receives would result in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment. The one-stop operator or partner must also determine that the individual has the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in and complete the training. [NPRM 680.210]

9. Describe the Local Workforce Development Board's process and policy to meet priority of service requirements for Adult Training Services. If the Local Workforce Development Board has a policy, attach the document and name document: Local Area Name Priority of Service Policy. **Uploaded with process included**

10. How does the Local Workforce Development Board define self-sufficiency?
Adult Self-Sufficiency Definition
Individuals who are employed, earning wages/income equal to or greater than 200% of the lower living standard income level (adjusted for family size), receiving family health insurance benefits, and not receiving public assistance including, but not limited to, subsidized housing or food stamps.
Dislocated Worker Self-Sufficiency
Individuals who have re-entered the workforce earning wages/income, equal to or greater than, 80% of their pre-layoff compensation, and eligible for family health insurance benefits; or dislocated workers who meet the adult definition of self-sufficiency.

11. Provide the Local Workforce Development Board Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy and include the following elements in summary. [WIOA Section 108(b)(19)]. Name document: Local Area Name ITA Policy. **Uploaded**

Individual Training Accounts (ITA) Summary	
Dollar Amount Limits annually	\$5000
Dollar Amount Lifetime Limits	\$7600
Time Limits	2 years or less (or by special permission)
Degree or Certificates allowed (Associate's, Bachelor's, other)	Associate's Degrees, Diplomas, Continuing Education Certificate's or Third Party recognized Credentials/Certificates

Period of time for which ITAs are issued (semester, school year, short term, etc.)	Issued each semester or prior to short-term training
Procedures for determining case-by-case exceptions for training that may be allowed	Costly Occupational Training Policy - Approval of Western Piedmont Program Administrator Required

12. Describe methods to ensure all updates and changes to the local Workforce Development Board Policies are submitted to the Division throughout the life of this Local Plan.
The WPWDB ensures all updates and changes to local policies are submitted using a team approach. The Director, Program Administrator and Program Coordinator review policies and make updates. The Program Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the updates are made and uploaded to WISE in our local plan.

II. Regional Strategic Planning

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 system includes businesses, organizations, agencies, employed and unemployed persons, training and educational institutions, adults and youth. To enhance services to all these constituents, aligning workforce development planning and services with regional labor markets is both effective and productive. Communities and regions recognize that to have successful economic development, it must go hand-in-hand with a well-functioning workforce development system. North Carolina has built on several years of emphasizing the value of regional efforts and worked with local workforce development boards and local elected officials to establish and enhance identification of appropriate regions and the working relationships that have been developed.

Local Area Plans should reflect compatibility with NCWorks Commission's Strategic Plan and the North Carolina Jobs Plan, issued in December 2013 that contains recommended strategies for economic growth during the years 2014 – 2024 and the draft North Carolina WIOA State Unified Plan. A regional framework in Local Area Plans should:

- *Promote effective and efficient use of resources;*
- *Align with North Carolina's regional economic development efforts;*
- *Identify the workforce needs of businesses, job seekers and workers, current and projected employment opportunities and job skills necessary to obtain employment;*
- *Better address the workforce issues of businesses and individuals on a labor market basis;*
- *Detail coordination with community colleges and universities;*
- *Provide a customer-focused coordinated approach to delivery of training, employment services and economic development; and*
- *Articulate a consistent and defined regional approach to workforce development.*

Local Workforce Development Boards are to continue, or begin, formal interaction based on regional geography aligning with labor market areas. The following regional configurations will be used for submission of this Regional Plan:

- *Western Region: Southwestern and Mountain Areas WDBs;*
- *Northwest Region: High Country, Western Piedmont, and Region C WDBs;*
- *Piedmont Triad Region: Northwest Piedmont, Guilford, Davidson Works, and Regional Partnership WDBs;*
- *Southwest Region: Centralina, Charlotte Works, and Gaston County WDBs;*
- *North Central Region: Kerr-Tar, Durham, and Capital Area WDBs;*
- *Sandhills Region: Lumber River, Cumberland County, and Triangle South WDBs;*
- *Northeast Region: Region Q, Northeastern, and Turning Point WDBs; and*
- *Southeast Region: Eastern Carolina and Cape Fear WDBs.*

1. Identify the Workforce Development Boards comprising the configuration for regional strategic planning and the counties each Board serves. Provide a reference name for the regional group, if applicable.

Region C Workforce Development Board; Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board; High Country Workforce Development Board. Collectively known as the Future Workforce Alliance.

2. Describe the vision for the region and how the Workforce Development Boards collaborate to achieve that vision. Describe the regional goals that have been established and how performance towards those goals be measured?

The vision of the FWA is to help employers meet their workforce needs, help individuals build careers, strengthen the local economy, and meet the challenges of global competition. Our goal is to provide job seekers the opportunity for advanced educational attainment that will provide meaningful careers and improve their quality of life by making them self-sustaining. We also represent 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. The FWA realize that embracing an employer (business customer) led system is paramount to our ability to truly develop and provide quality training opportunities for jobseeker customers that will have significant impact and value for local/regional businesses. This includes working collaboratively with our local community colleges as well as other training providers to convene honest communication with Business leaders and assess training that truly enhances their workforce as well as increases a jobseeker's employability. Below we provide a more specific layout for Goals and Strategies:

Goals-

- Workers have skills they need to be successful and fill the current and emerging high-wage demand jobs.
- Employers have skilled workforce to remain competitive and continue to contribute to local prosperity
- Continue to align services that are integrated and make efficient and effective use of resources.
- Increase partner agency referrals and reverse referrals for greater impact and collaboration.

Strategies and measurement-

- Sector strategies through the development of Certified Career Pathways
- Continue to the progress toward the establishment of Work Ready Communities, which can be tracked vis www.workreadycommunities.org
- Promote and assist in the establishment of Registered Apprenticeship Programs
- Engage youth to increase their work experience opportunities, to prepare them to be productive citizens. This will be tracked through service providers and ncworks.gov performance measures.

3. Provide a brief synopsis of the region's significant accomplishments working together during the past year.

In PY15 there was no specific regional accomplishment by FWA. We continue to collaborate via phone and in person to discuss challenges and interpretations of the new legislation, WIOA while trying to meet customer demands. We do meet quarterly as a regional leadership team along with our NCWorks Center Managers and the Northwest Regional Operations Director to determine strategies for success and continuous improvement.

Early in the program year Region C experienced the situation of having their workforce board director vacate the role and move to work for DWS as the Southwest Regional Operations Director. In April 2016 the High Country Workforce Board director also left and took another position outside the area. Due to these transitions collaboration has been minimal as far as achieving any specific accomplishments.

4. Describe how the regional vision aligns with the draft NC Unified State Plan.
Our regional vision, goals and strategies align with the NC Unified State Plan by aligning with the focus on Career Pathways, Work Ready Communities, Youth Engagement, Adult Basic Ed, providing funding for increased skill sets and consistent job placements. Knowledge and skills needed and preferred vary among employers even within the same industry. However local, anecdotal feedback from employers at committee meetings, board meetings, economic development meetings, and other partner gatherings regularly return to the lack of soft skills in job candidates. The general opinion is that other needs (work experience, education credentials, and technical skills) can be more easily be addressed. The 2014 Employer Needs Survey produced by LEAD and the NC Association of

Workforce Development Boards found that roughly one in four employers statewide reported that a lack of soft skills (communication, enthusiasm, and interpersonal skills) was a reason for business hiring difficulty.

It is anticipated that the creation of new industry sector partnerships where none previously existed and the ongoing work of current groups will be able to provide more detailed needs, whether industry-specific or locally-specific, that will begin to address the hiring challenges of local and regional businesses.

5. Provide an analysis of the regional economic conditions to include: a) existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and, b) knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. Include sources used and business involvement in determining needs. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(A)(i)(ii) and (B)] **See Attachment A (#5 regional) Economy Overview for Plan 3.31.16. In the Western Piedmont area, all four counties have an employer advisory group that meets monthly and keeps us informed of their employment and training needs. These meetings is where several key training academies have been developed through partnership with the community colleges.**
6. Provide a thorough analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. [WIOA Section 108(b)(1)(C)] **See Attachment B (#6 regional). An analysis of the workforce in the region is carefully examined and considered using www.ncworks.gov, Labor Market Facts and Analysis, and LEAD LMI information. Consistent involvement with K-16 stakeholders also give us immediate insight to educational and skill levels of our youth and under/unemployed workforce. UPLOADED screen shot/reports of the ncworks.gov labor market data for the Northwest Prosperity Zone that demonstrates ability to analyze.**
7. Describe strategies and services used to coordinate workforce development programs and economic development. [WIOA Section 108(b)(4)(A)(iii)]
Each of the FWA member workforce entities regularly meets with local Economic Development entities to assess their needs, discuss projects and provide support and encouragement related to both new recruitment efforts and to existing industries. The Certified Work Ready Community initiative has also brought both voices to the table for collaboration and commitment to make sure it is a success and that goals are met on time. The FWA is completely committed to developing and maintaining relationships with Economic Development partners in order to best meet business customer needs. For the Northwest Prosperity Zone we meet with Bill Slagle, EDPNC, Economic Development Regional Industry Mgr; Marty Tobey, CTE Regional Rep, and Betty Silver, Customized Training Rep to discuss strategies and services for workforce and economic development.
8. Describe how the business services resources of each of the Workforce Development Boards work together on a regional basis to serve employers across the labor market.

Regionally the BSR's meet quarterly to discuss and address issues that have been presented by local business leaders. Discussions include best practices, current employer needs, instruction, navigation and issues with using the NCWorks system; raising manufacturing awareness; scheduling Career and Job Fairs as needed and requested by potential employers. The group is also responding to any needed rapid response meetings to meet with employees who are being laid off due to plant closings or economic downturns.

The group is also discussing certified work ready communities and once certified how to maintain the certification. This initiative is one that has been and continues to be important to the entire region and they have every intention of working toward each of the counties achieving this designation as soon as possible. This approach is also directly in line with the NCWorks Commission Strategic Plan dealing with expanding the number of Work Ready Communities on a statewide basis.

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

Most of the FWA are rural areas and local transportation is one of the biggest challenges, and in most cases mass transit does not exist therefore, making the conversation around regional transportation a moot point at this time.

Many rural counties have local transportation authorities that may be utilized when necessary, however, often the cost of utilizing these services is prohibitive.

Below is data showing commuting statistics for the 15-county region. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of workers are employed outside of their county of residence, while forty-four percent (44%) live and work in the same county. *Data compiled from the 2014 Data Books for North Carolina Prosperity Zones by NC LEAD.*

	Employed in County, Live Outside	Live in County, Employed Outside	Employed and Live in County
Alexander	4,038	9,547	4,199
Alleghany	1,320	1,758	1,414
Ashe	2,566	4,755	4,105
Avery	3,342	4,743	1,906
Burke	12,875	14,579	12,069
Caldwell	10,476	24,269	12,791
Catawba	41,053	27,011	33,462

Cleveland	15,554	26,998	15,708
McDowell	6,749	8,930	6,962
Mitchell	2,470	3,280	1,950
Polk	2,906	4,292	1,624
Rutherford	7,378	10,659	9,438
Watauga	10,063	9,774	9,303
Wilkes	8,955	13,806	11,595
Yancey	1,574	3,963	1,799

10. Describe how the region coordinates with area secondary education, community colleges and universities to align strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication of services.
[WIOA Section 108(b)(10)]

Each of the FWA Workforce Development Boards benefit from regular collaboration and consistent communication with local community college providers. Currently there are eight community colleges in the FWA service region that are members of the N.C. Community College system (Isothermal, Cleveland, McDowell Technical, Mayland, Wilkes, Western Piedmont, Caldwell, and Catawba Valley). The prevalence of these institutions of higher learning allows the FWA providers to collaboratively work in developing training programs that support high growth occupations and in building career pathways that can support local business needs and foster growth. It also allows the FWA to regularly act as a convener to share ideas and program of instruction examples between training entities, thus ensuring that there is an effort to minimize duplication. We have engaged in ongoing communication with Community College providers to build and monitor training programs for viability and effectiveness. Furthermore, the FWA remains very involved with Public School officials on a regular basis. This allows for Career pathway development to be targeted at specific sectors and to insure that all applicable representatives are involved in the planning and execution of building such initiatives. In regards to STEM efforts, there is an early stage initiative called, STEM West that is seeking support in order to mimic the STEM East alliance and provide and reap the same benefits for the western part of the State. Catawba County Schools has been the lead on this project so far but the advisory board is made of up public and private partners. The FWA will continue to leverage and value educational partners and stakeholders in an effort to always be developing and evolving career pathway strategies for students, jobseekers, and business customers.

11. Provide details on how the region addresses workforce issues specifically related to its: a) cities and/or towns; b) suburban areas; and c) rural areas.

The FWA covers a total of 15 of the 100 N.C. Counties. As a result, there is a wide range of diversity regarding socio-economic, demographic, and logistic challenges. While the majority of the FWA service area is recognized as being in rural communities, there are developing cities and towns scattered throughout the entire region. Despite these differences, the FWA is currently experiencing moderate growth in the Manufacturing, Allied Health and Hospitality/Tourism sectors. As a result, the FWA is able to continue to identify and replicate best practices wherever possible. Examples include the creation of Work Readiness Certification training programs to address soft skills issues throughout multiple areas. The FWA also works diligently to remain engaged and active throughout the entire NCWorks Career Center System through the auspices of Integrated Services Delivery. It is through these relationships that the FWA and associated staff can stay informed about local challenges, develop and maintain regular communication with jobseeker customers and continuously assess and identify workforce issues in a variety of areas.

The FWA Workforce boards also have an advantage of knowing and understanding the cities, towns, suburban areas and rural areas outlying workforce issues because they are housed within councils of government. Through this relationship we have quicker knowledge of business expansion needs from the community development block grants; housing needs from Section 8 housing; transportation and data analysis that can assist us and other workforce partners.

12. Provide details on how the region connects military skills to occupational demands to serve military veterans and families. Include methods the region uses to promote the hiring of military veterans.

The FWA is committed to providing prioritized services to military veterans and their families. The FWA works closely with Local Veteran employment Representatives (LVER) as well as with Disabled Veteran's Outreach Program Specialists to insure that there is a wide variety of services available to military veterans' and their families. It is vital to the FWA to insure that local business and employer representatives are aware of a variety of Veteran related subsidies and incentives designed to encourage and accelerate the employment of military veterans. The FWA also participates in regional Stand Downs in order to provide services for veterans. The WDB's work with, assist and help coordinate the region's Homeless Veterans Stand-down events. Recently the Innovate Catawba Workforce team coordinated a USO of NC training event, sending out invitations across the region to HR personnel. This opportunity consisted of military consultant/outreach groups like USO of NC to provide training to HR personnel in the region to educate them on how to go to a Military base, engage with those about to separate, and recruit them for job opportunities in our area.

13. Describe the Workforce Development Board's use of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies, designed to meet the needs of

employers in the corresponding region in support of the regional strategy to meet the needs of businesses. [WIOA Section 108(b)(4)(B)]

WDB's and regional partnerships are committed to expanding the recognition of the labor force throughout our service areas by continuing to work with counties to achieve recognition as a Certified Work Ready Community, as recognized by ACT. Additionally, the WDB's will focus primarily on the promoting and the facilitation of training for the following occupational clusters:

- **Advanced Manufacturing—including S.T.E.M. and maintenance occupations**
- **Nursing, Allied Health, and other health-related occupations**
- **Mission Critical Operations and Information Technology**
- **Hospitality and Tourism**

This will be enhanced by the development of Certified Career Pathways in Advanced Manufacturing and Nursing/Allied Health.

The On-the-Job Training Program provides incentives for business to help defray the cost of training eligible new employees. The program also provides training opportunities in the local business community to adults and dislocated workers. OJT is a training method where experienced employees instruct and coach new employees on how to perform their job, giving them the benefit of experience.

Services to the businesses include:

- **Screening aptitude and basic skills requirements**
- **Referral of eligible applicants**
- **Reimbursement of up to 75% of the training wage (depending on the number of employees at the company's training location—see OJT Policy document) for up to 26 weeks-depending on the skills needed to perform the job and the skills gap identified for the training individual.**
- **Follow-up services to help ensure completion of training and retention of the newly trained employee**

OJT is available to both public and private sector businesses and may be linked concurrently or consecutively to classroom training funded through WIOA or other resources.

PY 2016 Local Area Plan Instructions Attachment Checklist

- ☐ Signed copy of Consortium Agreement
- ☐ Administrative Entity Organizational Chart
- ☐ Workforce Development Board List (*form provided*)
- ☐ Workforce Development Board By-laws
- ☐ Local Area Organizational Chart
- ☐ Local Area Certification Regarding Debarment * (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area Signatory Form* (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area Services Flow Chart
- ☐ One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding (*guide provided*)
- ☐ Local Area NCWorks Career Center System (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area Adult and Dislocated Worker Services Providers (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area Youth Program Elements (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area Youth Services Providers (*form provided*)
- ☐ Local Area Youth Incentive Policy
- ☐ Local Area Oversight Monitoring Policies and Tools
- ☐ Local Area Equal Opportunity Procedures
- ☐ Local Area Supportive Services Policies
- ☐ Local Area Needs-Related Policies (optional)
- ☐ Local Area Incumbent Worker Training Policy (optional)
- ☐ Local Area On-the-Job Training Policy
- ☐ Local Area Transitional Jobs Policy (optional)
- ☐ Local Area Individualized Training Account Policy

*Mail signed and unfolded originals to assigned Division Planner at N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions, 4316 Mail Services Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4316.