

NORTH DAKOTA PYS 2022-2023 (MOD)

CONTENTS

North Dakota PYs 2022-2023 (Mod).....	1
Overview	3
Options for Submitting a State Plan	3
How State Plan Requirements Are Organized	4
I. WIOA State Plan Type and Executive Summary	5
a. WIOA State Plan Type.....	5
Combined Plan Partner Program(s)	6
b. Plan Introduction or Executive Summary.....	7
II. Strategic Elements.....	7
a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis	7
b. State Strategic Vision and Goals.....	45
c. State Strategy	58
III. Operational Planning Elements.....	64
a. State Strategy Implementation.....	64
b. State Operating Systems and Policies.....	87
IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs.....	110
V. Common Assurances (For All Core Programs)	111
VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs	112
Program-specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B	112
Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services)	151
Program-specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs....	167
Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (Combined or General).....	183
VII. Program-Specific Requirements for Combined State Plan Partner Programs	243
Performance Indicator Appendix.....	243
All WIOA Core Programs	243
Additional Indicators of Performance.....	244
Other Appendices.....	244

OVERVIEW

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan— a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), and
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III),
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined State Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II-IV of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)) ¹
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program (programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

[1] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.

- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
 - State Strategy Implementation,
 - State Operating Systems and Policies,
 - Assurances,
 - Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
 - Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, Supplement to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.² States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations.

Paperwork Reduction Act: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) provides that an agency may not conduct, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to be 86 hours per state; including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Responding to this collection is required to obtain or retain the Federal grant benefit. In addition, responses to this information collection are public, and the agencies offer no assurances of confidentiality. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Investment, and reference OMB control number 1205-0522. Note: Please do not return the completed plan to this address.

[2] Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs. Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

Combined State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs, as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below.

This is a unified plan

COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

No

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

No

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))

No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))

No

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)

No

Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)

No

Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

No

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

No

Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))

No

B. PLAN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Unified or Combined State Plan may include an introduction or executive summary. This element is optional.

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

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

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include—

I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

II. EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

III. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

i. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

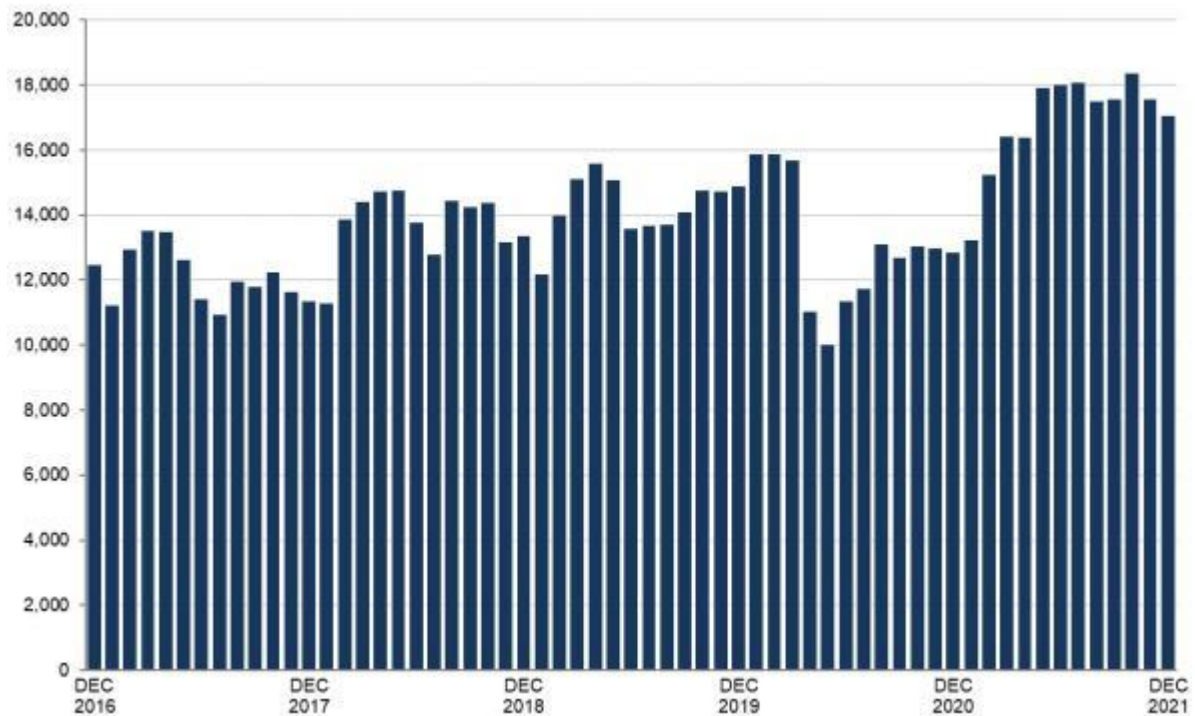
Online job openings statistics provide a timely overview of the current supply/demand dynamic of North Dakota's labor market. Job Service North Dakota's online labor exchange system is the underlying source for the job openings and resume data produced for the state. North Dakota had a total of 17,073 open and available online job openings in December 2021, a change of -2.9 percent (-507) from the prior month and +32.6 percent (+4,199) from the same month one year ago. Newer job openings, those posted within the last 30 days, accounted for 68.0 percent of all job openings. Of those openings with a typical entry-level education assignment, 51.0 percent required either a high school diploma or equivalent or no educational credential. The remaining job openings required some sort of postsecondary education or credential.

Among North Dakota's 53 counties, 35 reported an over-the-year increase in job openings, while 14 reported an over-the-year decrease. Cass County reported the largest over-the-year

increase in job openings with a change of +1,806. Traill County reported the largest over-the-year decrease with a change of -120. Cass County reported the largest number of job openings (5,956), followed by Burleigh County (2,977), and Grand Forks County (1,798).

Total online job openings dropped to a low in May 2020 (10,027) due to the effects of the pandemic and rose back to current levels over the year. North Dakota has not seen 17,000+ online job openings since 2015 due to the upswing of the oil boom.

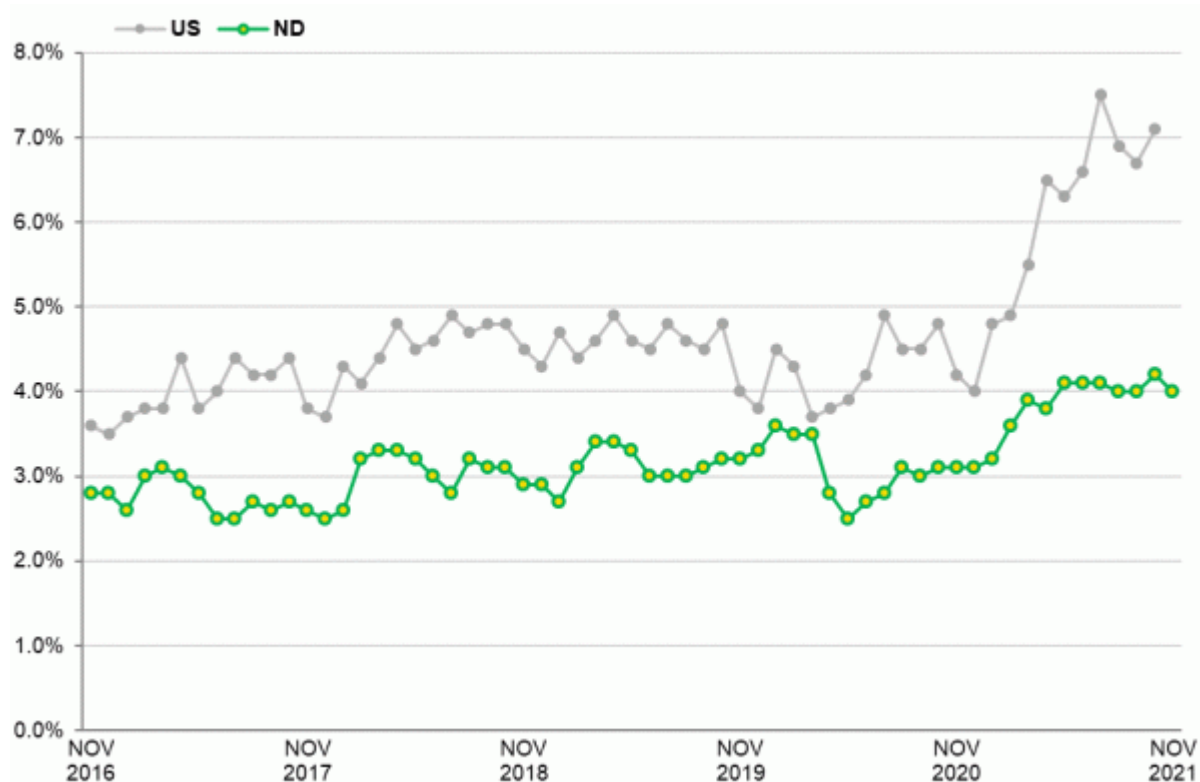
NORTH DAKOTA ONLINE JOB OPENINGS



Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

NORTH DAKOTA JOB OPENINGS RATE (%)

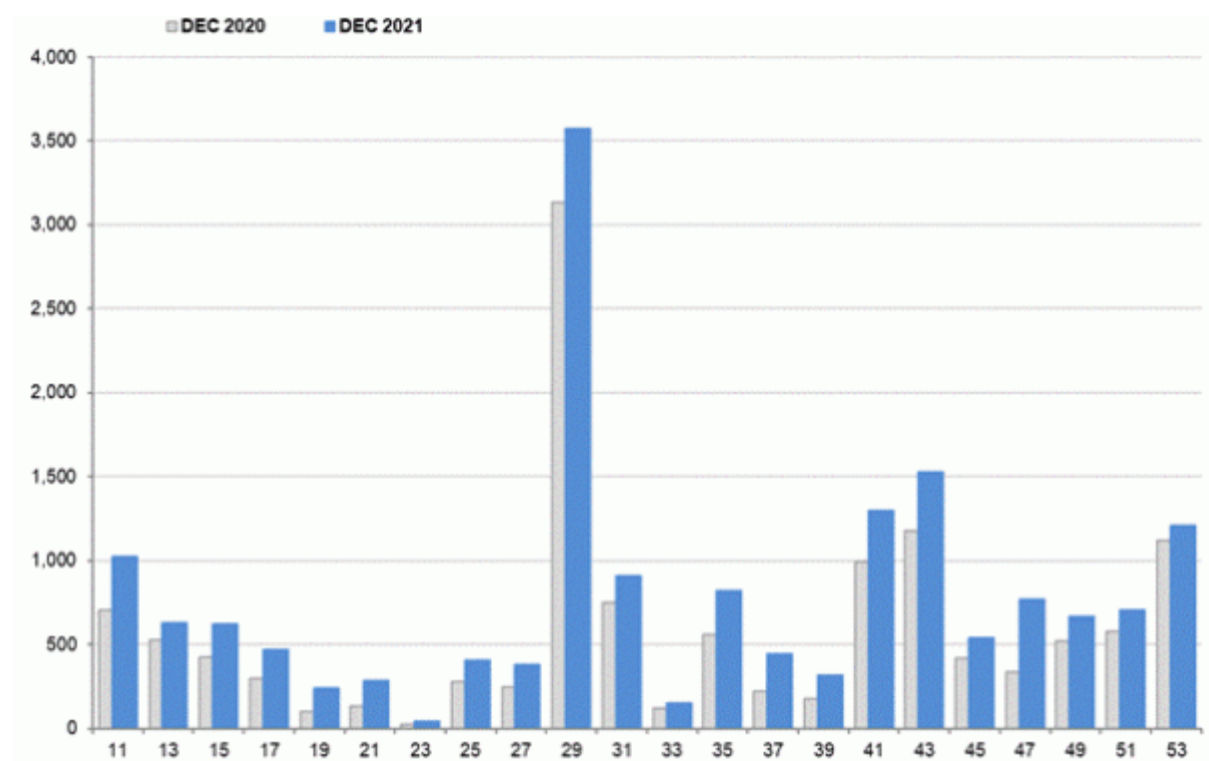
The job openings rate is the percentage of all jobs in the economy open and available. A higher rate is an indicator of increased demand from employers resulting in more opportunities for job seekers. North Dakota has experienced a steady climb in the job openings rate since the drop in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The trend follows that of the national rate, though not as significant of an increase over-the-year.



Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

Among the 22-non-military major occupational groups, Healthcare Practitioners and Technical reported the largest number of job openings (3,573), followed by Office and Administrative Support (1,527) and Sales and Related (1,296). Twenty-two occupational groups reported an over-the-year increase in job openings, while zero reported an over-the-year decrease. Healthcare Practitioners and Technical reported the largest over-the-year increase in job openings with a change of +442. No occupational group posted a year-over-year decrease in job openings. Healthcare Practitioners and Technical has consistently reported the highest number of openings every month since 2015.

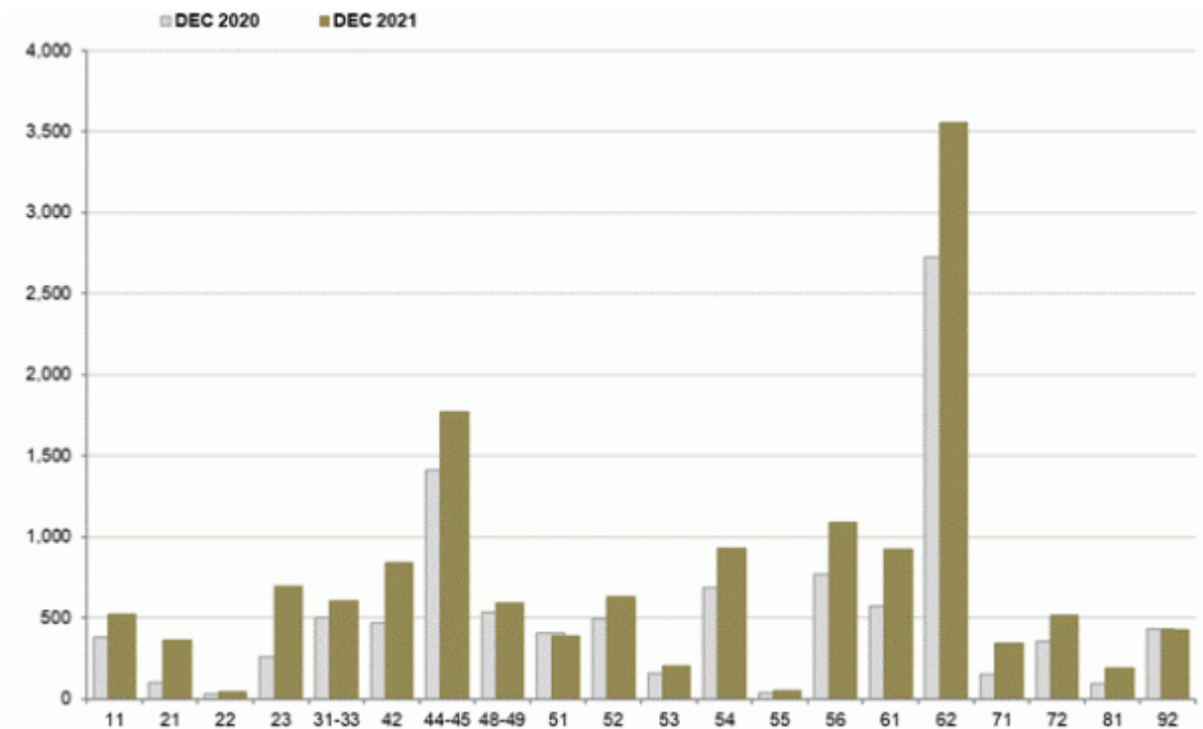
NORTH DAKOTA ONLINE JOB OPENINGS BY OCCUPATION GROUP



Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

Health Care and Social Assistance reported the largest number of job openings (2,726) among industries, followed by Retail Trade (1,410) and Administrative and Waste Services (769). Two industries saw decreases over-the-year (Information and Public Administration) and nine industries reported increases over-the-month. Health Care and Social Assistance has consistently had the highest number of openings every month since 2015.

NORTH DAKOTA ONLINE JOB OPENINGS BY INDUSTRY



Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

ii. EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

The 2020-2030 long-term employment projections for North Dakota indicate a 10.1% increase and most industries are expected to add jobs to North Dakota's economy. The Health Care and Social Assistance industry sector is expected to have the highest numerical growth, adding 9,922 jobs in a ten-year period. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation is expected to have the highest percentage growth of 31 percent. Roughly two-thirds of the projected gains are considered to be bounce-back employment associated with the brief recession in 2020 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

NORTH DAKOTA TOP 10 INDUSTRIES PROJECTED NUMERIC CHANGE 2020-2030

Industry Title	2020 Employment Estimate	2030 Employment Projection	Numeric Change
Total, All Industries	453,632	499,288	45,656
Health Care and Social Assistance	62,661	72,583	9,922
Accommodation and Food Services	29,523	35,911	6,388
Construction	26,107	30,928	4,821
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	15,281	19,664	4,383
Transportation and Warehousing	20,235	23,119	2,884
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	15,721	18,442	2,721
Manufacturing	25,655	28,341	2,686
Educational Services	38,163	40,790	2,627
Wholesale Trade	23,083	25,548	2,465
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	6,209	8,132	1,923

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

NORTH DAKOTA TOP 10 INDUSTRIES PROJECTED PERCENT GROWTH 2020-2030

Industry Title	2020 Employment Estimate	2030 Employment Projection	Percent Growth
Total, All Industries	453,632	499,288	10%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	6,209	8,132	31%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	15,281	19,664	29%
Accommodation and Food Services	29,523	35,911	22%
Construction	26,107	30,928	19%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	15,721	18,442	17%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3,677	4,300	17%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	4,882	5,699	17%
Health Care and Social Assistance	62,661	72,583	16%
Transportation and Warehousing	20,235	23,119	14%
Administrative and Support and Waste	11,974	13,472	13%

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

Construction and Extraction occupations are projected to have the highest numerical growth, adding 6,504 jobs over the ten-year period, followed by Food Preparation and Serving Related occupations. The same two occupational groups are projected to have the highest percentage growth over the ten-year period of 20% and 18%, respectively. These gains, again, are considered to be bounce-back employment following the brief pandemic recession.

NORTH DAKOTA TOP 10 OCCUPATION GROUPS PROJECTED NUMERIC CHANGE 2020-2030

Occupational Group Title	2020 Employment Estimate	2030 Employment Projection	Numeric Change
Total, All Industries	453,632	499,288	45,656
Construction and Extraction Occupations	31,945	38,449	6,504
Food Preparation and Serving Related	32,198	38,038	5,840
Transportation and Material Moving	40,223	46,035	5,812
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	28,582	32,996	4,414
Healthcare Support Occupations	18,137	21,282	3,145
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	22,563	25,534	2,971
Educational Instruction and Library	24,183	26,639	2,456
Business and Financial Operations	19,043	21,250	2,207
Personal Care and Service Occupations	14,502	16,677	2,175
Building, Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	16,108	18,259	2,151

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

NORTH DAKOTA TOP 10 OCCUPATION GROUPS PROJECTED PERCENT GROWTH 2020-2030

Occupational Group Title	2020 Employment Estimate	2030 Employment Projection	Percent Growth
Total, All Industries	453,632	499,288	10%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	31,945	38,449	20%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	32,198	38,038	18%
Healthcare Support Occupations	18,137	21,282	17%
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	6,113	7,107	16%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	28,582	32,996	15%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	14,502	16,677	15%
Transportation and Material Moving	40,223	46,035	15%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	6,837	7,799	14%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and	16,108	18,259	13%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	22,563	25,534	13%

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

Education can also play a role in predicting where employment trends are heading. Occupations that require a postsecondary nondegree award or an associate degree are expected to grow by 13.5 percent. Occupations that require a bachelor's degree are expected to grow by 12.3 percent, and occupations that require a master's, doctoral or professional degree are expected to grow by 12.4 percent. Occupations requiring short-term on-the-job training (<30 days) are projected to grow by 9.2 percent, and long-term on-the-job training (>12 months) by 13.2 percent. Apprenticeships are projected to have the highest percent growth at 18.5%.

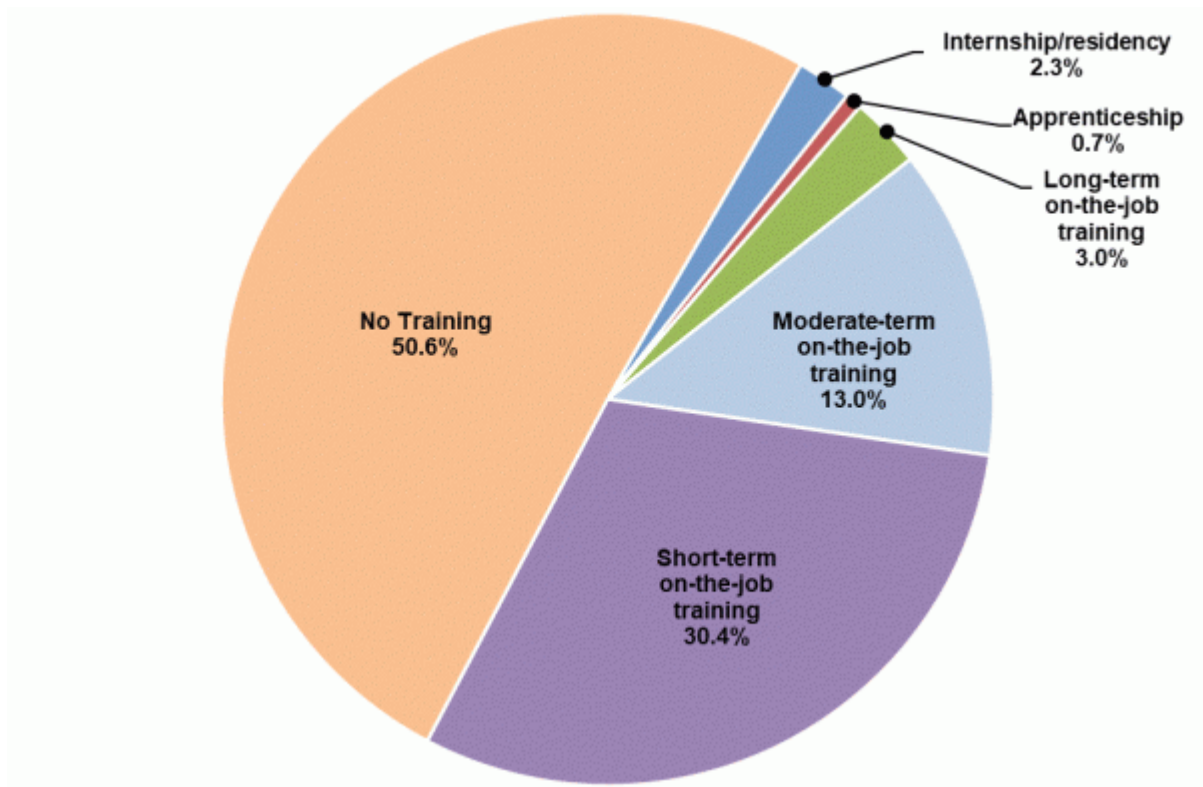
iii. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

Job Service North Dakota relies heavily on the Business Services staff in the local offices to work with employers in determining what their needs are for recruiting and retaining employees. They work closely with employers, schools, and the North Dakota University System to remain up to date on the most timely and pertinent needs and programs. This is done to develop programs designed to help job seekers and employers attain the tools and education they need to address skills needed in the workforce.

Employers have many needs when it comes to knowledge, skills, and abilities. Anecdotal conversations with employers and individuals involved in human resources have yielded surprising results. Many of these individuals indicate the largest deficiency of employees has been "soft skills" such as showing up to work, being on-time, cleanliness, etc. These skills, they claim, would be universal for nearly every occupation. If true, this would indicate a portion of the labor force is essentially unemployable in any occupation. These skills and abilities are relatively easy to improve upon and once the undesirable behaviors are corrected, gainful employment should be possible.

According to the most recent Online Job Openings Report, the majority of job openings require no formal training (50.5%) to attain competency in the skills needed in an occupation or occupational group. Short-term on-the-job training was required for 30.4% of those listed openings and 13% required moderate-term on-the-job training.

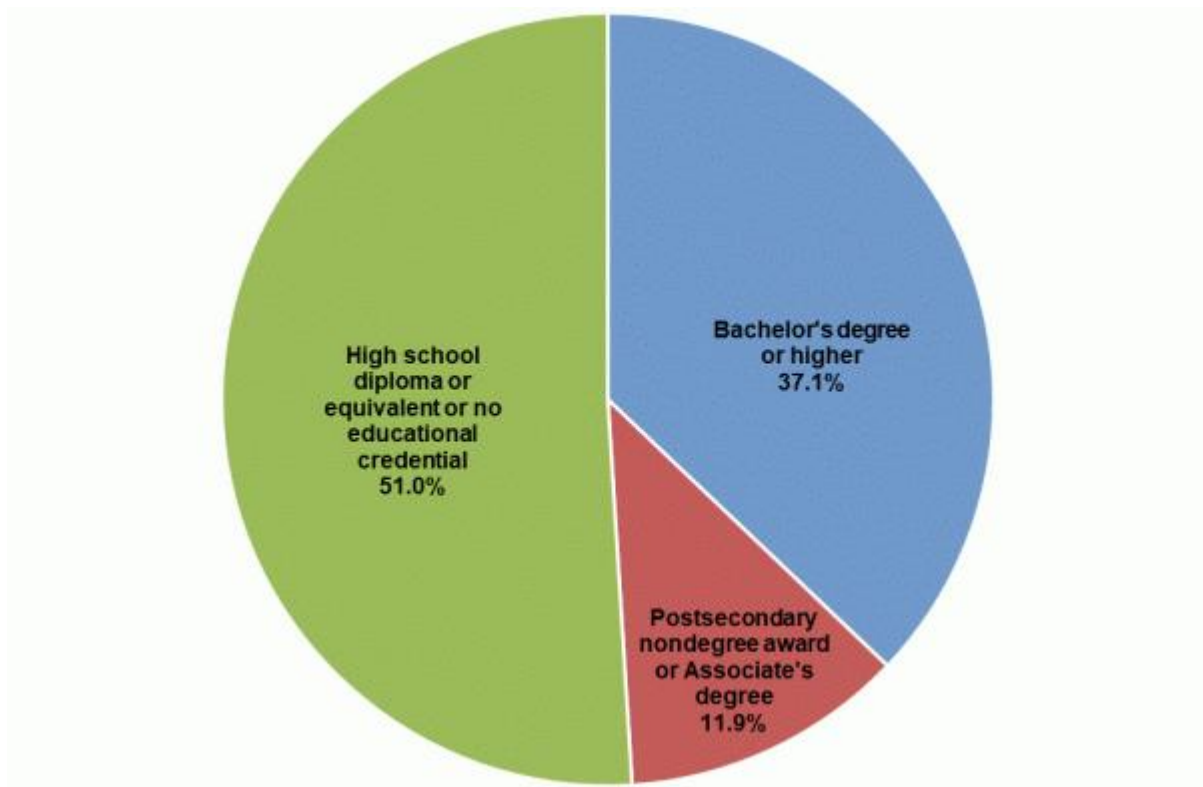
NORTH DAKOTA DISTRIBUTION OF ONLINE JOB OPENINGS BY TYPICAL TRAINING



Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

The typical entry-level education needed for the majority of online job openings was High School Diploma or equivalent, or no educational credential (51%). A Bachelor's degree or higher was needed for 37.1% of openings and a Postsecondary nondegree award or Associate's degree was needed for 11.9% of openings.

NORTH DAKOTA DISTRIBUTION OF ONLINE JOB OPENINGS BY TYPICAL ENTRY-LEVEL EDUCATION



Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA⁴. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups⁵ in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes—

[4] Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2

years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

[5] Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

I. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

II. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

IV. SKILL GAPS

Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

i. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

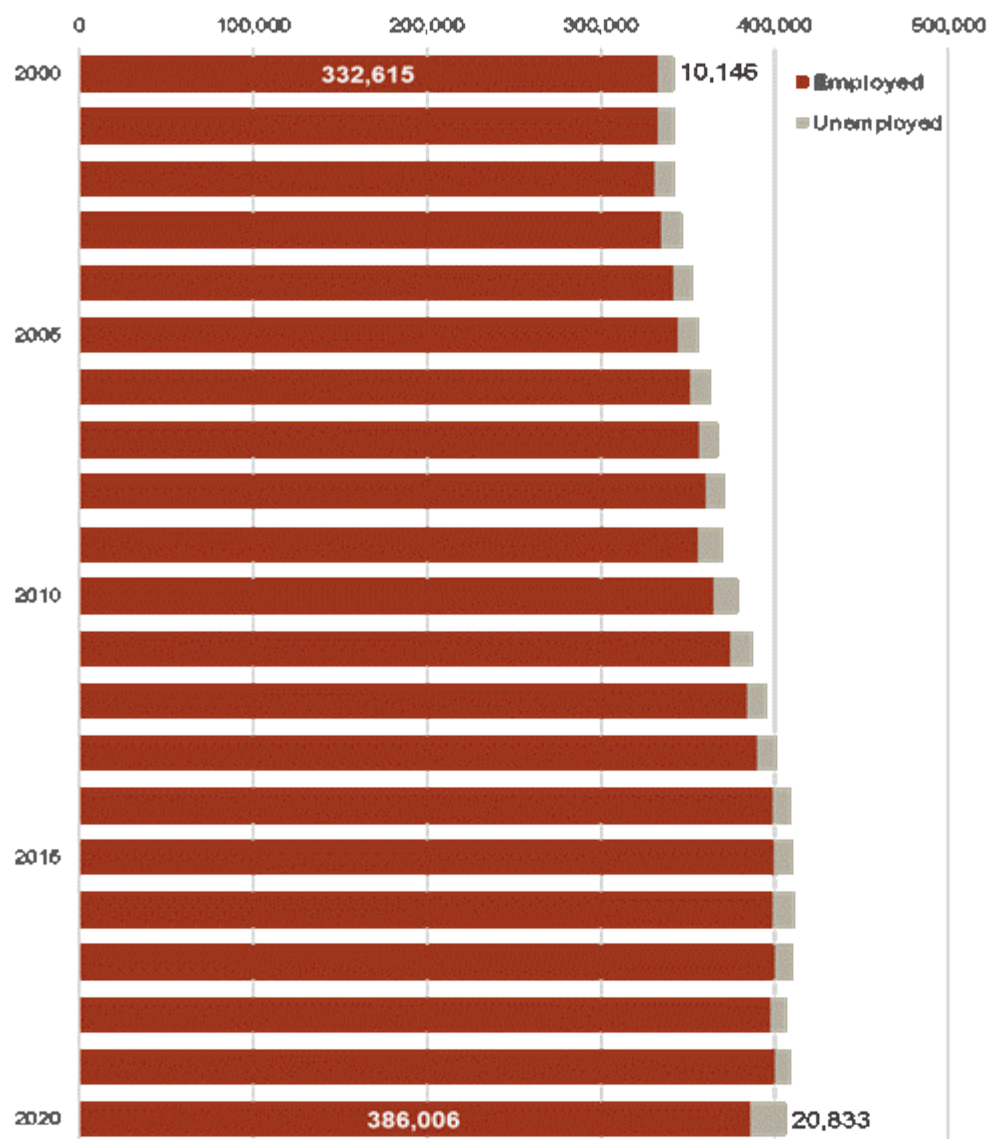
In the past 20 years, North Dakota's economy has gone through three distinct stages: flat growth (2000-2006), rapid growth (2006-2015), and sustained growth (2015-present). Following years of stagnation, the state experienced dramatic workforce fluctuations in the mid2000s due to the Great Recession in the United States (2007-2009) and the oil boom in western North Dakota (2006-2014). Despite some downturn during the recession, the concurrent effect of the oil boom quickly drove overall economic growth to surpass pre-recession levels in the 2010s. During the oil boom, North Dakota experienced sudden population growth, an employment surge, and an increase in average wages.

Many industries in North Dakota were affected by both the upswing of the oil boom (2006-2014) and the downturn caused by lower oil prices (2015-2016). At the end of the boom, many economic figures initially declined, but employment and wage numbers for most industries have remained high and steadily growing in the years prior to 2020 and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

From 2000 to 2020, the labor force grew from a total of 342,761 to 406,839 (a net increase of 64,078, or 19 percent). Like the state's population, the labor force grew significantly during the oil boom, and has slowly decreased since 2015. From 2006 to 2015, the state's overall population grew by about 106,000, while the labor force grew by about 64,000.

Since the end of the oil boom, labor force numbers have remained rather flat. This is largely explained by how the labor force is counted—only residents of the state are included. Because many oil and gas workers did not permanently reside in North Dakota, this data only captures a portion of the overall downturn. In 2020, the total labor force number decreased by 2,641 from the previous year, but the unemployed portion doubled from 9,521 in 2019 to 20,833. The spike in unemployed persons is consistent with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which wrought sudden public health policies such as temporary and permanent business closures, restrictions on establishment capacities, and guidelines to minimize person-to-person contact.

NORTH DAKOTA LABOR FORCE

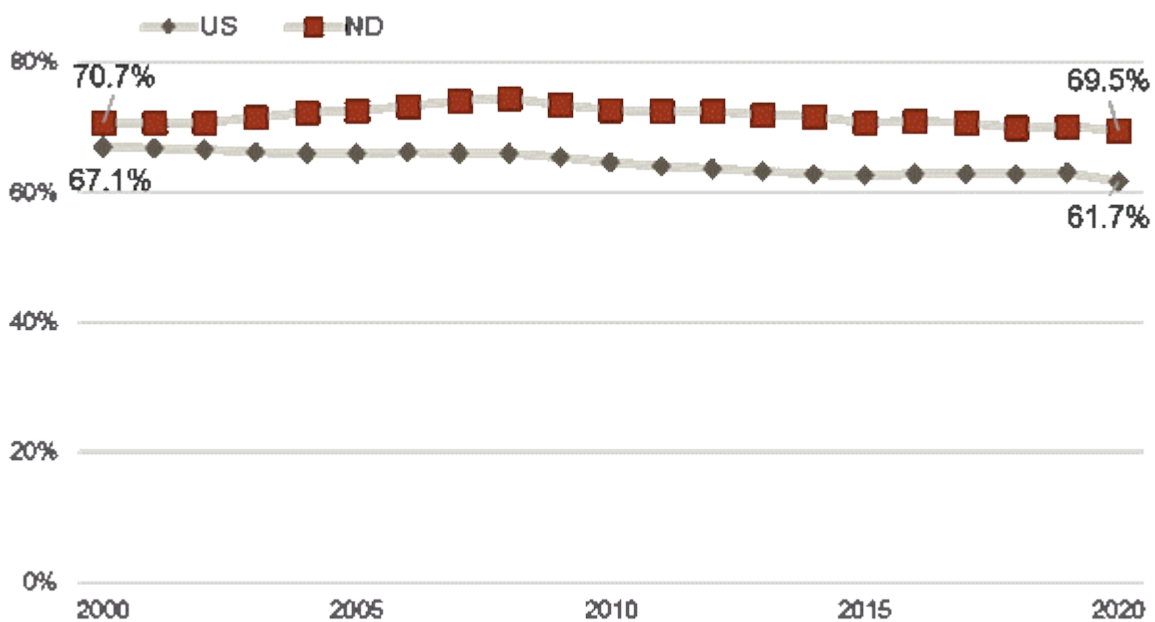


Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

Historically, North Dakota has had one of the highest labor force participation rates in the nation. The rate has remained relatively flat for the past 20 years, reaching a peak of 74.5 in 2008 and a low of 69.5 in 2020. During much of the oil boom, North Dakota's rate remained around 72 percent. Since then, the rate has slowly declined. In the same period, the national rate has decreased but has remained relatively flat for the past several years. The national rate was 61.7 percent in 2020. The lower labor force participation rates in all states, including North Dakota, further illustrate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor economy.

In 2020, North Dakota ranked third in the nation for labor force participation with an adjusted rate of 69.5 percent. West Virginia ranked 50th with a rate of 54.9 percent.

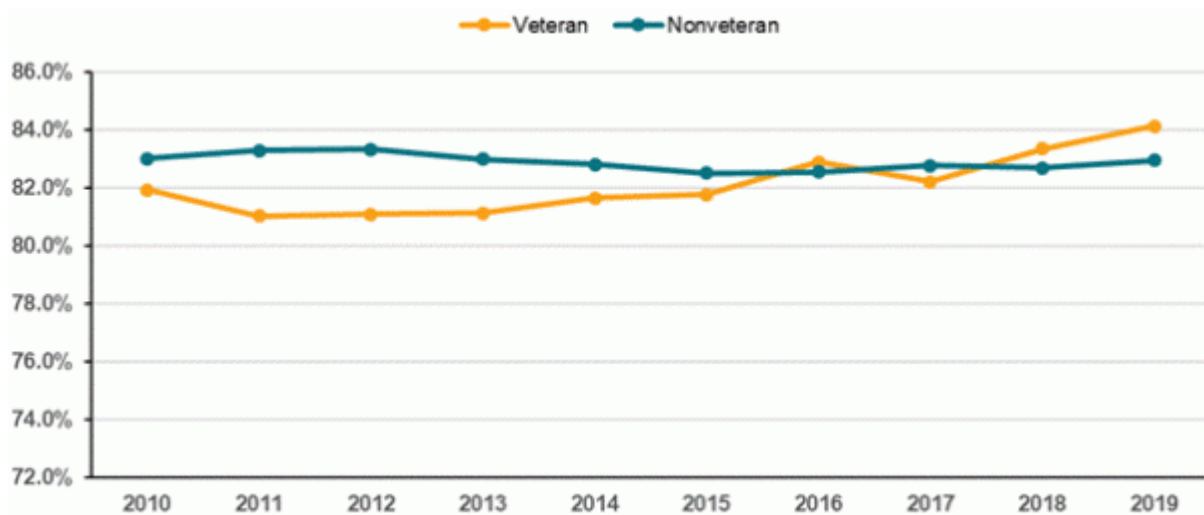
NORTH DAKOTA LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE



Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

In 2019, North Dakota's labor force participation rate for veterans was 84.1 percent, a change of +0.8 of a percentage point from the prior year. Comparatively, the labor force participation rate for nonveterans was 82.9 percent, a change of +0.2 of a percentage point from the prior year. The United States labor force participation rate for veterans was 76.6 percent, 7.5 percentage points lower than North Dakota's rate. North Dakota's veteran labor force participation rate ranked 1st in the nation. Nebraska ranked 2nd (83.4 percent), trailed by Virginia 3rd (83.0 percent), and Maryland 4th (82.9 percent).

NORTH DAKOTA VETERAN LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

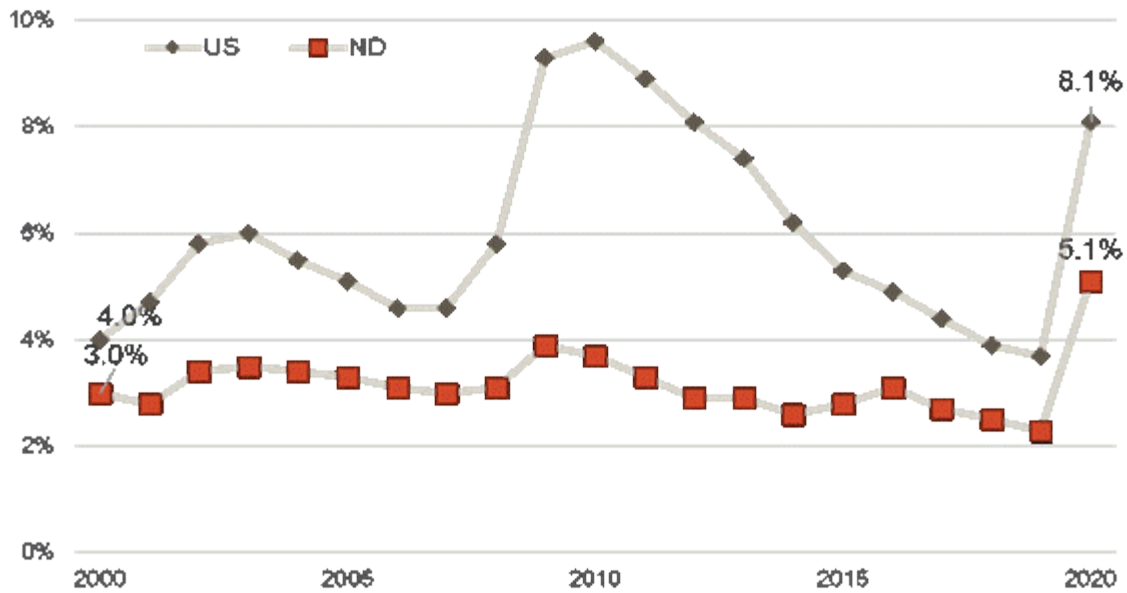


Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

For the past decade, North Dakota has had a very low unemployment rate. Like the state's labor force participation, North Dakota's unemployment has historically outperformed the national average. After the Great Recession in the late 2000s, North Dakota unemployment reached a high in 2009 at 3.9 percent before steadily dropping to a low of 2.6 percent in 2014. Since then, the rate has remained low and dropped to a new low of 2.3 percent in 2019. The national unemployment rate reached a high in 2010 at 9.6 percent and has since steadily dropped to a low of 3.7 percent in 2019. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, unemployment increased nationwide, which caused a spike in both the North Dakota unemployment rate, which was 5.1 percent, and the national rate, which was 8.1 percent.

In 2020, North Dakota ranked fourth in the nation for lowest unemployment with a rate of 5.1 percent. Nevada ranked 50th with a rate of 12.8 percent.

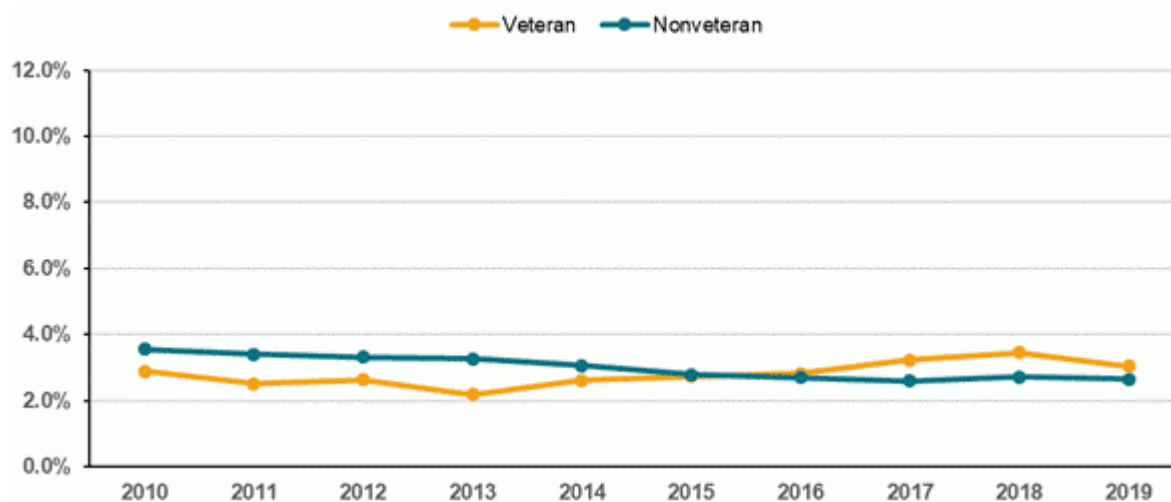
NORTH DAKOTA UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

In 2019, North Dakota's unemployment rate for veterans was 3.0 percent, a change of -0.5 of a percentage point from the prior year. For comparison, the unemployment rate for nonveterans was 2.6 percent, a change of -0.1 of a percentage point from the prior year. The United States unemployment rate for veterans was 4.4 percent, 1.4 percentage points higher than North Dakota's rate. North Dakota's veteran unemployment rate was the fifth lowest in the nation. Nebraska ranked 1st (2.1 percent), trailed by Vermont 2nd (2.3 percent), Wyoming 3rd (2.8 percent), and Maine 4th (2.9 percent).

NORTH DAKOTA VETERAN UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

ii. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

Occupations Overview

In both 2010 and 2020, the Office and Administrative Support occupations group had the largest number of workers belonging to it. In that 10-year period, the Office and Administrative Support occupations group had a net decrease of 8,660, or 15 percent. Conversely, most occupation groups had net increases in the same period, with the gap closing between Office and Administrative Support and other occupation groups. The groups that show the most dramatic growth from 2010 to 2020 were the Transportation and Material Moving occupations group (the highest numerical change, with a net increase of 10,190, or 35 percent) and the Legal occupations group (the highest percentage change, with a net increase of 1,030, or 75 percent).

NORTH DAKOTA OCCUPATIONS BY HIGHEST AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT

RANK	OCCUPATION GROUP**	2020	2010	# CHANGE	% CHANGE
1	Office and Administrative Support	49,310	57,970	-8,660	-14.9
2	Transportation and Material Moving	39,020	28,830	10,190	35.3
3	Sales and Related	36,870	39,140	-2,270	-5.8
4	Food Preparation and Serving Related	32,000	32,750	-750	-2.3
5	Construction and Extraction	31,920	23,710	8,210	34.6
6	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	28,270	20,490	7,780	38.0
7	Education, Training, and Library	22,870	20,860	2,010	9.6
8	Production	22,480	19,170	3,310	17.3
9	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	21,790	16,460	5,330	32.4
10	Management	19,520	14,460	5,060	35.0
11	Business and Financial Operations	17,880	12,160	5,720	47.0
12	Healthcare Support	17,380	11,840	5,540	46.8
13	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	13,400	14,230	-830	-5.8
14	Personal Care and Service	10,840	12,530	-1,690	-13.5
15	Computer and Mathematical	6,240	6,290	-50	-0.8
16	Architecture and Engineering	6,230	5,320	910	17.1
17	Protective Service	6,200	5,550	650	11.7
18	Community and Social Service	5,820	4,800	1,020	21.3
19	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	4,760	3,550	1,210	34.1
20	Life, Physical, and Social Science	4,010	2,820	1,190	42.2
21	Legal	2,410	1,380	1,030	74.6
22	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	820	1,390	-570	-41.0
	Represents largest change from 2010 to 2020 by number or percentage				

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

From 2010 to 2020, average annual wages in most occupation groups grew by 30 to 45 percent (the average overall increase was 37 percent). In both 2010 and 2020, the Management occupations group had the highest average annual wages and had a net increase of \$18,700, or 22 percent, over 10 years. The Food Preparation and Serving Related occupation group had the lowest average annual wage in both 2010 and 2020 and had a net increase of \$8,370, or 43 percent, over 10 years. In that period, nearly all the occupation groups increased in wage by \$10,000 or more. The groups that show the most dramatic growth from 2010 to 2020 were the Legal occupations group (the highest numerical change, with a net increase of \$22,130, or 34 percent) and the Sales and Related occupations group (the highest percentage change, with a net increase of \$14,420 or 47 percent).

NORTH DAKOTA OCCUPATIONS BY HIGHEST AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES

RANK	OCCUPATION GROUP	2020	2010	# CHANGE	% CHANGE
1	Management	\$103,850	\$85,150	\$18,700	22.0
2	Legal	\$86,930	\$64,800	\$22,130	34.2
3	Architecture and Engineering	\$79,940	\$63,810	\$16,130	25.3
4	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	\$78,180	\$58,200	\$19,980	34.3
5	Computer and Mathematical	\$71,820	\$53,670	\$18,150	33.8
6	Business and Financial Operations	\$69,600	\$53,140	\$16,460	31.0
7	Life, Physical, and Social Science	\$68,530	\$48,600	\$19,930	41.0
8	Construction and Extraction	\$57,080	\$42,000	\$15,080	35.9
9	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	\$56,750	\$42,400	\$14,350	33.8
10	Community and Social Service	\$54,830	\$37,780	\$17,050	45.1
11	Education, Training, and Library	\$53,610	\$41,060	\$12,550	30.6
12	Protective Service	\$50,460	\$37,590	\$12,870	34.2
13	Production	\$48,820	\$34,470	\$14,350	41.6
14	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	\$47,420	\$33,740	\$13,680	40.5
15	Transportation and Material Moving	\$45,720	\$33,800	\$11,920	35.3
16	Sales and Related	\$44,980	\$30,560	\$14,420	47.2
17	Office and Administrative Support	\$42,000	\$29,410	\$12,590	42.8
18	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	\$37,720	\$25,740	\$11,980	46.5
19	Healthcare Support	\$35,970	\$25,920	\$10,050	38.8
20	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	\$34,050	\$23,460	\$10,590	45.1
21	Personal Care and Service	\$30,150	\$23,260	\$6,890	29.6
22	Food Preparation and Serving Related	\$27,800	\$19,430	\$8,370	43.1
	Represents largest change from 2010 to 2020 by number or percentage				

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

Of North Dakota's working veteran population ages 18 to 64, over half reported being employed in one of five occupation groups: Transportation and Material Moving, Construction and

Extraction, Management, Office and Administrative Support, or Production. Of these occupations, veterans reported a higher concentration of employment than nonveterans in Transportation and Material Moving, Construction and Extraction, and Production. All Military Specific occupations were filled by veterans. Additional occupations with a significantly higher percentage of veteran employment compared to nonveteran employment were: Protective Service, Installation, Maintenance and Repair, and Architecture and Engineering.

Industries Overview

From 2010 to 2020, the largest share of employment belonged to the Health Care and Social Assistance industry. In that 10-year period, the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry had a net increase of 11,106, or 20 percent. Similarly, nearly all industries had increased in that time period, though the Health Care and Social Assistance industry and Retail Trade industry remain the largest by far. Though oil and gas activity declined both in 2015 at the end of the oil boom and in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction industry still exhibits the biggest growth by percentage from 2010 to 2020, with a net increase of 4,497, or 42 percent.

NORTH DAKOTA INDUSTRIES BY HIGHEST AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT

RANK	INDUSTRY*	2020	2010	# CHANGE	% CHANGE
1	Health Care and Social Assistance	66,704	55,598	11,106	20.0
2	Retail Trade	44,055	43,800	255	0.6
3	Educational Services	33,467	32,148	1,319	4.1
4	Accommodation and Food Services	29,526	30,639	-1,113	-3.6
5	Construction	26,403	22,378	4,025	18.0
6	Manufacturing	25,490	22,895	2,595	11.3
7	Public Administration	23,266	21,911	1,355	6.2
8	Wholesale Trade	23,090	21,060	2,030	9.6
9	Transportation and Warehousing	18,211	12,949	5,262	40.6
10	Finance and Insurance	17,787	16,644	1,143	6.9
11	Professional and Technical Services	16,751	12,727	4,024	31.6
12	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	15,158	10,661	4,497	42.2
13	Administrative and Waste Services	12,310	11,922	388	3.3
14	Other Services (except Public Administration)	10,977	11,692	-715	-6.1
15	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	9,175	8,307	868	10.4
16	Information	6,013	7,580	-1,567	-20.7
17	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5,404	4,090	1,314	32.1
18	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	4,805	3,667	1,138	31.0
19	Management of Companies and Enterprises	3,818	4,329	-511	-11.8
20	Utilities	3,632	3,676	-44	-1.2
	Represents largest change from 2010 to 2020 by number or percentage				

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

From 2010 to 2020, annual wages in all industries increased by a net average of 45 percent. The Utilities industry had the highest average annual wage in 2020, and had a net increase of \$32,240, or 42 percent, since 2010. The Accommodation and Food Services industry had the lowest average annual wage in 2020 but had a net increase of \$6,503, or 51 percent, since 2010. The Management of Companies and Enterprises industry had the biggest growth by number from 2010 to 2020, with a net increase of \$36,103, or 57 percent. The Other Services industry had the biggest growth by percentage from 2010 to 2020, with a net increase of \$16,147, or 67 percent.

NORTH DAKOTA INDUSTRIES HIGHEST AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES

RANK	INDUSTRY	2020	2010	# CHANGE	% CHANGE
1	Utilities	\$108,655	\$76,415	\$32,240	42.2
2	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	\$106,774	\$79,970	\$26,805	33.5
3	Management of Companies and Enterprises	\$99,826	\$63,723	\$36,103	56.7
4	Information	\$77,913	\$48,253	\$29,660	61.5
5	Professional and Technical Services	\$76,816	\$51,746	\$25,071	48.4
6	Finance and Insurance	\$73,797	\$46,678	\$27,119	58.1
7	Wholesale Trade	\$71,148	\$51,356	\$19,792	38.5
8	Construction	\$66,610	\$46,616	\$19,994	42.9
9	Transportation and Warehousing	\$63,029	\$44,666	\$18,364	41.1
10	Manufacturing	\$57,854	\$43,421	\$14,433	33.2
11	Public Administration	\$57,173	\$41,977	\$15,197	36.2
12	Health Care and Social Assistance	\$56,195	\$39,838	\$16,357	41.1
13	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$52,420	\$34,275	\$18,146	52.9
14	Educational Services	\$50,270	\$37,078	\$13,192	35.6
15	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	\$46,780	\$35,007	\$11,773	33.6
16	Other Services (except Public Administration)	\$40,284	\$24,137	\$16,147	66.9
17	Administrative and Waste Services	\$39,957	\$25,520	\$14,437	56.6
18	Retail Trade	\$34,002	\$24,137	\$9,866	40.9
19	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	\$22,468	\$16,584	\$5,884	35.5
20	Accommodation and Food Services	\$19,260	\$12,758	\$6,503	51.0
	Represents largest growth from 2010 to 2020 by number or percentage				

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

Of North Dakota's working veteran population ages 18 to 64, just under half reported being employed in one of five industries: Public Administration, Construction, Health Care and Social Assistance, Transportation and Warehousing, or Manufacturing. Of these industries, veterans reported a higher concentration of employment than nonveterans in Public Administration, Transportation and Warehousing, Construction, and Manufacturing. Over one sixth of veterans were employed in the Public Administration industry. Other industries with a significantly higher percentage of veteran employment compared to nonveteran were: Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction, Utilities, and Wholesale Trade.

The following presents an overview of North Dakota employment, wages, and establishments aggregated by all industries. These figures provide a general view of demographic changes and economic trends as they have developed, with special attention to 20-year and 10-year benchmarks.

AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT

From 2000-2020, average employment across all industries grew by 86,819 (28 percent). From 2010-2020, net employment growth was 37,368 (10 percent). In 2020, most employment belonged to the private sector (82 percent).

	2000	2010	2020
AVG EMP	309,223	358,674	396,042
Private	82%	81%	82%
Government	18%	19%	18%

AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGE

From 2000-2020, the average wage across all industries grew by \$30,771 (125 percent). From 2010-2020, net wage growth was \$17,327 (45 percent). In 2020, average wages in the private sector were higher than in government by \$3,441.

	2000	2010	2020
AVG WAGE	\$24,683	\$38,127	\$55,454
Private	\$24,319	\$38,026	\$56,059
Government	\$26,362	\$38,565	\$52,618

TOTAL ESTABLISHMENTS

From 2000-2020, total establishments across all industries grew by 9,652 (39 percent). From 2010-2020 net growth was 6,525 (23 percent). In 2020, nearly all establishments belonged to the private sector (94 percent).

	2000	2010	2020
TOTAL ESTAB	24,876	28,003	34,528
Private	92%	92%	94%
Government	8%	8%	6%

EMPLOYMENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Employment in North Dakota has flipped from an even split of male and female workers in 2010 to a male majority in recent years (53 percent in 2020). Most of North Dakota's workers are between 25 and 64 years old. In 2020, 25-44-year-olds made up 46 percent of the workforce (41 percent in 2010), and 45-64-year-olds made up 34 percent of the workforce (38 percent in 2010).

In 2020, the employment composition was 53 percent male to 47 percent female. By comparison, in 2010, it was 50 percent male to 50 percent female. In the past 10 years, the overall workforce grew significantly, and male workers increased by twice the amount that female workers did.

Since 2010, the proportions among age groups across all industries changed by relatively small percentages. The largest shifts in proportion were among 25-44-year-olds (+4 percent) and 45-64-year-olds (-4 percent). The age groups with the largest employment shares in North Dakota were 25-44-year-olds (46 percent) and 45-64-year-olds (34 percent).

From 2010 to 2020, the most significant increase was among workers 25-44-year-olds, which grew by nearly 40,000 workers (or 28 percent). Workers aged 45-64 years-old (grew by 5 percent) and 65+ years-old (grew by 59 percent) increased numerically by several thousand each over the same period. The 10-year growth among older workers suggests that North Dakotans are opting to remain in/rejoin the labor force rather than retiring.

EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE GROUPS

Over 75 percent of North Dakota workers belong to either the 25-44 year-old and 45-64 year-old age groups. A minority of workers belong to the youngest and oldest age groups because those populations tend to be in a pre- or post-career phase of life (e.g. students and retirees).

AGES 14-18

The industries with the largest shares of 14-18 year-old workers continue to be the Accommodation and Food Services industry (33 percent) and the Retail Trade industry (26 percent). These industries attract young and unskilled workers because many operate seasonally and offer part-time hours (e.g. retail stores, restaurants, hotels, etc.). The Arts,

Entertainment, and Recreation industry experienced the largest growth in share of workers aged 14-18 years-old (+3 percent) in the past 10 years. Within this age group, the share of workers in other industries changed by a figure between -1 percent and +1 percent from 2010.

AGES 19-24

The industries with the largest shares of 19-24 year-old workers continue to be the Retail Trade industry (17 percent), the Health Care and Social Assistance industry (17 percent), and the Accommodation and Food Service industry (16 percent). This age group is broken out specifically to observe the effects of the oil boom on young employment, since 19-24 year-old workers tend to have some skill and work experience, and they are most flexible (e.g. willing to relocate, travel, work nontraditional hours). The Health Care and Social Assistance industry experienced the largest growth in share of workers aged 19-24 years-old (+2 percent) in the past 10 years. Within this age group, the share of workers in other industries changed by a figure between -3 percent and +1 percent from 2010.

PAGES 25-44

The industry with the largest shares of 25-44 year-old workers is, by far, the Health Care and Social Assistance industry (17 percent). For all other industries, employment is more evenly distributed within this age group than in others. The Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction industry had the largest increase in share of workers since 2010 (+3 percent). Within this age group, the share of workers in other industries changed by a figure between -2 percent and +2 percent from 2010.

AGES 45-64

The industry with the largest shares of 45-64 year-old workers is the Health Care and Social Assistance industry (17 percent). The Educational Services industry (11 percent) and the Retail Trade industry (10 percent) have a considerable number of workers in this age range, too. The Transportation and Warehousing industry had the largest increase in share of workers since 2010 (+2 percent). Within this age group, the share of workers in other industries changed by a figure between -2 percent and +1 percent from 2010.

AGES 65+

The industries with the largest shares of 65+ year-old workers continue to be the Health Care and Social Assistance industry (17 percent), the Retail Trade industry (14 percent), and the Educational Services industry (12 percent). Within this age group, the share of workers in each industry changed by a figure between -2 percent and +1 percent from 2010.

iii. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF NORTH DAKOTA'S POPULATION (AGES 25+)

For the 3-year period 2017-2019, the largest proportion of North Dakota residents ages 25+ reported that their highest educational attainment was a high school diploma or equivalent (26.6 percent). Those reporting some college, no degree accounted for the second highest proportion at 22.7 percent. Together with those reporting less than high school, the proportion of North Dakota's 25+ population without at least an Associate's degree is 56.3 percent. A Bachelor's degree was reported as the highest educational attainment for 21.3 percent of the 25+ population. Together with the 8.3 percent reporting an advanced degree, 29.6 percent of North Dakota residents ages 25+ reported at least a Bachelor's degree as their highest educational attainment.

HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (%)				%
Educational Attainment Categories				2017-19
Less than high school				7.0
High school diploma or equivalent				26.6
Some college, no degree				22.7
Associate's degree				14.1
Bachelor's degree				21.3
Master's degree				5.5
Doctorate or professional degree				2.7
At least a bachelor's degree				29.6
Advanced degrees				8.3

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

The most popular broad fields of degree for all North Dakota bachelor's degree holders ages 25+ were business and related at 20 percent and education and related at 19 percent. Health sciences and related was third at 14 percent. Together, the top three broad fields of degree account for 53 percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded. Engineering and architecture (6 percent) and humanities and liberal arts (5.5 percent) round out the top five. Nearly one in three of all bachelor's degree holders went on to get an advanced degree. Those with bachelor's degrees in physical sciences (56.7 percent), biology and biomedical sciences (55.8 percent), or social sciences (40.1 percent) were the most likely to get an advanced degree. The least likely to get an advanced degree were in construction, production, and transportation (3.8 percent), business and related (14.7 percent), or law, criminal justice, and public administration (15.3 percent) fields. The top five most popular detail field of degree categories (nursing; business management and administration; elementary education; general education; and accounting) account for 30.9 percent of all bachelor's degree holders in North Dakota.

When narrowing the focus to terminal bachelor's degree holders (i.e. no advanced degree), the top five broad fields of degree mirror the results of all bachelor's degree holders for the most part, though agriculture and natural resources sneaks into the top five. The most popular broad fields of degree for North Dakota terminal bachelor's degree holders ages 25+ were business and related at 23.7 percent and education and related at 17.4 percent. Health sciences and related was third at 14.1 percent. Together, the top three broad fields of degree account for 55.2 percent of all terminal bachelor's degrees. Engineering and architecture (6.4 percent) and agriculture and natural resources (4.9 percent) round out the top five. The top five most popular detail field of degree categories (nursing; business management and administration; elementary education; accounting; and general business) account for 34 percent of terminal bachelor's degree holders in North Dakota.

NORTH DAKOTA VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Veterans reported a higher level of educational attainment than nonveterans for all categories except the Bachelor's degree or higher category. 95.3 percent of veterans had completed high school or an equivalency, while only 93.2 percent of nonveterans had. Some college or more had been completed by 67.7 percent of veterans, 1.2 percent higher than nonveterans.

TOP INDUSTRY GROUPS BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND FIELD OF DEGREE

Just over half of North Dakota's population ages 25+ reported being employed in one of five industries: health care and social assistance; retail trade; educational services; construction; or manufacturing. Health care and social assistance was either the first or second top employing industry for all educational attainment levels except for those with a high school diploma or equivalent or less. Construction was the top industry for those with less than a high school diploma or equivalent. Retail trade was the top industry for high school graduates. Master's degree holders were more likely to become teachers or education administrators, so it is no surprise that 34.9 percent report working in the educational services industry. For those with a doctorate or professional degree as their highest educational attainment, 76.5 percent report working in the health care and social assistance; educational services; or professional, scientific, and technical services industries.

For terminal bachelor's degree holders, 42.3 percent reported working in the educational services, health care and social assistance, or public administration industries. For a majority of terminal bachelor's degree holders, their field of degree and top employing industry appear to be a logical fit. For example, 70.8 percent of those with a field of degree in health sciences and related were working in the health care and social assistance industry while 54.8 percent with a field of degree in education work in educational services. Half of the 18 fields of degree report either health care and social assistance, educational services, or public administration as the largest employing industry for terminal bachelor's degree holders.

TOTAL POPULATION 25+			%	Less than high school			%
1	Healthcare and Social Assistance		18.1	1	Construction		13.0
2	Retail Trade		8.8	2	Accommodation and Food Services		11.8
3	Educational Services		8.2	3	Retail Trade		10.4
4	Construction		8.1	4	Manufacturing		10.1
5	Manufacturing		7.2	5	Healthcare and Social Assistance		8.2
High school diploma or equivalent			%	Some college, no degree			%
1	Retail Trade		12.6	1	Healthcare and Social Assistance		13.3
2	Construction		12.7	2	Retail Trade		13.0
3	Healthcare and Social Assistance		11.4	3	Construction		8.0
4	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting		8.3	4	Manufacturing		7.8
5	Manufacturing		6.0	5	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting		0.8

Associate's degree			%	Bachelor's degree			%
1	Healthcare and Social Assistance		20.6	1	Healthcare and Social Assistance		19.0
2	Retail Trade		10.0	2	Educational Services		14.0
3	Construction		6.0	3	Public Administration		8.4
4	Manufacturing		7.8	4	Finance and Insurance		6.7
5	Public Administration		7.0	5	Retail Trade		6.0
Master's degree			%	Doctorate or professional degree			%
1	Educational Services		34.9	1	Healthcare and Social Assistance		30.7
2	Healthcare and Social Assistance		16.6	2	Educational Services		25.9
3	Public Administration		8.9	3	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services		13.9
4	Manufacturing		6.3	4	Public Administration		6.5
5	Finance and Insurance		6.7	5	Other Services (except Public Administration)		3.0
At least a bachelor's degree			%	Advanced degrees			%
1	Healthcare and Social Assistance		20.6	1	Educational Services		32.0
2	Educational Services		19.0	2	Healthcare and Social Assistance		24.7
3	Public Administration		8.4	3	Public Administration		8.6
4	Finance and Insurance		7.0	4	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services		7.1
5	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services		6.7	5	Finance and Insurance		4.8

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

TOP OCCUPATION GROUPS BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND FIELD OF DEGREE

Just under half of North Dakota's population ages 25+ reported being employed in one of five occupation groups: management; office and administrative support; sales and related; transportation and material moving; or healthcare practitioners and technical. Those with lower educational attainment were more likely to work in occupation groups related to

transportation and material moving or construction and extraction. Management, healthcare, and education were the top employing occupation groups for those with higher educational attainment. Master's degree holders were more likely to become teachers or education administrators, so it is no surprise that 42.4 percent report working in education or management occupations. For those with a doctorate or professional degree as their highest educational attainment, 74.4 percent report working in occupations related to healthcare, education, or legal services.

For a majority of terminal bachelor's degree holders, their field of degree and top employing occupation group appear to be a logical fit. For example, 64.9 percent of those with a field of degree in health were working in the healthcare practitioners and technical occupation group while 49 percent with a field of degree in education worked in education occupations.

For detail occupations, those with a high school education or less as their highest educational attainment tend to work as truck or sales drivers, farmers or ranchers, cooks, laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, or janitors and building cleaners. The top three occupations for workers with at least a bachelor's degree were registered nurse, elementary or middle school teacher, or accountant or auditor.

TOTAL POPULATION 25+			Less than high school		
		%			%
1	Management	13.5	1	Transportation and Material Moving	15.0
2	Office and Administrative Support	11.3	2	Construction and Extraction	11.8
3	Sales and Related	8.8	3	Production	11.2
4	Transportation and Material Moving	7.9	4	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	10.8
5	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	7.8	5	Management	10.3
High school diploma or equivalent			Some college, no degree		
		%			%
1	Transportation and Material Moving	13.0	1	Office and Administrative Support	15.0
2	Management	12.3	2	Management	12.7
3	Construction and Extraction	11.5	3	Sales and Related	11.1
4	Office and Administrative Support	10.7	4	Transportation and Material Moving	10.0
5	Sales and Related	8.2	5	Construction and Extraction	7.2

Associate's degree			%	Bachelor's degree			%
1	Office and Administrative Support		15.1	1	Management		17.5
2	Management		10.5	2	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical		12.5
3	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical		10.4	3	Business and Financial Operations		10.7
4	Sales and Related		8.9	4	Educational Instruction and Library		10.7
5	Construction and Education		7.1	5	Office and Administrative Support		10.2
Master's degree			%	Doctorate or professional degree			%
1	Educational Instruction and Library		25.1	1	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical		42.7
2	Management		17.3	2	Educational Instruction and Library		17.0
3	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical		11.9	3	Legal		14.1
4	Community and Social Services		6.3	4	Management		10.4
5	Business and Financial Operations		6.5	5	Life, Physical, and Social Sciences		5.4
At least a bachelor's degree			%	Advanced degrees			%
1	Management		17.0	1	Educational Instruction and Library		22.7
2	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical		15.1	2	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical		22.0
3	Educational Instruction and Library		14.0	3	Management		15.0
4	Business and Financial Operations		8.1	4	Community and Social Services		6.4
5	Office and Administrative Support		5.4	5	Business and Financial Operations		4.5

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

IV. SKILL GAPS

MEDIAN ANNUAL EARNINGS AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Generally, the higher one's educational attainment, the more likely they are to be employed, working full-time hours (35 hours or more per week), and reporting higher earnings. Median annual earnings were 41.6 percent higher for those whose highest educational attainment was

reported as a bachelor's degree compared to those reporting a high school diploma or equivalent. Advanced degree holders earned 75 percent more than those with just a high school diploma or equivalent. Those reporting less education are more likely to be unemployed, working part-time hours, or not in the labor force. For terminal bachelor's degree holders (no advanced degree), earnings were highest for those with a field of degree in engineering and architecture. Earnings were lowest for those with a field of degree in arts, psychology and social work, or humanities and liberal arts. Terminal bachelor's degree holders whose field of degree was education are more likely to be employed less than 50 weeks a year (26 percent). Terminal bachelor's degree holders with a field of degree in arts, health, or psychology and social work were more likely to be employed part-time hours. Terminal bachelor's degree holders with a field of degree in education were more likely to report being out of the labor force and not working or looking for work (35.3 percent).

			\$	%	%	%	%	%	%
			Median Annual Earnings	Employed 50-52 Wks/Year	Employed < 50 Wks/Year	Employed Full-time Hours	Employed Part-time Hours	Unemp. Rate	Not in Labor Force
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT									
Educational Attainment Categories			2017-19	2017-19	2017-19	2017-19	2017-19	2017-19	2017-19
Less than high school			24,280	79.5	20.5	79.1	20.9	7.1	80.0
High school diploma or equivalent			35,380	63.6	10.2	61.4	18.0	2.3	30.8
Some college, no degree			38,080	65.1	14.9	65.9	14.1	2.0	30.8
Associate's degree			42,080	68.9	10.7	68.1	11.9	2.1	19.9
Bachelor's degree			60,080	68.0	11.0	68.3	11.7	0.6	20.3
Master's degree			65,080	63.5	10.5	60.3	13.7	0.5	21.3
Doctorate or professional degree			82,080	67.1	12.9	60.6	13.2	0.5	20.9
TOTAL			42,080	60.1	13.9	65.5	14.5	1.9	28.7
At least a bachelor's degree			63,080	67.6	12.2	67.6	12.2	0.6	20.0
Advanced degrees			62,080	64.7	15.3	60.6	13.5	0.0	21.2

Source: Job Service North Dakota, Labor Market Information Center

Highlights gathered from 2019 Census North Dakota data:

- Persons with a disability are more likely to be over 64 years of age.
- Persons with a disability tend to be older than persons with no disability, as 71 percent of persons with a disability were age 65 and over.
- The employment rate of working-age people (ages 16+) with a disability was 36 percent.
- The percentage with a disability who were not in the labor force, was 62 percent.

Among the six types of disabilities identified, the highest percentage of individuals with disabilities not working but actively seeking work was for people with a cognitive disability. The lowest percentage was people with a self-care disability.

- The median annual earnings of working-age people with disabilities working full-time/full-year was \$29,986.

- The percentage of working-age people with disabilities with a high school diploma or equivalent was 34 percent, some college or associate degree was 35 percent and bachelor's degree or more was 17 percent.

The above discussion of the advanced and varied level of educational attainment suggests a very capable, competent, and skilled workforce. While North Dakota has a quality workforce of capable, competent, and skilled individuals, there is a shortage of available workers. North Dakota's rate of unemployed per job opening was 0.57 in November 2021, the latest month for which North Dakota data are available. One year prior, North Dakota's rate was 1.31. The U.S. rate of unemployed per job opening was 0.60 in October 2021, the latest month for which U.S. data are available. One year prior, the U.S. rate was 1.47. For comparison, North Dakota's October 2021 rate was 0.51. Among North Dakota's 53 counties, 21 reported a rate less than one in November 2021, while 32 reported a rate greater than one and 1 reported a rate greater than one. A rate less than one indicates that there are more job openings than available labor supply.

Likewise, North Dakota's rate of active résumés per job opening was 0.13 in December 2021. One year prior, North Dakota's rate was 0.89. Twenty-two of 22 non-military major occupational groups reported a rate of less than one, while zero occupational groups reported a rate greater than one. One year ago, thirteen occupational groups reported a rate less than one. Among North Dakota's 53 counties, 52 reported a rate less than one, while 1 reported a rate greater than one. A rate less than one indicates there are more job openings than in-state active résumés.

All of these facts combined indicate that while there has been a leveling off period in North Dakota, there is still an abundance of jobs; more jobs than there are individuals available to work. This implies that there might not be a skill gap in the traditional sense, but rather a lack of employees. In this type of economy, employers will have to consider more flexibility in their hiring requirements in order to get employees in the door and improve their skills with on-the-job training or improve the attractiveness of their job offers with increased wages or improved benefits.

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of—

A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required ⁶ and optional one-stop delivery system partners.⁷

[6] Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

(unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

[7] Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.

B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

The North Dakota Workforce System is a relationship of agencies and functions that includes those formal and informal education and training activities. The training provides current and potential workers with new or enhanced knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for successful employment for in-demand occupations being created by North Dakota employers. North Dakota is adapting service delivery in response to a variety of workforce needs. Western North Dakota is responding to the stabilization of the oil prices. Over the last six years the oil and gas industry has changed from hiring “numbers” to hiring a qualified, skilled, and safety-minded workforce. Just like the rest of the US, employers statewide continue to experience a lack of workforce for skilled positions. As a result of rapid innovation and introduction of new technologies, such as unmanned aerial systems, the workforce system and the education and training system must respond. The availability of qualitative and quantitative economic and workforce intelligence will allow the workforce system partners to rapidly respond to the talent needs of North Dakota business and industry. Upon Governor Burgum taking office, the Workforce Development Council was recognized as a key resource to assist in addressing one of North Dakota’s most significant challenges---a workforce equipped with the skills needed to succeed today and thrive and grow in the future. The Council’s mission and membership were re-activated and assigned the responsibility to study North Dakota’s workforce opportunities and challenges, and with that understanding proposed a path forward.

Focus will be placed on preparing or retraining individuals for in-demand occupations in advanced manufacturing, energy, information technology based, transportation, and health care. However, other WIOA qualifying occupations may be found in the state’s in-demand occupations list found at <https://www.jobsnd.com/job-seeker/demand-occupations>. Analysis of the current and future job market using labor market information, job openings, employer reports to determine skill gaps, and ensuring the necessary training to meet those gaps will be a priority in implementing WIOA Title I programs, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, Trade Act and SCSEP funds to serve North Dakota. The strong connection with UI claimants through North Dakota’s flexible Reemployment Services Program will provide the impetus for serving increased numbers of individuals and for rapid reemployment results.

Low-income individuals receive a variety of services to assist them in reaching self-sufficiency. A customer-focused approach including an initial assessment of skill level, skill development, career counseling/promotion and support service needs for each individual shall be available through the AJC Workforce Center. Job Service ND provides the SNAP E & T Services and this allows for partner programs to provide additional services that lead to employment and dependency on social programs.

The Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) is a program administered by Job Service ND through a contract funded with TANF funds. JOBS is provided to TANF recipients living in Cass, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, Steele, and Traill counties. The program provides case management, coaching on a variety of soft skills ranging from problem solving, working with difficult people, childcare and scheduling problems. Additionally, job retention guidance, structured status checks, self-evaluation and planning for the next step on the career ladder, job coaching, job performance are provided to the participant. All career services and referrals to training are available to TANF recipients across the state. Job Service AJC Workforce Centers have invited additional JOBS contractor staff to the local offices to strengthen partnerships and to promote and explain all the services available to TANF recipients. These collaborative meetings have been received well and additional co-enrollments are expected to increase with WIOA Youth services.

The Parental Responsibility Initiative for the Development of Employment (PRIDE) is a program administered by Job Service ND through a contract funded with TANF funds. The program is a partnership between Job Service ND, the district courts, and the North Dakota Department of Human Services, helps noncustodial parents find employment or better paying jobs so they can meet their child support obligations. In addition to increasing child support collections, PRIDE helps increase parent visitation time with children, while reducing court time and reliance on public assistance such as Food Stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Medicaid. Participants in the PRIDE program receive Wagner Peyser career services and referrals to WIOA training. Participants with a disability receive referrals to Vocational Rehabilitation. Participants who lack a high school diploma or equivalent, are referred to Adult Education.

Because North Dakota WIOA Adult funds are so limited, only low-income or basic skills deficient individuals are enrolled into individual career services and training. Training services are approved for in-demand occupations in North Dakota. Core programs, WIOA Adult (low-income only) and WIOA Youth have collaborated with mutual customers for many years, even before the passage of WIOA. Vocational Rehabilitation and WIOA Adult funds share training costs through co-enrollment, WIOA Adult (low-income only) and WIOA Youth funds assist with the costs of GED testing for participants enrolled in Adult Education.

Core partner staff are well informed of additional referral sources when encountering homeless individuals seeking employment. Many partner staff are members on their area homeless coalitions and referral contacts. Staff also participate in veteran stand down events to reach out to homeless veterans and offer employment assistance. The First Link 211 network is a resource for a variety of community-based services such as food pantries, homeless and domestic violence shelters and clothing. <https://myfirstlink.org>. Connecting homeless individuals with the necessary immediate services will strengthen the effect of the AJC Workforce Center career services.

In collaboration with the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, JSND staff participate in a coordinated effort to assist ex-offenders find employment through the Transition from Prison to Community initiative. Services provided include resume and interview assistance explaining ex-offender status. Information is provided to promote the use of WOTC and federal bonding. During the month of June, there are special Second Chance job fairs offered in our AJC Workforce Centers of Minot, Bismarck, Fargo, and Grand Forks. These job fairs are arranged to connect ex-offenders with employers and employment opportunities. An informational flyer has been created to assist an individual with previous criminal convictions communicate in a job interview.

Based on U.S. Census Bureau data for 2019, 5.1% of North Dakota's population is identified as Language other than English spoken at home. For this targeted population group, Core Partners make every attempt to ensure the needs of customers with limited English-speaking skills are met. New Americans will receive job search assistance, have access to Rosetta Stone software and are referred to Adult Learning Centers for English literacy services. To provide interpretation services in a timely manner, JSND utilizes language identification cards, CTS Language Link interpreting services, free online translation software. All interpretation services are provided free of charge to the recipient. Services are provided in coordination with partners with special programs, such as, the Lutheran Social Services Refugee Program, cultural diversity centers, and the Adult Learning Centers. English as a Second Language classes are provided by Adult Learning Centers. A basic skills class curriculum, funded by PY 13 WIA Incentive dollars, continues to be offered to New Americans and in the Fargo Adult Learning Center. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff are available as requested to participate in the class and present job search information. The class covers basic work skills to include but not limited to soft skills, basic work math, reading, writing, transportation, interviewing, application process, childcare needs and computers. The class curriculum rotates every six weeks.

In January of 2017, North Dakota began receiving Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) funds. However, after receiving these grant funds for two years, JSND did not reapply in 2019. We felt the conditions of the grant were too stringent for the ruralness of North Dakota. Instead, we have implemented our own reemployment program called Reemployment Services Program (RSP). This is a mandatory program for all unemployment claimants who are not job attached and reside in the county where one of our nine AJC Workforce Centers are located. Due to the Covid pandemic and half of the AJC Workforce Center staff assigned to the Unemployment Insurance Call Center, North Dakota suspended our RSP program from April 1, 2020-July 31st, 2021. As a result of this, we do not have definitive data if the program is lowering the state's average weekly duration rate. However, and even with the Covid pandemic, North Dakota's average weekly duration rate still stands at 11 weeks.

Besides JSND's RSP, Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff provide a variety of labor exchange services to UI claimants. The most common service is to assist a UI claimant with the requirement to register on the Job Service ND Virtual One- Stop (VOS). VOS is the electronic labor exchange system. Staff assist UI claimants with the online registration and aid in creating a resume. VOS has a virtual recruiter feature that will notify UI claimants of new job openings that meet their search criteria.

Additional services to UI claimants include assistance to create resumes for each type of employment that a UI claimant is seeking and techniques for improving interviewing skills for UI claimants. Online/electronic applications are prevalent with many employers and this application process is often problematic for UI claimants that lack computer literacy. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff are familiar with the local employer requirements and assist with this online application process.

UI claimants have a series of "How To" instructional videos to assist with the UI claims filing process and weekly certification. The videos are posted on the Job Service webpage [jobsnd.com](https://www.jobsnd.com/unemployment-individuals/unemployment-insurance-how-videos). <https://www.jobsnd.com/unemployment-individuals/unemployment-insurance-how-videos>. UI claimants receive referrals to WIOA Dislocated Worker for upgrade training for in-demand occupations. Out of area job search and relocation support services are provided as needed. Referrals are also provided to core programs for partner services such as increased academic skill and GED or vocational rehabilitation services that support their job search activities.

Resources are available to UI claimants on various job seeking topics such as the importance of soft skills, quantifying and measuring occupational skills and accomplishments. For UI claimants with a criminal record and ex-offenders, guidance is provided on how to overcome this barrier to employment on applications and during interviews.

AJC Workforce Center staff identify and refer individuals with disabilities who meet the employers' qualifications. In coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation, individuals who are not job ready may receive career services, training and supportive services, including assistive technology, necessary to enhance their marketable work skills. Core program staff are involved in a variety of community and public service clubs and will continue to promote the capabilities and employment of individuals with disabilities. During PY 18, 65.4 percent of all WIOA Youth enrollments were individuals with disabilities; Adult enrollments were 15.1 percent, and Dislocated Worker enrollments were 10.8 percent. During PY 20, 79.2 percent of all WIOA Youth enrollments were individuals with disabilities; Adult enrollments were 14.5 percent, and Dislocated Worker enrollments were 12.5 percent.

Veterans are served through coordination of efforts by Local Veterans' Employment Representatives, Disabled Veterans' Outreach programs, and Consolidated Positions. Veterans are provided priority of service through the one-stop centers. Each individual who enters or calls the workforce center are screened to quickly direct veterans to appropriate staff to address their unique needs.

Job Service North Dakota, along with workforce partners such as local Economic Development Corporations and/or Chambers of Commerce, Department of Corrections, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other stakeholders host job fairs during the year in various locations throughout North Dakota. Due to COVID-19, the only job fairs that were held during PY20 were in the cities of Grand Forks and Fargo. Fargo held a multi-industry job fair in early March of 2021 that attracted 72 employers and 125 job-seekers. Grand Forks held a drive-thru multi-industry job fair in the parking lot of their local community events center, and it attracted 55 employers but only 60 job-seekers. The employers were spread throughout the parking lot and job-seekers were able to drive their automobiles through the maze of employers.

During the two job fairs, a survey was electronically sent to each employer after the event but unfortunately the return rate was only 10% of those that attended. The survey consists of nine questions ranging from "were you satisfied with the number of visitors at your booth, approximately how many jobs seekers visited the booth, how many the employer would consider hiring, job offers made, job fair times, promotion of the event", etc.

All surveys were compiled and read through after the event and if the situation warranted were acted upon. Most of the responses were favorable and included notes like "Great Event", "We will be back next year", "Prepared Job-Seekers", "Great promotion of the event", but on occasion the employers made suggestions to improve the events. Items asked for included a more comfortable atmosphere (too hot/cold), too long of a job fair, not long enough, no resume copy services on-site, job-seekers were not qualified, different types of food/drink, etc.

*Job Fair Numbers

Total number of employers surveyed - 127

Total number of job seekers attended the events - 185

*Due to Covid-19, Job Service did not host any in-person job fairs from March 2020-March 2021.

Additionally, Job Service North Dakota has considered the three measures proposed by the USDOL for the performance indicator pilot and chose the two which best match JSND's mission to "Meet the Workforce Needs of the State's Employers": Participant Retention with the Same Employer and Repeat Business Customers.

To promote partner collaboration and meet the current workforce needs and activities across the state, the Adult Education Program supports the industries in demand as determined by the WDC and directs the local programs to provide information to unemployed students/participants about those areas first, and then to the remaining list of high demand, high need career clusters determined by Labor. Additionally, each local program advisory board discusses local workforce needs and the best methods to meet those needs.

Per WIOA, in addition to offering academic instruction, all programs offer and enroll students and participants in career pathways classes according to their need and interest. This may include career exploration, skill development, career assessment, placement services in concert with partner agencies, integrated employment and training.

THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

The level of support from economic development, education, and business leaders for workforce programs has been consistently strong. There is a healthy partnership at the state-level between the core programs, with strengthening interest from our non-core partners to collaborate, leverage resources and improve outcomes across all programs. Professional staff work tirelessly to remove barriers and maximize resources to improve services to the customer, both the employer and the worker.

North Dakota strives to build partnerships for future workforce needs and opportunities. WIOA core and required programs will enhance linkages between employers, students, parents and schools for shared understanding of workforce needs and opportunities. Efforts will include identifying working situations between education entities and industry to showcase relationships in career training.

In order to assess and analyze gaps between labor supply and demand to provide programmatic offerings, partnerships with economic development leaders will be strengthened to further understand local workforce. Untapped labor pools such as Native Americans, New Americans, Justice Involved individuals, and Individuals with Disabilities. Efforts will be made to expand training and work-based learning opportunities for the mentioned populations through Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education Centers, Job Service ND, Department of Corrections, TrainND and the state's public, private and tribal colleges and universities. Additionally, and only within the last 24 months, a special sub-committee was added to the Workforce Development Council. This sub-committee called "Populations with Barriers" was formed to confront the state's challenge of tapping into the labor pools as described above. Although this committee is still rather new, it is studying ways to get these populations into sustainable and meaningful work in ND while breaking down the barriers to employment. This committee, led by Job Service North Dakota's Executive Director, provides a quarterly update to the full council.

Strengthening the use and availability of registered apprenticeships with co-enrollments by all core and required partners will fill a workforce need in the state which has been underutilized in the past. The Department of Commerce applied for and received an Apprenticeship State

Expansion Grant. The intent of this grant has been to create a new Registered Apprenticeship Programs which helps statewide companies in the state's primary industries and those businesses looking for qualified jobseekers filling in-demand occupations. The program offers classroom and online training through North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS). NDSCS has a long tradition of providing responsive, accessible, and flexible training solutions that include their current apprenticeship programs. NDSCS has curriculum currently approved with the Department of Labor and will be expanding their offerings to meet the growing needs in healthcare and manufacturing industries. This grant has been impacted by challenges caused by the pandemic and turnover in staffing, but both NDSCS and Commerce are committed to making progress toward the grant's goals.

Because North Dakota is rural, there are limited public transportation options available. The North Dakota Department of Transportation reports that although all counties in North Dakota have transit services, such transportation is for limited time periods for as low as three days per week. Urban centers with fixed routes and paratransit that operate six days per week include Minot, Bismarck, Dickinson, Fargo, Jamestown, Devils Lake, and Grand Forks. One of the top reasons riders in North Dakota use public transportation is to attend training or employment. These fixed route systems are experiencing budget shortfalls, lack of employees, and have proposed limitations to public transportation to include limiting fixed bus routes from 7am to 6pm with limited hours on the weekend and holidays. Many sectors need employees to work beyond 6:00 p.m. and without public transportation are unable to attract a sufficient applicant pool for available positions.

Residents of rural counties need to travel to more urban settings to receive training and support services that support their efforts to gain employment. Once training is completed these same individuals then need to secure reliable transportation for work opportunities. The lack of transportation is particularly a problem in counties in which reservations are located as they are typically in more isolated parts of the state without fixed route public transportation. Many individuals living on reservations have higher rates of poverty and the lack of public transportation severely limits their ability to seek and accept employment.

Job Service ND has experienced business services staff who are competent in engaging employers to meet their labor exchange needs. The challenge facing Job Service ND is transitioning the employer services to focus on and promoting WIOA work-based learning activities to include partnerships with apprenticeship involved employers. To meet the intention of WIOA, business services staff will need to take a more active role to promote the work experience activities, especially for WIOA Youth. The 20% WIOA Youth expenditure will require a collaborative effort to continue to meet this requirement.

STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A) above.

The agencies responsible for the WIOA core and required program in North Dakota include: • Job Service ND (which has responsibility for the majority of the WIOA core and required programs, such as WIOA Title I, Wagner Peyser, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, Consolidated Positions, Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs and Unemployment Compensation Programs) • The Department of Human services (which has responsibility for Vocational Rehabilitation, SCSEP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) • The Department of Commerce

(Community Services Block Grant) • The Department of Public Instruction (Adult Education), and • Motivation, Education and Training (National Farmworker Jobs Program)

Job Service ND oversees the nine American Job Centers in the state. The current Job Service AJC Workforce Centers are staffed by 73 staff funded by WIOA Title I and Title III, JVSG, TANF E & T, TANF discretionary and SNAP E & T. AJC Workforce Center management staff continue to work to provide outreach to rural communities and reservations. At least 10 towns across the state are visited on a bi-monthly, prescribed time. The Job Service ND website (www.jobsnd.com) allows for self-service job search 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from anywhere internet access is available. Jobsnd.com links to the online labor exchange system for individual job search and employer job posting activities. Job seekers can use jobsnd.com to create résumés and conduct automated job searches. Additionally, job seekers can become aware of education and training programs available and view labor market information such as high-demand occupations, current wages and training required. Job seekers can also explore career options, find direction to veteran services, and access community resources.

Each Job Service AJC Workforce Center has a resource area with computers available for individual self-service. Resource area staff promote tools to assist individuals in making career choices such as the RUPrepareND.com, resume writing software, myskillsmyfuture.org, and mynextmove.org. The resource areas also offer a wide variety of printed materials. Resource area staff is available for assist those who lack computer skills to conduct their job search or to file an unemployment insurance claim. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff assist customers with complex online job applications.

Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff provide the WIOA career services and enroll into training. Resource room staff and case managers are knowledgeable of the services available from the core program partners.

Local partner program staff have been collaborating for many years under WIA and continue with a stronger purpose under WIOA.

NDVR operates as a division housed within the state's Department of Human Service (DHS). DHS is in the process of merging with the Department of Health and will become the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The North Dakota Department of Human Services operates eight regional human service centers (HSC). Each serves a designated multi-county area, with programs and services to include adult services, developmental disability services, child welfare services, children's mental health services, serious mental health care coordination, acute clinical services, substance abuse services, and crisis and emergency response services. NDVR has regional offices located in each of the eight HSC regions. In two of the regions, they are co-located with the local Job Service, in two they are co-located within the HSC. Supervision and direction of the rehabilitation staff is provided by staff located in NDVR's State Office. NDVR has developed working arrangements with 20 CRPs and monitors their performance through monthly reports submitted for each individual served and through VR counselor comments and observations of CRP performance and training needs.

Vocational Rehabilitation services in North Dakota are provided through a single Combined VR agency serving individuals with disabilities including consumers who experience significant visual impairments. NDVR serves individuals with disabilities that constitute or result in substantial barriers to employment to assist them with obtaining, maintaining or advancing in employment. Individuals present with either a single or multiplicity of disabilities that include, but are not limited to development disabilities, learning disabilities, behavioral health disorders, diabetes, deafness, amputation, and traumatic brain injury. NDVR provides services such as

counseling and guidance, assessment, vocational training, post-secondary education, transportation, personal assistance services, and job placement. Through informed choice and in partnership with their VR counselor, individuals with disabilities create an individualized plan for employment, maximize their potential, and reach the goal of competitive integrated employment. Service identification is determined through a comprehensive assessment of individual needs and interests based upon their vocational goal selection. Comparable benefits are sought prior to the expenditure of program funds for non-exempt services.

The VR agency also provides more specialized services to individuals with the most significant disabilities targeted to their specific needs. For example, NDVR provides a myriad of educational and training programs such as the Blindness Skills Training, Assistive Technology Training, and Low Vision Services to individuals that experience significant vision loss. Specialized technical assistance and training support is provided to provide Supported Employment to individuals with the most significant disabilities that result in competitive and integrated employment. DVR takes very seriously its responsibility to provide high quality services to all individuals with a disability. DVR has forged a strong relationship with agencies such as the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind, the North Dakota School for the Deaf/Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Community Rehabilitation Programs that provide service to individuals with Intellectual Disabilities.

Forty full time VR counselors are employed by the division with their offices located in the eight larger communities in the state. These VR counselors work closely with staff from JSND and the Adult Education Programs located in these same communities. Staff and fiscal resources are leveraged by all three agencies to provide workforce service to the business community, individuals with disabilities, populations receiving state economic assistance to include TANF, and New Americans.

NDVR had been operating on an approved Order of Selection (OOS) with all categories open. With the division's current financial state, and with approval from the State Rehabilitation Council, will be coming off OOS.

The Adult Education program is part of the ND Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Adult Education receives federal and state funds to provide academic and career related skills to eligible participants. Additionally, the Adult Education system offers the same services to students who are unable to speak, read, write or comprehend the English language and works to reduce barriers to employment, community participation and family literacy. Under WIOA, ND Adult Education held a formal competition for local programs in December 2019; upon completion of the RFP process in accordance with guidance from OCTAE, eight (8) regional adult learning centers were awarded funding to provide services. The ND Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) applied for and was awarded funding, under WIOA, to provide services within correctional education. The Fargo Adult Learning Center applied for and was awarded funding to provide Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) under separate WIOA funding. Adult Education provides career services and refers for training enrollment when applicable, as all staff have been provided information and knowledge of the services available from core program partners. Local partner program staff have been collaborating for many years under WIA and continue with stronger purpose under WIOA.

Eligible participants can improve their technology and computer skills by using a variety of different programs, i.e. Microsoft Digital Literacy. Topics include computer basics, the internet and world wide web, productivity programs (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access), as well as essential digital literacy skills necessary for success in the workplace and college. In addition, COVID-19 has taught our professionals to be innovative in best practices as we utilize the digital

tools to enhance learning whether on-line, in-person, or hybrid methods and to navigate with our students their goals into the work field. Our state plans to address the digital skills gap among adults, especially in New American, tribal, and rural areas. State director of Adult Ed. Sits on this team in a goal to develop a plan to address these needs. In addition, Adult Ed. Directors and staff have maintained contact in serving students in rural communities through the satellite locations and online methods/resources.

Efforts and priority have been placed on Integrated Education and Training programs. A couple of local program directors and the state director attended a virtual IET Camp to learn more about IET development in Adult Education in our state. We shared out the resources. In addition, we were able to run a grant competition outside of Adult Education funds for IET development. Three sites applied and are working on their plan. Another site has a partnership with CTE on an IET program.

We continue to monitor and offer support to the directors in meeting goals. Not only has the form of delivery needed to be adjusted, but peoples' needs have increased. Our most significant area impacted is our EL student population in our data set. As stated above, our state is working toward a plan on digital equity on digital skill development in all areas, but especially in tribal, New American, rural communities.

Performance is validated through onsite monitoring of local programs, data audits through the statewide student management systems.

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

1. VISION

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

2. GOALS

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment⁸ and other populations.⁹

(B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

[8] Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

[9] Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

Using the tables provided within each Core Program section, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

4. ASSESSMENT

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

1. Vision:

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

Doug Burgum took office as the 33rd governor of North Dakota on December 15, 2016. Burgum brings a business leader's approach to diversifying the economy, creating 21st century jobs, and revitalizing our main streets. During his State of the State speech in January of 2018, Burgum articulated his vision for the state:

"Our administration is adopting a purpose statement and that purpose statement is simple. Six words. Empower people, improve lives and inspire success."

Governor Burgum maintains a people-centric philosophy and demonstrates this through the five "cultural aspirations" that were created through a collaborative process that engaged his cabinet and extended leadership teams across the state. To maintain alignment with Governor Burgum's goals for North Dakota, the workforce system has adopted the five cultural aspirations as its vision:

1.
 - a. Work as One -We understand that diverse teams working together across divisions and departments can bring all of the resources of our state to serve our citizens best. Being inclusive and sharing information provides a better outcome and is crucial to innovation.
 - b. Citizen Focused -We strive to deliver the best service, with the right balance between technology and citizen facing time. With simplification at the core; we listen, design, create and deliver with citizens at the center of our work.
 - c. Growth Mindset - We are curious. We learn from each other, finding the genius in what's been done, eager to improve upon it. We feel supported and have courage to take risks with accountability, learning and applying the learning as we move ahead.
 - d. Make a Difference -We are focused on the impact of each activity, program and interaction using data and analytics to identify priorities and measure outcomes.

Continually striving for improvement and impact, effort alone does not equal success.

- e. Leadership Everywhere - We lead by example, promote team spirit and hold ourselves and others accountable. We have gratitude, empower each other and view failures as learning opportunities. We are humble, transparent, focused, and trustworthy.

In addition to these cultural aspirations, Governor Burgum has declared five strategic initiatives, all of which are connected to North Dakota's workforce plan:

1. Reinventing Government: Changes in technology have challenged existing approaches and systems providing an opportunity for reinvention by embracing technology and building a strong workforce and economy. There have been continued efforts to unify services, develop employees, and have more cross-agency collaboration. Additionally, the Governor supported the K-20W "Every Student, Every Class, Cyber Educated" initiative, a multi-faceted, comprehensive approach to computer science and cybersecurity education and workforce training. North Dakota is on track to be the first state in the nation with integrated cybersecurity and computer science K-12 standards.
2. Transforming Education: Governor Burgum has made significant commitments to ensure that North Dakota's educational system connects directly to the development of a 21st century workforce.

Governor Burgum created the Innovative Education Task Force to underscore North Dakota's commitment to leading the nation in innovative education. The Innovative Education Task Force was made up of education, youth development, business and community leaders. The task force was charged with creating a system to identify and support schools and districts implementing innovative practices, and with providing direction on how state government can empower districts to adopt student-centric learning practices designed to support a 21st century economy impacted by rapid technological change. The task force endorsed policy recommendations in the following areas: flexibility regarding graduation requirements and personalized pathways within education; holistic student support; development of innovation tool kits to support districts exploring student-centered learning practices; better aligned accountability assessments; wrap-around supports for educational entities outside of individual school districts; incentive innovation funding, grounded in teacher leadership; communication strategy and feedback solicitation in an effort to better educate community members on the needs of today's learners; collaboration with higher education; data synthesis within school districts; and disseminating proficiency scales. Since the release of the task force's report, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction rolled out the North Dakota Choice Ready criteria for graduation, which emphasizes personalized pathways and calls for students to meet the requirements of two of three categories: post-secondary ready, workforce ready, and/or military ready.

Further preparing North Dakota students to excel in the 21st century workforce is the PK-20W Initiative, which was first created in 2018 and aims to bring together stakeholders (including K12 and state government agencies, post-secondary, workforce and strategic state and national private sector partners). The goal of this initiative is to provide development pathways to grow a properly trained workforce for current and emerging industries.

Computer Science and Cybersecurity (CSC) are key to developing and integrating 21st Century Skills (e.g. technology, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, innovation, creativity, persistence). The ND Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) believes

that all North Dakota public schools must provide challenging and rigorous programs of study in CSC across all grade levels.

In 2019, NDDPI brought together a group of North Dakota teachers, administrators, and higher education faculty, along with industry partners to draft CSC standards. As a result, the North Dakota Computer Science & Cybersecurity Standards were adopted.

In 2021, members of the PK-20W Initiative completed the North Dakota CSC Plan to provide a statewide roadmap to guide actions so all North Dakota PK–12 students are provided high-quality computer science and cybersecurity education. The plan encompasses items identified by Code.org as the “Nine Policy Ideas to Make Computer Science Fundamental to K-12 Education” (https://code.org/files/Making_CS_Fundamental.pdf). The North Dakota CSC Plan covers key policy and implementation issues related to standards, certification, course pathways, graduation requirements, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) entrance requirements, and professional learning. Bringing this plan to scale will require a coordinated effort by multiple stakeholders as well as oversight to ensure success.

1. Tribal Partnerships: Governor Burgum is committed to promoting greater understanding of North Dakota's Native American tribes and has highlighted opportunities for collaboration between state and tribal governments. In January of 2018, he convened a first-of-its-kind conference on strengthening government-to-government partnerships and relationships. Topics discussed during the conference included treaties, federal partnerships, urban Native American issues, workforce development, child welfare, law enforcement, tribal consultation, energy, historic preservation, sovereignty and governance. Governor Burgum understands that the well-being of North Dakota tribal communities equates the well-being of the state. Mark Fox, chairman of the Mandan, Arikara and Hidatsa Nation, said tribal leaders had long struggled to build a bridge between tribes and the state. He and other tribal leaders commended Governor Burgum for making tribal engagement a priority and for encouraging communication and understanding. “You have to understand where you come from or what has happened so you can change where you want to go,” Fox said. Since this initial meeting in 2018, a second has been held and the interim Tribal Taxation Issues Committee, which is chaired by Governor Burgum, has laid the groundwork for tax revenue-sharing legislation.
1. Behavioral Health and Addiction: Recognizing that behavioral health and addiction impact the state's ability to achieve its vision, including but not limited to the impact these issues have on the workplace, within a month of taking office, Governor Burgum and First Lady Kathryn Burgum brought together health professionals, tribal leaders and others from across the state to discuss a collaborative approach to facing addiction in North Dakota communities. In January 2018, Governor Burgum signed an executive order creating the Office of Recovery Reinvented to promote strategic and innovative efforts to eliminate the shame and stigma associated with the disease of addiction.

The Office of Recovery Reinvented is comprised of a seven-member advisory committee, chaired by First Lady Kathryn Burgum. In partnership with the Department of Human Services' Behavioral Health Division, The Office of Recovery Reinvented is pursuing key strategies as part of the governor's Behavioral Health Initiative. These strategies include: supporting the full continuum of care, embedding services close to home and people's natural supports to keep families together, and to stop criminalizing behavioral health and divert criminal justice involvement. The Office of Recovery Reinvented collaborates with executive branch agencies, advocates, volunteers and others on various initiatives, pursuing opportunities to launch cost-

effective, grassroots efforts that increase education and awareness of addiction. For example, in March 2019, the Office of Recovery Reinvented launched the Youth Ending Stigma (YES) Challenge, which is designed to enable student-led initiatives and projects focused on eliminating social stigma surrounding behavioral health issues including addiction and mental health conditions. In addition to hosting an annual behavioral health conference, the Office of Recovery Reinvented also hosted the first-ever Peer Support Day at the Capitol, which brought behavioral health advocates, peer support specialists, individuals who have received peer support services, behavioral health and health care providers, state and local decision-makers and others together to discuss the approach and benefits of peer support and the role that it plays in recovery. Governor Burgum has linked this initiative to that of reinventing government by stating, “To reinvent government, we must comprehensively reinvent how we approach the disease of addiction. The Office of Recovery Reinvented will help catalyze our strategic efforts to strengthen recovery services and eliminate the shame and stigma of addiction.”

1. Main Street Initiative (MSI): Finally, Governor Burgum’s “Main Street Initiative” is an effort to preserve the health and vitality of North Dakota’s more rural communities by empowering local leaders and communities to help attract 21st century workforce and compete in the global economy.

The MSI has three components, all of which directly or indirectly relate to the state’s workforce plan: First, smart and efficient infrastructure — Governor Burgum believes that building smart, efficient infrastructure starts by examining the full costs, return on investment, and sustainability of our growth patterns, including all parts of North Dakota, from large metro areas to small towns. The basic premise of this pillar is that the creation of mixed-use city centers and neighborhoods maximizes existing infrastructure, which is a clear economic benefit for taxpayers. This strategy of infilling existing spaces with diverse retail and housing opportunities reduces long-term costs for city government, benefits tourism and business and fosters the kinds of creative spaces, arts and culture that attract people of all ages.

The second pillar of the MSI is the creation of healthy, vibrant communities. Governor Burgum acknowledges that in order to attract and retain quality talent, North Dakota needs to create cities with vibrant cores, and that these unique places and spaces become the differentiator that helps lead to healthy fiscal — and physical — communities.

The third pillar of the MSI is a 21st Century Workforce. North Dakota’s economy is changing, and, now more than ever, a skilled workforce is vital to the success of any company — big or small. In industries like energy, agriculture, healthcare, unmanned aerial systems, biotech, cybersecurity, manufacturing and engineering, Burgum states, we are seeing the emergence of new solutions built on innovative ideas.

With these cultural aspirations and strategic initiatives to guide our work, Governor Burgum’s vision for workforce development in North Dakota will result in a plan that: 1) identifies what matters most, with targeted, actionable goals accompanied by measurement and accountability systems; 2) acknowledges that tackling this issue requires collaboration across many state agencies; and goes beyond what has been done previously, and 3) demonstrates a new and innovative approach to thinking. Aiding in the success of the MSI have been the launch of the Main Street Community Dashboard, which serves as a resource for community leaders who are spearheading MSI efforts within the 66 communities engaged in the initiative; the expansion of community development activities and more than \$2.3 million in funds made available for these programs; and the implementation of the annual MSI Summit, which brings community members, students, and state team members together to learn about strategies and resources necessary for successfully managing the MSI throughout North Dakota.

Governor Burgum's enthusiasm for the future is captured by his final comment in his January 2018 State of the State address: "The State of the State is one of unlimited promise and potential, provided that we embrace change, we diversify our economy, and we harness the unstoppable forces of technology. "

2. Goals

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the above analysis of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

1. Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers of employment* and other populations.*
2. Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

The Unified State Plan provides focus on integrating the Governor's vision for job creation for emerging careers in the fossil fuels and renewable energy sector, healthcare sectors, advanced manufacturing sector, value-added agriculture, transportation and information technology sector. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act will support training opportunities for public assistance clients, low-income individuals, individuals with disabilities, veterans, migrant and seasonal farm workers, and Native Americans.

Governor Burgum has acknowledged the persistent workforce shortage remains the number one gating factor for economic growth in North Dakota. "Our state is ready to go to the next level because of the tremendous progress made in the last two years," Burgum said. "Our forward-looking agenda is focused on solving our workforce challenges, increasing accountability and budget transparency, investing in our people, and investing in our future."

The Governor's commitment to addressing these challenges was partially captured in his October 2021 AccelerateND proposal for the American Rescue Plan Act funding the state received. AccelerateND included \$326 million for workforce and economic diversification, and featured the following investments:

- - Workforce development initiatives
 - Polytechnic center
 - Early childhood tuition waivers and childcare grants
 - Natural gas infrastructure
 - Clean sustainable energy
 - Unemployment Insurance System modernization

The Workforce Development Council is also committed to addressing the workforce challenges and acknowledges that while their 2018 report establishes the framework for the future, it is necessary for education, state workforce resources, and private industry to connect, coordinate, and collaborate to take the understanding of the workforce issues and create actionable plans for future legislative sessions. In furtherance of this vision, in 2019, the Council created subcommittees to create needed strategies in three main areas from the original report: 1) Recruiting and retention of workers; 2) Addressing opportunities for the populations with barriers to employment; and 3) Focusing on the career exposure and technical skills gap, with

two additional subcommittees focused on occupational licensure reform and WDC communication strategies created in 2020.

Job Service North Dakota, the state agency designated by the Governor as the WIOA Title I Fiscal Agent, Grant Subrecipient and State Administrative Entity, and also serves as the One-Stop Operator as designated by the Council, has also reinvigorated its commitment to meeting workforce needs by creating a strategy aimed at improving the customer experience and collaborating with workforce partners throughout the state. Specifically, the following initiatives have been created to drive the agency mission of Meeting Workforce Needs which align with the Governor's strategic initiatives:

- - Revamping the agency website aimed at delivering exceptional service and creating a skilled workforce;
 - Improving the presence of labor market information for job seekers and employers through social media, promotion of dashboards, and increasing community presentations;
 - Identifying areas of business process improvement and opportunities to leverage technology to better serve both employers and job seekers;
 - Improving business support and workforce connections;
 - Supporting online business registration in a collaborative effort with other state agencies;
 - Identifying workforce partners for colocation to better serve the customer; and
 - Focusing on efforts to transform the workplace culture, believing that an engaged workforce will enable improved service to the customers.

In addition to these efforts by Job Service North Dakota, the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is working to advance credential attainment for individuals with disabilities. Currently, North Dakota is among the highest in the nation for credential attainment. Our goal is to continue to be a national leader in this area, and to achieve this goal, we will continue prioritizing credential attainment for Vocational Rehabilitation clients and focus more heavily on credentials that are aligned with the state's in-demand jobs list, when possible. VR is also collaborating with Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) and with Tribal Nations in the state to expand services. For example, the State Vocational Rehabilitation office is working with the staff at Spirit Lake Vocational Rehabilitation who are pursuing training, so they can expand support for Pre-Employment Transition Students and start the process earlier in a student's education. This goal is well-aligned with the WDC goal of expanding earlier and more diverse career exploration. Another new initiative that is under development is in close collaboration with DOCR as the justice involved population has been underserved by VR in North Dakota. Individuals who are transitioning out of the prison system are eligible for VR individualized services that include counseling and guidance, skill assessment and interest inventory, employment goals and short-term vocational training, targeted job placement and assisting with on-the-job training opportunities, and more. This population typically needs to secure employment quickly upon release to establish stability, so the support provided by VR is aimed at helping them achieve this and successfully enter the workforce. By expanding interaction with justice involved and residents of DOCR, the ultimate goal is to connect

individuals with jobs that are the right fit for them, thereby promoting success outside of the prison system.

North Dakota's workforce challenges are many, and there is statewide commitment from cabinet leaders to collaborate and connect to continue forward movement and action to advance the efforts of addressing North Dakota's complex workforce challenges.

The North Dakota Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Development, developed and implements a system of performance and accountability measures for the state around workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction. Each workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction partner cooperates in providing the data necessary to implement these measures as pursuant to NDCC 54-60-19. The Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Development shall consider these reports in preparing the Consolidated Biennial Statewide Strategic Plan for the state's system for workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction. In addition, before November first of each even-numbered year, the Department of Career and Technical Education, Job Service North Dakota, the Department of Commerce, Department of Public Instruction, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and the State Board of Higher Education shall present their agencies' workforce-related budget initiatives for the upcoming biennium, including alignment of their initiatives with the Consolidated Biennial Statewide Strategic Plan, to the North Dakota Workforce Development Council. The North Dakota Workforce Development Council (the Council) members shall consider potential areas for collaboration.

Since November of 2017, the Workforce Development Council has worked to deeply understand North Dakota's workforce challenges, including but not limited to, commissioning regional economic impact and labor availability studies, partnering with the Greater North Dakota Chamber of Commerce to conduct the first-ever employer survey, and interviewing dozens of stakeholders across the entire state for the purpose of proposing a workforce plan that identifies priorities based on a data-driven understanding of North Dakota's workforce challenges, maximizes state and federal resources, and aligns the educational system with industry needs to drive and create actionable solutions.

The Workforce Development Council approaches establishing workforce priorities and goal outcomes based on impact versus activity. According to the National Governor's Association, most states take an uncoordinated approach to workforce strategy. The Workforce Development Council uses data and evidence-based approach to creating strategy through a priority focus rather than a program focus.

In October of 2018, the Workforce Development Council presented a report of 38 recommendations to Governor Burgum in the following categories: addressing the technical skills gap, the need for youth engagement and earlier and more diverse career exploration, nursing and healthcare technician shortage, support for populations with barriers to employment, and the need for net in-migration of North Dakotans. In 2020, the WDC presented a report of 13 recommendations in the same categories, but replaced the nursing and healthcare technician focus with a broader focus on occupational licensure reform.

Underutilized populations were considered as solutions for the State's workforce shortages when determining goals and priorities in both of the Council's reports of recommendations. Aligning resources and partnering with other State Agency efforts such as the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR), TANF and Adult Education services for English Language Learners, Vocational Rehabilitation, Native Americans and individuals struggling with addiction will continue to be given strong consideration as the Council moves forward in

developing future strategies. Goals will be formed with consideration on what drives the economy and supports the Governor's Vision.

The Council has created subcommittees to address workforce challenges within each of the themes mentioned above. All recommendations and projects proposed by the subcommittees must follow the guidelines Governor Burgum's established for the Council to follow in the Strategic Planning process, which are: • The Plan is based on a thorough understanding of North Dakota workforce needs, supported by data and evidence • The Plan maximizes state and federal resources • The Plan emphasizes industry-led solutions • The Plan includes matching educational needs with workforce needs.

GOVERNOR'S VISION FOR YOUTH

The Workforce Development Council's recommendations under the theme calling for youth engagement and earlier and more diverse career exploration and addressing the technical skills gap highlight the Governor's vision for youth and the direction in which North Dakota is headed. The following section expands on this section of the Council's report.

CAREER EXPOSURE/AWARENESS.

Today, early exposure to career options for students (and their parents) is limited, with students and parents alike generally lacking awareness of available post- secondary degree pathways beyond the four-year degree. In addition to inadequate exposure to the wide array of career options available in North Dakota and the pathways to achieve them, youth in North Dakota do not have sufficient opportunities for work-based learning, which accelerates success in any career. Finally, there is great opportunity to engage youth in the success of their own communities while amplifying efforts to expose students to the wide array of career options in North Dakota.

North Dakota has an opportunity and necessity to become a leader in engaging youth earlier and creating a consistent and integrated approach to career exploration, accompanied by efficient, high- quality educational pathways to assist in educating youth in current and high demand jobs available in our state. Accomplishing this necessitates tighter alignment to North Dakota's educational systems (PK-12, CTE, NDUS) and other delivery systems such as the Center for Distance Education (CDE), and must be supported by leadership and investment from the private sector.

To achieve the goal of creating earlier opportunities for earlier career exposure:

Earlier & More Diverse Career Exploration and Addressing the Technical Skills Gap

- a. The Council recommends expanding Area Career & Technology Centers (ACTC) with a total investment of \$40M to be awarded incrementally to multiple school districts through a competitive grant process to regions that demonstrate commitment to ensuring success through industry alignment and private sector match.
- b. The Council recommends that the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education (NDCTE) and North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) work collaboratively to promote and encourage increased opportunities for career explorations in our schools.
- c. The Council recommends expanding North Dakota Studies curriculum to highlight multiple industries and career opportunities.

d. The Council recommends the development of a grant program to support the private sector in creating virtual examples of high demand careers in North Dakota for educators and students to access.

e. The Council endorses utilizing a portion of ND Career Builders funding to promote the program to stakeholders, including businesses, employees, students, parents, and educators.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT.

It has been shown that empowering youth by creating the opportunity to participate in the community benefits development as leaders, and specifically, contributes to better problem-solving and decision-making skills when compared to those youth who are not engaged. Similarly, it has been reported that youth who have been empowered by the community are likely to be future community leaders. The development of such vital skills (e.g. problem solving and decision- making) at a young age will serve the youth well in a variety of life endeavors, with an additional and important advantage—exposing youth to the many opportunities available in their own communities may well encourage youth to remain in those communities.

Encouraging youth engagement in the labor force also responds to a concern raised by North Dakota employers in the 2018 North Dakota Workforce Survey, that is, the absence of work ethic, dependability, and problem-solving skills—all of which would be enhanced through earlier work experiences. Further, employers and industry groups have consistently emphasized a need for educational programs to include work-based learning experiences at an earlier age. Though this need has been emphasized, almost one-third of hiring managers are not targeting youth at all.

In December 2018, the Innovative Education Task Force (IETF) released a report of based on their study of innovative education in North Dakota and the opportunities that exist within the state. The IETF was made up of education, youth development, business and community leaders. Governor Burgum charged this task force with creating a system to identify and support schools and districts implementing innovative practices, and with providing direction on how state government can empower districts to adopt student- centric learning practices designed to support a 21st century economy impacted by rapid technological change. IETF's findings and recommendations which are most aligned with innovative education and student-centered practices, as they relate to preparing tomorrow's workforce are:

1.
 - a. The highest ranked initiative, as determined by the IETF, focused on providing additional personalized learning pathways that would be recognized by the state. Specifically, a personalized graduation pathway that could complement the current Carnegie Unit-based system was strongly recommended. Given the increasing opportunity for interdisciplinary, work-based and proficiency-based instruction and assessment, confining graduation requirements to specific credits was identified as a major barrier to student-centered learning. Instead, a proficiency transcript, in which mastery could be demonstrated in multiple modalities and disciplines, was identified as a way to preserve rigor while promoting flexibility. This personalized pathway would not replace the current credit-based graduation pathway: students would be able to select the route that was best aligned to their future aspirations.

Progress in this area is demonstrated through HB 1478 passed by the 67th Legislative Assembly, which allows schools to award credit for educational opportunities provided by sponsoring

community entities if the teacher of record is a licensed teacher at the school. For example, a student interested in journalism could earn school credit for work experience at the local newspaper, writing, proofreading and editing articles.

1.

- a. Educating students is hard work and is made more difficult when done in isolation. The IETF recommends the creation and dissemination of innovation tool kits to help support districts wanting to explore more student-centered learning practices. The tool kits will be comprised of information developed by North Dakota educators leading instructional changes in their community and other research-based best practices.
- b. In today's data-driven environment, sharing data around new practices is imperative to ensure successful initiatives can be scaled and replicated. The IETF recommends that districts identify key data metrics, ranging from behavioral referrals to extracurricular participation, to help inform their decisions and ensure new innovative systems do not throw "the baby out with the bathwater."

Governor Doug Burgum and state Superintendent of Public Instruction Kirsten Baesler applaud the Presidential Memorandum aimed at expanding access to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and recognizing the important role it plays in developing a new generation of citizens contributing to the American economy. "We're grateful to the administration for placing such strong emphasis on STEM education, which dovetails with our own efforts to promote innovative, project-based, experiential learning opportunities that better prepare students for lifelong learning in the 21st century economy," Burgum said.

Gov. Doug Burgum joined Governors for Computer Science, a partnership comprised of bipartisan state leaders committed to advancing policy and funding to expand access to, and increase equity in, K-12 computer science education. "Providing access to computer science courses is fundamental to our students' success and an important part of our focus on innovative education and addressing workforce development gaps in our state," said Burgum. "Additional exposure to computer science in K-12 will help our students succeed in a 21st century economy where computing is part of virtually every facet of our daily lives." Goals of the partnership include enabling all high schools to offer at least one rigorous computer science course, funding professional learning opportunities so teachers can be prepared to teach these courses and creating a set of high-quality academic standards for K-12 computer science to guide local implementation of courses.

Demonstrating the State's commitment to increasing access to computer science in schools, 18 North Dakota educators completed North Dakota's first-ever K-12 Computer Science and Cybersecurity Standards in March 2019. These standards are designed to provide all students with a quality, equal-opportunity education in computer science and cybersecurity that becomes a fundamental and foundational component of their education. Additionally, during the 2019 Legislative Session, one of the few bills to receive unanimous support in both the House and Senate was Senate Bill 2171, which provided the state superintendent with the authority to issue credentials for teachers of computer and cyber science. Many efforts are being made to provide teachers with the necessary training to learn about computer science - including coding, digital literacy, and cybersecurity. EduTech and ND DPI have developed partnerships that will aid in providing trainings to K-12 teachers in North Dakota.

Further preparing North Dakota students to excel in the 21st century workforce is the PK-20W Initiative, which was first created in 2018 and aims to bring together stakeholders (including

K12 and state government agencies, post-secondary, workforce and strategic state and national private sector partners). The goal of this initiative is to provide development pathways to grow a properly trained workforce for current and emerging industries.

Computer Science and Cybersecurity (CSC) are key to developing and integrating 21st Century Skills (e.g. technology, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving, innovation, creativity, persistence). The ND Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) believes that all North Dakota public schools must provide challenging and rigorous programs of study in CSC across all grade levels.

In 2019, NDDPI brought together a group of North Dakota teachers, administrators, and higher education faculty, along with industry partners to draft CSC standards. As a result, the North Dakota Computer Science & Cybersecurity Standards were adopted.

In 2021, members of the PK-20W Initiative completed the North Dakota CSC Plan to provide a statewide roadmap to guide actions so all North Dakota PK-12 students are provided high-quality computer science and cybersecurity education. The plan encompasses items identified by Code.org as the “Nine Policy Ideas to Make Computer Science Fundamental to K-12 Education” (https://code.org/files/Making_CS_Fundamental.pdf). The North Dakota CSC Plan covers key policy and implementation issues related to standards, certification, course pathways, graduation requirements, Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) entrance requirements, and professional learning. Bringing this plan to scale will require a coordinated effort by multiple stakeholders as well as oversight to ensure success.

Higher education also is a key to our state’s future. Out-of-school youth are encouraged to seek post-secondary education to earn necessary credentials that will prepare them to fill open positions within the state. In recent years, North Dakota has taken significant steps forward in making post-secondary education more affordable for all of our young people. Increasing the skills of North Dakota’s youth aligns with the Governor’s vision for a highly skilled workforce to support the State’s economic growth and increases per-capita income. North Dakota’s commitment to increasing access to post-secondary education, while also preparing students to fill available jobs is demonstrated by the 2019 state legislature with the passing of House Bill 1171, creating a skilled workforce scholarship and student loan repayment program aimed at attracting people into high need and emerging occupations in the state. The result is the ND Career Builders Scholarship & Loan Repayment program. The North Dakota University System institutions across the state, along with agency partners including the ND Workforce Development Council, ND Department of Commerce, the Bank of North Dakota, and Job

Service of North Dakota are promoting this opportunity for students, employees, and businesses. The program targets the workforce needs of North Dakota with the goal of recruiting and retaining talent in skilled workforce jobs. Additional information on the program can be found at <https://ndus.edu/career-builders>. This program received continued appropriation by the 67th Legislative Assembly, and was granted the ability to accept out-of-state graduates in the loan repayment program, which enhances the state’s talent attraction efforts.

Another resource is the state funded Operation Intern program, which provides financial support for companies offering internships within target industries and/or on the state’s in-demand jobs list. The maximum amount of Operation Intern funds an employer can receive is \$20,000 per funding round or \$40,000 per biennium. Employers will be limited to a maximum of five interns each funding round. This biennium will have two funding rounds. Operation Intern is utilized as a way to expand Internship and work experience opportunities for North

Dakota Higher Education and Secondary students with North Dakota employers. More information can be found at <https://www.workforce.nd.gov/workforce/OperationIntern>.

Incorporating a model of career information and career promotion will ensure that students, parents, educators, and other career influencers are aware of the career opportunities which are being created by North Dakota business and industry and the requirements for those opportunities. Two industry awareness efforts, energy and information technology, are in place to inform secondary school youth, parents and teachers of employment opportunities. Both industry awareness efforts started with Governor's state set-aside funds and due to the success, have been sustained. Career and Technical Education provides funding and enables the continuation of the provision of this career information.

This effort supports the State's vision by ensuring that youth and others have information on careers specific to North Dakota and their region at their disposal. This will assist them in making career choices which will lead to employment in North Dakota.

The Career Outlook is a publication of the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education's Career Resource Network. The publication includes a multitude of information that assists youth to research and plan for their career. Youth can complete a self-assessment, a career clusters interest inventory, research occupations, explore options to finance education, military opportunities and employment.

<https://www.cte.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/CRN/CareerOutlook/CareerOutlook.pdf>.

Additionally, RUReadyND.com is a software program that the Bank of ND and Student Loans of ND provide to all North Dakota public and private middle schools and high schools. The program allows access to career exploration, education planning, and ACT test preparation tools. It features sections for students and parents. Youth can explore career and education options, complete an interest profile and a skills survey, and plan for high school and college. A portfolio is created and can be revisited as students make decisions throughout their school years.

The North Dakota Commission on Education Improvement recommends ways to improve the current system of delivering and financing elementary and secondary education, including the equitable distribution of state education dollars. The Commission recognized the need to increase the amount of time available to students for career planning. The relatively high ratio of students to counselors (450 to 1) was reduced to 300 to 1. To help meet that lower ratio a Career Advisor position was created to work under the direction of a school counselor and can be counted for 30% of a counseling programs time. A Career Advisor has received in-depth training in the areas of career development and incorporates career development information or skills in his/her work with students, parents, or school staff. There are 30 trained Career Advisors in schools across the state. There are another 30 trained individuals working in a variety of venues including colleges, both public and tribal, and REAs.

Finally, school districts utilize career advisors to provide sequential career development activities, current career information, and related career exploration opportunities to students in grades seven through twelve. A career advisor will use computer-assisted career guidance systems and provide career information to students, staff and parents. Other activities include facilitated classroom career exploration activities, maintained student career portfolios, coordinated job shadows, career fairs, college visits, job interviews, administration and interpretation of interest assessments and student preparation with employment-seeking skills. Student benefits from career development activities include a sense of achievement, greater ownership, a sense of direction and purpose, and development of a lifelong skill.

1. Performance Goals: Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

2. Assessment:

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

The North Dakota Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Development developed and implements a system of performance and accountability measures for the state around workforce development, workforce training and talent attraction. Each partner in the workforce development system provides the data necessary to implement these measures.

The Division of Workforce Development consults with partners in the state's system for workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction, including the Department of Career and Technical Education, the Department of Public Instruction, Job Service North Dakota, the State Board of Higher Education, the Department of Human Services, and other Divisions of the Department of Commerce.

The measures are continuously reviewed to identify and implement improvements to the State's system for workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction. Division of Workforce Development develops linkages between partners of the State's system for workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction, to assure coordination and non-duplication of programs and services provided in the state. The performance accountability report is made available at:

<https://www.workforce.nd.gov/about/PerformanceAccountability/>.

The assessment, which compiles data from individual program years, in addition to data from each biennium, provides an at-a-glance image of program success and opportunities for improvement. Distributing this information across all workforce development, workforce training, and talent attraction partners allows for each to establish attainable goals that will enhance the impact of each program within the state's workforce development system.

C. STATE STRATEGY

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION 101(D)(3)(B), (D). "CAREER PATHWAY" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(7) AND INCLUDES REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP. "IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(23)

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND

OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2)

Career Pathways

WIOA provides an extraordinary opportunity to improve job and career options for North Dakota workers and job seekers through an integrated, job-driven, public workforce system that links diverse talent to businesses. It supports the development of strong, vibrant regional economies where businesses thrive, and people want to live and work. The workforce system includes three focus areas: the needs of business and workers drive workforce solutions; American Job Centers provide customer service to jobseekers and employers and the workforce system supports strong economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.

Career and Technical Education, Adult education, post-secondary education, and other partners collaborate to establish career pathways systems that make it easier for all individuals to attain the skills and credentials needed for jobs in North Dakota.

Career pathway systems offer an effective approach to the development of a skilled workforce by increasing the number of workers in the North Dakota who gain industry- recognized and academic credentials necessary to work in jobs that are in-demand. Core partners will align educational offerings with business needs, career pathways systems engage business in the development of educational programs up front. Career pathways systems transform the role of employers from a customer to a partner and a co-leader and co-investor in the development of the workforce.

Employers have a high stake in the development of career pathways that lead to an increase in their pipeline of qualified workers. The North Dakota career pathways system will offer a more efficient and customer-centered approach to workforce development by structuring connections among employers, adult basic education, support service providers, occupational training, and post-secondary education programs. Career pathway programs make it easier for people to earn industry-recognized credentials through avenues that are more relevant; to provide opportunities for more flexible education and training; and to attain market identifiable skills that can transfer into work. These comprehensive education and training programs are suited to meet the needs of working learners and non-traditional students.

Career pathways programs will be designed to serve a diverse group of learners to include; adults, youth, dislocated workers, veterans, individuals with a disability, public assistance recipients, new immigrants, English language learners, and justice-involved individuals. The ND Career and Technical Education has created 16 career clusters that organize virtually all occupations around 16 broad categories. Occupations within each cluster require similar skills and knowledge. The categories include: • Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources / Energy • Architecture & Construction • Arts, A/V Technology & Communications • Business Management & Administration • Education & Training • Finance • Government & Public Administration • Health Science • Hospitality & Tourism • Human Services • Information Technology • Law & Public Safety • Manufacturing • Marketing • Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics • Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

Each career cluster has a poster created on-line that lists occupations under heading of education required; High School Diploma or Equivalent, Post-Secondary non-degree award or

Associate's Degree and Bachelor's Degree or Higher. Each poster included a column that lists the ND annual openings and typical annual wage. Career cluster information is available online on the ND Career and Technical Education website under Student Resources at <https://www.cte.nd.gov/career-clusters>. The career clusters are available to all core partner programs and are used for career exploration.

The Career Outlook publication is a comprehensive resource that includes self-assessment tools, occupational research, information on financing an education, employment and education and training. The Career Outlook supports thoughtful, deliberate planning to choose a career that is personally satisfying and fulfills a critical need in local communities. The workforce of tomorrow will need the knowledge, technical skill, and attitude necessary to be globally competitive. This publication guides individual through the process of planning and preparing for a lifetime of success in North Dakota.

<https://www.cte.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/CRN/CareerOutlook/CareerOutlook.pdf>.

WIOA training funds support career pathways in many occupation areas such as healthcare career ladders of nurse assistant, licensed practical nurse and registered nurse. Transportation occupations offer increased wages and opportunity based on skills and endorsements held. Welding occupations require a variety of skills and certifications to work in specific areas. The ND eligible training provider list offers many certifications to expand skills for these in demand occupations in the State. <https://www.jobsnd.com/training/providers>.

North Dakota will continue to strive for a strong comprehensive workforce system that enables individuals to move easily between employment and skill improvement to advance their careers, achieve their occupational goals, and contribute to a growing economy. The workforce system includes partners in delivery of labor exchange services funded by Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, labor market information, workplace training, skills development and education, along with partners in business, industry and economic development.

Collaboration among partners for comprehensive delivery of services will include identification of skill needs and training gaps, and addressing training needs for in-demand occupations. The Governor's five targeted industries, as well as in-demand occupations in support industries, will be the primary focus of skill development strategies for the State. Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult education and WIOA Youth funds will be used to help targeted youth populations access jobs and occupational training opportunities that will keep them connected with their communities and North Dakota's labor market. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) provides services to youth which will assist them with identifying appropriate career goals and make the adjustment from school to employment. Pre-employment transition services are offered to high school students age 14-21. Services include job exploration, work-based learning opportunities, counseling on enrollment in post-secondary education, workplace readiness and self-advocacy. Adult Education enabling youth to acquire the basic skills necessary to function in today's society so that they can benefit from the completion of secondary school, enhanced family life, attaining citizenship and participating in job training programs.

The North Dakota workforce development and training system receives Federal and State funding support, and in many cases matching funds are also provided by the private sector. WIOA Title I funds are used to help leverage other Federal fund sources such as Pell Grants and student loans. In addition, WIOA funds are used to help leverage state and private sector funds available to address workforce training needs. North Dakota has a strong collaboration among state workforce partners to increase the employment of North Dakotan's with disabilities. Staff

from local offices of DVR, Job Service North Dakota and Adult Basic Education collaborate in joint planning and service delivery to individuals with disabilities.

Core program staff collaborate to best achieve that goal for their participants. These efforts will continue to be coordinated to support North Dakota's Talent Initiative goals to expand, attract, and retain talent to meet the state's workforce needs.

Sector Strategies

Sector strategies will be expanded to continue enhancing and strengthening economic vitality through addressing employer and job-seeker talent requirements. Sector partnerships implement effective coordinated responses and integrate resources to develop the talent and workforce needs of key industries of a regional labor market.

Labor market information will be used as the basis to map and assess current sector activities to identify successes and challenges along with emerging market areas. This data will be used to understand the skills required for the current and future workforce and prioritize target industries.

Job Service participates in many activities that support economic development around the state. Established sector strategy groups hold manufacturing roundtables to jointly discuss industry challenges and find solutions, one challenge is recruiting workforce. Two examples of these are the Dickinson Manufacturing Roundtable located in the southwest part of the state and the Highway Two West Manufacturing Association located in the northeast part of the state. Additionally, during the last four years, the Unmanned Aerial System industry has grown at an immense pace and has added a roundtable quarterly discussion that Job Service staff are invited to. Job Service staff offer the services available to assist with labor exchange, training opportunities and labor market information at all of these statewide strategy meetings. Additionally, Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff participate in sector strategies with Tech Connect IT Sector and the Health Tech Trade Steering Committee.

Through the EmPower North Dakota Commission, leaders from all major energy industries in North Dakota meet regularly with one common goal: to be critical thinkers for the development of the state's energy resources. The strategic partnerships between North Dakota's long-standing and emerging energy industries enable all sectors of the industry to work together as they meet our state's and country's energy needs. North Dakota is proactive and aggressive in addressing energy development and serves as a model for America in fostering innovative, long-term energy strategies to meet our nation's growing energy demand and need for energy security in an environmentally responsible manner.

A sector strategy in North Dakota that is sort of new and might not totally fit under the description of what a "sector strategies" is commonly referred to. The collaboration of state workforce agencies and in particular Job Service North Dakota in meeting the needs of New Americans who are arriving into our great state. Through working with Lutheran Immigration and Resettlement Services (LIRS), we are placing the New American populations in work sectors such as manufacturing, hospitality, and healthcare. This collaboration between LIRS and JSND has always been in place, but during the last year and even during the midst of the Covid pandemic, our relationships have grown, and this population is taking advantage of our services more than ever. We are seeing more and more of the New American population take advantage of services in our resource rooms, and programs such as WIOA and JOBS. This population is very important in filling the 18,000 job openings in ND. North Dakota continues to see an increased population of New Americans/refugees and other English Language Learners

during the last five years. There were 421 New American arrivals in FY 2017, 174 in FY 2018, 124 in FY 2019, 44 in FY 2020, and a proposed 200 in FY 2021 as reported by LIRS.

Finally, the Greater North Dakota Chamber provides a license for The Manufacturing Institute's Dream It, Do It, a sector strategy to connect with high school students to provide exposure to manufacturing jobs and dispel misconceptions about the industry. Manufacturers identify young professionals within their company who engage students to inspire them to consider a career in manufacturing. This model has been shared with the Workforce Development Council and other industries in hopes to replicate the successes and provide career awareness experiences for the next generation of workers.

The Workforce Development Council has established an in-demand occupations list for North Dakota in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The list includes occupations determined to have a current or potential impact on the state's economy. The factors used in creating the list are: Total Employment (2020), Ten-Year Numeric Job Growth (2019-2029), Annualized Job Growth Rate (2019-2029), Annual Job Openings, Average Annual Wages, and Essential and Emerging Occupations. <https://www.jobsnd.com/job-seeker/demand-occupations>

Vocational Rehabilitation allows for exited individuals to reapply for increased skills for career advancement. Career pathway training provides new opportunities for individuals whose disability has advanced and is now requiring changes in work environment and needs new or advanced skills.

The state of North Dakota has been proactive in development of partnerships with business and industry, education, economic development, and the workforce development system to continuously identify and address workforce challenges. The Workforce Development Council, community colleges, business and labor, the Office of Apprenticeship, and TrainND all work closely to identify workforce needs and address training solutions. DVR's primary mission is to assist North Dakotans with disabilities to improve their employment opportunities and to assist North Dakota businesses in finding solutions to their disability—related issues.

Through this "dual client" approach, DVR assist individuals with permanent injuries, illness, or impairments to achieve competitive integrated employment and increased independence. DVR also assists business owners and employers through full-service business consultation on a variety of business and disability-related areas. Core program partners will collaborate with Career and Technical Education to receive professional development to build a common understanding of career pathways and how they can be used across all agencies. Career and Technical Education will, with consultation of the others involved, take the lead on professional development that will be applied across all agencies.

North Dakota continues to see resettlements of New Americans. Job Service AJC Workforce Centers link Adult Education and English literacy programs. Adult Education offers programs assist English language learners in literacy activities, rights and responsibility of students, workforce training, and can include integrated education and training. The Fargo Adult Learning Center is currently the only ALC in ND offering all of the above in a program called Integrated English language and civics education (IELCE). All ALCs in the State offer English language acquisition classes, a form of citizenship, and workforce training. Fargo ALC receives additional funding from WIOA to offer the IELCE program with IET. We are excited that our state was able to hold a competition for an IET grant 2021 with an additional amount that was awarded by our state for IET development. Three sites participated and we were able to grant out \$122,736 to our local programs to implement IET's. They were able to develop around in-

demand jobs such as CNA or Paraprofessional areas. In addition, one of our sites was able to partner with CTE to develop an IET at their local program. All programs continue to refine their processes. Job Service AJC Workforce Centers and other core partners are available and request to help in preparing participants so that unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations can occur. Also, so economic self-sufficiency can be obtained.

A growing partnership with CTE is a goal for upcoming program years. Talks have already begun about the “how”. The goal is to simply allow Adult Education participants access to the machines, training, teachers that are currently being used in the CTE program. In some of our ALCs in ND, a shared physical location exists as well as a shared Director. We are pleased to report steps have taken place on meeting these two separated student populations on site. It has always been seen as two separated student populations, but it seems plausible that we can find a way to utilize this resource. ND is also going to explore opportunities of CTE in our postsecondary institutions, this could be a large factor in widening our options for IET offerings across the state. With resources that are not sufficient to provide certain workforce trainings, partnerships become key. One of the pillars in solving the workforce challenge in ND deals with tapping into historically underutilized populations, especially those with barriers. ALCs, in concert with VR and Job Service centers, are strategically planning ways in which we can make an impact in this area.

Involving interns in North Dakota businesses addresses two important challenges. Internships provide employees in a tight labor market and build connections between young people and North Dakota employers. The state funded Operation Intern program offers private businesses up to \$20,000 every two years to fund internships in their companies.

Co-enrollments of participants are encouraged to maximize the total resources available for preparation of the workforce to meet employment needs. Examples of funds leveraged with WIOA include: Title II Adult Education; Carl Perkins; Trade Act; Tribal WIOA and Tribal 477 programs; Motivation, Education and Training (MET); TANF; Vocational Rehabilitation; SCSEP, and North Dakota New Jobs Training. WIOA funds are used to cover the cost of GED testing, dual enrollments with WIOA Dislocated Worker funds complement Trade Act enrollments, MET and WIOA co— enrollments support training and Vocational Rehabilitation referrals receive Wagner-Peyser services. JOBS clients also receive Wagner- Peyser services routinely and receive WIOA assistance as appropriate. Building on these partnerships assist in determining what funding source is best utilized to increase job seeker skills and to increase customer service. These efforts result in meeting the needs of North Dakota employers and supporting the Governor’s vision.

The Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff include the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). One Disabled Veteran Outreach Program specialist and four Consolidated Positions assist the needs of disabled veterans. Those veterans and eligible persons who require intensive service in order to obtain and retain employment that supports their self-sufficiency. CPs also provide outreach to employers in advocating for the hiring of Veterans. CPs are available in Fargo, Grand Forks, Bismarck, and Minot but do provide outreach to the five other AJC Workforce Centers located across the state.

UI claims are taken only through online means. This service delivery model increases the need for assistance from Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff. Job Service AJC Workforce Centers have adjusted as required by WIOA and have adapted service delivery to meet the growing needs of UI claimants. UI claimants have a series of “How To” instructional videos to assist with the UI claims filing process and weekly certification. The videos are posted on the Job Service

webpage jobsnd.com. <https://www.jobsnd.com/unemployment-individuals/unemployment-insurance-how-videos>

Expanding apprenticeship programs and participation is a goal for North Dakota and for the Workforce Development Council. Agencies including the Department of Commerce, Job Service North Dakota, Department of Career and Technical Education, North Dakota University System, Department of Instruction, and others, are all involved in working to identify opportunities to identify employers that should consider apprenticeship and individuals who may be interested in pursuing this valuable workforce training opportunity. The State Longitudinal Data System has even started developing an online resource that highlights where apprenticeship opportunities exist in North Dakota, as a tool for jobseekers and career counselors or advisors who are helping students explore career paths. The Department of Commerce applied for and received an Apprenticeship State Expansion Grant in 2019. This grant has been sub-granted to North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS) to aid in their efforts to develop new apprenticeship programs in in-demand occupations, and to recruit and support new apprentices. Programs developed under this grant receive classroom and online training through NDSCS, which has a long tradition of providing responsive, accessible, and flexible training solutions including their pre-existing apprenticeship programs. NDSCS has curriculum currently approved with the Department of Labor and is using this grant to expand their offerings to meet the growing needs in healthcare and manufacturing industries. To date, NDSCS has recruited 10 new apprentices and has developed four new apprenticeship programs, including Emergency Medical Technician, Construction Equipment Mechanic, CNA- Restorative, and Medical Aide. Unfortunately, North Dakota is not on track to fulfill the requirements of the Apprenticeship State Expansion grant by the existing performance deadline of June 30, 2022. The grant lost momentum due to challenges caused by COVID-19 and turnover in staff at the Department of Commerce and NDSCS. There was also a delay in year one spending, due to finalizing the agreement with the sub-recipient. These challenges are all addressed in a revised statement of work that was submitted in May 2022, along with a request for a one-year, no-cost extension. If that request is granted, the new Period of Performance would end on June 30, 2023. The Department of Commerce and NDSCS are committed to the growing apprenticeship in North Dakota's target industries and in-demand jobs, and committed to achieving the goal of recruiting 315 new apprentices, which is set forth in the state's agreement with DOL. To help us achieve this goal, the Department of Commerce and NDSCS are now engaging in coaching through American Institutes for Research (AIR), the contracted technical assistance provider for the purpose of this grant.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above.

Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

The North Dakota Workforce Development Council serves as the State Board under WIOA section 101(d). North Dakota is designated by the Governor as a single state local area.

The Council shall carry out the functions of a local board. The Workforce Development Council identifies, develops and recommends workforce policy changes to programs that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the State's workforce development system. Targeted industry and potential labor pools are the focus of the Council meetings to provide direction for a comprehensive workforce development strategic plan. The Council identifies and develops opportunities for collaboration and partnership between education, employment and supporting workforce development policies, resources and activities in the State. The nine American Job Centers are located regionally throughout North Dakota.

July 2017, the Workforce Development Council voted to restructure the membership to meet the WIOA section 101(b). The Council represents diverse geographic areas of the state. The chairperson was selected by the Governor and represents business, and a director and support staff are employees of the North Dakota Department of Commerce and Job Service, and assist the Council in performing its functions.

The Council, as a whole, are responsible to the Governor for: Identifying, developing and recommending workforce policy changes to federal and state programs that will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the State's workforce development system; Reviewing and identifying the current and future economic development and workforce development needs of the state and recommending steps for meeting those needs; Providing direction for a comprehensive workforce development strategic plan; Identifying and developing recommended actions that will enhance and increase the capacity of the state's workforce development system; Identifying and developing opportunities for collaboration and partnership between education, employment and supporting workforce development activities in the State; Reviewing and approving a Council operating budget; Performing the duties and functions of State Board as prescribed under WIOA.

The Workforce Development Council creates policies as required by WIOA and receives reports for all core programs, career technical education and Department of Commerce. The members review the law and regulations and considers the benefits to the state. The Workforce Development Council considers the service delivery for the state and the single local area designation when determining service providers. The Council enters into memorandums of understanding for providers for WIOA Youth services and Adult and Dislocated Worker career services. The Council considers the unique characteristics of North Dakota and the wishes of the Governor when making provider decisions. In order for the Council to have a better understanding of what the nine AJC Workforce Centers across the state provide to the employers and citizens through the Title I and III programs, the Job Service Workforce Services Director (One-Stop Operator) has invited all Council members into the AJC Workforce Centers for a tour. Additionally, each AJC Workforce Center manager has been given a goal of connecting with their area council member(s) and to personally invite them into the AJC Workforce Centers to understand the mission of Job Service North Dakota and what we provide to our customers. Finally, a report on Job Service North Dakota and Workforce Center activities are provided at each quarterly Workforce Development Council meeting.

In following WIOA's training emphasis for in-demand occupations, the Workforce Development Council will review LMI data annually and make adjustments as necessary. Biennially, the Council creates and submits a list of recommendations which includes several legislative initiatives to the Governor. These recommendations are utilized by entities in their legislative testimonies for policy changes and funding requests to Standing Committees. Additionally, the

recommendations are also used to drive the projects taken on by the Department of Commerce Workforce Division, and other state agencies.

The Executive Committee provides for the administration, continuity and good order of the Council as a whole and performs executive management tasks as may be determined by the Council membership, including: a. Assist in establishing the meeting agendas for the Council. b. Track all outstanding actions of the Council and recommend actions that would assure successful completion of all tasks and objectives. c. Recommend policy positions for the Council's review and approval. d. Establish task groups when needed——design purpose and role, obtain and appoint members, designate chair, and establish operating parameters and completion time subject to approval of the Council.

The Administrative Committee shall be responsible for: a. Developing a Unified State Plan. b. Recommend to the Council, goals for the development and continuous improvement of the statewide workforce delivery system to include development of linkages to assure coordination and non— duplication among programs and activities. c. Provide recommendations for improvement of comprehensive State workforce delivery system, including State adjusted levels of performance as needed when the core program performance fails to meet negotiated levels. d. Recommend projects to the Council for Governor's consideration for funding and provide recommendations to the Council on the use of the Governor's Set Aside Funds when available.

Finally, the Council has created four subcommittees which all have a specific area of focus based on the report of recommendations released by the Council in October 2018. Each subcommittee has been tasked with building strategies to accomplish the goals in one of the following areas from the original report: 1) Recruitment and retention of workers; 2) Addressing opportunities for the populations with barriers to employment; 3) Increasing earlier and more diverse career exploration and addressing technical skills gap; and 4) Occupational licensure reform. A fifth subcommittee is utilized to develop a communication plan aimed at educating citizens throughout the state on the initiatives developed by the Council. The subcommittees meet monthly and serve as the research arm of the Council.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also, describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

The North Dakota workforce system gives all stakeholders including businesses, students, job seekers, researchers, and public officials access to all federally—funded workforce development programs, as well as several state—funded programs. Services provided through the Job Service AJC Workforce Centers include: • WIOA Title IB—Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth • Wagner—Peyser • Unemployment Insurance • TANF Employment and Training (JOBS) • Labor Market Information (LMI) Jobs for Veterans State Grant • Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) • Foreign Labor Certification • SNAP Employment and Training (BEST).

Job Service AJC Workforce Center core and required partners include: • Adult Education and Family Literacy Act • Vocational Rehabilitation • Post—secondary Career and Technical Education under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act • Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and Job Corps.

North Dakota capitalizes on the strengths each partner brings to the system while reducing or eliminating duplication of products and services. The simplicity in the structure with defined roles and responsibilities of all partners allow case managers and providers to deliver the services necessary for North Dakota's growth and competitive edge.

Job seekers have the option to search for employment, review labor market information and a variety of other employment topics through Jobsnd.com. Links to the job listing site provides fast access to a database of thousands of jobs. Jobsnd.com utilizes Job Spidering, a powerful online tool that captures job listings from other sources including corporate web sites, online newspaper listings, and other private job boards. Spidered jobs are added to Job Service's internal job listings to provide seamless access to thousands of job openings.

Employers benefit from having job openings viewed by the largest applicant pool in North Dakota and the ability to view similar listings for wage and benefit comparison. Job seekers benefit by having the largest single portal in North Dakota to access job openings for all occupations. Jobsnd.com has the largest pool of job openings in the state. Job Service provides staff assisted services. Job seekers are assessed to identify current skill levels and gaps. The assessment information is used to determine skill development opportunities within in—demand occupations. Labor market information is provided for job seekers to make informed occupational choices and execute their job search efficiently. Career services will be provided to the extent needed based on individual assessments. Support service needs will be assessed, and referrals made to partner programs or known community resources.

Informational services are provided through the FirstLink 211 Network. The FirstLink Network is a unique resource that brings together workforce development partners, community organizations and businesses. The FirstLink Network is a partnership developed to assist customers gain access to services in order to obtain, retain and advance in employment.
<https://myfirstlink.org/>

Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff providing assessment and orientation services will be knowledgeable of services of all core and required partners and will be able to explain services available and refer job seekers for those services. North Dakota has a strong history of partner collaboration and dual enrollment of mutual clients. Partner program staff, through release of information, share assessment information and employment plans. The sharing of information provides convenience for the client and also enhances the chances of success. When all employment and training resources are considered, the likelihood of success is greatly increased. ITA costs sharing with DVR and WIOA has been occurring for over a decade. Students working with Adult Education to earn their GED have received support services to cover testing costs. TANF participants, especially out—of—school youth, are referred to and receive WIOA services. Job—driven workforce development will prepare workers and ensure businesses have skilled workers to be competitive. Individuals can quickly learn skills where hands—on experience in a work environment is integrated with classroom learning.

Job-driven training programs will be promoted with the aim to include work—based learning opportunities that best suit their participants. Work based learning activities include: • Work experience, paid and unpaid • Job shadows • Internships • On-the-job training and Registered apprenticeships.

Participant outcomes of employment and wages improve with work-based learning activities. Employers reduce their recruitment and training costs with work—based learning activities. It also helps them hire better—prepared employees who understand workplace expectations. WIOA Career Services includes activities on behalf of employers, including small employers, which describe the work-based learning opportunities available. Job driven training ensures that job seekers and workers are equipped with the skills needed by employers and are matched to employers with good jobs. Staff will utilize the eligible training provider list and the ND in—demand occupation list to promote individual training accounts. Classroom training and on—the—job training will support the workforce needs of employers and where available, apprenticeships. Funds will be leveraged between core and required programs whenever possible.

Co- enrollments of participants are encouraged to maximize the total resources available for preparation of the workforce to meet employment needs. Examples of funds leveraged with WIOA Title I funds include: Title II Adult Education; Carl Perkins; Trade Act; Tribal WIOA and Tribal 477 programs; Motivation, Education and Training (MET); TANF employment and training (JOBS); SNAP Basic Employment and Skills Training (BEST); Vocational Rehabilitation and SCSEP. WIOA funds are used to cover the cost of GED testing, dual enrollments with WIOA Dislocated Worker funds complement Trade Act enrollments, MET and WIOA co-enrollments leverage program training funds and Vocational Rehabilitation referrals receive Wagner-Peyser services. JOBS and BEST clients receive Wagner-Peyser services routinely and receive WIOA assistance as appropriate. These partnerships assist in determining what funding source is best utilized to increase job seeker skills. These efforts result in meeting the needs of North Dakota employers and supporting the Governor’s vision.

To ensure the WIOA requirements are implemented with fidelity and to the ‘spirit’ of the law, the state core partner agencies will work together to increase collaboration through professional development. Regional core partners routinely meet and cover such topics as labor market information (LMI), career pathways, motivational interviewing, agency roles and partnerships. Regional training to ensure networking, common training understanding and implementation of exemplary practices. This training concept maximizes staff time, funding and participant outcomes.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

Core partners collaborate with community efforts and initiatives to assist North Dakotans meet their employment goals and increase earnings. Core partner staff participate in a variety of activities that promote in-demand careers, career pathways, academic achievement and employment.

Collaboration among WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, DVR, Unemployment Insurance, SCSEP, Trade Act, business and industry, the North Dakota University System, TrainND (state funded customized employee training), Career and Technical Education (Carl Perkins), Adult Basic Education, refugee services, foster care providers, the Department of Corrections, and many more partners will result in:

- Expanded awareness and leverage of programs/funds designated to serving

targeted populations, often served by multiple entities; • Rapid development and deployment of programs and activities unique to economic and employment needs for North Dakota's workforce; • Access to increased numbers of persons in need of assistance, including low skilled, low income, individuals with disabilities, English Language Learners, disaffected youth, veterans, dislocated workers, and individuals residing in high unemployment areas, including American Indians.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a special program for unemployed low income persons age 55 or older who have barriers to employment. SCSEP participants receive paid on-the-job training, annual physical examinations and job-related counseling when needed. SCSEP training stipends do not affect most social service benefits. The purpose of the SCSEP program is to:

- Foster and promote useful part-time opportunities in community service activities for eligible persons.
- Foster individual economic self-sufficiency.
- Increase the number of older persons who may enjoy the benefits of unsubsidized employment in both the public and private sectors.

In North Dakota SCSEP is a statewide program that is provided through two Federal Grants:

- Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Vocational Rehabilitation for individuals 55 and older living in the following counties: Bowman, Burleigh, Cass, Divide, Dunn, Grand Forks, McKenzie, Mountrail, Richland, Sargent, Stark, Steele, Traill, Ward, Williams.
- All other counties in the state are provided services by the The National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA) (all races can seek participation through NICOA). Applications for NICOA can be found at: <https://www.nicoa.org/programs/scsep/scsep-pre-application/>

The current collaboration between SCSEP and DVR is strong and greatly enhances the success of individuals. SCSEP refers participants to DVR to assist with disability evaluation and assessment and adaptation toward their employment. DVR refers clients to SCSEP to assist with assessment of job skills and required training for employment in specific career fields.

SCSEP is progressively building partnerships with the Older Americans Act senior service providers, adult protective services, county social services, local veteran's service centers, Adult Education, Job Service AJCs, homeless coalitions, and tribal colleges, to facilitate referral of services. The co-enrollment of clients provides maximum access to available resources.

The Center for Rural Health (CRH), University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the Area Health Education Center (AHEC) utilize state, federal and private funding to focus on maintaining access to quality health care for North Dakota residents. A critical component to being able to provide health care services is having adequate workforce. The CRH and AHEC, in partnership with the ND Department of Commerce, and other stakeholders across the state, support student experiences fostering interest and excitement about a careers in health care. Career pathway efforts include Rural Collaborative Opportunities for Occupational Learning (R-COOL) Health Scrubs Academies and Camps; HOSA Future Health Professionals, the only statewide student organization that focuses on health careers; and AHEC Scholars program and rural clinical rotation experiences for college students in health care profession programs.

There is one Job Corps center in ND. The Burdick Job Corps Center is located in Minot, ND and partners with the Minot AJC. All new job corps students have one-stop center orientation onsite and offer career services when employment and future training is appropriate. The Burdick Job Corps Center has staff co-located for admissions and placement services in the Bismarck AJC. All AJC staff are familiar with the Burdick Job Corps and refer potential students and assist with employment and training needs to students returning to the area.

Registered Apprenticeship alignment has been strengthened within the state workforce system. Registered Apprenticeship has been incorporated into Job Service ND applicant services and business services within the WIOA core programs with the help of the Apprenticeship Accelerator grant and Governor's Set-aside funds. Job orders in the labor exchange system are flagged as Registered Apprenticeship openings. All Job Service staff, including WIOA program case managers, have the list of current Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to become familiar of the activity in the State for employer and occupation targets for program promotion. Business service staff messages with employers will include Registered Apprenticeship benefits.

The Department of Commerce applied for and received an Apprenticeship State Expansion Grant. This grant will create a program which helps statewide companies in the state's primary industries and those businesses looking for qualified seekers filling in-demand occupations. The program will offer class room and online training through the North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS). NDSCS has a long tradition of providing responsive, accessible, and flexible training solutions that include their current apprenticeship programs. NDSCS has curriculum currently approved with the Department of Labor and will be expanding their offerings to meet the growing needs in healthcare and manufacturing industries.

This program will upturn the current North Dakota apprenticeship usage. By working with students, parents, groups which represent under represented populations, and NDSCS – this approach will engage individuals to start a pipeline for industry and draw from. Youth will build a familiarity with the apprenticeship model as will those looking for a career change. Individuals working full-time will also become aware of the opportunity to change or start career paths without incurring student loan debt.

Unemployment insurance for North Dakota is administered through Job Service ND. This allows for a strong working relationship with the Job Service AJC's. Job Service AJC staff receive annual training on the Unemployment Insurance Internet Claim Entry (UIICE) system from UI staff. UI staff work directly with Job Service AJC staff when UI claimants have specific issues and questions. Many claimants depend on Job Service AJC staff for assistance with their online claim filing and to navigate UIICE for the reemployment requirements. Job Service AJC staff provide a variety of labor exchange services to UI claimants. The most common service is to assist a UI claimant with the requirement to register on the Job Service ND Virtual One-Stop (VOS). VOS is the electronic labor exchange system. Staff assist UI claimants with the online registration and provide assistance creating a resume. VOS has a virtual recruiter feature that will notify UI claimants of new job openings that meet their search criteria. Additional services to UI claimants include assistance to create resumes for each type of employment that a UI claimant is seeking and techniques for improving interviewing skills for UI claimants. Online/electronic applications are prevalent with many employers and this application process is often problematic for UI claimants that lack computer literacy. Job Service AJC staff are familiar with the local employer requirements and assist with this online application process. Social media is discussed as a means to broaden a UI claimant's job search.

UI claimants receive referrals to WIOA Dislocated Worker for upgrade training for in- demand occupations. Out of area job search and relocation support services are provided as needed.

Referrals are also provided to core programs for partner services such as increased academic skill and GED or vocational rehabilitation services that support their job search activities.

Employers frequently utilize the Job Service AJCs for onsite hiring events and job fairs. UI claimants are provided information on upcoming hiring events and job fairs and are instructed on where to find future events on the Job Service ND website. Resources are available to UI claimants on various job seeking topics such as the importance of soft skills, quantifying and measuring occupational skills and accomplishments. For UI claimants with a criminal record, guidance is provided on how to overcome this barrier to employment on applications and during interviews.

Job Service ND is a grant recipient to provide services for the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program. The agency provides the following services to TANF recipients living in Cass, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, Steele, and Traill counties; case management, coaching on a variety of soft skills ranging from problem solving, working with difficult people, child care and scheduling problems, job retention guidance includes frequent, structured status checks, self-evaluation and planning for the next step on the career ladder and ongoing job coaching can help improve job performance and avoid employment disciplinary issues. All career services and referrals to training are available to TANF recipients across the state. Job Service AJC's shall continue to invite additional JOBS contractor staff to the local offices to strengthen partnerships and to promote and explain all the services available to TANF recipients. Outreach will continue to create collaborative partnerships and result in additional co-enrollments particularly with WIOA Youth services.

Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff utilize Community Action Partnership as a referral source for support services. The services include budgeting and money management, child care, commodities, emergency assistance, energy assistance, food pantry, head start, housing, self-sufficiency, volunteer income tax assistance, and weatherization in most locations. Community Action has a financial literacy resource available online that is available for all customers.

Motivation, Education and Training Inc. (MET) operates the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) in eastern North Dakota. An ongoing partnership between Job Service ND and MET has existed to provide MSFWs additional opportunities for employment and training. MET maintains offices in the Red River Valley cities of Grafton and Fargo. Additionally, MET has an office in the Wahpeton, ND AJC. These MET offices and the Job Service AJCs work together to provide services to MSFW's in the respective areas. Tying the various service agencies together broadens the potential of serving the MSFWs in a one-stop concept.

North Dakota receives five Indian and Native American program awards. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff are familiar with the tribal colleges around the state and refer individuals who may be eligible for these grant funds. As these funds become limited, Job Service AJC staff are notified to provide assistance and services through WIOA Title I funds.

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g. transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

North Dakota has an established core partner working relationship. DVR and Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff participate on local Adult Education advisory boards. Job Service staff are appointed members of the State Rehabilitation Council and are on the North Dakota state and local Transition Community of Practice teams. Core partner staff have integrated business services activities and local partner collaboration meetings to further integrate services. These meetings act as a tool to educate each other on the services available under all titles which results in appropriate referrals and enhanced outcomes. State level trainings are offered to all local core program staff. Efforts to integrate service delivery and formalize referral process continue at the State level as well as between local programs.

With the WIOA increase in age eligibility and focus to spend 75 percent of WIOA youth funds on out-of-school youth, recruitment efforts are targeted toward this population. Youth Coordinators work closely with Job Service AJC Workforce Center Resource Room staff, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation on referral and dual enrollment of out-of-school youth. In addition, Youth Coordinators utilize local networks with social service staff and/or community-based programs targeting homeless, disabled and transitioning youth. Over the last decade, Job Service North Dakota has also performed outreach to the five Native American Reservations in ND. We have partnered with the tribal regions in setting up summer work experience opportunities for in-school youth. Job Service North Dakota is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in the delivery of our training and employment programs.

Unemployment insurance claimants within the age eligibility are targeted for out-of-school youth recruitment. Although the focus has shifted to serving the out-of-school population, outreach continues to be provided to schools. Communication with school personnel including principals, CTE teachers and counselors is crucial to locate students who have dropped out or for those graduating and in need of assistance for occupational skills training to fill the jobs in-demand.

The strong relationship between the WIOA Youth Coordinators and DVR staff has resulted in over 59% of WIOA youth participants with disabilities in PY 2018 and this number was increased to 79.2% during PY20. This can be attributed to collaboration on participant needs and the need to maximize funding due to North Dakota's minimum funding levels. Again, this illustrates how Job Service North Dakota is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in the delivery of our training and employment programs.

The blend of career services and referral is provided and may vary depending on the customer needs that will be addressed. Customers may be directed to self-service only, job getting services, or skill development services based on their initial skill assessment results. Co-enrollment will be utilized as appropriate in order to provide the most appropriate funding source for those services that best meet the customer's needs in a cost-effective manner. A customer-focused approach including an initial assessment of skill level, skill development, career counseling/promotion and support service needs for each individual shall be available through the Job Service AJC Workforce Center.

This approach will be used to determine the needs of: • Individuals with disabilities • Dislocated workers, including trade impacted • Displaced homemakers • Basic Skills deficient • Individuals with multiple challenges to employment • JOBS clients • BEST clients • Non-custodial parents • Low-income individuals including recipients of public assistance • Migrants and seasonal farm workers • Minorities • New Americans and others with limited English proficiency • Older individuals • School dropouts • Veterans • Ex-offenders • Homeless individuals. Employment into in-demand occupations will be the goal for all individuals and will include non-traditional training choices.

North Dakota continues to see an increased population of New Americans/refugees and other English Language Learners. There were 421 New American arrivals in FY 2017, 174 in FY 2018, 124 in FY 2019, 44 in FY 2020, and a proposed 200 in FY 2021 as reported by Lutheran Immigration and Resettlement Services. Job Service ND AJC Workforce Centers link with Adult Education and English literacy programs. Adult Education has offerings that incorporate English literacy with occupational skills training that is closely aligned with local economies.

The state of North Dakota has been proactive in development of partnerships with business to assist New Americans and English language learners in acquiring additional assistance and preparation to progress in employment readiness. We believe this to be very important in looking at ways to enhance the equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout all industries in ND. Majority of New Americans in ND are served at the Fargo Adult Learning Center (FALC). FALC also currently is the only site in ND to receive and be operating an IELCE program. An Elders program also exists to help acclimate students to a new environment and to help students feel more comfortable. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff are available as requested to participate in the class and present job search information. The class covers basic work skills to include but not limited to soft skills, basic work math, reading, writing, transportation, interviewing, application process, childcare needs and computers. The class curriculum rotates every six weeks. In order to better serve English Language Learners, the Wagner-Peyser 10% funds will be designated to this special group of individuals.

The mission of the ND Community of Practice for Transition is to work towards building, supporting, and sustaining community partnerships. The system promotes and improves the scope, opportunity and quality of services for youth with disabilities to adequately prepare for life and career beyond high school. Communities of Practice (COP) involve people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a similar passion and who interact on a regular basis to learn from each other, and problem solve. North Dakota's Community of Practice will focus on working across groups and localities to share information, address issues, learn together, find shared goals and define shared work. The North Dakota structure is modeled on the national community of practice, of which North Dakota is a member. The group will focus on developing the community by inviting relevant state agencies and identifying groups that are involved in transition. The State and Regional Communities, as well as other state Community of Practice groups will share information and ideas through Shared Work, a website established by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act partnership.

The ND Department of Public Instruction, Special Education Unit sponsors a Statewide Interagency Community of Practice that actively engages all stakeholders that represent the roles important to secondary transition for students with disabilities in ND. In addition, the Community of Practice extends the existing state advisory into the regions. The State Transition Community of Practice Advisory Council identifies the development of Regional Interagency Transition Committees as a strategy to improve communication, knowledge and expertise among stakeholders in the transition process for youth with disabilities. An interagency transition team brings together a variety of stakeholders who are supporting youth with disabilities so they can have the best chance for success as adults. The State Community of Practice meets quarterly, and the Regional Community of Practice teams work to implement and state initiatives and best practices for the intended beneficiaries.

Recent Regional Community goals and accomplishments include: • Transition Fairs • Updated policies • Increased training opportunities • Development of timeline for services • Development of transition folders for families • Information sharing • Sharing information • Improved partnerships with the Department of Public Instruction, DVR, Developmental

Disabilities, Job Service, Higher Ed, Independent Living centers, Chambers of Commerce, etc., • Development of services for students with disabilities ages 18-21 • Development of programs to balance functional and academic needs • Identification of agency responsibilities • Consistency of services throughout the region.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) offers training and employment services to assist in finding and retaining full-time employment leading to self-sufficiency. TANF families receive employment and training services by participating in the Jobs Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS). JOBS program supportive services are available that help remove barriers to employment and training such as transportation allowance, assistance with childcare costs, car repairs, tools and clothing for work, work experience, on-the-job-training, job search and job readiness, community service program, vocational educational training, providing childcare services to an individual who is participating in a community service program. TANF households with increased earnings may qualify for six (6) months of Transition Assistance. Transition Assistance promotes job retention by providing an extended period of case assistance that provides a safety net of financial support and support services to assist households in attaining self-sufficiency. Post TANF supportive services may be provided to eligible individuals for up to six (6) months following the closure of their TANF or Transition Assistance case. Post TANF recipients continue to receive supportive services. TANF Kinship Care program provides enhanced funding and support services in order to expand the options for placement of children who are in the care, custody, and control of County Social Services, Division of Juvenile Services (DJS) or Executive Director, Department of Human Services. As an alternative to Foster Care, children may be placed with relatives. Kinship care rules follow many of the same rules as foster care. Diversion Assistance was implemented to provide short-term emergency benefits and support services to families during a 'specific crisis or episode of need'. The intent of the assistance is to address current need that may prevent the family from needed assistance under TANF. Diversion benefits and support services may be received four months in a 12-month period. Parental Responsibility Initiative for the Development of Employment (PRIDE) program is a collaborative effort with Child Support, Job Service ND and the TANF Program. The program addresses non-payment of child support by the noncustodial parent. Referrals to the program are made by Child Support or by judicial order by a district court. The program assists individual find employment. Support services are offered to assist to remove barriers to employment.

Individuals with disabilities are referred to Vocational Rehabilitation to assist in finding solutions to disability-related issues to improve employment by providing: • Assessments for items such availability and use of transportation, problem-solving abilities, strengths and weaknesses with social behaviors, communication skills, grooming, dealing with conflict, motivational skills, target interventional levels, identification of barriers and support options, transferable skills and abilities, interest, self-concept • Job Development and Placement Services to assist in attaining the job and developing essential work skills. • Job Retention services such as accommodations and follow along services directly engaging with the client and employer to assist in maintaining and retaining employment. • Supported Employment for individuals who have traditionally been excluded from consideration for community employment. TANF is the payer of first resort for TANF recipients who are eligible to receive the same supportive services from Vocational Rehabilitation.

Children and adults without a high school education are referred to Department of Public Instruction for Adult Education. School age children (ages 4 to 18) receiving TANF are automatically eligible for the Free or Reduced School Lunch Program through the Department of Public Instruction. Department of Public Instruction automatically enrolls the children in the

School Lunch Program from a daily electronic match and exchange with the Department of Public Instruction to direct certify children for school meals. Services offered online by Job Service ND available to all TANF recipients:

- Search for employment • Receive job postings • Apply for employment • Access current labor market information • Resume services • Find career assessment tools • Assessment tools • FirstLink 2-1-1 Network • O'Net • RUReady • Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) • Rosetta Stone • Interdisciplinary Team Case Management. In addition, Job Service ND provides TANF recipients living in Cass, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, Steele, and Traill counties the following services: • Case management • Coaching on a variety of soft skills ranging from problem solving, working with difficult people, child care problems, scheduling problems, etc. • Job retention guidance includes frequent, structured status checks, self-evaluation and planning for the next step on the career ladder and ongoing job coaching can help improve job performance and avoid disciplinary issues

The Basic Skills Employment and Training Program (BEST) is a required component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The primary goal of the SNAP Employment and Training program is to provide SNAP participants opportunities to gain skills, training, or experience that will improve their employment prospects and reduce their reliance on SNAP benefits. Additionally, the BEST program offers a way to allow SNAP recipients to meet work requirements.

With the success of the SNAP Employment and Training two-year pilot program, the Department of Human Services is expanding the SNAP Employment and Training program across the state beginning April 1, 2020. The expansion of SNAP Employment and Training will change the program from a mandatory to a voluntary program and will include the following components: Job Search Training, Job Search, Job Retention and Education/Vocational Training. Included in these components will be an assessment, development of an employment plan and case management. Due to Covid and the volunteering part of the program, there were very few participants enrolled on a statewide basis during the months of Apr 2020-June 2021.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants visiting a Job Service AJC Workforce Center receive skill assessment, career counseling, and labor market information. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff recommend on-site development tools to increase interview, soft or computer skills, short term industry training or degree programs through WIOA services and other core and community partner referrals. Job Service administers the UI, Wagner-Peyser and WIOA programs.

Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff provide a variety of labor exchange services UI claimants who visit the local offices. The most common service is to assist a UI claimant with the requirement to register on the Job Service ND Virtual One-Stop (VOS). VOS is the electronic labor exchange system. Staff assist UI claimants with the online registration and provide assistance creating a resume. VOS has a virtual recruiter feature that will notify UI claimants of new job openings that meet their search criteria.

Additional services to UI claimants include assistance to create resumes for each type of employment that a UI claimant is seeking and techniques for improving interviewing skills for UI claimants. Online/electronic applications are prevalent with many employers and this application process is often problematic for UI claimants that lack computer literacy. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff are familiar with the local employer requirements and assist with this online application process. Social media is discussed as a means to broaden a UI claimant's

job search. UI claimants receive referrals to WIOA Dislocated Worker for upgrade training for in-demand occupations. Out of area job search and relocation support services are provided as needed. Referrals are also provided to core programs for partner services such as increased academic skill and GED or vocational rehabilitation services that support their job search activities.

Employers frequently utilize the Job Service AJC Workforce Centers for onsite hiring events and job fairs. UI claimants are provided information on upcoming hiring events and job fairs and are instructed on where to find future events on the Job Service ND website. Resources are available to UI claimants on various job seeking topics such as the importance of soft skills, quantifying and measuring occupational skills and accomplishments. For UI claimants with a criminal record, guidance is provided on how to overcome this barrier to employment on applications and during interviews.

Unemployed individuals receive skill assessment, career counseling and planning, and labor market information in Job Service AJC Workforce Center's resource rooms. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff recommend on-site development tools to help improve individuals' interviewing skills, soft skills, and computer skills.

Unemployed individuals receive information regarding short-term industry training or degree programs through WIOA services and other partner referrals.

Unemployed individuals receive job search assistance and referrals for work experience activities.

Online services are available to unemployed individuals via self-service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from anywhere internet access is available. Jobsnd.com links to the online labor exchange system for individual job search and employer job posting activities.

Unemployed job seekers can use jobsnd.com to create résumés and conduct automated job searches. Additionally, unemployed job seekers can become aware of education and training programs available and view labor market information such as high-demand occupations, current wages and training required. Unemployed job seekers can also explore career options, find direction to veteran services, and access community resources.

Just like every other state, COVID-19 affected North Dakota in ways we could not ever imagine from a Job Service North Dakota point of view. Beginning at the end of March in 2020, unemployment claims were being filed at a pace that never had been seen before. Due to the increased volume, the agency moved 35 of the 72 AJC Workforce Center staff into the unemployment claims center on March 24th, 2020. These individuals came from Title I and II programs, along with other state workforce contracted areas. The AJC Workforce Center staff remained in these positions until April 19th, 2021.

From March of 2020 through June 19th, 2021, Job Service processed 265,000 unemployment claims while paying out over \$1.2 billion in benefits. Essentially our staff completed 14 years of work in just over 15 months.

Under WIOA, Adult Education funds are granted to the ND Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) to provide educational services to eligible students/inmates. The ND DOCR includes the state penitentiary, the youth correctional center, and multiple transitional facilities. The ND DOCR provides a wide range of educational opportunities to incarcerated students. In North Dakota, if an incarcerated individual does not have a High School Equivalency, they are mandated by law to work towards earning one. Research shows that education, mixed with other rehabilitative pieces, can have a significant impact on recidivism

rates. Adult Basic and Secondary Education is provided at each center along with GED testing and prep. Classes also exist for students whose

language is not primarily English. Students with low literacy levels are included in a Read Right program. This is a research-based program that helps the student increase reading levels

by increasing speed and understanding. Career readiness and digital literacy skills are also taught at each of the DOCR facilities. Each site also has their own “specialty” courses. For example, the NDSP (State Penitentiary) has the Last Mile (cyber security and coding) available for students. The James River Correctional Facility (JRCC) offers a construction trades program. The Missouri River Correctional Center (MRCC) offers a welding program provided by a full-time instructor. Beyond earning an HSE and working on trade skills, post-secondary options are available through a MOU with Ashland University along with correspondence options within institutions of the students’ choice. In addition, since Lutheran Social Services closed, we are happy to continue to offer services to New Americans and those needing EL services. The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service is now overseeing and working with Adult Ed. programs to assist in New American transitions. Meetings have taken place with some local programs and the state director.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The Wagner-Peyser program is administered by Job Service and has historically been co-located in the Job Service AJC Workforce Centers alongside WIOA Title I programs, the Jobs for Veterans State Grant, TANF, SNAP, Trade Act, and PRIDE (a TANF-funded noncustodial parent employment program), facilitating collaboration and seamless service delivery between all programs when providing services to employers. North Dakota employers use jobsnd.com to post job listings, search resumes for qualified candidates, review labor market information and market trends. Employers create automated candidate searches and access links to business related resources.

Jobsnd.com uses “job spidering”, a powerful online tool that captures job listings from other sources including corporate websites, online newspaper listings, and other private job boards. Spidered jobs are added to Job Service’s internal job listing which provides great efficiency advantages for employers. Employers who list job openings on a corporate website will automatically have their positions spidered to jobsnd.com and will not have to re-enter job order information.

Job Service’s Labor Market Information (LMI) Center is the premier source of labor market information in the state. The LMI department organizes and packages labor market information for use in business and economic decision-making. Regional economic profiles, job reports, unemployment rates, wage reports, informed analyses and employment projects are a few items the Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff provide to help businesses make more informed workforce decisions. Skill assessment completed by Job Service ND Workforce Center staff enables clear direction to employer job openings or referrals to training programs. Knowing the skills job seekers have helps match them to skills desired in employer’s job openings. When skill

gaps are identified, job seeker training needs can be quickly addressed and paired with transferable skills of job seekers. Job Service ND staff showcase agency services regarding on available self-service tools, provide assistance with entering effective job listings and share best practices for successful recruiting using the online system.

Job Service ND Workforce Center staff offer workshops for employers on such topics as recruitment and retention strategies in a very competitive employee market, interview and screening techniques, tax laws for employers, labor market information and writing quality job listings. Additionally, informational sessions have been conducted and are available with agriculture employers to provide guidance on H2A program regulation. Information includes common problems encountered, explanation of desk audits by the Department of Labor and Wage and Hour, housing inspection requirements and time allowed for question and answer. Similarly, employer groups have been organized to discuss the benefits and strategies used in hiring New Americans and English Language Learners.

Job fairs and “hiring events” for employers have proven to be a hugely successful activity. Job fairs are held throughout the state but mainly in the cities of Dickinson, Wahpeton, Williston, Minot, Bismarck, Grand Forks and Fargo. These events are rather large with 60-90 employers participating in most of these events. However, during the last year we have seen a 50% decrease in job-seeker attendance compared to the previous three years. Some of the reason for the decrease are Covid-19 related, but some is due to having close to 10,000 less people in our workforce compared to PY19 time frames. Additionally, an employer may schedule time to spend in a Job Service AJC Workforce Center to connect directly with job seekers who are visiting the AJC Workforce Center. During the last year, there were 68 hiring events held in the AJC Workforce Centers where 421 job-seekers took advantage of these opportunities with employers. The job fair and hiring event information is shared within the Job Service AJC Workforce Centers, promoted on jobsnd.com website, and social media platforms such as Facebook along with other workforce partners.

Additionally, during June of each year, JSND coordinates with such workforce partners as Department of Corrections, DVR, Adult Ed, local Economic Development and other entities to offer 2nd Chance Job Fairs. These job fairs are held for individuals having difficulty finding a job because of background, work history or life circumstances. Business Service staff recruit employers who are willing to provide employment opportunities to this population who often are not considered during other events. Due to Covid-19, these 2nd Chance Job Fairs were not held in 2020 and 2021 but are scheduled for June of 2022.

Wagner-Peyser, WIOA and JSVG staff working in the same Job Service AJC Workforce Center allows for greater sharing of information about employers’ needs and job seekers skills. When training needs are identified, Job Service works with employers to provide work-based learning opportunities for in- demand occupations. Job seekers get updated skills to meet the changing needs of the workforce. WIOA funded work-based learning is an excellent tool for skill building and helps employers grow their workforce. Existing skills are expanded and strengthened while new abilities are developed. Job Service staff working with employers are cognizant of occupations and opportunities to refer to registered apprenticeship. On- the-job training contracts paired with registered apprenticeship opportunities provide maximum training benefits for employers.

Several core program staff and AJC Workforce Center managers serve on advisory boards for TrainND, the state’s four regional workforce training regions. This frequently provides opportunities to collaborate when discussing training needs with employers. Job seekers and employers are referred to TrainND programs to build skills. Job Service staff may recommend

future employer focused training opportunities to TrainND due to their connection and communications with employers. Job Service staff are engaged with local chambers of commerce and economic developers. LMI is frequently requested to help with decisions for prospective companies that are locating to communities within the state.

Utilizing technical assistance from the national Job Driven VR Technical Assistance Center (JD-VRTAC.), DVR had developed and has been utilizing an LMI curriculum tailored to North Dakota's needs. The LMI curriculum is used to help clients set and accomplish career goals based on current business and employment needs within the state. In addition, the JD-VRTAC provided technical assistance to further enhance our methods for building and maintaining employer relations. This has resulted in improved services to employers including employer driven training and meeting their needs utilizing customized employment.

AJC Workforce Center staff have established collaborations between core partners to share workforce intelligence, partner with job fairs, and Rapid Response events. Business service staff share information on business expansion and new employers to the area. All core partner business services will participate in the State efforts to expand apprenticeships and increase credentials utilizing the Governor Set-aside funds to meet workforce challenges and skill development.

Vocational Rehabilitation provides ADA consultation and receives many requests for disability etiquette training for employers which helps in interacting with colleagues, customers and people in the community. North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation assists ND business owners and employers in finding solutions to disability-related issues. Services are designed to maximize the productivity and potential of new hires, to help retain an existing work force and to provide research and the latest information on disability-related issues. VR, through the work of Business Specialists and VR Counselors, meets with local businesses to inform them of the service and support available to help them maintain individuals with disabilities in their workforce. VR's promise to business is to quickly assess the rehabilitation needs of their employees and efficiently complete all necessary and required documentation to provide the required rehabilitation service.

The local adult learning centers work with both JSND and VR to consult for business services to better align services and avoid duplication with employers.

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

In December 2020, the Workforce Development Council (the Council) produced a report of recommendations after researching needs, best practices, and opportunities in the themes identified in the Council's 2018 report of recommendations. Several recommendations included close collaboration and/or support for North Dakota's community colleges and career and technical education.

Below are the recommendations made under the "Earlier & More Diverse Career Exploration and Addressing the Technical Skills Gap" theme:

1.
 - a. The Council recommends expanding Area Career & Technology Centers (ACTC) with a total investment of \$40M to be awarded incrementally to multiple school

districts through a competitive grant process to regions that demonstrate commitment to ensuring success through industry alignment and private sector match.

- b. The Council recommends that the North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education (NDCTE) and North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) work collaboratively to promote and encourage increased opportunities for career explorations in our schools.
- c. The Council recommends expanding North Dakota Studies curriculum to highlight multiple industries and career opportunities.
- d. The Council recommends the development of a grant program to support the private sector in creating virtual examples of high demand careers in North Dakota for educators and students to access.
- e. The Council endorses utilizing a portion of ND Career Builders funding to promote the program to stakeholders, including businesses, employees, students, parents, and educators.

Two of these recommendations gained traction in the 67th Legislative Assembly and another is being carried out by state agencies and a subcommittee of the Workforce Development Council. First, Area Career and Technology Centers received funding both in the 2021 regular and special legislative sessions, totaling \$88 million. The North Dakota Department of Career and Technical Education (NDCTE) is managing this funding and administering to school districts in the form of grants. Next, improvements were made to the North Dakota Career Builders skilled workforce scholarship and loan repayment program, which the Council has championed since its inception in 2019. Most notably, Career Builders is now able to utilize a portion of its funding for marketing the program to students, parents, educators, businesses and employees, and the loan repayment track of this program may be utilized by employees who have been recruited from outside of the state. Finally, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and NDCTE are partnering to produce a resource on how to utilize House Bill 1478, which was passed by the 67th Legislative Assembly, and allows schools to award credit for educational opportunities provided by organizations and activities outside of school (i.e., internships).

The recommendations described in this section that have not yet been enacted are designed to serve as a roadmap throughout the next few years as the Workforce Development Council, Governor's office, core program partners, education providers and legislature work to address diverse workforce needs in North Dakota. It is important to note that these recommendations may evolve as the state's workforce needs evolve.

F. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system.

Many barriers stand in the way of successful employment for returning citizens including the lack of sufficient training opportunities prior to release. Following release, these citizens have a criminal history causing employers to overlook the potential worker without discernment for the age of, or nature of, the conviction. Potential employment is also impeded by occupational license restrictions precluding those with convictions from attaining a license for certain professions. With a fractional investment in skill training, job placement and support, the cost of

incarceration could be reduced while mitigating other less direct, but no less significant, costs to society.

Below are recommendations included in the Workforce Development Council's 2020 report of recommendations in the "removing barriers to employment" theme:

1.
 - a. The Council recommends developing a job placement pilot program through a coordinated effort between Job Service North Dakota, Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation, local organizations that serve and support ex-offenders, and employers with a goal of placing recently or soon-to-be released ex-offenders into in-demand positions in ND.
 - b. The Council recommends promoting the existing framework and service provided by the North Dakota Parole and Pardon Advisory Boards to allow ex-offenders participating in the job placement pilot program, as well as ex-offenders preparing for parole, to have the opportunity to apply for a certificate to demonstrate their readiness for the workplace.
 - c. The Council recommends developing a statewide marketing campaign to provide education around hiring ex-offenders with a goal of changing employer perceptions and hiring practices.

With an average of 1600 prison releases annually from the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR), the Workforce Development Council has prioritized removing barriers for formerly incarcerated individuals. Although none of these recommendations received funding during the 2021 legislative session, DOCR, Job Service North Dakota, and the North Dakota Department of Commerce worked collaboratively to bring The Last Mile program to the ND state prison. The Last Mile provides full-stack information technology training to residents of the state prison and effectively prepares students for high demand IT jobs post-release. North Dakota invested Governor's set-aside funds in this program, which is currently training its first cohort in the state.

Additional priorities for the Workforce Development Council include attracting people to our state and the jobs we have to offer, and retaining the people, including students, who are already in the state. Below are recommendations related to the Council's "recruitment and retention of workers" theme:

1.
 - a. The Council recommends sustaining the Technical Skills Training grant created by the Department of Commerce with \$1,000,000 of CARES Act funding. This grant program provides matching dollars to help training providers develop or expand accelerated, skilled workforce training programs in targeted industries and in-demand occupations.
 - i. NOTE: The Council encourages leveraging TrainND as a key partner
 - ii. The Council endorses the current \$2,000,000 funding allocation for TrainND as determined in the CTE budget for the 2021-2023 biennium and is supportive of TrainND serving as a key partner in providing training programs under the Technical Skills Training grant, in addition to the private sector and other training providers.

- b. The Council recommends investing in a targeted workforce recruitment campaign to support targeted industries in attracting workers to the state.

The Technical Skills Training grant was first launched by the Department of Commerce in June 2020 with \$1 million in CARES Act dollars and funded twelve new and expanding accelerated skilled workforce programs that were designed to get displaced workers trained for new jobs. The success of the first round of this program aided in an appropriation of another \$1 million in CARES Act funds by the legislature during the regular legislative session. This program requires a one-to-one match and again saw tremendous success, with eight programs receiving funding. Examples of the types of training programs supported by this grant include nursing assistant, commercial driver's license, welding, software development, wind turbine technician, and even pilot training.

The Technical Skills Training grant was included in Governor Burgum's Accelerate ND proposal for the American Rescue Plan Act dollars the state received. The program received a \$3 million appropriation in the 67th Legislative Assembly Special Session in November 2021. Now, in addition to supporting the launch and expansion of workforce training programs, this grant will also be able to support incumbent worker trainings to promote internal advancement, comprehensive onboarding training programs, and safety trainings.

Outside of these recommendations, North Dakota currently has two active apprenticeship grants. In partnership with North Dakota State College of Science, the Department of Commerce is administering the Apprenticeship State Expansion grant, which is aimed at increasing the number of apprenticeship programs and the number of apprentices in the state, while the ND Department of Career and Technical Education and Lake Region State College have the State Apprenticeship Expansion grant and are focused on increasing awareness surrounding apprenticeship opportunities.

North Dakota was recently one of six states accepted into the National Governor's Association Workforce Innovation Network and is working to develop a comprehensive state plan to increase digital skill literacy among adults in rural communities, Native American and New American populations. The project is in the early stages and partners to administer future curriculum have yet to be identified.

Finally, the North Dakota Department of Commerce recently started working with a talent attraction company, RoleCall, to aid in generating and tracking leads for North Dakota communities and companies. The state recognizes that marketing is not enough and that to be effective in recruiting people to the state, we needed a team of subject-matter experts to support our efforts. RoleCall participated in an immersion tour in November 2020 and is currently building out their program, which will be ready to launch in spring 2021.

The recommendations described in this section are designed to serve as a roadmap throughout the next several years as the Workforce Development Council, Governor's office, core program partners, and legislature work to address diverse workforce needs in North Dakota. These recommendations have not been implemented yet, as plans for implementation and funding must be determined. It is also important to note that these recommendations may evolve as the state's workforce needs evolve.

G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

During the 2019 Legislative Assembly, the legislature passed HB 1171 which led to the creation of ND Career Builders, a scholarship and loan repayment program designed to drive students toward programs that will prepare them to fill in-demand jobs and to retain recent graduates who have accepted such jobs with North Dakota companies. The High-Need and Emerging Occupations List is at the foundation of this program as it establishes the occupations in ND that are in high demand. The Workforce Development Council (the Council) and ND Job Service establish the qualifying high-need and emerging occupations annually around July 1st. The North Dakota University System (NDUS), the Council, and JSND's Labor Market Information unit map the qualifying occupations to qualifying programs, which may be certificates or degrees earned from qualifying ND institutions. This program was again funded by the 2021 Legislative Assembly under SB2272 and as of December 1, 2021, has been used by 173 students and supported by over 75 state employers and 15 non-disclosed donors.

The length of the identified qualifying programs is unique to the scholarship and to loan repayment. Qualifying programs for the scholarship are those of around 4 semesters or 6 quarters or less in length. Qualifying programs for loan repayment may be any certificate or degree from a ND institution, provided it relates to one of the high-need and emerging occupations.

Making the ND Career Builders scholarship and loan repayment program unique, is a partnership between the state and private-sector business, whereby for each dollar of private support received, the state will contribute a dollar of public funding. All recipients of this funding must commit to living and working in North Dakota for three years.

On a larger scale, the North Dakota workforce development and training system receives Federal and State funding support, and in many cases matching funds are also provided by the private sector. WIOA funds are used to help leverage other Federal fund sources such as Pell Grants and student loans and State funded scholarships such as the North Dakota Academic or Career and Technical Education Scholarship. North Dakota workforce partners have become accustomed to making the most out of limited funds. Collaboration between partners is strong and leveraging funds is a necessity. Co-enrollments of participants are encouraged to maximize the total resources available for preparation of the workforce to meet employment needs. Collaboration among WIOA core programs, SCSEP, Trade Act, business and industry, the North Dakota University System, TrainND (state funded customized employee training), Career and Technical Education (Carl Perkins), refugee services, foster care providers, the State Penitentiary system, and many more partners will result in: Expanded awareness and leverage of programs/funds designated to serving targeted populations, often served by multiple entities; Rapid development and deployment of programs and activities unique to economic and employment needs for North Dakota's workforce; Access to increased numbers of persons in need of assistance, including low skilled, low income, individuals with disabilities, disaffected youth, veterans, dislocated workers, and individuals residing in high unemployment areas, including American Indians.

H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

WIOA training funds expand access to postsecondary credential by providing training opportunities to low income, New Americans, disabled individuals and dislocated workers. Occupation areas such as healthcare career ladders of nurse assistant, licensed practical nurse and registered nurse offer career pathways and credential earning opportunities.

Transportation occupations offer increased wages and opportunity based on skills and endorsements earned. Welding occupations require a variety of skills and certifications to work in specific areas.

Information Technology occupations require specialized certifications to address the state's various needs for data security and maintenance. The ND eligible training provider list offers many certifications to expand skills for these in demand occupations in the State.

The ND Eligible Training provider list provides information on training program credentials and credential types. The information also includes whether the completed training further requires an industry test for credential. Program staff are knowledgeable and inform participants of the options and the steps to follow to pursue credential attainment.

Many providers shut down when the pandemic was declared to adjust to COVID CDC and ND Health department guidelines, then quickly adjusted to on-line and hybrid options to continue training. This had an impact on WIOA participants who were in the midst of or about to enter training. Training plans were extended or changed. Though most participants had the ability to complete training, some were not due to life circumstances.

The Workforce Development Council has established an in-demand occupations list for North Dakota in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The list includes occupations determined to have a current or potential impact on the state's economy. The factors used in creating the list are: Total Employment (2020), Ten-Year Numeric Job Growth (2019-2029), Annualized Job Growth Rate (2019-2029), Annual Job Openings, Average Annual Wages, and Essential and Emerging Occupations. <https://www.jobsnd.com/job-seeker/demand-occupations>.

The Department of Commerce applied for and received an Apprenticeship State Expansion Grant. This grant was intended to create a program that helps statewide companies in the state's primary industries and those businesses looking for qualified seekers filling in-demand occupations. The Department of Commerce sub-awarded this grant to program to North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS), which offers classroom and online training. NDSCS has a long tradition of providing responsive, accessible, and flexible training solutions that include their current apprenticeship programs. NDSCS has curriculum currently approved with the Department of Labor and will be expanding their offerings to meet the growing needs in healthcare and manufacturing industries.

This program has experienced a variety of challenges which have prevented the anticipated upturn in current North Dakota apprenticeship usage. NDSCS and Commerce recently started gaining more momentum with this grant and will be working with students, parents, groups which represent under-represented populations to promote apprenticeship opportunities and create a pipeline for industry to draw from. A long-term goal is for youth to build a familiarity with the apprenticeship model as well those looking for a career change. Individuals working full-time will also become aware of the opportunity to change or start career paths without incurring student loan debt.

The Department of Commerce will sustain efforts to work closely with employers, education entities and the State Director of U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship after the

Apprenticeship State Expansion grant closes. Department of Commerce staff will work with employers to facilitate the process of standard writing and orientation to the Registered Apprenticeship processes. Commerce staff will also work with AJC Workforce Center business services staff to assist with promoting Registered Apprenticeships.

VR provides outreach to high schools to provide services to students with disabilities. As part of this effort, potentially eligible and eligible transition students are provided with vocational guidance and counseling which includes job exploration as well as opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education.

Adult learning centers will improve access to post-secondary programs in the following ways: A partnership is being discussed with the ND University System and the Bank of ND to ensure public and private post-secondary recruiters are present at all adult learning centers and that students attend to learn about programs and services including financial aid; Approximately half of current adult learning centers are housed in community college settings; strategies to increase post-secondary access have included scholarships to GED recipients, discounts on books, supplies and fees, first semester scholarships and improved orientation methods to allow students to observe classroom activity, meet with staff and current program students; and, Creating partnerships with employers to offset costs for credentials and certifications. COVID-19 has created challenges, but sites have developed online options to connect students with employment and post-secondary programs. We are slowly building up again.

I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

Economic development entities, Job Service, and Adult Education have a long history of collaborating with efforts to address workforce needs in the state. North Dakota continues to experience workforce shortages statewide across all industries throughout the state. Job Service is a valuable and willing partner for career awareness events such as regional and local career expos, job shadowing, and internship promotion events. The Adult Learning Centers across the state partner with Job Service is hosting these events for Adult Education students, as well as promoting participation in the Job Service events mentioned above.

Attracting workforce continues to be a huge need in the state and economic development partners coordinate efforts for large job fair events. Job fairs are planned jointly between Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff, chambers of commerce, and community EDC's. The recruitment of employers and promotion of the events are shared responsibilities. EDC staff assist during job fair events and greet and welcome employers and job seekers. Each region of the state holds multi-industry job fairs that target the specific needs of local employers. Job Fair events can provide opportunities for as many as 90 employers to connect with up to 750 job seekers at a single event. Employers find these recruitment events extremely beneficial and often hire needed employees on the spot. Adult Education students are encouraged to attend the regional events. When attracting workforce is an issue, building a workforce from underutilized populations can be a solution. An underutilized population in ND that Adult Education can assist with is those citizens with no high school diploma or high school equivalency.

Local EDCs throughout the state have started or continued their own recruitment campaigns in ND. The Bismarck/Mandan EDC has a campaign called "Make Your Mark" and it showcases employment opportunities in the capitol city. The website, <http://bmda.org/make-your-mark>, promotes the benefits of living in the Bismarck-Mandan area and to the top left of the website

are the employment opportunities with a link to the jobsnd.com website and second are the area profiles generated by the Job Service Labor Market Information department. Not to be out done, the Grand Forks EDC has started the “Way Cooler Than You Think” campaign that shadows what the Bismarck-Mandan EDC is doing. <https://grandforksiscooler.com>. It is clear having Job Service collaboration with these initiatives adds value and increases results. Job Service employment opportunities are promoted through additional Economic Development websites in Grand Forks and Fargo who have links to the state job bank, the Virtual One Stop. In Northeast ND, an unmanned aerial systems (UAS) feature jobs report is distributed to promote opportunities at Grand Sky, America’s first business and aviation park. Grand Sky is located on the Grand Forks AFB and has been growing substantially over the last two to three years by adding employers and new airframe systems and missions.

Job Service participates in many activities that support economic development around the state. Established sector groups hold manufacturing roundtables to jointly discuss industry challenges and find solutions, one challenge is recruiting workforce. Job Service Workforce Center staff offer the services available to assist with labor exchange, training opportunities and labor market information. Adult Learning Centers across the state benefit from the support of economic development supplied by Job Service. Adult education is also connected to and supportive of the economic development initiatives. The unique partnerships and communication that exist between Adult Learning Centers and business are expanding and this is creating an environment that is conducive to IET and IELCE partnerships.

A labor market study in the Greater Fargo/Moorhead area indicated the critical need for workforce in the highest populated area in North Dakota. Job Service Workforce Center staff assisted in conducting the survey and continues to assist in establishing and executing initiatives on three subcommittees; Attract, Build and Innovate. The study specifically included utilizing the New American population as a workforce pool. Job Service, local economic development staff and other community stakeholders in Fargo and Grand Forks areas are working together to find ways to overcome language barriers and cultural differences to meet the needs of employers. Adult Education plans a role in assisting the New American population in Grand Forks via the Grand Forks Adult Learning Center (ALC) and the ESL program.

Local Job Service AJC Workforce Centers and Adult Education staff engage and collaborate with many county Job Development Authorities in their localities and staff are members on their boards. All locations in North Dakota are experiencing workforce shortages and collaborating with these local entities assist with recruitment of workforce and offer training resources. One Job Service Employer Committee remains in North Dakota and has continued due to the benefits of collaboration for this value added agriculture and manufacturing community.

Job Service AJC Workforce Centers, Adult Education, and VR staff partner with local EDC in a variety of ways. A number of AJC managers are members on the EDC boards. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff participate in EDC strategic planning meetings, workforce study planning, provide labor market information and regional employment issues such as workforce shortages and child care. Partnerships are developed to collaborate to ensure the success of new employers who open their business. This assistance includes recruiting workforce, posting job orders and resume searches. Joint meetings are held with entrepreneurs and new employers who are looking to locate or expand their markets to the area and receive information on the workforce resources and financial incentives available. Financial incentives may include WOTC, WIOA and state tax incentives. County and city demographics are shared as well as supply and demand information.

Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff participate in sector strategies with the following industry groups; Tech Connect IT Sector, the Health Tech Trade Steering Committee and Manufacturers Roundtables.

Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff partner with city EDCs to connect area students to careers. Arranging job-shadow days in February is a way to introduce industry and employers to provide career exploration. This effort includes local EDCs, area high schools, community colleges and universities to provide a 4-6 hour job shadow to area students. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff and EDCs partner to promote local employment and careers through the EDC sponsored Career Counselor Week. Career counselors hear presentations about local economic development, employment opportunities and labor market information to use with their students.

EDCs depend on the involvement and resources from Job Service AJC Workforce Center and VR management and staff to conduct annual statewide Career Expos. Career expos feature hands on employer exhibits and break-out sessions on career exploration and pathways. Economic development staff consider this a collaborative workforce retention strategy and educates attendees about career opportunities and related training needed. Adult Education Directors are aware of the events are strongly encourage staff and students to participate.

Throughout the state, a good number of Job Service management, Adult Education, and VR staff are members on their local chamber of commerce and subcommittees. An example is the Chamber Agriculture Committee working with businesses to promote agriculture and agricultural related businesses in Southwest North Dakota or Military Affairs to sustain partnerships with the two Air Force Bases in the State, Young Professionals groups and Business Training committees. Job Service AJC Workforce Center and VR staff frequently provide LMI information and participate in area Leadership courses. Core Program staff strengthen relationships with area chamber members by participating in Business after Hours events, area Human Resource committees and Downtowners Associations. Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Group membership is a strong business relationship builder through ribbon-cutting and ground-breaking ceremonies to celebrate grand openings, new locations, expansions and milestone accomplishments of Chamber members. Finally, Job Service staff exhibit at university career recruitment events making soon-to-be graduates aware of North Dakota opportunities.

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section **II Strategic Elements**. This includes—

Job Service utilizes Geographic Solutions products as the operating system for labor exchange, case management and labor market information. The labor exchange function is linked from jobsnd.com to the job listing site that provides fast access to a database of thousands of jobs. Job Spidering, a powerful online tool that captures job listings from other sources including corporate web sites, online newspaper listings, and other private job boards is one of the features included. Spidered jobs are added to internal job listings to provide seamless access to thousands of job openings. Employers benefit from having job openings viewed by the largest applicant pool in North Dakota and the ability to view similar listings for wage and benefit comparison. Job seekers benefit by having the largest single portal in North Dakota to access job openings for all occupations. Jobsnd.com has the largest pool of job openings in the state. Employers and job seekers have flexible options to connect through the Virtual One Stop online

portal or mobile app. The flexibility of online options became especially valuable when the pandemic was first declared, and the AJC Workforce Centers switched to access by the public by appointment only.

The Job Service case management system is also a Geographic Solutions product and is utilized for all registrations, enrollments and data entry for the Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs. The case management system is linked to the labor exchange system and tracks participant activities. The Trade Act program activity is incorporated into this system. The system provides ease for dual enrollment and seamless case management. Each participant has an enrollment summary that captures the activity from the multiple programs and case managers can quickly ascertain the current status and plan for future recommendations to achieve employment goals. All case notes are centralized which provides a cohesive picture of a participant's activity over multiple programs. Document imaging was incorporated into the case-management system. Documents required for monitoring and data validation are stored electronically. Case managers have a procedure manual that provides technical assistance for data entry, data validation and system Use. Case managers used online processes to continue serving WIOA customers, processing forms through online exchanges, accepting remote signatures, providing orientations, making eligibility determinations, and working remotely with clients to develop plans.

Geographic Solutions is the vendor for North Dakota's labor market information. Jobsnd.com includes the link to North Dakota's Labor Market Information website (NDLMI). NDLMI is a next generation internet application bringing together diverse stakeholders through an expanded data collection and data mining effort. NDLMI generates, compiles, disseminates and publishes the state's leading economic data and labor market information—from wages to projections to the latest employment figures—resulting in better-informed economic decisions. NDLMI has the most extensive network of economic data resources in the state, maintained by experienced research analysts meeting high statistical standards.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AWARE (Accessible Web-Based Activity Reporting Environment) is NDVR's internal, web based, fully integrated, comprehensive case management software system designed for public vocational rehabilitation agencies. AWARE is hosted by the State of North Dakota Information Technology. Staff within the VR program possess the requisite skills and program knowledge to support the administration of AWARE. This group exchanges information about the system and recommends system's modifications to its vendor Alliance Enterprise.

ADULT EDUCATION The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Adult Education program, operates a statewide student management data system known as LACES (Literacy, Adult and Community Education System) for every student served. Used since 2010, this comprehensive web- based program allows each adult learning center, as well as the ND Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, to enter standard demographic, assessment, attendance, class hours and other relevant related data into a real time structured system. All core program operating systems have been updated to gather required Participant Information Record Layout (PIRL) data.

1. THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF—

A. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (E.G., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, CASE-MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.)

Job Service utilizes Geographic Solutions products as the operating system for labor exchange, case management and labor market information. The labor exchange function is linked from jobsnd.com to the job listing site that provides fast access to a database of thousands of jobs. Job Spidering, a powerful online tool that captures job listings from other sources including corporate web sites, online newspaper listings, and other private job boards is one of the features included. Spidered jobs are added to internal job listings to provide seamless access to thousands of job openings. Employers benefit from having job openings viewed by the largest applicant pool in North Dakota and the ability to view similar listings for wage and benefit comparison. Job seekers benefit by having the largest single portal in North Dakota to access job openings for all occupations. Jobsnd.com has the largest pool of job openings in the state. Employers and job seekers have flexible options to connect through the Virtual One Stop online portal or mobile app. The flexibility of online options became especially valuable when the pandemic was first declared, and the AJC Workforce Centers switched to access by the public by appointment only.

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ADULT EDUCATION The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Adult Education program, operates a statewide student management data system known as LACES (Literacy, Adult and Community Education System) for every student served. Used since 2010, this

comprehensive web- based program allows each adult learning center, as well as the ND Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, to enter standard demographic, assessment, attendance, class hours and other relevant related data into a real time structured system. All core program operating systems have been updated to gather required Participant Information Record Layout (PIRL) data.

B. DATA-COLLECTION AND REPORTING PROCESSES USED FOR ALL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THOSE PRESENT IN ONE-STOP CENTERS

Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in one-stop centers.¹⁰

[10] For the PY 2016 state plan, descriptions of data collection and reporting processes need only include currently known indicators.

Job Service receives a data file generated from Geographic Solutions from all program information. Job Service sends this file to SWIS and uses the file to match against North Dakota wage records. The results from SWIS and the state's wages are combined and sent back to Geographic Solutions. The wage results are incorporated into the data file and returned to Job Service. This file is used to generate the WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, VETS and Trade Act federal reports through the WIPS.

Vocational Rehabilitation AWARE can be customized to include data elements unique to NDVR's business plan and to produce specialized reports. The agency uses AWARE to track service delivery, case service funds, usage and outcomes. The agency further uses AWARE to track services provided through contracts with local school districts and providers to students age 14-21 engaged in pre- employment activities. Pre-employment activities to this group follow the required cores service funded through 15% of the agencies federal VR grant. Students' engagement in pre-employment service can be tracked and their activities achieved in AWARE. Web-based and real time reports are available to all staff with access to AWARE, both remotely and at itinerant locations. Counselors and managers can view a variety of data and information, including budgets, production activities and "activity due" reports. The RSA-113 and RSA-911 reports produced for RSA are generated directly from AWARE.

Adult Education - The LACES system is self-hosted and delivers high-quality results and streamline data reporting to state and federal agencies. Training is annually required on feature use and data evaluation. This student data management system is used by all entities providing Adult Education under WIOA in ND. Customized alerts allow staff to track multiple data fields, including follow up. Multiple queries are readily available, as is a dashboard feature for each program to 'self-assess' progress in key areas. The State Office has access to all program data and conducts a quarterly data analysis of each local program for progress, accomplishments and challenges. State and local program staff use LACES to track service delivery and outcomes.

All core program operating systems have been updated to gather required Participant Information Record Layout (PIRL) data.

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (E.G., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

The Workforce Development Council Policy 2-07-01 Co-Enrollment Policy and Procedures is in place primarily for programs administered by Job Service ND; Title WIOA Adult, Youth and

Dislocated Worker, Wagner Peyser, Trade Act, and JVSG. For example, Job Service ND requires co-enrollment of Trade Act Recipients whenever they receive assistance or services from WIOA Dislocated Worker. North Dakota's Virtual One-Stop case management module records and provides a comprehensive view of offered services and eliminates duplication. The Virtual One-Stop case management module contains fields to indicate co-enrollment with required partners such as Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and SCSEP service providers.

The North Dakota Co-Enrollment Policy states:

Purpose: To inform all one-stop career center staff of the procedures for co-enrolling eligible customers in the Wagner-Peyser program and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I program. The Virtual One Stop case management module records and provides a comprehensive view of offered services and eliminates duplication.

Background: The North Dakota Unified State Plan states that North Dakota will co-enroll one-stop customers in partner programs. Co-enrollment policy and process is as follows:

Co-Enrollment of Trade Act Eligible Participants Eligibility will be determined during the certification process by the Trade Act representatives. TAA participants will be co-enrolled in the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program at the time of training enrollment.

Co-Enrollment of JOBS Participants TANF E & T participants may be co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser based on the need for career services. WIOA Adult program co-enrollment will be determined based on individual assessment and need.

Co-Enrollment of BEST Participants SNAP E & T participants may be automatically co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser. WIOA Adult program co-enrollment will be determined based on individual assessment and need.

Co-Enrollment of PRIDE Participants (TANF funded) PRIDE participants may be automatically co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser. WIOA Adult program co-enrollment will be determined based on individual assessment and need.

Co-Enrollment of UI Claimants UI claimants, who are required to have a work search, will be automatically co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser. WIOA Dislocated Worker program co-enrollment will be determined based on individual assessment and need.

RESEP participants co-enrolled in WIOA Title I programs will be determined at the time of the RESEP assessment/orientation.

Co-Enrollment of Adult Education Participants Adult Education participants may be co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Title I based on referral information and collaborative plan between program case management staff and instructors, individual assessment and need.

Co-Enrollment of Vocational Rehabilitation Participants Vocational Rehabilitation participants may be co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Title I based on referral information and collaborative plan between program case management staff and counselors, individual assessment and need.

Co-enrollment within WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth) Programs Participants may be co-enrolled within all WIOA Title I programs based on fund eligibility and on individual assessment and need.

North Dakota is a single area state. There is only one local funding mechanism. The North Dakota Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) is attached as an addendum to the One-Stop Delivery System Memorandum of Understanding. The IFA states:

Infrastructure Funding Agreement American Job Center infrastructure costs are defined as non-personnel costs that are necessary for the general operation of the American Job Center. The cost categories are listed in the chart below. All Parties to this Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) recognize that infrastructure costs are applicable to all required Partners, whether they are physically located in the American Job Center or not. Each partner's contributions to these costs, however, may vary, as these contributions are based on the proportionate use and relative benefit received, consistent with the Partner programs' authorizing laws and regulations and the Uniform Guidance. The Partners are identified in the Cost Allocation Methodology section of this agreement. The schedule of the Infrastructure Funding Agreement will begin each calendar year, January 1 through December 31.

Cost Allocation Methodology

Job Service North Dakota administers several of the WIOA core and required partners. The agency cost allocation plan is used to cover Infrastructure costs. Partner programs administered by Job Service North Dakota are WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth, Wagner-Peyser, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, Trade Adjustment Act, Unemployment Insurance and Unemployment Insurance funded Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments program. Job Service North Dakota administers a portion of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) employment and training and TANF funded Parental Responsibility Initiative for the Development of Employment program through contract from the Department of Human Services. All staff overhead charges are applied to infrastructure costs. The partner programs physically located in an American Job Center will have square footage usage determine in the lease which factors in the infrastructure costs. Leases will be paid on a monthly basis. The partner programs not physically located in an American Job Center will have benefit determined by co-enrollments and available tallied customer orientations. See the chart for program details.

Partners	Method to determine benefit	Resources
WIOA Title I (Dislocated Worker, Youth & Adult)	Staff FTE's and Customers	Overhead portion of staff charges
Wagner-Peyser (employment services)	Staff FTE's and Customers	Overhead portion of staff charges

Partners	Method to determine benefit	Resources
JVSG (VETS)	Staff FTE's and Customers	Overhead portion of staff charges
Trade Act	Staff FTE's and Customers	Overhead portion of staff charges
Unemployment Insurance	IP addresses and UI ICE login's Square footage for UI Tax staff	RESEA Overhead portion of staff charges, FAIRA and UI Admin

Partners	Method to determine benefit	Resources
Adult Education	of co-enrollments with Wagner - Peyser staff assisted services & WIOA Title I	Adult Ed Admin funds
Vocational Rehabilitation	of co-enrollments with Wagner - Peyser staff assisted services & WIOA Title I	Program funds
TANF	Staff FTE's for JOBS & PRIDE of co-enrollments with Wagner - Peyser staff assisted & WIOA Title I	Overhead portion of staff charges, Admin Funds
NFJP (Farmworker Program)	of co-enrollments with Wagner - Peyser staff assisted services & WIOA Title I	Admin and Program funds
Job Corps	Square footage and of co-enrollments with Wagner- Peyser staff assisted services & WIOA Title I and onsite orientations	Program funds
SCSEP (Older Worker Program)	of co-enrollments with Wagner- Peyser staff assisted services & WIOA Title I	Admin and Program funds
Perkins-Post Secondary (Career & Tech Ed)	of co-enrollments with Wagner- Peyser staff assisted services & WIOA Title I	Admin funds

CSGB and HUD employment and training, YouthBuild and the Second Chance Act programs are not present in North Dakota. The Indian & Native American programs will not be participating in the Infrastructure Funding Agreement according to WIOA sec. (h)(2)(D)(iv).

Cost Reconciliation

All Parties agree that a semi-annual reconciliation of budgeted and actual costs and update of the costs and benefit determinations will shared by Job Service North Dakota. An invoice will be prepared for each Partner with the actual costs allocable to each Partner in accordance with the following process: • Job Service ND will submit the invoices to the Partners and send a copy of the updated budget to all Parties no later than forty-five (45) days after the end of the calendar year. • Upon receipt of the invoice and adjusted budget, each Partner will review both documents and will submit payment to Job Service North Dakota no later than fifteen (15) days following receipt. Payment of the invoice signifies agreement with the costs in the adjusted budget. • Partners will communicate any disputes with costs in the invoice or the adjusted budget to Job Service North Dakota in writing.

Steps to Reach Consensus

All Parties agree that the steps to reach consensus for this IFA will be the same as described in the Dispute Resolution section of the MOU. Partners will make a concerted effort to negotiate the IFA along with the remainder of the MOU, including the overall operating budget, for the North Dakota American Job Center network.

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

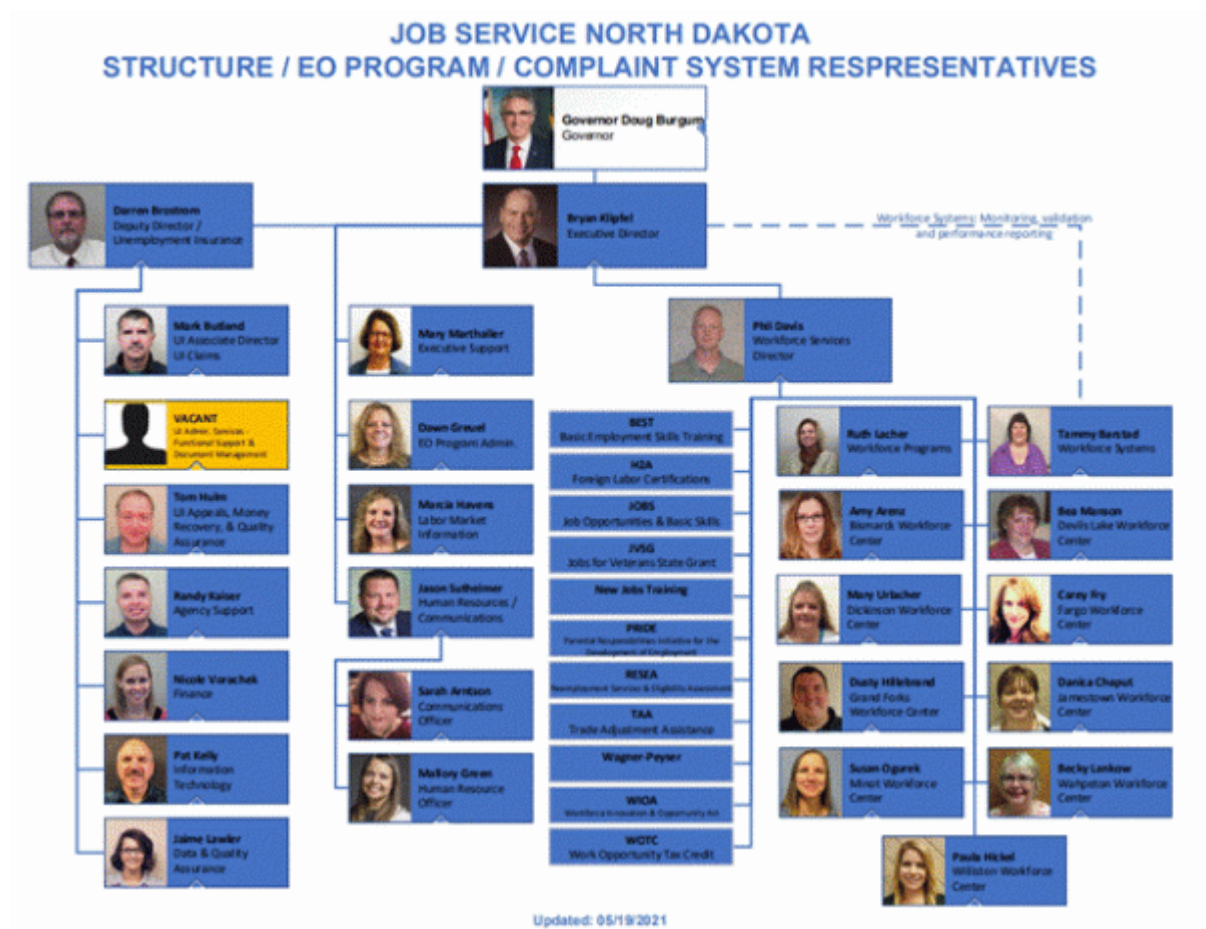
A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

Titles I and III of WIOA are administered by Job Service North Dakota.

Job Service's history is rooted in the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 and the Social Security Act of 1935 and is the WIOA one-stop operator providing employment and training services to workers, job seekers, youth and businesses. Job Service administers the unemployment insurance program, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, Trade Act, TANF employment and training and a TANF discretionary program, SNAP employment and training, and two state programs including incumbent worker training. Job Service houses the Labor Market Information center.

The Job Service ND organizational chart:



Title II of WIOA is administered by the Department of Public Instruction. Superintendent oversees everyone in the department. Each office has a Director, Adult Education program exists in the Office of School Approval and Opportunity (SAO). The Assistant Director of SAO is currently the State Director of Adult Education and also the GED State Administrator. North Dakota is split into eight regions and there is a Regional Provider of Adult Education in each region. Each Regional Provider has a site Director. <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/about-us> (WIP)

Title IV of WIOA is administered by the Department of Human Services. The organizational chart may be viewed here, <https://www.nd.gov/dhs/about/docs/org-chart.pdf>

B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

Included in this section are the members of the North Dakota Workforce Development Council and the activities in which they are engaged.

I. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

Governor Doug Burgum

Senator Randy Burckhard

Senate Appointment

Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck

House Appointment

Patrick Bertagnolli, Rough Rider Center

Business- Energy

Landis Larson, ND AFL-CIO

Labor

David Farnsworth, Dave Farnsworth, LLC

Chair, Business

Tifanie Gelinske, Greater Fargo Moorhead EDC

Business- Economic Development

Cindy Griffin, Midwest Ag Energy

Business- Agriculture

Howard Klug, City of Williston

Chief Elected Official

Dr. Mark Hagerott, ND University System

Education

Lyn James, City of Bowman

Chief Elected Official

Timothy Johnson, Strata Corporation

Business- Transportation

Nathan Joraanstad, Bushel

Business- IT

Jan Kamphuis, Sanford

Business- Healthcare

Kellie Fritz, True North Steel

Business- Manufacturing

Bryan Klipfel, Job Service ND

WIOA Core Program

Katie Ralston Howe, Department of Commerce

Workforce

Kasper Ziegler, United Brotherhood of Carpenters

Labor

Perry Lubbers, Consultant

Business

Becca Cruger, Grand Forks Region EDC

Business- Economic Development

Matthew Marshall, MinnKota Power Cooperative

Business- Energy

Guy Moos, Baker Boy

Business- Manufacturing

Stanley Schauer, Dept. of Public Instruction- Adult Education

WIOA Core Program

Donald Shilling, General Equipment

Business- Heavy Equipment

Wayde Sick, ND Dept. of Career & Technical Education Career & Technical Education

Tony Grindberg, Xcel Energy Business- Energy

Arnie Strebe, Dept. of Human Services Vice Chair, Workforce

Damian Schlenger, Vocational Rehabilitation WIOA Core Program

Erica Thunder, Dept. of Labor & Human Rights Workforce

James Upgren, Department of Public Instruction Education

Jason Ehlert, ND State Building & Construction Trades Council Labor

Dustin Jensen, Cultivate Solutions Business- Hospitality

Taya Spelhaug, Microsoft TechSpark Business- IT

Apprenticeship management perspective is offered by both Mr. Shilling and Mr. Ehlert. Mr. Shilling employs apprentices in his company, General Equipment, and Mr. Ehlert works closely with apprenticeship opportunities in the trades and has been active in promoting apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship throughout the state. The state is working to identify additional business representatives to increase business representation in lieu of asking the economic development professionals to step down from the board for now, as they add valuable perspective to the board's work and decisions. One of the consultants identified owns a consulting business for the energy sector. His company affiliation has been updated to reflect his business name. The other consultant listed recently retired and is holding his seat until another member is appointed to fill the spot on the board. The executive committee agreed on this process when updating the boards bylaws in 2021, per recommendation by Department of Labor Federal Project Officer desk review of WIOA Title I and Title III.

II. BOARD ACTIVITIES

Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

The Workforce Development Council meets a minimum of quarterly and is briefed by the Director and core program staff of the requirements in WIOA. The State Board under Governor Burgum has been given a specific responsibility for workforce strategic planning. Executive and Administrative committees also meet quarterly and have greater responsibilities for creating agendas, completing assignments to further move initiatives of the identified strategic plans, and to provide insight on use of Governor's Set-Aside funds. This planning will utilize data and establish measurable outcomes to quantify success. The Council discusses recommendations and provides approval on policies concerning their responsibilities. Each meeting provides the status of each core program's outcomes towards negotiated performance levels.

In October 2018, the Workforce Development Council presented a report of 38 recommendations designed to address North Dakota's workforce challenges to Governor Burgum. Since that time, the Council has formed five subcommittees, four of which meet monthly to prioritize the recommendations, develop strategies for moving them forward, and to identify potential partners to engage throughout the process. Each subcommittee has been tasked with building strategies to accomplish the goals in one of the following areas from the original report: 1) Recruiting and retention of workers; 2) Addressing opportunities for populations with barriers to employment; 3) Expanding earlier and more diverse career exploration opportunities and addressing the technical skills gap; and 4) Occupational licensure

reform. A subcommittee tasked with creating a communication plan and educating citizens throughout the state on the initiatives developed by the Council will start meeting once the Council's recommendations are finalized and ready for broader, statewide audiences. The existing subcommittees started meeting monthly in October 2019 and the new subcommittees will follow suit once they are formed. The subcommittees receive administrative assistance and guidance from the Director and provide status reports to the full Workforce Development Council at quarterly meetings.

4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

North Dakota is a single workforce area.

Job Service ND state level staff conducts an annual monitoring of the WIOA programs at the Job Service AJC Workforce Centers. WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth files will be sampled and reviewed for compliance with federal WIOA regulations, and Job Service WIOA policy and procedure directives. All documents required for monitoring and data validation are stored electronically within the document management module of GSI. Results and recommendations of the monitoring are reviewed with the Job Service AJC Workforce Center managers and supervisors. A written report identifying deficiencies and recommendations for improvement is disseminated response and, as warranted, corrective action. This monitoring enables WIOA case managers and supervisors to readily see how well the Job Service AJC Workforce Centers are performing in case management and where improvements are needed.

Desk reviews include regular monitoring of participant WIOA expenditures. The process of monitoring expenditures includes pulling a sample of payments from all the quarterly payments made on behalf of WIOA participants. Documents justifying payments are uploaded into the document management module of the virtual one stop system. The results of the review are documented and compiled in a formal report and disseminated to the WIOA managers and supervisors for response and as warranted, corrective action.

Local AJC Workforce Centers are encouraged to conduct peer monitoring of documentation and processes. This system allows for a system of constant training reminders for monitoring and data validation.

WIOA data element validation verifies the accuracy of WIOA participant data used to generate the WIOA performance reports. ND implemented a new pilot project for the data validation process where lead WIOA local office staff became a part of the data validation process. Under guidance from the state staff validator, each region reviewed files for a different region. The state staff validator will analyze the reports, validate elements not assigned to local AJC Workforce Center staff, and write the final official report. An official report on the results of the WIOA data element validation review is issued.

WIOA data element validation verifies the accuracy of WIOA participant data used to generate the WIOA performance reports. An official report on the results of the WIOA data element validation review is issued each year. The ND Department of Public Instruction and the Adult Education program have several levels of internal assessment. A developed work plan is reviewed and approved by DPI management each biennium as part of the budget process; state

funds are allocated to align to the work plan goals and tasks. Quarterly reviews of the work plan and accomplishments are completed between the Director and management. The review includes fiscal, program data, local program data and general program oversight.

Job Service ND designated EO staff conducts One-stop operator certification reviews using standards approved by the Workforce Development Council. The standards are reviewed every two years to ensure the certification review process continues to meet the requirements of WIOA. Review standard requirements include:

- General Information
- Program Effectiveness
- Continuous Improvement
- ADA compliance

One Stop centers are reviewed once every three years. The process includes observation of the facility, flow of services provided, file monitoring, access/services, coordinated and integrated services, EO, policies/practices and compliance, and continuous improvement. Final reports are shared with directors and workforce center managers.

Annual reviews are conducted to ensure programs/activities are conducted in a nondiscriminatory manner. US Census Bureau data for North Dakota as it relates to race, gender, age, and disability are compared by program. The 2020-2021 annual review shows 7.20% of North Dakota population (US Census Bureau) identify with a disability. WIOA programs in ND served 38% population served identified with a disability.

After an analysis of the demographic categories of race, gender, disability status, and age, there does not appear to be any evidence of discrimination. JSND is serving minority groups at a higher rate than their white counterparts in comparison to the overall population and is reaching those with a disability at a higher rate as well. Last year's report indicated females were being served at a slightly lesser rate than their male counterparts and the numbers are indicative of a similar pattern, but at an increased level. For the program year ending June of 2021, the ratio between males and females within the Adult and Youth programs average 13% compared to the average of 5% at the end of the 2020 program year.

The ND Department of Public Instruction and the Adult Education programs have several levels of internal assessment. A developed work plan is reviewed and approved by DPI management each biennium as part of the budget process; state funds are allocated to align to the work plan goals and tasks. Quarterly reviews of the work plan and accomplishments are completed between the Director and management. The review includes fiscal, program data, local program data and general program oversight.

The State Adult Education staff monitors each local program, at least, every 3 years and more often if there is a new director, a previous finding or upon request. The onsite monitoring covers 17 areas of program and fiscal authority and involves multiple staff. Desk audits performed via LACES and GED Analytics are performed randomly and typically occur, at least, every two months.

Federal performance indicators are also part of the Director annual review process and a determination of performance. Additionally, each local program is also assessed on its individual performance indicators. The North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation maintains a comprehensive program evaluation system with various components: • Consumer

record of services review • Grantee oversight • Evaluation of service providers • Customer satisfaction • Performance measures monitoring.

Data for program evaluation is collected using various methods, including surveys (telephone), public forums, site reviews, grant reports, client record reviews, client comment forms, a statistical system and program standards and performance indicators. This information is analyzed by management; if appropriate, it is shared with staff, service providers, grantees, federal funding agencies, legislature, clients and others. The analysis is used to assess unmet consumer needs, improve services and to guide the Division in planning its future focus and direction. Additionally, the information is used to assess and forecast the training needs of the Division's staff. Performance indicators have traditionally included: Change in Employment Outcomes • Percent of Employment Outcomes • Competitive Employment Outcomes—a primary indicator • Significance of Disability—a primary indicator • Earnings Ratio—a primary indicator • Self-Support • Rehabilitation Rate

Collectively, the core partners share performance measures and annual outcomes with the Governor's Workforce Development Council.

B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

North Dakota is a single workforce area.

North Dakota participated in an Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort group training offered by US DOL. North Dakota partners involved in the training were Job Service North Dakota, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, Workforce Development Council and Career & Technical Education. As we began our work, it was interesting to learn the readiness perspective varied from agency to agency on the state's capabilities to conduct an effective evaluation.

A series of surveys and discussions resulted in statewide strategies and action plans. North Dakota determined three opportunities for evaluation: 1) Virtual client delivery – evaluate participation and services utilized before and during the pandemic using existing data. 2) Build statewide evaluation system – establish knowledgeable statewide evaluation workgroup and standards, and 3) Career exposure and awareness – evaluate age 16-24 participant success factors and identify other demographics impacting program success.

The first priority was to establish a statewide evaluation committee. There are 5 voting members, one from each representing agency: Job Service North Dakota, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Development Council, and Career & Technical Education. A set of rules and principles that guide the work of the voting committee is a working document to outline the purpose of the committee, responsibilities of the committee and evaluation principles. Subject matter experts will be invited as needed to assist in determining research design and data collection approaches.

As North Dakota proceeds, the committee will review evaluation possibilities. One-stop partners may submit requests for programs to be evaluated, the direction and type of evaluation to be conducted. Evaluations of projects and programs that impact more than one agency and/or WIOA workforce program will take priority helping to set a precedence for a wider impact on workforce needs.

The committee will annually select one evaluation project of a one-stop partner program. The process may include various subject matter experts and analysts to conduct the evaluation, depending on the scope of the project.

C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e. the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

Each core program has different assessment methods in terms of effectiveness (as listed above), with some commonalities in overall shared quantitative goals. The new plan of assessing the effectiveness of our one-stop, mentioned in III. b. 4. B., will provide another set of assessment results to use for continuous improvement and future data decision planning.

Recognizing that WIOA requires a statewide evaluation system, North Dakota participated in one of the Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort group trainings offered by US DOL. North Dakota partners involved in the training were Job Service North Dakota, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, Workforce Development Council and Career & Technical Education. It was interesting to learn the readiness perspective varied from agency to agency on the state's capabilities to conduct an effective evaluation. A series of surveys and discussions resulted in statewide strategies and action plans. North Dakota determined three opportunities for evaluation: 1) Virtual client delivery – evaluate participation and services utilized before and during the pandemic using existing data. 2) Build statewide evaluation system – establish knowledgeable statewide evaluation workgroup and standards, and 3) Career exposure and awareness – evaluate age 16-24 participant success factors and identify other demographics impacting program success.

The first priority has been to establish a statewide evaluation committee. There are 5 voting members, one from each representing the agencies of: Job Service North Dakota, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Development Council, and Career & Technical Education. Subject matter experts will be invited as needed to assist in determining research design and data collection approaches. A set of rules and principles that guide the work of the voting committee is a working document to outline the purpose of the committee, responsibilities of the committee and evaluation principles.

As North Dakota proceeds, evaluation projects will target one-stop partner programs. Evaluations of projects and programs that impact more than one agency and/or WIOA workforce program will take priority helping to set a precedence for a wider impact on workforce needs.

Assessments results for the prior two years indicate:

ND businesses and citizens would benefit from continuation and increased remote service options. JSND has since increased direct outreach services to rural areas within each of the nine workforce center regions through locations in local libraries, EDCs, and county seats. ND leads the nation in connectivity. ND is one of six states currently involved with Workforce Innovation Network grant from the National Governors Association with objectives to expand access to

essential services, rapidly connect jobseekers to work, advance digital access and skill development, and enhance job quality for all.

Shared participants are often consecutively enrolled rather than co-enrolled. Participant success may improve across programs with a holistic wrap-around approach with support from various one-stop partners concurrently. Partner agency case managers, counselors, and teachers will need to coordinate efforts and promote partner program enrollments.

D. EVALUATION

Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

Recognizing the requirement under WIOA for a statewide evaluation system, North Dakota participated in an Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort group training offered by US DOL. North Dakota partners involved in the training were Job Service North Dakota, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, Workforce Development Council and Career & Technical Education. As we worked through the process it was interesting to learn the readiness perspective varied from agency to agency on the state's capabilities to conduct an effective evaluation.

A series of surveys and discussions resulted in statewide strategies and action plans. North Dakota determined three opportunities for evaluation: 1) Virtual client delivery – evaluate participation and services utilized before and during the pandemic using existing data. 2) Build statewide evaluation system – establish knowledgeable statewide evaluation workgroup and standards, and 3) Career exposure and awareness – evaluate age 16-24 participant success factors and identify other demographics impacting program success.

The first priority was to establish a statewide evaluation committee. There are 5 voting members, one from each representing agency: Job Service North Dakota, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Development Council, and Career & Technical Education. Subject matter experts will be invited as needed to assist in determining research design and data collection approaches. A set of rules and principles that guide the work of the voting committee is a working document to outline the purpose of the committee, responsibilities of the committee and evaluation principles.

As North Dakota proceeds, priorities will be given to evaluation projects that meet US DOL recommendations. North Dakota has strong agency to agency relationships. Evaluations of projects and programs that impact more than one agency and/or WIOA workforce program will take priority helping to set a precedence for a wider impact on workforce needs

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

I. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

For Title I programs, North Dakota is a single State local area under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity act of 2014 as designated by Governor Doug Burgum. Job Service North Dakota is designated by the Governor as the WIOA Fiscal Agent, Grant Recipient and State Administrative Entity. The Job Service ND Executive Director is designated as the WIOA Liaison. The WIOA Youth activities are provided by Job Service North Dakota through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Workforce Development Council and Job Service North Dakota.

II. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

For Title I programs, North Dakota is a single State local area under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity act of 2014 as designated by Governor Doug Burgum. Job Service North Dakota is designated by the Governor as the WIOA Fiscal Agent, Grant Recipient and State Administrative Entity. The Job Service ND Executive Director is designated as the WIOA Liaison. The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services and Training are provided by Job Service North Dakota through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Governor, the Workforce Development Council and Job Service North Dakota.

III. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED

For Title I programs, North Dakota is a single State local area under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity act of 2014 as designated by Governor Doug Burgum. Job Service North Dakota is designated by the Governor as the WIOA Fiscal Agent, Grant Recipient and State Administrative Entity. The Job Service ND Executive Director is designated as the WIOA Liaison. The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Services and Training are provided by Job Service North Dakota through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Governor, the Workforce Development Council and Job Service North Dakota.

B. FOR TITLE II

I. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL AWARD MULTI-YEAR GRANTS OR CONTRACTS ON A COMPETITIVE BASIS TO ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS IN THE STATE, INCLUDING HOW ELIGIBLE AGENCIES WILL ESTABLISH THAT ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS ARE ORGANIZATIONS OF DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVENESS

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, Adult Education Program, held a competition to distribute AEFLA funds for the 2020-2021 program year. The ND Governor's Workforce Development Council, which serves as the only state WIB sought statewide fund distribution via a regional service delivery model to maximize service delivery statewide. Each regional site will determine the delivery of satellite programs within the respective region. A (historical) formula method was used to determine the amount of funding based upon region population, unemployment rates and other distinguished factors (past performance of core indicators, EFL gains) to be determined prior to the competition and RFP development. The ND Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is the State's eligible agency for adult education and literacy programs and responsible for administering funds and providing program/performance oversight to local program grantees. Adult education and literacy eligible providers approved under WIOA requirements will continue to receive funding through June 30, 2020, as long as the eligible current providers adhere to State and federal grant expectations as measured through annual applications, financial reports, and program performance reports. Funding was made available on a three year cycle to provide adult education services. After implementation of services, providers will apply on an annual basis for continuing funding under Title II.

A new competition is currently being developed with a revised Request for Proposal (RFP). Some slight changes were made to the document and process, but for the most part the process and the document will remain the same. The cycle for this round of the competition will be four years (PY 2019-2020 through 2022-2023), with providers applying for funding annually as a part of the funding/grant process. The regional service model remains, and growth of satellites is expected in areas of need (funding dependent). Establishing a strong method of ensuring eligible agencies meet demonstrated effectiveness was a priority. An audit of the first competition found this aspect of the competition did not meet standard. In the upcoming competition, demonstrated effectiveness will be used as an eligibility requirement and this will be clearly stated. The two ways in which an eligible provider can meet the stated requirements are explained in the RFP. Two years of past data are to be used meet the stated requirements and the requirements being used satisfy applicants who have and also who have not been previously funded by AELFA. The competition was held December 20th, 2019 and completed and funding ready by July 1, 2020. Next competition will be held 2023. In addition, our state held an IET competition 2021-2022 PY.

II. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO APPLY AND COMPETE FOR FUNDS AND HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE THAT IT IS USING THE SAME GRANT OR CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

The ND Department of Public Instruction, Adult Education program directly funds its grants and contracts and does not use or fund a sub-State entity to conduct a competition. The agency will use the same announcement, application and process for all applications as is required in WIOA and ND Century Code; the required involvement of the agency procurement officer is to ensure that all applications are treated in the same manner and with consistent processes; that application processes are clearly written and nonnegotiable. Direct application will be the required norm. DPI procurement processes ensures direct access to apply for grants or contracts to all eligible providers in ND. Eligible applicants under Section 231 of WIOA will submit applications to the agency. RFPs for all programs competed were awarded under WIOA sections 225: corrections; 231: eligible providers; and 243: integrated English Literacy and Civics Education. The announcement and posting of the competition and RFP document will be done via the States procurement page that is accessible by all eligible applicants.

C. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

The Rehabilitation Act, allows states to operate as a “combined” agency serving individuals regardless of their disabilities. The act also allows states to operate two separate VR agencies, one agency for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, and a “general” agency for individuals with all other disabilities. North Dakota VR program, authorized as title IV of WIOA is designated as a “combined” agency serving individuals regardless of their disability.

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

I. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO MAKE THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS INTEROPERABLE TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF COMMON DATA ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

North Dakota has integrated data elements for WIOA Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker and Wagner- Peyser within Job Service. There is no plan to integrate an exchange of common data elements with Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education. Job Service data and Adult Education data can be gathered through the ND State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) for evaluation purposes. Since Vocational Rehabilitation is not included in SLDS, Vocational Rehabilitation will provide data on request for evaluation purposes. Assessment information is shared between the three agencies through release of information processes.

Currently, all partners are satisfied with their data systems and are diligent about sharing information across partner programs. Additionally, the Workforce Development Council and all partner programs (with the exception of Vocational Rehabilitation) utilize the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). SLDS adds to the shared knowledge produced by each individual partner program's data system and highlights job opportunities throughout the state. This information is beneficial to all programs and the populations they serve. Together, the Workforce Development Council and program partners are able to provide diverse, yet aligned, workforce data assessment to the governor's office through a combination of data collection tools. This system works well in North Dakota given the close collaboration and partnership that exists between Job Service North Dakota, Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Public Instruction, and Department of Commerce.

II. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO INTEGRATE DATA SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE STREAMLINED INTAKE AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO TRACK PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN

North Dakota has integrated data elements for WIOA Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker and Wagner-Peyser within Job Service. There is no plan to integrate an exchange of common data elements with Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education.

III. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL ASSIST THE GOVERNOR IN ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SYSTEMS ACROSS REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS (INCLUDING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON INTAKE, DATA COLLECTION, ETC.) AND HOW SUCH ALIGNMENT WILL IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

North Dakota has integrated data elements and intake for WIOA Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker and Wagner-Peyser within Job Service. There is no plan to integrate an exchange of common data elements with Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education. This integrated system serves many unemployed individuals. Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education are encouraged to refer participants to utilize Title I and Wagner Peyser programs to receive career services and training services when appropriate to improve service delivery and reduce duplicative effort.

Currently, all partners are satisfied with their data systems and are diligent about sharing information across partner programs. Additionally, the Workforce Development Council and all partner programs (with the exception of Vocational Rehabilitation) utilize the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). SLDS adds to the shared knowledge produced by each individual partner program's data system and highlights job opportunities throughout the state. This information is beneficial to all programs and the populations they serve. Together, the Workforce Development Council and program partners are able to provide diverse, yet aligned, workforce data assessment to the governor's office through a combination data collection tools. This system works well in North Dakota given the close collaboration and partnership that exists between Job Service North Dakota, Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Public Instruction, and Department of Commerce.

Given overall satisfaction with the data systems that are currently in place and the existing collaboration and relationships between one-stop partner programs, the Workforce Development Council will continue supporting what is in place. If needs evolve and a new system is necessary to best support WIOA clients, the Workforce Development Council will support efforts to identify a system that will best serve clients and partner program staff in delivering services. It's important to note work is happening on the other side of this equation; the client or potential client side. Currently, North Dakota is focusing on increasing digital skill literacy among adult jobseekers and workers, primarily those in rural communities, tribal nations, and New Americans. North Dakota was one of six states accepted into the National Governors Association Workforce Innovation Network and has a state team including the Governor's Office, Department of Commerce, Job Service North Dakota, Adult Education, and Microsoft, in addition to receiving contracted services from the University of North Dakota Institute of Policy and Business Analytics. This team is building a comprehensive state plan to increase digital skill literacy and close the digital skills gap to promote entrance and mobility in the workforce. This work is currently underway and the plan will be completed and delivered to the Governor by end of summer 2022. Recommendations in this plan will be included in the Workforce Development Council's 2022 report of recommendations. The Council will continue to monitor the data systems that are currently used by one-stop partner programs while empowering North Dakota workers and jobseekers to use the technology with which they interact at work and at home.

IV. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO DEVELOP AND PRODUCE THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 116, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM. (WIOA SECTION 116(D)(2))

Job Service, Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation will submit reports required under section 116, performance accountability separately. Job Service will submit reports for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and Wagner-Peyser.

Job Service uses Geographic Solutions system to gather data and pull data elements required for quarterly and annual reports. Report data is reviewed for accuracy and improvement prior to submission through WIPS.

The core partners collaborate for common elements reporting, sharing data required for federal reporting.

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

North Dakota's lead agencies will use the WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance to assess the immediate progress of participants from core programs. North Dakota's lead agencies will comply with federally directed WIOA evaluations and will on occasion conduct evaluations of longer-term outcomes for program participants. Such evaluations will include impact studies that will assess a

participant's employment status, earnings or educational achievement beyond the established timelines that are incorporated into the WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance.

North Dakota will utilize the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), a series of secured data warehouses comprised of historical education and workforce training data, to help assess WIOA participant post-program success. The objective of the SLDS is to provide data on the outcomes of North Dakota education and workforce training programs. Job Service ND through a partnership with ND Information Technology Department and ND Department of Public Instruction received a federal Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant in 2010 to develop a Job Service ND warehouse (workforce) separate from the K12 warehouse. ND Information Technology Department is responsible for building and managing the warehouse on behalf of Job Service ND. SLDS data will be used to illustrate how the workforce activities affect future earnings.. SLDS data from Job Service ND wage tables, North Dakota University Systems, Department of Public Instruction and Department of Human Services provides the capability to track participants and to determine employment, education activity and credential attainment.

C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

North Dakota will use a WDQI data warehouse which is populated daily to utilize UI wage data for WIOA requirements. This data base, as well as SWIS data, will be the sources for wage data for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law.

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

Job Service North Dakota, Vocational Rehabilitation, through the Department of Human Services, and Adult Education, through the Department of Public Instruction have signed data sharing agreements with the State Longitudinal Data System. These agreements will include the necessary safeguards as required in section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

Job Service AJC Workforce Centers offer priority of service to all covered persons who access the workforce system. Covered persons will be identified at point of entry to allow them to take full advantage of priority of service. Customers entering a Job Service Office will be queried in the customer reception area (point of entry) to ascertain covered person status. A "quick assessment" guide will be used by staff. A customer that self-attests to be a veteran or an eligible person (covered person) will be offered the opportunity to step to the front of the line and receive services before a non-covered customer. At that time, the covered person will be made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, employment and training services available and eligibility requirements for available employment and training services. Job Service North Dakota is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in the delivery of priority of service for veterans and the administration of all Federally funded programs."

Covered persons utilizing self- service will be made aware of entitlement to priority of service at the time of their registration in the Virtual One Stop (VOS). Once the customer identifies themselves as a covered person, a screen automatically displays information on entitlement to priority of service and programs and services that are available through Job Service North Dakota.

Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff will conduct an intake/assessment for each Veteran/Eligible person at point of entry to a Job Service AJC Workforce Center. Throughout the intake process, Veterans who disclose or self-attest as a veteran with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) or meets other eligibility requirements for JVSG services, will be referred to a JVSG staff member. If a JVSG staff member is not available when a referral is necessary, the Veteran/Eligible person may choose to be served on a priority basis by another staff member.

Veterans not meeting the criteria for JVSG services are to be referred to appropriate non-JVSG staff to receive core, intensive, and/or training services on a priority of service basis.

Job Service will monitor priority of service to veterans/eligible persons to ensure that all staff are following the statutory and regulatory requirements regarding all Department of Labor programs. Priority of service will be monitored through analysis of data found in the Employment and Training Administration's Federal Reports, from observations annotated in the JVSG Staff Monthly Report on Services to Veterans and from reports completed by Job Service Systems Management Staff. These reports are reviewed by the Job Service Workforce Development Director, the State Veterans' Program Administrator and the Director of Veterans' Employment and Training and conclusions drawn regarding the extent of priority of service demonstrated by each Customer Service Area. Process improvement plans are recommended for those offices needing improvement.

8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.)

with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

Compliance with section 188 of WIOA and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act is met through the submission of the Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunity Plan to the US DOL Civil Rights Center.

Job Service North Dakota (JSND) is committed to providing equal opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, national origin, citizenship status, disability, veteran status, or because of any other characteristic protected by applicable laws. This commitment extends to all aspects of our work in both the employment relationship and with our clients applying to or receiving services under our programs. Job Service North Dakota is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in the delivery of all state and federally funded programs.

Individuals with disabilities receive aid, benefits, services, and training equal to, or as effective as, those provided to others and will not receive separately unless it is needed. Should the need arise, we will ensure services are received in the most integrated setting possible.

Employees serving participants in our programs complete nondiscrimination training annually to ensure awareness and understanding of EO policies and regulations, and adherence to our internal policies with recognizing and responding to complaints of discrimination.

JSND and its core partners provide equal access to our facilities and services and discrimination against an individual, for any reason, is prohibited. We provide facilities which are accessible to all individuals by public transportation, driving, or walking. The One-Stop identifier is clearly displayed on all facility locations to ensure our buildings are clearly recognized. We operate our facilities during optimal hours to meet the needs of our customers, including both job seekers and employers. Where possible, we have co-located with our partners and to allow for additional meeting space for partner programs. JSND is committed to ensuring accessibility to our programs, services, and technology.

The JSND website operates from a platform created by the North Dakota Information Technology department (NDIT), a state agency. JSND's online service is a web-based self-service system offering universal access to a broad range of employment, training, and educational services. With assistance from NDITD, we ensure our website is in compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. NDIT conducts routine compliance checks of the website and takes steps to improve site performance for users with slow and limited connections.

Our online platform ensures:

- Access to specific services is available to all customers throughout the one-stop delivery system
- Access to 24/7 services to anyone with Internet access
- Access to services by clients in remote and rural areas who prefer to access services online vs. at a physical location

- Access to services by clients in urban areas who are unable to access a physical location due to lack of transportation, a disability, or for other reasons

JSND provides participation in our programs and services to individuals with disabilities that are as effective as that provided to others. Qualified individuals with disabilities receive aid, benefits, training, and services which are equal to, or as effective as, that provided to others. We ensure accessibility to individuals with disabilities in employment and employment-related training, including making reasonable accommodations to our facilities, policies, practices, and/or procedures to avoid discrimination on the basis of a disability.

In furtherance of our commitment to provide services to qualified individuals with a disability and remove barriers often experienced by hearing or visually impaired individuals, or individuals with a physical disability, our resource rooms are furnished with adjustable workstations which have wider access areas, adaptive technology, and adjustable height work surfaces which can be operated either electronically or hydraulically.

Our modern adaptive technology includes a phone amplifier, ear-covering and noise-cancelling headphones, 24" monitors, and teletypewriters. As needed, we will employ additional resources or seek outside consultation, to ensure our clients have access to our services. Employees in our AJC Workforce Centers have been trained on the use of the equipment, and training is integrated into our process for any new adaptive technology.

In addition to the One-Stop Certification which ensures compliance with several programmatic components, JSND also has a designated Equal Opportunity Officer to ensure we, along with our Core Partners, remain in compliance with adhering to our Non-Discrimination plan, and the provisions of the ADA. Utilizing a periodic monitoring system, annual reviews for compliance are conducted to identify any disparity in services provided to individuals who are classified within a protected group.

Additional auditing of services may occur in the event of complaints received by participants within our programs.

Each of the nine one-stop locations has a certification review once every three years. This certification review includes an assessment of program effectiveness and continuous improvement including accessibility of services, equal opportunity, and employee training. The facility is also reviewed for compliance with the provisions of the American's with Disabilities Act and specifically addresses parking, entrance areas, resource rooms, restrooms, and general public spaces including an assessment of carpeting, signage, doors, controls, and elevators.

We are committed to ensuring accessibility to our facilities and services and we prohibit discrimination against individuals for any reason. To solidify our commitment, we have made written assurances on our website, in our Non-Discrimination Plan, and in written notifications to all clients, participants of specific programming, and to the general public. These assurances also extend to our partner agencies and providers. As stated above and throughout this document, Job Service North Dakota is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in the delivery of all state and federally funded programs.

9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of

English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

Job Service North Dakota (JSND) makes every attempt to ensure the needs of customers with limited English-speaking skills are met. To provide interpretation services in a timely manner, JSND uses CTS Language Link interpreter services and partner agencies interpreting services. Job Service partners with the Adult Learning Centers (ALC's) to provide the needed education to the various ELL populations across the state. JSND staff refer WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and other state program participants to the nine Adult Learning Centers located in the same cities as JSND AJC Workforce Centers. ALC staff partner with community agencies that specifically serve New Americans like Afro American Development Association and New American Consortium for Wellness and Empowerment Center. The case managers then provide the proper follow-through to ensure our participants are provided the very best language education possible.

WIOA statewide dollars were used in 2021 to upgrade ELL software for Adult Education programs. This upgrade provides participants with foundations and tools needed to achieve success in life, college and career by helping to remove the language barrier for employment.

On a yearly basis, staff are trained to properly use the CTS Language Link and attend New American specific training. Recently, a procedure was written to provide further and consistent guidance on the use of CTS Language Link services.

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

North Dakota core partners established an electronic file with access for all plan writing team members. The team began meeting in October of 2021 to review, modify and collectively write the Unified Plan. The team included staff from Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Commerce, and Job Service ND.

- North Dakota Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Robyn Throlson, Planning and Evaluation Administrator
- ND Department of Public Instruction, Adult Education – Sara Mitzel, Assistant Director, Adult Education Program
- ND Department of Commerce/Workforce Development Council – Katie Ralston Howe, Workforce Development Director
- Job Service North Dakota, Workforce Programs - Ruth Lacher, Manager of Workforce Programs, Tammy Barstad, Manager of Workforce Systems, and Phil Davis, Workforce Services Director. Ruth, Tammy, and Phil represented all core and partner programs administered by Job Service ND, including Title I-B, Title III, and Trade Adjustment Assistance, Labor Market Information, and JVSG.
- The required partners included Career & Technical Education, TANF and SCSEP. The Governor's office was consulted regarding the State strategy for workforce. The Department of Commerce Workforce Division also provided information regarding the State strategy for workforce. The Administrative Committee of the Workforce Development Council review will occur in February 2022. The public comment period

for the WIOA Unified Plan modification, the Agriculture Outreach Plan and the proposed performance measures will be completed by the end of February 2022.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	Yes
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B—

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A. IDENTIFY THE REGIONS AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATED IN THE STATE

North Dakota is a single workforce area under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 as designated by Governor Doug Burgum. The North Dakota Workforce Development Council serves as both the State and local board as outlined in WIOA.

B. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR DESIGNATING LOCAL AREAS, INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER THE LOCAL AREA MET THE CRITERIA FOR “PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY” AND “SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY” IN ACCORDANCE WITH 106(B)(2) AND (3) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR IDENTIFYING REGIONS AND PLANNING REGIONS UNDER SECTION 106(A) OF WIOA. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE CONSULTED WITH THE LOCAL BOARDS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN IDENTIFYING THE REGIONS

North Dakota is a single workforce area under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 as designated by Governor Doug Burgum. The North Dakota Workforce Development Council serves as both the State and local board as outlined in WIOA.

C. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS

North Dakota is a single workforce area under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 as designated by Governor Doug Burgum. The North Dakota Workforce Development Council serves as both the State and local board as outlined in WIOA.

D. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 121(H)(2)(E) OF WIOA
RELATING TO DETERMINATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

This statement, including the Appeals Process is included in the MOU and the Infrastructure Agreement signed by one-stop partners.

The One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is the recognized vehicle for the Board to implement an agreement among the one-stop partner programs regarding one-stop delivery of services in the local workforce development area. North Dakota is a single area state.

To facilitate consistency and transparency in determining costs for One-Stop services, the Title 1 Administrator will prepare the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) and provide copies to one-stop partner programs and the WIB. Questions or issues regarding the IFA will be provided to the Title 1 Administrator and Board staff for resolution, if necessary.

The IFA must address cost sharing and infrastructure costs in a fair and equitable manner consistent with all policies and procedures. A review of the IFA will be conducted with an eye toward equitable cost sharing among partners, including a consistent approach to in-kind costs.

Appeals Process

This appeals process is in accordance with section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA.

Step 1. As one-stop partners are negotiating the IFA, if difficulty in reaching agreement or an impasse has occurred a one-stop partner may appeal the negotiated amount for their agency by notifying the Title I Administrator in writing immediately in order to direct an appeals resolution team to provide technical assistance and finalize a solution. This notification should occur within 30 days.

This appeals resolution team will be comprised of agency-designated staff with decision-making authority from each of the partner agencies working toward a local agreement and shall include a staff member from the workforce board.

Step 2. If the appeals resolution team is unable to finalize a solution within 30 days of notification by local partners, the appeal is forwarded to the Governor who will make final determinations on the terms of the IFA for those program partners over which he has decision-making authority and will impose a cost sharing arrangement.

Job Service ND must provide the appropriate and relevant materials and documents used in the negotiations to the Governor, preferably at the time of the notification of failure to reach consensus or request for appeal resolution, but no later than ten (10) business days thereafter. At a minimum, Job Service ND must provide to the Governor:

- The Local WIOA plan,
- The cost allocation methodology or methodologies proposed by the Partners to be used in determining the proportionate share,
- The proposed amounts or budget to fund infrastructure costs,
- The amount of Partner funds included,
- The type of funds (cash, non-cash, and third-party in-kind contributions) available (including all documentation on how Partners valued non-cash and third-party in-kind contributions consistent with 2 CFR 200.306),

- Any proposed or agreed on American Job Center budgets (for individual centers or a network of centers), and
- Any partially agreed upon, proposed, or draft IFAs.

Job Service ND may also provide the Governor with additional materials that they or the Governor find to be appropriate.

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

A. PROVIDE STATE POLICIES OR GUIDANCE FOR THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FOR USE OF STATE FUNDS FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

The State shall follow all applicable Federal and State regulations and guidance pertaining to the use of each individual fund source for workforce investment activities as set by North Dakota Office of Management and Budget fiscal policies.

(<https://www.nd.gov/omb/agency/financial/fiscal-policies-and-guidelines>)

The following is the WIOA Statewide Activities Funding guidelines:

Introduction

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), states are allowed to reserve Title I funds for purposes of statewide workforce investment activities. These activities are provided through workforce development systems to increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials by participants, which as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet the skill requirements of employers, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation.

Funding Guidelines

Each year, Job Service North Dakota (JSND), the WIOA Title I Fiscal Agent, Grant Subrecipient, and State Administrative Agency will set aside funds based on allocation methods as established under WIOA to be used to carry out statewide activities which provide relative benefit to the grant.

WIOA funds are to be used for initiatives which fit the strategy and direction of the Governor, and conform to the WIOA regulations, and the Uniform Guidance for allowable costs under 2CFR 200. To ensure the proper use of funds and application of the grant award, JSND has prepared these guidelines for use by the Governor and/or other state agencies in consideration of the use of these funds.

- Funds are considered program dollars and cannot be used for state administrative activities;
- Funds must demonstrate how the activities/services support the objectives of WIOA;
- Funds must be tied directly to services or otherwise benefit WIOA-eligible individuals (youth, adults, and dislocated workers as defined under the WIOA regulations);
- Funds must result in a measurable outcome under the WIOA performance accountability standards;

- Funds must not be used to duplicate or replace activities normally funded by another federal or state program; and
- Funds must not be used for ongoing or regular services of an organization

Funding Strategy

To ensure the funds allocated each year are spent by the third year, JSND and the Workforce Development Council (WDC) have established a funding strategy in alignment with WIOA regulations for allowable expenses. This percentage-based strategy will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of WIOA systems and services, as well as enhance the innovation of North Dakota's Workforce Development System. Some discretion may be given to the percentages listed herein should additional needs arise, if said funds are not otherwise designated.

- 10% for WIOA Research and Evaluation to strengthen the workforce system through evidence-based policy and decision making
- 10% for JSND as the One-Stop Operator for building and accessibility improvements to better serve the needs of citizens
- 20% for JSND system upgrades and enhancements to advance technology for improved services to citizens
- 60% for innovative solutions to address statewide workforce needs and strengthen North Dakota's Workforce Development System

Funding Approval

Funds for WIOA research and evaluation, one-stop operator building and accessibility needs, and JSND system upgrades and enhancements are allowable expenses under the WIOA grant and require the approval of JSND's Executive Director. Innovative solutions to address statewide workforce needs are subject to the funding guidelines and procedures as noted herein with final approval by the WDC.

Funding Procedures

JSND has a responsibility to administer the grant in compliance with WIOA laws and regulations, the WIOA grant agreement, and the Uniform Guidance for allowable costs. Therefore, all requests for utilizing the funds for innovative solutions must be approved by JSND's internal process prior to being submitted to the WDC for approval.

Any person or agency requesting funding under the WIOA grant for statewide activities must complete the WIOA Allowable Activities Funding Request form explaining the reasons for the funding in more detail. This form must be emailed to JSND's Workforce Services Director at: pndavis@nd.gov

JSND has established the WIOA Statewide Activities Committee to consider requests related to WIOA statewide activities funding. This internal team has the working knowledge and understanding of the WIOA regulations, the guidelines established herein, and the authority to disperse funds under WIOA.

This committee consists of the following positions:

- Executive Director
- Workforce Services Director

- Workforce Programs Managers (2)
- Finance Manager
- Planning and Projects Manager

Upon receiving the request for the use of WIOA statewide funds, JSND's WIOA Statewide Activities Committee may convene with the requesting party to discuss the request in more detail and gather additional information as needed. If the request for distribution of funds is questionable as to its alignment with the intent of the grant and compliance with the WIOA regulations, JSND will consult with the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) for formal guidance. Upon the committee making a decision to approve or deny the use of funds for the purpose of statewide activities, the Workforce Services Director for JSND will present the information to the WDC for approval.

Procurement

As the fiscal agent of the WIOA Title I funds, JSND is responsible for following established procurement procedures for the use of WIOA statewide activities funding. Accordingly, following approval by the WDC, JSND will act on behalf of the State and will lead the procurement process while continuously collaborating with the requesting party as to the required paperwork, status, and evaluation of vendors.

Reporting

JSND is obligated to monitor and report to the USDOL on the use of statewide activities funding. This may require JSND involvement in the project including regular meetings or may require the requestor of the funds to submit reports throughout the duration of the project. Discretion is left to the Workforce Services Director to determine the necessity in participation to comply with the grant requirements.

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR'S SET ASIDE FUNDING. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS TO RESPOND TO LAYOFFS AND PLANT CLOSINGS AND COORDINATE SERVICES TO QUICKLY AID COMPANIES AND THEIR AFFECTED WORKERS. STATES ALSO SHOULD DESCRIBE ANY LAYOFF AVERSION STRATEGIES THEY HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS AT RISK COMPANIES AND WORKERS

To ensure the funds allocated each year are spent by the third year, JSND and the Workforce Development Council (WDC) have established a funding strategy in alignment with WIOA regulations for allowable expenses. This percentage-based strategy will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of WIOA systems and services, as well as enhance the innovation of North Dakota's Workforce Development System. Some discretion may be given to the percentages listed herein should additional needs arise, if said funds are not otherwise designated.

- 10% for WIOA Research and Evaluation to strengthen the workforce system through evidence-based policy and decision making
- 10% for JSND as the One-Stop Operator for building and accessibility improvements to better serve the needs of citizens
- 20% for JSND system upgrades and enhancements to advance technology for improved services to citizens
- 60% for innovative solutions to address statewide workforce needs and strengthen North Dakota's Workforce Development System

Dislocated Worker Office

The Dislocated Worker Office (DWO) of Job Service has been designated by the Governor as the entity responsible for providing Rapid Response services through the Job Service AJC Workforce Centers located across the state. The AJC Workforce Center managers provide direct supervision to business services staff responsible for Rapid Response services. WIOA funding is utilized for Rapid Response services.

When the DWO receives Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notices, JSND staff, including Unemployment Insurance staff and the JSND Executive Director and the Workforce Development Council Director with the ND Department of Commerce are notified immediately, and the notice is shared. Depending on the level of community impact, communication may occur between local and/or state level service providers to inform them of the potential to assist in delivering Rapid Response and in serving impacted workers. In the case of WARN notices, the community's chief elected official also receives a notice from the company. A Job Service AJC Workforce Center representative may contact the community leader as a part of planning the response effort.

JSND efforts for WARN notices include initiating contact for Rapid Response with the employer and employee representatives if organized labor is involved. The DWO notifies and utilizes partners (Department of Public Instruction, Department of Career and Technical Education, Department of Commerce, Department of Human Services, North Dakota University System, Veterans Employment and Training Service, local Economic Development Corporations, ND Building and Trades Council, ND AFL-CIO, ND Petroleum Council, Associated General Contractors, various Manufacturing Roundtables, etc.) as appropriate. The Job Service AJC Workforce Center office manager or designee coordinates the response effort and works with the DWO to determine the level of involvement of the chief elected official, economic development officials, and others. In many Rapid Response scenarios, these services are delivered seamlessly by Wagner Peyser, WIOA, and UI staff members. External partners also participate and offer their perspectives and services.

During the times of heavy Covid-19 positive results in the state, Rapid Response was delivered via Microsoft Teams or the Talent Space technology. This allowed for the continuation of Rapid Response sessions.

The Rapid Response plan may include the following:

- Offering information on business start- up, growth and layoff aversion as a common service to all employers during regular employer visits or to anyone upon request.
- Exploring the potential for a task force which involves community leaders, company management, state leaders and representatives, organized labor, etc.
- Guiding a team in determining specific assistance to be provided at the dislocation site. ND is in the enviable position of experiencing a labor shortage, which sets the tone for directing the dislocated workers' attention to their transferable skills.
- Sharing information (in case of layoffs resulting from foreign competition) regarding petition filing, timing, and availability of TAA, Trade Readjustment Assistance, and the Health Coverage Tax Credit.
- Meeting with impacted employees to inform them of programs and available services (including scheduled activities, and special workshops which may include basic computer training) as well as answering questions and providing standardized dislocated worker

information packets. Agendas cover a full range of topics reflecting a fully integrated service delivery system including:

- Encouraging employers and employees to begin using services immediately rather than waiting until the layoff date.
- Arranging reverse job fairs onsite with employers with a scheduled closure or a large layoff. When a dislocation is reported to the DWO, the occupations and locations of these workers are listed in a management report to notify staff around the state of this talent pool. Ongoing proactive efforts exist within the various areas of the state through cooperation between Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff members and economic development. When a layoff is pending, opportunities to help transition those impacted workers to expanding and new North Dakota businesses are effectively coordinated in order to retain a skilled workforce.

For businesses in other stages of the economic cycle, assistance from outside resources is offered as well as information on recruitment services, unemployment insurance, workforce training, First Link 2-1-1 Network, business tax incentives, and North Dakota New Jobs Training program.

Job Service's Management Information System includes a list of all Rapid Response sessions linking individuals applying for WIOA and TAA. All WIOA and TAA participants can be properly reported as having attended Rapid Response session(s) associated with the impacted employer.

In the case of non-WARN dislocations, the contact and communication is dependent on the local area impact. Following either a permanent closure, mass layoff or a natural/other disaster resulting in a mass job dislocation, Job Service AJC Workforce Center managers and business services staff are responsible for initiating Rapid Response in their service areas as warranted.

C. IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES

In the event of a natural disaster, Rapid Response would be provided following an activation from the Workforce Coordination Center (WCC). North Dakota follows WCC Standard Operating Procedures which is a joint emergency effort among Job Service ND, Human Resource Management Services, North Dakota Workforce Safety & Insurance and the North Dakota Department of Labor. The WCC is part of The North Dakota State Emergency Operations Plan of the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, Division of Homeland Security. State agencies will be required to focus their attention on both the continuation of essential services and emergency response/recovery operations for the well-being of citizens; hence, non-essential services will likely be placed on hold until the severity of conditions requiring activation of the WCC subside. Current economic systems require limited inventories and minimal excess capacity. As such, relatively small surges in demand may overwhelm supply chain operations causing shortages of consumer goods and supplies, which may be critical to sustaining essential services to populations impacted by disasters. The WCC plan outlines protocols for redirecting the workforce to support delivery of essential services and emergency response/recovery operations.

Coordination and re-assignment of state, local and private workforce resources will be accomplished in conjunction with Job Service, Human Resource Management Services, N.D. Department of Labor and Workforce Safety & Insurance staffing assignments. Specified Tasks:

- Make decisions regarding state response and use of state resources supporting delivery of essential services
- Ensure WCC representation in the State Unified Command
- Document and adhere to decision points and triggers for activation of the WCC
- Make WCC staffing assignments • Develop assessment procedures and prioritize essential services • Ensure coordination with the Governor's Office to review and implement necessary human resource staffing procedures and/or policy changes
- Identify, train, prepare, deploy, and account for agency personnel essential to continuity of operations (e.g. staffing of essential service positions, sustaining emergency operations, staffing WCC, providing liaisons, equipment operators, support personnel, etc.)
- Identify, prepare, preposition as required, deploy, account for, and maintain readiness of equipment necessary for the continuation of essential services

Establish and maintain relationships with private industry. Implied Tasks:

- Maintain listing of WCC staffing needs
- Maintain listing of available work force
- Provide guidance to state agencies for emergency or disaster related re-assignment and policy concerns
- Coordinate efforts to ensure Continuity of Government and operations pursuant to the state agencies' Continuity of Operation Plans
- Conduct a needs assessment
- Maintain Situational Awareness and conduct Intelligence/Information management (gathering, analysis and interpretation of info/intel) of the spread of infectious disease and resulting impacts
- Support key statewide, local, and tribal essential services, as well as public awareness campaigns to encourage volunteers
- Communicate needs to voluntary agencies
- Coordinate volunteers
- Provide command and control of, and ensure interoperable communications with, state resources
- Conduct deliberate planning individually as agencies, and as a collective state team, to ensure thorough readiness for emergency operations, to include provisions for prioritizing and sustaining essential service operations goods and supplies, which may be critical to sustaining essential services to populations impacted by disasters.

The WCC plan outlines protocols for redirecting the workforce to support delivery of essential services and emergency response/recovery operations. Coordination and re-assignment of state, local and private workforce resources will be accomplished in conjunction with Job Service, Human Resource Management Services, N.D. Department of Labor and Workforce Safety & Insurance staffing assignments. Rehabilitate and repair resources such as equipment and personnel to ensure readiness to sustain essential service operations

- Identify and compile after action review data
- Provide liaison with private industry to coordinate and address appropriate responses during catastrophic events where severe disruptions occur in the availability and distribution of critical resources
- Develop media strategies and informational material with subject matter experts.
- Ensure coordination of message development and information with other agencies.

In the event of a disaster, local Rapid Response staff will meet with key affected employers and community leaders to learn the scope of the impact in terms of approximate numbers, duration of work cessation, and needs of the workers and businesses at various stages of the event. Following this analysis, Rapid Response staff members will contact partner agencies to update and request involvement in the Rapid Response process. Examples of partners who address immediate basic needs such as heat, shelter, food and clothing are the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Department of Health and Department of Human Services, National Guard, and FEMA. Rapid Response will be conducted as a team effort by the working partners to address the short-, medium- and long-term needs. Temporary co-location of working partners will occur to simplify and expedite service delivery. When affected workers are eligible for Disaster Unemployment Insurance the Rapid Response team will provide assistance to file these claims. Job Service ND can temporarily assign staff from other AJC Workforce Centers to meet the influx of unemployed individuals, as happened during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Following either a permanent closure, mass layoff or a natural/other disaster resulting in a mass job dislocation, Job Service AJC Workforce Center office managers have the responsibility for initiating Rapid Response in their areas of responsibility, as warranted. When the DWO receives a WARN notice, immediate contact is made with the Job Service AJC Workforce Center office manager/designee to initiate contact for Rapid Response with the employer and employee representatives if organized labor is involved. The DWO notifies and utilizes partners (Department of Public Instruction, Department of Career and Technical Education, Department of Commerce, Department of Human Services, North Dakota University System, Veterans Employment and Training Service, ND Building and Trades Council, ND AFL-CIO, etc.) as appropriate when any dislocation notification is received.

The Job Service AJC Workforce Center office manager or designee coordinates the response effort and works with the DWO to determine the level of involvement of the chief elected official, economic development officials, and others. In many Rapid Response scenarios, these services are delivered seamlessly by Wagner Peyser, WIOA, and UI staff members. External partners also participate and offer their perspectives and services. The Rapid Response plan has many facets which may include the following:

- Offering information on business start- up, growth and layoff aversion as a common service to all employers during regular employer visits or to anyone upon request.
- Exploring the potential for a task force which involves community leaders, company management, state leaders and representatives, organized labor, etc.
- Guiding a team in determining specific assistance to be provided at the dislocation site. ND is in the enviable position of experiencing a labor shortage, which sets the tone for directing the dislocated workers' attention to their transferable skills.
- Sharing information (in case of layoffs resulting from foreign competition) regarding petition filing, timing, and availability of TAA, Trade Readjustment Assistance, and the Health Coverage

Tax Credit. • Meeting with impacted employees to inform them of programs and available services (including scheduled activities, and special workshops which may include basic computer training) as well as answer questions and providing standardized dislocated worker information packets. Agendas cover a full range of topics reflecting a fully integrated service delivery system.

- Encouraging employers and employees to begin using services immediately rather than waiting until the layoff date.
- Arranging reverse job fairs onsite with employers with a scheduled closure or a large layoff.

The Rapid Response team will remain in place to assess ongoing needs in the community. Job Service ND will assess each situation to determine if a Disaster National Dislocated Worker Grant is necessary.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A).) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TRADE-AFFECTED WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PETITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE TRADE-AFFECTED DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT). DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION.

Rapid Response in North Dakota operates in essentially the same manner regardless of whether a TAA petition or certification is involved. See Section 2 (B) above for the description of Rapid Response activities. Rapid Response services are provided to all worker groups covered by a TAA petition similarly to any worker group that has been or will be permanently laid off. In most cases, the State and its local Rapid Response team are already aware of a dislocation event and Rapid Response activities are underway before a TAA petition is filed.

If a TAA petition is the first notice of a dislocation event, the State will notify the Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff, who will contact the employer to plan and schedule the Rapid Response. When Rapid Response is extended to potentially TAA-eligible worker groups, basic TAA Program information must be shared, including the program enrollment process should certification occur. If the State does not have access to the worker group prior to layoff, the State will use UI claimant information to identify potentially affected workers. In this situation, the local Rapid Response team will be required to extend outreach to the laid off workers using contact information obtained from UI. At minimum, the outreach materials must include information about the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program, workforce system, services available at the AJC Workforce Centers, and basic information explaining the TAA Program.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) remains a training strategy for participants who lack experience but have education or training related to the job, or whose limited experience does not qualify them for the jobs. Increased promotion and outreach have resulted in additional OJT experiences for job seekers and employers.

Employers benefit from OJT through cost savings for the expense of training a new employee. OJT gives employers the control to design a training plan that meets the needs of their business.

Supervisors assess progress over a period making it easier to identify and resolve a problem quickly. Trainees benefit from OJT by receiving an income while learning in jobs matched to their aptitude, abilities, and desired occupational goals. Trainees obtain hands-on training for new job skills and re-enter the workforce. Trainees may develop mentoring relationships leading to greater success in their new employment.

Work Experience is a planned, structure learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. Work experience may be paid or unpaid. In general, the intent of work experiences are for youth or adults with opportunities for career exploration and skill development and to enhance their work readiness skills in preparation for employment. Case managers work directly with employers to implement a plan of training for each individual that includes progress reports from direct work supervisors.

Registered Apprenticeship is most often promoted with OJT. When an OJT contract is being negotiated for an apprenticeable occupation, efforts are made to encourage the employer to couple the OJT with a registered apprenticeship program. WIOA funds may be used to cover costs of related training instruction to relieve the cost to the sponsor when there is a cost for third party instruction.

2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., job center staff taking applications and conducting assessments).

North Dakota apprenticeships have, up until recently, been used traditionally by the skilled trades industries. Recently, additional industries are recognizing the value the apprenticeship model provides to train and retain potential and current employees.

The state collaborates with the US DOL Office of Apprenticeship in North Dakota to coordinate information of apprenticeships in North Dakota. Entities share outreach information that enhances collaboration to result in increased WIOA and Registered Apprenticeship enrollments. Core program staff have received training from the State Director and the ETPL provides important information on utilization of Registered Apprenticeship. The state continues to strengthen partnerships between the State Director and other WIOA partners. Registered Apprenticeship has been incorporated into Job Service ND applicant services and business services within the WIOA core programs. These communications consist of establishing processes to share information that will generate a greater utilization of Registered Apprenticeships in the state. Increasing the knowledge of all parties about how WIOA can partner with Registered Apprenticeship will strengthen the promotion.

Department of Commerce and Job Service North Dakota staff will share information relating to employers inquiring about Registered Apprenticeship and are in need to fill apprenticeship openings. Job orders in the labor exchange system are flagged as Registered Apprenticeship openings. A quick search for the flagged job openings for registered apprenticeship is available on the homepage of the state's labor exchange website.

All Job Service staff, including WIOA program case managers, have the list of current Registered Apprenticeship sponsors to become familiar with the activity in the State for employer and occupation targets for program promotion. Business service staff messaging with employers includes Registered Apprenticeship benefits. Youth case managers are promoting Registered Apprenticeship specifically for out-of-school youth and as a strategy to meet the WIOA Youth 20% expenditure rate for work experience activities. Registered Apprenticeship promotional materials are available to all Job Service ND staff, on the agency webpage and in the resource rooms.

3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL POLICY

ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDERS

POLICY 2-06-01 (4)

PURPOSE:

This Policy provides new information, criteria, and procedures to implement the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.

POLICY:

A. Training Providers Subject to ETP List Requirements

The following types of training providers are subject to the ETP list requirements in order to receive WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to provide training services to eligible adult and dislocated worker individuals through Individual Training Accounts (ITA). ITA's may also be used for WIOA Title I Youth funds to provide training to older, out-of-school youth (ages 18-24).

1. Institutions of higher education that provide a program of training that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential;
2. Public or private training providers, including joint labor-management organizations, and occupational/technical training; and
3. Providers of adult education and literacy activities provided in combination with occupational skills training.

Postsecondary institutions located in Minnesota, Montana, and South Dakota are eligible to receive North Dakota ITA's based on reciprocal agreements. Post-secondary institutions outside of North Dakota that offer online training/distance education may be authorized to receive ITA's as long as the training program is listed on the home state's ETP list.

B. Initial Eligibility and Application Process

Training providers may submit an application for initial eligibility, which can be granted for up to one full year.

1.) Applications for the ETP list will be completed using a link available on jobsnd.com. The following information is required:

- Training provider applications must include verification documentation that the training provider is licensed, certified, or authorized by the North Dakota Department of Higher Education, or the relevant state agency with oversight, to operate training programs in North Dakota. If a program is not in compliance with the oversight agency as required by state law, the provider will not be able to apply for inclusion on the ETP list until they meet the necessary requirements.

- If a provider is in compliance with the oversight agency, the provider can proceed to #2 in the application process.

2.) Training providers applying for initial program eligibility must provide the following with the application:

- a) A description of each program of training services to be offered;
- b) Information on cost of attendance, including costs of tuition and fees;
- c) Whether the training program leads to an industry-recognized certificate or credential, including recognized post-secondary credentials;
- d) Whether the provider has developed the training in partnership with a business (and the name of the business);
- e) The in-demand industry sectors and occupations that best fit with the training program;
- f) The type of credential attained by all students in the program;
- g) Social security numbers (SSNs) for all students in the programs listed on the application, regardless of the funding source.

NOTE - SSNs will be used to generate the required annual WIOA wage and employment performance reports. Job Service North Dakota will access SLDS data to generate these reports for institutions in the North Dakota University System.

Social security numbers must be provided for all students by program listed in the application for the previous two program years (July 1 – June 30) regardless of the funding source. Training providers that have not been on the ETP list for at least two years will be required to provide student data for the time period available.

Once the application is submitted and the state has determined that the required information is available, the state will approve, deny, or request further information on the program within 30 days of the receipt of a complete application. The state will notify the provider of the determination.

Registered apprenticeship programs are not subject to the eligibility criteria or application requirements. While registered apprenticeship programs are automatically eligible, not all registered apprenticeship sponsors may wish to be included on the list. Sponsors of registered apprenticeship programs may choose to be included on the State ETP list. They will remain on the list unless they lose their registration.

Registered Apprenticeships programs that are taking applications are automatically considered in-demand occupations.

C. Continued Eligibility

After the initial eligibility period of one full calendar year, training providers must submit applications for continued program eligibility every two years. Applications for continued eligibility must be submitted by October 1st for the year in which eligibility expires. The continued eligibility application is required for any program that has previously been on the list.

The SLDS will be used to generate performance information for institutions in the North Dakota University System. For training institutions not participating in SLDS, the following information must be submitted to JSND.

TrainND, Private training providers, and Tribal colleges must include the following:

- a) The total number of participants enrolled in the program;
- b) The total number of participants completing the program;
- c) The total number of participants exiting the program;
- d) Information on recognized post-secondary credentials received by program participants;
- e) Information on the program completion rate for such participants;
- f) Social security numbers for all participants by program listed on the application for the two previous years, regardless of funding source, which will be used to calculate the performance measures listed in Attachment 1.

NOTE - SSNs will be used to generate the required annual WIOA wage and employment performance reports. Job Service North Dakota will access SLDS data to generate these reports for institutions in the North Dakota University System.

All training/education providers must include the following:

- g) Applications for continued eligibility must include verification documentation from the appropriate oversight agency to operate in North Dakota.
- h) Description of how the provider will ensure access to training services throughout the State, including rural areas and through the use of technology;
- i) Description of how the providers provide training services to individuals who are employed and/or individuals with barriers to employment;
- j) Information reported to State agencies on Federal and State training programs other than programs within WIOA title I-B; and

D. Performance Requirements

The performance information required is outlined in Attachment 1. Social security numbers must be provided for all students in programs included on the application in North Dakota for the previous two years regardless of the funding source. An electronic system will provide a secure means to transmit the data file. Training providers that have not been on the ETP list for at least two years will be required to provide student data for the time period available. Social security numbers for all North Dakota students will continue to be required annually and will be used to calculate the performance measures. Performance information will be published online for each training provider on the ETP list. Programs with less than 10 students enrolled will not be included in performance data.

E. Established Performance Levels

North Dakota has established an overall performance level of 15% that may be adjusted as further guidance and more accurate data becomes available. This rate allows for the maximum inclusion of programs considering the characteristics of populations served and relevant economic conditions. Eligible training providers will receive one year to improve performance prior to being removed from the ETP list.

F. Conditions for Removal

The state may remove a program or programs from the list for failing to meet the established criteria or performance levels in this policy, or for not providing all required performance information for subsequent eligibility. Removal is also appropriate if the program has failed to attain or lost the accreditation required for professional licensure. A training provider that is removed from the list for the reasons stated above may re-apply for continued eligibility when they can demonstrate that they meet all the requirements.

The state must remove from the eligibility list for a period of not less than 2 years any providers that willfully supply false performance information, misrepresent costs or services, or that substantially violate requirements of WIOA law or regulations. Providers are liable to repay all adult and dislocated worker funds received during the period of non-compliance.

No training provider debarred by the Federal Government may be permitted to be placed or remain on the ETP list.

In the case of a training provider or a program of training services that is removed from the list while WIOA participants are enrolled, the participants may complete the program unless the provider or program has lost state licensing, certification, or authorization to operate by the appropriate state oversight agency.

G. Appeal Process

Training providers can choose to appeal the rejection of their program for inclusion in the ETP list or its subsequent termination of eligibility. For any appeal by a training provider, an appeal must be submitted in writing via email within 14 days after notification of the decision. The appeal must include the justification for the appeal in their request. The training provider also has the right to request a hearing to discuss their appeal.

An ETP list appeals board will be assembled. The appeals board will schedule a hearing if requested and make a decision within 60 days of appeal. This will be a final decision and the program will be unable to reapply through the ETP list eligibility process for one year from the date of final notification by the ETP list appeals board.

REFERENCE:

(0) NDWDC minutes dated July 21, 2015

(1) NDWDC minutes dated October 13, 2015

(2) Amended by WIOA Liaison for the Governor dated December 30, 2015

(3) NDWDC Administrative Committee July 30, 2019

(4) NDWDC Executive Committee October 5, 2020

REVIEW: October 5, 2023

Attachment 1

REQUIRED PERFORMANCE DATA

The following information is required for all applications for continued eligibility. Outcomes will be determined based on the student Social Security Numbers provided for each program. The SSNs will be matched to North Dakota wages and WRIS II data to generate reports for each program with the following information:

1. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program
2. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program
3. The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program
4. The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized post-secondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program

Procedures were updated following federal guidance to include as many Registered Apprenticeship sponsors as possible, Job Service ND staff and the ND Office of Apprenticeship State Director work together to offer listing on the ETP list if desired. When sponsors choose to be included on the ETP list, Job Service ND staff requests basic information from the state office of apprenticeship state director to gather the following information:

- Occupations included within the RAP
- Name and address of RAP sponsor
- Name and address of the related training instruction provider, location of instruction if different from the program sponsor address
- Method and length of instruction
- Number of active apprentices

Registered Apprenticeship sponsors are automatically eligible to be included on the ETP list and are exempt from state and local ETP eligibility requirements. RAPs are also exempt from ETP performance reporting requirements under WIOA.

Link to current ETPL policy: [wdceligibletrainingproviders.pdf \(jobsnd.com\)](#)

This policy will be updated within 6 months to include the following:

RAP sponsors not currently on the ETPL will be contacted annually for an opportunity to opt-in, with the instruction to contact via email either the ETPL coordinator or the State Director of the Office of Apprenticeship. To further minimize the burden for sponsors, JSND will obtain the minimal amount of information per TEGL 8-19 needed for ETPL placement from the State Director. National RAPs will be asked to provide the required minimum amount of information for placement on the ND ETPL. New RAPs will be added to the ETPL at least every six months for those sponsors choosing to opt in.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE

BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC.
134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING
SERVICES FUNDED BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM

The North Dakota Workforce Development Council has established a policy due to limited funding to only serve individuals that meet the WIOA Adult priority.

NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

WIOA ADULT PROGRAM PRIORITY OF SERVICE

POLICY 2-05-01 (2)

POLICY

An individual shall be eligible to participate in the WIOA Adult Program if he or she is:

- i) Age 18 or older;
- ii) Eligible to work in the United States including a citizen of the United States, a United States national, permanent resident alien, lawfully admitted refugee, parolee, or other individual authorized to work in the United States;
- iii) In compliance with Selective Service System registration (applies to males only); and
- iv) Meets priority of service.

Priority of Service:

The Workforce Development Council supports the WIOA priority of service while under limited funding for eligibility. These categories are:

- low income adults (WIOA Sec 3(36))
- adults who are receiving public assistance
- basic skills deficient (WIOA Sec 3(5))

The Workforce Development Council also encourages enrollment of North Dakota residents as a priority.

Veterans and eligible spouses of veterans - covered persons - will receive priority of service.

20 CFR Part 1010.110 adopts the term “covered person” to define those veterans and spouses of eligible veterans who are eligible for priority of service. The Jobs for Veterans Act does not change the requirement that individuals, to include veterans and military spouses, must first qualify as eligible under the WIOA Adult Program before participation.

REFERENCE:

(0) NDWDC minutes dated May 12, 2015

(1) NDWDC Administrative minutes dated September 28, 2018

(2) NDWDC Administrative minutes dated October 28, 2021

REVIEW: October 28, 2024

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

The North Dakota Workforce Development Council has established a policy due to limited funding to only serve individuals that meet the WIOA Adult priority.

NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

WIOA ADULT PROGRAM PRIORITY OF SERVICE

POLICY 2-05-01 (2)

POLICY

An individual shall be eligible to participate in the WIOA Adult Program if he or she is:

- i) Age 18 or older;
- ii) Eligible to work in the United States including a citizen of the United States, a United States national, permanent resident alien, lawfully admitted refugee, parolee, or other individual authorized to work in the United States;
- iii) In compliance with Selective Service System registration (applies to males only); and
- iv) Meets priority of service.

Priority of Service:

The Workforce Development Council supports the WIOA priority of service while under limited funding for eligibility. These categories are:

- low income adults (WIOA Sec 3(36))
- adults who are receiving public assistance
- basic skills deficient (WIOA Sec 3(5))

The Workforce Development Council also encourages enrollment of North Dakota residents as a priority.

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REFERENCE:

(0) NDWDC minutes dated May 12, 2015

(1) NDWDC Administrative minutes dated September 28, 2018

(2) NDWDC Administrative minutes dated October 28, 2021

REVIEW: October 28, 2024

C. WITH RESPECT TO YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED IN
SECTION 129 OF WIOA—

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA—

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS OR CONTRACTS.[11]

[11] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

North Dakota is a single workforce area state. The WIOA Youth activities are provided by Job Service ND through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Workforce Development Council and Job Service ND.

State-developed and performance criteria is included in the Youth MOU. It can be viewed here: <https://www.jobsnd.com/workforce-development-council/governance>.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

With the out-of-school youth maximum age of 24 and focus to spend 75 percent of youth funds on out-of-school youth, recruitment efforts are targeted toward this population. Strategies to achieve improved outcomes include:

- Youth Coordinators leverage the AJC Workforce Center Resource Room staff knowledge of youth seeking employment and services through utilization of the nine AJC Workforce Centers statewide;
- Core partners, WIOA Youth, Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation communicate regularly for active referral and dual enrollment of out-of-school youth to ensure services are not duplicated and outcomes achieved;
- Adult Education ELL programs frequently work collaboratively with WIOA Youth Coordinators to provide services to New Americans;
- Front-line staff from the WIOA required partner agencies meet regularly to discuss dually enrolled participants and better align services provided;
- Youth Coordinators communicate with local networks including TANF and SNAP staff and/or community-based programs targeting homeless, disabled and transitioning youth and justice- involved youth through local at-risk youth organizations and leverage resources.

Although the focus is serving the out-of-school population, service presentations including LMI, labor exchange education and youth program outreach continues to be provided to schools.

Communication with school personnel including principals, vocational teachers and counselors is crucial to locate students who have dropped out or for those graduating and in need of assistance for occupational skills training to fill the jobs in-demand. These efforts have resulted in the out-of-school youth expenditure rate nearing or exceeding 75% and the Work Based Learning requirement exceeding 20%.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS UNDER THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM ELEMENT. [12]

[12] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

The WIOA Youth program incorporates all the requirements outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, specifically, objective assessments, employment planning (individual service strategies) and referral processes. All youth services are accessible through the Job Service AJC Workforce Centers and services are designed based on labor market information.

All youth, including youth with disabilities, entering the service delivery process receive an objective assessment. Assessment follows the guidelines in WIOA, section 129, including a review of academic and occupational skills, interests and supportive service needs.

Assessments provide the needed information and data to complete employment plans that link employment, educational and career pathway goals with the service strategies necessary to reach employment goals. Youth receive integrated services through the Job Service AJC Workforce Center. The assessment process identifies those with the interests necessary to pursue post-secondary educational opportunities, including non-traditional training opportunities. Youth program participants have all career services available as part of their employment strategies. Based on the assessment, youth are referred to appropriate services, including career counseling, specialized counseling, guidance and skill assessment.

Information is shared with other partners involved in the assessment to help unify and enhance the guidance and counseling process. Supportive services are provided to youth to assist them in completing their individualized employment plans. The service strategy is coordinated around the 14 Youth Program Elements, available to participants. The 14 youth program elements are:

1. Tutoring, study skills training and dropout prevention strategies: Participants may receive tutoring services and study skills training in order to complete secondary school. The North Dakota universities, community colleges, tribal colleges and other higher education partners will assist youth making the transition into postsecondary opportunities.
1. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate: Providing alternative secondary school services is vital to re-engage youth who have not responded to traditional school settings. This service is provided through coordination with local school districts.
1. Paid and unpaid work experiences including summer employment and other opportunities are available throughout the year and include pre-apprenticeship programs available through the Burdick Job Corps Center, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities. These opportunities not only help provide skills and experiences, but help youth understand what is associated with “real work” and what employers require of employees. Work-based learning opportunities, including summer employment opportunities, paid and unpaid work experience, internships, job shadowing and on-the-job training are directed at preparing youth for success in employment. Summer employment opportunities are directly linked to

academic and occupational learning. In most rural areas in North Dakota, many youth are first introduced to jobs through summer employment opportunities. Activities for youth with significant barriers to employment continue to focus on pre-employment and work maturity skills. On-the-job training is an excellent tool for occupational skill building for out-of-school youth who are ready for skill development and employment. The individual plan of each youth is focused on the needs identified through the individualized assessment process. Job Service and apprenticeship partners collaborate to determine how to establish and expand out-of-school youth work experience opportunities to registered apprenticeships offered by employers. Additionally, youth have access to services provided at the Job Service AJC Workforce Centers, including assistance with work search, resume writing, interviewing, and career exploration. They also have access to jobsnd.com to connect them with unsubsidized employment opportunities.

1. Comprehensive guidance and counseling: Through the comprehensive assessment process, a Youth Coordinator may identify that guidance and counseling services would be of benefit to a youth as the individual proceeds through the program. If so, referral to various providers would occur. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling services may include but are not limited to the following: 1.) Referral to drug and alcohol counseling services; 2.) Referral to mental health counseling services; 3.) Career counseling including information on career pathways and review of the RUReady.nd resource; 4.) Educational counseling; and 5.) Case management performed by a professional Social Worker or Vocational Rehabilitation counselor. Each of these services must be provided by an appropriately trained staff member, educational instructor, licensed counselor or social worker.
1. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training: Services are available for youth in need of such services to prepare for and transition to post- secondary education and training. These services may include assistance with post-secondary financial aid documents, assistance to attend college tours, assistance with college entrance or program exams.
1. Occupational skills training: Occupational skills training is provided through Individual Training Accounts to out-of-school youth whose employment plan includes post-secondary school through short term skill training or a degree program through a community college or tribal college. Focus will be placed on preparing or retraining individuals for the in-demand occupations in the state. Priority consideration is given to training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align with the in-demand sectors and occupations in the local area.
2. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities: Services are available for youth in need of education offered concurrently with workforce preparation activities.
3. Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors: Youth are provided leadership development opportunities that may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, decision making and teamwork.
4. Adult mentoring: Mentoring opportunities with caring adults is sought to provide consistent guidance and support. Activities and projects that provide citizenship skills,

life skills training, community involvement skills, and increase positive social skills, is used to develop overall leadership qualities.

5. Financial literacy education: Youth in need of financial literacy education services have access to activities designed to educate or assist youth with the following: making informed financial decisions including budgeting and accessing checking and savings accounts; learning to effectively manage spending, credit and debt; learning the significance of credit report and credit scores. Case managers have knowledge of financial literacy resources in their local area and try to identify youth who need financial literacy assistance.
6. Entrepreneurial skills training: Resources are available for youth interested in developing their entrepreneurial skills. Resources include: • The UND Center for Innovation, a comprehensive, hands-on assistance is available to technology entrepreneurs, innovators and manufacturers interested in starting up new ventures, commercializing new products and licensing new technologies. • Entrepreneur Centers of North Dakota provide access to over 20 financing programs and a network of organizations who provide counseling, training and assistance to start-up and existing entrepreneurs. Innovate ND is a comprehensive program of entrepreneur education and follow-up assistance with a goal to launch up to 20 new businesses in North Dakota annually. The program is open to all North Dakotans, former North Dakotans or other entrepreneurs, including students, who have an innovative idea, product or business service and want to grow their venture in North Dakota. • Marketplace for Entrepreneurs is a yearly event for where economic development organizations meet at Marketplace to provide training and technical assistance to North Dakota's entrepreneurs. A comprehensive directory for ideas, contacts, and other economic development information is found on the Marketplace web site.
7. Labor market information: Labor Market Information is provided to all youth receiving WIOA services. Information is mainly centered on career awareness, career pathways, career counseling or career exploration resources and occupational training available for targeted and in-demand industries and occupations. This information along with other services is available for youth as they transition and prepare for postsecondary education and training.
8. Support Services: Support services may be provided to WIOA youth participants when they are necessary to enable individuals to participate in authorized WIOA activities. Support services include but are not limited to the following: • Linkages to community services. • Assistance with transportation. Assistance with housing. • Referrals to medical services. • Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work and safety-related attire, work-related tools, eyeglasses which include protective eye wear.
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation: All youth will be provided follow-up services for at least 12 months after participation ends. The intensity and duration of follow-up services is based on individual need. Given the appropriate release of information, assessment information and employment strategies is shared with core and required partners to encourage consistent and accurate information that will foster a continuum of services. Information and referral processes will be implemented to introduce youth to the wide array of applicable services available through the workforce system.

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.

NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

IN-SCHOOL YOUTH ELIGIBILITY

POLICY 2-02-01 (2)

PURPOSE:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII) includes the Youth eligibility category of “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment”. Section 681.300 advises State Boards to define this criterion.

POLICY:

“A low income individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment” is defined as:

1. Having limited employment opportunities as defined as being unable to obtain employment after a four-week employment search, or
2. Residing in a community with limited youth-related employment opportunities defined as a community with 60 or less worksites based on LMI Area Profile data on July 1st of each year, or
3. Having one or more parents incarcerated, or
4. Having a record of being unable to hold employment demonstrated by being terminated from two or more jobs in the past six months, or
5. Being identified as at risk of dropping out of school as documented by school professionals.

This policy is effective July 1, 2015.

REFERENCE:

(0) NDWDC minutes dated May 12, 2015

(1) NDWDC Administrative minutes dated September 28, 2018

(2) NDWDC Administrative minutes dated October 28, 2021

REVIEW: October 28, 2024

NORTH DAKOTA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH ELIGIBILITY

POLICY 2-03-01 (2)

PURPOSE:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII) includes the Youth eligibility category of “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment”. Section 681.300 advises State Boards to define this criterion.

POLICY:

“A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment” is defined as:

1. Having limited employment opportunities as defined as being unable to obtain employment after a four-week employment search, or
2. Residing in a community with limited youth-related employment opportunities defined as a community with 60 or less worksites based on LMI Area Profile data on July 1st of each year, or
3. Having one or more parents incarcerated, or
4. Having a record of being unable to hold employment demonstrated by being terminated from two or more jobs in the past six months

This policy is effective July 1, 2015.

REFERENCE:

(0) NDWDC minutes dated May 12, 2015

(1) NDWDC Administrative minutes dated September 25, 2018

(2) NDWDC Administrative minutes dated October 28, 2021

REVIEW: October 28, 2024

5. INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION, AS DEFINED IN LAW, FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ATTENDING SCHOOL AS SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(I) AND SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(I). IF STATE LAW DOES NOT DEFINE “NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL” OR “ATTENDING SCHOOL,” INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE AND PROVIDE THE STATE POLICY FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A YOUTH IS ATTENDING OR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL.

This is the North Dakota state's policy for school attendance. It doesn't specifically define not attending school but if the student isn't meeting the compulsory attendance requirements, the student would be not attending.

North Dakota Century Code CHAPTER 15.1-20 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE 15.1-20-01. Compulsory attendance.

1. Any person having responsibility for a child between the ages of seven and sixteen years shall ensure that the child is in attendance at a public school for the duration of each school year.
1. If a person enrolls a child of age six in a public school, the person shall ensure that the child is in attendance at the public school for the duration of each school year. The person may withdraw a child of age six from the public school. However, once the child is withdrawn, the person may not reenroll the child until the following school year. This

subsection does not apply if the reason for the withdrawal is the child's relocation to another school district.

2. This section does not apply if a child is exempted under the provisions of section

15.1-20-02. Compulsory attendance - Exceptions.

1. The provisions of section 15.1-20-01 do not apply if the person having responsibility for the child demonstrates to the satisfaction of the school board that: a. The child is in attendance for the same length of time at an approved nonpublic school; b. The child has completed high school; c. The child is necessary to the support of the child's family; d. A multidisciplinary team that includes the child's school district superintendent, the director of the child's special education unit, the child's classroom teacher, the child's physician, and the child's parent has determined that the child has a disability that renders attendance or participation in a regular or special education program inexpedient or impracticable; or e. The child is receiving home education.
2. A decision by the board of a school district under subsection 1 is appealable to the district court.

15.1-20-02.1. Attendance - Determination - Policies.

1. To be deemed in attendance for purposes of this chapter, a student may not be absent from school without excuse for more than: a. Three consecutive school days during either the first half or the second half of a school or school district's calendar; b. Six half days during either the first half or the second half of a school or school district's calendar; or c. Twenty-one class periods.
2. The board of each school district and governing body of each nonpublic school shall adopt a policy that: a. Defines an excused absence as any absence from school, if that absence is supported by either a verbal or written excuse supplied by the student's parent, teacher, or school administrator; and b. Articulates the type of documentation that may be requested to verify a student's absence.
3. This chapter does not preclude a school district or nonpublic school from withholding credit, removing a student from a course, or taking other punitive measures against a student who does not arrive in a timely fashion or who exceeds a specific number of absences, as determined by the school district or nonpublic school.

North Dakota's policy for out of school youth will be posted to [jobsnd.com](https://www.jobsnd.com)
<https://www.jobsnd.com/workforce-development-council/governance>

6. IF USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION WHICH MUST FURTHER DEFINE HOW TO DETERMINE IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS UNABLE TO COMPUTE OR SOLVE PROBLEMS, OR READ, WRITE, OR SPEAK ENGLISH, AT A LEVEL NECESSARY TO FUNCTION ON THE JOB, IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S FAMILY, OR IN SOCIETY. IF NOT USING THE PORTION OF THE DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.

North Dakota provides the following guidance to the local area to determine basic skills deficiency:

An individual who is Basic Skills Deficient is defined as:

- Youth: Individual has English reading, writing or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test (Determined by TABE) or
- Adult or Youth: The individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individuals' family, or in society (See documentation/justification requirements below).

For individuals who are new Americans and/or are English Language Learners, the case manager may use their discretion to determine if the individual can speak English at a level necessary to function on the job or in society. New American or ELL status alone does not constitute basic skill deficiency. If the English language skills of a new American (determined through conversation or ALC consultation) warrant a TABE, a test should be administered. A basic skills deficiency determination by a case manager, must include an assessment and a detailed summary of how the decision was made. The summary must be documented in case notes as justification of the decision. The justification must be one or a combination of the following:

- A descriptive case note entered by the case manager summarizing the verbal interaction and/or information obtained in the assessment.
- A summary of conversation with Adult Learning Center staff describing the English language skills demonstrated in past or present enrollment in an ESL or ELL class. Future scheduled enrollment in ELL can be summarized in the case notes to support the decision.
- A case note specifying that an interpreter was necessary to translate for the individual, and accompanied the individual during appointments

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must include—

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)
2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)
3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

North Dakota received no public comments that represent disagreement with the Plan.

The Governor identifies the State as the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds.

Job Service is the provider of WIOA title I Youth activities. Job Service provides all fourteen WIOA Youth elements and provides these activities statewide through the nine Job Service AJCs. Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Job Service North Dakota coordinate wrap-around services as needed for a successful outcome of educational and employment goals for youth and adult participants. Participants experience successful completions with on-the-job training and work experience often resulting in unsubsidized employment. Job Service has

entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the North Dakota Workforce Development Council.

4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

Consistent with federal law, partner agencies agree to make available to participants and employers through the One-Stop System the career and training services that are applicable to their programs. (These services and sources of funding for these services are described in Attachment I). The majority of the federal workforce development and training programs in North Dakota are administered through the One-Stop Career Center operator, either through designation by the Governor as the grant recipient or sub-recipient or through contracts. Many program services are delivered using a case management approach. Successful case management is a result of strong connections between staff and participant. Case management is defined as, "A client-centered approach in the delivery of services designed; 1.)prepare and coordinate comprehensive employment plans, such as service strategies, for participants to ensure access to necessary workforce investment activities and supportive services using, where feasible, computer-based technologies; and 2.)provide job and career counseling, including information on career pathways, during program participation and after job placement. Case managers will maintain a close, long-term relationship with participants. The balance of the mandatory One-Stop System partners have in place various arrangements with the One-Stop Career Center operator for serving clients which could include co- locating staff at the One-Stop Career Centers, having staff visit the One-Stop Career Center on an itinerant or appointment schedule or making formal and informal referrals to clients of services available at the One-Stop Career Center. Each of these arrangements is intended to maximize the resources and services being made available to mutual clients. The applicable career services may

be made available by the provision of appropriate technology at the comprehensive One-Stop Career Center, by co- locating personnel at the AJC Workforce Centers, cross training of front-line staff within partner agencies, and the recent co-location of DVR in the Devils Lake and Grand Forks AJC Workforce Centers. Although co-location is desired wherever economically and practically feasible, through the use of technology and electronic linkages, an efficient customer service and referral system has been developed that supports customer choice and access to the programs and services of the One-Stop System partners. All partners will provide referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the One-Stop System. The primary principle of the referral process is to provide integrated and seamless delivery of services to workers, job seekers, and employers. In order to facilitate such a system, Partners agree to:

- Familiarize themselves with the basic eligibility and participation requirements, as well as with the available services and benefits offered, for each of the Partners' programs represented by the one-stop delivery system,
- Develop materials summarizing their program requirements and making them available for Partners and customers,
- Share assessment results of an appropriate interview, evaluation or vocational assessment,
- Provide substantive referrals to customers who are eligible for supplemental and complementary services and benefits under partner programs,
- Regularly evaluate ways to improve the referral process, including the use of customer satisfaction surveys,
- Commit to robust and ongoing communication required for an effective referral process, and
- Commit to actively follow up on the results of referrals and assuring that Partner resources are being leveraged at an optimal level.

The coordination of services established between partners in the One- Stop System varies depending upon the customer service needs being addressed. Each Partner commits to cross- training of staff, as appropriate, and to providing other professional learning opportunities that promote continuous quality improvement. Partners will further

promote system integration to the maximum extent feasible through: • Effective communication, information sharing, and collaboration with the one-stop operator, • Joint planning, policy development, and system design processes, • Commitment to the joint mission, vision, goals, strategies, and performance measures, • Leveraging of resources, including other public agency and non-profit organization services, • Participation in a continuous improvement process designed to boost outcomes and increase customer satisfaction, and • Participation in regularly scheduled Partner meetings to exchange information in support of the above and encourage program and staff integration. Data Sharing Partners agree that the use of high-quality, integrated data is essential to inform decisions made by policymakers, employers, and job seekers.

Additionally, it is vital to develop and maintain an integrated case management system, as appropriate, that informs customer service throughout customers' interaction with the integrated system and allows information collected from customers at intake to be captured once. Partners further agree that the collection, use, and disclosure of customers' personally identifiable information (PII) is subject to various requirements set forth in Federal and State privacy laws. All data, including customer PII, collected, used, and disclosed by Partners will be subject to the following: • Customer PII will be properly secured in accordance with the Local WDB's policies and procedures regarding the safeguarding of PII. • The collection, use, and disclosure of customer education records, and the PII contained therein, as defined under FERPA, shall comply with FERPA and applicable State privacy laws. • All confidential data contained in UI wage records must be protected in accordance with the requirements set forth in 20 CFR part 603. • All personal information contained in VR records must be protected in accordance with the requirements set forth in 34 CFR 361.38. Customer data may be shared with other programs, for those programs' purposes, within the workforce system only after the informed written consent of the individual has been obtained, where required. Customer data will be kept confidential, consistent with Federal and State privacy laws and regulations. All data exchange activity will be conducted in machine readable format, such as HTML or PDF, for example, and in compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794 (d)). All one-stop center and Partner staff will be trained in the protection, use, and disclosure requirements governing PII and any other confidential data for all applicable programs, including FERPA-protected education records, confidential information in UI records, and personal information in VR records Confidentiality All Parties expressly agree to abide by all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and c regulations regarding confidential information, including PII from educational records, such as but not limited to 20 CFR Part 603, 45 CFR Section 205.50, 20 USC 1232g and 34 CFR part

99, and 34 CFR 361.38, as well as any applicable State and local laws and regulations. In addition, in carrying out their respective responsibilities, each Party shall respect and abide by the confidentiality policies and legal requirements of all of the other Parties. Each Party will ensure that the collection and use of any information, systems, or records that contain PII and other personal or confidential information will be limited to purposes that support the programs and activities described in this MOU and will comply with applicable law. Each Party will ensure that access to software systems and files under its control that contain PII or other personal or confidential information will be limited to authorized staff members who are assigned responsibilities in support of the services and activities described herein and will comply with applicable law. Each Party expressly agrees to take measures to ensure that no PII or other personal or confidential information is accessible by unauthorized individuals. To the extent that confidential, private, or otherwise protected information needs to be shared amongst the Parties for the Parties' performance of their obligations under this MOU, and to the extent that such sharing is permitted by applicable law, the appropriate data sharing

agreements will be created and required confidentiality and ethical certifications will be signed by authorized individuals. With respect to confidential unemployment insurance information, any such data sharing must comply with all of the requirements in 20 CFR Part 603, including but not limited to requirements for an agreement consistent with 20 CFR 603.10, payments of costs, and permissible disclosures.

With respect to the use and disclosure of FERPA-protected customer education records and the PII contained therein, any such data sharing agreement must comply with all requirements set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99. With respect to the use and disclosure of personal information contained in VR records, any such data sharing agreement must comply with all of the requirements set forth in 34 CFR 361.38.

Accessibility to the services provided by Job Service ND and all Partner agencies is essential to meeting the requirements and goals of North Dakota. Job seekers and businesses must be able to access all information relevant to them via visits to physical locations as well as in virtual spaces, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, national origin, disability, veteran's status, or on the basis of any other classification protected under state or federal law. • Physical accessibility - One-stop centers will maintain a culture of inclusiveness and the physical characteristics of the facility, both indoor and outdoor, will meet the latest standards of accessible design. Services will be available in a convenient, high traffic, and accessible location, taking into account reasonable distance from public transportation and adequate parking (including parking clearly marked for individuals with disabilities). Indoor space will be designed in an "equal and meaningful" manner providing access for individuals with disabilities. • Virtual accessibility — Job Service ND will ensure that job seekers and employers have access to the same information online as they do in a physical facility. Information must be clearly marked and compliant with Section 508 of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services code. Partners will comply with the Plain Writing Act of 2010; the law that requires that federal agencies use "clear Government communication that the public can understand and use" and all information kept virtually will be updated regularly to ensure dissemination of correct information. • Communication accessibility - Communications access, for purposes of this MOU, means that individuals with sensory disabilities can communicate (and be communicated with) on an equal footing with those who do not have such disabilities. All Partners agree that they will provide accommodations for individuals who have communication challenges, including but not limited to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, individuals with vision impairments, and individuals with speech-language impairments. • Programmatic accessibility - All Partners agree that they will not discriminate in their employment practices or services on the basis of gender, gender identity and/or expression, age, race, religion, national origin, disability, veteran's status, or on the basis of any other classification protected under state or federal law.

Sharing and allocation of infrastructure costs among one-stop partners is incorporated within the One-Stop MOU. Infrastructure costs are defined as non-personnel costs that are necessary for the general operation of the Workforce Center. All parties recognize that infrastructure costs are applicable to all required parties, whether they are physically located in a JSND Workforce Center or not. Each partner's contributions to these costs may vary, as these contributions are based on the proportionate use and relative benefit received, consistent with the partner programs' authorizing laws and regulation under the Uniform Guidance.

Partner programs physically located in a One-Stop Center will have square footage usage determined in the lease which factors in the infrastructure cash contributions. Partner program not physically located in a One-Stop Center will have benefits determined by co-enrollments and available tallied customer orientation.

North Dakota Agency	Program Role	Resources
Job Service North Dakota	WIOA Title I Adult	Individualized, training, support, and follow-up services, employer services
	WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker	WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker
	WIOA Title I Youth	Youth services and employer services
	WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services	Basic career services, coordinated referrals to partner programs and employer services
	Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	Job search allowance, relocation assistance, transportation, and subsistence assistance while in training, training services, readjustment allowance and reemployment assistance
	Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JMSG)	Career readiness services for veterans and employer services
Motivation, Education & Training	National Farmworker Jobs Programs (NFJP)	Career and training services
Quentin Burdick Job Corps Center	Job Corps	Offers secondary education, post-secondary workforce training programs, and transition services to improve employment outcomes and self-sufficiency
Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara (MHA Nation), Standing Rock Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa	Native American Programs	Employment and training activities to make individuals more competitive, and promote social and economic development
Department of Public Instruction	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Literacy (AEL)	Basic skill assessments, literacy and numeracy, high school equivalency preparation, family literacy, integrated education and training, English Language acquisition, integrated English literacy and civics
Department of Human Services (DHS)	WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)	Career planning, vocational counseling, situational assessments, work-based and training services, assistive technology, transitional services, benefits specialists, disability specific, and employment services
	SCSEP	Part-time work experiences and training opportunities to enhance self-sufficiency
	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Provides temporary financial assistance and employment and training services to improve economic self-sufficiency
	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	Financial assistance for food to help individuals meet basic dietary needs while they regain financial independence
Career & Technical Education (CTE)	Career and Technical Education Program	Educational and training programs that provide opportunities to help students prepare for work
National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA)	SCSEP	Part-time work experiences and training opportunities to enhance self-sufficiency

5. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.

The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Career and Training Services are provided by Job Service North Dakota through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Governor, the Workforce Development Council and Job Service North Dakota.

Job Service is the provider of WIOA Title I Youth activities. Job Service provides all fourteen WIOA Youth elements and provides these activities statewide through the nine Job Service AJC Workforce Centers. Job Service has entered into a MOU with the North Dakota Workforce Development Council to provide these services.

<https://www.jobsnd.com/sites/www/files/documents/jsnd-documents/wdcmouonestopdeliverysystem.pdf>

6. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.

Classroom training services are provided through individual training accounts while On- the-Job (OJT) training is provided through a contract between the One Stop WIOA program provider and the employer. Career pathway information is provided by case managers during career exploration activities. Customer choice is supported by the provision of labor market information and through the occupations included on the North Dakota In-Demand Occupations list and Eligible Training Provider list (ETPL). Both are available on the Job Service website jobsnd.com. Consumer choice is enhanced through ETPL by comparison of program length and costs, listed credentials earned upon successful completion of programs, employment rates and median wages. On-the-job training occupations are not required to be on the In-Demand Occupation list or the ETPL. These training approaches may be coordinated through a Registered Apprenticeship arrangement or when the occupations of the OJT and Classroom training overlap. Sponsors for registered apprenticeship programs may take advantage of OJT and reimbursement for Related Training Instruction reimbursement.

7. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.

We will be conducting a (2024-2025 through 2027-2028) competitive grant process will begin mid-late December 2023 and is for a period of four program years. There will be a cut off for questions towards the beginning of February 2024 and the proposals will be due to the State by beginning of March. Learning from the first competition that North Dakota conducted, edits were made to the process. The three separate competitions that were run with three separated RFP documents, are condensed into one RFP document. Demonstrated effectiveness was not used as eligibility requirement and was mixed with past effectiveness, this has been corrected and clearly stated in the new process. The RFP also specifically lists the approved activities that go along with Section 225 funding.

Similar to the previous competition, the new competition will be coordinated via a DPI fiscal officer and applications will be first screened for eligibility and then transferred to a review team consisting of members of the Governors Workforce Development Council. This committee will read and score the applications and share recommendations and review feedback with the State. Announcement of selected applicants will be beginning of April 2024 and funds ready for program year 2024 by July 1.

Much of the process of the competition will mirror the first competition minus the changes listed above and also the removal of the bidder's conference.

8. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

The Memorandum of Understanding for the One-Stop Delivery System for the State of North Dakota for the Period of July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2023 is the cooperative agreement which defines how all local service providers will carry out the requirements of and access to the entire set of services available in the one-stop delivery system.

<https://www.jobsnd.com/sites/www/files/documents/jsnd-documents/wdcmouonestopdeliversystem.pdf>

E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;
2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;
3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;
4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:
 - A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;
 - B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;
 - C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;
 - D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND
 - E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.
5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND
6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESSES USED TO:
 - A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;
 - B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;
 - C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;
 - D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.

E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE'S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT.

7. THE SECRETARY MAY REQUIRE THAT STATES PROVIDE THE MOST RECENT DATA AVAILABLE ABOUT THE OUTCOMES OF THE EXISTING WAIVER IN CASES WHERE THE STATE SEEKS RENEWAL OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WAIVER.

North Dakota is not requesting any waivers at this time.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	Yes
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	Yes
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	Yes
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	

ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	78.5%	78.5%	78.5%	78.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	73.0%	75.5%	73.0%	75.5%
Median Earnings (Second	\$6,300	\$7,168	\$6,300	\$7,168

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Quarter After Exit)				
Credential Attainment Rate	66.0%	66.0%	66.0%	66.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	64.1%	62.1%	64.1%	62.1%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

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“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a

reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
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Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	80.0%	81.0%	80.0%	81.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	84.2%	83.1%	84.2%	83.1%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$10,000	\$11,415	\$10,000	\$11,415
Credential Attainment Rate	59.0%	74.1%	59.0%	74.1%
Measurable Skill Gains	77.6%	77.5%	77.6%	77.5%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

1

“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);

- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	75.6%	78.4%	75.6%	73.8%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	68.0%	73.8%	68.0%	73.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$4,200	\$4,683	\$4,200	\$4,683
Credential Attainment Rate	49.0%	55.0%	49.0%	55.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	59.2%	59.2%	59.2%	59.2%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

¹

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

All Program-Specific Requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF.

The state will continue to utilize state merit staff employees.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

Professional development is conducted in a variety of ways. The Job Service Labor Market Information Center presents an LMI workshop to Job Service AJC staff on an annual basis. This includes a review of LMI publications and resources available online. Biennial training is provided to Business Services and WIOA program specific staff. This type of training is held in an in-person format covering such topics as Registered Apprenticeship, hosting job fairs, business consultation, VOS updates, etc. Additionally biennial training is provided to WIOA and

WP staff covering such topics as case management, resume building, interview skills, services provided to WIOA participants, support services, etc.

Job Service AJC staff receive annual training from UI staff on the UI Internet Claims Entry System (UI ICE) each fall of the year prior to the UI claims peak period. Job Service AJC staff receive information on pertinent workforce topics brought forward through Job Service and/or community partners such as Community Colleges, Society of Human Resource Management, Economic Development, Department of Commerce and Chamber of Commerce organizations, and industry specific employer boards.

Career and Technical Education invites employment service staff to a variety of workshops scheduled each year. Workshops include Improved Career Decision Making, Career Planning, RUReadyND Training, and other career educational topics. Labor Exchange system training is held to ensure staff working with job seekers and employers are always informed of any changes to the online services.

The annual Society for Human Resource Management Workforce Summit provides the opportunity to hear national speakers and network with business representatives and other workforce professionals. Additionally, the annual Governor's Main Street Summit provides staff a chance to learn about workforce development, rural area development, local economies, updates from the ND Department of Commerce, and hearing from national experts on various workforce subjects.

Finally, all Job Service staff are highly encouraged to take Leadership Everywhere for Everyone Foundation series courses and the Leadership Everywhere for Managers courses that are provided free of charge from the state's Human Resource Management Section. These classes are part of Governor Burgum's five cultural aspirations of "Work as One, Citizen Focused, Growth Mindset, Make a Difference, and Leadership Everywhere."

3. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION

Job Service administers the UI, Wagner- Peyser and WIOA programs. During heavy peak seasonal increases in UI claims filing, UI and AJC managers and staff increase their cooperation to expedite the claims taking process. Job Service AJC staff receive annual training on UI ICE and other procedures. This ensures staff efficiently assist claimants with their UI claim filing. Job Service AJC staff connect with UI staff to resolve certain adjudication issues as identified in the established roles and responsibilities. In January of 2017, North Dakota began receiving Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) funds. The grant is providing services to all UI claimants who are not job attached and reside in the state. North Dakota had not applied for an RESEA grant for several years. UI staff provided training to new RESEA staff for understanding and awareness of UI issues of ineligibility and how to convey that information. In January of 2019, Job Service decided to not reapply for the RESEA grant due to a couple of reasons. North Dakota did not see a reduction in the average weekly duration and we felt the RESEA program put additional stress on rural unemployment claimants, who depending on their physical locations, had to drive 80-90 miles one-way to meet the mandatory in-person meeting obligation of the program.

In January of 2019, Job Service replaced RESEA with our state driven Reemployment Services Program (RESEP) that meets the needs of our claimants. All UI claimants who are not job attached and reside in the county where one of the nine AJCs are located, are required to

participate in the RESEP program. However, the program is not as structured as RESEA, yet meets the individual needs of the claimant. One example of meeting their needs is not requiring an in-person meeting for the claimant if the meeting can be done over the phone, computer (SKYPE, video, etc.). Another difference in the program is there is no requirement of a second meeting. If the RESEP case manager and the claimant feel they are doing well in their job-search, have met all the requirements of the UI program, have a solid resume, comfortable in their interview skills, etc., the claimant is released from the RESEP program. Items discussed with the RESEP claimant are an orientation to Job Service, employment assessment, unemployment eligibility review, enrollment in Wagner Peyser, job search planning, Labor Market Information, and WIOA. This program is being funded through the Wagner Peyser grant. North Dakota does recognize RESEA may become mandatory in future years.

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE

North Dakota Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff are knowledgeable in assisting individuals with UI claims filing. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff have a long history of aiding UI claimants. North Dakota has seasonal increase in UI activity. Job Service AJC Workforce Centers provide assistance following roles and responsibilities guidance provided by State UI management. In North Dakota, all UI claims are filed online. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff are well prepared to provide meaningful UI claims filing assistance and manage large influxes of individuals during peak claims taking periods.

Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff recommend on-site development tools to increase interview, soft or computer skills, short term industry training or degree programs through WIOA services and other core and community partner referrals. Career services including skill assessments, career guidance utilizing labor market information, job search assistance and access to WIOA assistance are available to all job seekers. Skill assessment completed by Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff enables clear direction to job openings or referrals to training programs. Knowing the skills job seekers have helps match them to skills desired in employer's job openings. When skill gaps are identified, job seeker training needs can be quickly addressed.

Staff aid claimants in navigating the UI ICE system in the Job Service AJC Workforce Center resource rooms on the available computers. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff assist in setting up a State of North Dakota Login and ID, this includes creating an email address if needed. UI ICE Reference Guides and additional UI information are made available for claimants in resource rooms. UI claimants have a series of "How To" instructional videos to assist with the UI claims filing process, and weekly certification, and ID.Me identification procedures. The videos are posted on the Job Service webpage jobsnd.com. The topics include: • Creating a State of ND Login • ID.Me Verification Process • UI ICE Overview: How to File for Unemployment Insurance in North Dakota • Filing a Claim Online Using the UI ICE Website • I Filed My Claim, Now What Do I Do? • Filing A Weekly Certification Using the UI ICE Website • Helpful Tips for Job Attached Claimants.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UI CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

North Dakota UI claimants are required to have a resume on file with jobsnd.com. When a UI claimant files a claim online, information is interfaced to jobsnd.com and creates a partial registration.

Jobsnd.com uses the partial registration data to automatically perform a job search and informs the UI claimant of suitable job openings available for application.

Employment Service staff assist with reemployment opportunities. In January of 2017, North Dakota began receiving Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) funds.

However, and as described in the previous paragraph, Job Service North Dakota replaced RESEA in January 2019 with our state driven Reemployment Services Program (RSP) that truly meets the needs of our claimants. All UI claimants who are not job attached and reside in the county where one of the nine AJCs Workforce Centers are located, are required to participate in the RSP program. However, the program is not as structured as RESEA but meets the individual needs of the claimant. In the other 44 counties of the state where there is no AJC Workforce Center located, the non-job attached claimants are required to do three job searches each week and are required to have a resume filed in our system for area employers to use to meet their hiring needs. Additionally, we have tools on our website to assist claimants not living near an AJC Workforce Center that will assist them in finding meaningful employment. These tools are short instructional videos on how to build a resume, conduct an interview, and to file an unemployment claim. The AJC Workforce Center employees stand ready to assist any claimant with their employment needs. We use electronic means such as TEAMS to conduct practice interviews or assist in any other means possible.

Job seekers, including UI claimants, visiting a Job Service AJC Workforce Centers receive skill assessment, career counseling, and labor market information. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff recommend on-site development tools to increase interview, soft or computer skills, short term industry training or degree programs through WIOA services and other core and community partner referrals. Career services including skill assessments, career guidance utilizing labor market information, job search assistance and access to WIOA assistance are available to all job seekers. Skill assessment completed by Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff enables clear direction to job openings or referrals to training programs. Knowing the skills job seekers have helps match them to skills desired in employer's job openings. When skill gaps are identified, job seeker training needs can be quickly addressed. Job Service has invested in jobsnd.com to allow for self-service that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from anywhere Internet access is available. Jobsnd.com links to the online labor exchange system for individual job search activity and employers to post job listings. Job seekers can use jobsnd.com to create quality resumes and conduct automated job searches. Additionally, job seekers can access education and training programs available and view labor market information such as in demand occupations, current wages and training required. Job seekers can also explore career options, find direction to veteran services, and access community resources.

Workforce Centers provide outreach, one or two times each month, in outlying rural areas, depending on need. Each of the nine workforce centers schedule staff to be available at local libraries, county seats, and economic development corporations in the rural areas of the workforce center regions. Staff are available to assist jobseekers and UI claimants who may not be able to easily travel to the workforce center, have limited internet connectivity, or may have trouble navigating the digital world.

ND leads the nation in rural connectivity. It is also one of six states currently involved with the National Governors Association grant. Grant partners within ND are: Adult Education,

Governor's office, Microsoft, Dept of Commerce, and Job Service North Dakota. The primary objectives of the project is to: 1) expand access to essential support services, 2) rapidly connect jobseekers to work, 3) advance digital access and skill development, and 4) enhance job quality for all. Everyone talks about digital skills but not everyone is getting the basic skills of how to use a computer, how to drag and drop. This project will help advance digital skill development for equitable economic participation, in alignment with state workforce and economic development goals. Participation in this grant is from November 2021 through July 2022.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

UI claimants, visiting a Job Service AJC Workforce Center receive skill assessment, career counseling, and labor market information. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff recommend on-site development tools to increase interview, soft or computer skills, short term industry training or degree programs through WIOA services and other core and community partner referrals. Job Service administers the UI, Wagner- Peyser and WIOA programs. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff provide a variety of labor exchange services to UI claimants. The most common service is to assist a UI claimant with the requirement to register on the Job Service ND Virtual One-Stop (VOS). VOS is the electronic labor exchange system. Staff assist UI claimants with the online registration and provide assistance creating a resume. VOS has a virtual recruiter feature that will notify UI claimants of new job openings that meet their search criteria.

Additional services to UI claimants include techniques for improving interviewing skills, assistance with online/electronic applications, use of social media to broaden a UI claimant's job search. UI claimants receive referrals to WIOA Dislocated Worker for upgrade training for in-demand occupations. Out of area job search and relocation support services are provided as needed. Referrals are also provided to core programs for partner services such as increased academic skill and GED or vocational rehabilitation services that support their job search activities. Employers frequently utilize the Job Service AJC Workforce Centers for onsite hiring events and job fairs. UI claimants are provided information on upcoming hiring events and job fairs and are instructed on where to find future events on the Job Service ND website. Resources are available to UI claimants on various job seeking topics such as the importance of soft skills, quantifying and measuring occupational skills and accomplishments. For UI claimants with a criminal record, guidance is provided on how to overcome this barrier to employment on applications and during interviews. Federal bonds are available for business hiring UI claimants with a criminal record or other high-risk background.

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

North Dakota's UI claimants who are not classified as "not returning to their employer" are required to register and have a resume on file with jobsnd.com. When a UI claimant files a claim online, information is interfaced to jobsnd.com and creates a partial registration. Jobsnd.com uses the partial registration data to automatically perform a job search and informs the UI claimant of suitable job openings available for application. Employment Service staff assist with reemployment opportunities.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI

ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND

North Dakota UI claimants complete their reemployment activities online on UI ICE. One feature of the UI ICE system is a provided list of five job openings that matches the UI claimants' last work occupation through an interface with the state job bank. A job list is provided each time a UI claimant logs into the UI ICE system to complete their reemployment activities. The reemployment activities include information on effective job search strategies, creating cover letters and resumes, an interviewing skills video and information on coping with job loss. Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff provide career services as outlined in WIOA to UI claimants and compliment the reemployment activities provided online.

To answer the question on eligibility assessment and assuming you are asking about UI, the RSP case manager discusses the overall responsibilities with the UI claimant. If there seems to be an issue with the claim, the claimant is referred to the Unemployment Insurance claim center and/or supervisors. All the AJC Workforce Center managers can and do discuss issues with the UI Call Center supervisors if there is some type of adjudication issue that may be needed on an individual claim.

4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

UI claimants receive skill assessments, career guidance utilizing labor market information, job search assistance and access to WIOA assistance. Skill assessment completed by Job Service AJC Workforce Center staff enables clear direction to job openings or referrals to training programs. Knowing the skills job seekers have helps match them to skills desired in employer's job openings. When skill gaps are identified, job seeker training needs can be quickly addressed. WIOA case managers will provide information to training and education programs via the ETPL which includes Registered Apprenticeship sponsors.

E. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED. AN ASSESSMENT NEED DESCRIBES THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

Based on the most current information available from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the numbers tell the story: North Dakota's 30,000 farmers and ranchers are among the very best in the world. They lead our nation in the production of many important commodities, including spring wheat, Durum wheat, all dry edible beans, pinto beans, navy beans, canola, flaxseed, all dry edible peas, and honey. Our state ranks second in black beans, great northern beans, lentils, oil sunflowers, non-oil sunflowers, all sunflowers, and all wheat; and third in barley, oats, and sugar beets. The demand for renewable energy has raised our state's ranking in soybean and corn production to ninth and eleventh, respectively. North Dakota had \$10.9 billion in combined crop and livestock production sales in 2019. Eighty percent (\$6.56 billion) of North Dakota's total agricultural sales are attributed to crop

production. North Dakota listed \$10.9 billion in total agricultural sales. According to the United States Department Agriculture, North Dakota's 2018 crop acreage numbers ranked in the top ten states for many grain crops, two in black beans, lentils, sunflower, non-oil, and three in sugar beets, barley and oats. In 2017, North Dakota planted 6.68 million acres of wheat, 436,000 acres of sunflowers, 202,000 acres of sugar beets, 75,000 acres of potatoes, and produced 33,670,000 pounds of honey. Based on USDA data, North Dakota consistently ranks 15 in annual cattle and calf livestock inventory. Other than sugar beets and potatoes, North Dakota does not rank in processed vegetable, fruit, nut, or melon production among the 50 states and Puerto Rico. Crop and cattle production is spread evenly across North Dakota. However, sugar beets and potatoes are primarily grown in North Dakota's far eastern Red River Valley. Based on past and projected agricultural activity in North Dakota, we do not anticipate the above acreage or cattle inventories to change significantly in the next 4 years. Based on agricultural employer activity with Job Service ND for calendar year 2018, agricultural employers placed an average of 773 seasonal job orders per year requesting an average of 2,521 seasonal agricultural workers per year (1,748 H2A openings and 773 non-H2A openings on average per year). The top five labor-intensive crops in North Dakota include wheat, corn, soybeans, barley and sunflowers. In order of need, the majority of job orders recruit for farm equipment operators, beekeepers, animal ranch workers, general farm workers and truck drivers. As a major agriculture state, North Dakota places great emphasis on the provision or employment services for agricultural employers and migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFWs).

2. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE

According to the 2020 state agriculture overview by the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) showed North Dakota's 26,000 farm and ranch operations occupy 39.3 million acres of land in North Dakota, which is 89 percent of the total land in the state.

North Dakota is a very diverse state in the number of commodities produced. In 2017, North Dakota led the nation in the production of all dry edible beans, navy beans, pinto beans, canola, flaxseed, honey, dry edible peas, Durum wheat, and spring wheat. North Dakota was the No.2 producer of lentils, black beans, great northern beans, all wheat, and sunflowers. North Dakota was in the top five for the production of several other crops as well.

North Dakota sold almost \$8.2 billion worth of agricultural products in 2017 (the most recent Agricultural Census). Of these sales, \$6.7 billion – or just over 81 percent of the total agricultural sales – came from crops. Soybeans had the largest amount of sales at \$2.1 billion, which accounted for one-fourth of all agricultural sales. North Dakota is the main producer of flaxseed and canola in the United States; the 2017 census showed that 87 percent of the country's flaxseed was grown in the state and 81 percent of the canola.

In the Red River Valley, sugar beets and potatoes are widely grown. In 2017, North Dakota was the third largest producer of sugar beets in the country and the fourth largest producer of potatoes. Also, producers in the state are proud of the fact that North Dakota is the largest

honey producing state in the nation. Approximately, 33.7 million pounds of honey was collected in North Dakota in 2017, or 23 percent of the total collected in the United States.

According to the North Dakota Department of Agriculture, there are about 1.83 million beef cattle and calves in North Dakota. That's more than two cattle for every person in the state. Beef cattle are raised in every North Dakota county. Cattle production has traditionally ranked second only to wheat farming as the most important sector in North Dakota's agriculture economy. Based on USDA data, North Dakota consistently ranks 15 in annual cattle and calf livestock inventory. Based on past and projected agricultural activity in North Dakota, we do not anticipate the above acreage or cattle inventories to change significantly in this plan modification period.

Based on agricultural employer activity with Job Service North Dakota for calendar year 2020, agricultural employers placed 774 seasonal job orders requesting 2509 seasonal agricultural workers (2275 H2A openings and 232 non-H2A). The top five labor-intensive crops in North Dakota include wheat, corn, soybeans, barley and sunflowers. In order of need, the majority of job orders recruit for farm equipment operators, beekeepers, animal ranch workers, general farm workers and truck drivers.

Statewide labor shortages in most industries, including agriculture, have caused agriculture employers to use the H2A program to meet labor needs. This is reflected in the high proportion of H2A openings in 2020. Job Service North Dakota remains dedicated to working with agricultural employers to locate qualified farm laborers and equipment operators to assist with the spring to fall farming seasons.

Because of the North Dakota short growing season, the number of seasonal farmworkers in November through February is relatively small. In March, the numbers increase as farmers prepare to begin planting in April. In April through October, numbers reach their highest levels as crops are planted, sprayed, cultivated, harvested and transported to storage or market. This cycle repeats every year, giving a wide variance in numbers needed by North Dakota farmers at any given point in time.

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWs IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

The number of migrant farm workers traveling to and within North Dakota continues to decrease. This can be attributed to farmers' use of technology and the use of modern farming practices. The transient nature of seasonal farm workers and established working relationships with agricultural employers in North Dakota makes it difficult to develop accurate demographic data and consistent estimates of MSFW's in the state.

H2A Foreign Labor Certification Agents reported the majority of the H2A workers are from the following countries: South Africa, Ukraine, Mexico, Honduras, Philippines, Bulgaria, Australia, Moldova, France, Ireland, England, Brazil, Peru, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Germany. The majority of H2A workers speak English, and those who do not speak English, speak Spanish.

Job Service North Dakota had 89 new MSFW and 260 Seasonal Farmworker registrations in 2020. Many of the positions are given to returning workers not registered with Job Service North Dakota or to foreign workers under the H2A program. WIOA Section 167 grantee (Motivation, Education and Training Inc. (MET) reports Hispanic groups and families from southern states and North Dakota Hispanic families, who have made North Dakota their permanent home, are the majority of non-H2A MSFWs.

4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

MSFW Outreach Workers primarily schedule meetings with migrants or receive walk-in customers in the Job Service North Dakota AJC Workforce Centers. The Grand Forks AJC Workforce Center serves the majority of North Dakota's MSFW population. Outreach efforts will be increased, especially in the Red River Valley. Outreach has been especially successful at MET (now co-located in several AJC Workforce Centers), schools, day care providers, and public health clinics. These outreach efforts will continue and be expanded to other communities. The State of North Dakota will continue to make efforts to collaborate with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services' Agricultural Worker Project (AWP) to provide better services to MSFW's. Partner agencies will be contacted to determine areas to conduct outreach and will continue to collaborate as available during community events and/or gatherings at churches, community centers, migrant health locations or migrant education locations. Job Service North Dakota has recently developed procedures and provided training on MSFW outreach to outreach workers its nine AJC Workforce Centers.

A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES

MSFW Outreach Staff will focus outreach efforts to known establishments where MSFW's frequent. Outreach Staff will make efforts to have a presence at events where there is a chance even a small number of MSFW's will attend. Examples include, but are not limited to, childcare orientations, parent/teacher conferences, County Social Services offices/events, in-field trainings, or community gatherings. New and different virtual efforts for outreach are being explored due to the pandemic.

B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH STAFF. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT-RELATED LAW COMPLAINT SYSTEM ("COMPLAINT SYSTEM" DESCRIBED AT 20 CFR 658 SUBPART E), INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWs IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

To support the Job Service North Dakota AJC Workforce Centers MSFW Outreach Workers, the State Monitor Advocate provides the MSFW Outreach Workers with a variety of resources and assistance throughout the year: 1.) Monthly, Wagner-Peyser registration reports are distributed to AJC Workforce Centers for review to determine if newly registered MSFW's eligible for additional assistance; 2.) The State Monitor Advocate visits each Job Service North Dakota AJC

Workforce Center at least annually to meet with the MSFW Outreach Workers, discuss local trends, and to determine if MSFW Outreach Staff have necessary tools and resources; 3.) AJC Workforce Center staff (including MSFW Staff) are provided training on the Complaint System; 4.) To meet equity indicators, the State Monitor Advocate reviews monthly and quarterly MSFW activity reports and based on these reports provides guidance as necessary to the Job Service North Dakota AJC Workforce Centers; 5.) The State Monitor Advocate attends State Monitor Advocate National Training conferences. After each conference, the State Monitor Advocate advises the state's MSFW Outreach Workers on any regulation changes or new requirements; 6.) Any new directives or MSFW guidance disseminated by the National Office are promptly forwarded to MSFW Outreach Workers. 7.) North Dakota has the MSFW complaint and the farmworkers rights poster posted at each AJC Workforce Center and translated into Spanish. A complaint system is implemented and was followed by training for the complaint system contacts within each AJC Workforce Center. The complaint system incorporates ETA forms and follows the law as described in 20 CFR 648 subpart E. The State Monitor Advocate partners with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services to provide training to refresh the knowledge of seasoned outreach workers and to fully inform new staff of farm worker legal rights.

C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES

MSFW Outreach Workers do not perform the MFSW program duties full-time. In addition to the MSFW Outreach Worker duties, the MSFW workers at Job Service North Dakota also provide Wagner-Peyser services and in some cases, WIOA case management services. Because MSFW Outreach Workers also perform Wagner-Peyser duties, the staff assigned as outreach workers are very knowledgeable in core programs and Unemployment Insurance.

D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

Because North Dakota MSFW Outreach Workers also perform Wagner-Peyser duties, staff assigned as outreach workers receive training and professional development in the provision of high-quality services to job seekers and employers through in-person and virtual Wagner-Peyser training sessions. In addition, the State Monitor Advocate advises the state's MSFW Outreach Workers on regulation changes and/or new requirements. The State Monitor advocate will disseminate training materials to the outreach workers, including training on sexual harassment and human trafficking.

E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEE AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS

Motivation, Education and Training Inc. (MET), operator of the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) in eastern North Dakota, and Job Service North Dakota maintain an on-going partnership to provide MSFW's additional opportunities for employment and training. MET maintains offices in the Red River Valley cities of Grafton, Fargo, and Wahpeton, North Dakota. MET employees are co-located in JSND Wahpeton and Fargo AJC Workforce Centers. This collaboration continues to grow and to provide services to MSFW's in the respective areas. Tying the various service agencies together promotes a "one-stop" concept. MSFW Outreach Workers from the Red River Valley offices attend networking meetings sponsored by farm worker advocacy groups. Agencies in attendance have included: 1.) Motivation, Education and Training Inc. (MET); 2.) The Agricultural Worker Project of Southern Minnesota Legal Services;

3.) County Social Service agencies; 4.) Migrant Health Services; 5.) Migrant and Seasonal Head Start agencies; 6.) Emergency food pantries; and 7.) Salvation Army organizations. At these networking meetings, participating members provide information about the services they offer to MSFW's and their families and the efforts they make in locating MSFW's in order to promote their services.

5. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

A. PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

I. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS

II. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES

North Dakota is not designated as a "Significant State" and does not have "Significant Bilingual" offices. However, all nine Job Service North Dakota AJC Workforce Centers have designated Business Services Representatives, MSFW Outreach Workers, and Complaint Service Representatives. The Grand Forks and Williston AJC Workforce Centers have a Spanish speaking staff member who assists with interpretation and all AJC Workforce Centers have access to telephone interpreting services. Job Service North Dakota AJC Workforce Centers, in coordination with other strategic partners, provide MSFWs and Limited English Proficient individuals with the full range of employment and training services including, but not limited to the following:

- Assistance with the Wagner-Peyser registration process in order to receive the full array of services;
- Resume assistance;
- Online job search assistance;
- Provision of information on services available in the Job Service North Dakota AJC Workforce Centers and contact information for partner agencies;
- Provision of basic information on labor rights, protections and responsibilities with respect to terms and conditions of employment;
- Assistance in reviewing job orders;
- Assessment and referral to agriculture and non-agricultural jobs, training, and support services;
- Provision of assessments, counseling, and other job development services;
- Assistance with submission of complaints to the State Monitor Advocate;
- Refer any apparent violations to Federal agencies;
- Referrals to local community service organizations;
- Assistance to Limited English Proficient individuals encountering language barriers;
- Assistance with career guidance and other job development contact strategies;
- Provide follow-up services as necessary and appropriate.

Special emphasis is placed on the identification of MSFW customers. Job Service North Dakota recognizes the importance of the agricultural industry to North Dakota and the large economic contribution made to the state's economy. Therefore, Job Service North Dakota ensures agricultural employers receive all the services provided to non-agricultural employers (see WIOA/WP Plan for services to employers). Job Service North Dakota provides agricultural employers the full range of employer services and some specialized services including, but not limited to the following:

- Assistance with the online employer registration process in order to access the full array of employer services provided by Job Service North Dakota;
- Assistance with the placement of job

orders; Access to online labor market information; • Access to online searches for qualified candidates registered with Job Service North Dakota; • Assistance with assessing labor needs; • Opportunities to participate in job/career fairs; • Recruitment activities to find and refer qualified MSFW's and other domestic candidates to fill job order positions; • Assistance with the H2A temporary labor certification program for agricultural employers experiencing a shortage of workers; • Provision of housing inspections; • Provision of information for compliance with labor laws and regulations; • Assistance with information on employment and training programs, tax incentives (WOTC), and bonding services.

In addition, Job Service North Dakota staff identifies employers who employ MSFWs and promote the recruitment and hiring of domestic workers when they are available. When U.S. workers are not available, agricultural employers may utilize the H2A Labor Certification Program administered by Job Service North Dakota. The H2A program is a resource for agricultural employers to use when an employer anticipates sufficiently qualified workers will not be found in the local labor market. Job Service North Dakota's priority for all agricultural job orders is the recruitment and hiring of qualified and available U.S. workers.

As North Dakota is a major agricultural state, Job Service North Dakota AJC Workforce Centers are dedicated to the provision, and continual improvement of services provided to MSFW's and employers.

B. MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS

Job Service North Dakota has nine AJC Workforce Centers across the state. Each has a Complaint System Representative and an MSFW Outreach Worker. The Complaint System Representatives assists MSFW's to file complaints (both ES and non-ES related), file apparent violations, coordinates with 167 grantees, other MSFW services providers, and forwards any apparent violations or complaints to the State Monitor Advocate. Marketing of the Employment Service Complaint System is the responsibility of the MSFW Outreach Workers by in-person and virtual meetings with MSFWs.

C. MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM FOR U.S. WORKERS (ARS) TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

The purpose of the ARS is to meet the labor needs of agricultural employers, provide job opportunities to farm workers and protect the domestic agricultural workforce. The ARS ensures proper disclosure of the terms and conditions of employment to seasonal workers who are recruited from outside the local commuting area. Job Service North Dakota, Wagner-Peyser staff, and MSFW Outreach Workers will continue efforts to strengthen its working relationships with MSFW's and employers so each better understands how the Labor Exchange System and outreach services can be of assistance. Efforts will continue to include promoting the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) to employers and the full range of Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange services delivered by Job Service North Dakota.

6. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A. COLLABORATION

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

Motivation, Education and Training Inc. (MET) operates the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) in eastern North Dakota. Partnership with MET has proven to be key to meeting MSFW needs and providing outreach. There is a current Memorandum of Understanding in place with MET and continuation of this partnership is vital and of high priority. Efforts will be made to strengthen relations with Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services' Agricultural Worker Project and other MSFW agencies.

B. REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

The following MSFW related organizations and agencies, were given the opportunity to provide information and comment on the WIOA Unified Plan modifications within the Agricultural Outreach Plan:

Motivation, Education, and Training, Inc. (MET) 45 West 6th St. Grafton, ND 58237 (WIOA Section 167 Grantee)

Community Health Service, Inc. 810 4th Ave. South. Suite 101 Moorhead, MN 56560

Agricultural Worker Project - Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, 1015 7th Avenue North
Moorhead, MN 56560

-Requested the following:

Request: Replace "Migrant Legal Services" with "The Agricultural Worker Project of Southern Minnesota Legal Services" (on pg. 5)

Request: Only list Moorhead location of SMRLS b/c we are the same organization, and that location is the most relevant to ND folks (p. 8)

C. DATA ASSESSMENT

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

A review of data between 2018 through 2022, demonstrates on average, equity ratios were met. It is challenging to meet these ratios quarter to quarter due to the low number of MSFW's accessing services through Job Service North Dakota AJC Workforce Centers. Received unemployment UI was listed at 2.7% vs 0% MSFW (actual numbers 6 vs 0), Referred to Employment was listed at 16.4% vs 0% MSFW (actual numbers 36 vs 0).

Efforts to improve these disparities include the SMA providing training on outreach services on how to find and offer services to MSFWs. The SMA shares lists monthly of MSFWs who have been within the state to workforce center outreach staff. Offices are reaching out to those individuals. A greater emphasis has been placed on offering services for MSFW who enter a workforce center and complete a WP application.

Job Service North Dakota and the State Monitor Advocate will continue to place special emphasis on the identification of MSFW customers. Outreach efforts will continue and may be expanded in the future to ensure MSFW employment and training needs are met. This will be done by continuous monitoring of MSFW activity and providing guidance and training to Job Service North Dakota Outreach Workers and other strategic partners.

D. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

Job Service North Dakota (JSND) provided equitable services to North Dakota's MSFW population. A Memorandum of Understanding is in place to solidify and maintain the partnership with Motivation, Education and Training Inc. (MET). Outreach efforts continue to be conducted throughout the State of North Dakota. North Dakota is a non-significant MSFW state and North Dakota's MSFW population primarily consists of H2A workers. New agriculture technology and farm practice changes continue to have a significant effect on the number of MSFW's in North Dakota. A continued decline is expected, but North Dakota will strive for continuous improvement in outreach efforts to MSFWs.

Farm equipment is getting bigger and more efficient, requiring fewer actual workers. An example is the combine. Not too long ago the combine was 30 feet wide, and now it is 60 feet wide. ND ag employers continue to experience challenges finding domestic workers and move instead toward accessing the H2A program. ND has seen an increase in the request and fulfillment of H2A workers over the last few years. The 2022 season requests saw an increase of over 200 H2A Job orders.

E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved this plan.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time (sec 121(e)(3));	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;	Yes
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	Yes
4. SWA officials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days; 6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and 7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing. 	Yes

WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers

indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	63.7%	65.0%	63.7%	65.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$6,800	\$6,834	\$6,800	\$6,834
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

¹

“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency has aligned its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) adopted the ESEA common core state standards for adult education in May 2015. Professional development to all adult education staff has been implemented over the past five years using the 2014 GED as a model.

Additionally, the ND RLA, Science, Math and Social Studies standards are used in professional development alignment with the GED and subsequent adult education services; the areas of Math and Science are currently under review. NDDPI, along with educators and education staff from across the state, wrote the North Dakota Content Standards in Math, Reading/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. This process started in 2017. Also, a part of ESSA, came the Choice Ready standards-with attention on ensuring the student is ready for multiple aspects of post high school choices. We currently do not use the same model as K-12 schools, but we strive to ensure our students are participating in activities that will also enable them to be Choice Ready (College and Career Ready). The College and Career Ready standards align with the State Adopted Standards. The assessments used in Adult Education in North Dakota are based/built off of the College and Career Readiness Standards(TABE/GED).

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—
 1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
 2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Special Rule. Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) serves as the administrative/fiscal agent for Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). As administrative/fiscal agent, NDDPI ensures local service providers (adult learning centers) deliver services to eligible individuals who: 1. are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance (16 years of age); 2. do not have the basic literacy skills necessary to function effectively in society; 3. have not reached a level of education equivalent to that required for a certificate of graduation to be issued; 4. are unable to speak, read, or write English to obtain or retain employment commensurate with their ability. All activities funded under WIOA are authorized, approved and overseen by NDDPI. Adult basic education and English Language service are the responsibility of Regional (8) adult learning centers located across the state, plus the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR). Eligible organizations applied, per AEFLA, to NDDPI for federal funds through a competition process in December-February (2016/2017) and will again in December-February (2019/2020) to provide services. The NDDPI conducted a competition using a Request for Proposal (RFP) grant process under WIOA upon receiving guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education. Criteria was aligned with the considerations required by federal legislation. The ND Governor's Workforce Development Council, which serves as the state WIB, sought statewide funding distribution via a regional service delivery model. Grants were awarded on a conditional three year basis, with performance and funding standards identified for discontinuation by the NDDPI if/as warranted. In each subsequent year, all local providers will apply on an annual basis for continuing funding under Title II through an application process. A new competition is currently being implemented, starting in PY 20-21, and will be for a four year cycle. RFPs for all programs competed agreed to adhere to direct and equitable provisions to award funds under WIOA sections 225: corrections; 231: eligible providers; and 243: Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education. State and local program directors collaborate and work to provide equity in our services for all students who fall under the Adult Ed. definitions. Our state has identified rural, tribal, and New American communities as populations to place emphasis. Local programs work with LIRS with New Americans and supports have been put in place to assist with transitions especially in the Fargo, Bismarck, and Grand Forks communities. Local providers utilize online methods and resources to assist in reaching students in the rural communities in instruction delivery. There are also online testing options as needed. Satellite locations are available in some regional locations as well around the state. This availability prevents distance creating a large barrier. North Dakota Department of Public Instruction has resources available on SB 2304 Resources - Teachings of Our Elders under Indian Education. These resources have been shared with all directors in Adult Education. This includes the North Dakota Native American Essential Understandings "Teachings of our Elders", which includes lesson plans and other resources. In addition, free professional development is available to local programs as needed.

The review of proposals included rating responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA. The NDDPI used the following Page 147 process to distribute funds to awarded applicants: no less than 82.5 percent of grant funds were awarded as grants and contracts under Section 231 to carry out Section 225. Programs for Corrections, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount were available to carry out Section 225. Local grants were selected and funds distributed based on the ability to meet the requirements of AEFLA Purposes outlined in WIOA: 1. assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skill necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency; 2. assist adults who are parents for family members become a full partner in the education development of their children; 3. promote transition from adult education to post-secondary education and training through career pathways; 4. assist immigrants and English language learners improve reading, writing, math, speaking and

comprehension of the English language and acquire understanding of American government, individual freedom, and responsibilities of citizenship. This included providing adult education and literacy services to the negotiated performance levels (not less than the State) which demonstrated academia, college and career effectiveness, and focused on research—based methods of instruction. This included alignment with local workforce and other partnerships which created a collaborative seamless process and system for eligible students. The determination of priority services followed federal guidance. All activities must demonstrate sufficient intensity and duration. Under WIOA (Section 203), adult education and literacy activities are defined as, “programs, activities, and services that include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education, and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, or integrated education and training.” A wide variety of program strategies are used to be responsive to the needs of adult learners, with a strong foundational emphasis on quality, intensity and duration of services which will result in real learning and related life changes, over placing emphasis on serving large numbers of students. The plan scope, or the ‘how’ for adult education involved implementation of a developed comprehensive professional development plan for all local adult education providers, of the WIOA required features to meet its stakeholders’ requirements, and best practice strategies for both instructional and social readiness for college and career. Partnerships with employers are emphasized during professional development and examples of existing relationships between adult learning centers and employers are shared and discussed. North Dakota has a couple very strong relationships that assist in getting employees a GED in order to advance inside the company/business. A (historical) formula method was used based upon region population, unemployment rates and other distinguished factors (past performance of core indicators, EFL gains).

Within the RFP process, North Dakota Adult Ed. has a section on how the state determines demonstrated effectiveness and the local board reviews process regarding Adult Education and Literacy Activities. The RFP clarifies what the eligible provider must demonstrate and lays out the application process. The state determines if criteria is met on effectiveness. Areas outlined include providing performance data on its record of improving skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the application. A rubric, criteria process is shared with those competing. A spread sheet is kept at the state level of the application review based on previous AEFLA Funded and Not Previously AEFLA funded sites. Below is the language in the RFP.

Two ways listed in the RFP on eligible provider may meet the requirements:

1.
 - a. Previously funded under AEFLA, as amended by WIOA must submit narrated performance data required under section 116 to demonstrate past effectiveness in Employment second quarter after exit, employment fourth quarter after exit, median earnings second quarter after exit, adult basic education MSG, ESL MSG, Percentage of NRS participants who attain a secondary school diploma or its equivalent, or number of students transitioning to postsecondary education and training. Measurement expectations are included.
 - b. If applicant has not been previously funded under AEFLA, they must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in service basic outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary

school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

Two years of past data are required to be submitted for demonstrated effectiveness, regardless of previously AEFLA funded or not previously AEFLA funded. It is highly recommended that the past data is from the previous two program years or calendar years.

Applicants are reviewed by the state agency through the RFP process. Applications for funds are submitted to the state and reviewed by the appropriate local board which consists of the Governor's Workforce Development Council members and WIOA core partners, all outlined in the RFP process. The state considers the results of the review by the local board. Rubric and explanations are included in the RFP. Competition is open and communicated to the public.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The NDDPI currently allocates federal and state funds to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCR) to provide adult education and literacy services at five state correctional facilities: State Penitentiary, Missouri River Correctional Center, James River Correctional Center, Thompkins Rehabilitation Correctional Center and the Youth Correctional Center. DOCR also provides a variety of resources (technology, curriculum, professional development, and leadership/guidance) to the Dakota Women's Correctional and Rehabilitation Center. Current DOCR educational staff teach a comprehensive program which includes special education services, secondary high school diploma or GED, career pathways, peer tutoring re—entry transition, career readiness, Microsoft digital literacy and other technology courses, Read Right (for low literacy students), college level/credit courses via IVAN or correspondence, and more offerings that are Center dependent. Funds were granted to support education programs for the correctional facilities in these areas: Adult education and literacy services; special education as

determined by the eligible agency, secondary school credit, integrated education and training, career pathways, concurrent enrollment, peer tutoring, and, transition to re—entry initiatives/post—release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. Each of the Centers that are granted funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution have assured to prioritize serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program. All incarcerated individuals in North Dakota are mandated by law to work towards their High School Diploma or GED if they do not have one. The education program inside the ND DOCR has been recognized as being a key piece of programming in reducing recidivism. Page 149 Available for both adults and juveniles is the research/evidence based Read Right program and also industry specific programs (i.e., welding, construction, FACS, Agriculture, Technology education, Commercial Arts, Vehicle Maintenance and Repair, computer drafting/3D printing). Inmate tutoring is offered as paid employment following completion of a training program. Classes in career readiness and reentry planning are available and required by inmates within a year of parole/release. Corrections, although under one state agency, participated in the competition requirements and were scored according to criteria listed above. Funding was not be provided for county or city jail inmates as the transition of services as most inmates do not stay beyond a 60 day incarceration time frame; previous data has shown minimal measurable skill gain in that environment and thus, the decision was made that it was not financially appropriate to serve at the county or city jails at this time. Our Regional centers may provide resources to the county and local jail if they see it could benefit students in their Region.

Within North Dakota’s Adult Ed. RFP process, there is a section on how the state determines demonstrated effectiveness and the local board reviews process regarding Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals. Below are sections within that RFP.

Corrections education (CE) is authorized under section 225 of WIOA and the funds in this section must be used for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs for:

1. Adult education and literacy activities;
2. Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
3. Secondary school credit;
4. Integrated education and training;
5. Career pathways;
6. Concurrent enrollment;
7. Peer tutoring; and
8. Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

The state may award up to 20 percent of the 82.5 percent of funds made available under WIOA for CE. The money is allocated to the eligible provider from the state via the same process, competitive grant or contract application as listed in CFR Subpart C, as listed above for Adult Education and IELCE. One CE eligible provider will be selected for the state of ND. Similar for

the total amount of funding for each adult education Region, State funding and funding allowed under Section 225 make up the total yearly award for CE.

In the event a priority needs to be determined in who to serve, priority must be given to programs serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

Funds for CR may be used to support educational programs for transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. Such use of funds may include educational counseling or casework to support incarcerated individuals to develop plans for post-release education programs and performing direct outreach to community-based program providers on behalf of re-entering students. Funds may not be used for costs for participation in post-release programs or services.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, including how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities.

Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs will engage students in purposeful use of the language. All of adult learning centers in North Dakota offer a civics course that eventually ends with the student needing to pass a civics test in order to be finished. Also, all of the adult learning centers offer EL instruction and assessment. However, the civics course and test provide are not as robust as we would expect from the IELCE program. North Dakota offers, through the competition process, the federal funding it is granted to one Regional center. Fargo Adult Learning Center was awarded the IELCE funds during the last competition. They were the only applicants and also serve over sixty percent of the states EL adult education population. Their IELCE program included EL instruction and a citizenship and civics course that was robust enough to meet the standards of an IELCE program. The program also included, concurrently and contextually, and IET program that included workforce preparation activities as well as workforce training. One of the pathways included a strong partnership with a healthcare provider and included CNA training. The healthcare provider was apart of the training and their standards were a part of the curriculum. This led to instant employment for those who completed. The plan moving forward is to find resources and partnerships to be able to offer similar programs, as mentioned above, in more Regional centers across the state. The next two sites have already been involved in some training and PD and are actively seeking out

a way to start an IELCE program. At the State level, we hope to be able to secure more funding legislatively with the evidence from the Fargo Adult Learning Center. This will Page 150 accelerate the growth of IELCE possibilities in the state. DPI will require all eligible providers (sections 225, 231, and/or 243) to apply via the standard application process to ensure all applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria. The agency ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants or contracts. It also ensures that the same grant or contract announcement, application, and proposal process is used for all eligible providers through the grant management system. DPI believes these approaches meet the AELFA requirements to ensure direct and equitable access. The agency uses the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA to fund eligible providers by incorporating each of the considerations into the narrative portion of the application. The agency attaches a point based scoring rubric weighting each of the considerations. Applicants must provide narrative detail to demonstrate how they will meet each consideration.

North Dakota will award Section 243 funds to an eligible provider through the competitive application process outlined above. Funds will be used to support the operational expenses of the local IELCE program, including teacher salaries and benefits, classroom supplies, textbooks, and other items necessary to carry out instruction in English language acquisition, workforce preparation activities, and civics education. While the State plans to issue guidance and technical assistance to eligible providers on how to co-enroll participants in occupational training, as appropriate, some section 243 funds may be used to offset occupational training costs as part of an integrated education and training program. It is a goal of the ND Adult Education program to strategically find partnerships and funding opportunities to advance the IELCE program.

The IELCE program that current exists and any that develop in the future will include a career pathway that involves a career listed on the in-demand job list that is created on an annual basis. By incorporating cultural aspects into the curriculum that already includes workplace preparation and workforce training, a program can readily prepare an individual for a career that leads to economic self-sufficiency. The very nature of the program accomplishes what this section is asking, as long as it is ran effectively. Strong partnerships with employers and trainers enable a well ran program. Ensuring the adult education portion of the program is aligned with ND content standards and that the IET portion is part of a career pathway will benefit our students in the area of gaining or advancing in employment.

The Regional adult learning center is directly responsible for attaining a knowledge of the local workforce landscape and developing the relationships necessary for a successful IELCE program. Also, the Workforce Development Council creates great resources that can be accessed and is a direct to the development system. Lastly, working and collaborating with state and local workforce partners will help to integrate the workforce development system and its functions into the IELCE programs.

Within North Dakota's Adult Ed. RFP process, there is a section on how the state determines demonstrated effectiveness and the local board reviews process regarding Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program. Within the RFP process, guidance is shared on the definitions and process of applying for the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education grant. With the amount of funding ND receives for IELCE activities, we award one Region the funding. Below is information in the RFP.

Eligible providers receiving funds through the IELCE RFP must provide services that:

1. Include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation; and
2. Are designed to:
 - a. Prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and
 - b. Integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA

The most critical element of continued leadership activities focused on increasing student learning and monitoring/evaluation of local programs. All local programs are on a two year cycle for onsite monitoring. NDDPI is on the Governor's Workforce Development Council. This position promotes the collaboration and vision of workforce partners to ensure a seamless system is developed, implemented and evaluated for effectiveness. The development of Career Pathways and IELCE/IET programs is a key initiative. North Dakota DPI used funds available under section 222(a)(2) to enhance the quality of programming in the adult education system. Not more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds made available were used to carry out State Leadership activities under section 223. Activities supported with federal leadership funds and extended using State funding include:

- WIOA core partner programs aligned and coordinated services for program participants. Leadership funds were used to build the capacity of grantees to coordinate and align services by cross-training staff on intake/orientation, eligibility screening, and referral between partners, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships. In addition, the development of all components of career pathways is a priority with a focus on bridge programming and integrated education and training.
- Supporting statewide PD and identifying annual PD needs, determine delivery and evaluate results to ensure best practice approaches which result in collaborative partnerships, academic and career focused rigors, increases in student MSGs and teacher/program quality. These funds were used on topics to include content standards implementation, instructional strategies and methodologies, integrated education and training, bridge programming, transition to post-secondary education, use of technology, distance education, and services to students with disabilities, and technical training with databases and assessment applications. Technical assistance is a strong component of leadership activities and funds as the State Office continues to support local programs with research/evidence based programs, activities and curriculum's to meet the individual needs of students. Technical assistance focused on Page 152 data and the student data management system (LACES), assessment and instruction; additionally, the aforementioned areas of career readiness, integrated employment and training and career pathways, and core partner services were key for local programs. The 2019-2020 PD calendar is being developed with these focused topics in mind. Using technology to improve program effectiveness through training and technical assistance focused on preparing instructors and program administrators to identify and utilize technology to enhance instruction, programming, and distance education. The State contracted to provide PD in the area of technology through activities such as face-to-face and online training in a variety of areas, and included educational technology, digital literacy instruction, and distance learning. In addition, other training and technical assistance focused on effective use of the statewide data system to maintain accurate

student data and continuously improve programming. The State Office supported multiple methods to ensure promising practices and models are shared with all providers to include local program TA and monitoring visits, monthly conference calls, electronically shared association newsletters monthly about training opportunities, high-quality resources, and promising practices for instruction and programming; an annual conference and other PD activities. The State provided grantee oversight to include monthly data monitoring, annual site visits, and a program improvement monitoring process for low-performing grantees. instruction and teacher training. • The State also evaluated integrating literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers through providing funding for basic skills and HSE preparation and partnering with local workforce programs. To identify curriculum frameworks and align rigorous content standards that specify what adult learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition. • Primary indicators of performance described in section 116; • Where appropriate, content of occupational and industry skill standards widely used by business and industry in the State. The State accomplished this WIOA provision by restructuring English Language Acquisition Content Standards to include integration of language acquisition and with workforce preparedness training. Further, professional development on integration of the College and Career Readiness Standards for adults with instruction for all students was utilized. Through participation of the State inter-agency planning initiatives with the WIOA partners, the State's adult education providers collaborated where possible and avoid duplicating efforts in order to maximize the impact of the activities described above.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE

The provision of high quality professional development has been strong across North Dakota and expanded to career pathways, bridge programs and effective career planning to meet the state's continual employment needs. IET and digital literacy are being advanced and designed for work with ELL students as our priority. As always, technical assistance was a strong component of leadership activities and funds, as the State Office continued to support local programs with research/evidence based programs, activities and curriculum's to meet the individual needs of students. Technical assistance continued to focus on data Page 153 and our associated student data management system (LACES), assessment and instruction; additionally, the aforementioned areas of career readiness, integrated employment and training and career pathways were key for local programs. In addition, added this year, was a professional development plan and platform connecting the LINCS courses with a North Dakota college in order for Adult Education staff to receive credit for the Adult Education courses they take. This costs the state nothing and the state director holds a master so can be the teacher of record on this platform. North Dakota Adult Lifelong Learners (NDALL) is an organization to support all Adult Education and Alternative Education leaders, staff, and educators in professional development needs. The state director is on the NDALL board and conference committee. A conference is held each fall.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

The adult learning centers are responsible to the State Office for meeting standards of quality for administration and instruction. Effectiveness of programs, services and activities of local

recipients of funds are assessed through systematic evaluation of programs. All activity related to ABE/ESL students are entered at least weekly into the student data management system. The State Office conducts random, but at least monthly, audits on program data for multiple indicators of quality. Secondly, the state used both data match and personal contact to identify performance indicators. Each local program is expected to meet the state negotiated performance measures. Lastly, as mentioned above, accountability lies in the results on onsite monitoring by the State Office as well as local program monitoring to assess their own standards and performance. The State Adult Education program evaluates programs monthly through a monthly desk audit process in which measures such as average attendance hours, educational functioning level gains, number of students post-tested, etc., are reviewed using the student data management system. The desk audits allow programs to review operational aspects of the program such as the percentage of funds expended, completion of required professional development, and completed personnel activity reports. In addition, the State Office performs site monitoring visits for each adult education and literacy program to ensure that state and federal laws and policies are followed, reviewed program performance, and connected with sponsoring administrators. After monitoring, the local program are required to submit a corrective action plan to address any report findings, recommendations, and commendations within an agreed upon timeline and follow up to the satisfaction of the State Office. An online repository and directory was created for statewide staff to have instant access to instructional and best practice resources and contact information/instant messaging to other centers. This allowed local program activities to increase their access to practices that are working and to share out best practices. All related PD activities included an evaluation component to provide the state office with demographic data of participants, and to determine how the PD activity is being utilized in the classroom and what related success occurred as a result. Secondly, evaluations helped the state office determine the quality of training, relevance and applicability of the topic. Respectively, each adult learning center director is responsible to ensure that the PD activity or event is implemented into the classroom or instructor methods and that by classroom observations, student educational gains, or teacher interview, the effectiveness of the PD is tracked. The State ensured student performance improvement, financial accountability, program quality, and regulatory compliance of local providers in accordance with federal laws and regulations, State statutes and rules, and the provisions of an approved grant award. The monitoring component of the Quality Assurance System is a risk assessment process used to Page 154 evaluate variables associated with workforce education grants and assign a rating for the level of risk to the federal Department of Education and the agency. In order to complete risk assessments, certain risk factors have been identified which may affect the level of risk for each agency. A risk matrix is completed for each provider. The annual risk assessment is conducted to determine the monitoring strategy appropriate for each provider. In addition to program improvement plans and other actions taken to improve quality, the following activities are available:

- New Director Training and Mentoring. Provided new directors with information such as federal and State guidelines, data collection and National Reporting System (NRS) reporting, and resources needed to administer their programs.
- Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Training. Through ongoing training, a network of trained professionals ensure the uniform administration and reporting of assessments used for determining federal-level gains.
- Data Reporting and Program Improvement Training. Provided training on the fundamentals of the NRS. Topics include monitoring, data analysis and collection, types of data and measures, assessments, data quality, and related information.
- Technical Assistance. Adult education monthly calls inform adult educators of program changes and reporting announcements, and provide opportunities to ask questions of State staff. In addition, technical assistance papers are posted on the federal Department of Education website.
- Teacher Training. Provided information and resources to

support instruction in the areas of HSE preparation, college and career readiness, career awareness and planning, career pathways, reading, and math instructional strategies.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;	Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	Yes
4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of

Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for

influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an

officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Please download and sign the forms below. Please scan and return the forms to wioa@ed.gov at the same time you submit your State Plan via the portal.

1. SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

2. Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying
[<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>]
3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable)
[<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>]

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	Enter information in this column
Applicant's Organization	
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	Enter information in this column
First Name	
Last Name	
Title	
Email	

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

In the text box below, describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs provide the information to meet the requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), consistent with the following instructions posted at <https://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/gepa427.doc>.

At the State level, the NDDPI requires all grantees of either state or federal funds, sign an assurance that they have read the GEPA requirements, understand the requirement parameters and agree to oblige to the highest standard possible, to carry out the intent of GEPA. [Currently, the NDDPI is not competing funds for State Leadership]. The NDDPI State Office has on file a statement from every funded program that they ensure equitable access to and participation in, federal assisted programs for students, teachers and other program beneficiaries with special needs. The NDDPI monitoring process of the local adult education programs, includes several questions about GEPA to justify compliance with Section 427.

A link is on the North Dakota DPI website on GEPA requirements. Link is here: <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/policyguidelines/general-education-provisions-act-gepa>. Below is an explanation of further steps to ensure GEPA requirements are met.

Local programs fill out a yearly application. Part of that has a needs assessment, describing how the ALC intends to improve learning, increase accessibility, enhance outreach and collaboration with local and regional economic development or employment initiatives, and promote diversity in the delivery of instruction and how the program addresses educational needs of those most at risk and those most in need within their service area. In the state of assurances section, the local providers' program directors sign this document on services, allocation and use of funds, reporting/accountability, and participation/communication. Under the services section it says they "adhere to guidelines for providing accommodations to students over the age of 16 with disabilities." Under reporting/accountability section it says they "comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act which prohibits discrimination from participation because of race, color or national origin; Title IX of the Educational Amendment Act of 1972 which prohibits

discrimination on the basis of sex; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.”

North Dakota Monitoring Protocol is aligned with the WIOA checklist of requirements and thoroughly reviewed with all local providers every other year; language in the intake/orientation, facilities, and program effectiveness sections. Informal visits are conducted in the off year. Several sections are included on the Program Monitoring Protocol to ensure accessibility and participation in providing equitable services to all students. In addition, our RFP has a section on Program Assurances that are laid out below.

E. The grantee assures that no qualified person 16 years of age or older with a documented disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity which receives or benefits from state funds.

F. The grantee will comply with all civil rights regulations prohibiting discrimination in program benefits, participation, employment, or treatment on the basis of race, gender, color, national origin, sex, and disability.

In addition, we collect quarterly reports from our local providers (housed in WebGrants management system) in which providers answer questions regarding annual program goals and progress/challenges, areas to improve on effectiveness to improve literacy and numeracy skills of students, instructional practices that are best practice and research-based, and strategies to meet all students. There is an area of concern section applying to students, instruction, program management, satellite sites, or other. Directors can add to these fields. Barriers are identified in LACES management system, and we strategize how to meet all students as able.

We will be more intentional about using the GEPA language in our yearly application process and will be placing the two following questions in that application.

Compliance with GEPA Section 427:

What barriers exist in your community that may prevent students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries from access or participation in funded projects or activities listed in the application?

What steps are being taken to address or overcome these barriers?

At the state level when expending State Leadership funds, such as professional development, we work hard to ensure all individuals/organizations are treated fairly and equally. We work to address barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. We use the same communication in all our partnerships, meetings, and work (respect to all) and use the same language as we would through a competition. Examples are included on our website for local programs and leadership to follow.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction

with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and

- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	58.0%	58.0%	58.0%	58.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	55.0%	55.0%	55.0%	55.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	\$5150	\$5250	\$5150	\$5275
Credential Attainment Rate	63.0%	63.0%	63.0%	63.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	46.0%	50.0%	47.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

¹

“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan [13] must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA:

[13] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(iii) of WIOA

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) continues to regularly seek the advice of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) on a number of issues including the state plan contents, consumer satisfaction, program goals and evaluation, policies, order of selection, public education and building relationships with the business community.

The results of the client satisfaction survey for FFY 2021 showed 84% overall satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services. The SRC's Planning and Evaluation Committee receives quarterly reports on the client satisfaction rates. They review the information, which is then discussed at the quarterly SRC meetings. They have not identified any trends or anomalies. The SRC made no policy recommendations during this fiscal year, nor did their annual report include any specific recommendations based on the survey results.

As had been identified in the Strategic Plan, VR has been reviewing and making changes to agency policies. All revisions have been reviewed with and approved by the SRC.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

One recommendation was made by the SRC throughout the year.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

VR should go off of Order of Selection structure within the state plan.

Response:

VR concurs and will to do so. *Attachment (m) addresses this recommendation.*

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

NDVR has not rejected any of the Council's input or recommendations.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

ND does not request a Waiver of Statewideness.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

NA

3. REQUIREMENTS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN WILL APPLY TO THE SERVICES APPROVED UNDER THE WAIVER.

NA

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to work with multiple agencies and entities throughout the state. A number of these are related to cooperative ventures with the Department of Human Services that facilitate employment of persons with significant disabilities. Listed below are the primary businesses, agencies and groups with whom we are currently working. The only groups in this attachment, with whom we have a formal written agreement, are the North Dakota Department of Agriculture and Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

(1) Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;

Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation Program – Cooperative agreement with VA/VR is to ‘ensure seamless, coordinated, and effective VR services to North Dakota’s veterans with disabilities and their dependents with disabilities; to improve cooperation and collaboration between the two agencies; to avoid duplication of services; to improve interagency communication; and to establish staff cross-training opportunities.’

While we do not have formal written agreements with the following entities; state and regional DVR staff work cooperatively with them based on individual consumer needs.

Business Information Centers (BIC) – Located in Fargo, the BICs provide consultation and resources for DVR consumers on various aspects of establishing and maintaining a business.

Small Business Administration (SBA) – Ongoing coordination of shared training and education programs between SBA staff and DVR staff.

Department of Commerce and local economic development groups – Offers resources for funding and business development for DVR consumers.

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) – Provides mentoring and consultation to DVR consumers who are developing business plans.

Lewis and Clark Development Corporation – Processes revolving loan fund applications for DVR consumers pursuing self-employment.

ND State Council on Developmental Disabilities (NDSCDD) – The council advocates for policy changes that promote choice, independence, productivity, and inclusion for all North Dakotans with developmental disabilities (DD). The council supports and provides funding for projects and activities that maximize opportunities for consumers and families. The NDSCDD serves in a planning and advisory capacity to state policymakers and agencies relative to services for persons with developmental disabilities. Areas of emphasis include individual employment opportunities, integration and inclusion, and empowerment and promotion.

North Dakota Association for the Disabled (NDAD) – Occasionally provides monies to DVR consumers for non-employment related expenses.

North Dakota Chamber of Commerce – Cooperative training and information exchange. Regional DVR staff are also members of their local chambers and participate on various chamber committees. This enables DVR to develop relationships with the business community.

Rocky Mountain ADA Center – Provides technical assistance, resources, education and training on disability issues including the ADA.

Center of Technology and Business – Provides technical assistance to DVR consumers in developing business and marketing plans.

North Dakota Center for People with Disabilities (NDCPD) – A statewide organization that serves the disability community and works with community providers and state and local government agencies to provide training, technical assistance, service, research and information dissemination. NDCPD faculty and staff have extensive experience in topics such as transition, person-centered planning, self-determination, employment, aging and health and they have cultivated numerous state and national collaborations over the years. Minot State University (MSU) serves as NDCPD's host institution.

ND Small Business Development Center (NDSBDC) – Helps North Dakotans to start, manage, and grow their businesses. Credentialed business advisors provide customized guidance and resources that help owners and entrepreneurs achieve their goals at every stage of their business life cycle.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

ND Assistive – ND Assistive is North Dakota's Assistive Technology Act program. ND Assistive serves as North Dakota's federally-funded assistive technology project through a sub-contract with the North Dakota's Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. ND Assistive offers services to North Dakotans with disabilities to help them bridge the gap between ability and disability using assistive technology (AT). ND Assistive is a statewide program designed to increase access to, and acquisition of, assistive technology. The DVR Director or designee is a voting member on their advisory council and participates in a collaborative partnership with ND Assistive.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

North Dakota VR works cooperatively with rural business development programs, and other programs to deliver specialized programs and services to assist in enhancing the workforce of

North Dakota. The strength of North Dakota's economy is the farmers and ranchers who lead the nation in the production of crops. This high level of production creates economic development and opportunities for expanded employment in rural communities across North Dakota. The Division assigns staff working in rural communities as liaisons to the USDA activities that serve to benefit individuals with disabilities. The Division also maintains a permanent seat on the North Dakota Workforce Development Council. North Dakota VR's role is to advocate and provide technical assistance that enhances opportunities for employment in rural North Dakota.

North Dakota DVR has an agreement with the North Dakota Department of Agriculture to determine the financial viability of farmers and ranchers with disabilities applying for and receiving VR services. Both agencies collaborate to support the farmer and rancher to determine the financial viability of their agricultural business. With a determination that the farm or ranch business is financially viable, DVR provides disability related solutions to the farmer or rancher's continued employment while the staff from Mediation Service assists with any continued credit and financial matters.

4. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

For eligible youth, DVR collaborates with the following agencies to provide comprehensive services to assist the youth with achieving competitive integrated employment:

- **Police Youth Bureau** – Is intended to divert youth from the juvenile justice system, prevent delinquency and intervene in crisis situations.
- **Division of Juvenile Services** – The administrative agency directed to take custody of delinquent and at-risk youth.
- **ND Youth Correctional Center** – The state youth correctional center that provides therapeutic treatment to juvenile offenders.
- **Behavioral Health Division** – Provides leadership for the planning, development, and oversight of a system of care for children, adults, and families with severe emotional disorders, mental illness, and/or substance abuse issues.
- **Centers for Independent Living** – Eliminate barriers and assist individuals with disabilities so they can live and work more independently in their homes and communities.
- **Human Service Zones** – Provide food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, children's health services, childcare assistance, home and community-based services and supports individuals with disabilities, personal care assistance, child welfare (foster care, child protection services, and related services), and referrals to other local resources and programs.
- **Children's Special Health Services** – Provides services to children with special health care needs and their families and promote family-centered, community-based, coordinated services and systems of health care.
- **ND Vision Services/School for the Blind (NDVS/SB)** – Offers services to ND residents who are blind or have a visual impairment.
- **ND School for the Deaf/Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing** – Offers services to ND residents who are deaf or have a hearing impairment.

- **Pathfinder** – Statewide, federally-funded (Office of Special Education Programs) parent training and information center. The purpose is to support parents and assist students with increasing independent living, self-determination and self-advocacy skills.
- **Nexus PATH Family Healing** - serves children, teens, and families through outpatient and community mental health services, foster care and adoption and residential care.
- **Family Voices** – Is a national, nonprofit, family-led organization which aims to achieve family-centered care for all children and youth through age 26 with special health care needs and/or disabilities.
- **ND State Council on Developmental Disabilities** – One of the council's goals is to support community-based competitive, integrated employment for people with developmental disabilities.
- **Anne Carlsen Center** – Offers community-based care for those of all ages with autism and a wide variety of other intellectual and developmental disabilities through assistance learning social skills and vocational skills training.
- **Federation of Families** – Provide leadership in the field of children's mental health; address the unique needs of children and youth, to ensure rights, support access to community-based services and to provide information and engage in advocacy.
- **ND Brain Injury Network** – The ND Brain Injury Network helps people with brain injury, their families, and providers find answers to questions, receive ongoing support, and gain access to services.
- **ND Brain Injury Advisory Council** – The mission of the ND Brain Injury Council is to improve the quality of life for all individuals with brain injury and their families through brain injury identification, awareness, prevention, research, education, collaboration, support services, and advocacy.
- **DHS Children and Family Services Chafee Foster Care Transition Program** – Services and supports are available through the Chafee Program for foster youth, age 16+, who have been identified as "likely to age out of foster care", and for youth who have aged out of the system and have not yet reached their 23rd birthday.
- **YouthWorks** – A private, nonprofit agency whose focus is in working teens, parents and young adults. They have programs for runaway, homeless and street youth; juvenile offenders; youth failing in school; youth suspended or expelled from school; young parents and pregnant moms (under 22); youth arrested and unable to immediately return home; youth needing emergency care; youth needing peer support or cross-age mentoring; and youth with anger issues. They provide family counseling and activity programs.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

VR does not have any.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH

DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AS WELL AS PROCEDURES FOR THE TIMELY DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF INDIVIDUALIZED PLANS FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR THE STUDENTS

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is responsible to provide a free and appropriate public education. The mission of DPI's Special Education Division is to be a recognized and respected leader in providing a system of supports to schools to ensure that students with disabilities have the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential and become life-long learners. The North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is the agency responsible to provide vocational rehabilitation service to students with disabilities. DPI provides guidance and direction to local school districts in the administration of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to provide accommodations for students with disabilities that are not served by the special education program.

North Dakota VR has defined a student with a disability as an individual with a disability in a secondary, post-secondary, or other recognized education program, who is between the ages of 14-21, is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is an individual with a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, or students with disabilities including but not limited to: physical, sensory, intellectual, mental health, and communication. A youth with a disability is any individual with a disability who is between the ages of 14-24, regardless of education status.

The Governor of the State of North Dakota has designated VR offices be in each of the eight regions. Each region serves a designated multi-county area, to provide vocational rehabilitation services. Each VR regional office has staff assigned to designated counties and local school districts to partner with the school in providing transition services. Every supervisor and rehabilitation counselor have a responsibility to liaise with local school districts, cultivate relationships, and provide education and information to partners. VR has a counselor assigned to each school in the state. VR staff develop and coordinate a set schedule (day of the week or month) with school personnel for appointments and meeting with VR eligible or potentially eligible students at the school.

The Department of Career & Technical Education (CTE) works to provide all North Dakota citizens with the technical skills, knowledge, and aptitudes necessary for successful performance in a globally competitive workplace. It is the responsibility of CTE, to the extent possible, to provide access to career and technical programs for high school and post-secondary students with disabilities across the state, as well as provide career awareness, work readiness skills, occupational preparation and training of workers throughout the state. VR provides guidance to local school districts in making accommodations to their curriculum and training process to engage students with disabilities in CTE programs.

The national CTE Perkins V Plan Collaboration Summit in December 2019 provided an opportunity for interdisciplinary teams comprised of state and local partners to work collectively in operationalizing Perkins V plans. A team from ND including state-level agency personnel from CTE, VR, and Special Education, along with a local education representative, attended. The summit provided the ND team the opportunity to forge closer collaboration efforts, and continue partnering to improve CTE access, equity, and inclusiveness for students with disabilities.

VR has policies and procedures that support coordination with public education to facilitate transition of students with disabilities. VR policies and procedures are reviewed and agreed

upon by DPI. VR practice includes development of student individualized plans for employment (IPEs) within 90 days from the date of the determination of eligibility. This coordination includes identification and solicitation of referrals to VR from the local school districts Section 504 coordinators. Potentially eligible students in need of pre-employment transition services may receive these services as young as age fourteen.

The following is language directly from our MOU regarding Coordination:

Coordination

It is the joint responsibility of VR and DPI to:

- Coordinate services for students with disabilities.
- Design and deliver cross-training sessions to the staff of both parties regarding competitive integrated employment as the preferred vocational outcome for students and youth with disabilities.
- Promote and disseminate information that gives individuals and families resources to envision a future that includes competitive integrated employment.
- Meet regularly with one another and representatives of LEAs at the North Dakota Secondary Transition Community of Practice to address systems, policy, practice, and funding issues that facilitate or negatively impact the transition of youth with disabilities from school to work or post-secondary education.
- Align policy in order to facilitate the seamless transition of youth with disabilities from school to work or post-secondary education, minimize redundant services, and maximize resources in both systems.

It is VR's responsibility to:

- Ensure services are available statewide, including the provision of Pre-ETS for students who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services.
- Assist in the achievement of employment goals for individuals who have applied and been found eligible for VR services.
- Promote interagency coordination and timely delivery of services.

It is DPI's responsibility to:

- Request consultation and technical assistance from VR when needed for planning and implementation of transition services.
- Provide all existing educational, medical, psychological, and career assessments through a release of information as necessary for a determination of eligibility by the VR agency.
- Provide special education and related services as developed and documented for students with disabilities in an IEP.
- Provide VR with documentation of completion of transition services or Pre-ETS for students with disabilities.
- Provide representation on the VR State Rehabilitation Council and relevant committee participation.

- Encourage LEA to identify points of contact for field staff from VR.

Teachers and VR counselors provide co-instruction in local schools to offer students activities surrounding career exploration, self-advocacy, interest testing, and workplace readiness training. Workplace readiness training curriculums were developed by DPI, VR, and other partners through an NTACT TA grant, and are one of many tools that can be used for co-instruction.

VR and DPI continue to collaborate at a local level with colleges, work force offices, community rehabilitation providers (CRPs), independent living centers, and employers to provide transition fairs. These fairs provide transition students with hands-on opportunities to explore and experience various careers.

VR and North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind have co-sponsored a weekend retreat when able, dependent on Covid, with the purpose of providing intensive pre-employment career services to youth with visual impairments. Due to the success of this retreat, plans are to continue sponsoring this event.

ND is involved with the National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes. A VR administrator, along with educators at a state and local level attend the national conference. The partners have also joined the state and local communities of practice, so there is a smooth transition for students who are deaf.

VR is also involved with the ND Dual Sensory Project in which strategies are found to work with individuals with a combined vision and hearing impairment. There are several partners dedicated to this project such as VR, Helen Keller National Center, ND Vision Services/School for the Blind, ND School for the Deaf, and Minot State University.

The following is language directly from our MOU regarding Coordination of Section 511 Documentation Requirements:

Coordination of Section 511 Documentation Requirements

Youth with disabilities must complete several required activities that promote the consideration of competitive integrated employment before they can enter employment that pays less than federal minimum wage.

VR has a procedure in place that outlines the requirements for youth to enter into subminimum wage under Section 511 of WIOA. As well as a procedure for ineligibility as a result of individuals desire to pursue sub-minimum wage. VR staff will continue to provide training and technical assistance to school personnel as well as 511 employers.

VR, in collaboration with the SEA and LEA, has coordinated a process to ensure that, in accordance with 34 C.F.R § 397.31, neither the State educational agency nor the local educational agency will enter into contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

To comply with WIOA, VR amended the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Transition Services and Pre-ETS effective December 20, 2019. The MOU addresses many areas including consultation and technical assistance; transition and pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) planning, outreach, coordination of section 511 documentation requirements, coordination of services, and financial responsibilities of the agencies.

The agreement identifies each agency's role and responsibility in consultation and technical assistance in the planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities that include vocational rehabilitation service.

The following is language directly from our MOU regarding consultation and technical assistance:

Consultation and Technical Assistance

It is the joint responsibility of VR and DPI to:

- Provide consultation and technical assistance to local VRs and LEAs on transition, career planning, community resources, employment, and post-secondary education.
- Provide consultation and technical assistance to local VR and LEA either in person or through alternative means, such as conference calls and video conferences.
- Utilize a common message when sharing information to local VR offices and LEA.
- Encourage LEA and VR staff to collaborate through their local Transition Community of Practice in planning and implementing efforts that are focused on the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including Pre-ETS and other vocational rehabilitation services.
- Identify and disseminate information about transition services, employment services, effective practices, training, and funding strategies that create positive employment outcomes to agency staff, partners, families, individuals, and public and private stakeholders.
- Inform each other and the LEA and VR staff about policies or procedural changes that may impact transition services.
- Provide technical assistance to identify potentially eligible and VR eligible students.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

Local VR and education staff identify a consistent system for referrals to VR. Typically, students should be referred two years before exiting school. Referrals are a collaborative effort between education and VR and are not limited to just those students in special education. Earlier referrals for students with more profound disabilities may be considered.

Students with disabilities may access Pre-ETS prior to applying to VR and prior to VR eligibility determination. This type of service may begin when a student requests it, or if the student has been recommended to receive one or more Pre-ETS and has shown documentation of a disability. The student may choose to apply to VR in order to determine if he or she is eligible for a more comprehensive scope of vocational rehabilitation services.

VR initiates outreach to potentially eligible students to identify those who need transition services and/or Pre-ETS. Eligibility for VR services typically is determined two years prior to the student's exit from secondary education. Eligibility may be determined prior to this typical timeline based on the need and expressed interest of the student. School districts shall be provided with contact information for the local VR office.

VR informs education staff, students, youth, and, as appropriate, families and authorized representatives regarding:

1. A description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program;
2. Information regarding VR eligibility requirements;
3. Information regarding application procedures; and
4. Information about the scope of services that may be available to students and youth with disabilities.

"IDEA allows representatives of other agencies, such as the VR agency, to be invited to participate at IEP Team meetings in which transition services and postsecondary goals are discussed, if that agency is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for the transition services to be included in the student's IEP. However, IDEA requires the consent of the parents or the student who has reached the age of majority under State law to invite other agency representatives to participate in the meeting."

These meetings are held at least annually. When VR staff is invited by a school district to attend a student meeting such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting, the VR staff considers how his or her involvement could be beneficial with regard to consultation, technical assistance, referral to VR, and the planning and coordination of service provision.

There may be times when a VR staff is not able to attend scheduled student-related meetings. Options for involvement beyond the physical presence of VR staff at the meeting could include the sharing of informational sheets and brochures, telephone conferencing, or other creative mechanisms developed at the local level.

In addition to student-related meetings, other opportunities to interact with educators, students, and families exist for VR participation. These may include parent nights, education staff meetings, school-based agency events, career fairs, and others. Attendance at these events fosters and advances collaboration with education. Many regions within North Dakota have a local Community of Practice (CoP). It is expected that one or more VR staff participate on these local teams and one representative from each of the local teams (not necessarily VR staff) reports back to the State CoP.

The IPE for students must be developed prior to the student exiting school. Once the IPE and IEP are established, there will be two active plans for the client. The IPE and the IEP will each reflect coordinated goals and a range of services for a period of time. Collaborating with education staff to align the two plans contributes in a positive manner toward the student gaining basic workplace skills, knowledge of specific occupational skills, long term career goals, etc.

The following is language directly from our MOU regarding transition and Pre-ETS planning:

Transition and Pre-Employment Services Planning

It is the joint responsibility of VR and DPI to:

- Facilitate and coordinate the smooth transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including the receipt of Pre-ETS, transition services, and other VR services.
- Provide training to LEA and VR counselors to assure transition and pre-employment services training will include activities such as the development and implementation of their IEP under Section 614(d) of the IDEA, coordination on Pre-Employment Services under Section 113, Accommodations under Section 504, and those related to Limitations on Sub-Minimum Wages under Section 511 of WIOA.
- Share current research findings and exchange professional literature on an ongoing basis.
- Collaborate on the provision of ongoing joint staff training and cross training of staff to ensure operational activities continue to meet the needs of the parties involved. Part of this training will include a two-day transition training/conference every other year and will be coordinated by the statewide Transition Community of Practice.
- Encourage volunteer employment opportunities and place emphasis on competitive integrated employment opportunities.
- Facilitate the local level engagement of potential employers to provide job shadows, work experience, etc. for students with disabilities.
- Provide training to local level LEA and VR to assure that the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that VR develops for a student with a disability who is receiving special education services is coordinated with the IEP the LEA develops in terms of the goals, objectives, and services identified.
- Provide training and oversight to assure transition plans demonstrate a coordinated set of activities that prevent a break in services for students as they transition.
- Provide information that will inform students and their parents of the availability of the Client Assistance Program, a dispute resolutions program available to VR clients and participants in rehabilitation programs receiving federal funding.
- Coordinate with non-educational agencies for out-of-school youth which may include the following:
 - Job Service
 - Department of Corrections and Juvenile Justice
 - Child Welfare, including foster care
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 - Behavioral Health
 - Developmental Disabilities
 - Children's Special Health
 - Parent Training Center
 - Family Advocacy Organizations

- Tribal 121
- Independent Living Centers
- School for the Deaf
- ND Vision Services
- Assistive Technology
- Autism Waiver Services
- Community Rehabilitation Providers

It is VR's responsibility to:

- Ensure VR staff are available to serve students attending the LEA.
- Determine eligibility for VR service and provide rehabilitation services to school-aged students with disabilities when referred by the LEA.
- Develop the IPE for students who are two years from exiting school, allowing for a smooth transition planning process, at the latest, just before exiting school; and no longer than 90 days from eligibility.
- Provide guidance to local LEAs and local VRs regarding the definition of a student with a disability which is an individual with a disability:
 - in a secondary, post-secondary, or other recognized education program;
 - who is between the ages of 14-21;
 - is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the IDEA;
 - is an individual with a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, or students with disabilities, including but not limited to, physical, sensory, intellectual, mental health, and communication.

Because the definition of a "student" with a disability for the VR program includes an individual with a disability for purposes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, it is broader than the definition under IDEA. VR agencies are authorized to provide transition services to this broader population of students with disabilities than LEA are authorized to provide under IDEA. Since the VR program may serve students with disabilities, including those individuals with a disability for purposes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, it is possible that these students may not have an IEP under IDEA, and therefore would not be eligible for or receiving special education or related services under IDEA.

DPI Responsibility:

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 - "A child with a disability remains eligible for special education until it is determined that a disability no longer exists and/or that the child no longer needs special education services; until the child exits services due to graduation

with a diploma, or until he or she has attained 21 years of age or has not reached the age of 21 before August first of the year in which the individual turns 21.”

- DPI will provide training and oversight to the LEAs to assure the following transition requirements of IDEA are followed:
 - DPI will encourage inviting VR to IEP meetings and other team meetings so VR can provide information, technical assistance, case consultation, and information/referral as needed for eligible or potentially eligible students;
 - Provide IEP team-determined transition services;
 - **Transition services** means a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that -
 - (1) Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;
 - (2) Is based on the individual child’s needs, considering the child’s strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes:
 - Community experiences;
 - Development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and,
 - Acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

VR and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) are involved with a Community of Practice (CoP) for Transition. The mission of the group is to work toward building, supporting, and sustaining community partnerships and systems that promote and improve the scope, opportunity and quality of transition for youth with disabilities to adequately prepare for life and career beyond high school with the individualized necessary supports identified and in place before graduation/exit.

North Dakota’s CoP focuses on working across groups and localities to share information, address issues, learn together, find shared goals, define shared work, and improve practice. Representatives from VR and DPI attend the National Capacity Building Institute, bringing back transition information from other states, which is then presented as a team at the state level with members going back to their local regions and sharing the information.

North Dakota’s CoP has representation from most regions and continues to be very active, holding quarterly meetings. Since the actual service delivery takes place in the eight regions of the state, most regions have developed a regional transition CoP committee. Each regional committee is to develop committee goals which are in various phases of implementation. The committees use a specific document for their planning process entitled: "Essential Tools, Interagency Transition Team Development and Facilitation" published by the National Center

on Secondary Education and Training and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The use of this document is helping to better coordinate efforts. The state director for DPI's Special Education and the State Transition Coordinator for VR provide technical assistance on how to continually improve their regional CoP.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

The following is language directly from our MOU regarding financial responsibility:

Financial Responsibility

Joint Responsibility of VR and DPI:

- Parties to this MOU commit to the implementation of complementary programs to assist with the provision of transition and Pre-ETS to students with disabilities in the State, including students with the most significant disabilities, to enable them to achieve an employment outcome in competitive integrated employment;
- DPI and VR are financially responsible for the services they provide under their own laws and rules; and,
- DPI and LEA are financially responsible for the cost of services it is mandated to provide under IDEA, Part B.

There may be times when either the school or VR could provide a service. There is no "standard" for who provides what. The team makes the decision based on the needs of the student. In those cases, the team should consider the following factors when deciding:

- The VR counselor may consult with the VR regional administrator or VR state office to determine which entity should provide the service.
- Does the school or VR have the capacity to provide the service (rural schools tend to have fewer resources)?
- Could the school provide a portion of the service and VR another portion? For example, if a student needs workplace readiness training and work experience, and the school is only able to provide workplace readiness training, perhaps the school does the readiness training and VR provides the work experience.
- Has the IEP team or student's team discussed what is in the best interest of the student in terms of providing services?
- What is the most efficient way to serve the student?
- Can the student be served through a Pre-ETS contract (a collaboration VR has with schools) whether the student is an open VR case or potentially eligible?
- Comparable benefits – are there other agencies that can provide the service?

VR serves everyone on an individual (case by case) basis. There is no "standard" for who provides what. The team makes the decision based on the needs of the client. Our guiding principles tell us that "collaborative partnerships and good communication are essential to success.

VR Responsibility:

- Provide outreach to all students with disabilities to make available Pre-ETS;
- Job exploration counseling;
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after-school opportunities, experiences outside of the traditional school setting, and/or internships;
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and,
- Instruction in self-advocacy.

DPI Responsibility:

- Nothing under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act shall be construed as reducing a LEA's obligation under the IDEA to provide or pay for transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to children with disabilities.
- Schools are responsible to provide the necessary services the student needs, in each domain of the IEP. They are, academics, communicative status, adaptive characteristics, ecological factors, jobs and job training, recreation and leisure, home/independent living, community participation, Post-Secondary Training and Learning Opportunities, and related services.

VR provides pre-employment transition services in addition to TA and consultation, to students ages 14 to 21. VR has many pre-employment transition purchase of service agreements across the state to expand on the pre-employment services formerly provided solely by the local schools and DPI is kept up-to-date on those activities.

VR expended \$2.27 million or approximately 20% of the FFY 2021 federal grant to fund statewide pre-employment transition services. VR will continue to commit at least 15% of the federal grant per year for these services. Required activities include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, training on self-advocacy, counseling on post-secondary opportunities, and workplace readiness training. In addition to services purchased based on approved IPEs for students, VR staff are providing services which includes tracking time spent for travel to rural areas. Under IDEA, the local school districts are required to provide transition services, however VR has entered into purchase of service agreements with local school districts to enhance or expand services.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

VR is working with DPI and local school districts to identify students with disabilities on an IEP. Transitioning students who are identified through the education unit's Section 504 coordinator are also referred to VR, and contacts are made with the guidance counselors to ensure students with special needs are aware of services through VR. Referrals are also received from independent living centers, human service centers, and community rehabilitation providers working with transition age students.

VR contacts potentially eligible students as early as age 14, thus when students do become VR eligible, relationships and trust have already been established. We also provide consultation and guidance which will help the potentially eligible students and their team with designing a roadmap for what should happen prior to VR eligibility so all team members are collaborating early on and facilitating a smooth transition.

VR counselors' outreach to schools on a regular basis. At the start of every school year counselors contact each of their respective schools to see who may benefit from VR services. That contact may be with special education teachers, school counselors, school social workers, through presentations to groups of students, individual students, parents etc. Many of our regions have "transition fairs" where outreach to students and parents happen. We also have "teen night out" where vendors and service providers are brought together so students and parents can visit with partners in the transition process. The state DPI and state VR not only highly support and promote these activities but also provide fiscal support.

The following is language directly from our MOU regarding outreach:

Outreach

It is the joint responsibility of VR and DPI to:

- Develop procedures for identification of and outreach to students with disabilities who need transition services and Pre-ETS (those eligible and potentially eligible for the program), such as information sharing at:
- IPE meetings
- Transition planning meetings
- Back-to-School Nights
- Transition and Career Fairs
- Presentations
- Orientations

It is VR's responsibility to:

- Inform applicants and eligible students with disabilities who are making the transition from programs under the responsibility of an educational agency to programs under the responsibility of VR, through appropriate modes of communication, about the availability of and opportunities to exercise informed choice; including the availability of support services for individuals with cognitive or other disabilities who require assistance in exercising informed choice throughout the VR process.
- Promote outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services as early as possible during the transition planning process. Outreach to these students will include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirement, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals. Outreach activities can include the use of brochures, social media, attendance at back-to-school nights, transition events, etc.

- Provide training to all VR counselors and qualified staff on their role in providing outreach activities to students with disabilities to include those served in special education, served under Section 504, and those served in general education.
- Provide outreach activities that are not exclusive to students with disabilities in special education, but should include those students with disabilities for purposes of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; students with disabilities receiving school psychological, health, nursing or social work services; and students with disabilities enrolled in an educational program and not in special education. VR agencies may also provide outreach to youth with disabilities who have dropped out of an education program or students who are at risk of dropping out of high school.

It is DPI's responsibility to:

- Work with VR to identify students with disabilities for referral to VR.
- Work with VR to identify referrals and encourage an application for VR services at least two years before students exit secondary education.

Additional Collaborative Efforts:

VR is part of the advisory committee and provides some financial assistance for the Think College programs across the state.

VR has a representative on the ND IDEA State Advisory Committee (IDEA SAC) on the Education of Children with Disabilities. VR represents the vocational organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities. The IDEA SAC: advises the state education agency (SEA) of the unmet needs within the state in the education of children with disabilities; comments publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities; advises the SEA in developing evaluations and reporting on data; advises the SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports; advised the SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities; consulted with the SEA regarding the provisions of Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE); provided advice to the SEA in determining the risk ratio threshold above which disproportionality is significant.

In 2017, ND became involved with the National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes. VR staff along with educators attended the national conference. The partners also joined the state and local CoP, so there is a smooth transition for students who are deaf.

VR and North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind (NDVS/SB) collaborate to provide comprehensive services to transition students with visual impairment/blindness. VR sends a counselor and vision rehabilitation specialist to NDVS/SB during teen week to educate on vocational rehabilitation services and assist as needed. NDVS/SB hosts teen week four times per year.

VR coordinates with DPI to host a semi-annual Secondary Transition Conference. The event brings transition stakeholders together to collaborate and learn about best practices for transition students with disabilities. Stakeholders include teachers, VR counselors, students with disabilities, parents, community rehabilitation providers, etc.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The utilization of community rehabilitation programs varies considerably throughout the state as needs and resources are unique to each region. The regional offices at the local level work closely with local providers to identify needs and to determine, with the provider, whether or not they are able to meet that need. The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Office meets with providers every six months to address any needs or concerns. In addition, the regional offices meet regularly with providers to address concerns, and partner to provide presentations to schools, individuals and families.

The triennial assessment of rehabilitation needs completed in FY 2018 included survey questions specific to community rehabilitation programs, their ability to meet individual's employment related needs and barriers encountered in meeting needs. Survey results are discussed in *Attachment (j)*.

VR continues to utilize information gathered from public hearings, input from providers and organizations; such as, the North Dakota Association of Community Providers (NDACP) and the North Dakota Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) to work more closely together. The agency will continue to make every effort to improve services to individuals when a problem is identified in a region. To ensure ongoing dialogue, NDACP and SILC are represented on the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) where issues are discussed whenever appropriate.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to survey providers for input regarding their training needs. Current training available to community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) includes video conference training on various topics, DVR 101, and three online customized employment modules through the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities/Minot State University. The topics for the online modules are discovery, job development for customized employment, and systematic instruction.

As a major player on the North Dakota Workforce Development Council, VR continues to be an active partner as opportunities arise.

The utilization of community rehabilitation programs varies considerably throughout the state as needs and resources are unique to each region. The regional offices at the local level work closely with local providers to identify needs and to determine, with the provider, whether or not they are able to meet that need. The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) State Office meets with providers every six months to address any needs or concerns, share updated information regarding VR employment policies, etc. In 2021, VR, four CRP staff, and staff from Minot State North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) develop Customized Employment Leadership Cohort that meets quarterly to address concerns related to implementing customized employment services, share information and success stories, and offer training to participants on various customized employment techniques. In addition, the regional offices meet regularly with providers to address concerns, and partner to provide presentations to schools, individuals, and families.

The triennial assessment of rehabilitation needs completed in FY 2021 included survey questions specific to community rehabilitation programs, their ability to meet individual's employment related needs and barriers encountered in meeting needs. Survey results are discussed in *Attachment (j)*.

VR continues to utilize information gathered from public hearings, input from providers and organizations; such as, the North Dakota Association of Community Providers (NDACP) and the North Dakota Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) to work more closely together. The agency will continue to make every effort to improve services to individuals when a problem is

identified in a region. To ensure ongoing dialogue, NDACP and SILC are represented on the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) where issues are discussed whenever appropriate.

2) Customized job development 3) Systematic instruction and 4) Where the money meets the road. In 2021, NDCPD became certified by the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) as one of 11 programs in the country that offer the National Certificate of Achievement in Employment Services: Basic Level with Emphasis in Customized Employment. This training includes 4 online modules, 3 workshops, and technical assistance for the trainees in the course. VR currently assist providers, financially, with obtaining this certification.

As a major player on the North Dakota Workforce Development Council, VR continues to be an active partner as opportunities arise.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to be involved in the quarterly statewide Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council, Behavioral Health Planning Council, Autism Taskforce and systems committees.

North Dakota has twenty CRPs who offer employment services for VR clients. In addition to employment services through VR many providers also provide an array of community services through contract with other government entities and private sectors. Finally, there are 12 additional providers listed on the North Dakota Association of Community Rehab Providers website, who provide services to individuals with disabilities, but not employment services through VR.

In 2019, VR researched payment rates and service guidelines from various states; as well as, obtained rate information from WINTAC and North Dakota's Developmental Disabilities division for individual employment services (IES). In October 2019, VR implemented an hourly rate for job development and job coaching services for supported employment and customized employment services.

Community rehabilitation program agencies must be certified either by CARF, The Council of Quality and Leadership for People with Disabilities (CQL) or have an approved plan in place for acquiring accreditation. Medical service providers must be approved by the State Licensing Board through its agreement with the Department of Human Services. All educational and vocational technical programs must be recognized by the State Board of Higher Education.

In 2011, the department established CRP agreements. The department has, as part of the provider agreements, language that addresses accessibility of facilities, affirmative action plans, special communication needs, and fraud, waste, and abuse. Within the agreements, the providers identify the scope of service they will provide to clients. The CRP agreements are effective for two years.

In 2020 and 2021, VR State office staff worked with Ticket To Work Employment Network Business Development Specialists to draft ND's Partnership Plus agreements and to offer training for potential employment networks within ND. Three CRPs expressed interest in either becoming an EN or signing a Partnership Plus agreement. VR will continue to work with the agencies to finalize the agreements. As of this date, none have signed.

In the fall of 2021, VR State office staff, Regional Administrators and CRP staff met to discuss concerns expressed by VR staff about providers and provider services, availability of providers across the state that can provide VR services (both rural and urban areas), and to re-connect with CRPs after the pandemic. The meetings allowed agencies to provide an overview of their

services, the populations they serve, staffing & training, issues, or concerns, discuss was to building partnership with VR (Referrals, communication and issues or concerns), and discuss their plans and creative solutions for services.

A work group was established in the fall of 2021 to outline VR's next steps on how to improve provider services in North Dakota. The work group is comprised of the eight regional administrators, Director, Assistant Director and CRP program administrator. ND VR identified the following key provider areas to further explore:

- Regional offices will establish provider communication to include email and regular meetings with VR and CRP staff.
- ND VR will review current payment practice and establish a standard for authorization and billing providers.
- ND VR will review and revamp the current VR provider application to include options for smaller providers and make the process easier for agencies to become VR providers.
- ND VR will review the current referral process to make improvements and to define what information to include as a default, and to outline expectations for VR staff to provide in-person handoff for new provider services.
- ND VR will identifying strategies and best practices to improve work readiness of VR participants prior to referring individuals to providers for employment services.
- ND VR will continue to work with providers to identify key challenges; such as staffing, retention, onboarding of new provider staff, training, etc.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) purchases services from two for-profit and 18 nonprofit community rehabilitation providers (CRPs), for the provision of supported employment and extended services.

In October 2019, VR implemented an hourly rate for job development and job coaching services for supported employment and customized employment services. In the 2020-2021 legislative session ND increased provider rates for Medicaid services, which included employment services through the Developmental Disabilities Division. ND VR also increased their rates for employment services to ensure VR is paying a similar rate.

All units that purchase extended services fall under the administrative control of the North Dakota Department of Human Services. A memorandum of understanding has been in place for many years, which included Medicaid and the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Division. In 2021, the memorandum of understanding was reviewed and updated to include the Vocational Rehabilitation, Aging Services, Medical Services, and Developmental Disabilities Divisions.

The Behavioral Health division manages a contract with Rocky Mountain Rehab for the provision of extended services for individuals with a serious mental illness, those with a brain injury, and others with diagnosis that are not able to access Medicaid services for extended services.

During the 2019 legislative session, North Dakota lawmakers authorized the Department of Human Services to create a Medicaid 1915(i) state plan amendment, which allows North Dakota Medicaid to pay for additional home and community-based services to support individuals with specific behavioral health conditions like mental illness, addiction, or a brain injury. The 1915 (i) ND state plan amendment was approved by CMS in February 2021. 1915(i) services cannot be provided to an individual at the same time as another service that is the same in nature and scope regardless of source including Federal, state, local, and private entities. For the 1915(i) Supported Employment/Ongoing Support Service to be entered, the Care Coordinator must first verify that services are not duplicated. VR is working collaboratively with Medical Services and the Behavioral Health Division to find ways to braid the process of providing employment services across agencies.

In the fall of 2015, VR began a three-year pilot project. North Dakota VR established the three-year pilot to gather data, information, and best practices the agency would need to consider when developing and implementing customized employment in the state. After the pilot was completed, VR contracted with NDCPD to coordinate training and technical assistance activities for two new cohort of CRPs to begin customized employment training. The cohort would receive two years of training to include webinars, technical assistance, and in-field mentoring. Only CRPs who have participated or who are currently participating in VR's customized employment training initiative, coordinated through Minot State University, are authorized to provide customized employment. The twelve CRPs provide customized employment services in all eight regions in North Dakota. A customized employment policy and payment rate were developed and implemented in October 2019. In October 2019, VR implemented an outcome-based payment for discovery activities and an hourly rate for job development and job coaching services for customized employment services.

In the 2020-2021 legislative session, House Bill 1405, related to an income tax credit for the employment of individuals with developmental disability or severe mental illness, was passed. The bill was signed by the governor in March 2021. North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation and the North Dakota Office of State Tax Commissioner will jointly administer this program which may encourage employers to hire individuals who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment. One hundred slots for qualified individuals were made available, with 30 meeting the criteria for the tax credit as of January 2022. The tax credit will be available through December 2022.

The Customized Employment/Supported Employment Tax Credit Program provides a ND income tax credit to employers for hiring an individual in one of the following target groups:

- Individuals with a developmental disability
- Individuals with a severe mental illness

Vocational Rehabilitation is responsible for determining if an individual meets the targeted group criteria and meet the following:

- has a most significant developmental or mental disability,
- is eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation's services, and

- requires customized employment in order to obtain competitive integrated employment.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

The North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is committed to building strong, long-term relationships with business. The agency has a dual customer approach with business being a key consumer of VR service. Services provided to business include consultation, technical assistance and information that serves to build awareness of business to an available source of qualified employees. Long term engagement with business will result in incorporating the workforce needs of business when assisting consumers of DVR to develop goals that are consistent with in-demand occupations.

DVR has developed a team of Business Service Specialists (BSSs) within the state. Full time BSSs are employed in the division's larger offices which include Fargo, Minot, Grand Forks and Bismarck. Each cover one quadrant of the state ensuring a statewide program.

In order to foster collaboration with business, DVR:

1. Has best practice guidelines used to train staff to increase staff skill in assessing business needs.
2. Has standards for the number and extent of presentations and outreach to business by staff to include BSSs and rehabilitation counselors.
3. Participates as a member organization in business-led organizations.
4. Attends the Workforce Development Council meetings and disseminates information to VR staff on the business needs as expressed during council meetings.
5. Participates in the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation's National Employment Team (NET) to share referrals and best practices.

Efforts to increase the use of labor market information to align consumer goals with workforce needs, DVR:

1. Trains consumers to access state specific labor market information to assist with making decisions related to their vocational goals.
2. Trains VR staff to use labor market information in all interactions with consumers to reinforce the need for training for jobs that are in-demand in the local labor market.
3. Collaborates and coordinates with state workforce partners regarding workforce needs which may include activities such as visiting with new employers and touring businesses.
4. Utilizes job shadows and informational interviews to assist clients with understanding the various positions available in their communities.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

In addition, VR staff, teachers, and community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) are working with employers to place transition students in work experiences which will lead to competitive integrated employment. During the student's school year, the VR staff, CRPs, and teachers collaborate to provide work experience that is beneficial to the student. The team outreaches to potential employers in order to provide opportunities for placement. When an employer sees the success of a student in work experience, they often offer them permanent positions.

Our state also provides year-round work experience through our pre-employment transition service purchase of service contracts with local education agencies. The team, consisting of the contract staff, teachers and VR counselors, share their business contacts and outreach to potential employers in order to provide opportunities for placement.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is organized within State government with the Department of Human Services (DHS) as the designated State agency. Medicaid, the Developmental Disabilities (DD) division and the Behavioral Health division are all part of DHS. The placement of the VR program within DHS provides significant opportunities to develop informal and formal working relationships.

VR has historically collaborated with the State Medicaid agency. Examples of historical and more recent collaborative efforts between DHS Medical Services and VR include:

- Working together to inform consumers with disabilities of Medicaid's Workers with Disabilities Coverage that allows individuals with disabilities in the workforce to maintain Medicaid coverage.
- Partnering with staff from Medicaid's Autism Unit to identify youth with disabilities who have the potential to benefit from the State Autism Waiver service. Staff from the Autism Unit have provided technical assistance to VR staff that is related specifically to the effective service and supports to assist individuals with symptoms associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Utilizing Medicaid to fund extended services for consumers who have successfully secured employment through the provision of the VR supported employment program.
- VR is an active stakeholder to the Medical Services division's Money Follows the Person Program.
- VR has collaborated with Medical Services and Behavioral Health on developing policies and practices related to employment and the 1915i ND State Plan Amendment to ensure continuity of services for individuals with disabilities across programs.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

VR has an MOU and high level of collaboration with the DHS DD division in the delivery of supported employment to consumers who experience an intellectual or developmental disability. VR policies and procedures instruct counselors to open a case for consumers with an

intellectual or developmental disability who may require long-term services. The partnership between VR and DD utilizes VR funding to provide the initial training and job stabilization with DD using Medicaid Waiver funding to provide long term support.

A workgroup comprised of VR, DD and CRP staff developed a checklist to expedite eligibility determination for individuals applying for VR services. A counselor can expedite eligibility determination and develop the individualized plan for employment with current and completed documentation through the utilization of this tool.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

VR has a high level of collaboration with the DHS Behavioral Health division in the delivery of employment services to consumers who experience behavioral health issues. VR provides employment services including supported employment for individuals with mental illness, substance use or brain injuries who require extended services provided through the Behavioral Health division's funding. VR is also involved as a team member for individuals involved in the Integrated Dual Disorder Treatment (IDDT) program which allows for a smooth transition into VR SEP once those individuals have stabilized and are ready to pursue competitive integrated employment.

During the 2019, legislative session North Dakota lawmakers authorized the Department of Human Services to create a Medicaid 1915(i) state plan amendment, which allows North Dakota Medicaid to pay for additional home and community-based services to support individuals with specific behavioral health conditions like mental illness, addiction, or a brain injury. The 1915 (i) ND state plan amendment was approved by CMS in February 2021. 1915(i) services cannot be provided to an individual at the same time as another service that is the same in nature and scope regardless of source including federal, state, local, and private entities. For the 1915(i) Supported Employment/Ongoing Support Service to be entered, the Care Coordinator must first verify that services are not duplicated. VR is working collaboratively with Medical Services and the Behavioral Health Division to find ways to braid the process of providing employment services across agencies. This partnership will increase the opportunity for individuals with a behavioral health diagnosis or brain injuries to obtain competitive integrated employment, and a person-centered approach for service delivery related to employment.

The 1915(i) is a Medicaid program that allows individuals with behavioral health conditions to access additional home and community-based services to include:

- Care Coordination develops a person-centered plan of care and assists in gaining access to needed 1915i services,
- Training and Supports for Unpaid Caregivers help for your caregiver to learn ways to support you
- Community Transitional Services money to help move into your own home after living in a group home, treatment center, or nursing home
- Benefits Planning help to learn about your benefits and how things change when you get a job in your community
- Non-Medical Transportation rides to activities in your community or to non-medical appointments to help you meet your goals
- Respite short term help for you while your caregiver runs errands or takes care of other needs

- Prevocational Training help for a short time so you can learn work or volunteer skills
- Supported Education help so you can do well and be safe in school
- Supported Employment help getting and keeping a job in your community
- Housing Support help so you can move into and stay in your own home
- Family Peer Support help for your family members by connecting them with other families who also support their loved ones
- Peer Support connecting you to other people who live with the same challenges you do

The services available through 1915 (i) ND state plan amendment will assist individuals obtain and maintain employment in their community, as well as offer employment opportunities for individuals who's individualized plan for employment falls within one of the service areas.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

I. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE STATE AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES IN RELATION TO THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY;

The North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's (VR) system to collect personnel information provides annual data concerning the numbers and categories of personnel that are employed by the state agency as well as the projected retirements within five years. The numbers of personnel are then compared to the clients served to determine the projected number of staff needed, including the ratio of counselors to clients. Information on personnel development is described in Section 4 of this attachment.

During 2021, 3,271 individuals were served by VR. This results in an annual client to counselor ratio of 82 to 1. The VR agency will hire counseling staff as necessary, based on projected caseload numbers. Current staffing is sufficient to provide vocational rehabilitation services. Hiring additional counseling staff will be dependent upon the need to maintain a reasonable counselor to client ratio and the availability of funding and available staff FTEs. At the end of September 2021, Vocational Rehabilitation had four counselor vacancies. In addition, there are four additional vacancies (one vision rehabilitation specialist, regional administrator, supported employment coordinator and support staff position.).

The VR agency reviews caseload sizes monthly to identify trends and future position needs. When an individual retired from her support staff position, the VR director evaluated staffing needs. As a result of high caseloads in the Grand Forks office the agency reclassified a vacant support staff position to a vocational rehabilitation counselor. The Williston office's Supported

Employment Coordinate left her position in the summer of 2021. Williston is a small rural community, where hiring qualified staff, with specialty areas can be difficult. The regional administrator worked with the VR Director and HR to review and revamp the job responsibilities of this position. The individual will still have the responsibilities of in-house supported employment services, with additional duties to meet the needs of the office.

During the next five years the agency estimates 12 staff members will be leaving the agency due to retirement alone. Additional vacancy positions are estimated at 2 counselors in the next five years. Traditionally, there is very little turnover in the non-counselor positions. In 2021, VR's annual turnover rate for counselors was 25%, with an overall agency turnover rate of 19.54%. The VR agency does not anticipate the turnover rate to increase in 2022.

In 2020 the Department of Human Services conducted the first of three-employee engagement survey for all staff. The state office and regional administrators have reviewed the results of the survey and each regional office has developed an employee engagement action plan. In December 2021 strategic planning retreat occurred. Employee retention, advancement within the agency, succession planning, and possible reclassification of positions were identified as areas the agency needs to explore and develop an action plan to address. A work group, consisting of state office staff, regional administrators and field staff will meet in 2022 to work on these issues. In addition, the VR agency will evaluate its current definition of qualified rehab professional.

In some North Dakota regional VR offices, they continue to lack qualified applicants for VR Counselor positions who have a master's degree in Rehabilitation and/or a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) licensure. NDVR continues to hire qualified candidates who do not have an appropriate master's degree, but have a Bachelor's degree in an appropriate area and the necessary skills and experience in working with individuals with disabilities.

The table below shows the total number of staff positions, the current vacancies and projected vacancies due to retirement over the next five years:

Vocational Rehabilitation Positions with Current and Projected Vacancies

Job Title	Total Positions	Current Vacancies	Projected Vacancies Over the Next 5 Years
Director	1	0	0
State Office Administrators and Support Staff	9	0	4
Regional Vocational Rehabilitation Administrators	8	1	3
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors	40	4	2
Vision Rehabilitation Specialists	7	1	1
Business/Career Assessment Specialists	6	0	0

Job Title	Total Positions	Current Vacancies	Projected Vacancies Over the Next 5 Years
Human Service Specialists/Aides and Rehabilitation Technician	5	1	2
Supported Employment Coordinator	1	1	0
Regional Support Staff	10	0	2
Drivers (part-time)	0	0	0

II. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND

Please see Table above.

III. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.

Please see Table above.

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

I. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM;

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has 23 counselors, vision rehabilitation specialists, and regional administrators who meet the Qualified Rehabilitation Professional (QRP), Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) standards. Currently, 56% of field staff meet the QRP standards. The VR agency anticipates six additional staff will be eligible to take the CRC exam in the next two years. Four central office administrators hold CRC certification.

All staff who obtain their CRC must maintain CRC status by participating in the required training. North Dakota VR is an approved continuing education provider through CRCC, and the HRD administrator coordinates and notifies staff of various training opportunities throughout the year. In addition, monthly training opportunities occur through video conferencing; as well as in-person training at the annual conference. In 2020, counseling staff received motivational interviewing training. This training occurs every two years. In 2021 the agency developed a contract with WOWI for assessment training for all staff. The contract will continue, so new counselors can participate in this training moving forward. Also in 2021, all counseling staff and regional administrators participated in a two-day understanding and working with personalities training, with a specific emphasis on employment.

The regional administrators review counselor's progress in reaching QRP standards at least annually during the counselor's performance review. North Dakota does not have any institutions that prepare rehabilitation professionals. Staff from the state office did work with the University of North Dakota to coordinate with CRCC so the university can offer a self-paced medical and physiological aspects of disability course. This course is one of the courses several counselors need if they are hired by the agency with a master's degree and meet category 3 for CRC attainment. Many staff who need further education are required to attend universities in other states. These schools are listed below. In addition, training sites used by North Dakota vision rehabilitation specialists are listed below.

Current counseling staff are taking post graduate classes to enable them to take the CRC exam. The numbers shown include staff currently enrolled in graduate programs or who have taken courses to meet the CSPD standards required by VR. The number of graduates in FFY 2021 and FFY 2022 are also shown below.

Institutions Providing Training to North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation Staff

Institution of Higher Ed	Students Enrolled	Graduates (FFY 2019)
Utah State University	1	1
University of Wisconsin Stout	1	0
Assumption University	1	0
University of North Dakota	2	0
University of Kentucky	1	1
Mississippi State University	1	1

II. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND

Please see Table above.

III. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.

Please see Table above.

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation lists all counselor job openings with Job Service North Dakota and the North Dakota State Government website. The agency preference is to hire individuals with a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling with credentials to qualify for certification. North Dakota VR will also consider the possibility of paid internships as an incentive to attract master's level interns with the intention of retaining them for counselor

openings. For hard to fill counselor positions, the agency has considered offering a sign-on bonus when advertising for counselor positions. The Director and Assistance Director have been working with the Department of Human Services Human Resource Department to improve job announcements for VR positions.

At this time, universities in North Dakota do not offer a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. Therefore, the agency is required to recruit graduate-level counselors from out-of-state. We are often unsuccessful in this effort because in most instances, our salaries are not competitive at the graduate level. If we are successful in recruiting graduate level counselors, we often find it difficult to retain them for the same reason. The University of North Dakota does offer a master's degree in counseling with an emphasis on rehabilitation and they have reached out to VR to determine what they can do to expand their program. Through our discussions, they developed necessary courses to meet the program requirements as well as making the program available through their distance learning platform. In addition, VR has started sending job announcements to them to post on their student site; as well as universities that offer a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling.

North Dakota VR recruits individuals with disabilities and provides reasonable accommodations needed to perform essential job functions. In addition, reasonable accommodation requests from current staff are addressed as they arise.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

VR recognizes that we will be losing valuable experience and managerial knowledge with the high level of retirees who are currently administrators in the regional and central offices. Our Success in Leadership initiative (launched in 2007) was a major aspect of our succession planning efforts. Due to entering COVID, Success in Leadership has not met. Applications are currently on hold.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has established a policy to ensure that professionals providing vocational rehabilitation services are appropriately and adequately trained to meet "Qualified Rehabilitation Professional Standards". The standard established and currently utilized when hiring is that they are nationally certified rehabilitation counselors.

A. Senior Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor requires a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, Counseling, Social Work, Psychology, Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Psychometrics, Behavioral Health, Behavioral Science, Disability Studies, Human Relations, Human Services, Marriage and Family Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Special Education or Vocational Assessment/Evaluation AND Two years of experience as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor; AND Certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC).

If unable to find qualified candidates, will consider filling as a:

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor requires a bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, Counseling, Social Work, Psychology, Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Psychometrics, Behavioral Health, Behavioral Science, Disability Studies, Human Relations, Human Services, Marriage and Family Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Special Education, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation or Human Development & Family Science.

AND one of the following:

- Two years of experience working with persons with disabilities in a direct service capacity; or
- One year of work experience as a vocational rehabilitation counselor; or
- A master's degree in one of the above disciplines.

Preference will be given to applicants who meet the ND Qualified Rehabilitation Professional (QRP) standards as follows: a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC); a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a counseling-related field from a program accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Counselor Education (CORE) or the Council on Accreditation of Counseling-Related Programs (CACRP); OR a master's degree in a closely-related field and eligibility to write the Council on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) Examination.

Individuals selected for any Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor position will be required to meet the ND Qualified Rehabilitation Professional (QRP) standards within five years from the date of appointment.

B. Individuals who do not meet personnel standards will develop a training plan that will identify how they will meet the personnel standards. The plan will also include timelines for meeting the personnel standard which must be approved by their regional administrator and the central office training coordinator.

C. At the present time, individuals requiring retraining to meet the personnel standards enroll in Utah State University's Distance Education Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling program, University of Wisconsin Stout, Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling Program, University of Kentucky Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, South Dakota State University and University of West Virginia, Master's Degree in Clinical Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling to complete the educational requirement for qualified rehabilitation personnel standards.

VR is waiting to hear which universities will be receiving the RSA Long-Term Training/CSPD Scholarships along with the changes there will be in the funding support available. Costs not covered by the scholarships are covered by VR's 110 funds.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

North Dakota VR has a strong working relationship with its workforce partners. This relationship allows staff to share information regarding business needs, current openings, and high demand occupations. The VR director is an active member of the Workforce Development Council. VR regional staff regularly meet with Job Service ND personnel and are members of their local Adult Education boards to share information regarding the evolving labor force and needs of individuals with disabilities. North Dakota VR has six staff members who provide

education, training and consultation for counselors related to workforce needs, labor market information, and the evolving workforce in the 21st Century; these positions include four business services specialists (BSS) and two career assessment specialists (CAS). All new counselors are required to complete four Career Index Plus webinars offered through WINTAC. Through monthly cyber chats and the state's annual training conference, VR staff are provided training on business engagement, labor market information, and other topics related to the evolving workforce.

In 1999, North Dakota VR's QRP standards were implemented. The goal established at implementation was 50% of staff on board October 1, 1999, would meet the QRP standards by October 2004 and 100% by October 2009. All staff hired after that date are required to meet QRP standards within five years of hire.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. A SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS WITHIN THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998; AND

VR assesses the the training needs of the current staff at all levels - administrative, counselor, vision rehabilitation specialists, career assessment specialists, business services specialists, rehab techs, and support staff. The needs assessment focuses on two levels of training (1) statewide training topics that are consistent with the State Plan, Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Regulations, RSA 911 requirements, and RSA priorities, and (2) regional training that addresses issues identified through case reviews, performance appraisals and other training that will assist staff in progressing toward their career goals.

Dollars are allocated for staff to attend workshops, webinars, conferences, formal course work training in rehabilitation counseling, medical assessment, ethics, job placement, rehabilitation technology, ADA, reauthorization, and other rehabilitation related training. All employees have access to these training opportunities. The agency's continuing education program also allows reimbursement for the cost of tuition and books for classes that are related to job duties and will increase the employee's skills in specific areas.

B. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO DESIGNATED STATE UNIT PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS.

VR receives and distributes information such as rehabilitation journals, Rehabilitation Briefs, National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Research Materials, topics researched by the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues, as well as videos and printed materials on related rehabilitation issues. Information is disseminated through the state email system and hard copies, CDs, DVDs are sent through the mail. North Dakota VR supports participation in professional organizations by encouraging attendance and providing registration and travel expenses for professional organization meetings and conferences.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

North Dakota VR provides interpreter services to individuals who have limited English speaking ability. Staff are provided information regarding Video Remote Interpreting (VRI). This is an on-demand service that provides communication between deaf or hard-of hearing persons or other languages in which VR staff can be in the same location, utilizing an interpreter by way of computer with a webcam and internet connection or a tablet using a cellular connection.

In several regions where minority populations are more predominant, VR staff have attended training on the customs and culture of minority groups. These materials are available to all VR staff.

North Dakota VR provides personnel or obtains services to accommodate clients in need of appropriate modes of communication. Agency staff members who have an interest are encouraged to take sign language classes. In regions that do not have personnel trained in alternate modes of communication, this service is purchased.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

North Dakota VR coordinates CSPD efforts with the CSPD requirements under IDEA. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is represented on the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) where information on training conferences is shared and invitations extended to attend each other's conferences and other training activities. VR is also a member of the statewide Community of Practice that has broad-based representation of agencies involved in various aspects of transition. Members of the Community of Practice, including VR staff, were also part of multi-agency team that participated in the Annual Capacity Building Institute to identify ways to improve transition services in the state. In addition, VR has one staff on the planning committee for the upcoming North Dakota DPI Secondary Transition Interagency Conference. VR will support staff attendance for the transition conference.

Due to COVID, North Dakota's Teacher Internship Program has been on hold. The VR Teacher Internship Program is designed to provide teachers with an opportunity to work closely with their local VR office and transition counselors. The teachers participate in a three-week internship, beginning with an in-depth orientation to the VR process. The project provides teachers with information regarding the VR program and process, adult agencies, employers' needs, labor market information, disability legislation, and has enhanced relationships between teachers and VR staff. Due to the success, VR plans to continue to offer this program once COVID is less of a concern.

North Dakota VR has and will continue to provide information to our staff and partners on our implementation of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act and pre-employment transition services through our cyber chats, provider meetings and written communication (email).

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation conducts a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) every three years. Together with the State Rehabilitation Council's Evaluation Committee and research analysts from the state's research team, VR began planning for the FFY 2021-2023 assessment in 2019 and conducted the activities in 2020. The state will conduct the next activities in 2023 for the 2024-2026 Statewide Assessment. The results of the CSNA will be used to develop goals, priorities, strategies and actions for both VR's State and Strategic Plans.

To obtain and assess unmet needs, a secondary data analysis was conducted using data from the ND VR client satisfaction survey. In addition, slightly different surveys geared to assess the various areas were sent to:

- those involved with special education at the secondary level and transition counselors,
- Community Rehabilitation Providers,
- to advocates, and
- an open invitation to the general public.

The rehabilitation needs identified, cut across all types and "categories". No needs were unique to any one of the groups for whom this assessment was conducted. Rather, the unique needs are identified with each individual during the vocational rehabilitation process.

For individuals with the most significant disabilities, the most commonly reported needs identified were help with finding a job, independent living skills and transportation. Other highlighted needs were more contact and support from their counselor.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

In North Dakota, 13.1% of the population is comprised of minorities. The breakdown of minorities employed during FFY 2020 is as follows: Native American is the largest of the minority groups at 5.6%, 4.1% are Hispanic, 3.4% are Black/African American, 2.3% are Other, comprised of individuals who have identified as having more than one race, and 1.8% are Asian/Pacific Islander.

The largest minority groups in ND is American Indian. There are four reservations in ND, two of which currently have American Indian VR Projects. VR collaborates with and frequently has dual cases with those programs.

For all minority groups, the most commonly identified unmet needs were assistance with financial aid, finding and/or keeping a job, and vocational/employment counseling.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

It should be noted that the one identified group who is unserved or underserved are individuals who are homeless. This group is not identified by one racial group. Of the individuals who have been considered unserved or underserved by VR, respondents did not have strongly ranked employment needs; the employment needs that were unmet were spread throughout the

choices. The most commonly identified employment need was assistance with finding and/or keeping a job, ongoing training/support on the job, and increased opportunities for self-employment.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

VR has a good relationship with and collaborates when possible with our Workforce partners. For individuals with disabilities who also receive services through the statewide workforce development system, the most commonly identified unmet needs were workplace relationship training, followed by assistance with finding and/or keeping a job and finally physical and mental restoration services.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

Youth and students with disabilities did not have strongly ranked employment needs. Financial Aid (22.7%) and assistance with finding and/or keeping a job (13.5%) were identified as their top employment needs. Vocational counselor turnover and communication are also identified in the top three.

In addition, VR conducted a Transition Survey of educators to ensure Pre-ETS services are available statewide to all students with disabilities who need them or to identify where the gaps/unmet needs are within the state. While normally, the Pre-ETS services are available, the pandemic had impacted the ability to provide services that need to be provided in person such as work-based learning.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

As part of the 2021 - 2023 CSNA, a link to the online survey was sent to individuals and directors of institutions and agencies chosen because of their likelihood to have a connection with or interest in individuals with disabilities. This included community rehabilitation programs, supported employment providers, psychosocial rehabilitation centers, Disability Support Services in the North Dakota University System, occupational therapy departments, and directors of special education. A total of 11 CRP provider surveys were returned. In addition, a link to the online survey was sent to advocates. These individuals were chosen based on their role with certain agencies or as a member of boards, advisory councils and committees who are connected to, and advocate for, individuals with disabilities. This included advocacy groups, disability organizations, Client Assistance Program, SRC and Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) members, Centers for Independent Living, various state agencies, AI VR projects, and VR staff. A total of 28 Advocate surveys were returned. An online version of the survey was provided with the option for alternative formats to give respondents flexibility in completing the survey. Responses were received from every region in the state with higher populated regions taking a greater share. Descriptive statistics and qualitative methods were applied for data analysis.

The surveys were designed to enable a comparison between Community Rehabilitation Programs' responses and non-CRP responses to the same set of questions. Questions included met and unmet employment-related needs, barriers encountered by CRPs and allowed for suggestions for improving services and removing barriers.

Unmet Needs:

CRPs identified increased opportunities for self-employment, benefits planning, and transportation as being at the top of the list of unmet needs. Advocates indicated assistance with finding and keeping a job was the most significant unmet need followed by independent living skills.

Transportation continues to be in the top of the list of unmet needs. VR is an active member of the ND Transit State Management Plan Committee. We will continue to advocate for increased services. We will also provide referrals and counseling and guidance to our clients on how to access the available transportation.

VR is working with providers to try to expand the services that they are able to provide. A pilot project has been launched to explore expanded SEP which will provide additional intensive training for providers and will result in policy amendments. There will also be continued education and awareness activities for the business community, lawmakers, service providers, educators, family members, and the general public. VR will also continue to work with Extended Services Funding sources to ensure individuals are able to utilize SEP and access supports once the VR case is closed. *Attachment (q)*

Barriers:

Providers felt that the top barriers were: community perception of people with disabilities, funding for agency operations and services, insufficient community services and agency staff turnover. Advocate respondents felt that there are insufficient community services, followed by funding agency operation and services. Funding for extended services and agency staff turnover tied for the third most commonly cited barrier.

In 2019, VR researched payment rates and service guidelines from various states; as well as, obtained rate information from WINTAC and North Dakota's Developmental Disabilities division for individual employment services (IES). In October 2019, VR implemented an hourly rate for job development and job coaching services for supported employment and customized employment services.

In the fall of 2021, VR State office staff, Regional Administrators and CRP staff met to discuss concerns expressed by VR staff about providers and provider services, availability of providers across the state that can provide VR services (both rural and urban areas), and to re-connect with CRPs after the pandemic. A work group was established in the fall of 2021 to outline VR's next steps on how to improve provider services in North Dakota.

Additional discussion relative to community rehabilitation programs is found in *Attachment (e)*

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Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers.

3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

Youth and students with disabilities did not have strongly ranked employment needs. Financial Aid and assistance with finding and/or keeping a job were identified as their top employment needs. This survey was conducted during the early stages of the pandemic when schools were providing distance learning or outside visitors were not allowed into the buildings. As a result, the students indicated a strong need for increased communication and contact. They have also expressed a concern over staff turnover.

Based on information from the Department of Public Instruction in 2020, there are approximately 4,369 students who are between the ages of 14-21. These individuals could potentially receive Pre-employment Transition Services, Title 1 and/or supported employment services during the next one to seven years. VR and DPI collaborate to provide transition planning for students with disabilities age 14 and in 9th grade to 21 years of age. Some of the major disability categories of these students include the following:

Primary Disability	Total by Disability	Age 14	Age 15	Age 16	Age 17	Age 18	Age 19	Age 20	Age 21
Autism	472	90	91	101	82	58	26	24	
Deaf Blind	0								
Emotional Disturbance	514	111	121	112	111	48	11		
Hearing Impairment	12		12						
Intellectual Disability	421	69	68	56	58	68	48	44	10
Other Health Impairment	891	224	194	179	180	100	14		
Orthopedic Impairment	0								
Speech Language Impairment	176	50	48	38	27	13			
Specific Learning Disability	1883	458	461	388	375	181	20		
Traumatic Brain Injury	0								
Visual Impairment	0								
Total by Age	4369	1002	995	874	833	468	119	68	10

In order to provide these transition students with pre-employment, in addition to the services provided by VR staff, VR has entered into purchase of service agreements with many local school districts to enhance or expand services. *Attachment (d)*

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES

Based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, North Dakota has over 37,400 residents between the ages of 16 and 64 who report a disability and consequently could be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

It is estimated that during 2023, a total of 3,738 individuals will receive vocational rehabilitation services.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

The remaining 360 individuals will receive services through Title VI, Part B.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION.

NDVR will no longer be on an Order of Selection.

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

NDVR will no longer be on an Order of Selection.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

The estimated annual cost to provide services to individuals who are in a services status is \$2.3 million.

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO BY THE STATE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, IF THE STATE HAS A COUNCIL, AND JOINTLY AGREED TO ANY REVISIONS

VR and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) with representation from American Indian VR programs, the client assistance program and the State Independent Living Council (SILC), have jointly developed the goals and priorities for the State VR program. The SRC meets quarterly to provide input to the VR agency on emerging need and this input is significant in shaping the goals and priorities of the VR agency. VR and the SRC held public forums this past year and invited consumers, parents, employers and other stakeholders to provide input on the goals and priorities of the VR program. VR and the SRC, during the Council's quarterly meeting held on January 15, 2020 jointly developed the goals and priorities for the VR program.

The goals and priorities are in alignment with WIOA and the Vision, Goals and Strategies in the Unified State Plan.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Goal 1: VR will assist 1,100 individuals with disabilities obtain or maintain competitive integrated employment during 22-23.

- Priority 1: To comply with State and Federal regulations.
- Priority 2: To provide opportunities for people with disabilities to obtain or maintain competitive integrated employment.

Goal 2: VR will provide services to 5000 employers throughout 22-23.

- Priority 1: To comply with Federal regulations.
- Priority 2: To assist employers with meeting their labor needs.
- Priority 3: To provide education and awareness to employers on the benefits of hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities.

Goal 3: VR will strive to decrease staff turnover rate to less than 15% during 22-23.

- Priority 1: To assist staff with their professional development.
- Priority 2: To provide more consistent and stable service to clients.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

The goals and priorities are based on the results of the 2021-2023 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) which is described in *Attachment (j)*, public input, and VR's Managing for Results Strategic Planning.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

The goals and priorities of the combined state plan are directly informed by section 116 performance accountability standards. For PY 2020, RSA and NDVR had negotiated 49% for MSGs and North Dakota achieved 68%. During the first two years of the four-year Unified State Plan, VR reported data for performance measures to RSA to establish a baseline used to determine future performance for the additional accountability measures.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

VR's most recent offsite monitoring was conducted in 2019. The report indicated findings in Internal Control Deficiencies. All necessary activities including, amending policy and practice were successfully completed.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is able provide services to all individuals and is not implementing an order of selection.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is not implementing an order of selection.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is not implementing an order of selection.

D. TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER; AND

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is not implementing an order of selection.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is not implementing an order of selection.

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is not implementing an order of selection.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's (VR) primary goal for the utilization of Title VI-B funds is to provide training and stabilization for an estimated 360 individuals with the most severe disabilities per year. It's projected that during FFY 2023, 360 individuals will be designated as eligible for supported employment and 76 will become employed. During FFY 2021, 318 individuals were designated as eligible for supported employment and 49 became employed. The breakdown by disability of those employed is expected to be similar to that of FFY 2021: cognitive impairments – 65%; psychosocial impairments – 29%; physical impairments – 2%; and communicative impairments – 4%.

VR will continue agreements whenever and wherever appropriate with the two for-profit and 18 non-profit community rehabilitation agencies to provide training and stabilization throughout the state. Extended services will also be provided by the community rehabilitation agencies with state general funds, and Medicaid waived services for individuals who qualify for services through the Developmental Disabilities division and are eligible for Medicaid services. For youth who qualify for and require SE but will not immediately be able to access extended services funded through state general funds or Medicaid waived services, VR will cover the cost of extended services, as outlined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Services are paid at the extended services rate. The VR counselor will provide the individual and family with the necessary information and referral so they may apply for or consider alternate extended services funding for those individuals who are receiving extended services, youth through the VR agency.

VR will ensure a minimum of 50% will be spent on youth and that those funds are met with a 10% match. Based on previous patterns, VR is confident that achieving this set aside will not be a concern. The latest data indicates that 50% of the SEP funds were spent on youth.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

Youth, with the most significant disabilities who require supported employment to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment, will receive training and stabilization through Title VI or general VR federal funds. If funding for extended services is not available for maintenance, extended services will be provided with state/federal VR funds for a period not to exceed 4 years.

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

VR will continue to work with the Behavioral Health division, Developmental Disabilities division, Division of Aging Services, County TBI Waiver Services and service providers to coordinate funding and services.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), working with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), is involved in ongoing data analysis, soliciting input from the public, to include VR consumers and partner stakeholders, in determining the strategic direction of the agency that are inclusive of the goals and priorities in Attachment (I) . The data sources used in identification and evaluation of the agency strategies include the Triennial Needs Assessment and information extracted that reports on the progress toward attaining the standards and indicators. VR has contracted with an independent research company to conduct client satisfaction surveys. The scope of the survey has been expanded. The expanded survey provides VR with current data that is used to identify trends and patterns, and is used to improve services for individuals. It is also used to capture data for the Triennial Needs Assessment. The annual case review process is used to further evaluate the effectiveness of rehabilitation counseling and guidance services provided across the agency. The Designated State Agency conducts biannual stakeholder surveys that provide important information to the agency with regard to emerging needs.

VR continues to expand services to businesses which will result in an increased number of individuals employed and those able to maintain employment.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS

VR continues to support assistive technology as an integral part of each stage of the VR process. When assistive technology needs are identified, further assessment and/or referrals are provided as necessary to include referrals to ND Assistive, the State Assistive Technology Act Program. Staff at ND Assistive meet the highest standard of their profession, providing assistive technology assessments and training (virtually and onsite), and are certified by the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America.

ND Assistive has two Assistive Technology Demonstration Centers in Fargo and Bismarck, complete with assistive technology to include the areas of work adaptations, sensory and communication needs, computer access, environmental modifications, and more. In each center, they have a unique simulated home environment with assistive technology throughout to include smart home technology for access and home monitoring. ND Assistive has a booth during the VR annual conference and presents on various topics to staff throughout the year.

Each new VR staff member tours the ND Assistive Demonstration Centers as part of their onboarding and receives information on ND Assistive's services.

ND Assistive maintains a social media presence with regular posts on the company's blog and outlets like Facebook and LinkedIn. They also make regular appearances on morning news channels. The topics covered include assistive technology equipment, funding, success stories, and staying at home through the use of AT.

In addition, VR is an agency member of the ND Assistive Consumer Advisory Council, which provides consumer-responsive, consumer-driven advice to the state AT Act Program.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM

In North Dakota, 13.1% of the population is comprised of minorities. The breakdown of minorities employed during FFY 2020 is as follows: Native American is the largest of the minority groups at 5.6%, 4.1% are Hispanic, 3.4% are Black/African American, 2.3% are Other, comprised of individuals who have identified as having more than one race, and 1.8% are Asian/Pacific Islander.

During PY 2020, 16.2% of all the individuals who became employed through VR services were minorities. This is similar to the 16.0% reported last time. The breakdown of minorities employed during PY 2020 is as follows: 6.9% identified as having more than one race, 5.3% Native American, 3.8% Black/African American and 0.2% Asian/Pacific Islander. 2.1% had an ethnicity of Hispanic.

Historically, the agency's strategy to improve performance was outreach to the four Native American reservations. The largest minority populations in North Dakota are individuals who are identified as American Indians, thus enhanced outreach to the reservations was a significant strategy to improve service to minority populations. There are four reservations in North Dakota. The tribal governments for two of those reservations currently receive funding from the Rehabilitation Services Administration for Tribal VR programs. VR has collaborated with tribal VR programs to provide technical assistance, training on specific disability related issues to include assistive technology and service to individuals who experience significant vision and/or hearing loss. Many of the VR counseling staff at the local regions share dual consumers with the tribal programs. The agency intends to increase the percentage of shared cases through identifying measures for the number of shared consumers in recently executed memorandum of understandings. Many of these reservations are located in remote corners of the state and a significant barrier to engaging consumers in VR service is the lack of public or private transportation. To address this issue, VR counseling staffs regularly travel to the reservation to provide state VR service. The VR regional administrators provide outreach to the reservations to assess the relationship between the state and tribal VR programs and seek opportunities to increase referrals to the VR program. Upon request, VR offers training and technical assistance to tribal VR in the provision of services.

Four percent of the state's population is comprised of new Americans who are recent immigrants to the United States. A majority of the new Americans come to the state from Nepal, Liberia, and Philippines. followed closely by China and India. New Americans often arrive in North Dakota with the support of Refugee Resettlement through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services who provides initial coordination of basic needs. As well as Refugee Resettlement Support Services through the Department Human Services, an agency that assists

get established and achieve self-sufficiency in the state. The resettlement effort includes partnerships with components of the workforce development system to address the unmet need of this population in securing employment. Partnering with components of the state workforce system, particularly the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) agency, the division ensures new Americans who experience disabilities are referred to VR to address disability-related barriers to employment. Staff in each geographical area communicate on a regular basis and participate in joint training and other networking opportunities that result in referrals between programs.

The agency also collaborates with the North Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS), the designated state agency for the VR program, to identify potential VR consumers. This coordination occurs between VR and the department's other divisions which includes the eight regional human service centers, behavioral health, field services, medical services, developmental disability, aging, and children and family services. In addition, regional VR staff outreach to staff of human service zone offices who administer DHS's economic assistance programs which include Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.

VR staff also collaborate with the various homeless shelters, as well as the subsidized housing units built for those who have been homeless, across the state to reach potential consumers who are unserved/underserved.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES)

VR is committed to provide pre-employment transition services to students. Activities include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, training on self-advocacy, counseling on post-secondary opportunities, and workplace readiness training based on individual needs. VR entered into purchase of service agreements with local education agencies to enhance or expand services. The activities include the following:

- Teachers and VR counselors provide co-instruction in local schools to offer students activities surrounding career exploration, self-advocacy, interest testing, and workplace readiness training. Workplace readiness training curriculums were developed by DPI, VR, and other partners through an NTACT TA grant, and are one of many tools that can be used for co-instruction.
- VR and DPI continue to collaborate at a local level with colleges, work force offices, community rehabilitation providers (CRPs), independent living centers, and employers to provide transition fairs. These fairs provide transition students with hands-on opportunities to explore and experience various careers.
- VR and North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind plan to collaborate on weekend pop-up clinics with the purpose of providing intensive pre-employment career services to youth with visual impairments. Due to the success of these effort, plans are to continue sponsoring this event across the state. VR also sends VR vision specialists to NDVS/SB to learn techniques and skills to assist with students. NDVS/SB also participated in a Tech Talk to demonstrate new assistive technology to the vision staff.

- ND is involved with the National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes. A VR administrator, along with educators at the state and local level attend the virtual quarterly meetings. The partners also joined the state and local communities of practice, so there is a smooth transition for students who are deaf.
- VR is also involved with the ND Dual Sensory Project in which strategies are found to work with individuals with a combined vision and hearing impairment. There are several partners dedicated to this project such as VR, Helen Keller National Center, ND Vision Services/School for the Blind, ND School for the Deaf, and Minot State University.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE

The results of the provider survey conducted with the 2021-2023 Triennial Needs Assessment is discussed in Attachment (j).

VR schedules statewide provider meetings and has one staff assigned part-time to support the collaborative effort of VR and providers to assist VR consumers gain competitive, integrated employment. In 2019, VR researched payment rates and service guidelines from various states; as well as, obtained rate information from North Dakota's Developmental Disabilities division for individual employment services (IES). In October 2019, VR implemented an hourly rate for job development and job coaching services for supported employment and customized employment services.

During the 2019 legislative session, North Dakota lawmakers authorized the Department of Human Services to create a Medicaid 1915(i) state plan amendment, which allows North Dakota Medicaid to pay for additional home and community-based services to support individuals with specific behavioral health conditions like mental illness, an addiction or a brain injury.

In the fall of 2015, VR began a three-year pilot project. VR established the three-year pilot to gather data, information and best practices the agency would need to consider when developing and implementing customized employment in the state. In addition, the project was designed to build the capacity to deliver customized employment services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities that lead to integrated and competitive employment opportunities for those currently receiving day support and segregated employment services. VR continues to contract with the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD) to coordinate and provide training, in-field mentoring and technical assistance for customized employment training. In addition, VR has provider service agreements to identify which services CRPs are approved to provide for VR clients and the qualifications to provide these services.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

Plans to meet and report on the performance accountability measures found in Section 116 of WIOA include:

- VR works with the core partner programs to receive and report employment data for individuals exiting the VR program who become employed in states other than North Dakota.
- The VR agency is actively working to align and integrate WIOA performance reporting requirements. The scope of this plan is included in the unified section of the state's workforce plan.

- VR closely monitors program data on a quarterly basis. The data is provided on a quarterly basis to RSA who uses the data to develop benchmarks of the VR program's performance.
- VR tracks the employer services as outlined in Attachment 4 of RSA-TAC-17-01, to be combined with data from ND Department of Labor.
- VR has started collecting SWIS wages and will continue to collect them quarterly for the employment and median wage performance measures.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The North Dakota Workforce Development Council has been engaged in developing and evaluating the success of strategic workforce planning. The Council conducted a statewide survey which was used in the development of the Workforce Development Strategic Plan and presented it to the Governor. The Council supports the following strategies which complement existing initiatives or programs and supports expansion of successful employment-based strategies:

- Engage students, parents, educators, schools, and businesses in a comprehensive career planning process.
- Increase stakeholder promotion of and employer use of work-based learning.
- Build partnerships for future workforce needs and opportunities.
- Assess and analyze gaps between labor supply and demand to provide programmatic offerings.

The VR staff has relationships with local Workforce partners. VR is seen as the disability experts. When there is an individual who has a disability and is working with a Workforce partner, VR may be called to open a case. We work collaboratively with individuals who are co-enrolled and provide guidance as to the necessary accommodations or adaptations that may be needed to assist an individual achieve vocational goals.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

The goals and strategies below are based on the results of the 2021-2023 Triennial Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs conducted in 2020, public input, federal standards and indicators, recommendations from the SRC and VR's Managing for Results Strategic Planning. They are designed to support achievement of VR's goals and priorities identified in *Attachment (I)*.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

Some strategies support achievement of more than one of VR's goals.

Goal 1: VR will assist 1,100 individuals with disabilities obtain or maintain competitive integrated employment during PY 22-23.

- Priority 1: To comply with State and Federal regulations.

- Priority 2: To provide opportunities for people with disabilities to obtain or maintain competitive integrated employment.

Strategy 1.1 *Assist with increasing provider capacity through activities such as training and Direct Support Professional (DSP) development.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 1.2 *Improve communication with providers to impact services at a case and system level.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 1.3 *Strengthen relationships with referral sources to increase number of appropriate applicants.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 1.4 *Utilize training to its maximum potential for effective staff performance and for the development of partners.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Goal 2: VR will provide services to 5000 employers throughout PY 21-22.

- Priority 1: To comply with Federal regulations.
- Priority 2: To assist employers with meeting their labor needs.
- Priority 3: To provide education and awareness to employers on the benefits of hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities.

Strategy 2.1 *Participate as a member in business, social, and professional organizations, such as chambers of commerce, Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), and Rotary Clubs.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 2.2 *Strategically develop infrastructure to connect Business Service Specialist role to employers and other VR roles.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 2.3 *Provide information to employers regarding incentives such as tax credits and other benefits that will incentivize employing individuals with disabilities.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 2.4 *Expand the scope and type of our social media presence to improve communication.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 2.5 *Redesign the web page for more detailed information, clarity, and accessibility.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Goal 3: VR will strive to decrease staff turnover rate to less than 15% during PY 22-23.

- Priority 1: To assist staff with their professional development.
- Priority 2: To provide more consistent and stable service to clients.

Strategy 3.1 *Improve staff engagement through activities such as project inclusion, individual and staff meetings.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 3.2 *Develop staff via training, specialization, and career ladders.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

Strategy 3.3 *Promote the support the development of future leaders via activities such as training and special assignments.*

Innovation/enhancement/improvement

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

VR received recommendations from the Washington Initiative on Supported Employment (WISE), North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD), SRC members and through public comment to develop and implement customized employment. North Dakota VR developed a customized employment policy, payment rates for customized employment and training and technical assistance for CRPs. VR invested and continues to invest in training and technical assistance for CRPs to gain the skills necessary to ensure that customized employment services are available across the state. VR contracted with NDCPD to coordinate training and technical assistance activities for eight CRPs to begin customized employment training. These CRPs received training to include webinars, technical assistance and in-field mentoring. Only CRPs who have participated or who are currently participating in VR's customized employment training initiative, coordinated through Minot State University, are authorized to provide customized employment. The number increased from eight to thirteen CRPs provide customized employment services in all eight regions in North Dakota. VR will explore ways to evaluate our provides to ensure quality services are being delivered.

Notations are made by the goals and/or strategies that include innovation, expansion and improvement of services and/or outreach activities.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

Goal 1: VR will assist 1,100 individuals with disabilities obtain or maintain competitive integrated employment during PY20 and PY21 by June 2022.

Priority 1: To comply with State and Federal regulations.

Priority 2: To provide opportunities for people with disabilities to obtain or maintain competitive integrated employment.

The total number of successful rehabilitations for completed federal program year 2019 was 568 and federal program year 2020 was 419 for a total of 987 (90% of the goal).

This goal was not met.

Strategies that impacted the outcome:

- Formulated a committee to establish onboarding activities to decrease staff turnover
- In the midst of the pandemic, ND VR moved staff home while maintaining relationships with clients through virtual services.
- VR has business service specialists to provide outreach and services to businesses in all four quadrants of the state. The division has four staff dedicated to providing business service and connecting VR counseling staff with local business to promote employment of persons with disabilities. Monthly meetings occur to work on statewide business engagement strategies.
- Provided presentations and information at the Statewide Governor's Workforce Conference and Statewide Association for Human Resource Managers. Reached an audience of over 250 business attendees to market the VR program.
- Training of staff in motivational interviewing techniques that serve to engage consumers as active participants in seeking employment.
- The division is a member of the State and Local Chamber of Commerce and participates in activities that serve to build relationships with business and facilitate referral of consumers for employment with these business entities.
- VR staff provide personal assistance to consumers in completion of resumes, teaching interview skills and guiding consumers in completion of on-line applications.
- VR continues a leadership role in the State's Workforce Development Council responsible for the development and evaluation of the State's Workforce Strategic Plan. VR staff working in the agency regional offices have effective regional teams with representatives of the partner agencies as identified in WIOA. These teams are effective in planning joint workforce activities that include career fairs, and discussion on collaboration to provide service to business.
- The options for extended services were increased as a result of the implementation of the 1915i in ND.
- VR has increased the number of CRP's who are able to provide Supported and Customized Employment.

Goal 2: VR developed a system to certify eligible individuals for the customized employment state tax credit through April 30, 2021.

Priority 1: To comply with HB 1406 passed in the 2019 State legislative session.

Priority 2: To incentivize employers to hire individuals with the most significant disabilities who require customized employment.

This goal was met. The process was outlined and has been put into place. DVR has created a flyer to inform employers about the tax credit, has made information available electronically on the website and via social media, and in person through training of VR and CRP staff. When

appropriate, the request is sent into the VR state office, is reviewed to verify all applicable criteria are met, and a letter certifying the individual is sent to the employer for their records.

Strategies that impacted the outcome:

- VR developed informational materials which provides information VR staff are able to share with businesses and clients.
- Information regarding the Tax Incentive is available electronically on the VR website as well as through various social media platforms.
- VR has partnered with the ND Tax Department to ensure the process will be seamless for businesses.

Goal 3: VR will provide 2,720 services to employers during PY20 and PY21 by June 2022.

Priority 1: To comply with Federal regulations.

Priority 2: To provide opportunities for people with disabilities to obtain or maintain competitive integrated employment.

Priority 3: To provide education and awareness to employers on the benefits of hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities.

This goal was exceeded. During PY 2019, 3048 services were provided to employers and in PY 2020, 2360 services were provided to employers.

Strategies that impacted the outcome:

- All four BSS attended the Windmills Training.
- Counseling staff were also given goals and are provided training to provide services to employers.
- VR staff attended the State HR conference where they conducted a session regarding VR services, they had a booth where they were able to provide additional information and network with employers.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

- 25% counselor turnover rate in 2020
- 21% counselor turnover rate in 2021
- CRPs have lost staff and there has been a reduction in the availability of services.
- Many clients lost their jobs, closed their VR case, or put their case on hold due to the pandemic.
- There were businesses that closed or reduced the hours of operation due to the pandemic.

- The North Dakota unemployment rate is at 3.2%.

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS

VR facilitated the Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, which is a subcommittee of the SRC where they promote competitive integrated employment as the first choice for individuals with the most significant disabilities. VR has partnered with twelve community providers to offer training in Customized Employment through Minot State North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities and the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE).

The primary supported employment goals identified in Attachment (n) of the 2020 Plan were to provide training and stabilization to an estimated 340 individuals and employ 76 individuals. In 2020, we provided training and stabilization to 325 individuals and 60 individuals became successfully employed. In 2021, we provided training and stabilization to 318 individuals and 49 individuals became successfully employed.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Supported employment is provided to eligible consumers with the most significant disabilities. VR's Title VI, Part B funds are used to provide intensive skills and behavioral training for consumers in competitive, integrated employment. The challenge for VR is the availability of extended services funds specifically the shortage of state funds available for individuals who have a mental illness, brain injury, or others who qualify for supported employment but do not have an identified extended services funding source. In addition, there is a lack of rural community rehabilitation providers as well as the willingness for the providers to travel long distances to provide services. Finally, COVID has significantly impacted the ability of providers to cover existing services within their agencies, retain staff or hire new staff to support individuals with disabilities.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

The ETA-9169 for PY2020 has the following:

- Employment second quarter after exit rate 58.9
- Employment fourth quarter after exit – 57.7
- Median earnings second quarter after exit - \$4,036.76
- Credential Rate - 52.5
- Measurable Skill Gains - 68.0

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED

During FFY 2020 and 2021, innovation and expansion funds were spent on the following activities:

ADA:

VR continues to participate with on-going education and ten staff attended the 2021 National ADA Symposium virtually. The regional offices have staff who are trained to support referrals and provide resources to employers and businesses in the community.

Business Services:

I & E funds were used to pay for business, technical, and professional service organization memberships, including Chamber of Commerce, for regional and state VR staff. Funds were also used for booth registration at high-profile regional and state conferences and events. Both allow for higher visibility of VR within the business community and by our individuals. They enable us to develop long-term partnerships with business owners and employers based on common goals, which should enhance recruitment and retention practices benefiting individuals with disabilities. In addition, the four Business Service Specialists attended the Windmills training to equip them with the ability to help businesses become more inclusive of individuals with disabilities.

Transition:

VR had transition contracts with local education units where students received Pre-ETS and as a result were able to participate in various work experiences, including job shadows, as well as developing resumes and practicing interviewing skills.

VR supported our transition services program administrator in attending the annual Capacity Building Institute. The program administrator is a member of the ND team represented by vocational Rehabilitation, Department of public Instruction and Career and Technical Education.

State Rehabilitation Council:

Funds were used to provide travel and per diem to SRC members.

Statewide Independent Living Council:

Funds were used to provide travel and per diem to SILC members. In addition, funds were used to pay dues to Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL). Two members attended the national APRIL Conference as well as the national SILC Congress. Eight SILC members also attended the Dakota CIL Embrace Your Disability Conference. After all three of those conferences, the attendees provided an overview of training to the council.

Assistive Technology:

The Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation controls and administers the funds made available through the federal Assistive Technology Act Grant and awards these federal grant funds to ND Assistive. The Vocational Rehabilitation Director or designee is a member of the Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) for the Technology Act Grant.

ND Assistive has a certification process for newly hired staff. Certified AT specialists employed at ND Assistive are, in addition to their primary work duties, spending time to develop the knowledge and skill set of newly hired AT specialist staff. The process of training can take up to 18 months. This process was developed due to a lack of educational opportunities in the state of North Dakota to produce trained AT specialists

Customized Employment:

VR contracted with Minot State University to coordinate and provide training and technical assistance and project management for customized employment training to include the Discovery Process for community rehabilitation providers and vocational rehabilitation staff throughout the state of North Dakota.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES

Supported employment services are available to individuals with the most significant disabilities in all disability categories including developmental disabilities, severe mental illness, traumatic brain injury, and physical disabilities. Services are provided by 20 providers. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) projects to serve 360 individuals with the most significant disabilities, in competitive integrated employment placements.

Individuals with the most significant disabilities will be served and outcomes achieved through the implementation of the following activities:

- Continued education and awareness activities for the business community, lawmakers, service providers, educators, family members, and the general public.
- Targeting supported employment as an outcome for students with the most severe disabilities transitioning from school to work through regional transition services.
- Coordination of the departments, agencies, divisions, organizations and programs whose activities have a direct impact on supported employment services.
- Identification of training and technical assistance needs based on provider outcome data.
- Continue to require licensing for all supported employment providers which will include accreditation by a national accrediting body.
- Continue to have semi-annual meetings with providers to provide technical assistance and training.
- Continue to work with extended services funding sources to ensure individuals can utilize supported employment and access supports once the VR case is closed.

Supported employment training is provided up to 24 months, unless more time is necessary for the client. In order to ensure continuity and a smooth transition, documentation must demonstrate that the individual meets the criteria for transitioning to extended services.

Individuals, once employed, begin the training piece of supported employment through the assistance of the individual's job coach. The job coach will provide training to the employer and the individual on job tasks, reasonable accommodations, and how to ensure the individual has the skills necessary to perform the work tasks, as independently as possible. The VR counselor must visit the individual at the employment site within 30 days of the individual becoming employed. The visit is coordinated with the community rehabilitation provider (CRP). Further visits will occur based on individual or employer needs.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES

Stabilization is the expected point of transition to extended services. Individuals are considered stabilized in employment if:

- all support needs have been addressed and necessary modifications or accommodations have been made at the worksite;
 - the individual is satisfied with the type of work;
 - the individual is satisfied with the overall number of hours worked per week;
 - the individual is working to one's maximum ability, as independently as possible;
 - the individual and employer agree that the person is performing the job, and meeting expectations of employment; and
 - the individual has reached a consistent intervention rate.
-
- **Transfer to extended services**
 - Prior to transitioning to extended services the VR counselor will schedule a team meeting. The team, which includes the extended services funder, must concur that the individual is stable in the job.
 - The VR counselor and extended services funder will identify the date the case will be transferred from VR to extended services.
 - The VR counselor will notify the individual and CRP with the projected date the individual will be ready to transfer to extended services.
 - The VR counselor will review the CRP progress report until the case can be closed to ensure the individual remains stable in a job and address any concerns that may arise.
 - The individual must be in extended services for a minimum of 90 days prior to case closure.

In the spirit of Employment First and the need for competitive integrated employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities working for sub-minimum wage or in sheltered employment, VR piloted a three year Expanded Supported Employment Project, which began in 2015 and ended in September 2018. The project outcomes will influence amendments to SE policies, practices, guidelines and payment rates; as well as assist in the development of a customized employment policy, guidelines and payment rate. VR continues to invest in the development of customized employment through a contract with Minot State North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities to provide training and technical assistance to providers.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL) CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY WIOA[14], AND ITS SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT[15];

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

2. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY)[16] AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[17], THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[18], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER SECTION 111 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

North Dakota Department of Human Services

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[19], THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[20], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND/OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Damian Schlinger, Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

FOOTNOTES

[14] Public Law 113-128.

[15] Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

[16] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[17] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[18] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations.

[19] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[20] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	Damian Schlinger
Title of Signatory	Director, NDVR
Date Signed	February 3, 2022

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.	
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.	
3. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to: Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:	
3.a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.b. The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (A or B must be selected):	
3.b.(A) "is an independent State commission" (Yes/No)	No
3.b.(B) "has established a State Rehabilitation Council" (Yes/No)	Yes
3.c. Consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.d. The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3)	
3.e. The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds (Yes/No)	No
3.f. The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs (Yes/No)	No
3.g. Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan	No

The State Plan must include	Include
3.h. The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.k. The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.l. The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities	
3.m. The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:	
4.a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.b. Impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.c. Provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No)	Yes
4.d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.e. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.g. Provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act	

The State Plan must include	Include
4.h. Comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.i. Meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs	
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,	
4.j.i. Has developed and will implement,	
4.j.i.I. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and	
4.j.i.II. Strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and	
4.j.ii. Has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25))	
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:	
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act	
5.c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act	
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:	
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act	
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that	

The State Plan must include	Include
such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act	
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:	Yes
7.a. The Designated State Agency Assures That it Will Provide Supported Employment Services as Defined in Section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b. The designated State agency assures that:	
7.b.i. The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b.ii. An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act	

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);

- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as “baseline” for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA.” The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as “baseline” for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as “baseline” for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as “baseline.” Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state’s plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	60.0	60.0	60.0	61.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	58.8	59.0	58.8	60.5
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	4141.1	4141.0	4141.1	4224.0
Credential Attainment Rate	39.7	52.6	39.7	52.7
Measurable Skill Gains	57.1	68.1	57.1	68.2
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹	Not Applicable ¹

¹

“Effectiveness in Serving Employers” is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult program, Dislocated Worker program, Youth program, Wagner-Peyser Act program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation program—and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it elects to include in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. ²⁴ If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the “common planning elements” in Sections II-IV of this document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program.

[24] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR APPENDIX

ALL WIOA CORE PROGRAMS

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

WIOA Title I and Title III Programs

PY22/PY23	Employment 2nd Qtr after Exit	Employment 4th Qtr after Exit	Median Earnings 2nd Qtr after Exit	Credential Attainment	Measurable Skills Gains
Adult	78.5%	73.0%	\$6,300	66.0%	64.1%
Dislocated Worker	80.0%	84.2%	\$10,000	59.0%	77.6%
Youth	75.6%	68.0%	\$4,200	49.0%	59.2%
Wagner-Peyser	63.7%	65.0%	\$6,800	NA	NA

¹ "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans.

ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Additional Indicators of Performance
No additional indicators.

OTHER APPENDICES