



Connecting Talent with Opportunity

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA AREA 9 WIOA  
UNIFIED LOCAL/REGIONAL AREA PLAN  
Submitted Draft May 31, 2024**

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## Strategic Elements, Governance and Structure:

**1. Identification of the Fiscal Agent & Governance Structure:** Provide an identification of the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA § 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) as determined by the chief elected official. This section should also include a description of the responsibility assigned to each of the following entities, as applicable for the LWDA:

- i. Chief Local Elected Official and/or Local Elected Official Board
- ii. Fiscal Agent
- iii. Local Workforce Development Board
- iv. Program Administrator (if a separate entity from Fiscal Agent)

The Fiscal Entity is: Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, Burke Walker, Executive Director, 305 Research Drive, Athens, GA 30605, (706) 369-5650

**2. Description of Strategic Planning Elements** – Provide a description of the strategic planning elements listed below. A complete answer will rely on a variety of data sources and employer input, and will describe how the information was gathered and what stakeholders were consulted.

- a. Provide an analysis of the regional economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. Include the listing of occupations in demand within the region and describe how the list was developed citing source data.

Region 9, Northeast Georgia, continues to experience a strong labor market as defined by the anticipated growth in several super sectors and an unemployment rate lower than the state and national average. Despite the strong employment numbers, the average household salary remains lower than the state and national average based on the most recent data available. As depicted in the Region 9 Labor Market Profile, the area's super sectors are Construction, Education and Health Services, Financial activities, Information, Leisure and Hospitality, Manufacturing, Natural Resources, Mining, and Agriculture.

Combined with the Projection Data below, based on 10-year projections, the top in-demand industry sectors in Region 9 are Accommodation, Motion Picture and sound Recording, Warehousing and Storage, Clothing and Accessories, Support Activities for Transportation, Food Services, Amusement, Gambling and recreation, Ambulatory Health Care, Electronics and Appliances, and Nonstore Retailers.

Over the past five years, the region has not experienced a significant change to the top-demand job openings and careers listed in this section; however, new job categories within our super sectors have been added and are expected to increase significantly. For example, Manufacturing and Healthcare continue to be the priority sectors for the region; both have significant anticipated growth in related fields such as warehousing (for Manufacturing/Distribution) and Ambulatory Health Care (for healthcare). These two sectors are identified as top workforce strategies in this region because of the earnings rate related to the educational requirements. This makes them a

feasible career path for almost 30% of the regional population 18 and 65+. Despite the low training unemployment rate, to create a robust workforce pipeline to these careers, we continue to need training and certification options—specifically short-term training—so that emerging and dislocated workers can gain the skills and training needed to obtain a job in one of these sectors.

Information in this section was gathered from the Georgia Department of Labor, Workforce Information and Analysis, and Labor Insight/Burning Glass. Information was also gathered through discussions with Chambers of Commerce, Economic Developers, Human Resource Managers, Industry Feedback, and labor union representatives.

The list of in-demand occupations is attached. This was compiled utilizing data from the GaDOL website: <https://explorer.gdol.ga.gov>, Georgia Labor Market Explorer Information, sorted by Occupational Outlooks for the Northeast Georgia LWDA. Staff utilized the process outlined by GDOL Workforce and Statistics and Economic Research Staff and the data grid for Area 9’s Occupational Projections. A comparison was made of the “annual growth rate,” “annual Openings from Growth and “education” columns to compile the in-demand occupation list for NEGA.



	Establishments			Employment			Weekly Wage		
	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change
Construction	1,724	1,764	2.3%	13,470	14,309	6.2%	1,268	1,285	1.3%
Education and Health Services	1,670	1,728	3.5%	25,215	25,952	2.9%	1,144	1,161	1.5%
Financial Activities	1,385	1,482	7.0%	7,424	7,406	-0.2%	1,186	1,207	1.8%
Information	173	185	6.9%	1,502	1,447	-3.7%	1,112	1,335	20.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,455	1,501	3.2%	24,539	25,777	5.0%	427	423	-0.9%
Manufacturing	732	736	0.5%	28,304	30,746	8.6%	1,234	1,224	-0.8%
Natural Resources, Mining, and Agriculture	224	225	0.4%	1,979	2,087	5.5%	1,086	990	-8.8%
Other Services	991	1,009	1.8%	4,971	5,107	2.7%	932	893	-4.2%
Professional and Business Services	2,388	2,437	2.1%	17,344	18,324	5.7%	1,063	992	-6.7%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	3,075	3,075	0.0%	60,495	62,523	3.4%	891	868	-2.6%
Unclassified	1,424	2,180	53.1%	1,044	1,234	18.2%	1,025	1,089	6.2%
Government	540	539	-0.2%	41,252	42,363	2.7%	1,058	1,088	2.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,781</b>	<b>16,861</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>227,536</b>	<b>237,277</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>

**Industries by Projected Growth**

This section shows the industries with the highest total annual percent change in Northeast Georgia Local Workforce Development Area, GA for the 2020-2030 time period.

Rank	Industry	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Estimated Employment	Total Change
1.	Accommodation	1644	2,962	1,318
2.	Motion Picture And Sound Recording	182	327	145
3.	Warehousing and Storage	6182	9135	2,953
4.	Clothing and Accessories	1,274	1,795	521
5.	Support Activities for Transportation	472	640	168
6.	Food Services	17,474	23,679	6,205
7.	Amusement, Gambling Recreation	1,143	1,544	401
8.	Ambulatory Health Care	9,096	12,241	3,145
9.	Electronic & Appliance	332	444	112
10.	Nonstore Retailers	1,131	1492	361

Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics Division, Projections Unit

### Occupational Employment Distribution

This section shows the occupations with the highest projected employment in Northeast Georgia Local Workforce Development Area, GA for the 2020-2030 time period.

Rank	Occupation Title	2020 Estimated Employment	2030 Projected Employment
1.	Transportation/Material Moving	27,359	34,816
2.	Office and Administrative Support	26,427	29,139
3.	Sales and Related	21,012	25,109
4.	Food Preparation and Serving Related	18,413	25,064
5.	Production	20,372	23,329
6.	Educational Instruction and Library	18,165	21,042
7.	Management	14,585	17,391
8.	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	10,972	14,098
9.	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	8,481	10,007
10.	Construction and Extraction	8,622	9,788

Source: Georgia Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics Division, Projection Unit

- a. Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Employers continue to state that soft-skills training is one of the most needed and requested. Industry reports new employees, specifically those under 30, do not understand the importance of these in the workplace. The needed skills include punctuality and attendance, problem-solving, awareness of appropriate work behaviors, how to get along with supervisors and co-workers, the importance of producing quality work, and financial literacy. This deficiency re-occurs throughout all the various in-demand occupations. These skills are taught as part of the GeorgiaBEST training offered through The Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) and is embedded into all k-12

pathways offered at Career Academies. The skills taught are in response to feedback given by local industry.

In direct response to the manufacturing industry needs in the NEGA region, a six- week course called ManufactuREADY was developed and has been in place for the last several years. Currently no trainings are offered; however, the course remains available as needed. ManufactuREADY couples occupational training, soft skills and a simulated manufacturing work environment. Upon completion of the six-week course, graduates are given preferred hiring status with several local manufacturers. In the past, the course has served over 100 participants each year.

Additionally, the local area continues to work with the CNA training vendors to incorporate skills identified by employers hiring CNA trainees as needed and necessary, including “soft skills” and computer literacy skills.

Athens Technical College continues to offer short-term, non-credit CNA. It is anticipated that this will continue through the next planning period.

The following chart exemplifies the numbers served through CNA programs through Athens Tech.

WIOA NORTHEAST GEORGIA SHORT-TERM TRAINING OVERVIEW										
Athens Technical College - Certified Nursing Assistant										
State Fiscal Year Data 2022-2023										
	# of Students	Employed	Job Search	Not Employed	Currently in Class	% Employed	% in School			
Certified Nursing Assistant Program	28	20	4	1	3	71.43%	10.71%			

The following charts provide information on the demand occupation job postings for:  
**Northeast Georgia Regional Commission In-Demand Occupation List** (Burning Glass)

Transportation and Material Moving

Driver/Sales Workers  
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers  
Light and Delivery Truck Drivers  
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators  
Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers  
Packers & Packagers  
Parking Lot Attendants  
Cleaners of Vehicle Equipment  
First-line Supervisors of Transportation, General

Office and Administrative Support

Customer Service  
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Audit Clerks  
Office Clerks  
Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks  
Order Fillers  
Stock Clerks – Sales Floor, Stockroom, Warehouse or Yard  
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants  
Medical Secretaries  
Hotel, Motel and Resort Desk Clerks

Business and Financial Operations

Marketing Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists  
Purchasing Agents  
Accountants  
Human Resources Specialists  
Management Analysts  
Training and Development Specialists  
Loan Officers  
Personal Financial Advisors  
Meeting, Convention and Event Planners

Sales and Related

Retail Sales, Supervisor, Salesperson  
Sales Representative  
Real Estate and Insurance Sales Agents  
Cashiers  
Sales Agents, Financial Sales  
Counter and Rental Clerks  
Parts Salesperson

Management

Food Service Managers  
General and Operations Managers  
Sales Managers  
Marketing Managers  
Financial, Construction, and Education Managers  
Medical & Health Service Managers  
Storage and Distribution Managers

Legal

Lawyers, Paralegals, Legal Assistants  
Legal support workers  
title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers  
Judicial Law Clerks

Education, Training and Library

Teachers, postsecondary  
Vocational Teachers  
Preschool and Kindergarten Teachers  
Elementary, Middle, High School, Special Education,  
Teacher Assistants  
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and  
Career/Technical Education

Healthcare Practitioners and Technical

Registered Nurses  
LPN, Critical Care Nurses  
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians  
Pharmacy Technicians  
Respiratory Therapy Technicians  
Physical Therapists  
Speech Language Pathologists  
Health Technologists and Technicians  
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians

Healthcare Support

Nursing Assistants (CNA, PCT)  
Physical Therapist Assistants  
Medical Assistants  
Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers  
Phlebotomists  
Dental Assistants  
Massage Therapists  
Medical Equipment Preparers  
Occupational Therapy Assistants

Community and Social Services

Educational, Guidance, School and Vocational  
Counselors  
Mental Health Counselors  
Social and Human Service Assistants  
Marriage and Family Therapists  
Healthcare Social Workers  
Child, Family and School Social Workers  
Probation Officers and Correctional Treatment  
Specialists  
Health Educators

Life, Physical and Social Science

Quality Control Analysts  
School, Clinical and Counseling Psychologists  
Medical and Life Scientists  
Biological Technicians  
Chemists  
Environmental Science and Protection Technicians  
Transportation Planners

Food Preparation and Serving Related

Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers  
Waiters and Waitresses  
Cooks, Dishwashers  
Host and Hostesses  
Bartenders  
Chefs and Head Cooks  
Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants  
Food Preparation Workers, including Fast Food

Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media

Fine Arts, Graphic Designers  
Merchandise Displays and Window Trimmers  
Coaches and Scouts  
Public Relations Specialists  
Interpreters and Translators  
Actors and Editors  
Interior Designers  
Commercial and Industrial Designers



The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Workforce Development Division provides occupational skills training in Demand Occupations for industries that are stable or growing. Skills training will not be provided in declining industries. At present, occupational training is only provided for jobs and careers where hourly rates and salaries are paid. Training is not provided for careers or jobs with commissions and fees (this includes real estate, cosmetology, massage therapy and nail technicians). Additional sources of financial aid may be available through the school's Financial Aid Office.

This listing serves as a guide, and is not meant to be all-inclusive. There may be additional occupations in which demand occurs based on the job market or specific opportunities within the broad spectrum of occupations. The NEGRC WDD may provide training for a job where demand is limited, but current openings exist. Bona fide job offers, letters of pre-hire and/or three employment posted ads for that occupation may be required for training in limited demand areas.

- Experience Requirements: (*source: Burning Glass*)
  - (1) Intermediate or higher level IT training requires previous IT related work experience.
  - (2) Healthcare occupations will be considered upon completion of core classes and/or prerequisites and acceptance into the occupational specific program of study.
  - (3) Requires background and Motor Vehicle Report (MVR) check.
  - (4) Six Sigma and Project Management Certifications will be considered on a case-by-case basis determined by the applicants work experience and industry.

- Education levels: (source JobsEQ® Data as of 2023Q4)

## Annual Average Projected Job Growth by Education Levels

Doctoral or professional degree (\$124,700)



Master's degree (\$86,700)



Bachelor's degree (\$86,300)



Associate's degree (\$58,000)



Postsecondary non-degree award (\$47,100)



High school diploma or equivalent (\$46,200)



Some college, no degree (\$40,200)



None (\$32,200)



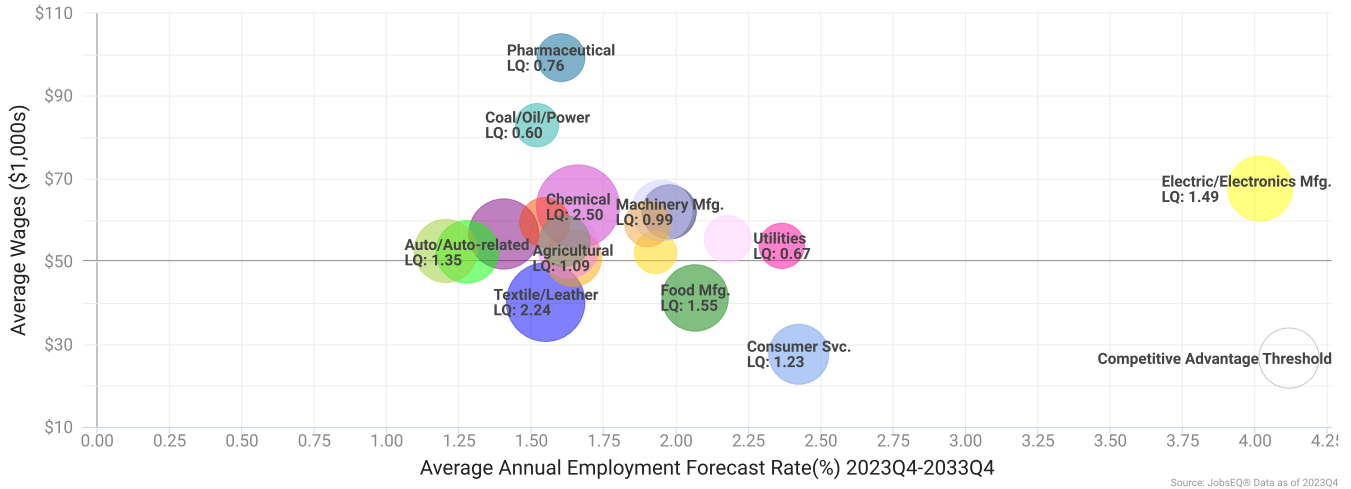
All Levels (\$53,700)



Source: JobsEQ®  
Data as of 2023Q4

- Industry Clusters in Demand: A cluster is a geographic concentration of interrelated industries or occupations. The industry cluster in the NEGA with the highest relative concentration is Chemical with a location quotient of 2.50. This cluster employs 5,913 workers in the region with an average wage of \$63,280. Employment in the Chemical cluster is projected to expand in the region about 1.7% per year over the next ten years.

Industry Clusters for NEGA as of 2023Q4



Location quotient and average wage data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, imputed where necessary, and updated through 2023Q3 with preliminary estimates updated to 2023Q4. Forecast employment growth uses national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics adapted for regional growth patterns.

- b. Provide an analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment, unemployment data, information on labor market trends and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. List all data sources used to gather this information.

The 2022 population of the 12-county region, according to the 2020 Census, was 691,261, which is a more than 13% increase from the 2010 population of 574,047. The population growth from 2005 to 2015 was 17.69%, which is higher than the state and national average of 14.44% and 8.77%, respectively. The projected population growth for 2025 is 703,354. The source for the population numbers was the US Census Bureau, Population Division. The number in the labor force in 2021 was 315,533 in 2021 and increased to 321,864 in 2022, a 2.0% increase. The number of employed persons in 2021 was 304,930 and increased to 312,720 in 2022, an increase of 2.6%. The unemployment rate for the region was 2.8% in 2022 compared to 3.4% in 2021. The source of the labor force, employment, and unemployment numbers was the Georgia Department of Labor and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

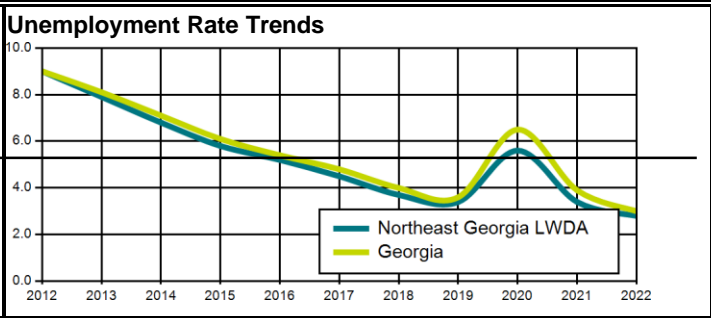
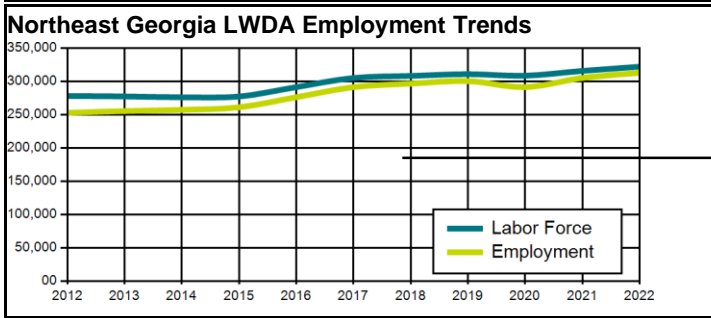
The 2021 Census indicates that 30.7% of the 18-65+ workers have at least a high school diploma, 24.4% have some college, 7.4% are two-year college graduates, and 15% are four-year college graduates. 12% of the 18-65+ labor force do not possess a GED/ High School diploma or higher.

The following chart summarizes the above data related to the labor force, the number of employed and unemployed persons, the unemployment rate, and the change in those numbers from 2021 to 2022.

<b>Labor Force Activity</b>												
<b>ANNUAL AVERAGES</b>												
	<b>Labor Force</b>			<b>Employed</b>			<b>Unemployed</b>			<b>Rate</b>		
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Barrow	42,196	43,097	2.1%	40,959	42,011	2.6%	1,237	1,086	-12.2%	2.9%	2.5%	-13.8%
Clarke	58,531	57,891	-1.1%	56,275	55,977	-0.5%	2,256	1,914	-15.2%	3.9%	3.3%	-15.4%
Elbert	7,813	7,872	0.8%	7,436	7,580	1.9%	377	292	-22.5%	4.8%	3.7%	-22.9%
Greene	7,239	7,331	1.3%	6,968	7,098	1.9%	271	233	-14.0%	3.7%	3.2%	-13.5%
Jackson	42,144	46,153	9.5%	41,118	45,209	9.9%	1,026	944	-8.0%	2.4%	2.0%	-16.7%
Jasper	7,076	7,207	1.9%	6,849	7,019	2.5%	227	188	-17.2%	3.2%	2.6%	-18.8%
Madison	13,456	13,357	-0.7%	13,038	12,972	-0.5%	418	385	-7.9%	3.1%	2.9%	-6.5%
Morgan	9,532	9,703	1.8%	9,223	9,442	2.4%	309	261	-15.5%	3.2%	2.7%	-15.6%
Newton	53,489	54,323	1.6%	51,158	52,466	2.6%	2,331	1,857	-20.3%	4.4%	3.4%	-22.7%
Oconee	20,071	19,984	-0.4%	19,621	19,523	-0.5%	450	461	2.4%	2.2%	2.3%	4.5%
Oglethorpe	6,953	6,909	-0.6%	6,751	6,720	-0.5%	202	189	-6.4%	2.9%	2.7%	-6.9%
Walton	47,033	48,037	2.1%	45,534	46,703	2.6%	1,499	1,334	-11.0%	3.2%	2.8%	-12.5%
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>315,533</b>	<b>321,864</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>304,930</b>	<b>312,720</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>10,603</b>	<b>9,144</b>	<b>-13.8%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>-17.6%</b>
<b>Georgia LWDA</b>												
Georgia	5,179,121	5,234,275	1.1%	4,977,562	5,075,093	2.0%	201,559	159,182	-21.0%	3.9%	3.0%	-23.1%
United States	161,204,000	164,287,000	1.9%	152,581,000	158,291,000	3.7%	8,623,000	5,996,000	-30.5%	5.3%	3.6%	-32.1%

Note: This series reflects the latest information available. Labor Force includes residents of the county who are employed or actively seeking employment.

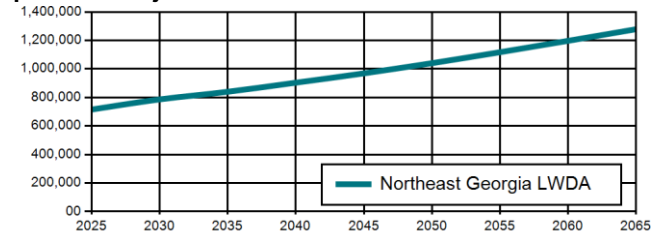
Source: Georgia Department of Labor; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



## Population Activity

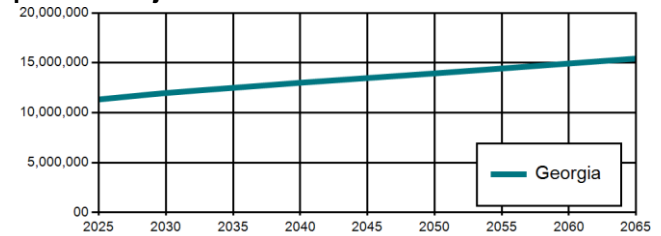
	Annual 2022	Annual 2021	Difference
Barrow	89,299	86,658	2,641
Clarke	129,875	128,711	1,164
Elbert	19,814	19,579	235
Greene	20,139	19,536	603
Jackson	83,936	80,286	3,650
Jasper	15,951	15,278	673
Madison	31,473	30,885	588
Morgan	21,031	20,635	396
Newton	117,621	115,355	2,266
Oconee	43,588	43,023	565
Oglethorpe	15,469	15,140	329
Walton	103,065	99,853	3,212
<b>Northeast Georgia LWDA</b>	<b>691,261</b>	<b>674,939</b>	<b>16,322</b>
Georgia	10,912,876	10,799,566	113,310
United States	333,287,557	331,893,745	1,393,812

## Population Projections



Source: Governor's Office of Planning and Budget

## Population Projections



Source: Governor's Office of Planning and Budget

Source: Georgia Department of Labor; U.S. Census Bureau.

## Education of the Labor Force

### Northeast Georgia LWDA PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE

	PERCENT					
	OF TOTAL	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Elementary	3.4%	0.8%	2.0%	3.5%	3.7%	6.1%
Some High School	8.6%	11.6%	6.6%	7.3%	8.1%	10.1%
High School Grad/GED	30.7%	31.2%	28.6%	26.3%	33.1%	32.0%
Some College	24.4%	43.4%	22.7%	21.8%	20.3%	20.1%
College Grad 2 Yr	7.4%	4.1%	8.6%	8.9%	8.5%	5.6%
College Grad 4 Yr	15.0%	8.2%	20.5%	17.9%	14.9%	13.2%
Post Graduate Studies	10.5%	0.6%	11.1%	14.4%	11.4%	12.9%
Totals	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note: Totals are based on the portion of the labor force between ages 18 - 65+. Some College category represents workers with some

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates.

- c. Provide an analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, including an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and capacity of such services to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce, and the employment needs of employers in the region.

The 12-county region has several local, independent initiatives as well as a unified sector strategy in place to address workforce needs. They include:

- four separate technical colleges, all of which have advisory committees made up of local partners and industry who advise the colleges on the programs needed in the area to develop the talent needed there.
- K-12 educational entities—particularly those with career academies—have advisory councils that include local industry to help determine the pathways to be offered. There are currently eight Career Academies in the region.
- Several Chambers of Commerce in the region have a workforce/education committee. In Athens, the Chamber has hosted an executive manufacturers roundtable meeting each month that includes representation from approximately 10 of the largest manufacturers, representatives from K-12, TCSG, and the University System of Georgia, and the local Economic Development representatives.
- The Georgia Department of Labor has employer committees for each office that provide information on workforce needs.
- Great Promise Partnership working with “at-risk” youth is active in three of the counties in the region with plans to expand.

The main challenge for the region is to create a comprehensive service delivery that caters to various needs, and brings together the various training resources available, including four different technical colleges and several non-credit instructional training programs. These programs are intended for people who require basic skills training to secure employment quickly and are not able to complete the traditional TCSG certification coursework. The system's strength lies in the fact that innovative best practices are being developed in each area and can be shared with everyone. In the past year, WorkSource NEGA has worked to create a pipeline that brings together all available resources from partners and identifies activities, training programs, and practices for building a workforce starting from elementary school through graduation and beyond.

- d. Provide a description of the local board’s strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), including goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

The local board’s goals are:

- Create a unified workforce system connecting the services and opportunities available through a multitude of partners in the region
- Assisting employers in meeting their employment needs
- Expand the number of employers and job seekers utilizing services of the public workforce development system

The local workforce area has a history of meeting and exceeding the performance accountability measures under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The local area will continue its efforts to that end, including continuing its follow-up services strategy, which entails each WIOA training-funded participant being contacted via phone, text, or email within 1 to 2 weeks after they exit the program. This allows time for targeted job search assistance to be provided if they indicate they are not employed. To assist our core program partners, the local area will share our follow-up strategies and other strategies to assist them in transitioning to this type of performance accountability measurement.

The LWDA currently tracks WIOA measures that show increases in employment, retention, and earnings of participants who attain recognized postsecondary credentials. These goals will also provide direction for the system's development and management, supporting regional growth and individual economic self-sufficiency.

- e. Taking into account the analyses described in sections "2. a-e" (above), provide a description of how the region utilizes this data to drive decision-making; and include the strategies utilized to coordinate core programs to align resources available to the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals. Provide a description of how the local board supports and carries out strategic partnering to help address local and regional challenges.

WorkSource NEGA is connected with multiple regional initiatives to support and foster workforce development efforts. They include:

- Serving in leadership roles on each of the Employment Relations committees sponsored by DOL
- Convening a subcommittee of local industry to connect them with K- 12 partners, DOL, TCSG, and others.
- Actively participating with local Chamber of Commerce events and initiatives as well as Economic Development entities of government and TCSG. We are members of all 12 Chambers.
- Participation in Family Connection and Career Academy community events.
- We have staff who serve on two Career Academy Boards.

The local area will continue its follow-up services strategy, which entails each WIOA training-funded participant being contacted via phone, text, or email within the 1<sup>st</sup> two weeks after they exit the program. This allows time for targeted job search assistance to be provided if they indicate they are not employed. To assist our core program partners, the local area will share our follow-up strategies and other strategies to assist them in transitioning to this type of performance accountability measurement.

The local area will continue to look for ways to implement data connectivity, whether through an integrated data system or, at the very least, the ability for partners to have look-up capability to create greater efficiency in providing customer services.

**3. Description of Strategies and Services** – Provide a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area in order to accomplish the items listed below:

- a. How will the area engage employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations?

The local area works with the Georgia Department of Labor's Employer Committees in Athens and Covington, receiving input from those groups on areas of demand sectors and occupations and input into the training needed for job readiness. There are 12 private sector representatives (one from each county) on the board, and they provide input on employment needs in their communities and their sectors.

The local area also works with representatives from the technical colleges from the credit instructional divisions, the economic development divisions, and the adult education divisions in the area, incorporating input from the employer advisory committees for the various programs of study offered at the colleges into the development of programs and curricula. This is particularly true in the development of credentials offering non-credit programs offered through technical colleges, which allows more flexibility in the training start date than the traditional semester credit training programs.

The local area participates in Chamber of Commerce meetings and the above-stated GDOL Employer Committee meetings. Presentations are routinely made to community, civic (Rotary), and employer-specific HR and manager-level meetings. Local events and job fairs inform employers of training opportunities available and recent graduates.

Through our sector strategy, we participate in regional discussions and strategic planning sessions to create innovative ways to engage emerging and dislocated workers. Over the past three years, the region's sector strategy focus has been implementing an educator externship week. The program places educators with a local manufacturer/healthcare/bioscience business for a week to better understand the entry-level requirements, career options, and internship/WBL opportunities available in the high-demand industries in the region. For the past three years, the region has worked to expand the Educator Externship program, which was adopted from the Newton Connects Externship program. In 2021, the sector strategy grant helped coordinate and fund 12 externships; in 2022, the number was expanded to support and fund 65 of the 122 externships in the region. In 2023, the region hosted 108 educators in externships with 53 employers, and ALL 12 counties participated. The regional approach to the externships has built relationships between industry, CTAE, and local workforce development professionals. While the WIOA-funded services are limited for this area, the sector strategy partnership has catalyzed K12 and the industry to be educated on the available services and how to access them. The collaboration between industry, community partners, schools, and others has grown each year. The externship program is a key part of the overall work in the region, changing the perception of skilled industry jobs and offering parents an alternative career path for themselves and their children that pays well and does not require post-secondary degrees.

For the upcoming year (PY24), the sector strategy will focus on retooling an existing mobile unit to add portable tools, kits, and VR resources that allow the emerging and dislocated workforce to explore and gain experiential knowledge in manufacturing, healthcare, and bioscience careers by attending demonstrations at local job fairs and community events. We are also in the process of restarting an Executive manufacturers roundtable comprised of executives from local manufacturing industries, chamber of commerce leadership, K-12, TCSG, and University System of Georgia representatives.



b. How will the area support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area? Discuss the area's workforce services to businesses and how business and organized labor representatives on the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) contributed to the development of these strategies. Provide a listing of business services available through the area(s) such as employer workshops and assessment and screening of potential employees.

The local area has instituted a workforce development pipeline that begins in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and continues post-graduation. This work directly responds to the feedback from industries regarding the need to market modern manufacturing jobs to K-12 students, teachers, and parents. It includes the implementation of pathways, internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, summer working opportunities, teacher externships, industry tours, industry speaker bureaus, and post-secondary education. The pipeline has been developed with input from K-12 systems, specifically those in work-based learning roles, DOL, TCSG, TCSG Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, GVRA, Development Authorities, and the input of the workforce development board.

Additionally, two of the technical colleges offered the ManufactuREADY training. When a local employer has a need, this course is available.

We utilize information from the Technical College Credit Program Advisory Committees to determine future needs.

The LWDA coordinates and participates in any employer activities offered through Wagner Peyser TCSG Office of Workforce Development (OWD) local staff, Georgia Department of Labor Athens Career Center, and Covington Career Centers. Business services provided to employers include:

- Provide space for employers to interview candidates
- Screen job postings for qualified candidates
- Conduct workshops for interviewing and resume preparation to prepare candidates to better align with employer expectations
- Conduct job and career fairs
- Provide Labor Market Information to assist employers in recruiting and retaining employees
- Customized Recruitment – Provide employers with information on readily available labor pool as well as training programs in the area to augment readily available labor pool.
- Provide businesses with information on the offender parolee employment program, job candidates and the federal bonding program for job candidates.
- Provide businesses with information on the WIOA tax credit program.

- c. How will the area better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development? Additionally, identify economic development partners and describe the involvement of the economic development community in developing strategies. How will the area strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs?

The local staff members are involved in various chambers of commerce, career academy advisory boards, technical college advisory committees, joint development authorities, and county interagency committees that include economic development representatives. They will continue to participate in these groups to ensure that the various economic development partners are aware of the training options that are available in the local area.

Chamber executives also serve on the workforce development board, and through these connections, members of economic development organizations provide input into the types of training needed and when hiring cycles will occur for both newly recruited and existing businesses.

The local workforce area has a long-standing relationship with the local Department of Labor Career Center staff. They have fostered this relationship through the local area's MEGA/One Stop meetings, which include representatives from various organizations such as GDOL, DFCS, Vocational Rehabilitation, Athens Technical College, ACTION Inc, CSBG, Athens Housing Authority, and WIA/WIOA Title 1. These meetings have been held quarterly since 2003. LWDA staff has access to staff operating the UI system on an accessible basis, and there is an open line of communication at multiple staff levels, not just at the director's levels. Presentations on services available through the OneStop system and unemployment insurance programs are made at various times throughout the year.

The workforce development, TCSG Business Services unit, and the Rapid Response team are key components in strengthening the link between the OneStop system and UI programs. TCSG Employment Services staff are trained in employment services and how to connect persons to the unemployment services programs. This enables customers to receive seamless services and return to employment as quickly as possible.

- d. Per TEGL 4-23, "strengthening economic self-sufficiency hinges on the ability of individuals to obtain good jobs that provide family-sustaining wages and advancement opportunities." Provide a description of how the area considers and incorporates job quality principles in local service delivery. Please note further guidance from OWD regarding these career path fundamentals is in development and will be released in the near future. These include:
- Family-Sustaining Income & Benefits
  - Defined Career Advancement Pathways
  - Accessible & Local Employment
  - Uplifting & Supportive Work Environments

The local area will respond to this question when guidance is provided by the Office of Workforce Development (OWD).

- e. How will the area/region leverage the historic infrastructure investments through the following pieces of legislation (IIJA/BIL, CHIPS, and IRA)? While most of this work will be conducted at the State-level to create partnerships and identify connections with the public workforce system, local awareness and involvement in these projects is crucial for their success. If applicable, please provide a description of any ongoing work the area is engaged in that supports the implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL); the Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS) and Science Act; and/or the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

To the extent that IIJA/BIL, CHIPS, and IRA become available at the local levels, the local area will collaborate with the appropriate entities to maximize the available resources.

**4. Regional Service Delivery** – (Only applies to regions that encompass two or more local areas)

Describe how the region will address the items listed below.

- a. Describe the plans for the establishment of regional service delivery strategies, including the use of cooperative service delivery agreements.
- b. Describe the plans for coordination of administrative cost arrangements including the pooling of funds for administrative costs. (if applicable).
- c. Describe plans for coordination of eligibility documentation and participant outreach.
- d. Describe plans for coordination of work-based-learning contracts such as OJT, IWT, CT, and Apprenticeships.

Not applicable

**5. Sector Strategy Development** – Provide a description of the current regional sector strategy development for in-demand industry sectors.

- a. Describe the partners that are participating in the sector strategy development.

Over the past three years, the region's sector strategy focus has been the implementation of an educator externship week. The program places educators with a local manufacturer/healthcare/bioscience business for a week to gain a better understanding of the entry-level requirements, career options, and internship/WBL opportunities available in the high-demand industries in the region. For the past three years the region has worked to expand the Educator Externship program, it was adopted from the *Newton Connects* Externship program. In 2021, the sector strategy grant helped coordinate and fund 12 externships; in 2022, the number was expanded to support and fund 65 of the total of 122 externships in the region. In 2023 the region hosted 108 educators in externships with 53 employers, and ALL 12 counties participated. The regional approach to the externships has built relationships between industry, CTAE, and local workforce development professionals. While the WIOA-funded services are limited for this area, the sector strategy partnership has catalyzed K12 and the industry to be educated on the available services and how to access them. The collaboration between industry, community partners, schools, and others has grown each year. The externship program is a key part of the overall work in the region to change the perception of skilled industry jobs and offer parents an alternative career path for themselves and their children that pays well and does not require post-secondary degrees.

For the upcoming year (PY24), the sector strategy will focus on retooling an existing mobile unit to add portable tools, kits, and VR resources that allow the emerging and dislocated workforce to explore and gain experiential knowledge in manufacturing, healthcare, and bioscience careers by attending demonstrations at local job fairs and community events.

The core participants of the sector strategy include:

Georgia Power/Southern Company  
ABB/Baldour (ACC)  
Pilgrim's Pride (ACC)  
Mathews International (Elberton)  
Elbert Memorial Hospital  
Pilgrim's Pride (Elberton)  
Elbert Chamber of Commerce  
Elbert County Schools  
Accurus Aerospace (ACC)  
Certain Teed (ACC)  
Steppan (Barrow County)  
Athens/Clarke Co DOL  
Caterpillar (ACC and Oconee)  
Piedmont Healthcare  
Athens Technical College  
UGA Fanning Institute  
Community Relations  
Athens Technical College (TCSG)  
Region 5 GVRA\*  
Athens-Clarke Co Chamber of Commerce  
Newton County Industrial Dev Authority  
Athens Community Career Academy  
Development Authority  
Athens-Clarke Co Econ Dev  
Workfoce Innovators of America  
Barrow County - Northeast Ga Medical Center  
Barrow County Economic Development  
Kubota  
SKBattery  
Takeuchi  
TenCate/SolMax  
TICA/TACG  
Jackson County Chamber  
Jackson County School District  
Madison County School District  
Madison County Chamber of Commerce  
Oglethorpe County School System  
Select Trees  
Oglethorpe Chamber of Commerce  
Elbert County  
Barrow County School System  
Georgia Power/Southern Company  
Georgia Power/Southern Company  
Morgan County Chamber of Commerce  
Greene College and Career Academy

Morgan County High School  
 Jasper County Charter Schools  
 Jasper County Development Authority  
 Department of Community Affairs \*  
 Oconee Chamber of Commerce  
 SNAP/TANF Representation\*  
 Foothills Charter School  
 ACTION, Inc.  
 Walton County Development Authority

b. Describe the meetings that have taken place and the strategy by which partners will continue to be engaged.

Northeast GA has multiple sector strategy partnerships:

- The Executive Manufacturers Roundtable: This group was a successful work group convened by Georgia Power prior to the pandemic. While the meetings have occurred sporadically since then, there's an effort to re-engage the group in 2024.
- In 2022, an informal workgroup was developed with representatives from the Newton County Industrial Development Authority, the Walton County Development Authority, and the Athens-Clarke County and Barrow County Economic Development offices. This group has worked to apply for additional funding through grants that will further support the vision of the regional sector strategy and the workforce pipeline efforts.
- WIOA staff and project consultants work with the remaining counties in the region on an individual basis to share and expand innovative programs, such as the externship program, with Jackson, Madison, Walton, Jasper, Morgan, Greene, and Newton Counties.
- Additionally, in 2021, the region obtained a US/DOL ARC WORC grant of \$618,909.00 to deliver multiple short-term training strategies in Welding and Industrial Maintenance in the four counties in the ARC area (Barrow, Madison, Jackson, and Elbert) to develop a ready and skilled workforce. The grant made use of the training trailers highlighted in the flyer below and delivered training to 92 participants over a two-year period.



- c. Describe the research and the data that was used to identify the sector that was chosen for the sectors strategies training.

Research data reviewed included the following:

- Data provided by the GaDOL, Workforce Statistics Division, TCSG, WorkSource GA *Long Term Industry Projections*.
- Current industry overview data provided by the Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Georgia Area Labor Profile for 2023 - Region 5
- Burning Glass

The information was used to identify the Region 5 Super Sectors and the percentages of Region 5 residents employed in each job sector. The following three sectors were chosen for sector development.

These areas represent almost 30 percent of the regional sector areas and should have the most impact for the region.

- **Manufacturing:** 25,820 732 Industries, 30,746 persons employed or 13.0% of total employment
- **Transportation & Warehousing as a division of manufacturing:** 4 3 5 industries, 18,306 persons employed or 7.6% of total employment
- **Health Care:** 21,556 businesses, 3,030 persons employed or 9.7% of total employment.
  - **Manufacturing/Healthcare/Bioscience** was identified as the initial and subsequent sectors to be addressed by the LWDA in consultation with the above entities.

d. Provide a completed outline of the sector strategy for the previously identified sector that includes the following details:

i. Participating employers;

The following companies are actively participating in the sector strategy efforts. They represent a wide range of manufactured products, healthcare, and bioscience career options:

Barrow	Johns Manville Corp
Barrow	Progress Container & Display
Barrow	Shuetz Container
Barrow	Stepan
Clarke	ABB
Clarke	Carrier Transicold
Clarke	Caterpillar
Clarke	Accurus
Clarke	Johnson & Johnson
Clarke	Pilgrim's Pride
Clarke	Certaiteed
Clarke	Piedmont Health
Clarke	Alloy Therapeutics
Clarke	Boehringer Ingelheim
Greene	Horizon Growers
Greene	NIBCO
Greene	Novellis
Greene	Pure Beauty
Greene	America's Remanufacturing Co (ARC)
Greene	A2B Fulfillment
Greene	Boiler & Steam
Greene	Reynolds Lake Oconee
Jackson	Kubota
Jasper	Norton Packaging
Madison	Georgia Metals Inc
Madison	SPG Construction
Morgan	Antico-Mannington
Morgan	Flambeau Inc.
Morgan	Mannington
Newton	Beaver Manufacturing
Newton	Bridgestone Sports
Newton	CR Bard
Newton	Nisshinbo Automotive Mfg.
Newton	Old Castle Building Envelope
Newton	SGD North America (Verescence)
Newton	SKC Inc.
Newton	SPG International
Newton	West Rock
Oconee	Engineered Fabrication
Oglethorpe	Select Trees
Walton	Elite Storage Solutions

Walton	Hitachi Automotive Systems Americas
Walton	Leggett and Platt
Walton	Shire
Walton	Tucker Door & Trim
Walton	Standridge

ii. Target occupations.

Region 5 manufacturing and healthcare companies cover a broad spectrum of industry types. The following is a listing of the major manufacturing occupations represented by the companies identified as potential partners.

- Transportation equipment and Machinery manufacturing
- Welding (Tig/Mig)
- Electrical equipment manufacturing
- Metal Fabrication
- Chemical manufacturing
- Paper Products manufacturing
- Food manufacturing
- Distribution-related careers (forklift, robotics)
- CNA
- LPN
- EMS
- Phlebotomy
- Medical Assistant

iii. Training programs

Training is provided by four different technical school systems and approved Eligible Training Providers. The curriculum is developed and taught based on feedback from employees obtained directly from the sector strategy meetings and TCSG Advisory groups.

Some of the training programs currently available in Region 5 which are supportive of the

**Manufacturing and Healthcare Sectors** include:

- GED Preparation
- Technical College Certification Programs
  - Machine Tool/CNC Machinist
  - Welding
  - Electrical Systems
  - Industrial Maintenance
  - Electronics
  - CNA
  - EMS
  - Phlebotomy
  - Medical Assistant



As referenced earlier, the short-term, non-credentialed ManufactuREADY course is available as requested from Economic Development at Technical Colleges.

**6. Description of the One-Stop Delivery System** – Provide a description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area that includes the items detailed below.

- a. Provide a description of how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers.

The LWDA is continuously reviewing placement outcomes of the training providers. If a provider wishes to begin training new trainees, they must have at least a 50% placement rate of previous trainees placed before new trainees may begin. This ensures that immediate placement outcomes are being reviewed rather than waiting until the subsequent eligibility process takes place at the state level annually.

- b. Provide a description of how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.

The local area utilizes a computer mobile unit to provide access where needed or appropriate. In most instances, arrangements are made with technical colleges (Elbert, Barrow, Jackson, Morgan) for access to space so that access to services is available. Additionally, customers have access to the Covington DOL Career Center.

With these multiple access options, customers have access to many options in their local community and are subject to a maximum drive of approximately 25 miles for some specific trainings and resources. The local area also collaborates with the local library system and the senior adult centers.

- c. Provide a description of how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA § 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This should include providing staff training and support and addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The regional office of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency is located in the local area's comprehensive one-stop facility in Athens, GA. This facility meets all of the physical accessibility requirements of Section 188.

The local area converted its USDOL Disability Employment Initiative Grant to a partner in the American Disability Employment Network. Participation in this initiative enhances the local area's access to persons with disabilities and strengthens the already existing relationship between the local area staff and vocational rehabilitation staff. The local area has completed the Section 188 self-assessment tool to identify and address any items that would present a barrier to persons with disabilities.

- d. Provide a comprehensive description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.
- Georgia Department of Labor Athens Career Center is the host physical location of the region's comprehensive one-stop. They provide access to all unemployment, labor market information, services both job seeker and employer, all UI services, labor market information, ex-offender services. They have approximately 15 staff located in the facility. As persons enter the one-stop facility career center staff refer customers to WIOA funded training services if such referral is deemed appropriate. TCSG OWD, Wagner-Peiser staff and veteran staff are present and accessible at both the Athens and Covington Career Center.
  - Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency- The One-stop center is the physical location of the 15 vocational rehabilitation staff assigned to the Northeast Georgia service area. These staff provide access to all services available to persons with disabilities seeking employment. They also deliver services throughout the region.
  - Job Corps Recruitment staff are at the One-Stop center on a scheduled basis.
  - WIOA Title I-Adult and Dislocated Worker Services- Staff are at the comprehensive one-stop on a scheduled basis. There are 2 staff there on a rotating basis utilizing available space. Access is also available through electronic and telephonic means.
  - CSBG, ACTION, Inc. is accessible through electronic and telephonic means.
  - Title V Senior Adult is linked in two ways. There is an Experience Works staff person housed at the one-stop who provides information to senior adults on services available. The local area also has an MOU with the Title V provider for the region, Athens Community Council on Aging, which provides for information sharing and cross-referral.
  - HUD Employment and Training Program Provider-Athens Housing Authority. Access to services provided through the Athens Housing Authority are provided through electronic and telephonic means; however, they do not receive education and training funds and are not a required partner. The Director of Housing Authority's Resident Services is a WDB's Youth Committee member.
  - Athens Technical College- Access to information on all training programs is provided via telephonic and electronic means. This involves all aspects of programming at the technical college: credit, non-credit, and GED.
- e. Identify the current One-Stop Operator in the local area(s) and describe how the region/local area is preparing for the competitive process for operator selection. Describe how market research, requests for information and conducting a cost and price analysis are being conducted as part of that preparation.

The operator, selected through a competitive bid process, was previously the Georgia Department of Labor. Effective 7-1-24, the entity will change to In The Door, Inc. The physical location is the Georgia Department of Labor Athens Career Center. This location is large and updated, with several meeting rooms of varying sizes, and sufficient parking on the bus line. A four-year RFP for the selection of a one-stop operator was issued in March 2024, with anticipated selection in May 2024. A review of the contract expenses was conducted to complete a cost and price analysis. This will be for the July 1, 2024-June 30, 2028, period pending consideration for annual renewal.

**7. Awarding Sub-grants and Contracts – Provide a description of the competitive process to be used to award sub-grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under Title I**

The local area has comprehensive Procurement Policies which have been reviewed as part of the annual Program Review Process. A summarization of the process is that the Board receives recommendations from the appropriate committee regarding the issuance of an RFP in keeping with the program design strategy. Responses to proposals are reviewed by staff and the appropriate WDB committee. The WDB Committee completes the proposal rating sheets and presents recommendations to the full WDB for funding consideration.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) package is the competitive bid solicitation document, and it is written by the staff and approved for distribution by the Board. While providing fair and open competition, the process will facilitate open and objective actions by all persons in the procurement process and prohibit any arbitrary action in the procurement process. Organizational conflicts of interest on the part of WIOA staff and WDB members in the evaluation of bids and selection of contracts is prohibited. Any potential conflict on the part of a board member is to be identified in the meeting where such discussion will occur. The affected board member will not participate in any discussion or vote. This action will be noted in the Board minutes.

To ensure the RFP package provides the necessary information for proposers to develop a responsive proposal and become knowledgeable of bid requirements, the following information is included in the RFP package:

1. Submission requirements including due date and number of copies to be mailed to Northeast Georgia Regional Commission.
2. A general description of the subgrant program including applicable federal and state laws and regulations with which proposers must comply. The RFP must reference Public Law Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) 113-128, and applicable federal regulations (20 CFR 652 et al.), revisions/amendments to such Act and Regulations, Uniform Administrative Guidance 2 CFR Part 200 and DOL's exceptions: 2 CRF Part 900, and State and local manuals which may be made available for review.
3. The population to be served, numbers to be served, type of training or service, funding parameters, performance goals, method of payment and invoicing, coordination requirements, review criteria used to determine responsiveness and competitiveness, the appeal process, equal opportunity provisions, monitoring and reporting requirements, and all standard federal state and local assurances.

The Staff publicizes and advertises the availability of RFPs at least six weeks before the proposal's due date. The staff maintains a list of organizations, agencies, and individuals who have expressed an interest in providing services in the Region.

After RFPs are issued, a bidder's conference will be held. When proposals are received, they must be logged in, and the proposer must be given a receipt. WIOA Staff will review all proposals for responsiveness. The WIOA Director and/or Board Chair will choose a review committee. Review criteria will be evaluated. Other criteria may be established specific to the type of proposal requested. The WDB will vote on proposals and approve proposals for funding and the contingency list pending contract negotiation.

A failed procurement occurs when no proposal or only one proposal is received. Staff, once authorized by the WDB to do so, may begin contract negotiations with the proposer. Contracts are not considered fully executed until all parties have signed them.

The procurement process in compliance with the requirements outlined in 2 C.F.R. 200.

8. **EEO and Grievance Procedures** – Provide a description of local procedures and staffing to address grievances and complaint resolution.

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION  
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT  
SERVICES**

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY  
FOR APPLICANTS AND PARTICIPANTS**

**Types of complaints:**

1. A Complaint that involves suspected fraud, waste, abuse, misconduct, or other wrongdoing, in a WIOA-funded program.
2. A General Complaint alleging a programmatic violation of WIOA.
3. A Complaint which alleges discrimination.

A General Complaint (#2) must first be filed at the local level using local Complaint procedures. However, Complaints alleging fraud, waste, abuse, misconduct, other wrongdoing (#1) or discrimination (#3), MAY BE, but are not required to be, immediately filed with the appropriate Federal Agencies.

If you believe you have been harmed by a violation of any policies or regulations surrounding the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program, you have the right to file a complaint and request a hearing. Complaints should be filed in accordance with the following procedures established by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Workforce Development Area (Local Area).

1. **A Complaint that involves suspected fraud, waste, abuse, misconduct, or other wrongdoing, in a WIOA-funded program, may be filed first locally or by immediately contacting one of the following agencies:**

TCSG-WFD	Georgia OIG	USDOL OIG
Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development Attn: Compliance Officer  1800 Century Place N.E., Suite 150 Atlanta, GA 30345-4304	Georgia Office of Inspector General 2 MLK Jr. Drive, SW  1102 West Tower  Atlanta, GA 30334 Phone: 866-435-7644 Form: <a href="http://oig.georgia.gov/file-">http://oig.georgia.gov/file-</a>	United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General  Attn: Hotline, Office of Inspector General US Department of Labor 200 Constitution Ave, NW Room S-5506

Phone: 404-679-1371 <a href="mailto:wioacompliance@tcsq.edu">wioacompliance@tcsq.edu</a>	Complaint	Washington, DC 20210 Phone: 202-693-6999 Form: <a href="http://www.oig.dol.gov/hotlinecontact.htm">http://www.oig.dol.gov/hotlinecontact.htm</a>
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**2. A General Complaint alleging a programmatic violation of WIOA.**

Any entity within the Georgia Workforce System, including but not limited to, customers, participants, recipients, subrecipients, contactors and service providers may file a complaint. Any complainant has the right to receive technical assistance in filing such complaint. General Complaints must be filed within one hundred twenty (120) days from the date of the action which gave rise to the complaint. The complainant may file a complaint using the Local Area's complaint form, available upon request. The complainant also has the right to make a written request for a hearing with such hearing occurring within sixty (60) days of the filing of the Complaint. The Local Area shall issue a written resolution for each Complaint received no later than sixty (60) days from the date the complaint is filed. As to General Complaints, the complainant must first file at the Local Area Level. If the Local Area does not respond within the 60 days, the Complainant may file a complaint with WFD. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the Local Area resolution an appeal may be filed with WFD within sixty (60) days of the Local Area's resolution. WFD shall not have jurisdiction over General Complaints until the Local Area has issued a written resolution on the Complaint or the Local Area has not responded within the sixty (60) day timeframe. Any resolution reached by WFD may be appealed to the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Employment and Training Administration within sixty (60) from the receipt of the written resolution from WFD. A Complainant may withdraw the Complaint at any time prior to resolution.

If a written request of a hearing is submitted as indicated above, the complainant(s) will be given a written notice of the hearing within ten (10) business days of receipt of the Complainant's written request. The notice will include:

- a) The date of the notice.
- b) The name of the Complainant and the name of the Respondent.
- c) A statement that the Complainant may be represented by legal counsel.
- d) The date, time, and place of the hearing along with the name of the hearing officer.
- e) A statement of the alleged violation.
- f) A copy of any policies or procedures for the hearing or the identification of where such policies can be found.
- g) The name, address, and phone number of the contact person issuing the notice.

Local Area	TCSG-WFD	USDOL
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission Workforce Division (WIOA)	Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development	United States Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave, NW
EO Officer: Rhonda Keeter 305 Research Drive Athens, GA 30606 Phone: 706-369-5703	Attn: Compliance Officer 1800 Century Place N.E., Suite 150 Atlanta, GA 30345-4304 Phone: 404-679-1371	Room N-4123 Washington, DC 20210 Phone: 866-487-2365

**3) A Complaint alleging discrimination**

It is against the law for this recipient of Federal financial assistance to discriminate on the following bases: Against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or, against any beneficiary of, applicant to, or participant in programs financially assisted under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, on the basis of the individual's citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity.

**Equal Opportunity Is the Law**

It is against the law for this recipient of Federal financial assistance to discriminate on the following bases: Against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, or, against any beneficiary of, applicant to, or participant in programs financially assisted under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, on the basis of the individual's citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. The recipient must not discriminate in any of the following areas:

Deciding who will be admitted, or have access, to any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity; providing opportunities in, or treating any person with regard to, such a program or activity; or making employment decisions in the administration of, or in

connection with, such a program or activity. Recipients of federal financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. This means that, upon request and at no cost to the individual, recipients are required to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to qualified individuals with disabilities.

### **What To Do If You Believe You Have Experienced Discrimination**

If you think that you have been subjected to discrimination under a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, you may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation with either:

- a) The recipient's Equal Opportunity Officer (or the person whom the recipient has designated for this purpose); or
- b) The Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW., Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210 or electronically as directed on the CRC Web site at [www.dol.gov/crc](http://www.dol.gov/crc).
- c) If you file your complaint with the recipient, you must wait either until the recipient issues a written Notice of Final Action, or until 90 days have passed (whichever is sooner), before filing with the Civil Rights Center (see address above).

If the recipient does not give you a written Notice of Final Action within 90 days of the day on which you filed your complaint, you may file a complaint with CRC before receiving that Notice. However, you must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the 90-day deadline (in other words, within 120 days after the day on which you filed your complaint with the recipient).

If the recipient does give you a written Notice of Final Action on your complaint, but you are dissatisfied with the decision or resolution, you may file a complaint with CRC. You must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the date on which you received the Notice of Final Action.

In providing any aid, benefit, service, or training under a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, a recipient must not directly or through contractual, licensing, or other arrangements, discriminate on the basis of citizenship status. Individuals protected under this section include citizens and nationals of the United States, lawfully admitted permanent resident aliens, refugees, asylees, and parolees, and other immigrants authorized by the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Secretary's designee to work in the United States. Citizenship discrimination occurs when a recipient maintains and enforces policies and procedures that have the purpose or effect of discriminating against individual beneficiaries, applicants, and participants, on the basis of their status as citizens or nationals of the United States, lawfully admitted permanent resident aliens, refugees, asylees, and parolees, or other immigrants authorized by the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Secretary's designee to work in the United States.

Any customer, applicant, employee or interested party has the right to file a Complaint of discrimination. All discrimination based Complaints and ADR must be filed within one hundred and eighty days (180) of the alleged discrimination. The Complainant may submit their discrimination Complaint to either the Local Area, WFD or the U.S. DOL, Civil Rights Center (CRC). If the Complainant chooses to file their complaint with the Local Area or WFD, a Notice of Final action response shall be issued within ninety (90) days of the Complaint's filing. Options for filing the Complaint shall include alternative dispute resolution. The Complainant has the right to be represented in the Complaint by an attorney or other representative.

### **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):**

- a) The procedures that a recipient adopts and publishes for processing complaints permitted under this part and WIOA Section 188 must state that the recipient will issue a written Notice of Final Action on complaints within 90 days of the date on which the complaint is filed.
- b) At a minimum, the procedures must include the following elements:
  1. Initial, written notice to the complainant that contains the following information:
    - i. An acknowledgment that the recipient has received the complaint; and
    - ii. Notice that the complainant has the right to be represented in the complaint process;
    - iii. Notice of rights contained in §38.35; and
    - iv. Notice that the complainant has the right to request and receive, at no cost, auxiliary aids and services, language assistance services, and that this notice will be translated into the non-English languages as required in §§38.4(h) and (i), 38.34, and 38.36.
  2. A written statement of the issue(s), provided to the complainant, that includes the following information:
    - i. A list of the issues raised in the complaint; and
    - ii. For each such issue, a statement whether the recipient will accept the issue for investigation or reject the issue, and the reasons for each rejection.
  3. A period for fact-finding or investigation of the circumstances underlying the complaint.

4. A period during which the recipient attempts to resolve the complaint. The methods available to resolve the complaint must include alternative dispute resolution (ADR), as described in paragraph (c) of this section.
  5. A written Notice of Final Action, provided to the complainant within 90 days of the date on which the complaint was filed, that contains the following information:
    - i. For each issue raised in the complaint, a statement of either:
      - The recipient's decision on the issue and an explanation of the reasons underlying the decision; or
      - A description of the way the parties resolved the issue; and
    - ii. Notice that the complainant has a right to file a complaint with CRC within 30 days of the date on which the Notice of Final Action is received if the complainant is dissatisfied with the recipient's final action on the complaint.
- c) The procedures the recipient adopts must provide for alternative dispute resolution (ADR). The recipient's ADR procedures must provide that:
- 1) The complainant may attempt ADR at any time after the complainant has filed a written complaint with the recipient, but before a Notice of Final Action has been issued.
  - 2) The choice whether to use ADR or the customary process rests with the complainant.
  - 3) A party to any agreement reached under ADR may notify the Director in the event the agreement is breached. In such circumstances, the following rules will apply:
    - i. The non-breaching party may notify with the Director within 30 days of the date on which the non-breaching party learns of the alleged breach; and
    - ii. The Director must evaluate the circumstances to determine whether the agreement has been breached. If the Director determines that the agreement has been breached, the complaint will be reinstated and processed in accordance with the recipient's procedures.
  - 4) If the parties do not reach an agreement under ADR, the complainant may file a complaint with the Director as described in §§38.69 through 38.71.

If the Complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution of his/her Complaint by the Local Area or WFD, the Complainant may file a new Complaint with the CRC within thirty (30) days of the date on which the Complainant receive the Notice of Final Action. If the Local Area or WFD does not respond within the 90 days, the Complainant may file a new Complaint with the CRC within thirty (30) days from receiving the Notice of Final Action or one hundred and twenty days (120) from the date on which the original Complaint was filed.

Local Area	TSCG-WFD	USDOL OIG
Northeast Georgia Regional Commission  Workforce Division (WIOA) EO Officer: Rhonda Keeter 305 Research Drive Athens, GA 30606 Phone: 706-369-5703  rkeeter@negrc.org	Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development Attn: Compliance Officer  1800 Century Place N.E.,  Suite 150 Atlanta, GA 30345-4304 Phone: 404-679-1371  <a href="mailto:wioacompliance@tcsgeu">wioacompliance@tcsgeu</a>	United States Department of Labor, Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC) 200 Constitution Ave, NW  Room N-4123  Washington, DC 20210 Form: <a href="http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc">http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc</a>

All complaints filed with the Local Area must contain the following:

- a) The full name, telephone number (if any), address of the person making the complaint.
- b) The full name and address of the person or organization against whom the complaint is made.
- c) A brief, clear statement of the facts including the date(s) that the alleged violation occurred.
- d) May include attached documents.
- e) The relief requested including whether or not a formal hearing is requested (or the complainant's representative)
- f) A SIGNED written statement that the information included in the Complaint is true and correct.

A Complaint Form will be provided to the Complainant upon request

A Complaint may be amended to correct any technical deficiency at any time up until the date of the resolution OR the date of a hearing, if a hearing is requested. In the event the Complaint does not contain enough information to enable a resolution, the Local Area shall make reasonable efforts to contact the Complainant to gather additional, necessary information. In the event the Local Area lacks jurisdiction; the Local Area shall issue a written notice within 5 business days to the Complainant informing him/her of the lack of jurisdiction.

The Complaint Processing Procedures are as follows:

- 1) Initial, written notice to the complainant;
- 2) A written statement of the issue(s), provided by the complainant;
- 3) A period of fact-finding or investigation of the circumstances underlying the complaint;
- 4) A period during which recipient attempts to resolve the complaint, with an option of ADR; and
- 5) A written Notice of Final Action, provided to the complainant within ninety (90) days of the date on which the complaint was filed.

#### **Complaints Against Public Schools**

If the complaint is not resolved informally and it involves public schools of the State of Georgia, the grievance procedure will comply with both WIOA and OCGA 20-2-1160.

## **Local Boards and Plan Development:**

1. **Local Boards** – Provide a description of the local board that includes the components listed below.

- a. Describe how local board members are identified and appointed. Include a description of how the nomination process occurs for adult education and labor representatives. (Proposed § 679.320(g))

Private sector member nominations are solicited from the general-purpose business organization in the location that will be represented. These nominations are forwarded to the Local Elected Official representing that jurisdiction for concurrence. Upon concurrence, the nomination is forwarded to the CLEO for consideration for appointment to the Board. Nominations are solicited for organized labor representatives with representatives in the region. Nominations received are forwarded to the CLEO for consideration for appointment to the Board. The local area has 2 representatives who are affiliated with apprenticeship programs.

Where there is more than one local area provider of adult education and literacy activities under Title II, the provider that serves four or more counties of the 12-county service area will be the representative on the WDB. This representative will consult with the other regional providers at least 2 times per year to bring issues and concerns to the WDB. This nomination will be concurred by the CLEO.

- b. Describe the area's new member orientation process for board members.

The local area has an orientation PowerPoint that it provides to new members. Additionally, the board may hold a retreat periodically where additional information is shared with Board members.

- c. Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with regional economic development activities carried out in the region (where the local area is located or planning region).

The mission of the LWDB is to provide services and resources to new and existing businesses to supply a globally competitive and sustainable workforce. This will be accomplished by addressing



the staffing and training needs of businesses and individuals by partnering with educational systems, economic development, and other agencies. These services and resources will be provided to the region's businesses and individuals in an effective and efficient manner through a one-stop delivery system in the 12-county area.

As mentioned in other sections of this plan, the local area has available a short-term course, ManufactuREADY, that was created in response to a demand for trained labor candidates from both employers and economic development professionals. This five to six-week, five-day-per-week training program provides instruction in soft skills as well as related job-specific skills in the manufacturing sector. Depending on the needs of the specific employer(s), the course can be tailored to meet the evolving needs of those employers. This course is offered through the ITA ETPL system, which provides broad access to both training providers and locations that meet the needs of both job seekers and businesses. While no ManufactuREADY training cohorts are occurring at this time, the course remains available as needed.

In addition to ManufactuREADY, the local area also utilizes its computerized mobile learning units to assist employers in their hiring needs, both by participating in job/career fairs and using the units for mobile instruction as requests are identified.

The local area has a relationship with the TCSG OWD Business Services Regional Coordinator, who is invited to participate in the local area's quarterly One-Stop/MEGA meetings. The local area, through its One-Stop/MEGA meeting, provides interaction, and two-way interaction with the TCSG OWD Business Services Regional Coordinator facilitates the flow of employer needs.

- d. Describe how local board members are kept engaged and informed.

The board meets 5-6 times per year, January, March, May, August, October. Information regarding the meeting notices, minutes of the meeting, other training opportunities (i.e. SETA or NAWB) are communicated either at a board meeting or through electronic method. Board members receive the NEGRC newsletter which provides information on all programs of the NEGRC including workforce development activities. Board members also are afforded an opportunity as a part of the Board meeting to share information of workforce development related activities in their community

**2. Local Board Committees** – Provide a description of board committees and their functions.

- a. If committees have not been utilized, provide a description of why.

**Executive Committee-** Acts on behalf of the board if action is needed between board meetings or if a quorum is not present at the WDB meeting. The Chair, Vice- Chair, Secretary/Treasurer and Chair of the Youth Committee comprise the Executive Committee.

**Youth Committee-**Provides input to the WDB regarding youth programming and program design, youth RPF, and youth funding recommendations. The Youth Committee is comprised of one member of the WDB and representatives from youth-serving entities/organizations, including School District, Juvenile Justice, Boys and Girls Club, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Ad Hoc Committees are established by the Chair as needed.

- 3. Plan Development** – Provide a description of the process by which the plan was developed to include the participation of core partners, providers, board members, and other community entities. Also describe the process by which the local board provided a public comment period prior to the submission of the plan to solicit input into the development of the plan.

Input on workforce needs is gathered throughout the year through the One-Stop quarterly, sector strategy, and WDB meetings. The information gathered has been used to develop the plan. The WDB was provided with a draft for review and input.

The draft plan was posted on the NEGRC website 30 days prior to submission to TCSG OWD, and a public notice was posted in the legal organ of Athens-Clarke County notifying the public of the plan's posting on the website and its availability for review during regular office hours during the 30-day comment period.

### **Service and Delivery Training:**

- 1. Equity in Service Delivery and Educational Programming** –Provide a description of how the area will develop education, training, and career service strategies that better address and promote equity in recruitment, service design, implementation, and support services to improve access and outcomes for individuals in such communities. Local areas should examine population groups, particularly those identified in the LMI analysis as having higher unemployment and lower earnings than the overall population, and explore existing inequities with access to and participation in the local workforce and education programs, the outcomes in terms of employment and earnings, and placement in quality jobs. The local area and the sector strategy grant advisory group (representatives from Newton, Walton, Clarke, and Barrow Counties) is focused on finding ways to bring information about available careers and well-paying job opportunities to the areas of the region with the highest number of citizens with the least access to economic mobility and the resources to change their generational trajectory from living in poverty to one of financial stability. One of the proposed initiatives for the next four years is a STEM Mobile Unit that would be funded through industry and grant funds. The STEM Mobile Unit will bring information, hands-on experience, and virtual experience to areas that might not otherwise know about job opportunities. Additionally, the mobile units will be equipped with computer stations and Wi-Fi so that participants can receive assistance in applying for job openings and/or apply for them while at the event.

We will continuously analyze the local labor market to pinpoint specific groups who are facing higher rates of unemployment and lower earnings compared to the overall population. Once these target groups are identified, we will examine the existing disparities in access to education, training, and workforce programs. This will involve assessing barriers such as lack of affordable childcare, transportation issues, language barriers, and limited access to quality education and training resources. We will involve key stakeholders, including community-based organizations, employers, and representatives from the target population groups. This collaborative effort will provide crucial input on the needs and perspectives of different communities and help in designing effective strategies.

- 2. Expanding Service to Eligible Individuals** – Provide a description of how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment in core

programs, as appropriate; and how it will improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary, academic, or industry-recognized credential.

The local area has a long-standing relationship with workforce entities in each county, including the Chambers of Commerce/Economic Development/Local Workforce Development organizations, K-12 School Systems, DOL, GVRA, TCSGs, and local industries. We have been working toward common goals for 30 years. Our efforts are synthesized, and practices are shared through our one-stop partners and the one-stop coordinator who is funded through WIOA. The members of our workforce board are also closely aligned with these organizations and are leaders in their respective workforce

development fields. Adult, youth, and dislocated worker programs have been in place in an official capacity since 2003. The local area has a history of working with people with barriers and co-enrolling people. The local area's practice of working with the core programs of Adult Education, Department of Labor, and GVRA has resulted in the local area serving through WIOA funding approximately 6% persons with disabilities, 18.6% offenders, and 1% veterans. Upon completing the USDOL Disability Employment Initiative grant, the local area transitioned to the Employment Network through the American Disability Employment Network. This was transferred to TCSG OWD effective 7-1-2023.

In 2017, as the unemployment rate declined, the local area instituted service to underemployed persons as part of its eligibility process. The local area selected 200% of the poverty guidelines as its income threshold. In 2019, this was changed to 150% as economic conditions changed. The above actions indicate how the local area is continually responding to the changing economic and workforce environment.

In 2018, as a follow-up to a previous grant, the local area released a Request for Proposal in the Spring of 2018 for services for four target groups: offenders/ex-offenders, TANF and SNAP recipients, older workers aged 55 and older, and veterans and their spouses. They are contracted to serve 150 persons per contract period. This initiative is in its second three-year cycle and continues to provide valuable services to these special populations.

Additionally, the area's mobile computer units were used and will continue to be used as needed in conjunction with the area's adult literacy providers to better prepare job seekers needing adult literacy services to meet employer needs. The mobile units were used with the Athens Regional Library system to enhance the digital literacy skills of persons in the region. Additionally, digital literacy and adult literacy access have been delivered through a collaboration with the Athens Diversion Center and the Athens Day Reporting Center. This collaboration stalled during the pandemic but is anticipated to restart in the next two years. This collaboration will better prepare the ex-offender/returning citizens for job preparedness. The units were used in collaboration with 4-6 senior adult service centers in the area, providing basic digital literacy to seniors in the area.

Also, in 2018, two skills training trailers were purchased to expand the training and manufacturing experience opportunities to local participants. One trailer includes an eight-bay welding mobile classroom; the other includes multiple stations designed to allow students to learn various skills related to Industrial Mechanics. They include electrical, hydraulic, and pneumatic mechanics training bays and programmable logic control (PLC) technology. Once delivered, these trailers have been used by Goodwill, K-12 systems, Local workforce entities, and several community partners to promote or offer certified training to students interested in a

career in manufacturing. The trailers have been used to promote available careers and provide hands-on experience at multiple career fairs and career exploration expos at the area high schools.

The goal has been to increase the number of recognized credentials by working with training providers to review their program design and build in incremental industry-related credential attainment versus waiting until the attainment of the ultimate credential, i.e., diploma or associate degree. Participants in need of a job quickly can obtain an entry-level job after 6 weeks of short-term training vs 18 – 24 months of a full certification program. The hope is that once the participant is employed, he/she will continue through the full certification pathway and move into a middle-sector job rather than remain at the entry-level. This effort will be continued and expanded. The local area will work with the core programs to increase the career pathway options and co-enrollments into occupational training programs that will meet the needs of the area's employers.

In 2021, the region obtained a WORC grant of \$618,909.00 from the US/DOL ARC to deliver multiple short-term training strategies in Welding and Industrial Maintenance in the four counties in the ARC area (Barrow, Madison, Jackson, and Elbert) to develop a ready and skilled workforce. The grant used the training trailer highlighted below and delivered training to 92 participants over two years. Because of the mobility of the trailers, persons living away from certification hubs and training could gain industry-recognized credentials without having to locate transportation to and from a classroom.



**3. Description of Service to Adults and Dislocated Workers** – Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

The local area has provided an array of services for adult and dislocated worker customers, including:

- Basic Labor Market Information
- Information on types of training and availability of that training in the region or elsewhere.
- Admission Requirements for that training
- Referral to the specific training provider
- Intake, Assessment, and Eligibility Determination for WIOA-funded services

- Assistance with training primarily through the Individual Training Account (ITA)
- Referral to other services as needed
- Assistance with Support Services (Day Care and Transportation) while in training
- Assistance with Preparation for the Job Search by providing access to interviewing and resume preparation activities
- Follow-up assistance

The local area has ITA agreements with 9 technical colleges, 15 colleges and universities and 20 proprietary schools to maximize customer choice for the adult and dislocated worker. The local area continues to develop new agreements with qualified training providers who provide training in demand occupations in an effort to meet customer choice as well as employer need.

The local board and the core programs and one-stop partners in the local area continue to work towards the common goal of providing the most effective service delivery possible to the area's adult and dislocated worker population.

Adult and Dislocated Worker services are provided in, or through, the Athens Career Center (comprehensive One-Stop) in collaboration with the local workforce development staff and partners and include, but are not limited to, the following: job search and job placement assistance, testing, Rapid Response activities as requested by the local workforce area, filing of UI claims, service coordination, career guidance and counseling, referrals to partner agencies, various workshops (i.e., resume preparation, interviewing preparation, financial planning, and others), utilization of WorkSource GA portal, federal bonding, and Work Opportunity Tax Credits.

### **Career Services:**

There is no sequence requirement for these services. These services can be provided in any order to provide flexibility in targeting services to the needs of the customer.

Career services must be made available and may include from the following services:

- Determination of eligibility to receive assistance
- Outreach, intake, and orientation to the information and other services
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and support service needs
- Job search and placement assistance, and where appropriate, career counseling
- Provision of employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas including job vacancy listings in such labor market areas, information on job skills necessary to obtain the jobs, and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services provided by programs and eligible providers of adult education, providers of post-secondary occupational training education activities and occupational training activities available to school dropouts under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied

Technology Education Act and providers of vocational rehabilitation program activities.

- Provision of information with respect to the Career Resource Center delivery system in the local area
- Provision of accurate information relating to the availability of supportive services, including child care and transportation, available in the local area, and referral to such services as appropriate
- Provision of information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs that are not funded under WIOA and are available in the local area.
- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include interviewing, evaluating, diagnostic testing, and use of other assessment tools to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals
- Group workshops which may include development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality and attendance.
- Individual counseling and career planning
- Case management for participants seeking training services
- Financial literacy services

Career services may be provided in coordination with core partners or other agencies in the area, or through contracts with service providers, which may include contracts with public, private-for-profit and private-non-profit service providers approved by the Northeast Georgia WDB.

**Training Services:** Training Services may include:

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment
- Training programs operated by the private sector

Training services shall be provided in a manner that maximizes customer choice in the selection of an eligible provider of such services.

Training services shall be provided to eligible adults and dislocated workers through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), through which a customer chooses among qualified training providers. The services will be provided in accordance with state and local procedures.

## **Qualification requirements include:**

Through an interview, evaluation, assessment, or case management process, customers may be determined to be in need of training services and having the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services.

However, provisions of WIOA funding for training shall be coordinated with other grant assistance for such services, including Federal Pell Grants, HOPE scholarships or for persons who require assistance beyond the assistance made available under other grant assistance programs.

The list of approved eligible training providers (EPL) is made available through via the Internet to individuals seeking training information with access from any computer.

The EPL includes eligible program descriptions and information identifying training providers.

4. **Description of Rapid Response Services** – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.

The local area has designated a Senior Program Manager and Business Services and Outreach Representative to serve as the designated point of contact for Rapid Response activities. These positions interact with the designated representative from TCSG OWD upon notification of an event. They coordinate activities with both the impacted employer/employees as well as the appropriate partner agencies including the Georgia Department of Labor as well as other appropriate partners. Activities include meeting with the employer to determine the scope of the event, providing the employer with the array of services available to impacted employees including filing for unemployment, working with TCSG will hold job fairs (s) and offer retraining assistance for impacted employees.

**Description of Youth Services** – Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce development activities in the local area, including activities for youth with disabilities. This description and assessment shall include identifying successful models for such youth workforce development activities. Include a description of the alignment and coordination, as appropriate, between the Title I Youth program, Job Corps centers in the State, Title II AEFLA program, and Title IV VR program for youth who could be co-enrolled in programs and served by program staff who are co-located in the One-Stops.

The local area has a long history in providing quality youth services. This is an array of in-school youth services with these being available in each of the 12 counties focusing on the 14 elements of WIOA. There is 1 competitively bid provider, ACTION, Inc. the area's CSBG provider, who delivers this throughout the 12 counties. At one time, this program served over 250 young people each year. However, due to the federal funding shift to at least 75% of youth funds being spent on out-of-school youth, these numbers have been reduced to 125-150 youth. Work-based learning in the form of post-high school career interest summer work experience is an integral part of the in-school program and the work being done with the sector strategy. The area is planning to fully build out a K-12 Workforce pipeline that includes internships, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, teacher externships, student tours of industry, and job placement coordination between the sector strategy group and the CTAE/WBL educational partners. Outcomes from this activity have typically been an 80%-88% high school graduation rate. While, for the last several years, the local areas have had a competitively procured out-of-school youth provider delivering

GED services, due to budget constraints, the local board chose not to offer an RFP for OOSY for the upcoming three-year period. OOSY services will be delivered through ITA Individual Training Accounts utilizing the entities on the state Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). It is anticipated approximately 50 to 75 persons will be served via this strategy. Additionally, the local area is working with the Athens Technical College Career Plus, which offers GED and high-school diploma credentialing coordinated with occupational technical certificates of credit - TCC

**5. Implementation of Work-Based Learning Initiatives** – Provide a description of how the area will implement initiatives such as Incumbent Worker Training programs, On-the-Job Training programs, Customized Training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of Employers in the corresponding region in support of the business service strategy. If these services are not utilized, provide a description of why.

The local area has always had work-based learning through work experience as a service for in-school youth programming. The out-of-school youth provider incorporated work experience and on-the-job training into their planned program activities. Any work-based learning offered will meet any and all requirements established by the TCSG OWD as outlined in their Policies and Procedures Manual. These requirements are reviewed with the entity offering the activity to ensure adherence to established rules.

To expand the work-based learning activity, the local area reviews the occupational areas that ITA students are enrolled in and contacts Program Deans to determine which of those programs require a clinical or internship component. For those programs in which it is permissible, the local area provides work experience/internship funds to support those hours in the clinical/internship component. In some cases, based on the structure of the academic requirements for the program, this may be structured as a stipend instead of an hourly wage.

As career pathways are developed, if it is determined that work-based learning is the appropriate method to deliver/enhance training in that sector, it will be considered for incorporation into the adult and dislocated worker training strategy.

For those students who complete ITA training and cannot secure employment, work-based learning as an additional support is an option. The local area is implementing work-based learning internship/work experience for those students who have completed their ITA academic but are having difficulty obtaining employment. This will provide those students with an opportunity to participate in a work-based learning activity in the field in which they receive academic instruction. It is anticipated that this will provide one of two outcomes. Either a placement at the employer location where they receive work experience occurs or they will have training-related work experience, which will enhance their resume and demonstrate to potential employers their enhanced preparation and qualifications.

The local area maintains contact with business intermediaries through the Regional Liaisons/Coordinators from TCSG OWD, the Georgia Department of Economic Development, and the Department of Community Affairs. These persons provide information on business/employer needs and will provide an opportunity to connect employers with a trained workforce utilizing work-based learning strategies.

As shared earlier, the ManufactuREADY Program was developed at the request of local employers and incorporated soft skills instruction with manufacturing basics. The 5–6-week



course operates on a training schedule similar to a work schedule, Monday –Friday, 9-4. Persons completing the course exit with OSHA 10, CPR/First Aid, Forklift, and WorkKeys Certifications. The local area began operating this model in February 2015 and averaged around 100 graduates each year of operation with an 88.8% placement rate. One of the goals of the course was to give employers verifiable information on work habits as demonstrated consistently for the preceding 5-6 weeks. This is verifiable by the person's demonstrated activities versus in an OJT setting where the employer must rely on what the person tells them they can demonstrate, and many times, the employer may find that what they have been told doesn't match with what the person demonstrates in the first 5-6 weeks of employment. Upon request from the technical colleges, the local workforce area stands ready to offer the next ManufactuREADY course as the tool to prepare employees to be the best fit for employers and to provide employers with verifiable information as to demonstrated behaviors and work ethic.

6. **Provision of ITAs** – Provide a description of how training services in WIOA § 134 will be provided through the use of ITAs. If contracts for the training services will be used, describe how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

The local area utilizes ITAs as its primary training tool for adults and dislocated workers. The ManufactuREADY course referenced in an earlier section is an example of a short-term ITA as well as a short-term, non-credential CNA. While the use of the ManufactuREADY course is a short-term non-credit delivered course culminating in the obtainment of an industry-recognized credential is increasing in the region, the majority of the ITAs are in programs at technical colleges yielding a technical certificate of credit, diploma, or associate degree. Additionally, the local area does have ITA agreements in place with 20 proprietary training institutions that provide training primarily in truck driver preparation (approximately 125-175 person per year), associated medical training (CNA, medical assistants), and an array of computer-related training. All ITA training vendors are on the state ETPL and provide training in an occupational area that meets the local area's in-demand occupation policy. The local area does not use contracts for the training services delivered through ITAs.

7. **Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Micro-enterprise Services** – Provide a description of how the area will coordinate and promote entrepreneurial skills training and micro-enterprise services.

The local area will continue to coordinate with local providers including the East Athens Development Corporation and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located at the University of Georgia to promote both entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

Both EADC and the SBDC offer training and courses specific to entrepreneurial and microbusiness enterprises. Staff and service providers are involved in and attend regularly Chamber of Commerce, Employer Committees and community meetings to stay informed of entrepreneurial activities and services in the community.

8. **Coordination with Education Programs** – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate education and workforce development activities carried out in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication of services.

The sector strategy described above, in addition to the local area's in-school youth program design, provides a natural linkage to each and every public school system in the region. There is at least one person in each county who has a connection to the LWDA through the sector strategy or the ACTION, Inc. contract. Additionally, local area staff are engaged with the seven career academies in Barrow, Clarke, Jackson, Madison, Morgan, Greene, and Newton counties currently operating in the region. As additional career academies are added in the region, staff will engage with them as well. The sector strategy aims to inform teachers of the jobs available and connect youth to those pathways starting in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Additionally, local area youth staff contact appropriate staff in each county in the spring of each year to re-orient them on the services available for graduating seniors who do not currently have high school plans and/or those graduating seniors who plan to attend technical college. This contact reminds students and high school staff of the financial assistance available through WIOA. This contact enables the partners to ensure that there is not a duplication of services.

Local area staff are on advisory committees of the four technical colleges providing regional services. Two different technical colleges are represented on the local workforce board. There are direct service providers through three of the four technical colleges, which provide awareness of services being provided in an array of activities. As a part of the local area's ETPL process, the local area has agreements with over 35 training vendors. As additional training vendors indicate an interest in providing education/training occupational services, local area staff will provide them with the ETPL application to submit for consideration.

Since the local area has long-standing agreements with 9 technical colleges and 15 colleges and universities, there is a point of contact in those institutions, which enhances collaboration.

Additionally, the local area participates in Spring Career Fairs, and at those fairs, we include the trailers, etc., and we work strongly with Great Promise Partnership in three counties in the region.

9. **Description of Supportive Services** – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area. Describe the coordination of transportation and other supportive services regionally, if applicable.

The local area will provide transportation, childcare services, and emergency assistance to adults, dislocated workers, and youth participants who qualify for these supportive services. The local area will coordinate supportive services with all federal, state, and local agencies, including Pell, HOPE, DFCS, UI, and any other funding resources available to the participant.

**Supportive Services Policy:** The Georgia Workforce Investment Board approved supportive services guidelines and expenditure caps which become effective July 1, 2018. The NEGRC WIOA has developed a process by which participants are determined eligible and need supportive services to participate in WIOA activities. Federal Law states that supportive service costs should be NECESSARY to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA Title 1.

Eligibility and determination of the need for supportive services should be conducted by a case manager on a case-by-case basis.

The following policies apply for out-of-school participants enrolled in adult, youth, or dislocated worker programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which include ITA-based type training and are served by NEGRC WIOA. Support Services Policies for youth service programs that do not include ITA-based training are under the Youth Program Support Services Section of the Support Policy and are for youth served by NEGWIOA youth service providers. These NEGWIOA youth service providers include both in-school and out-of-school youth.

### **Documentation of Eligibility and Determination of Need for Supportive Services**

Supportive services are available only for WIOA-eligible participants actively enrolled in ITA-based training activities. Documentation of eligibility will be determined at a maximum level of 150% above the poverty level for adults and youth (NEGA WIOA's priority of service plan.) Income eligibility will be determined by completing the Family Unit Form, page 1, and the 6 Month Calculation Worksheet For Employed Persons In The Family Unit, page 2.

The need for information will be determined by completing the Request for Supportive Services Form and the Projected Cost of Training Form. This information will be entered into the participant's case file.

Dislocated Workers will be **EXEMPT** from the maximum 150% above the poverty level. Income earned in the six-month period prior to dislocation could disqualify them from receiving supportive services when the dislocated worker is no longer employed due to no fault of their own.

### **Determination of Need**

Financial/Physical Need: There must be documentation in the participant's case file that participants are incapable of providing these services for themselves. Documentation may consist of:

- Self-attestation
- Low-income verification
- Receipt of federal or state public assistance
- Receipt of UI benefits
- Lack of employment or underemployment (UI records or separation notice)
- Documentation of skill upgrading that would lead to employment in a local or state in- demand occupation
- Birth certificates of children receiving childcare

Resource Coordination: There must be documentation that supportive services are not available from other state or federal grant programs. There must be analysis of all federal/state/local resources available and how they are being coordinated. For example, an NEGWIOA analysis of need form will document the total basis of need considering UI, Pell, Hope etc., or other instances of federal/state/local resources available, to determine how resources are being coordinated.

### **Provision of Supportive Services**

NEGWIOA will provide transportation, childcare services and emergency assistance to adult, dislocated workers, and youth participants that qualify for these supportive services.

**Support Service Request Form:** Each participant requesting supportive services will complete a request for support service form. The WIOA career advisor will determine the basis of need and sign off on the justification for support that is necessary and reasonable to complete WIOA activities. This justification will include a projection of the total amount anticipated of support services requested. This documentation should be collected and included in the participant's case file, VOS/Tracksource system. NEGWIOA finance will maintain records to monitor the yearly cap limitations. Yearly transportation and childcare cost must be projected before training services begin.

Payments will be made directly to participants by NEGRC in the form of a check. Payments are based on class attendance and childcare forms submitted by the participant. Payments will be made bi-weekly and will depend on timely receipt of the above documentation.

Case Managers must enter in the VOS/TrackSource system the estimated **approved** supportive service cost at the beginning of a participant's service or when supportive services have been deemed necessary. Any substantial change to a participant's supportive service dollar amount, and/or the addition of a different type of supportive service will need to be updated in the VOS/TrackSource system. These costs will be approved by the Senior Planner. (Routine fluctuation in a participant's supportive services, such as training absences, holidays and/or inclement weather is exempt from this process.)

All support documentation will be maintained in the participant's physical case file (participant time sheets, etc.).

Additionally, documentation for the WIOA activity for which support is being provided must be included in the case file. Documentation should include time sheets signed by the instructor/supervisor, proving participation in training services.

### **Transportation**

- 1) Eligible participants will receive \$15.00 daily for meals/transportation.
- 2) Participants must attend 50% of their scheduled classes each day to receive the \$15.00 per day support amount. If less than 50% of their scheduled classes are attended, meals/transportation support will not be issued for that day.
- 3) To receive the meals/transportation support, a "Participants Attendance Report" form must be completed bi-weekly. This form must contain the following information:
  - Name, school attending, and the training program in which they are enrolled.
  - Dates (month, day and year) must be filled in correctly in the space provided.
  - Hours scheduled and hours attended verified by the instructor(s).
  - Signature of instructor(s) verifying attendance.
  - Signature and date of the customer

### **Dependent Care**

If dependent care is not otherwise available from DFCS, or other funding sources, NEGWIOA may assist with the cost of care for dependent children under age 5 or adult dependents with documented care needs. This is available while the participant is enrolled in ITA training activities, (excluding core and intensive services). Assistance is available when the individual is scheduled

and/or commuting to training activities. Assistance may also be available for children ages 6 through 12 for after school care or during times when school is not in session. Funds from other sources, such as TANF, may be combined with WIOA funds. In those instances, WIOA funds may only be used for those expenses not covered by the other funding source. For participants receiving TANF benefits, it must be documented that the participant is not receiving dependent care benefits from TANF before providing dependent care assistance through WIOA.

- 1) For children 5 years and under - Eligible participants will receive \$20.00 per day per child for full-time care. This would include children up to age 12 during school breaks, i.e., summer or extended breaks throughout the year.
- 2) For children 6 years and older - Eligible participants will receive \$12.00 per day per child for after school care up through age 12.
- 3) For childcare assistance to be reimbursed, the childcare form must be accompanied by a "Participant Attendance Report."
- 4) Childcare will be paid only for those days attending school. The customer will be responsible for payment of childcare expenses when they are not in school.
- 5) Childcare will not be paid when breaks between quarters occur i.e., Spring break, Christmas break.
- 6) Childcare assistance will not be made for children over the age of twelve unless extenuating situations exist. A written request must be made to NEGRC explaining the circumstances.
- 7) Childcare assistance will not be paid to providers that reside at the same address as the WIA customer.
- 8) To receive childcare assistance the participant must complete a "Childcare Provider Verification Form." This form must contain the following information:
  - Name of the childcare provider, childcare providers address and phone number, customers name, school attending and effective date.
  - Name of the child(ren), their age, hours to be kept, weekly rate and daily rate.
  - Person(s) who are authorized to sign the childcare forms must print and sign their name. This form will only be completed when a new childcare provider will be used.
  - This form must be submitted to the NEGRC before any childcare payments can be issued.
  - To receive the childcare support, a "Childcare Invoice" must be completed bi-weekly. This form must contain the following:
    - Customers name, childcare providers name, name and age of child(ren).
    - Dates (month, day and year) must be filled in correctly in the space provided.
    - Initials of the childcare provider for each child and each day that childcare were provided, for each child.
    - Amounts charged for days attended.

- Signature and date of participant.
- Signature and date of childcare provider.

9) Falsification of childcare or attendance forms may result in being terminated from the WIOA program.

Participants are encouraged to use licensed dependent care providers whenever possible. If not licensed, the service must be provided by a dependent care provider who cares for children outside of the participant's home. Payments will be made directly to participants, based on receipts from dependent care provider.

**Waivers:** Not Applicable

**Emergency Assistance**

Emergency assistance up to \$250 per individual one-time assistance for special needs (i.e., housing assistance, dental/medical care, clothing, car repairs, mental health, etc.) may be provided on an individual basis. This request must be for assistance necessary to successfully continue training activities or to enable the individual to accept employment. The requests are made in writing to NEGWIOA.

**Support Services are not allowed for the following:**

- Rent deposits or housing deposits
- Mortgage payments
- Car payments
- Purchase of vehicles
- Fines
- Out-of-Area Job Search Assistance
- Relocation Assistance
- Needs-based payments
- On-the-Job Training Plans

**Other Requirements and Policies**

1. A participant continues to be eligible for support services only as long as he/she is active in the program. Failure to participate fully, without good cause, will result in termination of assistance.
2. During the assessment period individual needs are identified and a plan is developed and documented in the participant employment development plan for support provided by NEGWIOA, DFCS or other programs. To maximize the support available, NEGWIOA will actively promote coordination with organizations to provide supportive services at no cost to the program or the participant. These services could include assistance in housing, legal problems, financial planning, dental/medical care, mental health, and other areas.
3. Customers in certificate, diploma or associate degree programs, at a minimum, must be

enrolled full-time (12 credit hours) per semester in order to be eligible for support services. If the customer takes less than 12 credit hours and continues to be eligible for supportive services, the case manager must indicate the reason for the less than 12 credit hours and

document this in the customer's case notes section in Tracksource. NEGRC will review the reason for the less than 12 credit hours and either approve/deny the support service.

4. No whiteout is to be used on support forms. For corrections, draw one line through the error, initial it, and have the appropriate person (instructor or childcare provider) initial the change.
5. Any forms that are not completed correctly and completely will be returned to the customer for correction.

Support forms must be submitted to the NEGRC office no later than Tuesday's mail of support processing weeks. (Customers will receive a yearly chart indicating support processing weeks.) If forms are received processing weeks.) If forms are received after Tuesday's mail, they will not be processed until the next cycle. All forms should be mailed directly to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, Workforce Development, 305 Research Drive, Athens, GA 30605.

**10. Coordination with Social Service Programs** – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate with social service providers, including SNAP and TANF. The description should include the utilizations of both programs as a referral source.

- Department of Family and Children Services providing linkages on support services to ensure non-duplication of services
- CSBG entity ACTION, Inc. providing additional supports to customers to assist in removing barriers that may prevent them from completing their training
- Athens Housing Authority as well as other housing authorities in the region serving as an information access point for their residents providing them access to training services as well as the resources of the mobile learning units.

### **Coordination with Core Partners:**

1. **Description of the Workforce System** – Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies all relevant programs and how the local board will work with the entities to carry out both core and other workforce development programs to deliver well-aligned services in support of the strategies identified in the state plan. This should include programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.).

The local area will continue work with:

- TSCG OWD to ensure that full array of Wagner Peyser services from labor market information, job preparation workshops, job referral, Unemployment Insurance, veterans services are available. The local area will also encourage, to the fullest extent possible, that all job seekers utilize the resources of the WorkSource GA portal system.
- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency to ensure that the full array of services from supported employment to job coaching to specialized

assessment is utilized and that co-enrollment of customers with disabilities be facilitated where such is the appropriate action.

- Adult Learning Divisions at 4 technical colleges physically located in the region.
- Technical Colleges Economic Development Departments to ensure that division's expertise in quickly developing and delivering training to meet employers' needs are met. This is ongoing with Athens Technical College, Georgia Piedmont Technical College, Lanier Technical College and in discussion with Southern Crescent Technical College.
- To ensure that the high-quality ITA programming, which has been the trademark of the region, providing over 173 different employers with trained employees in Program Year 2022.

2. **Coordination with Wagner-Peyser** – Provide a description of plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the state employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Currently, Wagner-Peyser, operated by TCSG, is housed at the Athens Career Center. The Athens Career Center provides an array of services to a diverse population of job seekers, including veterans, unemployment claimants, persons with disabilities, youth, and individuals with limited English proficiency, among others. The Athens Career Center provides a seamless access point for delivering information and resources upon entering the career center or customer contact via telephone, fax, or email.

Services routinely provided to employment services job seeker customers (including UI claimants) include:

- Job search assistance, job referrals, and job developments
- Automated job referral assistance
- Access to computers, job search software, Jobs TV
- Workshops on a variety of employment-related topics (e.g., effective job search, online applications, resume development, interviewing skills, networking)
- Labor market information for career exploration, high-demand fields, average salaries
- Access to career advisors, vocational assessments, training and education resources, financial aid options
- Self-service resources such as Employ Georgia labor exchange services, unemployment claims applications, books, videos, flyers
- Individualized assistance for customers with unique needs, including setting a customer service plan, scheduling one-on-one visits and workshops to develop job seekers, reviewing and modifying customer service plan as needed



- Specialized assistance for veterans, including case management, job search counseling, WOTC, OJT, and apprenticeships
- Specialized assistance for ex-offenders, including strategic workshops, federal bonding, and WOTC
- Specialized assistance for long-term unemployed and customers with employment barriers, including case management, job search counseling, and WOTC

Career Center staff offer services off-site to offenders and parolees, (Probationer State Training Employment Program) eligible customers. Workshops are conducted weekly at the Athens Diversion Center, Clarke County Correctional Facility and bi-monthly at the Elbert County Probation Office. Career Center staff work closely with the case managers in these facilities to develop job search and employability skills to increase secured employment.

The Career Center provides established off-site locations to reach individuals in the rural counties served by the Career Center. The Athens Career Center houses partner agency staff on a routine basis to enhance service delivery and avoid duplicating services. The staff with dedicated use of space at the Athens Career Center include staff with: WIOA, Job Corps, GVRA, Athens Technical College. As needed, additional partners may schedule to use space.

The Career Center LVER (Local Veterans Employment Representative) and TCSG OWD Business Services works closely with local Chamber offices, area employers, civic organizations, WIOA and other governing agencies and businesses to promote hiring opportunities. These business service related relationships are aimed towards the streamlining of candidate searches and recruitment processes. The Athens Career Center staff actively participate in the coordination and implementation of large hiring events, annual career fairs and in-house recruitments held at the Career Center.

The Athens Career Center has an established plan for assisting customers with limited English proficiency. The career center can utilize an agency multi lingual directory to locate staff speaking a variety language that can serve as interpreters. Interpreter resources are also available through the University of Georgia.

3. **Coordination with Adult Education** – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities under Title II, including a description of how the local board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 107(d)(11) and section 232 of WIOA.

Our primary goal at the One-Stop is the facilitation of access to services that result in participants reaching educational and/or career goals. Connecting individuals with Adult Education services is accomplished through the use of technology and/or physical presence (scheduled by appointment and/or rotation basis). Kiosks are available in the One-Stop that connect individuals with area Adult Education programs in the region, including Athens Technical College, Georgia Piedmont Technical College, Lanier Technical College, and Southern Crescent Technical College.

Kiosks are self-service devices that allow clients to:

- Chat online/interact with Adult Education representatives from the four Adult Education programs in their region (provides flexibility)
- Submit their name, address, email address, phone number, etc. to schedule for GED testing, Adult Education classes, ELL classes, Bridge to Success (Out-of- School-Youth Services) program, etc. (increases seamless communication)
- Apply for orientation/schedule TABE testing date/location
- More discreetly provide information they may view as sensitive
- Check in for scheduled Webex appointments with Adult Education staff (ex. Transition Specialist for Workforce and post-secondary transitioning support)
- Check in to virtual classes on one of our college campuses (based on class schedule)
- Kiosk can also be utilized to access Adult Education distance education programs
- Printer access will be available

Adult Education classes are offered at over 20 sites in the service area. Classes are offered mornings, afternoons, and through distance education to provide after-hours access to participants that may not be available during traditional hours.

## **Information Resources**

Relationships will be strengthened through data sharing. Systems should be integrated for intake and outcome documentation. We will develop deeper connections through this transparency and be better equipped to support cross-program wrap around services.

## **Coordination with Adult Education**

The NEGRC Workforce Development board coordinates with multiple technical colleges in the local area to provide workforce development activities, adult education and literacy activities in the local area. Direct access to services is available to clients through Athens Technical College, Georgia Piedmont Technical College, Lanier Technical College and Southern Crescent Technical College.

## **Expanding service to Eligible Individuals**

The target population for adult education services include residents aged 16 and over, without a high school diploma or its equivalency or a lack of English proficiency, and who have experienced barriers to education and/or employment. Adult Education services include access to free Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, High School Equivalency diploma options, English Language Acquisition, Corrections Re- entry Education, Literacy, Test Preparation, Workforce Preparation and Out-of-School Youth workforce development training programs. Referral processes are in place with area community-based organizations, the Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation, Local School Boards, and area employers to provide services that assist Adult Education students in reaching their educational and career goals. Activities are aligned, and co-enrollment provides students with wrap around services that improve retention and acquisition of certification and credentials. The services provided through adult education increase

essential basic skills, employability skills, and prepare students with hands-on technical skills training pathways that lead to employment.

In addition, a Career Plus High School Equivalency program is underway at Athens Technical College. This program combines credits earned from prior learning assessments plus earned college credit. Students can use credits earned from core high school courses and passed sections of the GED test and apply them to towards earning a High School Equivalency diploma. Students also earn two technical certificates of credit in a career training pathway. The Career Plus program allows students to work simultaneously in their college and core high school credit courses.

Students in these career training programs qualify for paid tuition, books, tools, and other support services (including transportation and childcare reimbursement) that can potentially be an obstacle to student success.

## **Basic Skills Services**

Basic and literacy classes/ remedial activities are provided by adult education instructors. Classes are offered mornings, afternoons, evenings, and through distance education to provide after-hours access to participants that may not be available during traditional hours. Individualized student educational plans are developed to help students reach their goals. Services are tailored through the individual and Adult Education instructors, volunteers, Career Coordinators, and Transition Specialists are available for ongoing guidance and support. Intake forms and TABE testing are part of the initial application process. Students are tested after 40 hours of instruction to determine educational functioning gain(s). TABE tests assess mathematics and reading comprehension and analytic reports identify areas of strength and weakness that inform individualized plans for students seeking their GED or High School Equivalency options.

## **Youth Programs**

Out-of-School youth programs (age 16-24) that allow students to enter college and work on their GED preparation and college credit classes simultaneously are available. This dual coursework reduces the time it takes to earn a credential and secure employment. In addition, a Career Plus High School Equivalency program is underway at Athens Technical College. This program combines credits earned from prior learning assessments plus earned college credit. Students can use credits earned from core high school courses and passed sections of the GED test and apply them to towards earning a High School Equivalency diploma. Students also earn two technical certificates of credit in a career training pathway. The Career Plus program allows students to work simultaneously in their college and core high school credit courses.

Students in these career training programs qualify for paid tuition, books, tools, and other support services (including transportation and childcare reimbursement) that can potentially be an obstacle to student success.

Pathways for our career training programs, which combine accelerated career training and job placement with personalized educational support, are aligned with the Manufacturing and Healthcare Sector strategies. Sample program pathways include: Manufacturing Operations, Welding Technology, Machine Tool Technology, Commercial Truck Driving, Healthcare Access, and Certified Nursing Assistant. These short-term programs incorporate team teaching and work ethic training. Our program model is based around education being offered currently with, and in the same context as, workforce preparation. Career Pathways were selected to meet regional demand.

## GA BEST

Adult Education programs have incorporated the Georgia BEST (Business Ethics Student Training) into their curriculum. Although each model varies, every program is designed to address soft skill gaps that employers in Georgia are looking for in competitive applicants. These skills include: Professional Image, Attendance/Punctuality, Attitude and Respect, Social Media Ethics, Discipline and Character, Oral and Written Communication Skills, Productivity and Academic Performance, Responsibility and Organization, Self-Management and Time Management, and Teamwork and Work Habits. Upon completion, students receive certification from the Georgia Department of Labor. This curriculum is designed to “prepare tomorrow’s workforce today”.

### Performance Measures

Ongoing assessment methods are utilized to ensure performance measures are continuously met. Annual employer surveys are distributed for employers to rate and compare the entry participant’s skills with that of other entry level employees. Program advisory committees, made up of industry business representatives, are utilized to seek out new internship/employment opportunities for participants. Technical Colleges also have a warranty for all graduates. If employers find that a student does not demonstrate skills needed that were covered in the program, the student is retrained at no cost.

1. **Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation** – Provide a description of the cooperative agreement between the local Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation office and the local board which describes efforts made to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, cross-train staff, provide technical assistance, share information, cooperate in communicating with employers and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

The local Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) has had a long and mutually supportive relationship with the local office of Workforce Development and the other local workforce development partners in providing services to promote the self-sufficiency and independence of Georgians with disabilities. GVRA staff is co-located in the regional one-stop along with staff from the Department of Labor, Veteran’s services, Job Corp, Jobs for Georgia Graduates, and Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, along with other area employment and service providers who are frequently present and accessible for information and referrals.

In addition, long-standing, mutually beneficial relationships with other strategic partners such as Advantage Behavioral Health Services, Viewpoint, Action, Inc., the Department of Family and Children’s Services, the Department of Education, multiple local colleges and universities, community rehabilitation programs and other providers of soft and specific employment skills training as well as the local independent living center. These collaborative relationships will continue to be nourished and new ones developed to better meet the growing needs of employers and job seekers with disabilities.

GVRA representatives serve on the local Workforce Development Board and its Youth Committee and are actively engaged with various community organizations, such as Family Connection, Employer Committees, and other county and regional organizations, aimed at meeting workforce needs and improving community economics and the well-being of community members.

In addition, memoranda of understanding have been developed between GVRA and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Education and various pilot projects are underway including ones with the Department of Juvenile Justice, one local housing authority, and some selected local employers to provide information, training, and employment services to persons with disabilities who want to work. Other MOUs and innovative projects are being developed to expand and better coordinate services to youth and out-of-school youth to prepare them for careers in high-demand occupations in their local economies.

In addition, the local workforce area served as a USDOL pilot site and a Disability Employment Initiative grant in which GVRA staff and Workforce Development staff worked in conjunction to maximize access to core and intensive services and to ensure collaboration and the identification of resources and braiding of funds to better meet the needs of the individual striving to prepare for work and the businesses striving to meet their workforce needs.

GVRA offers and seeks cross-training of staff whenever possible, with staff assisting in the planning of and/or participating in training offered by many local partners as well as by informal communication and sharing of information at community events, interagency meetings, symposiums, and resource fairs. These efforts will continue and be increased as we collectively plan and implement new processes and procedures to maximize collaboration among partners.

GVRA clients will prepare for available job opportunities by engaging in training in a chosen career pathway with a concentration on soft skills as well as the career-specific knowledge and skills needed to succeed in their chosen field. This will be done in collaboration with local school systems, technical colleges, community rehabilitation programs, workforce development staff and area businesses to provide a continuum of services so that job candidates are better prepared for success on the job when hired.

### **Performance, ETPL and Use of Technology:**

1. **Description of Performance Measures** – Provide a description of the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official pursuant to WIOA § 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance in the local area of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system.

The local area will provide negotiated performance measures upon completion of performance negotiation with TCSG OWD.

2. **One-Stop System Performance and Assessment** – Provide a listing of locally/regionally developed one-stop performance standards and describe the criteria used to develop the performance standards. Describe how the one-stop system and regional service delivery are assessed by the local board.

The workforce board receives quarterly reports from the one-stop operator on the array of services provided to customers accessing services at the comprehensive one-stop site as well as the number of customers receiving services from which partner via the comprehensive one stop

site. The one stop operator worked with the one stop partners to develop a referral process for the partners to use. Adjustments have been made to this process. Reports are provided to the workforce development on the information gathered from this process.

3. **ETPL System** – Describe the regional Eligible Training Provider System, including the elements listed below.

- a. Provide a description of the public notification to prospective providers.

Applications will be accepted by the local WDB at any time during the program year. Applications will be evaluated and reviewed by WIOA Director and WIOA Program Director. The local board for NEGA WIOA utilizes a regional approach for the ETPL system. NEGA WIOA solicits bids through a public invitation process by posting a training provider application on its website. It also ensures that the WFD website directs interested applicants to this site. Applications will be accepted by the local WFD board at any time during the program year.

- b. Provide a description of how the board(s) evaluates providers and proposed training programs for initial eligibility, based on (at a minimum) criteria of proven effectiveness, local employer/industry demand, accreditation and customer accessibility.

The LWDB approved the local area ETPL provider minimum performance criteria/standards at its May 2016 meeting. Staff reviews applications requesting placement on the ETPL by the local area against the criteria approved by the LWDB to determine if the program meets the standards and should be forwarded to the state for consideration for inclusion on the state ETPL.

Non-responsive providers will be notified in writing that their application was non-responsive and the reason(s) for the determination.

- c. Provide a description of the formal appeals process for aggrieved ITA customers and providers of unapproved training programs.

Appeal procedures are established to provide recourse to those who think their proposal did not receive proper consideration. These procedures follow the standards set forth by TCSG OWD.

On a regional basis, there is no formal appeals process for aggrieved ITA customers. NEGRC WIOA will make every effort (both formally and informally) to resolve any issue at the local level.

However, if it remains unresolved, then the provider may make a formal appeal to the State.

As described in section 4.4 of the State Workforce Policies and Procedures located at

[www.tcsg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/11.14.19-SWDB-Approved-PP2.pdf](http://www.tcsg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/11.14.19-SWDB-Approved-PP2.pdf), the provider must make the state-level appeal in writing and submit it with 45 days of the local decision. It must be signed by an authorized individual from the training provider and should include the following:

1. Name of the training provider
2. Address and phone number of the training provider
3. The specific program which was denied (if applicable)
4. A copy of the Local Board's decision

5. An explanation of why an appeal is being filed, and
6. If applicable, documentation of any specific factor (e.g., conflict of interest, nepotism, procedural non-adherence, etc.) which put the aggrieved training program at a competitive disadvantage.

The State will review the appeal and may choose to hold a hearing to gather additional information as it determines necessary. It will issue its decision based on its findings.

- d. Provide a description of the ongoing process used to update the data on the eligible providers list (exclusive of the state-conducted continued eligibility process).

The LWDA is accustomed to generating regular provider outcomes reports. These reports are shared with the LWDA staff. These reports use customer placement information, credential information and follow-up information to determine if the training area, or program is still feasible to maintain on the ETPL. If not, the data will be updated on the ETPL.

As part of a regional approach, NEGRC WIOA has adopted the State's performance standards as described in section 4.4 of the State Workforce Policies and Procedures located at [www.tcsg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/11.14.19-SWDB-Approved-PP2.pdf](http://www.tcsg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/11.14.19-SWDB-Approved-PP2.pdf)

Initial enrollments for a new eligible provider will be limited to five (5) participants. Additional enrollments will only be approved once NEGRC WIOA has evaluated the provider's training program and has determined that the provider is in full compliance with the minimum performance standards set by the State and adopted by NEGRC WIOA.

Performance reviews will be conducted yearly for each provider/program utilizing the minimum performance standards set by the State. If the goals are met, the training provider continues without interruption.

However, if the required levels are not met, then the provider/program is placed on a 6 month "Hold" status. During this "Hold" status, the provider may develop and submit corrective action plans and verifiable information regarding performance. Depending on the results and outcomes during the "Hold" status of participants that were still in training at the time the "Hold" was placed, the "Hold" may be lifted, or it may continue until performance requirements are met.

If the provider's status has changed, i.e., moved location, termination of business, etc. NEGRC will immediately notify WFD.

Submittal of program changes, additional programs and price increases are reviewed by the WIOA Director and WIOA Program Director. If approved, they are transmitted to the WFD.

- e. Provide a description of any regional policies or agreements for ITAs or training providers.

The local area has an ITA training policy as outlined below in "g".

- f. Provide a description of the process to track and manage all ITA activity.

Reports are provided monthly to program staff which include customers who are in an ITA, customers who are currently active, customers who are in job search, customers who have completed and customers who are receiving follow-up services. Performance outcomes are also provided on a quarterly basis.

- g. Provide a description of local board policy on use of statewide eligible training provider list (including financial and duration limits, out-of-area training, service to out-of-area customers, etc.).

- ITA customers can only be enrolled in an approved training provider programs that are on the approved statewide Eligible Training Provider List.
- Training must be in occupations identified in the local WIOA Plan as growth occupations or documentation of employment prospects for areas not listed in the plan should be provided. (see attached list of demand occupations)
- Training must result in an employment wage sufficient to attain self-sufficiency without the aid of public assistance.
- Training must be at least 12-semester hours per week to accommodate existing Unemployment Insurance requirements. Exceptions to this policy may be approved, in writing, on a case-by-case basis.
- Programs should not exceed 104 weeks (two years). Exceptions to this policy may be approved on a case-by-case basis and requests should include evidence that financial support is available during extended training periods.
- In general, all training programs must be within a reasonable commute of the WIOA local area that may include out-of-the-area and out-of-state training institutions. Out-of-the-area training programs that are not within commuting distance to the WIOA local area may be approved on a case-by-case basis. All approved training must be located within the contiguous United States.
- All applicants must apply for the Pell Grant and/or HOPE Scholarship program, if eligible. Depending on the need and availability of WIOA funding, Pell funds may be combined with WIOA funds to cover total expenses.
- WIOA funding may be provided for college level and post baccalaureate instruction only if all of the following conditions have been met:
- The customer must be accepted into a certificate or diploma program, and the course of study must be occupation-specific (i.e., radiologic technician, accounting, teacher certification). No funds shall be provided for general academic programs (i.e. General Studies, Bachelors of Business Administration, Bachelors of Art, etc.).
- Total course of study will take no longer than 104 weeks (2 years) to complete and be a certificate or degree program.
- The customer must demonstrate that he/she has the financial resources to attend long-term training.
- Continuing Education and other similar courses will be approved if the following conditions apply:
  - (a) The customer must have a specific occupational goal.
  - (b) The customer must have a work history or educational background that relates to the occupational goal.
  - (c) The customer must present evidence describing how the proposed training will increase his/her employment marketability.



- ITAs may be utilized for expenses related to training, including but not limited to the following: books, tuition and fees, supplies, tools, uniforms and shoes, certification, licensing, testing fees, drug testing for entrance into training, medical requirements for training entrance, etc.
- Customers accepted into a program of study on a provisional basis may receive assistance on a case-by-case basis.
- ITAs will not be used for payment of late fees caused by customer error or delay. The customer will be responsible for these fees, as he/she is responsible for other fines or penalties.
- Training funding limitations are as follows:
  - a. Up to \$5,000 in training costs, excluding support may be expended for each participant for the first year of training.
  - b. For training that extends beyond one year, total training costs may not exceed \$7500, excluding support.

If the cost of training exceeds funds limitation guidelines, career advisors should assist in developing a financial plan to cover total costs of training. Customers shall not be required to apply for or access student loans, or incur personal debt as a condition of participation.

- h. Provide a description of how registered apprenticeship programs are added to the ETPL.

Any Registered Apprenticeship program within the LWDA which are not currently on the ETPL, will be reported to the TCSG OWD for inclusion on the ETPL.

Registered apprenticeship programs are exempt from initial eligibility procedures and will remain on or be placed on the list as long as they remain registered.

4. **Implementation of Technology** – Provide a description of the technology used to enhance customer (participant and business) experience and any additional data analytics used to enhance planning and measure outcomes beyond mandated performance measures.

The local area will utilize TCSG WorkSource GA portal site as part of its effort to enhance the business experience. As with any transition, there have been some challenges with the migration to this system, but it is the belief that it can ultimately position the local area to better serve the businesses' needs. Local area staff have received training on the TCSG WorkSource GA portal site and continue to work to learn the system and how it can best meet businesses' needs. The local area utilizes the internet with job seekers, encouraging them to connect with various resources/training providers electronically rather than actually expending resources to drive their initial research of what training they may be interested in. Job seeker customers are also encouraged to utilize all of the internet-based tools available via the USDOL website related to career interests, as well as all of the job postings available via Indeed, Monster, Career Builder, etc. Job seekers are also encouraged to utilize the TCSG WorkSource GA portal site to assist them in their resume preparation and posting their resume for employer searches and matches.

## State Initiatives and Vision:

1. **State Branding** – Provide a description for how the area has adopted and will continue to utilize the state brand.

After receiving the state brand document in mid-August 2016, the local area has adopted the branding criteria to include the appropriate WorkSource logo and other elements with signage and other materials. Earlier this year, the DOL/One-Stop Signage was installed.

All information produced by the local area includes the state brand WorkSource Georgia, Connecting Talent with Opportunity. This includes the wraps for the two mobile occupational skills training trailers. (See photo above.) This may prove to be the “largest” and most visible piece of the rebranding for the local area, as the 2 units are in use throughout the 12-county region.

2. **Priority of Service** – Describe how the area/region will identify and administer the state’s priority of service policy. Identify if the region will add target populations in addition to those specified by state and federal policy.

<b>PRIORITY OF SERVICE</b>	
<p><b>Effective Date: 03/01/2012</b>  <i>(Policy approved by WIB on 03/20/2012)</i></p> <p><b>ALL POLICY UPDATES ARE RECORDED ON PAGE 5</b></p>	<p>Staff                      Responsible:                      WIOA Staff</p>

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) requires Priority of Service be given to “public benefits recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient” when providing career and training services using WIOA Title I adult funds. WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E)

**Priority of Service Must be Provided in the Following Order:**

1. Veterans and Eligible Spouses WIOA § 3 (63)(A), TEGL 3-15, TEGL 10-09
2. Low Income Individuals
  - SNAP or TANF recipient (current or within last six months)
  - Supplemental Social Security (SSI) recipient
  - Homeless individual
  - Receives free or reduced-price lunch
  - Is a foster youth
  - Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets WIOA’s income requirements, even if the individual’s family income does not

- Receives an income or is a member of a family receiving an income that, in relation to family size, is at or below 150% of the current Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) and Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines (whichever is higher) See chart attached
3. Basic skills deficient
- For an adult and an out-of-school youth, a participant is basic skills deficient if they:
    1. Lack a high school diploma of high school equivalency *and* are not enrolled in any secondary education; or
    2. Are reading or writing English, or computing or solving problems at or below an 8.9 grade level, according to a TABE assessment or another standardized assessment pre-approved by OWD; or
    3. Are determined to be English Language Learners.
  - For in-school youth, a participant is basic skills deficient if they:
    1. Are more than a year (5-6) Carnegie credits) behind in accordance with local education policy *and* will not graduate on time with peer cohort; or
    2. Have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or below on a 4.0 scale; or
    3. Have taken and did not pass an end of course assessment (ECA) for Mathematics and/or English/Language Arts; or
    4. Are reading or writing English, or computing or solving problems at or below an 8.9 grade level, according to a TABE assessment or another standardized assessment pre-approved by OWD.
    5. Are determined to be Limited English Skills proficient through school documentation.
    6. Are English Language Learners.

### **Veterans Priority of Service**

Veterans under WIOA § 3 (63)(A) receive priority of service for all USDOL-funded programs as described in the Jobs for Veterans Act (38 U.S.C. 4215 (2)), meaning priority must be given to veterans and eligible spouses for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. According to TEGL 10-09, veterans and eligible spouses, including widows and widowers as defined in the statute and regulations, are eligible for priority of service. The Final Rule requires that the broad definition of “veteran” found in 38 U.S.C. 101(2) be used. Additionally, “eligible spouse” is defined in section 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act. While veterans receive priority for WIOA services, LWDAs and applicable service providers must have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program to ensure the most effect provision of services.

Per TEGL 19-16, TCSG OWD Policy Manual Section 3.4.1.1 - Participants and family members that are eligible for VA funded benefits are not required to first utilize their VA funded training benefits before utilizing WIOA funds.

### **Implementing Priority of Service in WIOA Adult Programs**

Implementing priority means that these individuals receive services earlier in time or instead of non-priority individuals. Veterans and eligible spouses of veterans who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for Adult programs must receive the highest priority for services. For Adult programs, WIOA priority and Veteran priority categories should be merged and provided in the following order:

1. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, low income individuals, or basic skills deficient. Military earnings are not to be included as income for veterans and transitioning service members.
2. Second, to individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses who meet WIOA priority criteria.
3. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
4. Last, to individuals outside the groups given priority under WIOA, but who still meet the eligibility criteria.

NEGRC will work cooperatively with the local GDOL Career Center Wagner-Peyser, Regional Veteran's Employment Representatives (RVERs) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists providing direct referrals of Veterans to ensure the most effect provision of services.

### **Additional Restrictions**

1. Individuals applying for training services and who already have one of the following will be considered for retraining on a case by case basis.
  - an attainment of a recognized public technical college or private proprietary school certificate/credential
  - an attainment of a recognized public technical college diploma
  - an attainment of a recognized public technical college associate degree
  - bachelor's degree
2. Individuals who currently have a master's degree or any higher advanced degree will not be eligible for retraining.
3. An individual who has had WIOA funded training but did not complete the training will not be considered for additional training unless information provided to the WIOA office can substantiate the extenuating circumstances on why the individual did not complete training.
4. Training assistance for individuals seeking a four-year college and advanced degrees will only be approved for funding in areas that are occupational specific, and are in current demand areas, **and can be** completed within the time limits set by WIOA.

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### **When Services or WIOA Resources are Limited:**

In accordance with 20 CFR Section 663.600, and WIOA Section 134(d)(4)(E), if limited funding has been declared in the local area, priority of service must be provided in the following order: WIOA § 3 (63)(A), TEGL 3-15, TEGL 10-09

1. Veterans and Eligible Spouses WIOA § 3 (63)(A), TEGL 3-15, TEGL 10-09
2. Low-Income Individuals
  - SNAP or TANF recipient (current or within last six months)
  - Supplemental Social Security (SSI) recipient
  - Homeless individual
  - Receives free or reduced-price lunch
  - Is a foster youth

- Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets WIOA's income requirements, even if the individual's family income does not
- Receives an income or is a member of a family receiving an income that, in relation to family size, is not in excess of the current Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) and Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS) Poverty Guidelines (whichever is higher) See chart attached

3. Basic skills deficient

**Additional Restrictions**

1. Individuals applying for training services and who already have one of the following will be considered for retraining on a case by case basis.
  - an attainment of a recognized public technical college or private proprietary school certificate/credential
  - an attainment of a recognized public technical college diploma
  - an attainment of a recognized public technical college associate degree
  - bachelor's degree
2. Individuals who currently have a master's degree or any higher advanced degree will not be eligible for retraining.
3. An individual who has had WIOA funded training but did not complete the training will not be considered for additional training.
4. Training assistance for individuals seeking a four-year college and advanced degrees will only be approved for funding in areas that are occupational specific, and are in current demand areas, and can be completed within the time limits set by WIOA.

Job seekers in Metropolitan Areas of Clarke, Jackson, Madison, Oglethorpe and Oconee may qualify if their Family Income is less than the amount indicated below for the last 6 calendar months. The 6 month calculation date will be set by the WIOA application date. **(Effective May 01, 2022)**

Persons in Family	HHS Poverty Level (6 months)	150% at or below the HHS Poverty Level (6 months)	150% at or below the HHS Poverty Level (1 year)
1	6795	10,192	20,384
2	9155	13,732	27,464
3	11,675	17,521	35,042
4	14,413	21,619	43,238
5	17,011	25,516	51,032
6	19,895	29,842	59,684
7	22,780	34,170	68,340
8	25,664	38,496	76,992
for each over 8	2885	4327	8,654

Job seekers in Atlanta MSA Areas of Barrow, Jasper, Newton and Walton Counties may qualify if their Family Income is less than the amount indicated below for the last 6 calendar months. The 6 month calculation date will be set by the WIOA application date.

Persons in Family	HHS Poverty Level (6 months)	150% at or below the HHS Poverty Level (6 months)	150% at or below the HHS Poverty Level (1 year)
1	6795	10,192	20,384
2	9155	13,732	27,464
3	11,515	17,521	35,042
4	14,040	21,619	43,238
5	16,570	25,516	51,032
6	19,377	29,842	59,684
7	22,184	34,170	68,340
8	24,991	38,496	76,992
for each over 8	2807	4347	8654

Job seekers in Non-Metropolitan Areas of Elbert, Greene and Morgan Counties may qualify if their Family Income has is less than the amount indicated below for the last 6 calendar months. The 6 month calculation date will be set by the WIOA application date.

Persons in Family	HHS Poverty Level (6 months)	150% at or below the HHS Poverty Level (6 months)	150% at or below the HHS Poverty Level (1 year)
1	6795	10,192	20,384
2	9155	13,732	27,464
3	11,515	17,272	34,544
4	13,999	20,998	41,996
5	16,520	24,780	49,560
6	19,319	28,978	57,956
7	22,119	33,178	66,356
8	24,918	37,377	74,754
for each over 8	2800	4200	8400

**PRIORITY OF SERVICE**

**POLICY UPDATES:**

**Effective Date: 10/16/2019**

*(Policy approved by WDB Executive Committee on 10/16/2019)*

**Revised: Income Guidelines updated - 05/12/2020, 05/01/2021, 05/02/2022**

Revised: 03/01/2021 *Veteran Referral to DVOP*

Revised: 08/19/2021 - TCSG policy update regarding GI Bill/Veteran benefits

Revised: 05/20/2022 State policy update: English Language Learners

Revised: 08/18/2022 State policy clarification: Basic Skills – English Language Learners

**3. Alignment with State Goals** – Describe how the area/region will align with each of the goals listed in the State Unified Plan

**a. Utilize sector partnerships to inform and guide strategic workforce development strategies and enhance partnership coordination.**

The development of the k-12 workforce pipeline is a collaborative effort of k-12 systems, local government and industry, and state partners. All are aligned and in agreement of the sector strategy goal of beginning the workforce pipeline in high school through engagement with students, parents, and educators and continuing it through post-grad for those who are unemployed and recently graduated.

**b. Develop a streamlined and regionally integrated workforce system that delivers efficient services to both businesses and individuals.**

WorkSource NEGA collaborates to streamline services and avoid duplication, except when demand calls for it, such as with short-term training vs. full diploma or degree certifications.

**c. Capitalize on the workforce system’s strength to increase to create opportunities for all Georgia communities to prosper.**

The two training trailers available for teaching students (and adults) are available for teaching applied and soft skills anywhere in the Region. A process has been developed to request use of the trailers.

The curriculum can be taught by industry or a provider selected by the local community based on the needs of that community. These training trailers combined with the mobile units that can be used for resume writing and job interviewing skills allow for the majority of the essential core services to be offered anywhere, anytime based on the needs of the community.

**d. Continuously align workforce and education system objectives to current and future skill requirements.**

Significant work has been done over the past two years to connect with the education system in the Region and to align workforce efforts. This is the central focus of the sector strategy – see the sector strategy description above.

**e. Expand the pool of available employees by increasing the participation of WIOA strategic populations in the workforce system.**

We are anticipating significant changes in the labor market post-COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, unemployment was exceptionally low, but will likely be much higher as we enter into a likely recession. Regardless, our strategy has been to both build a workforce to enter high-demand jobs in modern manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality, and other sectors while working with the technical colleges and short-term training providers to offer opportunities to obtain both the minimal skills needed to obtain an entry-level job and/or the full certification diploma and work experience needed to begin a career in one of the higher demand fields

## Attachments

**Attachment 1:** Local Workforce Development Board Member Listing. Please make note if there are any current vacancies and what category that vacancy is in. If you do have vacancies, state the amount of time that the seat has been vacant and/or provide the waiver from OWD.

Member Name	Title	Entity	Board Category
Ronnie Boggs	Owner	Boggs Antiques	Private Sector
David Cagle	Representative	Local Union 72	Organized Labor
Kathryn Lookofsky	Business Services Coord	TCSG OWD	Wagner Peyser
Tom Kirby	HR Manager	Leggett & Platt	Private Sector
Andrea Daniel	President	Athens Technical Coll	Education
Angela Hahn	Area Manager	Georgia Power	Morgan Private Sector
Rodney Kalessa	Supply Chain Manager	Caterpillar	Oconee Private Sector
Kay Keller	President	United Way of NEGA	Community based Org
Bob Hughes	Economic Dev. Director	Madison-Morgan Chamber of Commerce	Economic Development
Gina Mixon	Director of Benefits & Employee Dev	Jackson EMC	Jackson Private Sector
Chris Kubas	Executive VP	Elberton Granite Assn	Elbert Private Sector
Jamie Lancaster	Executive Director	The Glen at Lake Oconee	Greene Private Sector
Chip Reynolds	Campus Dean	Lanier Technical College-Barrow/Jackson	Education
Jacqueline Garland	Executive Director	Monticello-Jasper Chamber of Commerce	Jasper Private Sector
Jason Pines	Special Representative	Local Union 72	Organized Labor
Shari Kaplan	Service Area Manager	Ga. Vocational Rehabilitation Agency	Rehabilitation Services
Jeffery Wearing	Owner	Ready Rental	Newton Private Sector
Nathan Coker	Operations Manager	Stanfield Air Systems	Madison Private Sector
Joe Vogt	Manager	Solvay	Barrow Private Sector
Carol Williams	Realtor	Coldwell Banker	Clarke Private Sector
Katrina Pittman	Director- HR Physical Plant	University of Georgia	Education
Community Based Organization -In Process To Filled			



**Attachment 2: Local Negotiated Performance**

The local negotiated performance will be negotiated in 2024 and will be provided upon receipt.

<b>WIOA Performance Measure</b>	<b>PY2 4 Goal</b>	<b>PY2 5 Goal</b>
Adult Q2 Entered Employment		
Adult Q4 Entered Employment		
Adult Median Earnings		
Adult Credential Rate		
Adult In-Program Skills Gain		
DW Q2 Entered Employment		
DW Q4 Entered Employment		
DW Median Earnings		
DW Credential Rate		
DW In-Program Skills Gain		
Youth Q2 Placement in Employment or Education		
Youth Q4 Placement in Employment or Education		
Youth Median Earnings		
Youth Credential Rate		
Youth In-Program Skills Gain		
Employer Measure		

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**Attachment 3:** Public Comments on the Local Plan that Express Disagreement

**Comment 1**

Originating Entity:

Comment:

**Comment 2**

Originating Entity:

Comment:

**Comment 3**

Originating Entity:

Comment:

**Comment 4**

Originating Entity:

Comment:

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**Attachment 4: Signature Page**

The undersigned hereby agree to adhere to all applicable federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and policies in performing any duty associated with the funds made available to under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Local Workforce Area Director

Entity Representing: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Chief Local Elected Official

Entity Representing: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Local Workforce Development Board Chair

Entity Representing: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_