

REGIONAL AND LOCAL PLAN PY 2024 - 2027



Region Two Regional Local Plan 2024-2027

GeauxJobs
WORKFORCE AREA 20

EMPLOY 
Your future is our business.
AmericanJobCenter®

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS:	3
CHAPTER 2: STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION:	44
CHAPTER 3: VISION, GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:	55
CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES: LWDB 20	74
CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION: LWDB 20	119
CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & ASSURANCES: LWDB 20	125
REGIONAL / LOCAL PLAN SIGNATURES LWDB20	151
CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES: LWDB 21	152
CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION: LWDB 21	168
CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & ASSURANCES: LWDB 21	172
REGIONAL / LOCAL PLAN SIGNATURES LWDB21	175

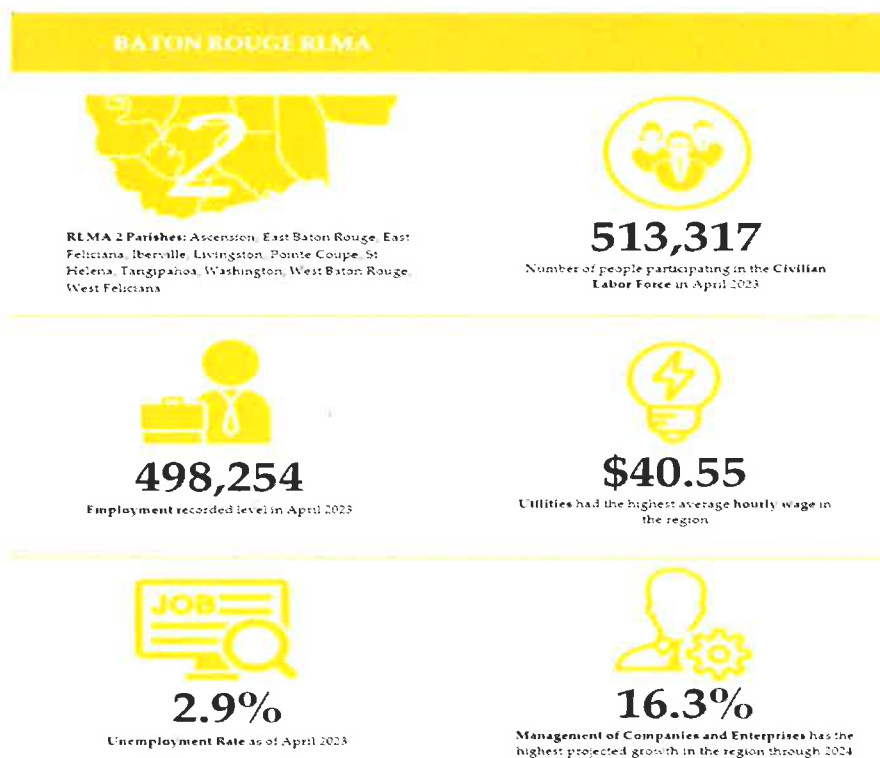
CHAPTER 1: ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS: REGIONAL

1. *Provide and Analysis of the Economic Conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations*

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (RLMA 2) comprises eleven parishes: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana. Positioned strategically on both sides of the Mississippi River expanding to the Mississippi State southwest line and encompassing the Northshore of Louisiana, this region serves as a vital economic hub for Louisiana. Serving as the Capital Region, this area is heavy in government services and employment. Its natural advantages have historically also supported strong industries such as advanced manufacturing, warehousing, healthcare, transportation and more recently, professional services and information technology.

The region's economy is underpinned by robust infrastructure, including an expansive network of ports, railroads, and highways, which facilitate both domestic and international trade. This foundation, combined with a highly skilled and diverse workforce, positions the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) as a center of innovation and economic resilience.

Overview of Regional Employment (2023)



Industry Projections 2022 to 2024

Industry Forecast: Total, All Industries

Area	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Statewide	1,956,496	2,015,125	58,629	3.0%
Baton Rouge RLMA	478,010	496,376	18,366	3.8%

Major Industries in the Baton Rouge RLMA

Industry	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Health Care and Social Assistance	67,523	70,600	3,077	4.6%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	49,339	50,606	1,267	2.6%
Construction	45,546	47,245	1,699	3.7%
Retail Trade	46,484	45,899	-585	-1.3%
Educational Services	42,575	43,163	588	1.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	38,977	41,860	2,883	7.4%
Government	34,054	33,906	-148	-0.4%
Manufacturing	32,281	32,713	432	1.3%
Administrative and Waste Services	25,196	26,577	1,381	5.5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	22,576	23,744	1,168	5.2%

Growing and Shrinking Industries (2022-2024)

Top 5 Growing Industries in the Baton Rouge RLMA

Industry	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Health Care and Social Assistance	67,523	70,600	3,077	4.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	18,582	21,489	2,907	15.6%
Accommodation and Food Services	38,977	41,860	2,883	7.4%
Construction	45,546	47,245	1,699	3.7%
Administrative and Waste Services	25,196	26,577	1,381	5.5%

Bottom 5 Shrinking Industries in the Baton rouge RLMA

Industry	Base 2022 Employment	Projected 2024 Employment	Difference	Percent Change
Retail Trade	46,484	45,899	-585	-1.3%
Government	34,054	33,906	-148	-0.4%
Agriculture, Fishing, Forestry, and Hunting	1,142	1,152	10	0.9%
Utilities	2,454	2,467	13	0.5%
Mining	827	874	47	5.7%

Region Two - Sector Selection Criteria

When assessing which sectors to prioritize for workforce development in Region Two, several key criteria guide the decision-making process to ensure maximum economic and social impact. These criteria encompass both workforce dynamics and broader economic considerations. Metrics such as total job share and projected openings due to growth and attrition provide valuable insights into labor market demands. Furthermore, the economic influence of a sector is evaluated based on its ability to generate self-sustaining wages, contribute to regional wage totals, and drive industry revenue. The geographic scope of a sector's influence, along with its potential to address priority occupations, further underscores its significance in promoting

sustainable regional development. Collectively, these factors shape a strategic approach to sector selection and investment.

Targeted Industries and Clusters

The economic fabric of the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) is woven with industries that reflect a strategic alignment with their natural resources, geographic advantages, and demographic trends. These industries, both traditional and emerging, are not only pillars of economic growth but also provide a foundation for sustainable development. Collaborative efforts among economic stakeholders have ensured that the identification of these industries aligns with long-term regional goals, addressing workforce challenges and leveraging opportunities for expansion and innovation. This targeted approach positions the region to thrive in a competitive and rapidly evolving global economy.

Advanced Manufacturing,

- **Economic Impact:** Advanced Manufacturing remains the largest contributor to the Gross Regional Product (GRP), representing 29% of the total GRP.
- **Wages and Workforce Challenges:** While the sector supports self-sustaining jobs, it faces an ongoing shortage of skilled workers, highlighting the need for workforce development initiatives.
- **Regional Significance:** This industry benefits from proximity to the Mississippi River with several oil, gas and chemical manufacturing plants and the crossroad of major interstates, an established industrial infrastructure, making it a cornerstone of the regional economy. It also drives upstream industries like Warehousing and trade, amplifying its economic impact.
- **NAICS Codes:** 32–33 (Manufacturing),

Healthcare

- **Economic Impact:** Healthcare is a cornerstone industry and is growing rapidly with and employment growth of 4.6% anticipated.
- **Wages and Key Occupations:** Offers significant opportunities in roles such as nursing, medical assistants, and healthcare administration, providing sustainable wages and career pathways.
- **Regional Impact:** With the aging population and increasing healthcare needs, this sector plays a critical role in both economic development and quality of life.
- **NAICS Codes:** 621 (Ambulatory Healthcare Services), 622 (Hospitals), 623 (Nursing Facilities), 902622 & 903622 (State and Local Hospitals).

Transportation and Warehousing, Including Wholesale Trade

- **Economic Impact:** Contributing 18% GRP, this sector serves as the backbone of regional and international trade. It is home to over 700 logistics organizations. This industry employment is expected to grow by 15.6%
- **Strategic Importance:** The region's location along the Mississippi River and its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico make it a vital hub for domestic and international trade. Upcoming infrastructure projects, such as major port expansions, will further solidify its position as a Warehousing powerhouse.
- **NAICS Codes:** 4811–4842, 4861–4869, 4881–4889, 4931, 5324, 42.

Construction Sector

- **Economic Impact:** Construction remains a critical driver of infrastructure development, especially with large-scale projects like the expansion of many chemical and manufacturing plants across the region.
- **Strategic Importance:** Major expansions and other developmental infrastructure projects require sustained labor demand, creating significant opportunities for skilled trade and supporting industries like manufacturing and Warehousing.
- **NAICS Codes:** 23 (Construction).

Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (Emerging Sector)

- **Emerging Sector:** This sector represents a cross-cutting group of occupations that drive innovation and operational efficiency across industries, employing more than 31,000 workers, of which nearly 20,000 are technical (engineering, computer, scientific) in nature.
- **Job Share and Growth:** Encompasses roles like business operations specialists, accountants, and environmental scientists, which are essential to industries like manufacturing, healthcare, and Warehousing.
- **Wages and Regional Impact:** These positions often provide competitive wages and opportunities for career advancement, making the sector a key focus for economic development. A job in this category boasts an average wage in excess of \$ 100,000.
- **NAICS Codes:** 54.

Information Technology (IT) as a Cross-cutting Occupation Group

- **Emerging Priority:** IT occupations are increasingly critical, supporting the digital infrastructure required by industries such as healthcare, Warehousing, and energy.
- **Key Roles:** Includes jobs such as computer systems analysts, cybersecurity specialists, and network administrators, which are in high demand as businesses prioritize digital transformation. Some of the highest growth

occupations include Data Scientists, Software Q&A Analysts, and Software Developers.

- Cross-Sector Impact: IT serves as a foundational sector, enhancing productivity and innovation across all other targeted industries.
- Occupation Group: 15-200.

Emerging Infrastructure Projects and Their Workforce Impact

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) is poised for significant economic growth, driven by transformative infrastructure projects that will generate substantial job opportunities and enhance the region's competitiveness. These projects align closely with the region's targeted industries, particularly transportation, Warehousing, construction, and hospitality, and are anticipated to create thousands of jobs, both directly and indirectly. These are just a snapshot of the immense growth projects for this region.

Southland Steel Fabrications

Southland Steel Fabricators Inc. announced it is investing \$25 million to add 100,000 square feet of production space and acquire cutting-edge welding technology at its original facility in St. Helena Parish. The expansion will increase robotic welding capacity by 50 percent and double material processing capabilities as industrial mega-projects create surging demand for fabricated steel in Louisiana. The company expects to create 80 new direct jobs over the next three years with an average annual salary of \$60,000 while retaining 340 current positions. This along with their previous expansion in Amite estimates the project will result in 117 indirect new jobs for a total of 197 potential new jobs.

Amazon Distribution Center

Amazon's \$200 million state-of-the-art fulfillment center, known as BTR1, opened on a huge parcel of land once occupied by the city's Cortana Mall. The center's launch in the middle of 2024 has served as a lesson in what the planting of a major logistical hub by a big corporate entity can do to reshape the future of work, life and business in a region. The Amazon facility hired over 1,000 direct full-time jobs and additional part-time jobs. Since last June forty new business licenses have been filed within a one-mile radius of the Amazon fulfillment center, and 197 licenses within a two-mile radius of the hub.

MKS Plastics

MKS Plastics, a Louisiana-based premium industrial pail manufacturer, announced it is investing \$14 million to double the size of its production facility in Tangipahoa Parish. The 48,000 square-foot expansion will increase manufacturing output, allowing the company to better serve its customers in the petroleum and chemical industries. The company expects to create 20 new direct jobs while retaining 82 current positions. MKS also anticipates the creation of about 100 construction jobs at peak construction, the project will result in 34 new indirect jobs, for a total of 54 new jobs.

Total Quality Warehousing (TQL)

Total Quality Warehousing (TQL), the second largest freight brokerage in North America and one of the largest global third-party Warehousing firms, announced it is expanding its presence in Louisiana by establishing a new location in Baton Rouge. The company expects to create 98 direct new jobs and an additional 146 indirect new jobs, for a total of 244 potential new jobs in the Capital Region. With six deep draft ports, six Class 1 railroads, seven primary airports and six interstate highways, no other state can compete with Louisiana's infrastructure advantages

Niagara Bottling

Niagara Bottling, one of the nation's leading beverage manufacturers, invested \$160 million to establish a state-of-the-art production facility near Hammond. The company created 70 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of \$55,000. The company has plans to expand the operations into Phase 2 in the coming years.

Fabricated Steel

Fabricated Steel Products, Inc. announced an expansion of its East Baton Rouge Parish facility that will add state-of-the-art technology, enhance overall productivity and efficiency and create new jobs. The \$3.2 million investment will include a state-of-the-art robotic assembly and welding line that is expected to increase the company's production of structural steel by 50 percent.

FSP expects to create 15 new direct jobs while retaining 75 current positions. Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in 22 indirect new jobs, for a total of 37 potential new jobs in the Capital Region.

John H. Carter Center for Excellence

John H. Carter Co./ControlWorx LLC announced plans to build a \$69 million, 285,000-square-foot facility in Ascension Parish that will house products and services designed to support key industries in Louisiana and nearby states that include oil and gas, refining chemicals, power, renewable energy and pulp and paper production. The company is expected to create 175 direct new jobs over the next 10 years with a projected payroll of \$12.5 million. The company will also retain 741 current jobs across the state. Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in 301 indirect new jobs, for a total of 476 potential new jobs in the Capital Region.

Premier Concrete

Premier Concrete Products, Inc. announced it is investing up to \$10 million to add a state-of-the-art precast concrete pipe production unit at its manufacturing facility in Livingston Parish. The expansion will allow the company to address the shortage of precast concrete products and support infrastructure and drainage projects across the southern United States. The company is expected to create 33 new jobs over the next 10 years while retaining 90 current positions. This expansion will result in 50 indirect new jobs, for a total of 83 potential new jobs

Projected Workforce Impact

These infrastructure projects alone collectively represent a significant investment in the region's economy. Combined, they are anticipated to create:

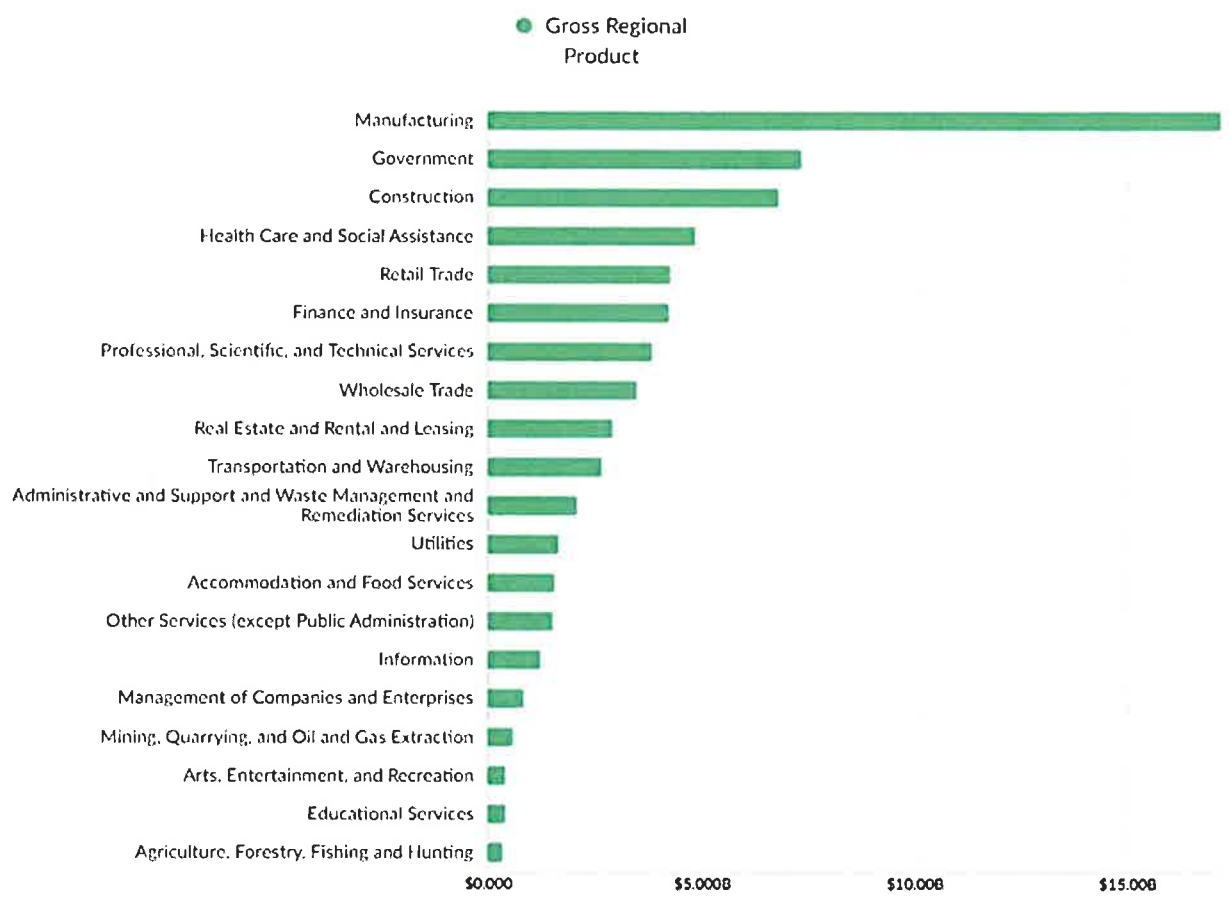
- **Direct Jobs:** approximately 1,491
- **Indirect Jobs:** Additional opportunities in supporting industries such as construction, Warehousing, and retail.
- **Broader Economic Benefits:** Enhanced regional connectivity, increased trade capacity, and revitalized local economies.

By aligning workforce development strategies with these projects, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region can ensure a prepared and competitive workforce to meet the growing demands of these transformative initiatives.

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's diverse economic portfolio, anchored by traditional sectors like manufacturing, healthcare, construction, and Warehousing, and bolstered by emerging industries such as IT and professional services, showcases its adaptability to shifting economic trends. Strategic investments in these targeted industries and clusters are essential to ensuring the region's resilience and competitiveness in the years ahead. By addressing workforce challenges, fostering innovation, and maximizing the impact of infrastructure projects, the region is positioned to achieve sustained economic vitality. This forward-looking approach capitalizes on current strengths while preparing for future demands, ensuring that the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region remains a vibrant hub of economic activity.

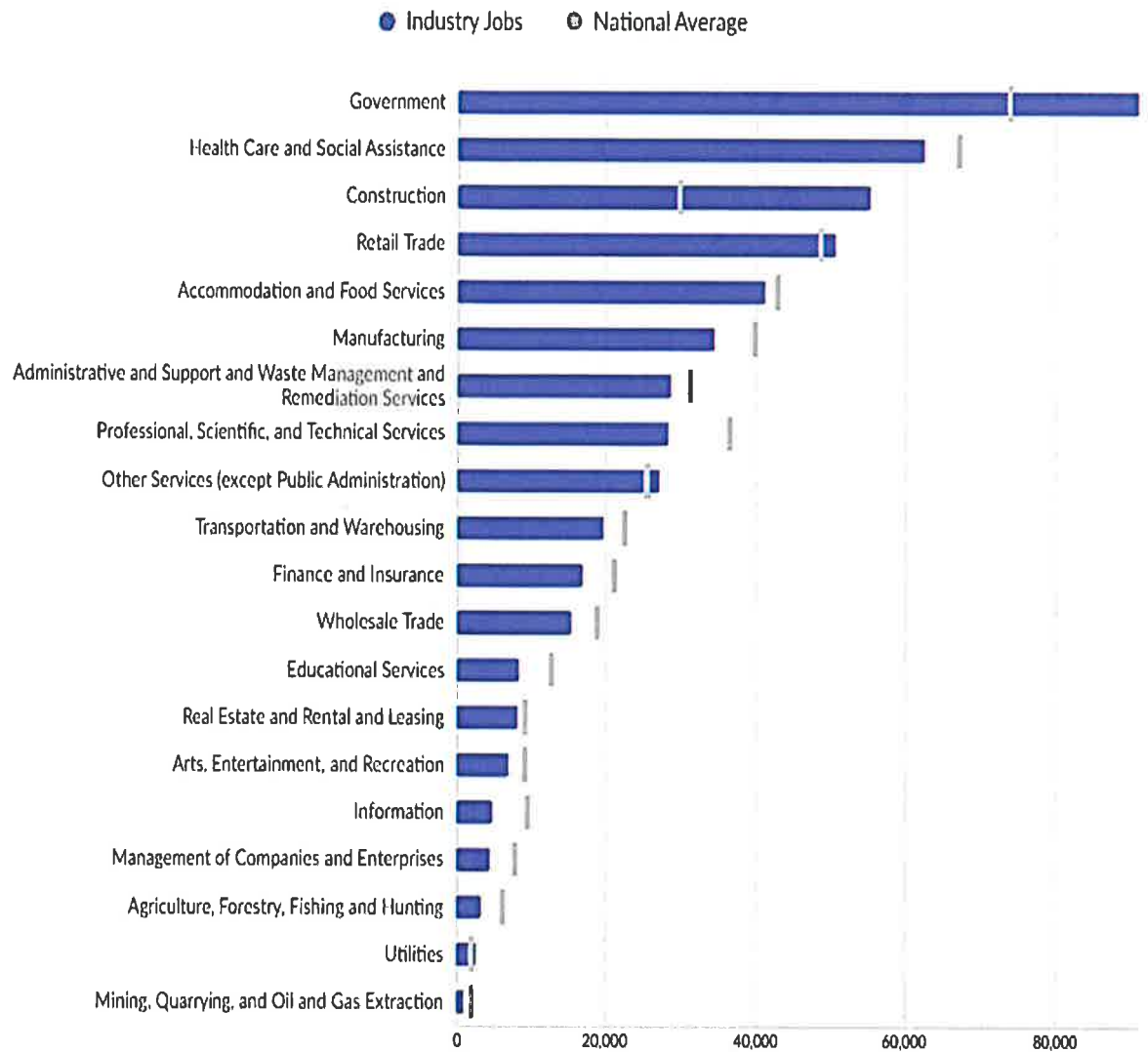
The **Gross Regional Product (GRP) chart** below highlights manufacturing as the leading economic contributor in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region, generating the highest GRP across industries, followed by Government, Construction and Healthcare. Retail Trade, Finance and Insurance and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, along with Wholesale Trade, also play significant roles, underscoring the diverse economic base. This diversity highlights the region’s capacity for sustainable growth by combining traditional industries with emerging sectors like professional services. Such a balanced economic portfolio not only drives current success but also positions the region for future resilience and innovation.

Top Industry GRP



The next chart illustrates the largest occupational sectors in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region, highlighting industries by the number of jobs compared to the national average. While sectors like Government, Healthcare and Social Assistance, and Construction dominate in terms of employment. Serving as the Capital Region for Louisiana Government plays a major part in employment opportunities, but the other industries make up a large part of the industries hiring and providing the gross regional product for the area.

Largest Industries



Occupations

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region currently has over 16,405 job openings across all occupations. The average number of people employed over the past year was 453,307. The average hourly wage is 29.90. These openings include opportunities for both net new job growth and replacement needs due to workforce transitions and retirements. These roles play a critical role in the region's economic vitality, offering individuals pathways to rewarding careers while driving the expansion of key industries. To meet this demand, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) local workforce development boards and centers prioritize these occupations, aligning training programs with high-demand roles to prepare residents for sustainable, high-growth careers.

Top 20 Occupation Projections for 2022 – 2032

(Since our LMI projects are 2 and 10 years for this we used the 10 year projections)

Star Rating	Occ. Code	Occupational Title	10 Year Growth	Average Hourly Rate	Education or Training
1	31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2,208	\$9.95	HS
4	47-2061	Construction Laborers	1,624	\$20.31	HS
5	29-1141	Registered Nurses	925	\$35.82	Bachelor's degree
2	53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	861	\$15.44	HS
1	35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	678	\$14.14	HS
5	11-1021	General and Operations Managers	645	\$49.53	Bachelor's degree
5	47-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	641	\$36.13	HSs/Work Experience/Certification
5	47-2111	Electricians	639	\$29.52	Certification
2	53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	610	\$16.77	HS
5	47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	554	\$33.41	Certification
5	29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	522	\$55.59	Master's degree
5	51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	511	\$33.11	Certification
5	11-9021	Construction Managers	494	\$51.98	Bachelor's degree
5	11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	466	\$49.15	Bachelor's degree
4	47-2031	Carpenters	443	\$24.21	Certification
4	29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	424	\$24.66	Certification
1	31-1131	Nursing Assistants	418	\$14.15	Certification
4	53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	403	\$23.67	Certification
5	49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	395	\$31.60	HS/Experience/Certification
4	49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	379	\$19.10	HS/Experience

Key Occupations and Their Role in Targeted Industry Sectors

The jobs are in the following key occupations with 15 of the 20 occupation titles carrying a 4- or 5-star job rating. The following are new job openings and do not include replacement job openings that occur annually due to transfers, exits and retirement. Some occupations are not specific to a single demand area.

Advance Manufacturing

General and Operations Managers (11-1021): With 645 projected openings and a median wage of \$49.53, these managers are crucial to improving operational efficiency and productivity across manufacturing and energy sectors.

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032): Supporting supply chains vital to manufacturing and oil and gas industries, these drivers are projected to have 403 openings, earning a median wage of \$23.66.

Industry Machinery Mechanics (49-9041): Projected openings 395 with a median wage of \$31.60.

Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers (53-7062): Projected openings 610 with a median wage of \$16.77.

Health Care

Registered Nurses (29-1141): Among the most in-demand roles, registered nurses are projected to have 925 openings with a median wage of \$35.82. They are vital to deliver quality patient care and address the region's growing healthcare needs.

Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses (29-2061): Projected to have 424 openings, these healthcare providers play an essential role in patient care, with a median wage of \$24.66.

Nurse Practitioners (29-1171): With 522 projected openings, these serve as medical professionals and diagnosticians, earning a median wage of \$55.59.

Medical and Health Services Managers (11-9111) Projected openings 466 with a median wage of 49.15. These medical professionals serve as administrative health care professionals.

Nursing Assistants (31-1131) Projected to have 418 openings with a median wage of 14.15.

Home Health and Person Assistants (31-1220) This occupation is projected to have the highest growth however it also has the lowest median pay rate at 9.95

Transportation/Warehousing/Logistics

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032): With 403 openings, these roles are indispensable for sustaining regional supply chains and ensuring connectivity across industries.

Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers (53-7062): Projected openings 610 with a median wage of \$16.77.

Stockers and Order Fillers (53-7065): Projected openings 861 with a median wage of \$15.44

Maintenance and Repair Workers General (49-9071): Projected openings 379 with a median wage of \$19.10.

Construction

General and Operations Managers (11-1021): With 3,658 openings, operations managers play a vital leadership role in large-scale infrastructure projects, such as port expansions, earning a median wage of \$50.25.

First Line Supervisors Construction Trades (47-1011): Projected openings 641 with a median wage of \$36.13.

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (53-3032): With 1,933 openings, these drivers are

critical to the transportation of materials and supplies necessary for construction projects, earning a median wage of \$23.66.

Carpenters (47-2031): Projected openings 443 with a median wage of \$ 24.21.

Electricians (47-211): Projected openings 639 with a median wage of \$ 29.52.

Plumber, Pipefitters and Steamfitters (47-2152): Projected openings 554 with a median wage of \$ 33.41.

Welders, Cutters, Solderers, (51-4121): Projected openings 511 with a median wage of \$ 33.11.

Construction Laborers (47-2061): This group has the second largest job openings at 1,624 with a median wage of \$ 20.31.

Summary

The top 20 high-demand occupations and other key occupations near the top 20, driven by total openings from net new growth and workforce replacements, are critical to the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's economic success. These roles directly support the four targeted sectors: Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Transportation and Warehousing/Logistics, and Construction. By focusing on these key occupations, workforce development initiatives can align with regional priorities, ensuring a resilient and competitive economy capable of meeting current and future labor market demands.

Industries and Occupations with Favorable Location Quotients

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region has notable location quotients (LQ) in various key industries and occupations, indicating a higher concentration compared to the national average. Among industries, Construction, Government, Utilities, Health Care, Manufacturing and Transportation and Warehousing stand out with particularly favorable LQs. The emphasis on Government comes from the Baton Rouge Region also serving as the Capital Region. Similarly, the prominence of Construction underscores the region's strategic advantage in emerging businesses and infrastructure bolstered by its continued growth and expansion into health, manufacturing, transportation, and warehousing.

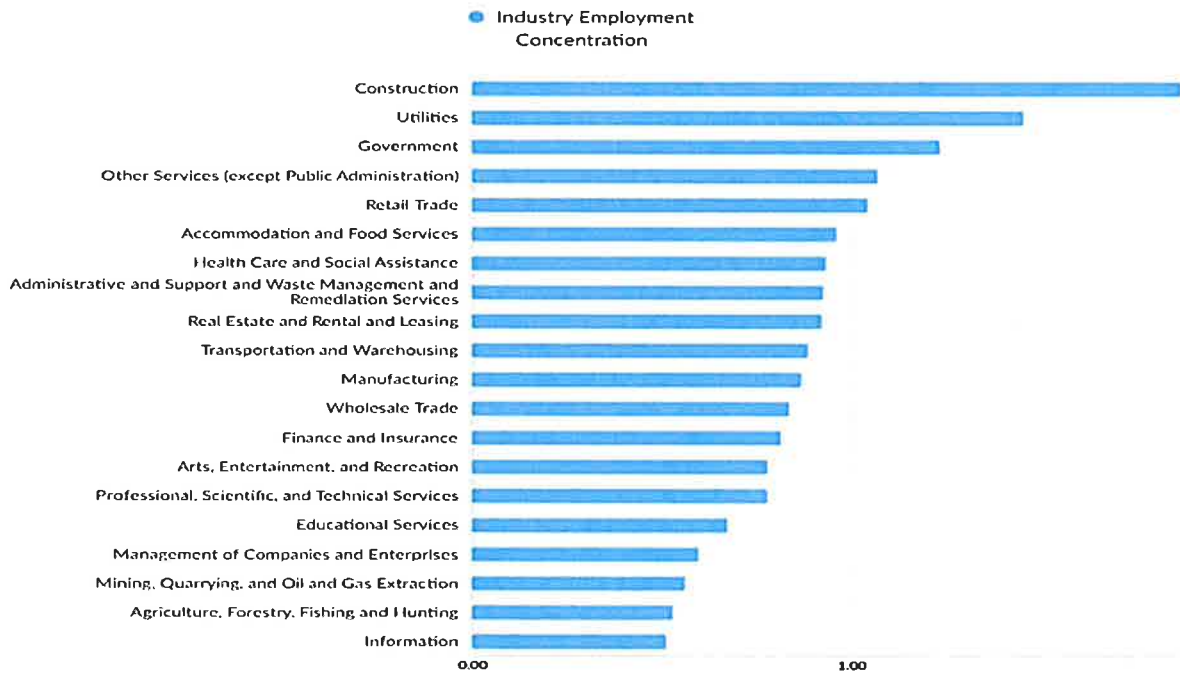
The Construction, Utilities, Government, and Protective Services sectors have high employment concentrations. Construction and Utility work support infrastructure for businesses and community projects. The Construction sector drives regional growth with projects in Manufacturing, Oil, Gas, Chemical, and Warehousing, creating demand for skilled trades like boiler makers, electricians, helpers, and project managers. These industries and occupations enhance the region's physical and economic development, aligning with its strengths for sustained growth and competitive advantage.

Protective Services are essential in addressing the region's unique challenges, including public safety and emergency management, particularly in a geographic area prone to natural disasters. These occupational concentrations illustrate the region's specialized workforce strengths, which underpin both economic resilience and regional competitiveness.

Moreover, industries and occupations with favorable location quotients align seamlessly with the region's targeted sectors and key roles, emphasizing their critical importance to the Greater Baton Rouge economy. Advanced Manufacturing leverages the region's proximity to the Mississippi River and industrial infrastructure, driving high employment concentrations in industrial production, Warehousing, and energy. These sectors depend on a skilled workforce to sustain energy output and industrial growth, further highlighting their strategic importance.

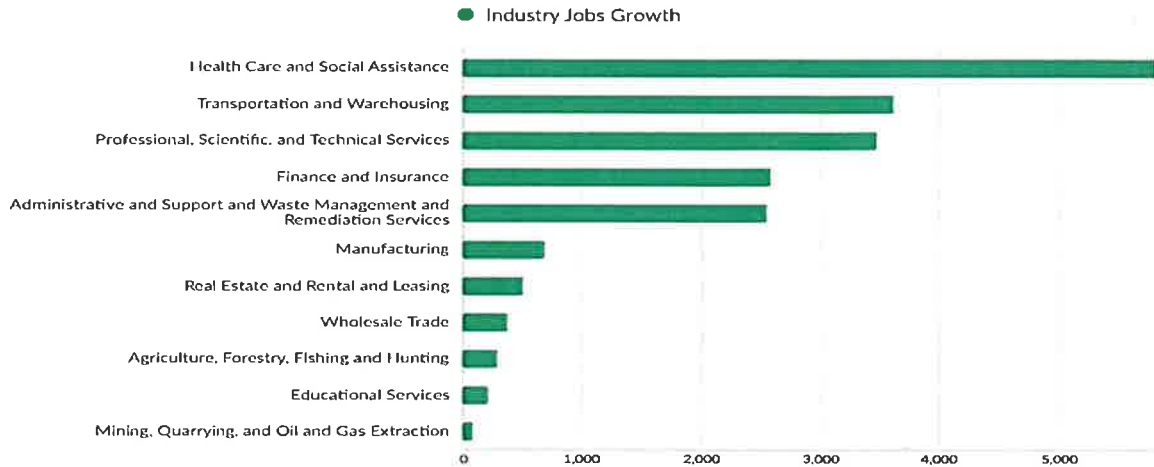
Healthcare, as a cornerstone of the regional economy, reflects strong demand for essential occupations such as registered nurses, medical assistants, and licensed vocational nurses. These roles are indispensable for addressing the healthcare needs of an aging population and expanding access to care. Similarly, Transportation and Warehousing serve as vital connectors for regional industries to national and international markets, with occupations like heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers and captains of water vessels ensuring supply chain efficiency and trade facilitation.

Top Industry Employment Concentration

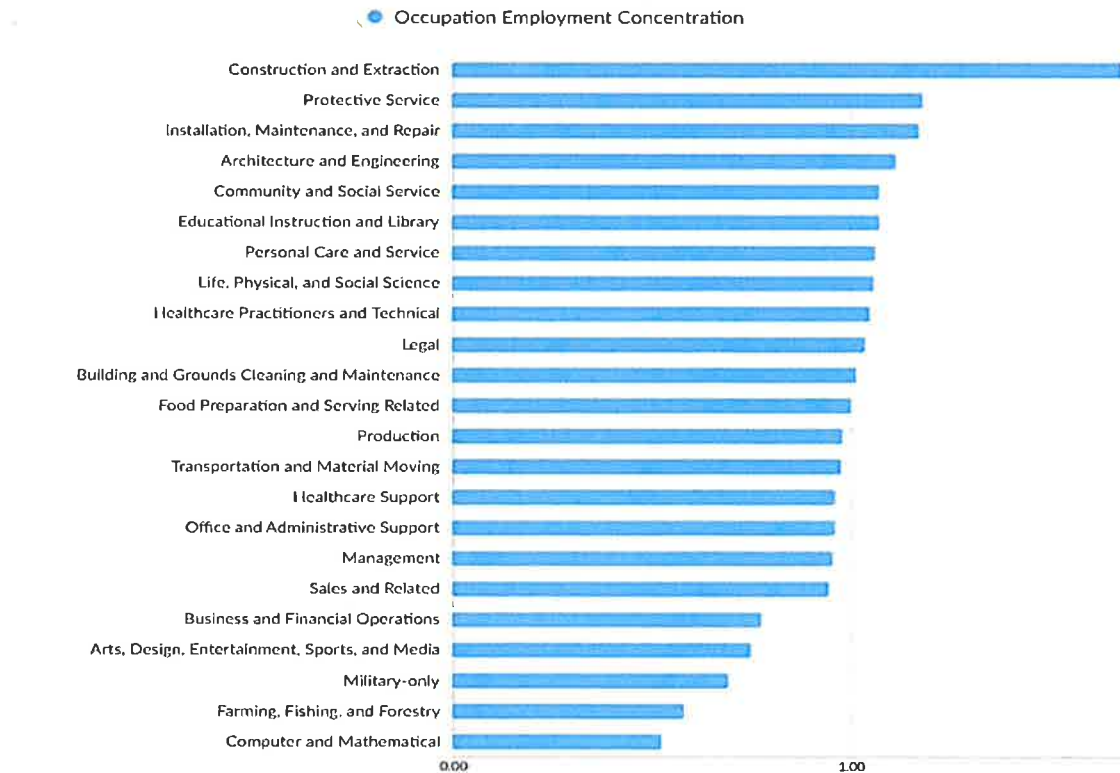


Industries and Occupations with Favorable Demand Projections Based on Growth

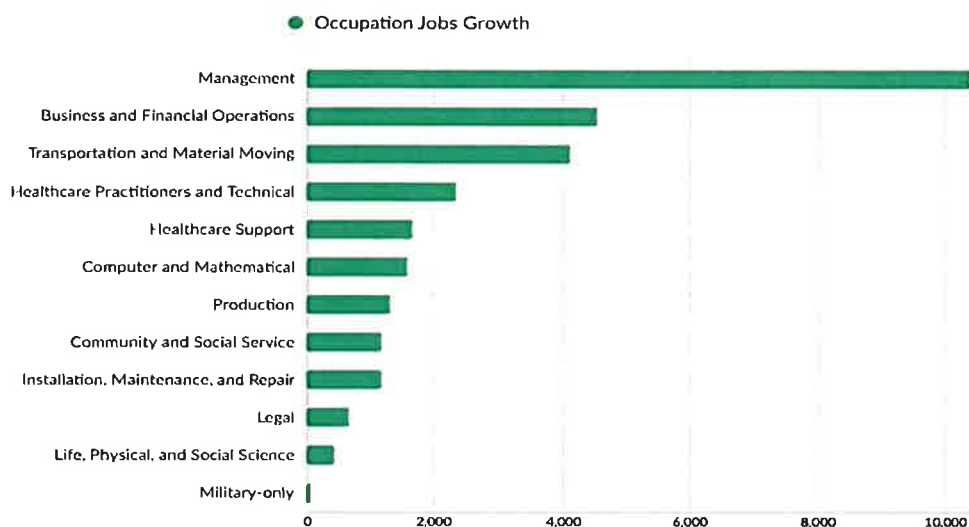
Top Growing Industries



Top Occupation Employment Concentration



Top Growing Occupations



In the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2), several industries show growth projections:

- **Health Care and Social Assistance** leads with the highest net job growth, adding over 6,000 jobs by 2027. This growth reflects the increasing demand for healthcare services, driven by population needs and regional efforts to expand access. High-demand occupations in this sector include Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses, and Medical Assistants, all of which align with growing healthcare needs and provide sustainable career opportunities.
- **Transportation and Warehousing** is second in our area with a net job growth at over 3,500 jobs. This growth reflects the location of this region and its ability to transport goods and services with quad modal transportation services. The crossroads of major interstates like Interstates 10, 55 and 12 allow for east west and north south routes.
- **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services** show robust growth, with an increase of 3,000 jobs. This sector drives innovation and technical advancements, with key occupations such as Business Operations Specialists, Accountants and Auditors, and Human Resources **Specialists** leading demand. These roles are essential for businesses seeking to remain competitive and align with the region's strategic priorities.
- **Manufacturing** demonstrates growth of nearly 600 jobs, reflecting the region's investment in industrial capacity and energy production. Occupations like General and Operations Managers, Industrial Mechanics, and Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers are critical to this sector's ongoing expansion.
- **Construction**, while not currently reflected in the net growth data, is poised to experience significant demand due to upcoming infrastructure projects related to

the expansion of industry. These large-scale developments will create sustained demand for skilled construction workers, such as electricians, heavy equipment operators, and project managers, positioning construction as a key growth sector in the coming years.

The distinction between net growth and total job demand is essential for understanding the dynamics of regional employment. While industries with high total demand (including replacements) indicate where the greatest number of job openings exist, industries with net growth point to areas of economic expansion and innovation. These growing industries, coupled with high-demand occupations, represent key opportunities for workforce development initiatives to strengthen the local economy and provide residents with long-term career pathways.

By strategically aligning workforce efforts with these sectors, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region can ensure it remains competitive, resilient, and prepared to meet the demands of a shifting economy.

Connection to Targeted Industries

Replacement jobs are also important as they are those jobs left vacant due to retirement, exits and transfers to other positions or occupations. These occupations highlight their importance in maintaining the strength of the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's targeted industries:

- **Transportation and Warehousing** relies heavily on stockers, order fillers, and truck drivers to ensure goods flow efficiently through the region's robust supply chain infrastructure.
- **Construction** benefits construction helpers who aid journeyman in the construction industry and are on a career path for increases wages and skill in this apprenticeship occupation.
- **Hospitality and Retail** depend on roles such as cashiers, retail salespersons, waitstaff, and food preparation workers to support the vibrant service economy that is central to Baton Rouge' global reputation.

The abundance of replacement jobs across these occupations reflects the region's economic diversity and resilience. These opportunities not only provide career pathways for workers but also ensure that critical industries remain well-staffed and capable of meeting the demands of a dynamic and evolving economy. By aligning workforce development initiatives with these replacement needs, the region can sustain its economic vitality while creating accessible opportunities for its residents.

Industries and Occupations that are important to overall growth

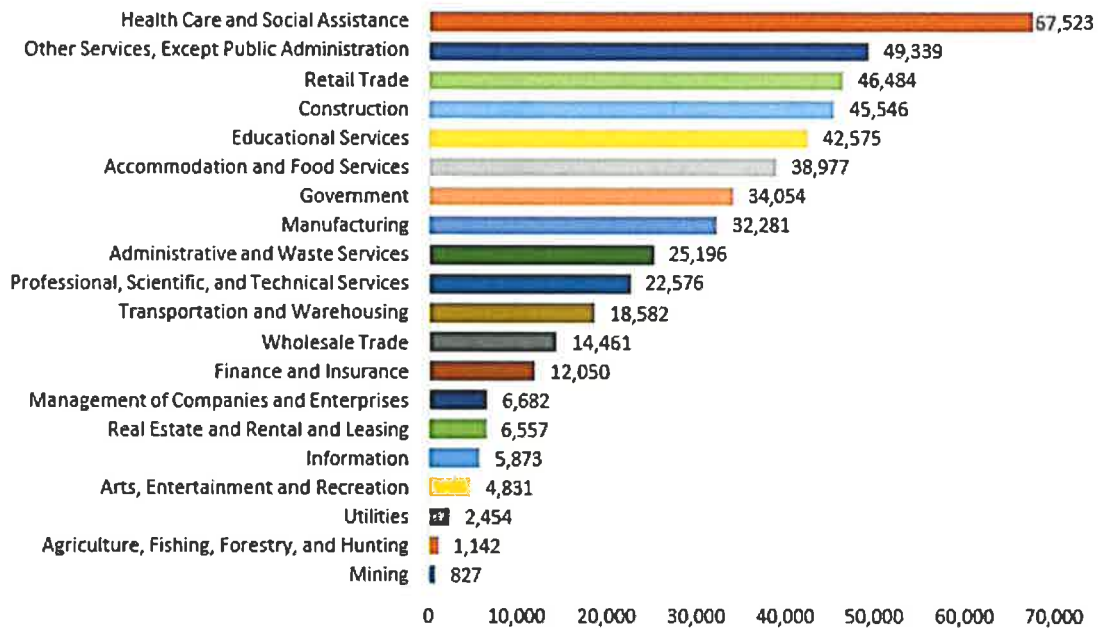
Although experiencing modest or flat growth, certain industries continue to play crucial roles in the economy of the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region, significantly contributing to the local economy and offering essential services. These industries play key roles in community stability, workforce development, and maintain a robust economic foundation, even as they face challenges and evolve with changing market dynamics.

- **Retail Trade:** The retail trade sector remains a critical pillar of the regional economy. While net growth is modest or even slightly negative in some areas, such as retail salespeople and cashiers, the sector continues to generate a substantial number of replacement jobs, ensuring consistent workforce demand. This resilience underscores its importance in providing goods and services to the community and supporting other economic activities. Retail managers, who play a vital leadership role, are essential for ensuring operational efficiency and adapting to challenges like e-commerce competition and shifting consumer preferences.
- **Public and Private Educational Services:** With a steady upward trend this industry is indispensable for workforce development and long-term economic growth. Educational services not only prepare individuals for high-demand occupations but also foster regional innovation by enhancing skills and knowledge. Roles like elementary and secondary school educators are particularly vital, supporting the next generation of workers and ensuring community stability. This region is also heavy in post-secondary education institutions and training programs. Public Institutions include Louisiana State University, Southern University, Southeastern Louisiana University, Baton Rouge Community College, Northshore Technical and Community College, and River Parishes Community College along with several proprietary training schools.

While the Retail Trade sector adapts to evolving consumer behaviors and technological advancements, and the Educational Services sector responds to growing workforce demands, both industries remain critical drivers of the Greater Baton Rouge economy. Their enduring relevance, even in the face of modest or flat net growth, highlights the importance of these industries in providing employment, community services, and economic stability. Occupations such as retail managers and educators exemplify their contribution, ensuring that these sectors continue to support the regional economy and adapt to future challenges.

Overall Current Industry Employee Numbers

Distribution of Employment by Industry Sector



Employment by Industry Sector in RLMA 2

Source: QCEW

Louisiana Star Rated Occupations

Major Occupations in the Baton Rouge RLMA

Occupation	SOC Code	Base 2022	Projected 2024	Difference	Percent Change	Star Rating
Cashiers	41-2011	12,729	12,668	-61	-0.48%	★
Retail Salespersons	41-2031	10,522	10,233	-289	-2.75%	★
Registered Nurses	29-1141	10,179	10,526	347	3.41%	★★★★★
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	53-7062	8,583	9,153	570	6.64%	★★
General and Operations Managers	11-1021	8,501	8,927	426	5.01%	★★★★★
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	31-1120	8,011	8,579	568	7.09%	★
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	43-6014	7,820	7,806	-14	-0.18%	★★★
Food Preparation Workers	35-2021	7,551	7,939	388	5.14%	★
Construction Laborers	47-2061	7,520	7,819	299	3.98%	★★★
Office Clerks, General	43-9061	6,861	7,003	152	2.22%	★★

Major 5 Star Occupations in the Baton Rouge RLMA

Occupation	SOC Code	Base 2022	Projected 2024	Difference	Percent Change
Registered Nurses	29-1141	10179	10526	347	3.41%
General and Operations Managers	11-1021	8501	8927	426	5.01%
Construction Managers	11-9021	2401	2519	118	4.91%
Financial Managers	11-3031	1932	2044	112	5.8%
Lawyers	23-1011	1928	2001	73	3.79%
Medical and Health Services Managers	11-9111	1550	1674	124	8%
Administrative Services and Facilities Managers	11-3010	1076	1106	30	2.79%
Pharmacists	29-1051	1037	1046	9	0.87%
Registered Nurses	29-1141	10179	10526	347	3.41%
General and Operations Managers	11-1021	8501	8927	426	5.01%

The Star Jobs Rating coincides with the Industry Sectors for high demand and high wages for the Greater Baton Rouge and Northshore Region.

The Region's Economic Evolution and Emerging Sectors

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's economy is undergoing a significant transformation, with the rise of emerging sectors that complement its traditional industries. This evolution is driven by technological advancements, an increased emphasis on innovation, and a strategic focus on building a more diversified and resilient economic foundation.

- **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services:** This sector is at the forefront of the region's economic growth. The increasing demand for technical expertise and innovative solutions has positioned this industry as a critical driver of progress. From business operations specialists and environmental science technicians to accountants and auditors, the sector supports a wide range of occupations that enhance efficiency and sustainability across multiple industries. Its contributions are especially impactful in areas like construction and healthcare, where technical innovation is key to improving processes and outcomes.
- **Information Technology (IT):** Expanding rapidly, the IT sector is driven by the growing demand for digital solutions and cybersecurity measures across industries. Occupations such as software developers, IT specialists, and network

administrators are increasingly critical to meeting both local and national needs. IT plays a pivotal role in modernizing industries like Advanced Manufacturing and Transportation and Warehousing, enabling these traditional sectors to stay competitive in the global market. Healthcare consistently improves services through automation and robotics requiring IT staff and programmers. Additionally, IT supports the region's workforce development efforts by introducing high-tech career pathways that align with future labor market demands.

Opportunities for Diversification and Resilience

These sectors highlight not only economic growth but also the region's adaptability and workforce strengths. Professional, scientific, and technical services drive innovation and new business opportunities, boosting productivity across industries. The IT sector keeps local businesses competitive in an increasingly digital global economy.

The rise of these sectors also reflects the region's commitment to building economic resilience. By diversifying its economic base, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region is better equipped to weather fluctuations in traditional industries such as oil and gas. Workforce development initiatives that prioritize skills in technical services and IT further enhance this resilience, ensuring the region remains a hub for innovation, sustainability, and long-term growth.

As these sectors continue to expand, they create new career opportunities for residents, attract investment to the region, and strengthen its position as a competitive and forward-looking economic center.

Sources for Data Charts and Graphs and Data Numbers

- Louisiana Workforce Commission, LMI
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)
- U.S. Census Bureau
- Lightcast
- GNO, Inc. Regional Economic Development Entity
- BRAC, Inc. Regional Economic Development Entity

2. Employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The employment landscape in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) reflects diverse and evolving needs across existing and emerging industry sectors. With 16,405 openings posted online in January 2025 there is great need for skilled workers in high

demand areas. In Manufacturing and Construction, there is a consistent demand for skilled trades such as machinists, electricians, and welders, alongside operations managers capable of overseeing production and integrating advanced technologies. Additionally, Construction is experiencing sustained demand for skilled laborers, project managers, and equipment operators due to major infrastructure projects, including port expansions. Meanwhile, the Healthcare sector urgently requires Registered Nurses, Certified Nursing Assistants Patient Care Techs, and Licensed Practical Nurses to address the needs of an aging population and expanding healthcare infrastructure.

The Transportation and Warehousing/Logistics sector highlight the need for Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, warehouse supervisors, and warehousing analysts to maintain and optimize supply chain operations. This region has a quad modal transportation design available to it with Multiple Ports, Airports, Rail Service and major interstates makes transportation and warehousing combined advanced manufacturing a prime existing demand industry. Emerging sectors, such as **Information Technology (IT)** and **Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services**, reveal growing opportunities for software developers, cybersecurity specialists, data analysts, and business operations professionals. Employers across all these sectors consistently prioritize technical certifications, critical thinking skills, and hands-on experience with emerging technologies.

Openings in Region Two: There are currently 10,121 job openings posted in HiRE (Louisiana Works) for February of 2025.

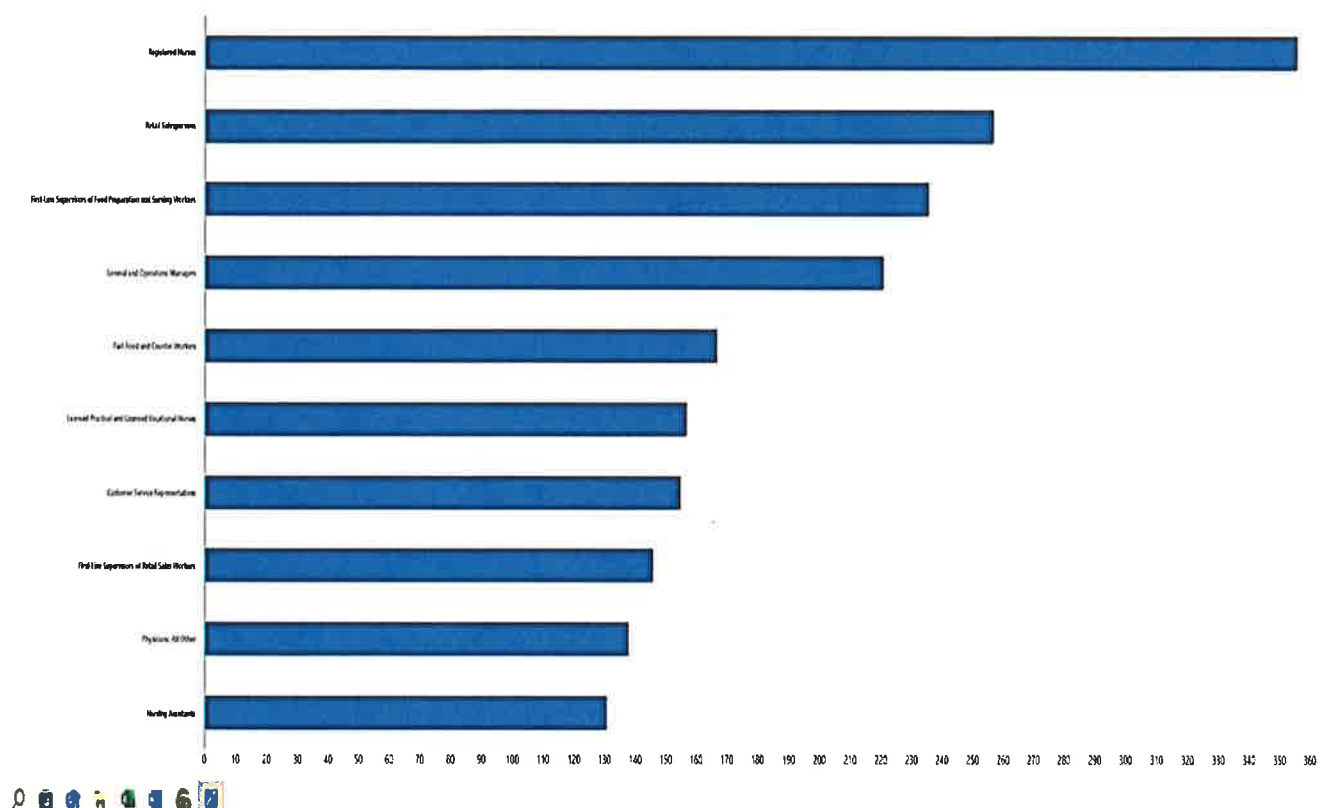
The "Top Posted Occupations" chart further illustrates the region's dynamic workforce demands. Registered Nurses lead with over 304 Postings in Feb of 2025, underscoring the critical need for healthcare professionals. Retail Salespersons, First-Line Supervisors of Retail Workers, and General and Operations Managers demonstrate the continued importance of healthcare, manufacturing and construction. These jobs fluctuate over time but tend to remain in the areas of demand for the region.

With median posting durations ranging from 19 to 32 days, employers face varying levels of urgency and competition to fill these critical roles. This highlights the importance of targeted workforce development initiatives and accelerated training programs to bridge the gap between job seeker skills and employer needs, ensuring a responsive and resilient labor market.

Occupations by Advertised Jobs ?



This section shows the occupations with the highest number of job openings advertised online in 2nd Regional Labor Market Area, Baton Rouge, LA on February 22, 2025 (Jobs Data on Level 1).



3. *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:*

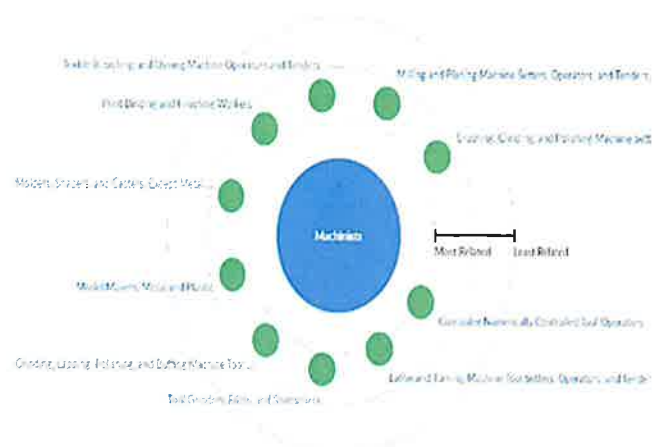
Targeted Career Pathway Clusters in the Region

To meet the workforce needs of in-demand industries and support economic growth, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) has prioritized targeted career pathway clusters. These clusters are designed to align training and education programs with high-demand occupations, providing residents with clear and accessible routes to sustainable careers.

Advanced Manufacturing:

The manufacturing sector is advancing with the integration of sophisticated technologies. Career pathways in this field now emphasize advanced manufacturing techniques, robotics, and automation, which equip workers with essential skills for contemporary production environments. Training programs frequently offer certifications in areas such as industrial maintenance, machining, and mechatronics, addressing the rising need for specialized expertise. These pathways bolster regional industries like oil and gas, petrochemicals, and general manufacturing, thereby ensuring a consistent supply of qualified professionals.

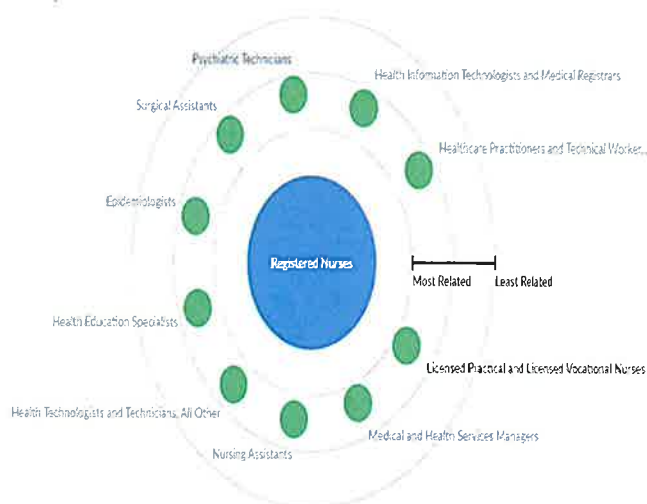
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Machinists with median advertised salary of \$52,000. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Machinists and your selected occupation.



Healthcare:

The healthcare sector serves as a fundamental component of the regional economy, with a rising demand for professionals in various roles. Career pathways in healthcare include Registered Nursing, Licensed Practical Nursing, Medical Assistants, and Nursing Assistants, all of which are essential in addressing the region's expanding healthcare infrastructure. Moreover, pathways in healthcare administration prepare individuals for positions in hospital management and patient access, while medical technology programs provide students with expertise in areas such as medical imaging and laboratory sciences. These pathways benefit from partnerships with prominent healthcare employers ensuring they meet industry standards and requirements.

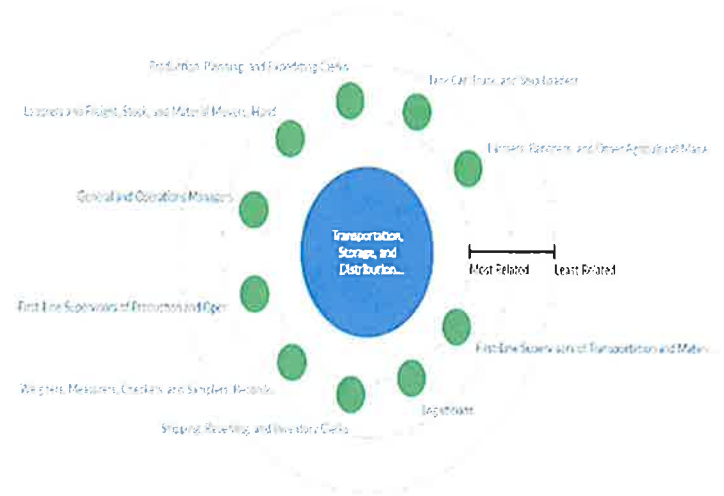
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Registered Nurses with median advertised salary of \$100,224. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Registered Nurses and your selected occupation.



Transportation and Warehousing:

The transportation and warehousing sector presents various opportunities for workforce development as a regional hub for trade and distribution. Career pathways in this field include Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training programs, preparing individuals for roles as Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers. Supply chain management and warehousing certification programs offer additional options for careers in warehousing, freight coordination, and transportation analysis. These programs support the region's infrastructure expansion efforts and the growing need for efficient supply chain operations.

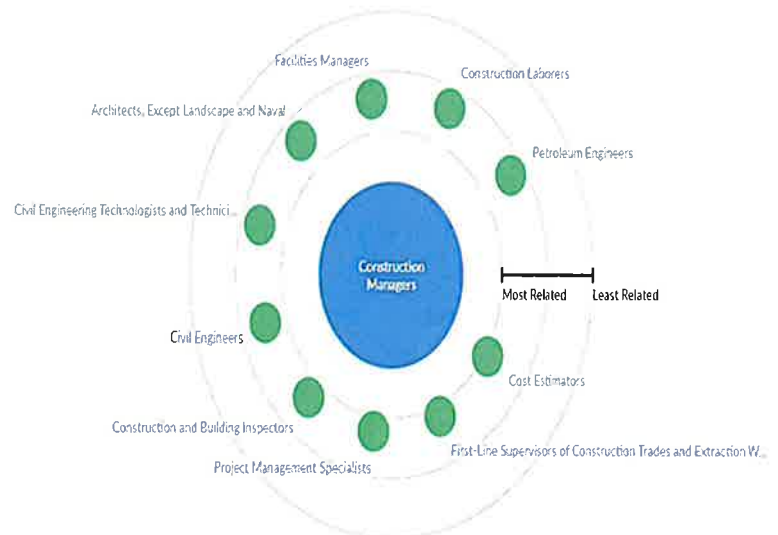
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers with median advertised salary of \$60,002. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers and your selected occupation.



Construction:

With considerable infrastructure projects currently in progress, including industrial expansions, the construction sector is identified as a high-priority area for workforce development in the coming years. Career pathways in construction focus on apprenticeships and certifications in trades such as carpentry, electrical work, plumbing, and heavy equipment operation. These programs are typically driven by employers, with collaborations between workforce boards and local unions ensuring that participants receive hands-on training and access to employment opportunities.

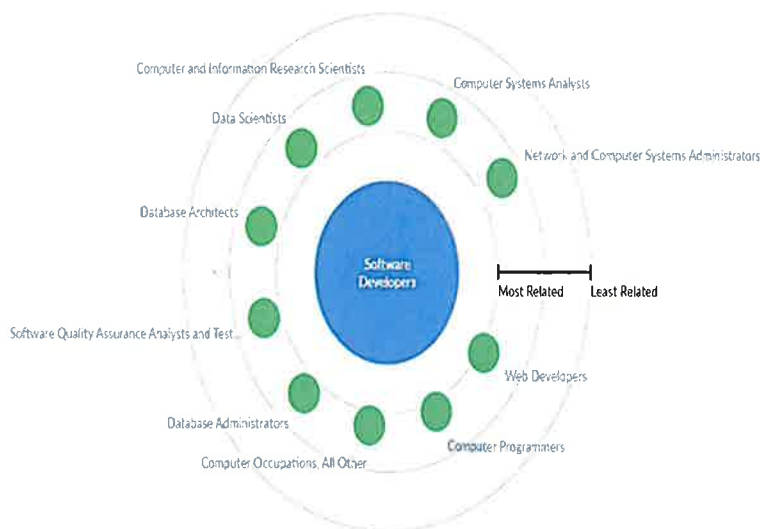
Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Construction Managers with median advertised salary of \$89,984. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Construction Managers and your selected occupation.



Information Technology and Technical Services:

The IT and technical services sectors are experiencing significant growth in the region, driven by the increasing digitization across various industries. Career pathways in this sector include areas such as cybersecurity, software development, and data science, which are essential to fulfill both local and national needs. Training programs often offer industry-recognized certifications, such as the Apprenti Apprenticeship Program. Employers like IBM focus on ensuring relevance and applicability. These pathways provide opportunities for both entry-level and advanced roles, contributing to the region's efforts to develop a skilled workforce in technology. Feeder jobs leading to software developer roles are integral to this development.

Below are the top listed feeder jobs for Software Developers with median advertised salary of \$115,072. Select a job to view additional insight (i.e. Skill Gaps) between Software Developers and your selected occupation.



By concentrating on high demand career pathway clusters, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region ensures that workforce development initiatives are closely aligned with industry requirements. These pathways not only offer well-defined routes to high-demand occupations but also support the region's broader objectives of economic mobility and resilience. Through collaborations with employers, educational institutions, and workforce boards, these targeted pathways equip residents for meaningful careers while addressing significant labor shortages in key industries.

Skills in Demand in the Region

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) needs a workforce skilled in both technical and soft skills to support its diverse economy. Key sectors include healthcare, transportation and warehousing, IT, construction, and manufacturing. Workforce development must focus on providing specialized technical skills and essential soft skills to meet employer demands.

Technical Skills: The Foundation of Regional Employment

The demand for technical skills is evident across key industries, and it reflects the region's reliance on specialized expertise to sustain economic growth:

- **Healthcare Dominance:** The healthcare industry is the region's largest employer, emphasizing the need for nursing and medical support skills. Specialized skills like health assessment and medical privacy are becoming increasingly vital, particularly as advancements in medical technology evolve how care is delivered.
- **Transportation and Warehousing:** The demand for Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers and Warehousing coordinators highlights the importance of CDL licensure and supply chain expertise. With the region's role as a critical transportation hub, these technical proficiencies ensure the seamless movement of goods across national and international markets.
- **Construction and Advanced Manufacturing:** The ongoing infrastructure projects and industrial expansion emphasize the need for workers with certifications in trades such as welding, carpentry, machinists, instrumentation, and occupational safety. These roles form the backbone of industries driving the region's physical and economic development.

Soft Skills: Work Readiness Skill Development

While technical skills are vital, soft skills remain a universal requirement across all sectors. Employers consistently highlight these competencies as critical for workforce success. These skills transcend into all industries and are crucial to employment success.

- **Communication and Leadership:** Verbal and written communication skills can help you convey information and ideas to your peers, supervisors, and managers. Developing your communication skills can help your present data reports, compile work-related emails or complete daily documents. Some ways to develop your communication skills include attending public speaking or writing courses, practicing various written compositions, and creating verbal presentations.
- **Customer Service and Problem-Solving:** Problem-solving can help you discover innovative solutions to challenges. Your critical thinking skills can help a company improve its processes, enhance customer experience, and increase employee satisfaction. Having critical thinking skills can help you identify the cause of a situation, analyze the processes that a problem affects and enable you to think of a potential solution. Some ways to develop your critical thinking skills include identifying lessons from previous challenges, reviewing historical solutions, practicing your active-listening skills and defining the problem.
- **Teamwork and Technical Collaboration:** In precision-based industries like healthcare, manufacturing, and IT, diligence ensures quality and safety, while teamwork facilitates collaboration and innovation. Positions within a company rely on teamwork and collaboration. This can help teams perform their tasks efficiently, complete projects and discover solutions. Effective communication, problem-solving and conflict resolution skills can help you improve your ability to work in a team. Some ways to develop your teamwork skills include delegating

tasks, communicating clearly and regularly with others, and fostering a positive mindset.

- **Time Management:** Time management can help you effectively allocate your time to different tasks throughout the day. It can also help you reduce stress, enhance productivity and improve your timeliness. You can practice your time-management skills by setting alarms, developing daily schedules and creating reminders on your computer or mobile device.
- **Basic Reading and Math Skills:** Understanding your responsibilities and information requires strong reading and comprehension skills. You can improve these by reading articles, taking comprehension tests, and attending courses. Math is essential in many workplace tasks and careers, such as understanding finances and customer orders. Enhance your math skills by seeking help, taking courses, and practicing regularly.

Emerging Skills: Preparing for the Future

As industries adapt to technological and environmental shifts, emerging skills are becoming critical for regional competitiveness:

- **Data Communication/Analytics:** In 2025, 70 percent of jobs will involve working directly with data. This means that every organization will need people with the skills to interpret, translate, and communicate what that data means to the people who need to use it .
- **Data Science and Artificial Intelligence:** As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly integrated into our workforce, AI literacy will be an essential skill for employees, especially in tech-driven industries such as digital banking. Companies can promote hands-on experience with AI tools, establish AI as a core competency and foster a culture of innovation to integrate opportunities for upskilling into their organizations.

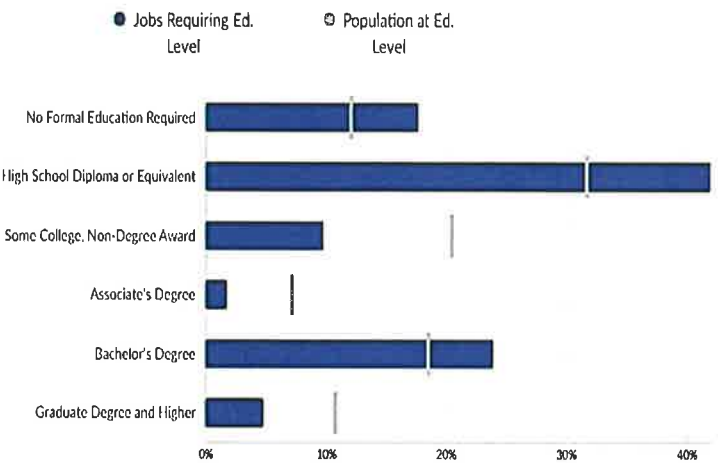
Skills Present in the Region

Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

The underemployment graph shows the gap between the education levels of the workforce and job requirements in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region. It covers all jobs, not just those with self-sustaining wages. Most jobs require only a high school diploma or equivalent, but there are many individuals with higher education, especially associate and master's degrees, who struggle to find matching positions. Graduate degree holders also face underemployment due to a lack of advanced roles. In contrast, jobs needing no formal education or just a high school diploma are well-matched with the workforce. These positions often also require experience, highlighting the importance of entry-level opportunities with career advancement and skill certifications. This region has support for educational attainment through higher education

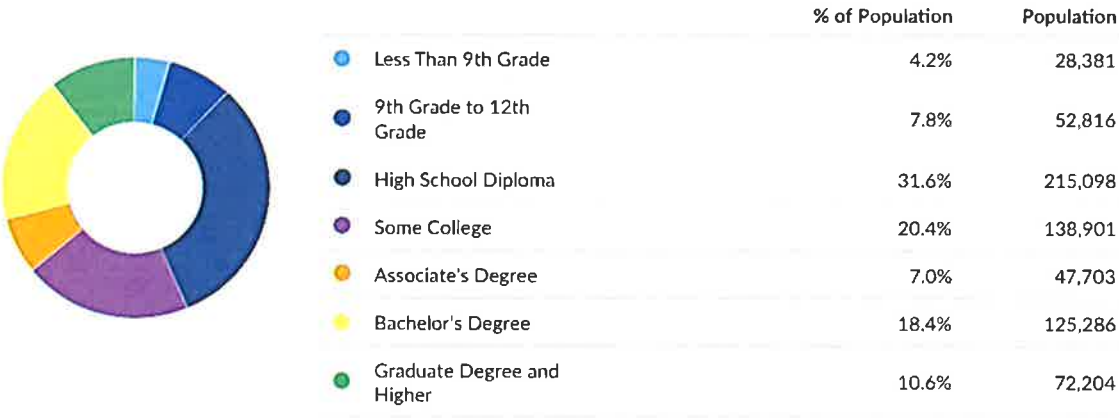
institutions. The education-to-work pipeline is strong in Region 2. There are apprenticeship programs that provide skill trades for increased earnings and placement.

Underemployment



Educational Attainment

Concerning educational attainment, 18.4% of the selected regions' residents possess a Bachelor's Degree (2.7% below the national average), and 7.0% hold an Associate's Degree (1.8% below the national average).



Educational Pipeline

In 2022, there were 15,081 graduates in 11 Louisiana Counties. This pipeline has shrunk by 3% over the last 4 years. The highest share of these graduates come from "General Studies" (Certificate), "Business Administration and Management, General" (Bachelor's), and "Biology/Biological Sciences, General" (Bachelor's).

School	Total Graduates (2022)	Graduate Trend (2019 - 2022)
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College	7,430	
Southeastern Louisiana University	2,179	
Baton Rouge Community College	1,531	
Southern University and A & M College	1,166	
River Parishes Community College	672	
Diesel Driving Academy-Baton Rouge	448	
Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University	316	
ITI Technical College	241	
Fortis College-Baton Rouge	189	
Delta College of Arts & Technology	143	

Skills sought by Employers in Targeted Sectors

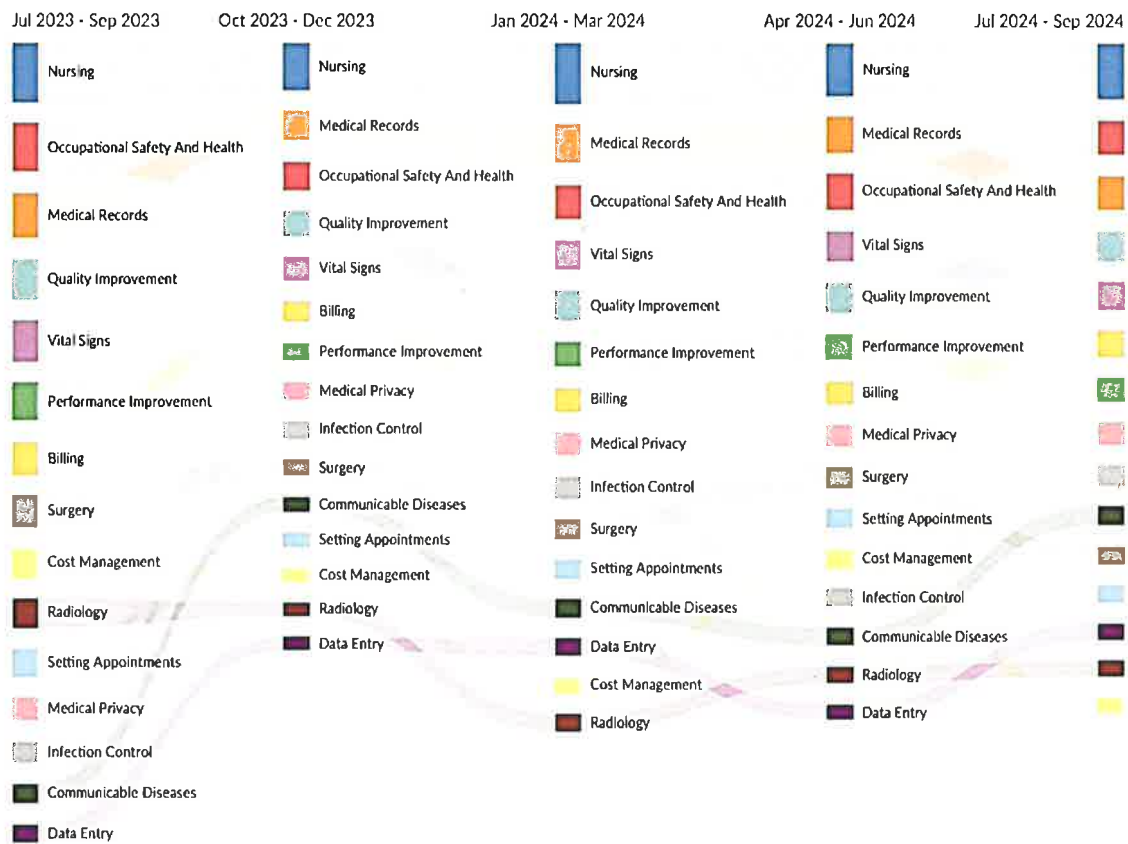
There is an evolving demand for skills across key industries in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region, prioritizing the most sought-after capabilities. In healthcare, skills such as Nursing, Registered Nurse (RN) certification, Medical Records, and Vital Signs consistently appear, reflecting the critical need for patient care expertise, regulatory compliance, and public health management. This sector dominates skill demand due to the region's growing healthcare infrastructure and workforce needs.

In construction, skills like Occupational Safety and Health, Performance Improvement, and Quality Improvement are in high demand, emphasizing the importance of safety compliance, and project compliance and improvement. Similarly, the transportation and warehousing industry highlights demand for skills in Occupational Safety and Health, highlighting the need for adherence to safety standards.

The advanced manufacturing industry sector emphasizes skills like data entry, cost management and quality improvement which are critical for organizational strategy, data analysis, and effective communication in high-skill industries.

Top 15 Skills for All Job Types by Quarter

Skills help us understand the direction an industry is headed.



Meeting Employer Needs

To effectively bridge the gap between job seeker skills and employer expectations, regional workforce development initiatives are focused on strategic priorities:

- **Expanding Access to Certifications and Accelerated Training Programs:** Targeted efforts are underway to increase access to certifications to include jumpstart programs in K-12 and dual enrollment with local community colleges. Several apprenticeship programs offer accelerated training combined with work-based learning.
- **Customized Training Design:** Workforce boards are actively partnering with employers to implement customized training programs tailored to address critical skill gaps in high-demand sectors. This collaborative approach ensures that training aligns with real-world business needs by collaborative efforts of employers, workforce development boards and training providers.
- **Promoting Work Readiness Education:** To complement technical training,

initiatives emphasize the development of soft/work readiness skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork through workshops, mentorship opportunities, and hands-on experiences.

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region by aligning workforce development efforts with the skills required by employers, the region can foster skill training and work readiness opportunities ensuring demand area growth.

Alignment of Job Seeker Skills with Business Demands

While direct connection between the job seekers and the demands of local businesses can occur, there are often gaps in critical sectors. Industries have begun the process of implementing work-based apprenticeship programs that enhance job seeker skills in critical areas. Employers who have difficulties in finding candidates with specialized certifications, technical expertise, and hands-on experience are moving toward on-the-job training and customized training that link academic skills with work-based learning.

This highlights the pressing need for strong collaboration among workforce boards, educational institutions, and employers to close these gaps. Expanding work-based learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships and internships align job seeker skills with industry demands, ensuring that the region's workforce is prepared to meet evolving economic challenges.

4. *Regional workforce considering current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment*

Changing Demographics

The demographic trends in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) indicate that the increase trend will continue into 2028 with a projected 2.5% overall increase in the population adding 26,000 citizens. The overall population does not appear to have a deviation from the current demographic representation.

Economy Overview

1,041,828

Population (2023)

Population grew by 28,055 over the last 5 years and is projected to grow by 26,124 over the next 5 years.

512,279

Total Regional Employment

Jobs grew by 9,613 over the last 5 years and are projected to grow by 23,815 over the next 5 years.

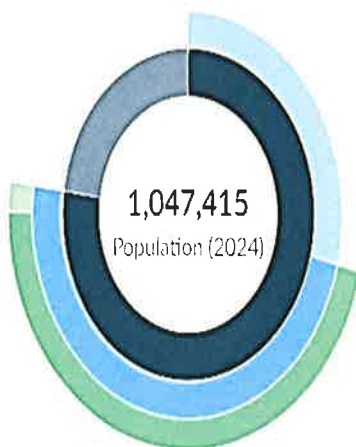
\$70.5K

Avg. Earnings Per Job (2023)

Regional average earnings per job are \$12.9K below the national average earnings of \$83.3K per job.

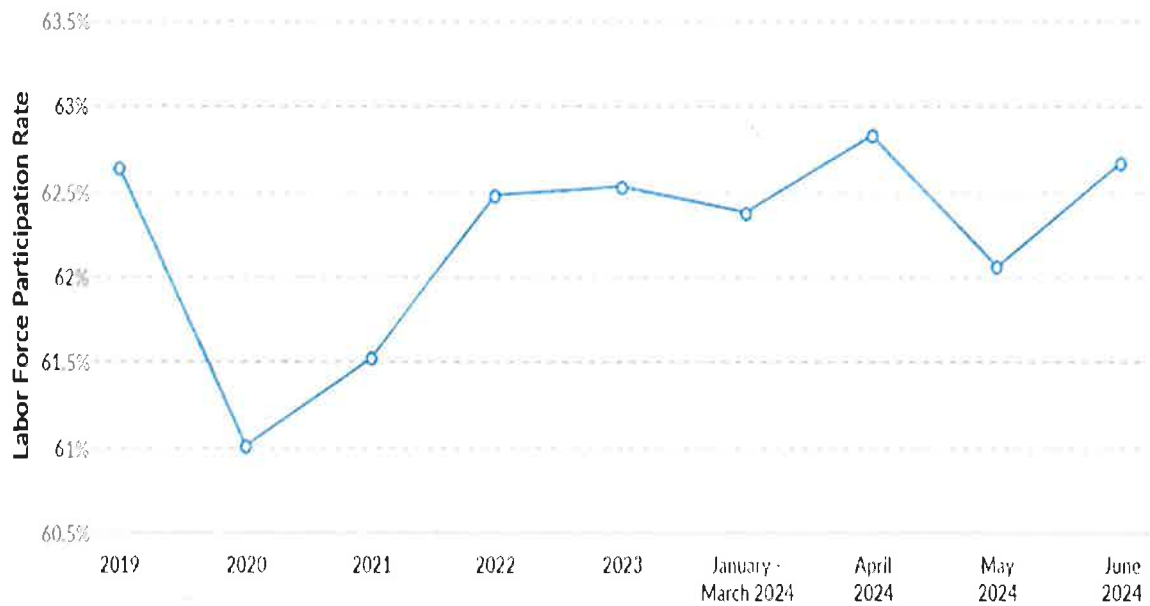
The projected increase will help meet the anticipated demand for employees, estimated at 23,815 jobs over the next five years. Currently, the Labor Force Breakdown indicates that 301,870 citizens aged 16 and older are not part of the labor force. Of these, there are 21,722 individuals receiving unemployment insurance who are actively seeking to rejoin the workforce. The remaining 238,655 citizens are available for skills training and employment initiatives. Region 2's labor market participation rate is approximately 62.5%, which is comparable to the national rate of 65.6% and exceeds Louisiana's state rate of 58.4% as reported in December 2024.

Jun 2024 Labor Force Breakdown



	Population
16+ Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population	808,760
Not in Labor Force (16+)	301,870
Labor Force	506,890
Employed	485,168
Unemployed	21,722
Under 16, Military, and institutionalized Population	238,655

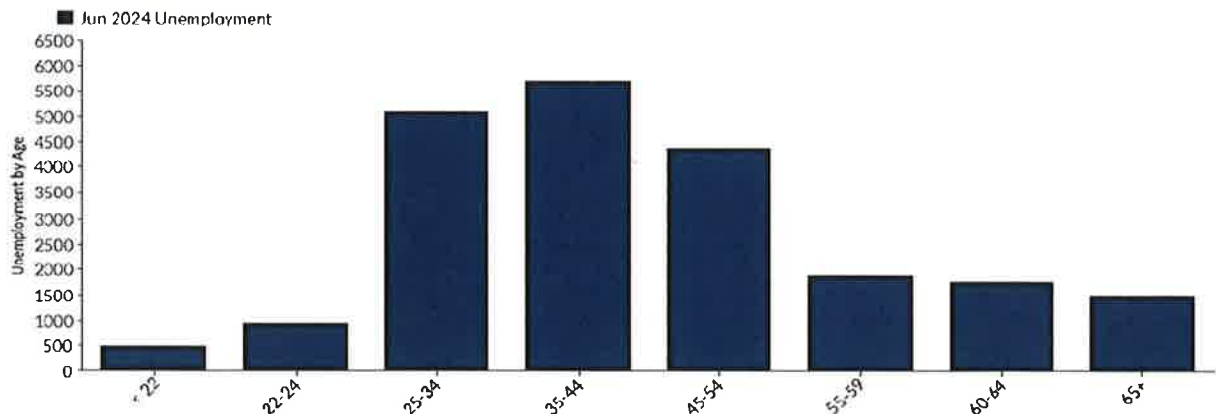
Labor Force Participation Rate Trends



Unemployment In the region

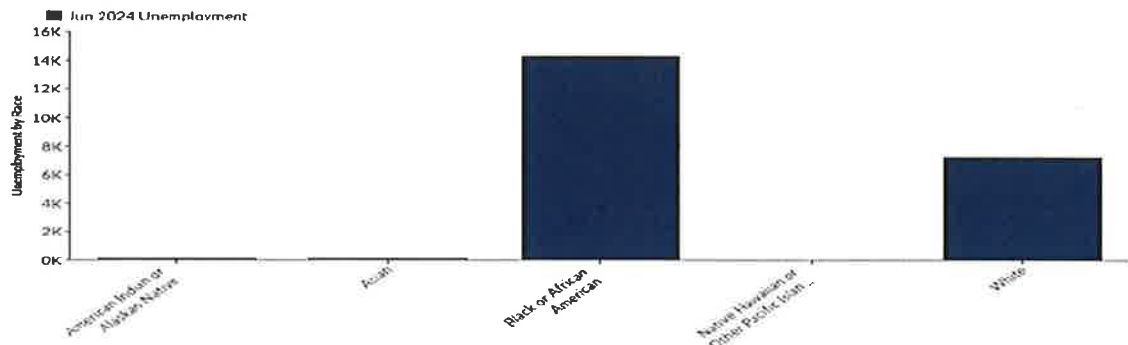
Unemployment data for the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) shows that 35–44-year-olds are the largest unemployed group, with over 5,714 people. African Americans are significantly overrepresented at 65.6% (14,249), and females make up 62.3% of the unemployed. These statistics indicate a need for targeted reemployment efforts for these groups in Region 2.

Unemployment by Age



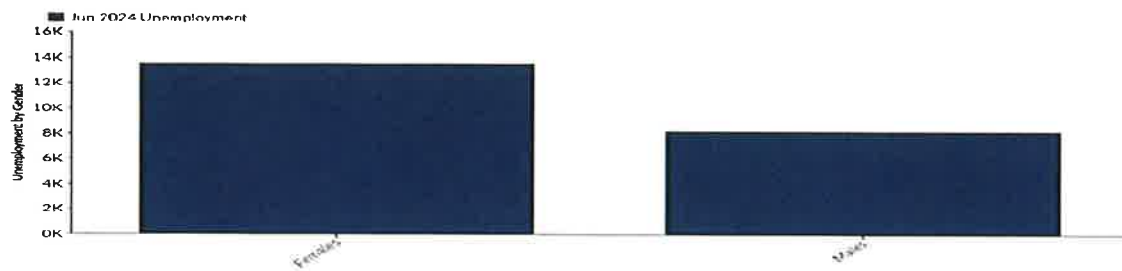
Age	Unemployment (Jun 2024)	% of Unemployed
< 22	477	2.20%
22-24	940	4.33%
25-34	5,102	23.49%
35-44	5,714	26.31%
45-54	4,365	20.09%
55-59	1,885	8.68%
60-64	1,753	8.07%
65+	1,487	6.85%
Total	21,722	100.00%

Unemployment by Race



Race	Unemployment (Jun 2024)	% of Unemployed
American Indian or Alaskan Native	101	0.46%
Asian	124	0.57%
Black or African American	14,249	65.60%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	20	0.09%
White	7,229	33.28%
Total	21,722	100.00%

Unemployment by Gender



Gender	Unemployment (Jun 2024)	% of Unemployed
Females	13,536	62.31%
Males	8,186	37.69%
Total	21,722	100.00%

The data highlights the need to align workforce development with regional economic demands. Investing in upskilling programs for high-demand industries like healthcare, transportation, and warehousing can reduce unemployment and prepare workers for new opportunities in Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region. Unemployed individuals may require reskilling and upskilling to re-enter the labor market.

Special Populations in the Region

Reentry Population

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region has a substantial reentry population, estimated to be around 2,340 individuals in 2023. These individuals encounter challenges, including limited access to job training, employer reluctance, and the necessity for supportive services such as housing, transportation, and mental health resources. Workforce boards collaborate with programs like the Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LA-PRI) to offer essential services that facilitate a smooth transition into the workforce. As a policy, individuals within the reentry population receive priority service to ensure they have access to job training and placement opportunities.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Expungement Services:** Continued partnerships with CSBG and TAA agencies to remove employment barriers for reentry individuals.
- **Tailored Job Programs:** Expanding training in high-demand fields such as CDL Drivers, construction, manufacturing, and Warehousing.
- **Employer Engagement:** Incentivizing businesses to hire reentry individuals through tax credits and workforce readiness programs.

Unemployment and Dislocated Worker Population

The total unemployment population in the eleven-parish Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region MSA, 21,722 individuals, represents the potential dislocated worker population. This group includes individuals affected by layoffs, sector transitions, and economic disruptions. Workforce boards support dislocated workers through initiatives such as On-the-Job Training (OJT), targeted job fairs, employer networking events, and enhanced job-matching services. These programs aim to connect dislocated workers with opportunities in growing industries like healthcare, IT, and advanced manufacturing.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **On-the-Job Programs:** Providing paid, hands-on training with regional employers to upskill dislocated workers.
- **Job Fairs and Networking:** Hosting targeted events to connect dislocated workers with hiring employers in high-demand sectors.
- **Job Matching:** Career specialists and business service representatives actively work to "open doors" to employers by making introductions and advocating for job placements.

Youth Population

Louisiana has a dropout rate of 7.4%. This group constitutes a significant portion of the youth population (ages 16-24) who are neither in school nor employed. These young individuals encounter challenges such as limited access to education, mentorship, and career opportunities. Workforce boards have developed youth-specific initiatives outlined in the Youth Services section of regional and local plans, which include apprenticeship programs, GED support, and soft skills training.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Work Experience:** Creating direct learning opportunities in high-growth sectors providing the opportunity to earn and learn.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Partnering with local employers to provide career guidance and real-world experiences.
- **Expanded Youth Services:** Leveraging regional and local plan frameworks to ensure comprehensive support for disconnected youth.

Veterans

The region is home to approximately 45,756 veterans, many of whom face challenges transitioning into civilian careers. Workforce boards collaborate with local veterans' organizations and initiatives such as LWC Veteran's Services to connect veterans with high-demand jobs in Manufacturing and Warehousing. Veterans receive priority service through all workforce programs, ensuring access to tailored support and job placement services. Core and mandated partners work together to provide seamless assistance for veterans, from skills

translation to employment readiness.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Priority Services:** Ensuring veterans receive front-line access to workforce development programs.
- **Veteran-Specific Initiatives:** Partnering with NextOp, and LWC Veteran's Services and hosting veteran-focused job fairs.
- **Collaboration:** Ensuring all workforce system partners collaborate to address the unique needs of veterans.

Senior Population

The senior population, aged 55 and older, includes 282,289 individuals at risk of retiring without sustainable income. This demographic underscores the need for workforce programs focused on upskilling, flexible work options, and utilizing their experience to meet labor demands.

Policy and Service Implications:

- **Senior Employment Initiatives** like SCSEP help address barriers for senior workers. SCSEP offers part-time community service roles, helping seniors gain work experience.,
- **Employer Engagement:** Encouraging businesses to recognize the value seniors bring to the workforce through experience and reliability.
- **Supportive Services:** Providing technology skills training and addressing other barriers like transportation and healthcare access.

B. Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region demonstrates a comprehensive approach to workforce development through sector initiatives that address in-demand industry needs. These initiatives are guided by the collaboration of four local workforce boards, employers, foundations, and regional institutions. Below are detailed responses to the questions, highlighting specific initiatives.

How Workforce Partners Will Convene Employers, Foundations, and Regional Institutions

Workforce partners in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region utilize a collaborative and strategic approach to convene employers, foundations, and regional institutions to lead sector partnerships and make coordinated investments. Key strategies include:

- **Sector-Specific Advisory Councils:** Workforce boards establish sector-specific advisory councils comprising employers, educational institutions, and foundation representatives. These councils meet regularly to identify workforce needs, discuss training program design, and align investments with industry priorities.
- **Regional Workforce Summits:** Workforce partners host regional workforce summits and industry forums, bringing together stakeholders to share insights, identify gaps, and foster collaboration. Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), Greater New Orleans, Inc (GNO, Inc) and the Region 2 Regional Planning District serve as partners hosting regional workforce summits with employers.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborations between workforce boards, employers, and foundations are formalized through public-private partnerships. For instance, The North Baton Rouge Industrial Training Initiative (NBRITI) is a collaborative program led by Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC), Employ BR and ExxonMobil, offering free, accelerated training in high-demand trades such as electrical, instrumentation, millwright, pipefitting, process technology, and welding. Participants receive classroom instruction and hands-on experience, culminating in nationally recognized certifications from organizations like the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and the American Welding Society (AWS). The program aims to equip North Baton Rouge residents with the skills needed for immediate employment in local industries.
- **Educational and Industry Partnerships:** Workforce boards partner with institutions like Northshore Community and Technical College and North Oaks Hospital to address healthcare shortages. Northshore Community and Technical College is part of the three school partnerships with Laitram, LLC, Elmers Candy and Zatarain's (McCormick) Mechatronics program which brings together manufacturers and educators to train workers in robotics and automation.

- **Neutral Conveners:** Organizations such as the Greater Baton Rouge Area Foundation and the Northshore Foundation act as neutral conveners, facilitating dialogue between stakeholders, ensuring alignment across sectors, and identifying opportunities for coordinated investments.
- **Local Chambers and Economic Development Organizations:** Economic Development partners align economic partners with workforce development boards.

By fostering collaboration through these structured approaches, workforce partners ensure that sector partnerships are employer-led, foundation-supported, and aligned with regional priorities, resulting in coordinated investments that meet the workforce needs of both established and emerging industries.

Established and Active Industry Sector Partnerships in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region

Healthcare (Northshore Healthscape): Northshore Healthscape collaborates with healthcare providers such as Ochsner Health, St. Tammany Health System, North Oaks Healthcare System, and Our Lady of the Lake, along with local workforce boards and colleges. This partnership addresses workforce needs in nursing, medical assisting, and healthcare administration. Achievements include the annual graduation of hundreds of credentialed healthcare professionals, many of whom occupy critical roles in local hospitals and clinics. Additionally, this initiative has enhanced access to healthcare services in underserved communities.

Advanced Manufacturing (Mechatronics Apprenticeship): The Mechatronics Apprenticeship program, led by Laitram, LLC, Elmers and Zatarain's is based on a partnership with Northshore Technical and Community College and Delgado Community College. The program trains workers in robotics, automation, and mechatronics, addressing critical skill shortages in advanced manufacturing. Outcomes include dozens of apprentices transitioning into full-time roles at leading regional manufacturing firms, strengthening the advanced manufacturing workforce pipeline.

The North Baton Rouge Industrial Training Initiative (NBRITI): is a collaborative program led by Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC) and ExxonMobil, offering free, accelerated training in high-demand trades such as electrical, instrumentation, millwright, pipefitting, process technology, and welding. Participants receive classroom instruction and hands-on experience, culminating in nationally recognized certifications from organizations like the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and the American Welding Society (AWS). The program aims to equip North Baton Rouge residents with the skills needed for immediate employment in local industries. Region 2 works with the NBRITI program to assist with recruitment, supportive services, and job placement for individuals seeking career opportunities in various industries. This partnership helps connect job seekers with employers, provides essential services, and ensures access to resources such as transportation and childcare.

These initiatives highlight the collaborative efforts of workforce boards, employers, educational institutions, and local governments to address workforce needs across various parishes. Their successes in training, job placement, and economic growth reinforce the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's commitment to aligning workforce development with industry demands.

CHAPTER 2: STRATEGIES FOR SERVICE INTEGRATION: REGIONAL

This regional component of the plan must describe the regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery strategies and the connection of job seekers with employers.

- A. Provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers*

Analysis of Workforce Development Activities in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) boasts a dynamic workforce development system that leverages collaboration, innovation, and strategic investments to align with regional and state economic goals. While the region has made significant strides in addressing workforce challenges and fostering economic resilience, opportunities remain to strengthen service delivery, expand partnerships, and address skill gaps to meet the evolving needs of employers and jobseekers.

Strengths of Workforce Development Activities

Regional Collaboration

The region's two Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) work closely with each other and with the local and regional economic development organizations, educational institutions, and industry leaders to align training programs with employer needs. As the region is made up of eleven parishes in the Capital and Northshore area. Employ BR encompasses East Baton Rouge Parish and Geaux Jobs consist of the ten parishes surrounding Baton Rouge and the Northshore including Ascension, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana. The workforce population is mobile and travel for employment within the regional workforce area constantly. Due to the shifting ability for employment the workforce boards share similar policies and processes to assist employers.

Innovative Service Delivery Models

Workforce boards have implemented online tools, such as online appointment setting, interactive chats, pre-screening applications, jobseeker videos, and virtual case management, which enhance accessibility for employers and jobseekers alike. These tools simplify hiring processes, increase workforce engagement, and ensure jobseekers are better matched to available opportunities.

Partnerships

The region collaborates with our workforce partners and economic development partners to assist jobseekers and employers in connection with their workforce partners. There is a strong academic focus in the region that allows for a multitude of training opportunities to meet the needs of the employer's skill requirements.

Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Funding Limitations

Despite the success of various initiatives, limited funding restricts the scalability and reach of workforce programs. Funding for workforce activities comes specifically from WIOA funding as a passthrough from the LWC as part of the WIOA allocation to the state. These funds limit the number of services directly provided. Over the past five allocations to the State of Louisiana there have been reductions which have been passed down to the local areas. These reductions have amounted to almost 40% of workforce funding. The need to reduce staffing and services has caused the reduction of affiliate sites locally. There is also the increased cost for training services that occurred post pandemic that limits the number of person who can be served.

Coordination Challenges

The region's extensive network of workforce development partners creates complexities in service delivery, sometimes leading to fragmented efforts. Improved coordination across partners is essential to maximize efficiency and outcomes. Though WIOA mandates that partners collaborate jointly with workforce boards on engagement and infrastructure, the siloed state programs limit the ability to share resources. The required shared funding infrastructure costs create an undue burden on administrative services.

Meeting Educational and Skill Needs

Educational Partnerships

The region benefits from strong partnerships with institutions such as **Louisiana State University**, **Southern University**, **Southeastern Louisiana University**, **Northshore Technical and Community College**, **Baton Rouge Community College**, **River Parishes Community College**, and various proprietary training schools. These collaborations ensure that training programs are aligned with employer needs in key industries like advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT.

Adult Education and Apprenticeships

Adult Education programs are available at LCTCS campuses, as well as through several local school systems and non-profits. These programs provide resources to help individuals without a high school diploma prepare for the HiSET exam. Programs such as Jump Start 2.0 and

registered apprenticeships offer pathways for skill development, beneficial for those entering the workforce or seeking additional training. These programs focus on practical learning and real-world application.

Support for Special Populations

Initiatives such as Reboot Louisiana and the MJ Foster Promise Program provide comprehensive support, including childcare, transportation, and financial assistance, to help individuals with barriers to employment and access sustainable career opportunities. Louisiana Rehabilitative Services (LRS) provide job training and services to those with disabilities to allow them to enter the world of work.

Barriers to Address

Despite these efforts, underserved populations such as individuals with disabilities, veterans, and seniors face challenges. Programs like SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program), LRS and NextOp Veterans require additional resources to expand their impact. LRS could benefit by having more non-federal matching funds to draw down more federal dollars to provide services to our populations in great need. Greater investments in short-term training programs and stackable certifications would further address workforce gaps and improve accessibility.

Persistent Skill Gaps

Employers in sectors report ongoing challenges in finding candidates with specialized technical skills. Expanding access to training in emerging areas requires additional funding resources.

Addressing Employer Needs

Employer-Driven Training Programs and Sector-Based Approaches

Workforce boards collaborate directly with employers to develop customized training programs in healthcare, warehousing, and advanced manufacturing. Programs like NBRITI in construction and the North Oaks in healthcare ensure training aligns with employer demands and addresses skill shortages. Sector-specific initiatives such as Northshore Healthscape for healthcare demonstrate the effectiveness of aligning workforce development with regional economic priorities.

Labor Market Data Utilization

Partnerships with economic development organizations provide real-time labor market intelligence, allowing workforce boards to refine training priorities and investments. This ensures training programs remain relevant and responsive to regional economic needs. The Louisiana Workforce Commission provided current Labor Market information along with short- and long-term occupational forecasts.

Challenges in Meeting Employer Needs

While these efforts have achieved significant successes, employers in emerging sectors still face difficulties recruiting candidates with advanced technical skills and certifications. Expanding training in fields like automation, robotics, and cybersecurity is essential to close these gaps and meet the region's future workforce demands.

Effectiveness of Training Programs

Successes

Training programs in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region target high-demand jobs like registered nurses, practical nurses, construction helpers, and CDL/heavy equipment operators. On-the-job training is very effective, with over 90% of participants still employed after 12 months, highlighting the benefits of hands-on learning.

Opportunities for Improvement

Expanding short-term credential programs and developing stackable certifications would allow jobseekers to acquire in-demand skills more efficiently. Allowing dual enrollments to link to internships and stipends will enhance the work being done by K-12. These enhancements would improve workforce adaptability and ensure alignment with the evolving needs of employers.

Partner Commitments

Collaborative Agreements

Workforce boards maintain Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the sixteen required partners per WIOA requirements. There are also agreements with educational institutions, and economic development agencies maintain and cooperative agreements to streamline service delivery and foster resource sharing.

Focus on Special Populations

Programs such as Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, NextOp Veterans, and SCSEP offer specialized support to underserved populations, promoting equitable access to employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, veterans, and seniors.

Sector Strategy Investments

Workforce development efforts prioritize high-growth industries such as healthcare and construction. Initiatives like NBRITI and Northshore Healthscape highlight commitment to aligning workforce development with regional economic priorities and labor market needs.

B. Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region has established a comprehensive and well-coordinated system for delivering supportive services that address the barriers jobseekers face in accessing workforce opportunities. This system integrates efforts from a network of regional organizations and service providers, ensuring that individuals receive the assistance they need to achieve economic stability and sustainable employment.

Regional Organizations Providing Supportive Services

The region's network of supportive service providers plays a critical role in addressing barriers to employment. Organizations like United Way of Southeast Louisiana, Council on Aging, and HUD provide essential housing, utilities, and transportation assistance, helping stabilize individuals during transitional periods. Total Community Action agencies (TCA) address significant challenges for families, such as access to affordable childcare and transportation subsidies, making it easier for parents to participate in training or secure employment. TCA also provides services such as drivers licenses, TWIC cards, energy assistance and rental assistance.

Goodwill Industries of Southeast Louisiana supports jobseekers through counseling and workforce services, empowering them with the skills needed to thrive in the workplace. Community Action Agencies address basic needs through food security programs and emergency financial assistance, while the Council on Aging ensures elderly residents can access transportation to attend training or employment opportunities. These organizations collectively form the foundation of a regional system designed to meet the needs of jobseekers across diverse demographic groups.

Policies and Procedures for Coordination

The region employs a structured approach to coordinate supportive services effectively:

Interagency Collaboration: Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) formalize partnerships through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to streamline service delivery and reduce redundancies. WIOA requires 16 federally mandated partners to agree to work jointly and share infrastructure needs of the local area in providing services to those looking to become self-sufficient.

Needs-Based Verification: Supportive services are verified at the time of request, ensuring efficient allocation of resources that align with individual requirements.

Regional Partner Meetings: Through regular partner meetings, partners align supportive services with labor market trends and employer needs.

Integrated Service Delivery: Co-enrollment across WIOA, TANF, and SNAP programs allows jobseekers to access multiple services through a single point of contact, enhancing

efficiency and accessibility. At this time all TANF and SNAP recipients are required to enroll in HiRE to begin the integration model. Those who are TANF and SNAP recipients are also priority populations for WIOA services and meet eligibility requirements for training.

Examples of Coordination in Action

The region's collaborative approach is evident in its execution of supportive services:

- **Transportation Assistance:** Supportive services through WIOA allow for vouchers and reimbursement of transportation costs for attending training. Subsidized transportation programs through TCA and transit partnerships help jobseekers attend job interviews, training sessions, and employment opportunities.
- **Housing and Utility Support:** Emergency housing including emergency rent and mortgage payment and utility assistance from Catholic Charities and Community Action Agencies provide critical stability for jobseekers facing financial crises.
- **Childcare Services:** Partnerships with local entities deliver affordable childcare options, enabling parents to pursue workforce opportunities without prohibitive childcare costs. Childcare vouchers are also available through the Department of Education for those involved in training or work

C. Describe the coordination of services with regional economic development services and WIOA service providers

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region has created a framework to align economic development with workforce services. This approach integrates workforce strategies with regional economic priorities, addressing labor market needs effectively. By partnering with key organizations, WIOA providers, and businesses, the region promotes collaboration for employment and economic growth.

Active Participation in Regional Planning

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region benefits from the active participation of a diverse network of organizations that play critical roles in shaping workforce strategies and aligning them with the needs of employers and jobseekers.

Regional Economic Development Organizations

1. **Greater New Orleans , Inc. (GNO, Inc.):**
GNO, Inc. is a leading force in regional planning, driving initiatives that connect industry needs with workforce services. By sharing labor market data, facilitating sector-based strategies, and securing grants, GNO, Inc. ensures that workforce development remains a key driver of economic progress for the parishes of Washington and Tangipahoa in Region Two.

2. **Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC):** is a leading force in regional planning, driving initiatives that connect industry's needs with workforce services. By sharing labor market data, facilitating sector-based strategies, and securing grants, BRAC ensures that workforce development remains a key driver of economic progress. BRAC serves the parishes of East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Iberville, Pointe Coupee, East Feliciana, West Feliciana, and Ascension.
3. **Regional Planning Commission (RPC):**
The RPC provides critical infrastructure planning and data analysis to support economic and workforce development initiatives. Its focus on transportation and Warehousing aligns closely with workforce strategies for supply chain management and related industries.

Local Economic Development Entities by Parish

1. **Washington Economic Development Foundation:** The Washington Economic Development Foundation serves Washington Parish, located on the Mississippi / Louisiana border in Southeast Louisiana. We provide information and assistance for businesses seeking to locate or expand operations. Washington Parish has two business parks and numerous sites with infrastructure including rail and locations on major highways with easy access to Interstate Highways 55, 59, 10 and 12.
2. **Tangipahoa Economic Development Foundation (TEDF):** TEDF's Mission is to identify opportunities and lead efforts to attract new jobs and investment, enhance the climate for retention and expansion of existing business, address education and workforce development needs, and provide advocacy for economic development public policy on behalf of all Tangipahoa Parish citizens and businesses. TEDF was instrumental in Latrium, LLC and Medline Industries moving to Tangipahoa Parish.
3. **St. Helena Parish Economic Development Committee:** St. Helena parish Economic Development Committee is a volunteer board of directors and operated by professional staff, this committee works daily to ensure that business have what they need to flourish as they grow. Southland Steel is expanding its manufacturing processes in St. Helena Parish.
4. **Livingston Economic Development Council (LEDC):** The Livingston Economic Development Council (LEDC) is committed to helping businesses thrive in Livingston Parish. For those interested in locating or expanding in Livingston Parish, LEDC assists to showcase our many assets to give businesses a competitive advantage when looking to locate in the region.
5. **East Feliciana Economic Development District:** The office is part of East Feliciana Parish government and focuses on business development in the rural parish.

6. **West Feliciana Economic Development:** The office is part of West Feliciana Parish Government and the largest employers in West Feliciana are Entergy Nuclear Plant and Angola State Penitentiary.
7. **Pointe Coupee Economic Development:** This department supports workforce initiatives for Pointe Coupee Parish government. They work jointly with the Pointe Coupee Parish Chamber to promote Economic Development.
8. **Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC):** Economic development in East Baton Rouge Parish is led by the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC). Companies interested in the Baton Rouge Area are encouraged to work with BRAC's Business Development team. The team offers a suite of concierge services to companies looking to expand or relocate to the Baton Rouge Area. BRAC meets the high demand of employers of Region 2.
9. **West Baton Rouge Chamber Association:** The purpose of West Baton Rouge Chamber is to refine and organize additional industry-specific round tables and events to provide resources that are specific to that constituency's needs. Expand how we educate & inform businesses on the opportunities & challenges regarding economic growth & re-development.
10. **Iberville Environmental and Economic Development:** This parish office works with businesses to ensure environmental compliance. The Iberville Chamber of Commerce is a community partner in economic development. Iberville Parish has a strong employer presence in the chemical industry with Dow Chemical and Shintech Industries.
11. **Ascension Economic Development Corporation (AEDC):** AEDC was created in 2005 by the Parish of Ascension, the Ascension Chamber of Commerce and the City of Gonzales, Louisiana under the state's economic development corporation statutes. AEDC's vision is that Ascension Parish will be the preferred location for quality business and economic development in the worldwide market. A major employer in Ascension are oil and gas manufacturing.

WIOA Service Providers

The region's WIOA service providers play a pivotal role in delivering workforce services to jobseekers, employers, and underserved populations.

- **Workforce Development Boards (WDBs):** The two WDBs in Region Two provide strategic oversight and coordinate service delivery across the region's eight parishes. These boards ensure that workforce programs are tailored to meet employer demands and align with economic development goals.

- **Adult Education Providers:** A network of adult education entities works collaboratively to address foundational skill gaps. These providers focus on improving literacy, numeracy, and digital skills, helping adult learners prepare for high-demand occupations in sectors such as healthcare, construction, and IT.
- **Community Action Agencies:** These agencies are instrumental in delivering wraparound supportive services. By aiding with childcare, transportation, utilities, and emergency financial support, they help jobseekers overcome barriers that might otherwise prevent them from accessing workforce programs.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Services:** Organizations such as Louisiana Rehabilitation Services ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to tailored training programs and supportive services, enabling them to participate fully in the workforce.
- **Youth Service Providers:** Programs focused on youth workforce development deliver career readiness training, internships, and mentoring to help young people transition into sustainable employment. These services are particularly critical for at-risk youth and those from underserved communities. Region 2 has two YouthBuild programs that focus on high-risk youth services for those out of school youth with a combination of carpentry certification.
- **Community-Based Organizations:** Community-based organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in the region's workforce ecosystem, providing targeted support and connecting jobseekers to vital resources. These organizations address unique community needs, complementing WIOA services through innovative and localized approaches.
 - **Faith-Based Organizations:** Churches and faith-based groups offer job readiness workshops, support networks, and access to emergency assistance for vulnerable populations.
 - **Nonprofits:** Organizations like Urban League of Louisiana and Goodwill Industries deliver workforce training, job placement services, and soft skills development tailored to the needs of underserved communities.
 - **Civic Groups and Advocacy Organizations:** These groups provide mentorship, career counseling, and advocacy for populations facing systemic barriers to employment, such as reentry individuals and single parents.

Business Engagement

Employers in the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region play a vital role in workforce planning and service delivery, ensuring alignment between workforce programs and industry demands. In healthcare, North Oaks Regional Health System and Ochsner Health lead collaborative efforts with workforce partners, including local workforce boards and educational institutions, to design training programs addressing critical skill shortages in nursing, medical assisting, and healthcare administration. Similarly, the Northshore Healthscape initiative involves healthcare providers across the Northshore, focusing on credentialing and workforce readiness to support the growing healthcare demands of the region.

In advanced manufacturing and IT, companies like Laitram, LLC, Elmers Candy actively contribute to initiatives such as the Mechatronics Apprenticeship Program, which provide

training in robotics and automation. These programs are critical for developing a skilled pipeline of workers to support innovative-driven industries.

Both workforce boards have business representatives on their boards, and they serve as representatives for business and industry. They provide the board with information on supply and demand and upcoming industry changes.

Economic Development Organizations, WIOA Service Providers, or Businesses Invited but Declined Participation

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region (Region 2) works collaboratively between the two workforce boards to engage stakeholders. While most economic development organizations, WIOA service providers, and businesses have actively participated in shaping regional strategies, some have occasionally been unable to engage due to competing priorities, resource limitations, or timing conflicts.

For instance, smaller businesses and organizations may not have the capacity to fully engage in planning activities, despite being invited. Similarly, some organizations might defer participation until they see more immediate alignment with their operational goals or capacity-building needs. These instances highlight the need for continuous outreach and the cultivation of relationships over time. The region addresses these gaps by fostering an open and transparent environment for communication with the local boards, characterized by robust information sharing with social media and web sites, sector-focused forums, and regular stakeholder meetings. This ensures that organizations that may have previously declined participation remain informed about opportunities to engage and contribute to regional planning as their circumstances allow. By emphasizing collaboration as an ongoing process, the region remains committed to broadening participation and ensuring that workforce strategies are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of all stakeholders.

Obstacles for engaging more business on the workforce boards is the lack of the ability to have virtual meetings along with the requirement for members to submit financial disclosure reports. There is also an issue with the use of proxies for business members. These members represent overall business and industry sectors and should be allowed to have designated proxies in their absence.

Mechanisms for Coordination

The region employs mechanisms to ensure effective coordination among its economic development organizations, WIOA service providers, and businesses:

The region employs several mechanisms to ensure effective coordination among its economic development organizations, WIOA service providers, and businesses:

- **Formalized Agreements:** Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and cooperative endeavor agreements establish clear roles and responsibilities, reducing duplication of

effort and enhancing collaboration. Each local workforce board is required to have MOUs with the 16 required partners as per WIOA legislation regarding shared services and customers in the workforce arena. Integrated services between social services (Division of Children and Family Services) and local workforce boards to coordinate services to remove barriers for those who are currently enrolled in public benefit services and moving into workforce and skill training.

- **Integrated Data Sharing Platforms:** Tools like Lightcast enable stakeholders to access real-time labor market and economic data, ensuring workforce strategies are informed by the latest trends. Employers and Economic Development organizations share access to these reports.
- **Cross-Regional Committees:** Regular meetings of Workforce Development Board leadership and Business Services Teams foster alignment across sectors and ensure that programs remain responsive to employer needs. The local workforce boards also have business services representatives who work with local and small businesses to address employer needs regarding staffing and demand needs.
- **Employer roundtables/meetings:** Sector-specific employer roundtables and meetings provide direct input on workforce challenges and priorities, shaping training programs and service delivery models. Workforce directors and staff share resources and shared programs at these meetings when invited.
- **Co-Enrolled Programs:** Programs that integrate WIOA, LRS, TANF, and SNAP services allow jobseekers to access multiple resources through a single point of contact, enhancing efficiency and reducing administrative burdens.

D. Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate

Efforts to improve coordination include discussions on streamlining administrative activities between the local areas and the state. A prior recommendation has been the decentralization of Wagner-Peyser Funds and RESEA funds from the state to the local level, as it is in other states, allowing these funds to be braided with existing resources. This approach currently is not feasible since the new DOL ruling requires those services to be provided by state merit staff only.

Collaborative Cost-Sharing Agreements and Pooling of Funds

This area is for the state's unified plan and not local as we only receive funding from WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Funds. Admin funds are specific to the workforce area. We do assist each other with programs however funds are maintained at the grant authority.

CHAPTER 3: VISION, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES: REGIONAL

This section will describe how the Local Board(s) will align the regional workforce, education, and economic development activities with those conducted in the local areas. The responses should ensure consistency with other plans and demonstrate that businesses, educational institutions, and workforce development stakeholders have contributed input and are engaged in the strategy development process.

A. Describe the local strategic vision to support state and regional economic growth

Region Two's Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region aligns with Louisiana's goals to boost labor market participation and economic independence. This vision focuses on economic mobility, educational excellence, and workforce resilience. It emphasizes collaboration among workforce development, social services, education, and economic development stakeholders to promote regional growth and upward mobility for all residents.

Regional Strategic Vision

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's local workforce boards follow strategic priorities aimed at economic growth, increasing opportunities for education, training, and support services, particularly for individuals facing employment barriers. The Region also focuses on addressing workforce skill gaps and ensuring equitable access to opportunities for all residents. These priorities align with regional and state-level goals and emphasize collaboration and innovation.

Promoting Educational Collaborations

The region collaborates with educational programs from K-12 to adult learning. Programs like Jump Start 2.0, JAG, and expanded dual-enrollment help high school students earn industry-recognized credentials for in-demand jobs. For adults, initiatives such as TOPS, TOPS Tech, Pell Grant, Reboot and the MJ Foster Promise Fund offer targeted training in essential sectors, addressing skill shortages and removing employment barriers. These efforts ensure education remains vital for workforce development.

Sector-Based Workforce Development

The region's strategy is in strong alignment with Louisiana's emphasis on high-growth industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, construction, transportation, warehousing/logistics, and information technology. Existing sector partnerships in healthcare and construction can be further developed to include advanced manufacturing and warehousing/logistics/transportation, ensuring that training programs meet employer requirements. These initiatives establish clear pathways to the skills needed by employers and provide jobseekers with defined career routes, thereby addressing critical workforce shortages.

Enhancing Supportive Services to Underserved Populations

The region focuses on inclusive workforce strategies to enhance economic mobility. Key services provided include transportation assistance, childcare subsidies, and reentry programs for justice-involved individuals. These initiatives, along with targeted outreach to underserved populations, aim to ensure equitable access to workforce development programs, particularly for individuals experiencing poverty or low educational attainment.

Aligning Workforce Development with Economic Development

Collaboration with regional economic development organizations such as Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.), Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC) and the Capital Regional Planning Commission (RPC) aligns workforce strategies with broader economic priorities. Multi-parish economic development agencies work with local workforce areas on joint processes and programs to address employer needs. These partnerships focus on supporting infrastructure projects and utilizing labor market data to refine workforce initiatives, promoting economic growth across the region.

Investing in Lifelong Learning and Digital Skills

In response to the increasing demand for digital competencies, local initiatives are focused on enhancing residents' skills through digital literacy training programs providing literacy certifications. These programs are important to our collaborations with technological employers such as IBM. Apprenti, Inc is a distinguished registered apprenticeship provider offering digital resources and cybersecurity training. These efforts not only equip the workforce for emerging opportunities but also improve adaptability to the evolving demands of the industry.

Alignment with the State of Louisiana's Vision and Principles

The local regional vision is deeply aligned with the State of Louisiana's workforce principles, ensuring a unified approach to workforce development:

- **Economic Mobility:** Local programs provide pathways out of poverty and move them to economic independence through targeted skills training and credentialing for high-wage, high-demand jobs.
- **Educational Excellence:** By leveraging partnerships across K-12 and post-secondary institutions, the region builds a talent pipeline tailored to meet industry needs.
- **Collaboration:** Focused efforts on individuals with barriers to employment reflect the state's goal of equitable access to economic opportunities. Integration of social services with workforce to provide collaborative case management moving citizens to economic independence.
- **Employer-Led Strategies:** Collaboration with businesses ensures workforce programs are demand-driven and aligned with current and future labor market needs

Stakeholder Engagement in Strategy Development

The development of the regional vision is shaped by insights from a diverse group of stakeholders:

- **Businesses:** Employers in healthcare, construction, manufacturing, and IT provide critical input on workforce gaps and co-design training programs through sector partnerships.
- **Education:** K-12 systems, community colleges, and universities collaborate on curriculum development, dual-enrollment initiatives, and credentialing programs.
- **Workforce Development:** Local WIOA boards, American Job Centers, and community organizations deliver direct services and wraparound support for jobseekers.
- **Economic Development:** Partnerships with entities like GNO, Inc and BRAC, and the eleven parish economic development agencies along with local chamber of commerce's to ensure workforce initiatives are aligned with regional economic growth strategies.

Commitment to Collaboration and Continuous Improvement

The local workforce boards are dedicated to fostering collaboration, innovation, and adaptability in workforce strategies. Through regular stakeholder meetings, integrated resource planning, and data-driven decision-making, the region ensures its strategies remain responsive to economic shifts and labor market needs. By aligning closely with the State of Louisiana's goals, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region positions itself as a leader in economic and workforce development, driving a resilient and inclusive economy that benefits all residents.

B. Describe the local goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment) and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region is committed to developing a workforce that is educated, skilled, and prepared to succeed in an evolving labor market. Recognizing the region's economic strengths and the opportunities presented by growing sectors such as healthcare, construction, advanced manufacturing, transportation/logistics and IT, the local workforce strategy emphasizes preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment. These objectives are supported by a focus on performance accountability measures that monitor progress and ensure effective outcomes for both job seekers and employers.

Preparing Youth for Workforce Success

A primary objective for the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region is to provide youth with the necessary tools and opportunities to thrive in a competitive and evolving labor market. This initiative emphasizes early exposure to high-demand industries, access to relevant educational

pathways, and practical real-world learning experiences. By focusing on collaborative efforts with K-12 and addressing those for any reasons have not earned a high school diploma this region will holistically use the 14 elements in WIOA to provide services to address skill gaps.

Expanding Career Pathways

Programs such as **Jump Start 2.0** and dual-enrollment initiatives offer high school students the opportunity to graduate with industry-recognized credentials, thus preparing them for immediate employment or post-secondary education. These initiatives focus on high-demand fields and industry-based certifications, including healthcare, advanced manufacturing, construction (skilled trades), and transportation and logistics, ensuring that young individuals enter career pathways with ample opportunities. Region 2 will collaborate with businesses and industries to support the K-12 agenda by providing work-based learning opportunities to all students enrolled in Career and Technical Education (CTE) curricula.

Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Local workforce boards are working with employers to establish paid internships and apprenticeships that offer students practical experience in key sectors. These programs aim to connect classroom learning with industry requirements, equipping youth with the necessary skills and exposure for success. Geaux Jobs implemented in-school work-based learning initiatives at AJC sites and collaborated with local school districts to help youth facing significant barriers develop work readiness skills in a structured setting. Employ BR provides summer youth work experience programs to support work-based experiential learning for youth in the Baton Rouge area.

Engaging Underserved Youth

Outreach efforts focus on at-risk and underserved youth to ensure they have access to resources, mentorship, and guidance. Collaborations with community organizations aim to address barriers and create tailored programs for this population. The region hosts three annual career fairs targeting high school seniors, bringing together employers and post-secondary institutions to enhance students' K-12 learning and certifications. This outreach includes collaboration with employers and jobseekers to establish opportunities to engage underserved youth. Geaux Jobs and EmployBR also work with other DOL programs such as YouthBuild and Job Corp to serve underserved youth.

Supporting Individuals with Barriers to Employment

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region is focused on creating opportunities for individuals facing employment barriers. By addressing challenges such as lack of education, transportation, and other systemic obstacles, workforce initiatives aim to enhance economic mobility for all residents. This region will also collaborate with families enrolled in DCFS programs to promote employment-based strategies, including training to help them remove barriers that may be preventing them from entering the workforce.

Customized Training Programs

The development of customized training programs in this region has been a priority. Programs with North Oaks Hospital, NTCC, and Geaux Jobs have addressed the shortage of medical assistants. In Baton Rouge, NBRITI, Exxon, BRCC, and Employ BR are collaborating to provide over 100 construction helpers for area industrial plants through customized training. Customized training addresses skill shortage areas effectively, with business and industries playing a significant role. The aim is to continue these activities. These employer partnerships will meet industry needs and ensure that training aligns with current and future projected requirements.

Supportive Services

Non-skill-related barriers, including childcare, transportation, access to books, training materials, and technology, are mitigated through integrated supportive services. By incorporating these supports into workforce programs, the region ensures that participants can fully engage in both training and employment opportunities.

Incumbent Worker Training Programs

Collaborating with LWC and business and industry to promote incumbent worker training programs is essential to addressing the evolving nature of the economy. The workforce that values continuous learning and adaptability is paramount. The region invests in initiatives that promote lifelong learning and skills advancement to meet the changing demands of industries. Priority is given to training in advanced manufacturing, robotics, and digital learning to cater to the increasing demand for digital and technical skills across various sectors. These programs are designed to prepare participants for emerging opportunities in innovation-driven industries and to retrain current workers, enabling them to advance alongside technological improvements.

Alignment with Performance Indicators

The region's workforce development initiatives are designed to meet and surpass federally mandated performance accountability measures. These benchmarks ensure that programs deliver tangible outcomes beneficial to both jobseekers and employers. The region consistently meets and exceeds the required performance indicators through comprehensive case management efforts and diligent follow-up. By working directly with participants to address their training and supportive service needs, the region aims to optimize performance.

Employment Rate 2nd and 4th Quarter after exit

Programs are designed to facilitate the placement of participants into sustainable employment within high-demand sectors by collaborating with training providers and industry partners. Continuous follow-up by case managers ensures that participants who require assistance receive adequate support in entering the workforce. Additionally, partnerships with employers help to ensure a smooth transition into roles with growth potential.

Median Earnings

Training efforts focus on occupations offering competitive wages, such as skilled trades, registered nurses, crane operation, construction, general and operations managers. Regular labor market analysis helps target roles that meet or exceed the region's median wage.

Credential Attainment

Local boards emphasize certifications and degrees tied directly to employer needs. Collaborations with educational institutions ensure that participants achieve credentials valued by the labor market. Through the work of case managers, career counseling allow participants to choose careers meeting industry needs along with participant interest. This promotes credential attainment.

Measurable Skill Gains

Work readiness and short-term training programs are designed to track progress through the earning of measurable skill gains. These skills gain support credential achievement and work readiness or participants by preparing participants for incremental career advancement while ensuring adaptability in the workforce.

Employer Engagement

This measure is still specific to individual participant involvement. Our region will work with our employers to get feedback from businesses to help inform us on the needs of the industry and what workforce program can be promoted to meet those needs. With an ever-changing and mobile employee base we will promote job stability to as a way to achieve this measure.

Sustaining our Workforce Goals especially for those with extreme barriers and youth

The region's workforce strategy focuses on ensuring all eligible participants have access to training, earn credentials, and secure employment. Sustainability is also a key focus, with continuous improvement processes utilizing data and stakeholder feedback to refine strategies and address emerging challenges. By addressing barriers and collaborating with our shared partners we vision this will allow the region to sustain our workforce goals while addressing the need to increase the labor market participation rate and move people from dependance to economic independence.

Emphasizing youth development, support for individuals facing barriers to employment, and alignment with performance measures, the Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region aims to build an inclusive and adaptive workforce. These efforts align with state goals for economic mobility, preparing residents to meet the demands of an evolving labor market while promoting long-term economic resilience.

- C. *Provide a description of the regional and local strategies that will achieve the vision and principles. This must include a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local areas:*

Key Regional and Local Strategies

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's workforce development efforts are grounded in collaboration, adaptability, and a commitment to meeting the needs of both employers and jobseekers. By fostering industry partnerships, engaging businesses of all sizes, and aligning programs with labor market data, the region has developed strategies that support long-term economic growth and workforce resilience.

1. Industry-Led Collaborations

Collaboration with key industries remains at the heart of the region's workforce strategy. Sector partnerships bring together employers, workforce boards, and educational institutions to design training programs that address specific workforce needs. For example, the GBRITI Partnership focuses on equipping workers with basic construction skills to allow them to enter work in the industrial plants and be mentored by journeymen to advance their careers in a work-based learning environment. In healthcare, collaborations with North Oaks and Ochsner Health address workforce shortages by creating specialized programs in nursing, healthcare administration, and related fields. Engaging Small and Medium-Sized Employers

2. Small and Medium Sized Business Engagement

Small and medium-sized businesses play a vital role in the regional economy, and the workforce development system prioritizes their engagement to ensure they can access the resources needed to remain competitive. Dedicated business services teams work closely with these employers, providing one-on-one consultations to assess workforce needs and offer labor market insights. These teams also connect businesses to workforce incentives such as On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Work Experience (WEX) programs, which subsidize hiring and training costs. Programs like the Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) provide small employers with financial support to upskill their current workforce, helping them adapt to industry changes and increase productivity. Hiring events and use of the AJCs for employer interviews allows those businesses without a place to host these events draw larger numbers of jobseekers.

3. Targeted Outreach to In-Demand Industries

The region's targeted outreach initiatives concentrate on identifying high-growth industries by utilizing labor market intelligence tools such as Lightcast and LMI to pinpoint sectors experiencing or anticipated to experience growth within the next 2 to 10 years. Regular employer roundtables facilitate opportunities for businesses and

industries to discuss workforce challenges and collaborate with workforce boards on customized solutions. These discussions not only inform workforce planning but also strengthen relationships between employers and workforce development partners.

4. Co-Designing Workforce Solutions

Workforce programs are developed in close collaboration with employers and training providers to ensure they are aligned with current and future job requirements. Apprenticeship programs in fields such as the skilled trades, IT, and healthcare combine classroom instruction with hands-on experiential learning and paid learning to create a pipeline of skilled workers ready to meet employer needs. Additionally, work-based learning opportunities, such as paid internships and job shadowing, provide participants with practical, industry-specific experience that bridges the gap between education and employment.

5. Partnership programs and integrated service delivery

This region will initiate an integrated pilot program with the Division of Children and Family Services to align and integrate services aimed at addressing employment barriers. The pilot program will collaborate with businesses, industry, training partners, and social services organizations to help families overcome obstacles that have prevented them from achieving economic stability. The goal is to assist families in attaining economic stability and independence.

Services to Support Employer Engagement

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region offers a comprehensive suite of services to employers, designed to facilitate talent acquisition, improve workforce retention, and leverage technology to enhance recruitment efforts. These employer-centered services ensure businesses can access the skilled workforce they need to thrive in a competitive economic landscape.

1. Talent Acquisition Support

Employers benefit from robust talent acquisition services provided through the region's American Job Centers (AJCs). These centers offer pre-screening services, ensuring employers receive candidates who align closely with their specific job requirements. By matching job seekers to positions based on qualifications, AJCs save employers time and resources in the hiring process. Workforce boards also coordinate targeted hiring events and job fairs tailored to high-demand sectors, creating direct connections between job seekers and employers. These events, both in-person and virtual, enable businesses to efficiently meet their staffing needs while promoting job opportunities in critical industries.

2. Customized Workforce Solutions

To support long-term workforce sustainability, workforce boards offer customized solutions that address employers' unique challenges. For example, employee retention strategies include leadership development programs and team-building workshops aimed at reducing turnover and improving workplace culture. Additionally, employers receive assistance in navigating funding opportunities such as the Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) and Louisiana's Rapid Response Program for dislocated workers. These grants enable businesses to improve their existing workforce, adapt to changing industry demands, and recover from economic disruptions.

3. Technology-Enhanced Services

Employers in the region have access to technology-driven tools that streamline the recruitment process. The HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) platform allows businesses to post job openings, search candidate resumes, and connect with qualified job seekers, all in one centralized portal. In addition, virtual job fairs expand employers' reach by enabling them to engage with candidates across the region without geographic limitations. These online tools enhance efficiency, broaden access to talent, and support employers in meeting their workforce needs.

Alignment with Vision and Principles

These strategies align with the State of Louisiana's vision of fostering economic mobility and resilience by ensuring that employers play an active role in workforce development. By prioritizing sector partnerships, small business engagement, and customized solutions, the region equips employers with a skilled workforce while creating opportunities for job seekers. This collaborative approach ensures that workforce programs are both demand-driven and inclusive, addressing the needs of the economy and the community alike.

1. To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region's local workforce development system is designed to address the evolving needs of businesses while ensuring job seekers are equipped with the skills and resources to succeed. This system prioritizes the alignment between workforce training, employer demands, and regional economic goals through a combination of collaborative partnerships, tailored services, and innovative approaches.

Key Strategies to Meet Business Needs

A. Customized Employer Services

To address specific workforce challenges, the region offers personalized services that connect businesses with the tools and resources they need. Business Service Representatives (BSRs): Dedicated BSRs work directly with employers to identify workforce gaps and develop tailored solutions. These include programs such as On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and Work Experience (WEX), all designed to address unique training and hiring needs.

Customized Training Programs: Employers collaborate with training providers and AJCs to create specialized training initiatives. For instance, North Oaks partners with local boards to develop healthcare certification programs.

B. Sector-Based Approaches

Industry-specific strategies ensure that workforce initiatives remain aligned with regional economic priorities.

- Targeted Sector Partnerships: Partnerships in industries such as healthcare, construction, transportation, and IT bring together employers, training providers, and economic development organizations to co-design programs that address current and future workforce needs.
- Rapid Response Services for Employers: Businesses undergoing downsizing or closures receive support from Rapid Response teams, which help workers transition into new roles while maintaining positive employer relationships.

C. Talent Recruitment and Retention Support

Efforts to recruit and retain talent focus on building pipelines that align with employer needs and offering businesses seamless access to qualified candidates.

- Pre-Screened Talent Pipelines: American Job Centers (AJCs) provide businesses with pre-screened candidates tailored to their specific hiring criteria, reducing recruitment time and costs.
- Job Fairs and Hiring Events: Workforce boards coordinate industry-specific events that connect employers with job seekers in high-demand sectors like Warehousing, manufacturing, and professional services.

D. Enhanced Use of Technology

Technological tools enhance workforce development by streamlining employer engagement and expanding access to job seekers.

- **HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment):** This online platform allows businesses to post job openings, search resumes, and access labor market data to refine their hiring strategies.
- **Virtual Workforce Services:** Employers can participate in virtual job fairs, conduct online interviews, and engage with training programs, broadening their reach and simplifying the recruitment process.
- **Digital Literacy training programs:** Support all ages in knowledge attainment around digital literacy

E. Support for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses (SMBs)

Recognizing the unique challenges faced by small and medium-sized businesses, the region offers targeted support to enhance their workforce capacity.

- **SMB Engagement Programs:** Workforce boards dedicate resources to assist SMBs in workforce planning, accessing training funds, and navigating labor market challenges.
- **Shared Workforce Solutions:** Collaborative programs allow SMBs to share resources like training facilities and expert instructors, reducing costs while improving access to skilled labor.

2. To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development

Coordination of Workforce Development Programs and Economic Development

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region prioritizes seamless integration of workforce development and economic development initiatives to ensure alignment between labor market needs and regional economic strategies.

Key Coordination Strategies

- A. **Joint Planning and Data Sharing:** Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) collaborate with organizations like Greater Baton Rouge, Inc. (GNO, Inc.), the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), and the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) to align workforce training with economic growth priorities. This is done through shared labor market data and industry forecasts guide investments in in-demand sectors such as construction, healthcare, and IT.
- B. **Collaborative partnerships with Local Economic Development Organizations:** Serving 11 parishes means working collaboratively with the various local economic development organizations. We coordinate events with them such as hiring events once new industries are developed. It also includes coordinating with local training providers to meet industry skill-based needs for new and current employers.

- C. Collaborative Grants and Funding: Joint applications for state and federal funding support initiatives that simultaneously address workforce and economic development needs, such as DRA grants to meet health care shortages especially in rural areas or technology-driven manufacturing.

3.Strengthening Linkages Between the One-Stop Delivery System and Unemployment Insurance Programs

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region integrates unemployment insurance (UI) services with the one-stop delivery system to provide seamless support for jobseekers transitioning back into the workforce through services provided by state merit staff. WIOA staff have limited access to UI information but can assist customers with filing UI claims.

Key Strategies for Linkage Improvement

- A. Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Programs: AJCs coordinate with RESEA to provide UI claimants with personalized career counseling, skills assessments, and connections to training programs in high-demand industries.
- B. Technology-Enabled Support: Digital tools and virtual workshops allow UI claimants to access one-stop services remotely, broadening participation and reducing barriers.
- C. WIOA Training Services: Through the Dislocated Worker program UI claimants who meet eligibility criteria can enroll in training to gain initial certification or upskilling to return to employment.

4. To promote entrepreneurial skills training and micro-enterprise services

The region emphasizes fostering entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic self-sufficiency and innovation.

Key Strategies and Services

- A. Entrepreneurial Training Programs: Partnerships with organizations like the Urban League of Louisiana, Louisiana Small Business Development Centers (LSBDCs) provide workshops on business planning, financial management, and marketing.
- B. Targeted Outreach to Youth and Special Populations: Programs such as the Young Entrepreneurs Academy of Baton Rouge engage youth in hands-on entrepreneurial training, while initiatives for veterans and justice-involved individuals provide tailored support for starting small businesses. The ARC of Louisiana also provides micro-enterprise services for people with disabilities.

- C. Incubators and Coworking Spaces: Collaborations with incubators like Louisiana Tech Park, Stephenson Entrepreneurship Institute, BizTech, StartUp Northshore provide entrepreneurs with mentorship, networking opportunities, and shared office space to grow their businesses.

5. To 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 regional employers

The region implements a variety of initiatives to address employer needs and ensure a skilled and adaptable workforce.

Key Initiatives

- On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programs: OJT programs subsidize wages for new hires during their training period, enabling employers to onboard candidates while reducing financial risk.
- Incumbent Worker Training Programs (IWTP): Employers partner with workforce boards to upskill existing employees in fields such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT. Customized training programs are funded to address specific business needs.
- Customized Training Programs: Tailored training initiatives, like those developed for North Oaks Health System and Exxon, ensure that workers are equipped with the skills required for specific roles.
- Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Initiatives: Sector strategies align training programs with employer needs, while career pathways initiatives provide clear advancement opportunities in industries like transportation and healthcare.
- Utilization of Business Intermediaries: Workforce boards partner with intermediaries such as industry associations and chambers of commerce to strengthen employer engagement and facilitate workforce solutions.
- Business Services and Support: Business services teams offer hiring support, pre-screening of candidates, and access to grants for workforce training, ensuring that employers can address their labor needs efficiently.

These coordinated efforts ensure that the region's workforce development system is responsive to business needs, fosters economic growth, and supports jobseekers in accessing sustainable employment opportunities.

6. *Describe regional strategies that will increase apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.*

Regional Strategies to Increase Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Opportunities

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region has implemented a robust set of strategies to expand apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities. These initiatives are designed to align with the needs of employers in high-demand industries while providing career pathways for job seekers, particularly individuals with barriers to employment. By fostering collaboration among employers, training providers, and workforce development organizations, the region is building a sustainable model for workforce development.

Key Strategies

Current or Expansion of Registered Apprenticeships

- **Industry-Specific Programs:** The region has successfully registered apprenticeship programs tailored to high-demand industries, such as the Dow Chemical's P-Tech program for advanced manufacturing and apprenticeships in construction trades like electrician, pipefitting and welding, carpentry and heavy machinery.
- **Employer Partnerships:** Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) will collaborate with employers to create customized apprenticeship models, ensuring alignment with specific occupational requirements.

Integration of On-the-Job Training (OJT)

- OJT programs offer businesses a cost-effective solution to train workers while ensuring they acquire the practical skills needed to perform effectively. In a study conducted by LWC, they found 92.4% of OJT participants are retained by their employers after 12 months, highlighting the program's success in fostering long-term employment. Our region will continue to promote OJT contracts to enhance work-based learning initiative.

Work-Based Learning Pathways

- **Internships and Work Experience:** These opportunities allow students and recent graduates to gain hands-on experience in industries such as government to advance work readiness skills. Employers collaborate with educational institutions to offer structured learning experiences.
- **Youth-Focused Initiatives:** Programs such as Jump Start 2.0 integrate dual enrollment opportunities with career and technical education, providing high school students with pathways to apprenticeships and industry-recognized credentials. We will work collaboratively with K-12 on securing businesses to provide internship opportunities for Jump Start youth.

Streamlined Candidate Recruitment

- **Online Pre-Application Tools:** The region has developed tools to simplify the pre-application process, ensuring a seamless experience for candidates and reducing administrative burdens for employers.

Support for Underserved Populations

- **Second Chance Employers:** Programs are in place to support individuals reentering the workforce after incarceration, including apprenticeships that emphasize skill-building in trades like industrial maintenance and construction.
- **Veterans and Disabled Workers:** Customized apprenticeships and transitional programs cater to the unique needs of veterans and individuals with disabilities, ensuring equitable access to work-based learning.

Public-Private Partnerships Driving Growth

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region leverages a variety of public-private partnerships as critical components of its workforce and economic development strategies. These collaborations bring together government entities, private employers, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations to address workforce needs and economic priorities. Key initiatives include the Healthcare initiatives, with Ochsner Medical and North Oaks Health System focuses on preparing workers for positions in the health care industry, and the GBRITI and Exxon which supports the oil and gas industry with construction helpers for the industrial corridor.

Other initiatives include the Mechatronics partnership with Laitrum, LLC, Elmers Candy and Zatarain's Seasoning in the advance manufacturing sector. This program partners with Delgado and Northshore Technical for student training.

7. *Describe initiatives to shorten the time from credential to employment and address how the area will work with the education system to begin putting training opportunities in place to meet this strategy.*

Initiatives to Shorten the Time from Credential to Employment

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region is committed to reducing the time it takes for individuals to move from acquiring credentials to securing employment. By leveraging innovative training models, regional partnerships, and employer engagement, workforce development efforts focus on equipping job seekers with the skills and connections they need to enter the labor market efficiently and successfully.

Streamlined Training and Credentialing Programs

- **Accelerated Credentialing Programs:** Programs like Jump Start 2.0 allow high school students to dual-enroll in technical education courses, enabling them to graduate with industry-recognized credentials. These initiatives are designed to address skill gaps in key sectors, such as healthcare, construction, and advanced manufacturing and are stackable for further career ladder growth.
- **Fast-Track Career Pathways:** Local training providers, including Northshore Technical and Community College, Baton Rouge Community College, River Parishes Community College offer condensed training schedules for in-demand occupations such as welders, pipefitters, nursing, and various skill trades. These programs are developed in collaboration with employers to align training outcomes with workplace requirements.
- **Employer-Based Training:** On-the-Job Training (OJT) and are integral to connecting job seekers with immediate employment opportunities. These training programs allow for and earn and learn process where the individual is earning while they learn a skill trade. With 92.4% of OJT participants retained after 12 months, these programs emphasize practical skills and employer satisfaction. Customized Training Programs streamline the training for the individual employer, so the participant is skill trained for a credential and employer specific skills simultaneously.

Workforce and Education System Collaboration

- **Partnerships with K-12 and Post-Secondary Institutions:** Workforce boards work with schools to integrate career exploration and technical education into curricula. By coordinating with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and local employers, these partnerships ensure that student's graduate workforce-ready.
- **Industry-Driven Curriculum Design:** Working with K-12 CTE school district coordinators local the local workforce boards serve on their curriculum alignment committees to assist with tailoring CTE programs to the current regional demand market.
- **Interactive Career Resources:** Comprehensive Centers across the region allow students to come in and utilize our resource centers that provide information on training programs, funding opportunities, and career pathways. These tools empower job seekers to make informed decisions and quickly transition to training or employment. Students can access resources through our websites to access My Life My Way and other resources for youth to assist with career planning.

Innovative Approaches to Address Barriers

- **Support for Special Populations:** Initiatives such as the Re-Entry Program under the Second Chance Act and partnerships with veteran services provide tailored training opportunities, ensuring equitable access to fast-track programs. We also have Louisiana Rehabilitative Services providing services for those with disabilities co-housed in our centers.
- **Comprehensive Support Services:** Wraparound services, including childcare, transportation, and financial assistance for training materials, help job seekers overcome barriers to completing accelerated programs.
- **Digital Tools and Virtual Training:** Online pre-screening tools, virtual classrooms, and video-based job counseling expand access to training and shorten delays caused by logistical challenges. We also offer digital literacy via web-based applications and virtual interview training.

By fostering strong partnerships, integrating employer-driven training models, and addressing individual barriers, the region is positioned to create a seamless pipeline from credentialing to employment, supporting both job seekers and employers in achieving their goals.

8. *Describe the steps that will be taken to support the state's efforts to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development including:*

Steps to Support the State's Alignment and Integration of Education, Workforce, and Economic Development

The Greater Baton Rouge/Northshore Region implements a strategic approach to integrate education, workforce development, and economic initiatives. These strategies emphasize building employer-driven partnerships, expanding career pathways, addressing skill gaps, and improving accessibility to services for both employers and job seekers.

Fostering Employer-Driven Regional Sector Partnerships

Sector-Based Collaborations

The region engages employers through dynamic sector partnerships that streamline training and hiring efforts in high-demand industries. For example, partnerships with organizations like GNO, Inc., BRAC and local chambers of commerce focus on aligning workforce development with critical sectors such as healthcare, IT, advanced manufacturing, warehousing/logistics and transportation. These collaborations ensure workforce strategies address the needs of both employers and job seekers.

Data-Driven Decision-Making

Working with the Louisiana Workforce Commission and economic development entities local boards leverage labor market intelligence, powered by platforms like Lightcast, to guide investments in training and workforce initiatives. This data-driven approach aligns workforce programs with high-demand occupations and supports strategic decision-making in high-growth sectors. Future Works allows the boards to look at those who have been trained by the board and analyze employment outcomes based on performance to analyze successful training to employment sector outcomes.

Expanding Career Pathway Opportunities

Accelerated Training and Work-Based Learning

Programs like Jump Start 2.0 integrate dual enrollment and technical education, enabling high school students to earn industry-recognized credentials while completing their high school diplomas. Additionally, on-the-job training (OJT) programs and registered apprenticeships provide rapid pathways to employment in key industries like healthcare, manufacturing, the skilled trades and IT. These programs all provide stackable credentials that allow for immediate employment in high demand career fields with the ability to advance the participants credentialing as they work.

Bridge Programs

Training initiatives are paired with comprehensive support services to help individuals with barriers to enter the world of work. These bridge programs are designed to transition participants into high-wage, high-demand careers, particularly in sectors requiring advanced technical skills. Working with the Division of Children and Family Services, SNAP E&T and CS E&T programs and partnering with Baton Rouge Community College the workforce boards area assisting with industry specific training programs.

Addressing Skill Gaps for Special Populations

Targeted Support Services

Targeted supportive services programs are available for priority populations such as veterans, individuals with disabilities, foster care youth, and those with justice-involved backgrounds, developed in collaboration with partners like Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Veterans Services and Department of Corrections. Programs are tailored to meet the unique needs of these groups, ensuring equitable access to career opportunities

Community Engagement

Efforts to connect underserved populations with job and training opportunities include outreach events like job fairs and industry-specific recruitment sessions. Digital tools and

platforms also help bridge gaps by providing access to career resources and job matching services.

Improving Information Access for Employers and Job Seekers

Interactive Tools and Portals

Online platforms, including pre-screening applications and labor market dashboards, enhance transparency and accessibility for both employers and job seekers. These tools provide real-time insights into job openings, training programs, and labor market trends. Workforce Boards also have websites that allow for interactive resources, pre-applications for training services and information on available services.

Comprehensive Career Services

American Job Centers act as centralized hubs offering a range of services, including career counseling, resume workshops, and connections to training providers. These centers ensure job seekers have the resources needed to navigate career transitions effectively. Each workforce board as one comprehensive one-stop center and Geaux Jobs also has four additional affiliate centers to expand services.

CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES: LOCAL WORKFORCE AREA 20

This chapter provides an overview of all the operating systems and policies within the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs). LWDAs must incorporate key documents in the plan that describe the one-stop delivery system and the services provided by the workforce partners.

A. Coordination and Planning Requirements

Coordination and Planning Requirements

1. The Local Workforce Development Area Memorandum of Understanding provides a description of the one-stop delivery system, and other information that is essential to the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development systems as required by the WIOA Rule

Local Workforce Development Area 20 – Geaux Jobs, represents a ten-parish area through the Second Planning District Consortium Agreement, provides services to the parishes of Ascension, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and cost allocation plan (Infrastructure Agreement) has been developed with all core and mandated partners to support a seamless one-stop workforce delivery system.

The goal of the MOU is to establish a workforce system where core partners are co-located, providing unduplicated workforce services and sharing infrastructure costs. The MOU outlines various areas including services provided by each partner, target populations, participation requirements, site supervision, performance accountability, and cost allocation. LWDA 20's Memorandum of Understanding offers a description of the One-Stop delivery system and other necessary information for the establishment and operation of effective local workforce development systems as required by the WIOA Rule (20 CFR Part 678.705). The Memorandum of Understanding and any subsequent modifications are incorporated by reference into this plan. The One Stop Operator coordinates quarterly meetings with all mandated partners to review the MOU and cost allocation plan. The core and mandated partners include organizations administering the following programs if they provide services to the local area:

- WIOA Title Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
- Wagner Peyser
- Job Corps
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs
- Adult Education and Literacy Activities
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Carl Perkins Career & Technical Education
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- Community Services Block Grants (CSBG)
- Jobs for Veterans
- Senior Community Service Employment Activities
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- State Unemployment Compensation Program
- Second Chance Act Programs

2. The Local Workforce Development Area Service Integration Action Plan provides a description of how local workforce partners will align and coordinate services as required by the State of Louisiana Integrated Service Delivery Policy (OWD 2-23.2). The Service Integration Action Plan and any subsequent modifications are incorporated by reference into this plan.

The Service Integration Action Plan for LWDA 20 follows the guidance for the strategy for aligning and coordinating local workforce services in accordance with the State of Louisiana Integrated Service Delivery Policy (OWD 2-23.1). The Service Integration Action Plan, along with any subsequent modifications, is incorporated by reference into this plan. This integration process is spelled out in the MOU partnership agreement.

B. Provide information regarding the use of technology in the one-stop delivery system, including a description of:

Use of Technology

1. How the workforce centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA.

LWDA 20 has strategically incorporated technology to enhance its intake, case management, and service delivery processes, thus meeting the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These initiatives have markedly improved accessibility, efficiency, and client outcomes, establishing technology as a fundamental aspect of LWDA 20's operations.

The HiRE Platform: Workforce Management System

At the heart of LWDA 20's technology framework is the HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) platform, managed by the Louisiana Workforce Commission. This comprehensive system serves as a centralized hub for job seekers, employers, and workforce staff, streamlining operations and ensuring seamless service delivery.

- For Job Seekers: HiRE offers a user-friendly interface to research in-demand occupations, upload résumés, apply for jobs, and access training opportunities.
- For Employers: The platform facilitates job postings, candidate searches, and recruitment coordination, simplifying the hiring process.
- For Workforce Staff: HiRE's integrated tools support eligibility determination, case management, program tracking, and outcome reporting, ensuring compliance with WIOA standards while boosting operational efficiency.

The pandemic accelerated LWDA 20's transition to virtual service delivery. The HiRE platform became a vital tool for remote intake, eligibility determination, and case management. To complement these efforts, additional digital tools were adopted:

- JotForm, Sign Now, and Adobe Software: These solutions enable the secure, electronic submission of documents and e-signatures, reducing the need for in-person visits.
- Online Pre-Applications and Request for Services: Clients can now submit pre-application forms remotely, streamlining the onboarding process.
- Text Messaging Integration and Email: Outreach and retention efforts have been enhanced with text messaging, ensuring timely communication with participants.
- Virtual Appointments: Staff can host virtual appointments with participants for case management and follow-up activities.

Innovative Tools for Enhanced Client Support

In addition to leveraging traditional digital tools, LWDA 20 has introduced cutting-edge technologies to improve client engagement and outcomes:

- Virtual Orientation: During the pandemic our staff moved to virtual orientations which allow new participants to meet the orientation requirements without having to come into the center.
- Digital Literacy: LWDA 20 is incorporating digital literacy into the work/training readiness program. Participants entering training will be required to complete digital literacy training. This training can be done virtually or at the center and is mobile capable. Participants completing the program will receive digital literacy certification.

Commitment to Continuous Innovation

LWDA 20 remains committed to developing innovative solutions to better serve the community. By integrating new technologies and best practices, the organization ensures that its services are both effective and fiscally responsible while remaining focused on clients.

This progressive approach highlights LWDA 20's dedication to transforming its one-stop delivery system into a model of accessibility, efficiency, and innovation, thereby providing substantial support for job seekers, employers, and workforce staff.

Geaux Jobs is currently transitioning to Lobby Central as a uniform intake tracking system that will be used by both LWDB 20, LWC state merit programs, and DCFS as part of the integrated pilot. At this time, due to intense budget cuts that have occurred over the past four years implementing an integrated case management system will need to occur at the LWC level as funding prohibits the extreme cost of such an endeavor. LWDB 20 will continue to use the current mandated system HiRE as a service tracking system for those who are provided with WIOA services at the local level

2. How the Local Board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, using technology and other means.

Facilitate Access to Services

LWDA 20 is committed to providing equitable access to the comprehensive one-stop delivery system for all clients, including those in remote or underserved regions. Through the utilization of advanced technology and collaboration with community partners, the Board effectively bridges both geographic and digital gaps, facilitating connections between job seekers and employers with essential workforce services.

Core Technology Components

- **HiRE Platform:** A central hub for job seekers, employers, and workforce staff, providing tools for eligibility, program tracking, and reporting.
- **Virtual Tools:** The implementation of platforms like JotForm, Adobe, and virtual orientation and interview help to allow participants and employers to access services.
- **Advanced Technologies:** Digital literacy software provides certification for digital training provided in the career centers and can also be accessed remotely via home computers and mobile devices.

Partnerships to Enhance Accessibility

Recognizing that not all individuals have reliable internet or technology at home, the Local Board has collaborated with public libraries, community organizations, social services agencies, and other local hubs. These collaborations offer access to computers, internet services, and where citizens can utilize technology to access the HiRE platform and other virtual tools

Innovative Tools for Remote Engagement

The Local Board has integrated a range of technologies to simplify and expand remote service delivery:

- **JotForm and Adobe Software:** These tools enable clients to securely submit required documents electronically, reducing the need for in-person visits.
- **Online Training and Certification Programs:** Virtual training opportunities allow clients to gain in-demand skills and credentials, enhancing their employability from anywhere.

Looking ahead, the Local Board is committed to advancing remote service delivery by:

- **Investing in Mobile-Friendly Platforms:** Ensuring that services are easily accessible on smartphones and tablets.
- **Exploring Interactive Technology:** Introducing real-time virtual assistance to address client questions and provide immediate support regarding workforce system services.
- **Addressing Digital Equity Challenges:** Collaborating with local stakeholders to

expand access to affordable internet and technology for underserved communities. Looking at the connection to broadband initiatives across the ten-parish area to determine if there is ability to set up kiosk services to connect citizens to services through virtual manners.

- Overlay technology- CMI systems to allow for workforce services to be combined with social services and health care services statewide.

A Commitment to Inclusive Service Delivery

The Local Board aims to keep the one-stop delivery system inclusive, effective, and accessible. Using technology and community collaboration, it eliminates barriers and brings workforce services to remote and underserved areas.

C. Describe how the Local Board will support the strategies identified in the Combined State Plan and work with entities carrying out core programs.

Supporting Strategies Identified in the Combined State Plan

1. Expanding access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment

LWDA 20 acknowledges the significance of tackling systemic barriers that impede access to employment, training, and educational opportunities. An integrated approach is being used to ensure services are accessible to those most in need, particularly individuals encountering substantial obstacles to entering the workforce or advancing their careers.

Scaling Up Integrated Education and Training Models, Using Insights from Dual Enrollment, Determining Effective Marketing, Investigating Target Markets

LWDA 20 is expanding Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs that merge foundational skills development, such as GED preparation with industry-recognized credentialing. These programs endow participants with both workplace readiness and technical expertise, facilitating seamless transitions into high-demand occupations. Collaborations with local training providers and educational institutions ensure that IET programs are accessible and tailored to meet the needs of both jobseekers and employers.

- Integrating Adult Education classes in local AJC offices
By allowing for adult education classes to occur at the AJC offices provides for educational enhancements for those who need basic skill remediation and GED courses. These classes will allow citizens to receive career counseling with workforce case management services while working towards education.
- Lesson Learned from Dual Enrollment
Dual enrollment allows students to earn college credits while in K-12. This model allows students to complete post-secondary courses quicker. While most participants who come in for workforce assistance are either already completed K-12 or removed

from that system it makes sense to assist them with the fastest model to get them skilled up and into the workforce in a manner like dual enrollment.

- **Prior Learning Credits and Assessments**
Recognizing the untapped potential of prior learning the LWDA 20 is working to develop more work-based learning to include on-the-job training, work experience and transitional jobs to allow citizens to use prior learning to build into high demand training. This also allows citizens to earn and learn entering the workforce at a faster pace. By promoting the acceptance of prior learning through assessments it will allow employers to build on prior learning.
- **Targeted Marketing for mature and underemployed workers**
Through job fairs and hiring events these individuals will be targeted for career ladder employment opportunities. These events are posted on our social media platforms and in our local offices. We also do email blasts to all people in HiRE who may be looking for employment.
- **Customized training and incumbent worker training**
To optimize workforce participation through educational integration, LWDA identifies employers interested in collaborating with secondary educational institutions to provide training tailored for open positions in their industry. Through occupational forecasting looking at high demand jobs, LWDA 20 will tailor its outreach to connect these groups with suitable opportunities and resources. Additionally, hosting annual career fairs that bring together citizens, educational entities, and employers aims to strengthen LWDA 20's focus on customized training. These initiatives are designed to create direct connections between job seekers, training opportunities, and employers.

2. Facilitating the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs

To establish robust career pathways and promote co-enrollment in core programs, LWDA 20 employs innovative strategies and collaborative frameworks. These initiatives are designed to ensure that every participant has access to comprehensive resources, enabling them to achieve sustainable employment and career growth.

LWDA 20's identification of six high-growth industries (healthcare, advanced manufacturing, technology, construction, transportation, warehousing/logistics) serves as the foundation for its workforce strategies. Collaborations with major employers in these sectors provide entry-level positions and career progression opportunities for individuals overcoming significant barriers. Specialized initiatives target priority populations, offering tailored programs and resources to meet their unique needs. A core strength of the LWDA 20-LWDA 20 American Job Centers is its integration of multiple service providers under one roof. This co-location fosters a streamlined, holistic service delivery model that eliminates redundancy and ensures participants can easily access diverse resources.

The Board's dedication to aligning educational systems with workforce requirements is demonstrated through its collaborations with K-12 institutions and post-secondary entities. Initiatives include developing curricula that cater to industry demands and offering career exploration programs to students at pivotal decision-making stages. To ensure both efficiency and effectiveness, LWDA 20 personnel receive extensive cross-training to deliver integrated services across all program areas. This training equips staff to address the diverse needs of participants in an efficient and comprehensive manner.

3. Improving access to activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable)

LWDA 20's emphasis on credential attainment is fundamental to its mission of preparing a competitive workforce endowed with industry-recognized qualifications. These initiatives are tailored to address current labor market needs while forecasting future demands.

Partnerships with institutions such as Northshore Technical and Community College, River Parishes Community College, Southeastern Louisiana University, and specialized training organizations ensure that participants have access to high-quality programs aligned with employer expectations. The Board actively collaborates with training providers to develop curricula that address skills gaps. By integrating credential attainment into all major training initiatives, LWDA 20 ensures that participants acquire qualifications that enhance their employability and career potential. The credentials offered are both portable and stackable, facilitating continuous skill-building and professional development.

By directly engaging with employers, the Board identifies industry-specific training requirements and designs programs to meet these needs. Customized training partnerships with entities such as North Oaks Health System have led to the creation of targeted certification programs. LWDA 20's comprehensive approach aligns educational pathways with workforce strategies to ensure participants are well-prepared for roles in high-growth industries. This integration minimizes the skills gap and supports long-term career success.

Through the implementation of these targeted strategies and the fostering of collaborative partnerships, LWDA 20 is paving the way for an inclusive and responsive workforce development system. These efforts ensure that all residents within the area of the local workforce area twenty have equitable access to resources that support meaningful and sustainable employment.

D. Provide information regarding the local coordination strategies with state (including the Combined State Plan), regional and local partners to enhance services and avoid duplication of activities, including a description of:

1. Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training activities under WIOA Title I

Employment and Training Activities Under WIOA Title I

LWDA 20 American Job Centers offers a comprehensive range of employment and training services aimed at removing barriers to employment and enabling participants to attain self-

sustaining wages. These services conform to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I requirements and align with the priorities specified in the Combined State Plan. This ensures that job seekers receive targeted, demand-driven support tailored to both their individual needs and the regional labor market.

Assessment and Tailored Service Delivery

Every participant undergoes an initial assessment to evaluate their job readiness and develop a personalized roadmap for success. Based on the results of the assessment, individuals are categorized as either Adults or Dislocated Workers and receive a variety of services, including individualized employment plans, career planning, and counseling. This triage process ensures that participants are matched with the most appropriate resources to help them achieve their career objectives.

The integration of these activities establishes a participant-focused system that merges tools, training opportunities, and career counseling to enhance skill development and credential attainment. This holistic strategy is in direct alignment with the Combined State Plan's focus on career pathways and accessible service delivery.

Employment and Training Services

LWDA 20 focuses its employment and training services on high-demand industries identified through labor market analyses. The aim is to match workforce development with employer needs and regional economic priorities. Key services include:

- **Individual Training Accounts (ITAs):** ITAs offer participants access to occupational skills training programs listed on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). These programs help participants acquire industry-recognized certifications and skills required for various occupations, aligning with the State Plan's aim of promoting training investments that result in employment and career growth.
- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Through collaborations with local employers the purpose of OJT is to deliver hands-on, experiential training that meets workforce needs while providing participants with practical skills in real-world settings allowing for a learn and earn process that benefits both the employer and jobseeker.
- **Customized Training:** Programs developed in partnership with employers and training providers address specific employer needs along with job seeker skill gaps, ensuring that training aligns with market demands and directly contributes to regional economic growth.
- **Work Experience:** For individuals with limited employment history, subsidized work experience provides opportunities to build a work record, develop employability skills, and transition into permanent employment.
- **Supportive Services:** addressing barriers to participation by offering resources such as transportation assistance and textbooks, testing fees, technology and supply assistance ensures equitable access to training and employment opportunities.
- **Career Exploration and Online Training Tools:** Participants can access tools such as O*Net for career exploration, My Life My Way for career exploration and budget, Alison for free online certifications, all that can be found on the GeauxJobs.org website under resources.

- Customized Job Fairs: Tailored hiring events connect participants with employers in targeted industries, addressing immediate workforce gaps while supporting participant placement in sustainable careers.

Alignment with the Combined State Plan

LWDA 20's activities are closely aligned with the objectives of the Combined State Plan, ensuring that training investments and service delivery systems address the needs of both job seekers and employers. The provision of ITAs and the development of individualized employment plans reflect the State Plan's focus on creating clear career pathways that lead to family-sustaining wages and long-term upward mobility. The use of OJT and customized training programs further supports the Plan's emphasis on employer-driven workforce solutions, providing hands-on learning opportunities that directly meet market demands.

Additionally, LWDA 20's integration of services with Wagner-Peyser, Veteran's Services, RESEA, and LRS within the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) exemplifies the State Plan's vision of a seamless, cohesive service delivery system. Regular performance monitoring and data-driven decision-making ensure transparency and continuous improvement, aligning with the Plan's requirement for accountability and effective resource allocation.

LWDA 20 will also be piloting an integrated services delivery program that will expand beyond just DOL based programs and incorporate those provided by the Division of Children and Family Services to coordinate workforce and social service integration. By doing this we will be looking to expand those who are not work ready but willing into work ready and willing participants.

LWDA 20 American Job Centers exemplifies a comprehensive approach to workforce development, providing extensive employment and training services that are in alignment with WIOA Title I and the Combined State Plan. By incorporating career training, ITAs, OJT, supportive services, and customized training into its overall strategy, LWDA 20 equips participants for success in high-demand industries while addressing regional economic priorities. This strategic alignment establishes LWDA 20 as an essential partner in advancing workforce development objectives for both the region and the state.

2. Adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II. This description must include how the Local Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II consistent with WIOA.

Adult Education and Literacy

The LWDA 20 board includes a representative from adult education representing Northshore Technical and Community Colleges program. The Board plans to align Title II adult education services within our ten-parish area, mapping their connection to the workforce and offering to provide space in our centers for coordinated adult education classes to occur where funding is available. Additionally, the Board will review Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act funding applications to ensure alignment with the Local Workforce Development Board's

regional/local plan goals and objectives.

Additional Title II Funded Programs referred to by LWDA 20 for adult education and literacy activities include:

- Livingston Parish School System
- Baton Rouge Community and Technical College
- River Parishes Community and Technical College

3. *Wagner-Peyser Act.*

Wagner-Peyser Act Services Integration

Geaux Jobs (LWDA 20) integrates Wagner-Peyser Act services into its workforce development system through the LWDA 20 American Job Centers. This collaboration ensures a streamlined service delivery model that aligns with the Combined State Plan, enhancing access for both job seekers and employers. By combining Wagner-Peyser services with WIOA Title I programs, the local system avoids duplication, promotes efficiency, and delivers comprehensive support tailored to individual and regional needs.

Wagner-Peyser services encompass job search assistance, job placement support, and career guidance. These services are accessible through self-service options via the HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) platform, which enables job seekers to independently access job listings, research industries, and explore training opportunities. For individuals requiring additional support, LWDA 20 staff provide personalized assistance, including résumé preparation, career counseling, and job matching, to help participants achieve their employment goals.

Reemployment services are an essential component of Wagner-Peyser offerings, targeting individuals receiving unemployment insurance to facilitate their rapid return to the workforce. These efforts include tailored job search strategies and connections to training programs that align with local labor market demands.

LWDA 20 collaborates with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) to ensure the seamless integration of Wagner-Peyser services with WIOA programs and other workforce initiatives. The HiRE platform functions as a shared data system that facilitates effective tracking and reporting of services rendered to job seekers and employers. Wagner-Peyser staff are co-located within the LWDA 20 center, establishing a unified service delivery environment that simplifies participant access and enhances coordination between programs.

Partnerships with state and regional economic development organizations further augment service alignment. These collaborations target high-demand industries identified in the Combined State Plan, including healthcare, technology, and advanced manufacturing. By aligning services with regional economic priorities, LWDA 20 ensures that job seekers are connected to sustainable employment opportunities and that employers have access to a skilled workforce.

Alignment with the Combined State Plan

Integrating Wagner-Peyser services aligns with the Combined State Plan by promoting economic growth, accessibility, and measurable workforce outcomes. LWDA 20 staff work jointly with state merit staff to provide services to job seekers and employers, supporting goals of higher employment rates, skill development, and wage growth. Regular evaluations ensure continuous improvement and accountability, enhancing the region's economy and workforce development.

LWDA 20 aims to build a responsive, efficient, and equitable workforce system that effectively uses Wagner-Peyser Act services to meet community needs.

4. Vocational rehabilitation service activities under WIOA Title IV

Vocational Rehabilitation Services under WIOA Title IV

The LWDA 20 collaborates with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) to ensure comprehensive employment and training opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This partnership supports the integration of vocational rehabilitation services into the broader workforce development system and aligns with the goals of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title IV.

Coordination with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

LRS staff are housed in the Tangipahoa/St. Helena Comprehensive One Stop as part of LWDA 20 American Job Centers (local AJC) to provide support to individuals with disabilities. However, due to staffing concerns, LRS cannot have staff permanently located in all affiliate offices located in LWDA 20. LRS staff in the regional centers cover the workload for affiliate sites in LWDA 20 when the staff in the comprehensive center. AJC and participates in all employment and outreach events hosted by LWDA 20. Services provided by LRS staff include vocational rehabilitation assessments, career counseling, and individualized employment planning. Additionally, the LWDA 20 team has a direct contract with LRS to schedule participant services as needed. By coordinating with LRS, the Board ensures that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate support to overcome employment barriers and access training opportunities relevant to labor market demands.

Training and Support for Center Staff

To enhance service delivery, LRS conducts regular training for LWDA 20 staff on strategies for working with individuals with disabilities. This training ensures that staff are prepared to address the specific challenges encountered by this population and provide appropriate support. Additionally, the LWDA 20 center offers adaptive equipment to assist with job searches, such as large font settings, magnifiers, and access to Louisiana Relay services for individuals with hearing or speech impairments.

Accessibility and Compliance

The Board performs annual evaluations of the physical and programmatic accessibility of the LWDA 20 center to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and WIOA Section 188 requirements. These evaluations ensure that facilities are free of barriers and that program materials are available in accessible formats.

LWDA 20 integrates vocational rehabilitation services with the workforce system to ensure equitable employment and training access for individuals with disabilities, supporting inclusion and workforce participation goals in the Combined State Plan.

5. Relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities.

Relevant Secondary and Postsecondary Education Programs and Activities

LWDA 20 is dedicated to enhancing coordination and alignment between secondary and post-secondary education programs and workforce investment activities. This effort aims to establish a seamless pipeline for career readiness and advancement. A fundamental component of this strategy is the collaboration with Northshore Technical and Community College, River Parishes Community and Technical College, Baton Rouge Community College, and Southeastern Louisiana University. These institutions will act as hubs for postsecondary workforce development initiatives throughout the ten-parish area. They offer a range of programs designed to equip students for high-demand industries and emerging sectors, in accordance with labor market trends identified in regional and state workforce plans.

Coordination with Secondary Education Programs

The Board actively collaborates with local secondary education institutions to create pathways for students to transition smoothly into post-secondary education or the workforce. This includes initiatives to expand career and technical education (CTE) programs, dual enrollment opportunities and work experience, enabling high school students to earn industry-recognized certifications or college credits before graduation.

Expanded Partnerships with Northshore Technical and Community College, River Parishes Community College, and Baton Rouge Community College: This partnership focuses on several critical areas:

- Youth Opportunities Skill Training Program: This program aims to serve youth, providing targeted training that addresses local workforce needs.
- Experiential Learning Opportunities: Customized training that aligns with LWDA 20 to provide students with access to on-the-job training, internships, and work-based learning opportunities that align with their training programs. This practical experience enhances their readiness for the labor market.
- Customized and Apprenticeship Training Programs: Support efforts to expand and refine apprenticeship programs tailored to local industry requirements, ensuring

- participants gain relevant skills and direct employment pathways.
- **Industry-Driven Curriculum Design:** Local community colleges work with LWDA 20, employers and economic development agencies to update curricula according to the changing needs of industries like healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and information technology.

Support from Additional Educational Partners

The Board's network includes other local education and training providers, such as public schools, technical colleges, and community organizations. These partnerships aim to create a comprehensive approach to education and workforce development, especially for underserved populations. By building connections between secondary and post-secondary education programs and aligning these with workforce investment strategies, the LWDA 20 provides job seekers with access to the education and training necessary for high-demand careers. This integrated strategy aims to support an equitable and effective workforce system, addressing both local employer needs and state workforce goals.

6. How the Local Board will support the state strategies identified under § 676.105 and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study and career pathway programs under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment and needs identified in regional or local level assessments including the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment

Alignment with State Strategies

LWDA 20 is committed to supporting the state strategies outlined in § 676.105, aligning its initiatives with Louisiana's Combined State Plan. The Board prioritizes coordination with core program entities, career and technical education providers under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, and other workforce development partners. This approach aims to enhance service alignment and address regional workforce needs effectively.

Integration with Core Workforce Development Programs

LWDA 20 works with entities that implement workforce development programs such as WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth), Title II (Adult Education and Literacy), Title III (Wagner-Peyser Act services), and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation). This approach aims to create an efficient system that optimizes resources, reduces duplication, and provides participants with access to employment and training services.

- **Adult Education and Literacy Integration:** The Board includes representatives of adult education providers to map services and align them with workforce development objectives. The Board reviews applications for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act funding to ensure alignment with its regional plan.

- Vocational Rehabilitation Services: Collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation partners guarantees that individuals with disabilities receive customized services such as career counseling, skills training, and job placement. This promotes equitable participation in the workforce.

Support for Career Pathways and Perkins Act Goals

LWDA 20 supports the development of career pathways in industries identified in Louisiana's Combined State Plan. Key sectors include healthcare, advanced manufacturing, technology, construction, transportation and warehousing. Efforts to align K-12, post-secondary, and workforce pathways are carried out through partnerships with local education agencies and training providers.

- Career Pathways Development: LWDA 20 collaborates with Community Colleges and K-12 to create opportunities for high school students to gain industry-recognized credentials, aligning educational initiatives with regional labor market demands.
- Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment: LWDA 20 actively participates in Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments, guaranteeing that workforce development initiatives effectively address skills gaps and satisfy the requirements of both employers and students. This collaboration ensures that career and technical education programs are aligned with regional economic priorities.

Enhancing Service Alignment

The Board's strategies to enhance service alignment include:

- Data-Driven Planning: Utilizing labor market information and performance data, the Board identifies priority industries and aligns its training investments with high-growth sectors.
- Coordination through MOUs: Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with mandated partners, including Perkins Act entities, outline roles, responsibilities, and cost-sharing agreements. Quarterly meetings review progress, ensuring accountability and alignment.

LWDA 20 collaborates with core program providers, career and technical education stakeholders, and regional employers to align their workforce strategies with state priorities and address local and regional workforce needs. These actions help create a coordinated system that supports career readiness and economic development.

7. Provide a copy of the local supportive service policies and describe how the Local Board will coordinate the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area and include information on the supportive services by each local program as appropriate.

Supportive Services Policy and Coordination

LWDA 20 American Job Centers aim to address barriers to employment and training through comprehensive supportive services. These services are provided according to the Supportive Services Policy and are essential for participants under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Local Supportive Services Policy

The Supportive Services Policy outlines guidelines for aiding individuals facing barriers to completing training or obtaining sustainable employment. These services include transportation, childcare, housing support, utility assistance, and access to necessary work-related tools or uniforms. Eligibility and needs of participants are assessed individually to ensure effective resource allocation. Documentation supporting these services, such as receipts or self-attestation forms, is maintained according to procedural guidelines.

Types of Supportive Services Offered

The range of supportive services aligns with the directives outlined in the policy and includes the following:

- **Transportation Assistance:** Bus tokens, mileage reimbursement, and ride-share services as a last resort.
- **Uniforms and Work Tools:** Funding for employment-related attire, tools, and equipment, including items such as eyeglasses.
- **Books and Educational Supplies:** Support for materials required for training programs, as verified through syllabi or program descriptions.
- **Virtual Learning Technology:** Provision of laptops and Wi-Fi access for participants in training programs requiring these resources.
- **License Fees and Testing:** Coverage for certification or licensing costs necessary for employment.
- **Needs-Related Payments:** Daily financial assistance for participants enrolled in approved training programs.

Coordination of Supportive Services

LWDA 20 is committed to delivering supportive services through effective collaboration with WIOA core partners and community organizations. This coordinated approach ensures that participants receive the assistance they need to overcome barriers and achieve their employment and training goals.

Supportive Services for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs

Participants in the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs receive services to address common challenges. These include transportation assistance, training-related expenses, and other resources that help individuals maintain their participation in workforce development

activities and pursue career opportunities. Youth will also receive services aligned with the 14 elements of service as supportive services.

Resources for Adult Education and Literacy Participants

To tackle challenges associated with low literacy or limited English proficiency, LWDA 20 collaborates with Adult Education and Literacy Programs. Supportive services are offered to improve access to training and educational opportunities, ensuring participants possess the necessary resources to succeed in their selected career trajectories.

Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities

LWDA 20 works with Vocational Rehabilitation Services to ensure individuals with disabilities receive necessary accommodation and assistive technologies. Resources such as job coaching and adaptive tools are provided to support participants with disabilities in workforce development programs and achieving employment outcomes. This collaborative approach aims to coordinate and deliver supportive services, contributing to an inclusive and responsive workforce development system.

Policy Compliance and Transparency

LWDA 20 delivers supportive services in alignment with established guidelines. The following measures illustrate the organization's dedication to policy compliance and transparency.


Reasonable and Necessary Supportive Services

Supportive services are offered when they are found to be reasonable and necessary for addressing participants' specific barriers to training or employment. The costs of these services must directly align with program requirements and objectives, ensuring efficient resource utilization to support participants' success.

Compliance with Documentation Standards

LWDA 20 maintains clear documentation standards to ensure transparency and accountability. All requests for supportive services must include necessary forms, such as justification case notes, receipts, and additional records as specified in the Supportive Services Policy and Procedures. This process ensures adherence to policy requirements.

Supportive Services Policy LWDA 20

	Policy Name: Supportive Services Policy
Policy Number: 200-02	
Original Effective Date 05/18/2005 Revision Date: 03/10/2020 Revision Date: 09/22/2022 Revision Date: 01/26/2023	Current Approved Revision: 06/13/2024

- I. **Purpose:** This policy addresses the use and required documentation of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 funds for purposes of providing supportive services to eligible participants enrolled in WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs.
- II. **Policy Statement:** Geaux Jobs-LWDA20, consistent with the provisions as set forth in WIOA, may provide supportive services to eligible participants enrolled in WIOA Individualized Career Services and/or Training Services based on an objective assessment of participant needs for said services. Supportive Services are intended to remove certain barriers in order to increase the likelihood of successful completion of training and/or other individualized career services that lead to unsubsidized employment.

Supportive Services are not entitlements and must be supported by the demonstrated need(s) of each participant. Supportive Services are limited, and, to the greatest extent feasible, should be leveraged with other available resources, including co-enrollment in partner programs.

Eligibility: Supportive Services are based on the unique financial and training/employment needs of each WIOA program participant. As such, all supportive services provided by Geaux Jobs-LWDA20 will be based on the individual needs of participants as determined by Geaux Jobs-LWDA20 and included in the participant's Individualized Employment Plan (IEP), or Individualized Service Strategy (ISS), if participant is a WIOA enrolled Youth. WIOA funding is funding of last resort and will be used to pay for supportive services when it has been determined that other funding sources are unavailable, or when attempting to use other funding sources creates unreasonable delays in the provision of training and/or employment services.

To be considered for eligibility, all Geaux Jobs participants seeking supportive services must complete an application for supportive services. Participants, to be considered for supportive services, must document all valid barriers to education/employment when completing the application. The actual number of barriers that must be present to receive supportive services

will be examined and determined bi-annually. Participants whose combined family income exceeds the Poverty Guidelines, or 70% LLSIL, are not eligible to receive supportive services unless two (2) or more barriers to education/employment are documented and verified. Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth participants may be eligible for supportive services if they:

1. Are actively engaged in services designed to achieve the participant's training and/or employment goals
2. Have a demonstrated financial need, and
3. Are unable to access the supportive services from other resources in the community

III. Referral Process & Coordination with Other Community Resources

Funding for WIOA supportive services is limited and should be coordinated with other community resources. When providing supportive services, Geaux Jobs Career Counselors must ensure no other community resources are available. Alternatively, Career Counselors must demonstrate that the supportive services need is so urgent that referrals to other partner agencies would unreasonably delay the provision of the supportive service needed, creating an undue hardship on the participant in need of supportive services to increase the likelihood of their program success.

Referrals and referral outcomes must be documented in the participant's file and recorded in HiRE as detailed case notes. This documentation should include the following:

1. Date and amount of each supportive service provided
2. Provider's Name
3. Exhaustive efforts made to obtain supportive services through other community resources prior to providing supportive services using WIOA funding when WIOA funds are used to provide supportive services, and
4. Written justification for the supportive services provided which describes (a.) how the supportive services are necessary to enable the individual to participate in the WIOA program and (b.) how the supportive services will increase the likelihood of successful program outcomes.

IV. Allowable Supportive Services Available to Individual Program Participants in LWDA20

The following is a list and description of the types of supportive services deemed allowable in the Geaux Jobs-LWDA20:

1. Needs-Related Payments – Available only to individuals enrolled and attending training services

Needs-related payments (NRPs) provide financial assistance to participants that will enable them to participate in training and are a supportive service authorized by WIOA sec. 134(d)(3). Unlike other supportive services, a participant must be enrolled in training to qualify for needs-related payments.

Individuals in need of training services may not have the resources required to participate in

training. Needs-related payments are designed to provide a WIOA program participant with financial assistance made available to meet the needs of their *non-training expenses* for purposes of enabling them to engage in training services that lead to an in-demand occupation (WIOA Sec.134(d)(3)).

Geaux Jobs-LWDA20 will pay up to \$20.00 *per day* for each day of attendance in the training activity, not to exceed \$400.00 *per month* throughout training.
To receive Needs-Related Payments, Adult participants must:

- a. Be unemployed
- b. Not qualify for, or have ceased qualifying for, unemployment compensation or trade adjustment assistance under TAA or NAFTA-TAA; or any other form for supportive needs payments from other state or federal partners and;
- c. Be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA

Dislocated Workers must:

- a. Be unemployed, and
 - i. have ceased to qualify for unemployment compensation or trade adjustment assistance under TAA or NAFTA-TAA or any other form for supportive needs payments from other state or federal partners; and
 - ii. be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA by the end of the 13th week after the most recent layoff that resulted in the determination of dislocated worker, or, if later, by the end of the 8th week after the worker is informed that a short-term layoff will exceed six (6) months, or
- b. be unemployed, and
 - i. did not qualify for unemployment compensation or trade adjustment assistance under TAA or NAFTA-TAA, or any other form for supportive needs payments from other state or federal partners and
 - ii. be enrolled in a training service under WIOA

Needs-related payments may be paid while a participant is waiting to begin training provided the individual has been:

- a. approved for training services,
- b. accepted into a training program, and
- c. the training program is scheduled to begin within 30 calendar days of receipt of the supportive services

2. Career/Training-Related (Expenses) Necessities

Career and/or Training-related supportive services payments are for the purchase of -items *required for participation in training, individualized career services, and/or employment.* Examples of these types of supportive services include the purchase of books, tools, uniforms, and other items the student/employee is responsible for obtaining for training/employment. Supportive services for career/training related expenses must be directly related to securing an industry-based certification or post-secondary program completion. Supportive services for

youth shall be considered based on training needs if the student is in K-12 education with a training component need.

This is a reimbursable cost whereby the participant is responsible for making the purchase(s) and providing proof of purchase receipts, updated timesheets, grades, and measurable skills gains to Geaux Jobs-LWDA20 for approval, processing, and reimbursement. A student may be granted up to \$1,500.00 maximum in training related expenses regardless of SVP Code or time frame towards supportive services costs. If the training-related supportive services payments is reimbursed directly to a training provider those costs are included in the \$1,500 total for all training related supportive services allocated to the participant regardless of SVC Code. Training-related supportive services items must be clearly listed and defined on financial assistance forms and on all requests for reimbursement forms (e.g., invoice). An itemized list of supportive services for training needs must be attached to the financial assistance form and will be reviewed by the operations manager for allowable costs and cost reasonability. Those costs deemed excessive may be denied or require additional quotes to demonstrate costs are competitive and within a reasonable cost range when compared to other sources. Training providers must submit attendance records, grades, and measurable skills gained with reimbursement requests for supportive services for each eligible student/WIOA participant for all costs to be reimbursed to the provider directly once approved.

Three (3) written quotes must be provided on any items which cost \$300.00 or more. This includes items purchased by the training provider. The lowest responsive bid will be accepted.

Electronic Devices/Technology/Equipment

All technological devices and equipment have a maximum allowable reimbursable cost not to exceed \$400.00. Costs that exceed the maximum amount must be absorbed by the training provider, participant, or a resource other than Geaux Jobs-LWDA20. Laptops/tablets/Chromebook/iPad, or any such technological devices must be approved by the Operations Manager. Three quotes must be provided for any purchase that exceeds \$300 and Geaux Jobs reserves the right to verify cost. Those items deemed as equipment will be reviewed for cost purposes.

General School Supplies for Curriculums

School supplies that are used daily based on the program enrolled are allowable expenses. Examples of daily school supplies include notebooks, pens, paper, pencils, masks, hand sanitizers, and gloves. However, reimbursement for general school supplies may only be reimbursed to the student and the costs must be deemed appropriate for the duration of the courses. General school supplies will not be reimbursed to a provider.

Additional Training or Certification not included in the curriculum

If a student is required to have a specific training or certification to be approved for enrollment into a training course or program, then the required certification will be reviewed to verify its requirement as a condition for training eligibility and providers will need to verify that the

additional certification is not something that should be part of the overall curriculum of training that is covered under an ITA or other tuition payments.

3. Reimbursable Travel Allowance

A reimbursable travel allowance is an allowance which is based on the actual distance traveled for educational purposes. The current mileage rate paid by the Federal government (i.e., GSA Rates) will be reimbursed, by Geaux Jobs-LWDA20, to a participant who incurred such travel expenses during their daily commute to and from the classroom training site.

When the training site is outside of the normal classroom setting (e.g., clinical site, another campus), the reimbursement amount shall remain the same as the distance to the normal classroom training site/location. Travel Allowances shall not exceed \$400.00 per month regardless of the number of miles traveled by the student/participant.

Travel expense reimbursement for each participant shall align with the actual distance traveled to and from the participant's verified primary residence to and from the training site, following the most direct route. The distance traveled to the training site shall be established and verified at the outset of the training. For verification, a map printed from a reputable search engine such as MapQuest, Yahoo, Maps, or Google Maps will be attached to the Individual Training Account (ITA) Form.

Reimbursements for travel-related expenses shall follow the accurate and timely submission of Monthly Time and Attendance Records. Monthly Time and Attendance records shall be due to the Geaux Jobs Career Centers no later than the 5th working day of each month.

4. Other Supportive Services

In addition to the allowable supportive services listed herein, Geaux Jobs LWDA20 may pay for other allowable supportive services under WIOA to cover other expenses associated with participation in WIOA-funded activities. Prior written approval must be provided by an authorized Geaux Jobs Manager, such as the Operations Manager or Executive Director of Geaux Jobs. The additional supportive services that may be available include the costs associated with the purchase of:

- i. Driver's License- a document issued under government authority that permits the holder to operate a motor vehicle to allow for employment.
- ii. Work-related licenses, which are awarded by a governmental licensing agency, show that a person has the specific knowledge of skills needed to do a job
- iii. Testing/Certifications- certifications, which are awarded by a professional organization or other non-governmental body, requires demonstrating competency to do a specific job, often through an examination process
- iv. Work supplies-items that aid in the performance of a job, and often need to be replaced or refilled

WIOA Counselors shall maintain adequate documentation to support other supportive services costs. All required documentation for supportive services shall be obtained and/or completed prior to supportive service payments/reimbursements being made. All supportive services payments must be reflected in the participants' IEP if an adult/dislocated worker, and the ISS if the participant is a youth.

5. List Not Exhaustive

The list and types of allowable supportive services in the Geaux Jobs-LWDA20 and contained in this policy is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all supportive services available under WIOA but provides the list of allowable supportive services under WIOA that the Geaux Jobs-LWDB20 has approved and adopted as part of its workforce development services to eligible individuals participating in WIOA programs administered by Geaux Jobs-LWDA20. Additional supportive services may be added to this policy, or removed from this policy, pursuant to future Geaux Jobs-LWDB20 decisions regarding the provision of supportive services. This policy should be updated whenever such changes, or other policy changes, may occur.

6. Prohibited Purchases

The following are items that are considered prohibited supportive services purchases using WIOA funding:

- Any supportive service purchased prior to the participant's program enrollment
- Any supportive services purchased prior to approval by Geaux Jobs-LWDA20
- Fines and penalties such as traffic violations, late fees, and interest payments
- Entertainment, including trips
- Gift Cards
- Clothing not necessary for training or clothing used for promotional purposes.
- Contributions, or donations
- Vehicle or mortgage payments
- Refundable deposits
- Alcohol or tobacco
- Pet care or food
- Items for family members or friends
- Out of state relocation expenses that are paid for by the prospective employer
- Advances against future payments
- Graduation paraphernalia/Diplomas

The purchase and payment to participants of any of the above listed items would be in violation of WIOA and the Code of Federal Regulations governing WIOA and WIOA Title I programs. No exceptions.

7. Supportive Services After Exit and During Follow-up- Youth Participants Only

Adults and Dislocated Workers are not eligible for supportive services upon program completion. This includes during the 12-month follow-up period after program exit.

Youth participants can receive supportive services after exit, during the 12-month follow-up period if the services are part of their follow-up plan and supports completion/continuation of program goals. Examples of supportive services during follow-up may include, but not be limited to, work-related clothing/tools, certification/credential costs, and tutoring. These services must be included in the participants' ISS and documented in HiRE. These costs will be reviewed by the Operations Manager for allowability.

8. Other Requirements for Supportive Services

Geaux Jobs-LWDA20 staff must ensure supportive services costs are allowable, reasonable, necessary, allocable, and coordinated with the participant regarding receipt of the approved supportive service and associated reimbursement requirements for the service. Appropriate approval of any supportive service must be granted prior to actual commitment to providing funding.

No participant shall receive supportive services to assist in training/intensive services if the participant fails to participate in the training or activity without good cause. "Good cause" is defined as circumstances completely outside of the participant's control. This must be documented in HiRE case notes.

If a participant drops out of the activity/program within ten (10) days of receiving the supportive service, Geaux Jobs-LWDA20 staff must make exhaustive attempts (i.e., at least 3 attempts to contact participant) to retrieve the item(s) provided. The exhaustive attempts made must be documented in HiRE case notes.

Supportive payments shall be payable to either the participant or the vendor. Payments will be made only after submission of the proper documentation such as receipts showing itemization of the service or products provided, or, in the case of mileage, after the submission of a mileage tracking form. All appropriate procurement policies/procedures must be followed when making supportive services payments.

9. Modifications to Policy

This Supportive Services Policy is subject to modifications at the discretion of the Geaux Jobs-LWDB20 based on funding availability, conflict with federal, state, or local laws and/or policies, or other factors the LWDB20 deems appropriate. Any modifications shall be made by the Board, in writing, and in accordance with the By-Laws of the LWDB20. Once approved, all modifications shall be disseminated to all applicable staff, with the appropriate staff training on policy modifications, prior to becoming effective.

Needs-related payments provide financial assistance to participants for the purpose of enabling them to participate in training and are a supportive service authorized by WIOA sec. 134(d)(3).

References:

- WIOA Title I Sections 3(59), 134(d)(2)(3), and 129(c)(2)(G)
- 20CFR680.330,900,910; 20CFR690.920, 20CFR681.570, and 681.580
TEGLS 3-15; 19-16; and 21-16

E. Provide a description of how the local area will provide adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities including:

1. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area

Description and Assessment of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Services in LWDA 20

LWDA 20 Geaux Jobs American Job Centers play a vital role in providing employment and training services for adults and dislocated workers within the ten-parish Geaux Jobs area. These services, governed by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), are designed to align jobseekers' skills and qualifications with the requirements of local employers. By offering diverse programs and utilizing an integrated service delivery model, LWDA 20 ensures that individuals receive tailored support necessary for achieving self-sufficiency and career progression. The service delivery at LWDA 20 is built on an integrated triage-service delivery model that emphasizes efficiency and customization. The approach is driven by three specialized teams:

Career Development/WIOA Counselors

Counselors provide essential support to job seekers by helping them develop the skills necessary for successful employment. They help with job searches, resume preparation, and interview techniques, while also creating tailored employment plans and performing assessments to identify areas for improvement. Serving as intermediaries between job seekers and employers, counselors collaborate with businesses to match candidates to suitable positions that correspond to their qualifications and career objectives.

Business Services

Counselors facilitate employer engagement by working together with regional businesses to ascertain workforce requirements, develop strategic solutions, and advocate for the programs available through LWDA 20.

The Center uses the HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) technology platform, which facilitates service delivery by allowing real-time tracking of activities, outcomes, and program eligibility. This system provides job seekers with consistent support when accessing services in-person or virtually.

Employment and Training Activities

LWDA 20 provides a variety of employment and training programs to address the diverse needs of job seekers. Comprehensive assessments determine each participant's readiness for employment, followed by specific recommendations for training and career development. Notable activities include:

- Workforce readiness workshops covering resume writing, job search strategies, interviewing, and financial literacy.
- Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) finance occupational skills training programs, offering certifications in high-demand fields.
- On-the-job training opportunities where participants acquire hands-on experience while employed.
- Work experience placements for individuals with limited employment history, including those facing significant barriers such as disabilities or prior incarceration.
- Training and career services are also enhanced through workshops on basic skills, computer literacy, and business fundamentals, in collaboration with Title II providers.

Demand Based Employer-Focused Services

The LWDA 20 American Job Centers prioritizes employer engagement to ensure its services align with the needs of local businesses. Through customized recruitment, job fairs, and on-the-job training initiatives, the Center actively supports workforce development in the region. The Business Services Team collaborates with employers to address workforce gaps, design training programs, and offer solutions tailored to specific industries. Focusing on high-demand sectors such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, warehousing/logistics, technology, and transportation ensures that job seekers are trained in fields providing sustainable career pathways. This alignment with market demand positions LWDA 20 as an essential resource for both employers and job seekers.

LWDA 20's integrated service delivery model offers job seekers a comprehensive and seamless experience. Services are provided both in-person and virtually, enabling individuals to participate without logistical or geographic limitations. The Center addresses systemic challenges like transportation and childcare to better serve underserved populations. By forming partnerships with businesses, training providers, and community organizations, LWDA 20 maintains an effective workforce development system. Cross-trained staff, advanced technology, and a focus on continuous improvement ensure that the Center remains responsive to the changing needs of the labor market.

Assessment

The efforts at LWDA 20 aim to connect job seekers with employers, creating a system that supports self-sufficiency and economic growth. Using labor market data and occupational forecasting reports, Geaux Jobs focuses on high-demand industries, employer engagement, and providing personalized support, emphasizing the Center's role in workforce development within the ten parish Geaux Jobs area. Despite challenges such as funding limitations and systemic barriers, LWDA 20's approach attempts to address the needs of the local community.

2. A description of how the Local Board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities

Coordination of Workforce Development Activities with Statewide Rapid Response Efforts

To accelerate the reemployment of displaced workers, the Board provides professional and timely support through the state's Rapid Response activities. In collaboration with the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and other partner agencies, the Board ensures that employees impacted by layoffs due to company closures or downsizing receive the necessary resources to promptly reenter the labor market. The Rapid Response Team consists of representatives from the LWC Rapid Response Unit, the LWDA 20 American Job Centers Center, and the LWC Unemployment Insurance Unit, helping through staff support, informational pamphlets, and brochures.

The Board's main goal is to provide these services directly to affected employees before their separation date by:

- Coordinating with employers' representatives to plan and organize Rapid Response activities.
- Offering on-site services, such as orientations, job readiness workshops, and job matching or referral assistance.
- Providing ongoing support for dislocated workers post-layoff through the LWDA 20 American Job Centers to meet their needs and help them transition back to employment.

This approach aims to ensure that dislocated workers have the necessary tools and resources to manage their career transitions effectively.

F. Provide a description of how the local area will provide youth activities including:

1. A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities

Description and Assessment of Youth Workforce Investment Activities, Including Youth with Disabilities

The WIOA Youth program is designed to deliver a broad spectrum of comprehensive services that assist both in-school and out-of-school youth in attaining academic and employment success. These services cater to specific challenges and obstacles, providing personalized support through the creation of Individual Service Strategies (ISS) that are tailored to meet each participant's needs, abilities, and career objectives.

Core Activities: LWDA 20 offers the 14 WIOA-required program elements, forming the foundation for service delivery. These include:

- Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction, and Dropout Prevention activities

- that lead to the completion of a high school diploma or recognized equivalent
- Alternative Secondary School and Dropout Recovery Services assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary education or who have dropped out of school
- Paid and Unpaid Work Experience is a structured learning experience in a workplace and provides opportunities for career exploration and skill development
- Occupational Skills Training is an organized program of study that provides specific skills and leads to proficiency in an occupational field
- Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation is an integrated education and training model combining workforce preparation, basic academic skills, and occupational skills
- Leadership Development Opportunities encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors
- Supportive Services enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities
- Adult Mentoring is a formal relationship between a youth and an adult mentor with structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement
- Follow-up Services are provided following program exit to help ensure youth succeed in employment or education
- Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling provides individualized counseling to participants, including drug/alcohol and mental health counseling
- Financial Literacy Education provides youth with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve long-term financial stability
- Entrepreneurial Skills Training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business and developing entrepreneurial skills
- Services that Provide Labor Market Information offer employment and labor market information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations
- Post-secondary Preparation and Transition Activities help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training

The youth program and use of the 14 elements place strong emphasis on work-based learning and partnerships with organizations like the Job Corps, K-12, and Community Colleges to expand technical education and internship opportunities in high-wage, high-demand industries.

Services for Youth with Disabilities: Youth with disabilities are provided with tailored support through referrals to Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) for additional resources and specialized assistance. The LRS also offers access to adaptive equipment and technology, including assistive technologies, ensuring accessibility for job search and career development. By collaborating with disability-serving agencies and mental health providers, LWDA 20 enhances its capability to address the unique needs of this population effectively.

Successful Models: LWDA 20 employs an integrated, customer-centered approach. This integrated service delivery model looks to expand the reach to both in-school and out-of-school youth, partnering with K-12 school systems, social services agencies

and other local initiatives to further strengthen service delivery.

Outcomes: Through this system, the program connects youth to career pathways and achieves meaningful outcomes such as increased post-secondary credential attainment, enhanced work readiness, and successful transitions to employment.

2. A description of how local areas will meet the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth.

Description of How Local Areas Will Meet the Minimum Expenditure Rate for Out-of-School Youth

LWDA 20 is dedicated to meeting and surpassing the minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth (OSY), in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). LWDA 20 continues to prioritize this demographic through targeted investments and innovative strategies.

Comprehensive Outreach and Recruitment Efforts

To ensure adherence to the expenditure requirement, LWDA 20 has established a comprehensive outreach and recruitment strategy specifically aimed at engaging Out-of-School Youth (OSY). Collaborations with shelters, foster care programs, and juvenile justice agencies help identify and support disconnected youth. By partnering with Opportunity Youth programs, tailored pathways are provided to address their educational and workforce needs. These initiatives contribute directly to achieving the minimum expenditure rate by promoting program enrollment and participation.

Targeted Outreach Campaigns with YouthBuild

LWDA 20 has improved its outreach efforts by implementing targeted initiatives in collaboration with YouthBuild. This partnership has formalized a structured outreach process aimed at out-of-school youth entering skilled training and HiSET programs. By integrating work-based learning with career pathway training, this initiative enables participants to concentrate on securing high-wage and high-demand employment opportunities.

Oversight and Financial Accountability

LWDA 20 oversees funding allocations to meet expenditure requirements. Through regular monitoring and reporting processes, any discrepancies in spending are identified, enabling prompt corrective actions to align expenditures with program objectives. This approach ensures that resources are effectively utilized to maximize impact for OSY participants while adhering to federal guidelines.

LWDA 20 meets OSY expenditure requirements and provides transformative opportunities through strategic outreach, partnerships, and impactful programs. These efforts demonstrate

LWDA 20's commitment to an inclusive workforce system that supports OSY.

G. Provide a description of how the local area will provide services to individuals with barriers to employment as outlined in the Combined State Plan:

Strategies to Support Participants with Barriers

- **Re-Entry Services:** LWDA 20 supports returning citizens with academic help, job readiness, skills training, and job placement. Peer support systems and tailored interview preparation address employment gaps and criminal records. Partnerships with courts, parole offices, and nonprofits enhance these services.
- **Support for English Language Learners:** Translation services are available through technology resources and using translation services.
- **Current and Former Foster Care Participants:** Working jointly with the Foster Care programs priority will be given to allow for career counseling and training to assist with the transition out of Foster Care.
- **Barrier reduction services:** Through partnership with social services (DCFS, HHS, Corrections, United Way and other support agencies) LWDA 20 identifies and if barrier services are outside of those allowable under WIOA participants will be referred to other agencies or CBO's.
- **Supportive Services:** Transportation assistance, and financial aid for training expenses ensure public assistance recipients and priority groups can engage in workforce programs. These services are monitored and coordinated with local partners to avoid resource duplication and maximize impact.

1. Provide information on how priority will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low- income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA

Ensuring Priority of Service for Targeted Populations Under WIOA

LWDA 20 adheres to prioritizing public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, and those who have basic skills deficient. Priority of service is executed through a tiered eligibility system at the LWDA 20 American Job Centers. This system guarantees that individuals encountering significant employment barriers receive foremost access to WIOA-funded services, including career counselling, training programs, and supportive services.

To improve accessibility for these priority groups, LWDA 20 utilizes the HiRE platform, which facilitates targeted outreach, simplified application processes, and case management. For instance, HiRE allows staff to identify individuals who meet priority criteria and efficiently guide them through the intake process. Additionally, LWDA 20 staff undergo training in eligibility determination, career counseling, and case management strategies to effectively address the unique challenges faced by high priority populations.

2. Describe how the local workforce area will ensure equitable access to workforce and educational services through the following actions:

- *Disaggregating data by race, gender and target population to reveal where disparities and inequities exist in policies and programs.*

- *Developing equity goals in conjunction with the education system and preparing action plans to achieve them.*
- *Exposing more high school students, particularly young women and minorities, to careers in science, technology, engineering and math fields.*
- *Exploring how effective mentor programs can be expanded to adults, particularly those who are displaced and moving to a new career.*
- *Providing training to workforce program staff on data-driven approaches to address equity gaps.*
- *Enduring workforce services are strategically located in relation to the populations in most need.*

Ensuring Equitable Access to Workforce and Educational Services

LWDA 20 is currently abiding by the federal executive order to not implement programs that are specific to diversity, equity and inclusion, therefore this section related to those questions will be deferred at this time.

Promoting STEM Careers: LWDA 20 collaborates with partners such as Northshore STEM coalition to expose high school students to STEM careers. This includes hands-on workshops, summits, and mentorship opportunities.

Expanding Mentorship Programs for Adults: Effective mentorship programs are extended to adults, especially displaced workers transitioning into new careers. These programs pair participants with industry professionals to build confidence, skills, and networks needed for career success.

Strategic Placement of Services: Workforce services are systematically located within communities with the greatest need, ensuring that both physical and virtual access is available for populations facing geographical and transportation challenges. Collaborations with community organizations help to extend the reach and impact of these services.

H. Provide a description of training policies and activities in the local area, including:

- 1. How local areas will meet the annual Training Expenditure Requirement.*

Training Policies and Activities: Meeting the Annual Training Expenditure Requirement

LWC has not established an annual training requirement for Local Workforce Boards. LWDA 20 aims to allocate approximately 30% of training funds towards participant-based services. These services include career development, basic skills remediation, soft skills training, ITAs, OJTs, Transitional Jobs, Apprenticeships, and Work Experience, along with supportive services provided during training.

Focusing Participants Services Through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

LWDA 20 uses Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to support its training strategy. ITAs let eligible participants choose from programs on the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), focusing on certifications in high-demand fields. Priority sectors include:

- Healthcare
- Advanced manufacturing
- Construction
- Transportation and Warehousing
- Technology

This approach helps participants gain skills for sustainable jobs while meeting local workforce needs.

2. How local areas will encourage the use of work-based learning strategies, including the local area goals for specific work-based learning activities and proposed outcomes related to these activities.

Expanding Work-Based Learning Opportunities

Work-based learning models, such as On-the-Job Training (OJT), transitional jobs, and apprenticeships, are essential to LWDA 20's strategy. These programs enable participants to earn wages while obtaining practical, hands-on experience in real-world environments. By implementing these models, LWDA 20 not only supports local employers but also ensures that training funds are efficiently allocated to enhance participants' skills and prepare them for sustainable careers.

LWDA 20 partners with local employers to identify high-demand occupations and develop tailored work-based learning (WBL) opportunities that deliver immediate value to businesses while enhancing the employability of participants. For example, On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs enable employers to train new hires while receiving reimbursement for a portion of the training costs, thus promoting skill development in sectors such as healthcare, technology, advanced manufacturing, and construction.

The Board's objectives for WBL activities include increasing participation rates among priority populations, such as individuals receiving public assistance, youth, individuals with disabilities, and dislocated workers. Targeted outcomes encompass higher job placement rates, increased credential attainment, and improved employer satisfaction. These programs are monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure they meet the needs of both participants and employers.

Delivering Measurable Outcomes

The training strategy of LWDA 20 is designed to deliver measurable outcomes, including:

- Increased employment rates among participants
- Wage growth and career advancement
- Improved alignment between training results and labor market demands

By aligning training activities with regional workforce needs and addressing barriers to participation, LWDA 20 addresses participant training costs and also contributes to the long-term economic vitality of the LWDA 20 workforce area.

3. Provide a copy of the local Individual Training Account Policy and describe how training services outlined in WIOA Sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter, and how the Local Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided

Administration and Coordination of Individual Training Accounts

The LWDA 20 administers Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to provide Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-eligible participants with access to high-quality training programs aligned with in-demand occupations. ITAs are primarily utilized for occupational skills training provided by institutions listed on Louisiana's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), ensuring that participants are adequately prepared for careers in sectors essential to the region's economic growth.

The ITA policy facilitates participant-driven decision-making, enabling individuals to choose training providers and programs that align with their career aspirations and labor market demands. Career counselors at the LWDA 20 American Job Centers are instrumental in guiding participants through this process, assisting them in making well-informed decisions that correspond with their skills, interests, and employment prospects.

Requirements for ITA Approval

To ensure consistency and effectiveness, the following stipulations apply to the approval and use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs):

- ITAs must align with high-demand jobs identified in the local workforce development plan, with values established by LWDA 20 to reflect market trends.
- Training programs must be approved on the statewide Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to guarantee quality and relevance.
- Funding is based on individual needs, assessed through the participant's Household Expense Worksheet and related documentation.

- Pell Grants or other financial aid are incorporated into the budget analysis before ITA funding is issued.
- ITAs are issued only after accounting for the total cost of the training program, ensuring financial transparency and compliance.
- ITA vouchers are tracked through a local designated system to ensure their total value does not exceed approved limits.
- Participants must achieve passing grades in prior coursework to continue receiving ITA funding.
- ITAs are non-transferable and issued specifically to the individual's chosen training organization.
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds are not used to repeat failed courses initially paid for with ITA funding.

Coordination with Training Contracts


While Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) support the training needs of individuals, LWDA 20 also employs contracts for training services when group training proves more cost-effective or addresses specific employer or regional workforce requirements. Customized training contracts are particularly advantageous for readying cohorts of workers for high-demand industries in response to employer demands.

Ensuring Consistency and Quality

ITAs and training contracts guarantee that all participants, regardless of their funding source, receive consistent and high-quality training opportunities. Career counselors play a crucial role in this alignment by assisting participants in identifying the most appropriate training pathways that align with their personal and professional objectives while also addressing regional economic priorities.

By employing a dual approach, LWDA 20 effectively utilizes ITAs and training contracts to enhance resource efficiency, improve workforce preparedness, and address the dynamic needs of the local labor market. This strategy ensures equitable access to training opportunities and contributes to the region's sustained economic prosperity.

Individual Training Account Policy

	Policy Name: Individual Training Account Policy <small>A partnership of the americanjobcenter network</small>
Policy Number: 200-01	Current Approved Revision: 06/13/2024
Original Effective Date: 02/18/2016 Revision 09/14/2023	

OVERVIEW

Training services carried out with the adult, dislocated worker, and youth (OSY) funds received under Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 will be in accordance with section 134 of WIOA. Training funds shall be used to provide training services, to the extent feasible, to adult/dislocated worker/youth individuals who meet the eligibility requirements.

The ITA (Individual Training Account) is an account on behalf of a WIOA services eligible individual. Individuals may use ITA's in exchange for training services for skills-in-demand occupations from training providers on the approved list of Eligible Training Providers. This system will maximize participant choice in the selection of training activities. ITA's place training resources in the hands of the consumer. Rather than being directed to a provider of training by an agency, consumers will be able to select high quality training on their own. Consumer information about eligible training providers will be made available to all training seekers through the *one-stop* service delivery system.

Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 adult/dislocated worker/youth grant funds budgeted for training services must be provided on a priority basis to public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 has established a maximum ITA amount that participants may receive and a total maximum per participant. (Attachment 1)

Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 will adhere to the following justification for training criteria when approving ITA Scholarships/Vouchers; one of more of the following criteria may be used to establish justification:

- a. There is no suitable employment for the worker
- b. The training is appropriate for the worker
- c. There is a reasonable expectation of employment following training
- d. Training must be reasonable and available to the worker
- e. The worker is qualified for the training
- f. The training is available at a reasonable cost
- g. The training will lead to employment in a high demand/ high wage job.

High Demand/High Wage Jobs Definition

High demand/high wage jobs are those jobs listed on the Louisiana Workforce Commission, Department of Labor Star Jobs page as obtaining 3,4, or 5 stars. Those jobs and wages will reflect high demand/high wage as they meet the criteria of job growth, job demand, job openings in those occupations in the previous 12 months, and wages.

TRAINING SERVICES

Participants will be evaluated to determine whether they need training and if they possess the skills and qualifications needed to participate successfully in the training program in which they express an interest. Individual training accounts (ITA's) will be established for all eligible participants as defined in the act.

Occupational skills training will be provided in areas identified as targeted occupations based upon criteria such as number of openings, average entry level wage, potential for long term/stable employment, and general suitability for Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 applicants.

Occupational training will be conducted for occupations where skill shortages exist and for occupations where there is a reasonable expectation for employment. Occupational skills training shall conform to the specifications in the Geaux Jobs - LWDA 20 Demand Occupations list. Participants will be informed of the demand occupations and/or skills for which training may be provided.

Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 has made available to all individuals the right to pursue occupations that are non-traditional. The attainment of this goal will be achieved through the provision of counseling and information that will assist the individual in selecting the occupational skills training that is best suited for them, including those occupations considered nontraditional.

Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 will pay for individual courses included in a program that are online in delivery and are part of the overall curriculum of an approved training program at an approved training institution. The provider must be located in a physical building structure where students can physically commute to that location and the program is conducted in a classroom setting under the supervision of an Instructor/Teacher. LWDA 20 will not provide ITA training funding for training programs that are 100% online.

Individuals will be able to select a service provider from the Louisiana Eligible Training Provider's List (ETPL). The provider list is maintained by LWC and available in all One-Stops and on the Internet through LWC's Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE). The training participant will be required to undergo an in-depth review of all information concerning the training provider, high demand/high wage occupations, career paths in which training is being requested, and labor market information prior to being approved for training. This review process shall be completed with the assistance of a Geaux Jobs Counselor.

Individuals will be able to select a service provider from the Louisiana Eligible Training Provider's List (ETPL). The provider list is maintained by LWC and available in all One-Stops and on the Internet through LWC's Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE). The training participant will be required to undergo an in-depth review of all information concerning the training provider, high demand/high wage occupations, career paths in which training is being requested, and labor market information prior to being approved for training. This review process shall be completed with the assistance of a Geaux Jobs Counselor.

The training participant will be required to sign a receipt of the training vendor information form that will state they completed the review, and believe the training vendor, and career path they have chosen was made based on all available information provided through the career counseling process. It will also state they believe the career path they have chosen is the correct, and appropriate one for them. Geaux Jobs staff are prohibited from recommending, guiding or steering an individual to a specific training or training provider.

The client file will include a description of how the determination was made that the training selected is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or another area to which the trainee is willing to relocate. The client file will also include documentation of the determination that the individual has the skills and qualifications to allow successful participation in the selected training program.

In the event the training participant (client) does not complete the training, all unused funds that have been allocated for their training will be recouped (de-obligated) and placed back into the training system. Training for this client will be considered complete, and further training will not be considered unless the client is able to furnish justification for not being able to complete the training program. Only then, with approval from the Administrative Board Staff and availability of funds, can training funds be considered for this client. Program Staff will keep Contract Staff informed of the status of the participant throughout the program year.

Training is limited to a curriculum that can be completed in two years or less.

With the following exceptions:

- Four-year curriculum in a Higher Education Institution (College/University), in which the eligible individual to be enrolled has no more than one (1) year (2 semester, if possible, summer) remaining before receiving their diploma/certificate, and
- The individual has a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or greater, and
- The individual can provide documentation certifying the above requirements are met
- Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 will provide funding for the 1st year of Apprenticeship Training if a recognizable industry-based certification can be obtained in the first year.

ITA's may be used to purchase the following:

- Tuition for training services for skills in high demand, high wage occupations
- Books, fees, and/or other required training materials
- Other required training expenses
- Credentials.

ELIGIBILITY

Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 will allocate WIOA funds for the provision of occupational classroom training to eligible individuals who:

- After an interview, evaluation or assessment, and case management, have been determined to:
 - Need training services, and
 - Have the skills and qualifications to successfully complete the selected program of training services.
- Selected programs of training services that are directly linked to the employment opportunities in high demand/high wage in Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 or another area in which the adult or dislocated worker are willing to relocate.
- Been determined eligible according to the “Priority system” established by the State and Local Board.
- Are unable to obtain other grant assistance, including Pell Grants
- Require assistance beyond the assistance made available under other grant assistance programs.
- Otherwise meets the above requirements while an application for a federal Pell Grant is pending.
- Other Grant funds do not cover the complete cost of training.

PRIORITY SYSTEM

1. In addition to the priority requirements established in the WIOA and State LWC policy for priority of services to adults who are public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, veterans, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 will provide priority for enrollment into training activities to individuals who are Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 residents. Provided training funds are available, and it is documented that funds are unavailable in the participant’s area of residence, consideration will be given to non-residential participants with approval of the Director of Workforce Development.
2. **ITA LIMITED SLOTS**
When the available slots for a Service Provider are limited Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 participants will be enrolled first, prior to enrollment of non-residential participants. Slots will be reserved for Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 participants for a minimum of two-thirds of the program year. After that time, non-residential participants will be considered for enrollment if it is documented that funds are unavailable in their area. Non-residential participants may be enrolled for training in an Institution where there is no limit on slots upon providing the above documentation.

TRAINING PROVIDER

Training Institutions listed on Louisiana HiRE that have been approved by the Louisiana Workforce Commission will qualify as a provider, provided they have been in business for a minimum of one (1) year with successful performance with a minimum 80% completion rate, 50% placement rate and a minimum wage rate of \$13.50 per hour. All Training Institutions that qualify to be a part of Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 list of Training Providers and receive any federal funding of

training dollars will have to be knowledgeable of the Workforce Development Board's Policy on the Individualized Training Account (ITA) System. All qualified Training Providers will be equally recognized for training services. Training Provider information such as high demand/high wage occupations, career paths in which training is being requested, labor market information, convenience and accessibility will be considered by the participant in selecting a provider.

Training and Technical Assistance will be made available to all eligible Training Providers. The ITA system will be structured so that no one training provider is discriminated against. The Training Providers who meet the initial qualification (as set forth by the LWC) and whose training services are used during the first year will be evaluated annually to determine if their performance meets the state and local performance levels. Enrollment will be limited to initial Training Providers (per Attachment 2), until performance as stated in the ITA Agreement has been met. Established Provider limits are found in Attachment 2A. Limits will be based on the length of training.

FUNDING

Participants will be advised that other funding sources must be sought prior to receipt of Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 funds. Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 staff will assist participants in securing other funding such as Pell grants and Foster Promise. The solicitation and ineligibility of other funding must be documented.

Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 funds for the ITA system will be through the applicable Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth program after other sources of funding have been applied to the training cost. Participants who select training where the cost exceeds the amount allowable must provide documentation or proof supporting their ability to pay the excess costs prior to receiving Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 funds.

TRAINING PROVIDER AGREEMENT

Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 will enter into an Agreement with each Training Provider prior to the beginning of training and to the issuance of an ITA scholarship (voucher). The Agreement will include all the necessary clauses required by the federal and state government, and the local Geaux Jobs - LWDA 20 Board and provide the process for paying training providers, the payment schedule and refund policy. Approval of training reimbursements due to special circumstances will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Workforce Development; Training cost will come from LWC – ETPL site in HiRE.

TRAINING PROVIDER CLASS COMPOSITION

For funding purposes, WIOA funds cannot be used to fund more than 50% of a class composition. Providers will be required to provide proof that other students are enrolled into the class that are not funded in part or whole through WIOA funds. Those funds are not limited by funding source but collectively based off all WIOA funding streams and local areas. Special approval to exceed the 50% can be requested, in writing, and will be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Operations Manager and Director of Workforce Development.

ITA SCHOLARSHIP (voucher)

The ITA scholarship (voucher) will be completed and delivered to the training provider by Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 prior to the beginning of service. The scholarship (voucher) will be for an amount no more than the actual cost of the training minus the amount of any other available training grants or funds, such as Pell grants, and cannot exceed the limits established by the Local Workforce Investment Board. Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 will use an established ITA scholarship (voucher) that includes the following but not limited to:

- Name, address and telephone number of Training Provider
- Name, address, telephone number and social security number of participants
- Issuance and ending date
- Purpose of scholarship (voucher)(type of training)
- Value of scholarship (voucher)- Prior to other grants or funding
- Signatures: Program Supervisor (Operations Manager)
- Seal of Geaux Jobs LWDA-20

The scholarship (voucher) shall be produced in:

- Original - Training Provider
- 1st copy- Contracting & Bookkeeping
- 2nd copy-participant's record

ITA SYSTEM PROCEDURES

Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 has designed a system to determine who is eligible to receive an ITA. The local Eligibility policy will describe how participants will receive assessment, counseling, and an individual employment plan prior to issuance of an ITA.

ATTACHMENT 1

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNT VALUE

Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 has established a maximum amount that is applicable to all ITA's.

See Attachment 1 (a) for maximum amounts of Training Scholarships (vouchers). These begin with the date of entry into training.

Scholarship (vouchers) shall be issued for the total cost and length of training; however, the yearly cost shall not exceed the established cost limits. Payment of training cost will be exclusively from Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 funds and cost that extends beyond the current program year will be conditioned upon the receipt of Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 funds from the Louisiana Workforce Commission. Payments will be made in accordance with the payment schedule negotiated with the Training Provider. At the end of each program year WIOA Counselor will review each participant's progress and determine if the value of the scholarship needs to be adjusted.

In unusual circumstances where the total cost of a training program exceeds the maximum amount allowable, and where the participant is making sufficient progress, the WIOA Counselor and Operations Manager may review the case and determine if there is sufficient reason to exceed the limit. If funds are available, all exceeding costs must be approved by the Director of Workforce Development.

ATTACHMENT 1 (a)

Scholarship amounts will be determined according to the SVP Codes of the occupation being trained for.

SVP Level:

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1 | Not considered for ITA Training Scholarship/Vouchers. This is short-term that may be conducted under Intensive. |
| 2-5 | Up to \$5,000. per year. |
| 6 | Up to \$5,000 per year with a maximum of \$10,000*. |
| 7-9 | Non-funded due to program length. |

* After the first 12 months of training, the amount to be paid will be pro-rated as follows:

13-18 months - ½ of yearly allowable amount

19-24 months - yearly allowable amount

ATTACHMENT 2

Geaux Jobs LWDA-20 INITIAL Provider Year Enrollment Limits

10 Slots

New provider receives 10 slots in total combination of all curricula for 1st year.

ATTACHMENT 2(a)

Established Provider Enrollment Limits

20 slots per program year

Slots are based on all combined curriculums.

ITA vouchers may exceed 20 slots based upon fund availability and meeting performance measures of: credential attainment, measurable skills gains, placement in employment 2nd and 4th quarter after exit, and median income levels, with the approval of the Director of Workforce Development.

Upon formal request made by the training provider to the Geaux Jobs Operations Manager and subject to the availability of funding, training providers consistently meeting or exceeding performance requirements may be eligible for additional funding above the 20-slot maximum. The specific number of slots above the maximum must be included in the formal request. Final approval or denial of such a request shall be made by the Geaux Jobs Director of Workforce Development.

At the end of each program year, performance will be reviewed on all Training Providers prior to entering a new contract. Training providers who fail to meet performance for the previous program year may be subject to not receiving a new contract for the next program year unless they can demonstrate thru a corrective action plan, subject to the approval of the Director of Workforce Development showing that necessary steps to be taken to meet and/or exceed performance for the new program year.

4. Provide a copy of the local training provider's approval policy and procedures. Describe how the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that the providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers.

Approval and Continuous Improvement of Eligible Training Providers

LWDA 20's uses the State of Louisiana LWC as the means for training provider approval to ensure that all eligible training providers (ETPs) meet rigorous quality standards and align with regional labor market needs. Providers seeking approval must demonstrate their ability to deliver industry-recognized credentials, achieve strong completion and placement rates, and maintain affordability for participants.

Those providers deemed eligible on the eligible training provider list shall comply with the ITA policy when it comes to approval. All providers in LWDA 20 will be approved through an agreement process annually. Providers are required to submit regular reports on participant outcomes, including credential attainment, employment rates, and wage increases. These metrics collected by the LWC and are used to assess the provider's effectiveness in meeting the needs of local employers and jobseekers.

I. Describe if the local workforce board will authorize the transfer of WIOA Title IB workforce funds, including the maximum dollar amount and/or percentage that is authorized to be transferred on an annual basis:

1. To transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker funding streams.

Transfer of WIOA Title IB Workforce Funds Between Adult and Dislocated Worker Funding Streams

LWDA 20 has the authority to transfer up to 50% of funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams annually, in compliance with WIOA regulations. This flexibility permits the Board to respond to variations in labor market conditions and participant requirements, ensuring resources are allocated to the program with the highest demand.

The Board diligently oversees expenditures within the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams. Upon identifying a potential funding shortfall, the Board assesses the necessity of a transfer and coordinates with the State to commence the transfer process. This approach ensures continuous service provision while adhering to the region's workforce priorities.

Fund transfers are subject to review by the Board to uphold transparency and accountability. This procedure ensures that resource allocation is in accordance with regional workforce objectives and optimizes the effectiveness of WIOA funds for job seekers and employers within the local area.

2. To use funds for incumbent worker training as outlined in WIOA

Utilization of WIOA Funds for Incumbent Worker Training

LWDA 20 employs WIOA funds to finance Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) programs in adherence to WIOA Section 134(d)(4)(A)(i). These initiatives are designed to upgrade the skills of current employees, enhance the competitive edge of businesses, and bolster regional economic development.

The Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program is available to employees who meet the following criteria:

- Are currently employed.
- Have an established employment history with the employer for six months or more. For training provided to a cohort, not all employees are required to meet the six-month employment history requirement, provided the majority do.

Employers participating in IWT programs must comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act to establish an employer-employee relationship and contribute a portion of the training costs. This cost-sharing requirement underscores the employer's commitment to workforce development and promotes mutual investment in the success of the program.

IWT programs aim to improve the competitiveness of employees and employers. Training activities are tailored to meet specific employer needs, such as implementing new technologies, addressing skill gaps, or obtaining industry-recognized certifications. These programs focus on high-growth industries like transportation, healthcare, technology, and advanced manufacturing, where the demand for skilled workers is significant.

Employers must agree to retain employees or prevent layoffs resulting from the training. This ensures that IWT benefits both individual employees and contributes to the overall stability and productivity of the business.

LWDA 20 will cap the IWT allocation at 20% of the combined WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funds. IWT programs align with state and regional economic strategies to promote innovation and growth.

Through Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) 20 aims to promote employee retention, enhance productivity, and assist employers in maintaining a competitive workforce. These initiatives bolster the region's capacity to adapt to changing industry demands while fostering sustained economic growth.

3. To use funds for transitional jobs as outlined in WIOA

Utilization of WIOA Funds for Transitional Jobs

LWDA 20 utilizes WIOA funds for Transitional Jobs to help individuals with significant barriers to employment gain work experience and transition to unsubsidized employment. These jobs are short-term, subsidized employment opportunities aimed at helping participants build a work history, develop workplace skills, and address challenges to entering or re-entering the workforce.

Transitional Jobs aim to assist individuals who encounter considerable employment difficulties, including:

- Formerly incarcerated individuals.
- People who have been unemployed for an extended period.
- Individuals with limited or no work history.

Through collaboration with local employers and community organizations, LWDA 20 ensures that Transitional Jobs programs are consistently aligned with industries exhibiting strong hiring potential. This strategic alignment enhances the probability that participants will transition successfully to permanent, unsubsidized employment.

Transitional Jobs are managed by the Operator of the LWDA 20 American Job Centers Center. The program includes supportive services such as transportation assistance, job coaching, and career counseling to address participants' needs and support their success. These services are integrated into the Transitional Jobs framework to ensure participants have the necessary tools and support for the workplace.

LWDA 20 allocates no more than 10% of the combined WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to Transitional Jobs services. This allocation guarantees that adequate resources are available to offer significant opportunities to individuals with barriers, while also maintaining a balanced workforce development budget.

Transitional Jobs provide participants with a structured environment to acquire essential skills, establish a work history, and regain confidence. These programs aim to improve the employability of participants and enhance local workforce readiness by addressing barriers to sustained employment. By utilizing WIOA funds and building partnerships with employers and community organizations, LWDA 20 facilitates pathways to permanent employment for individuals in need.

4. To use funds for pay for performance contracts as outlined in WIOA

Use of WIOA Funds for Pay-for-Performance (PFP) Contracts

LWDA 20 has the opportunity to utilize WIOA funds through Pay-for-Performance (PFP) contracts as a strategic approach to incentivize service providers to achieve quantifiable outcomes. These outcomes encompass job placements, credential attainment, and wage growth. This performance-based strategy aligns financial incentives with program performance to optimize the

return on investment for workforce development funds.

LWDA currently does not provide funding for pay for performance contracts due to budgetary limits.

CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION- LOCAL WORKFORCE AREA 20

The plan must include information on the actions the Local Board will take toward becoming or remaining a high performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the State Board (WIOA Sec. 101(d)(6)) and (§ 679.560(b)(17)).

- A. Provide information regarding the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official consistent with WIOA Sec. 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 of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA Title I Subtitle B and the one-stop delivery system (core and required partners as applicable) in the local area (§ 679.560(b)(16)).*
- B.*
- 1. WIOA Performance Measures*

High-Performing Board

The LWDA 20 is a collaborative organization that supports economic growth through a comprehensive workforce development system. By working with local and regional partners, LWDA 20 addresses workforce challenges and develops solutions for planning and coordination. These partnerships include economic development entities such as the Greater New Orleans Inc. (GNO, Inc.), the Baton Rouge Area Chamber (BRAC), and multiple parishes and city Chambers of Commerce. This ensures a pipeline of skilled workers to meet the demands of local and regional employers.

As the leading convener of workforce development stakeholders, LWDA 20 is instrumental in advancing initiatives within the Baton Rouge and Northshore areas. The Board promotes collaboration among stakeholders to enhance employer engagement, fortify the regional labor market, and expand local workforce development programs to meet employer requirements. In its advocacy capacity, LWDA 20 endorses policy recommendations and actively pursues local and national resources to support its mission.

LWDA 20 acknowledges that accountability is essential to an effective workforce investment system. This dedication begins with the Board, which guarantees high-quality service delivery by requiring the LWDA 20 American Job Centers Center to adhere to rigorous standards of professionalism and performance.

To maintain a performance accountability system, LWDA 20 will:

- **Forge Strong Partnerships:** Establish a collaborative and transparent relationship with the LWDA 20 operator to ensure shared goals and aligned efforts.
- **Conduct Regular Oversight:** Schedule frequent meetings to review performance metrics, service quality, and staff development initiatives.
- **Adopt Continuous Improvement Practices:** Utilize a continuous improvement model to enhance all aspects of operations.

- **Implement Corrective Measures:** Require written corrective action plans for internal monitoring reports with areas of deficiency.
- **Enhance Reporting Standards:** Mandate monthly reports from the career center operator detailing service utilization, staff activities, and progress in unsubsidized job placements.

Through strategic collaboration, rigorous accountability, and a steadfast commitment to continuous improvement, LWDA 20 strives to enhance the workforce development system to meet the evolving needs of both employers and job seekers. By upholding high standards and fostering an environment of professionalism and innovation, LWDA 20 continues to strengthen its role as a high-performing board driving economic growth and workforce success in the LWDA 20 workforce area as seen in the PY22/23 Performance outcomes.

Negotiated Performance Levels of LWDA 20 - PY 22/23 Outcomes

LWDA 20	Negotiated	Adjusted	Actual
	PY22/PY23	PY23	PY23
ADULT			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	75.0%	76.5%	87.8%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	69.0%	70.4%	86.1%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,400	\$7,000	\$8,922
Credential Attainment	79.5%	81.0%	89.6%
Measurable Skill Gains	64.9%	70.7%	96.9%
DISLOCATED WORKER			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	75.0%	78.5%	82.8%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	67.0%	69.0%	91.2%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$11,081
Credential Attainment	80.0%	82.8%	86.4%
Measurable Skill Gains	73.1%	73.5%	100.0%
YOUTH			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	74.5%	76.0%	80.2%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	72.0%	73.2%	88.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$2,200	\$2,200	\$4,942
Credential Attainment	75.0%	76.2%	90.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	50.0%	50.5%	100.0%

The performance accountability system for LWDA 20 is based on federal and state regulations, utilizing WIOA Common Measures to assess the effectiveness of its workforce programs. The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) engages in negotiations with each local area to establish performance goals. For Program Years 2024–2025, the following performance measures have been designated for LWDA 20 (Orleans):

Negotiated Performance Levels for WIOA (LWDA 20)

Negotiated Performance Levels for WIOA Second Planning District Consortium (LWDA 20)

	PY 2024	PY 2025
WIOA Title I Adult		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	76.9%	76.9%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	72.0%	72.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$7,155	\$7,155
Credential Attainment Rate	83.0%	83.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	78.0%	78.0%
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	78.5%	78.5%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	73.0%	73.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$8,700	\$8,700
Credential Attainment Rate	84.0%	84.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	75.3%	75.3%
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	77.0%	77.0%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	74.5%	74.5%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$3,000	\$3,000
Credential Attainment Rate	76.5%	76.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	60.0%	60.0%

These measures establish a comprehensive framework for evaluating the performance of the local area, fiscal agent, service providers, and the one-stop delivery system. LWDA 20's dedication to surpassing these benchmarks demonstrates its commitment to becoming a high-performing board.

2. Additional State Performance Measures

Not applicable

C. Provide a description of the current and planned evaluation activities and how this information will be provided to the local board and program administrators as appropriate.

1. *What existing service delivery strategies will be expanded based on promising return on investment?*

Continuous Improvement and Return on Investment in Workforce Programs

LWDA 20 focuses on continuous improvement and the assessment of program outcomes to optimize the effectiveness of WIOA funds. The Board receives quarterly reports from the Operations Manager reflecting on quarterly performance. and monthly reports from the internal program monitor. These reports include key metrics such as WIOA enrollments, service utilization across activities, expenditures for each training component, training completion rates, and job placement outcomes. Monthly reports from the internal program monitor reviews the current program participants, training providers, and program offices to assure compliance.

Based on this data-driven approach, the Board makes decisions on how to allocate funding to achieve the best return on investment (ROI). Programs or training activities that show low completion rates or job placement outcomes receive reduced WIOA funding, ensuring resources are directed to initiatives that deliver the most impact.

LWDA strives for a demonstrable return on investment for all WIOA funds. Specifically, the ROI for WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) is four times the amount of the WIOA funds invested. This stipulates that for every WIOA dollar allocated to an ITA, the annual earnings of the training participant should amount to at least four times the initial investment.

A \$5,000 WIOA ITA investment should ideally enable the participant to attain an annual income of at least \$20,000. This criterion reflects the Board's dedication to ensuring that training programs funded by WIOA lead to substantial, self-sustaining employment opportunities for participants, while also optimizing the utilization of public funds. Reviewing the average training cost of \$5,000 for adult and dislocated workers compared to the median second quarter after exit income for PY 22/23 shows that the ROI is \$ 7.714 for every dollar spent for adult training and \$8.86 for every dollar spent on dislocated workers.

The Earn and Learn Initiative, such as on-the-job training shows a promising way to achieve measurable ROI. It provides living wages to participants in approved training programs as a shared cost initiative. This support allows full engagement in studies, leading to higher completion rates and better job placements.

By consistently monitoring and adhering to established performance benchmarks, LWDA 20 effectively enhances workforce development efforts, yielding substantial benefits for job seekers and contributing positively to the local economy.

2. *What existing delivery strategies will be curtailed or eliminated based on minimal return on investment?*

Evaluating and Phasing Out Ineffective Service Delivery Strategies

Currently, there are no specific service delivery strategies under consideration. However, delivery strategies with minimal return on investment may be reduced or phased out as needed. The Board would evaluate these strategies using quarterly performance data, including enrollment rates, completion rates, and employment outcomes. Programs and training providers with consistently low completion rates or limited job placements, particularly those not aligned with high-demand industries, may receive reduced funding.

The focus remains on programs that provide measurable outcomes and employment results for participants while aligning with employer demand and regional economic goals.

3. *What new service strategies will be used to address regional educational and training needs based on promising return on investment?*
 - *What return on investment and qualitative outcome data for various education and training programs will be collected to identify barriers to enrollments?*
 - *What are the most cost-effective approaches to taking down those barriers or helping residents overcome them?*

Implementing New Service Strategies to Address Regional Educational and Training Needs

LWDA 20 aims to address regional educational and training needs by using strategies that incorporate emerging technologies, data-driven approaches, and targeted outreach. These efforts are intended to increase access, reduce barriers, and align workforce development with regional priorities.

LWDA 20 is developing career pathway initiatives that combine adult basic education with occupational training. These programs allow participants to improve foundational skills while earning industry-recognized credentials, increasing their employability in high-demand sectors.

To enhance accessibility, LWDA 20 is expanding its virtual offerings to include workshops, and training programs. These initiatives are particularly advantageous for individuals who encounter transportation or mobility challenges, ensuring that services are inclusive and widely accessible. Additionally, innovative tools such as digital literacy training have been integrated to offer multiple levels of digital literacy for all age groups to support incorporating digital skills into employment.

The Board's Dislocated Worker recruitment strategies have demonstrated effectiveness in generating a return on investment (ROI). A comprehensive outreach campaign, which includes advertisements, billboards, and diverse social media strategies, has consistently resulted in increased enrollment. Additionally, collaborative efforts with the Louisiana Workforce Commission's Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program further bolster the reach and impact of these initiatives.

Innovative Program Initiatives

LWDA 20 continues to advance its program offerings to meet the needs of participants and employers:

- **Integrated services model:** Collaboration with The Department of Children and Family Services through collocation in Geaux Jobs AJC to provide integrated services to individuals with barriers to employment. This model program will occur in LWDA 20 with expansion to EmployBR as a regional pilot program.
- **Reverse Job Fairs for On-the-Job Training (OJT):** The "Reverse Job Fair" concept has demonstrated significant return on investment (ROI) and is continuously refined based on employer feedback to enhance its effectiveness. This structure has achieved notable success in OJT placements, providing participants with substantial work opportunities.
- **Career and Training Fair Collaboration with EmployBR:** LWDA 20 has effectively implemented multiple regional collaboration as a strategy to remove barriers to employment and training. This fair connected over 2500 job seekers from across the region with nearly 300 employers and numerous training opportunities, highlighting the power of collaboration in workforce development. The single-event format not only streamlines the job search process for participants but also allows employers and training providers to

efficiently access a diverse talent pool. By addressing logistical challenges and providing centralized access to resources, this collaboration has proven to be a scalable and cost-effective model. Replicating such events enhances regional workforce alignment and assists residents in overcoming barriers to employment.

- **Youth Work Experience Initiative:** This program provides high school seniors and out-of-school youth with opportunities to acquire soft and hard skills through work experience within local workforce offices and school system.
- **Youth STEM Exploration:** Provides hands-on exposure to STEM fields, equipping youth with critical skills for emerging industries as partners with the Northshore STEM coalition.
- **Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG):** Supports at-risk youth with academic assistance, employability skills, and mentorship to improve school-to-work transitions.

Data Collection for ROI and Outcome Evaluation

LWDA 20 emphasizes data-driven decision-making to ensure its programs yield measurable outcomes. Key metrics include:

- **Completion Rates:** Monitoring the percentage of participants who successfully complete educational and training programs.
- **Credential Attainment:** Tracking the number of industry-recognized credentials earned by participants.
- **Employment Rates and Wage Progression:** Evaluating job placement success and earnings growth among participants.
- **Participant Satisfaction and Employer Feedback:** Collecting qualitative insights to refine program offerings and enhance participant experiences.

This comprehensive evaluation process assists in identifying barriers such as financial constraints, logistical challenges, or awareness gaps, and informs strategies for effectively addressing these issues.

Through the implementation of innovative strategies, targeted outreach, and rigorous evaluation processes, LWDA 20 enhances access to education and training programs. This approach ensures alignment with regional economic priorities and promotes inclusive workforce development. These initiatives not only fulfill federal requirements but also contribute significantly to the long-term prosperity of the Geaux Jobs Local Workforce Development area.

CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & ASSURANCES: LOCAL WORKFORCE AREA 20

This section includes the technical requirements and assurances that are required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Sec. 121(c)(2)(iv)).

A. Fiscal Management

- 1. Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i) (§ 679.560(b)(14)).*

Fiscal Management

The Parish of Tangipahoa acts as the Fiscal Agent for LWDA 20, ensuring effective financial oversight and accountability. The Board employs the parish's procurement processes for selecting the One-Stop Operator(s) and WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth service/training providers, adhering to established standards and promoting transparency.

Procurement Process

The Board/Fiscal Agent employs a procurement process aimed at ensuring open and free competition. This process complies with the following regulatory standards as applicable:

- 2 CFR Part 215: Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations.
- Louisiana Procurement Code (R.S. 39:1551-1755): Governing the procurement of goods and services within the state.
- 29 CFR 95.40-48: Federal procurement standards for grant administration.
- The Board/Fiscal Agent ensures compliance with Section 107(d)(10)(B, C, and D) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. Written procurement procedures are maintained to demonstrate adherence to these regulations, including the solicitation and award of contracts for goods and services. Sufficient records are kept documenting each procurement, ensuring transparency and accountability.
- The Board/Fiscal Agent also addresses organizational conflicts of interest and other practices that could reduce competition, maintaining a fair procurement environment.

Disbursement of Grant Funds

Tangipahoa Parish functions as the administrative body for WIOA formula funds, overseeing the distribution of grant funds for LWDA 20. This includes allocation for operational costs and training expenses, encompassing programs provided by various training providers.

- WIOA Training: Ensuring participants receive occupational and skills training aligned with workforce needs.
- Supportive Services: Covering expenses that enable program participation, such as transportation and childcare.

- Work Experience: Funding placements that provide practical on-the-job training.
 - On-the-Job Training (OJT): Subsidizing employer costs for training new employees in the workplace.
2. *Provide a copy of the local procurement policies and procedures and describe the competitive procurement process that will be used to award the sub grants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities (§ 679.560(b)(15)).*

Local Procurement Policies and Competitive Process for WIOA Title I Activities

Tangipahoa Parish utilizes a competitive procurement process that complies with the federal regulations under 2 CFR Part 215, the Louisiana Procurement Code (R.S. 39:1551-1755), and 29 CFR 95, 40-48. This procedure guarantees open and fair competition while minimizing organizational conflicts of interest.

- The procurement process includes publicly advertised Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the selection of one-stop operators and WIOA service providers.
- Proposals are evaluated based on established criteria, including the provider's capacity to deliver services, past performance, and alignment with the Board's workforce goals.
- Contracts are awarded to qualified providers who meet performance expectations and provide cost-effective services.
- Documentation of all procurement activities is maintained to demonstrate compliance with WIOA requirements and to ensure transparency in the use of public funds

Tangipahoa Procurement Policy

T.P. RESOLUTION NO. R24-27

A RESOLUTION OF THE TANGIPAHOA PARISH COUNCIL-PRESIDENT GOVERNMENT TO AUTHORIZE THE PARISH PRESIDENT TO APPROVE AND AMEND THE FEDERAL PROGRAMS PROCUREMENT POLICIES FOR TANGIPAHOA PARISH GOVERNMENT

WHEREAS, the Parish has prepared an updated procurement policy and procedures that are focused on meeting procurement guidelines for use of federal funds by Tangipahoa Parish, and

WHEREAS, recent federal funding to the Parish from State or federal agencies and proposed funding from such agencies have requested review and adoption of a procurement policy to guide the Parish in meeting 2 CFR 200 administrative standards for procurement

THEN, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Tangipahoa Parish Council hereby adopts the Procurement Policy and procedures presented herein for use by the Parish when administering any covered funding.

On motion by Mr. Joseph and seconded by Mr. Mayeaux, the foregoing resolution was hereby declared adopted on this the 22nd day of July, 2024 by the following roll-call vote:

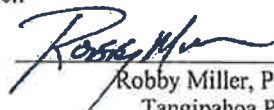
YEAS: Sinagra, Ingraffia, Joseph, Havis, Ridgel, Mayeaux, Wells, Vial, Hyde, Cieutat NAYS: None

NOT VOTING: None

ATTEST:


Jih DeSouza, Council Clerk
Tangipahoa Parish Council


David P. Vial, Chairman
Tangipahoa Parish Council


Robby Miller, President
Tangipahoa Parish

ABSENT: None

T.P. Res. No. R24-27

TANGIPAOA PARISH GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT/CONTRACT POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR USE OF FEDERAL OR STATE FUNDS IN TANGIPAOA PARISH ADMINISTRATION

These policy provisions are intended to serve as the legal authority for the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction services, and professional services for the Tangipahoa Parish Government, hereinafter the Parish, in the conduct of all of its Federal programs and the Parish's purchases. These policy provisions meet the Federal grant standards established in 2 CFR 200.317-326.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Statement of Procurement Policy is to (1) provide for the fair and equitable treatment of all persons or firms involved in purchasing by Parish ; (2) assure that supplies, services, and construction are procured efficiently, effectively, and at the most favorable prices available to the Parish; (3) promote competition in contracting; provide safeguards for maintaining a procurement system of quality and integrity; and (4) assure that Parish purchasing actions are in full compliance with applicable State laws, Federal standards, Parish ordinances, regulations or other relevant policies.

PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY AND ADMINISTRATION

The primary purchasing/procurement authority for the Parish shall be the Purchasing Agent. All procurement transactions shall be conducted and administered by the Parish's Purchasing Agent.

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall ensure that there are sufficient unencumbered funds available to cover the anticipated cost of each procurement before contract award or modification (including change orders), work is inspected before payment, and payment is made promptly for contract work performed and accepted.

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall ensure the appropriate method of procurement is used for the particular purchase considering Federal, State and Parish dollar thresholds.

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall ensure the appropriate contract and prices are applied to the particular purchase.

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall ensure that contracts shall be awarded only to responsible contractors/firms that possess the potential ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of the proposed procurement.

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall give consideration to such factors as the contractor's/firm's capacity, integrity, compliance with public policy, record of past performance, and financial and technical resources.

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall establish and maintain a contract administration system to ensure that contractors perform in accordance with their contracts, which provides for the proper inspection of supplies, services, or construction, as well as monitoring contractor performance, status reporting on construction contracts, and similar matters.

CODE OF CONDUCT

No employee, officer, or agent of the Parish shall participate in the selection, or the award or administration of a contract supported by public funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved. Such a conflict could arise if the employee, officer, or agent; any member of his/her immediate family; his/her partner; or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the above, or any covered person listed in R.S. 42 §1112(B) has a financial or other interest in the firm selected for award.

No officer, employee, or agent of the Parish shall solicit or accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or firms, potential contractors or firms, or parties to sub-agreements, except where the financial interest is not substantial, or the gift is an unsolicited item of nominal intrinsic value. No employee, officer, or agent of the Parish shall knowingly use confidential information for actual or anticipated personal gain.

FAIR AND OPEN COMPETITION

The goal of the Parish is to conduct all its procurement activities to provide the most qualified contractors or best products in a manner that also discourages and prevents favoritism, collusion, fraud, waste, and abuse and to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate any unfair competitive advantage. The Parish will carry out all procurement activities in a manner that provides maximum free and open competition.

The Parish will exclude any contractors or potential contractors that develop or draft specifications, requirements, statements of work, or invitations for bids or requests for proposals from competing for such procurements. In addition, State law provides the above shall further be prohibited from participating as subcontractors related to the award of that procurement.

The Parish shall not make any uncompetitive awards to an existing contractor and shall not make a federally funded award or reimburse from such award to a contractor based upon any form of agreement or understanding for general, unspecified services or broad types of services entered into in advance of work to be done.

The Parish will not enter into any arrangement or agreement [implied or express] to prepare a grant (or development) application on a “no fee” basis and then compensate the contractor by paying a contingent fee or other compensation from the grant award.

The Parish will avoid situations that create unequal access to information that can occur when a contractor has access to nonpublic information as part of its performance under another contract with the Parish and where that information may provide the contractor with a competitive advantage in a later competition for a Parish contract

Procurement procedures will not restrict or eliminate competition.

The Parish shall not place unreasonable requirements on firms in order for them to qualify to do business. Nor will the Parish encourage or participate in noncompetitive practices among firms. The Parish is alert to organizational conflicts that would jeopardize the negotiation process and limit competition. The Parish will not require unnecessary experience or bonding requirements. Contractors wanting to do business with the Parish must not hire a person to solicit or secure a contract for a commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingent fee, except for bona fide established commercial selling agencies.

Any alleged violations of these standards of conduct shall be referred to the Parish's Attorney. Where violations appear to have occurred, the offending employee, officer, or agent shall be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to dismissal or transfer; where violations or infractions appear to be substantial in nature, the matter may be referred to the appropriate officials for criminal investigation and possible prosecution.

SOLICITATIONS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

All solicitations of bids or offers shall clearly set forth all requirements which bidders or offerors must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids, proposals, or statements of qualifications.

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall incorporate a clear, accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, service, or product to be procured in all solicitations of offers. In competitive procurements, these descriptions shall not contain features which unduly limit competition.

The description may include a statement of the qualitative nature of the material, product, or service and the minimum essential characteristics and standards to which it must conform if it is to satisfy its intended use. Detailed product specifications shall be avoided whenever possible. A "brand name or equal" description may be used to define the performance or other salient requirements of procurement, but equivalent products must be acceptable. The specific features of the named brand which must be met by bidders/offers shall be clearly stated.

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall determine what regulatory and/or statutory requirements for publicizing or advertising are applicable to the procurement.

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall make a determination as to whether a particular procurement will require more than the minimum statutory or regulatory geographic and/or solicitation time period will be necessary to achieve effective competition and will make the appropriate adjustments. The Parish Purchasing Agent shall take into consideration the market area to be reached by the advertising method chosen and the number of potential vendors in that market area. The nearest metropolitan statistical area [MSA] to the Parish is the City of Hammond, whose largest general circulation newspaper is The Daily Star (Hammond, LA). Notwithstanding any other publication designated as the "official journal," all procurement actions requiring advertisement will be published in The Daily Star (Hammond, LA), at minimum.

The Parish maintains a website at www.tangipahoa.org which is available for the conduct of procurement solicitations and advertisements.

The Parish provides an additional bidding option: a uniform and secure electronic interactive system for submitting bids or proposals utilizing Central Bidding:
www.centralauctionhouse.com/Category/81/TangipahoaParishGovernment.

For all procurement activities requiring formal advertising the Parish will publish its bids and proposals in The Daily Star (Hammond, LA). In order to achieve maximum effective competition, the Parish is authorized to publish in other MSA newspapers if needed to increase the number of potential vendors.

The Parish may also publish in any applicable trade journals or industry publications. The Parish may conduct direct solicitations in addition to the required formal advertising requirements, provided that all pertinent information is provided equally to all prospective vendors.

CONTRACTING WITH SMALL AND MINORITY BUSINESS, WOMEN BUSINESS ENTERPRISES, AND LABOR SURPLUS AREA FIRMS

The Parish shall take affirmative steps to assure that small and minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus firms are solicited whenever they are potential qualified sources. The Parish shall also consider the feasibility of dividing total requirements into smaller tasks or quantities so as to permit maximum participation by small and minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus firms. Where permitted by regulations, delivery schedules will be developed which will include participation by such businesses. The Parish shall assist the prime contractor whenever possible by providing copies of lists which identify qualified small and minority firms, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms.

SUSPENSION AND DEBARMENT

Contracts for Federal awards shall not be awarded to debarred, suspended, or ineligible contractors. Contractors may be suspended, debarred, or determined ineligible by any Federal agency in accordance with HUD regulations (24 CFR Part 24) or by other Federal agencies (e.g., Department of Labor, for violations of Secretary of Labor Regulations) when necessary to protect the Parish in its business dealings.

PROTESTS

Any bidder or offeror who desires to protest the solicitation shall submit in writing to the Parish or Parish Purchasing Agent at least 10 working days before the bid opening or the due date of the proposal.

Any bidder or offeror who desires to protest the award or decision to award a contract shall submit the protest in writing to the Parish or Parish Purchasing Agent no later than 3 working days after the award or the announcement of the decision to award, whichever occurs first.

At minimum written protests will include:

Name, address, fax, and telephone numbers of the protester [including company name], the identity or description of the solicitation or contract number, and a detailed statement of the legal and factual grounds for the protest, including a description of the resulting prejudice to the protester.

CONTRACT TYPES

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall use the appropriate type of contract described below as determined by the nature of the purchase.

Firm fixed price. This contract type requires the delivery of products or services at a specified price, fixed at the time of the contract award, and not subject to any adjustment on the basis of the contractor's cost experience in performing the contract. It is appropriate for use when fair and reasonable prices can be established at the time of award; definite design or performance specifications are available, products are off-the-shelf or modified commercial products or services for which realistic prices can be offered, and any performance uncertainties can be identified, and reasonable cost estimated in advance. A purchase order issued by the Parish Purchasing Agent, and which specifies the product, quantity of supplies, or scope of services ordered, contains a determinable date by which delivery of the product, supplies, or performance of the services is required, and contains a definitive price not subject to any contingencies may be considered a fixed price contract upon the acceptance and execution by the Parish Purchasing Agent.

Cost reimbursement. Cost reimbursement types of contracts provide for payment of allowable incurred costs, to the extent prescribed in the contract. These contracts establish an estimate of total cost for the purpose of obligating funds and establishing a ceiling that the contractor may not exceed (except at its own risk) without the approval of the Parish Purchasing Agent. Unlike a fixed-price contract, the contractor may not necessarily receive the total amount of the cost ceiling. Cost reimbursement contracts are suitable for use only when uncertainties involved in contract performance do not permit costs to be estimated with sufficient accuracy to use any type of fixed-price contract.

Time and Materials contract. Under these contracts, the contractor's services are pre-priced (usually, in terms of hours) in the contract, and the Parish Purchasing Agent orders services in unit amounts (e.g., hours) as needed until the funds in the contract are exhausted. The Parish may use this type of contract only after the Parish Purchasing Agent determines that no other contract is suitable and if the contract includes a ceiling price that the contractor exceeds at its own risk. For reimbursement under Federal award, the Parish must have obtained prior written approval from the Federal or pass through agency.

Contract Options

The Parish may include options for additional quantities or performance periods in its contracts if they meet all the following requirements:

Options be included in contracts, provided that:

- A. The option is contained in the solicitation;
- B. The option is a unilateral right of the Parish;
- C. The contract states a limit on the additional quantities and the overall term of the contract;
- D. The options are evaluated as part of the initial competition;
- E. The contract states the period within which the options may be exercised;
- F. The options may be exercised only at the price specified in or reasonably determinable from the contract; and
- G. The options may be exercised only if determined to be more advantageous to the Parish than conducting a new procurement.

The inclusion of an additional scope of work to the original scope contained in the solicitation is not considered to be an option and will require conducting a new procurement.

TYPES OF PRICES

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall insure the appropriate type of price(s) as determined by the nature of the purchase are included in the contract. The percentage of construction cost or any other indefinite metric will not be used for price determination in any contract funded in whole or in part with Federal funds.

Below are descriptions of four different categories of prices. The types of prices are closely associated with types of contracts; Lump Sum and/or Unit Price with specified quantity for a Fixed Price contract. A Cost Reimbursement contract may have Lump sum or Unit Price components in addition to Billable Hours and/or Reimbursable Costs.

Lump Sum Price

For definable work product or deliverable, whose value can be expressed as a single price inclusive of all production costs [labor, materials and purchased service costs, allowable overhead and profit]. The contractor will bear all the risks in producing the work product or deliverable at the agreed upon price. Because of the presumed certainty of contract task or item performance that qualifies a contract task or item as a Lump Sum price no adjustments to contract price are permitted. For fixed-price contracts, no change in quantities for any Lump Sum task(s) or item(s) would be permitted. Payment of the total contract price will be made upon satisfactory performance, delivery, and final acceptance of contract task(s) or item(s).

Unit Price

For definable work products or deliverables whose value can be expressed as a single price inclusive of all production costs [labor, materials, purchased service costs, allowable overhead, and profit] for contract tasks or items and will be needed in two more iterations at the same agreed upon price. The contractor agrees to bear all the risks and cost variance in producing or performing the contract tasks or items at the agreed-upon price per unit and for the quantities specified. For fixed-price contracts, no change in quantities is permitted without an approved change order. If certain unit prices are contained in the initial contract, no deviations shall be allowed in computing negotiated change order costs. In cases where there is a discrepancy between the base bid total and the sum of the extended unit prices, the unit price bid shall govern.

Billable Hours

For work efforts that are composed of predominately personnel compensation costs with a minimum of outside purchases of materials and services needed to produce a work product or provide a service; the contractor will be reimbursed for applied work efforts at the agreed upon billable hourly rate(s) inclusive of direct labor compensation, overhead, general and administrative expenses, and profit [fully burdened] by job title. Billable hours may be utilized for services or products that have a definitive accomplishment or product or may be used to reimburse work efforts for a scope of services with an accomplishment that cannot be estimated accurately.

Reimbursable Costs

For work, efforts that require significant outside purchases of materials, services or from subcontractors in addition to the contractor's personnel compensation costs are needed to produce a work product or service. The contractor's personnel compensation costs will be reimbursed for applied work efforts at the agreed-upon hourly rate(s) by job title. The contractor's itemized outside purchases of materials and services will be reimbursed at invoice cost, identifying items by quantities and/or cost per unit.

COST REASONABLENESS

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall ensure that all contract awards are based upon a price or cost reasonableness determination. Normally, competition establishes price reasonableness. A price analysis is conducted by comparing lump sum prices – not cost estimates - received from contractors in a competitive pricing situation (e.g. when sealed bids are obtained).

In situations where there is minimal or no price competition, the Parish Purchasing Agent must obtain a breakdown of the proposed costs and perform a cost analysis.

The Parish Purchasing Agent will require a cost analysis when:

Using the competitive proposal (or “negotiated”) method of contracting, e.g., for acquiring professional, consulting, or Architect/engineering (A/E) services when there are other evaluation factors besides price or cost. Under the competitive proposal method, offerors are required to submit cost proposals that show the elements (e.g., labor, materials, overhead, and profit) of their proposed costs or price.

Cost analysis will be used whenever there is no price competition.

Negotiating a contract with a ***sole source***, i.e., not soliciting competitive bids or offers.

After soliciting competitive sealed bids, you receive ***only one bid***, and it differs substantially from your independent estimate of the contract price.

The Parish Purchasing Agent will ensure there will be adequate documentation to support contractor billings so that auditors may assess whether the amount paid for the services was reasonable. The Parish Purchasing Agent will require contractors to provide written billings with “sufficient detail,” to show what the contractor did, and the time required, if the billable hour or

reimbursable cost pricing method is used. Contractors must be willing to provide work products or other evidence of tasks performed.

PROCUREMENT RECORDS

These records **shall** include, but **shall not** necessarily be limited to, the following:

- A. Rationale for the method of procurement (if not self-evident);
- B. Document the basis for determining that price or rate quotations were obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources.
- C. Copies of bid and proposal advertisements and all responses
- D. Documentation of quote, bid or proposal solicitations and all responses including any vendors contacted through the direct solicitation,
- E. Documentation will also include evaluation/scoring documents and notes on interviews or negotiations. For competitive proposals, the file will also include the selection criteria utilized,
- F. Document the basis for the contract price, a copy of the bid tabulation form, or a Copy of the

completed Cost Reasonableness form for services.

- G. Selection of contract type
- G. Written statement explaining the basis of contractor selection
- H. A copy of the contract documents awarded or issued and signed by the Parish Purchasing Agent;
- I. Copies of prior canceled, withdrawn or superseded solicitations; copies of withdrawn or rejected bids or proposals;
- J. Basis for contract modifications; and
- K. Related contract administration actions including contractor clearance

FEDERAL CONTRACT PROVISIONS

The Parish shall include the provisions of 2 CFR 200 Appendix II in every contract funded with a Federal award. In addition, the Parish will include the required contract provisions of 24 CFR Part 75 for awards funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

PROCUREMENT METHODS AND PROCEDURES.

The Parish Purchasing Agent shall use the appropriate method of procurement and follow the applicable procurement procedures as determined by the nature of the purchase and the applicable Federal/State price/cost thresholds as they are listed in the Procurement Methods and Procedures Section. The Parish Purchasing Agent shall never divide or separate any purchase requirements in order to avoid any State or Federal threshold regarding the required method of procurement. For public works projects under \$250,000, the Parish Purchasing Agent shall make a determination on whether to use its advertised sealed bid procedure, small purchase or possibly

B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

- 1. Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA Sec. 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, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities (§ 679.560(b)(5)(iii)).*

Accessibility and Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The local One-Stop Career Center adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and WIOA Section 188. All partners provide reasonable accommodations to guarantee equitable access to services for individuals with diverse needs. These accommodations include, but are not limited to, assistive devices and support for individuals with hearing disabilities, vision impairments, speech-language impairments, and limited English proficiency.

To ensure compliance and maintain high accessibility standards:

- **Facility Reviews:** The EEOC Compliance Officer and Tangipahoa Parish Internal Affairs department regularly assess the One-Stop facility to verify adherence to ADA standards and WIOA Sec. 188 requirements, ensuring accessibility for all participants.
- **Staff Training:** Regular training programs are provided to staff at the One-Stop Career Center, focusing on addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities and promoting inclusivity.
- **Resource Distribution:** Title IV service copies are distributed to the One-Stop Operator, the Board, and all partners, ensuring awareness of accessibility guidelines.

These measures reinforce the One-Stop Career Center's commitment to an inclusive environment that supports the diverse needs of all individuals seeking workforce services.

- 2. Provide copies of executed cooperative agreements (as applicable) which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop system, with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities (§679.560(b)(13)). This may include cross-counter training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration and coordination.*

Cooperative Agreements and Integration of Services for Individuals with Disabilities

LWDA 20 has no cooperative agreements, however facilitates the integration of workforce services through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a Service Integration Action Plan, as mandated by WIOA. These agreements establish a collaborative framework among core

and mandated partners to ensure comprehensive service delivery that meets the diverse needs of individuals, including those with disabilities.

The MOU delineates the roles, responsibilities, and cost-sharing arrangements among partners within the LWDA 20 American Job Centers Center, including provisions to address the needs of individuals with disabilities. It specifies the following key areas:

- **Co-location of Core Partners:** Partners such as Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) provide training and employment services for individuals with disabilities directly within the One-Stop Center.
- **Shared Infrastructure Costs:** Ensuring that resources are utilized effectively to create accessible and inclusive service environments.
- **Collaboration on Training and Services:** Coordinated efforts to deliver services, including adaptive technology, vocational rehabilitation, and employer outreach.

Service Integration Action Plan

The Service Integration Action Plan complements the MOU by outlining strategies to align and coordinate services among local workforce partners. Key points include:

- **Cross-Training of Staff:** LWDA 20 staff receive regular training from LRS and other disability-focused organizations to enhance their ability to support individuals with disabilities effectively.
- **Use of Assistive Technologies:** The One-Stop Center provides adaptive equipment, including screen readers and relay services, to ensure accessibility for individuals with vision, hearing, or mobility impairments.
- **Referral Processes:** Partners utilize the Unite Us electronic referral platform to ensure seamless connections to additional services and resources.

Mou Agreement LWDA 20 and Partners

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN

**GEAUX JOBS-LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD,
THE CHIEF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIAL OF THE GEAUX JOBS CONSORTIUM
AND**

**THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM PARTNERS
OF**

**LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA #20
(ASCENSION, EAST FELICIANA, IBERVILLE, LIVINGSTON, PLAQUEMINE, ST.
HELENA, TANGIPAHOA, WASHINGTON, WEST BATON ROUGE, AND WEST
FELICIANA)**

I. BACKGROUND/PURPOSE OF MOU

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 requires a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) be developed and executed between the Local Workforce Development Board, with agreement of the area's Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) and the local One-Stop System partners to establish a cooperative working relationship between the parties and to define their respective roles and responsibilities in achieving WIOA objectives. The MOU also serves to create a framework for providing services to employers, job seekers, and others needing workforce services.

The Geaux Jobs-Local Workforce Development Board 20 functions as the Local Workforce Development Board in the Local Workforce Development Area representing the parishes of Ascension, East Feliciana, West Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Plaquemine, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, and West Baton Rouge. The President of Tangipahoa Parish Government serves as the Chief Local Elected Official to the Board, as set forth in the Multi-Jurisdictional Agreement of the Geaux Jobs Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). Geaux Jobs competitively procures the One Stop Operator for the local workforce system as required by federal law. This MOU represents an Agreement between Geaux Jobs, the One-Stop System Operator, and all WIOA required partners within Local Workforce Development Area 20.

WIOA Section 121(b)(1) identifies the federal programs and requires that services and activities under each program be made available through each local area's One-Stop Delivery System. The entities that receive the federal funds for each of these programs and/or have the responsibility to administer the respective programs within the local area are "required partners" under WIOA Section 121(b)(1).

WIOA Section 121 (c)(2) requires this MOU to include a description of the core services that will be provided through the local area's One Stop Delivery System and to identify the service delivery method(s) each partner will use to deliver the core services to shared

customers.

This MOU establishes a framework for a mutually beneficial relationship among the partners to reduce redundancy, increase cost efficiency, and continuously improve services to shared customers. Quality customer service is based on a “no wrong door” service delivery structure and approach, wherein every service entry point leads to program services relevant to the customer’s individualized needs. Collaboration amongst service providers and the integration of services to the fullest extent possible are system priorities. This MOU is intended to identify the roles and responsibilities of the partners for the implementation of an integrated service delivery system that is functional and efficient for its customers.

II. MISSION AND GOALS OF THE MOU

The One-Stop System Partners have adopted the following vision, mission, and goals to support this MOU:

Mission: To prepare a skilled, successful workforce aligned to the needs of local and regional business and industry.

Goals:

- To provide comprehensive services to customers- All job seekers, students, and employers will be served comprehensively and in a seamless system which addresses their needs, coordinates services across programs, and minimizes duplication of services and effort.
- To ensure integration of program services and activities- Program services and activities will be coordinated and integrated, where feasible. This will be accomplished through partner agencies jointly serving shared customers, supporting inter-agency in-service training to one another, and providing information and services that most directly meet the customers’ needs.
- To develop a customer-focused approach to service delivery- Provide the means for customers to evaluate the quality-of-service offerings and make informed decisions regarding which services will help meet their individual needs.
- To ensure services are accessible to customers at all system entry points- Provide all customers with full access to the full range of services available in the local workforce development area whether they are individuals searching for employment, building basic educational/occupational skills, earning post-secondary certificates or degrees, obtaining guidance on how to make career choices, or employer customers seeking skilled workers available for employment.

III. PARTIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The following table represents the federally required WIOA partners and programs along with the organization that represent each program:

REQUIRED PROGRAM PARTNER	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION
WIOA Title I-Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth Programs	Geaux Jobs-LWDA 20
WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Carl Perkins Applied Technology Act, Youth Build Bogalusa	Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS)
Unemployment Insurance Assistance Wagner-Peyser Act (Employment Services) Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Veterans' Employment Program (DVOP/LVER) WIOA Title I Rehabilitation Act (LRS)	Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)
Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program- Employment and Training Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)- Employment and Training Program (if any) Youth Build Quad Area	Quad Area Community Action Agency
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
Title V Older American Act	National Association for Hispanic Elderly & Capital Area Agency on Aging
National Farmworker Jobs Program	Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET)
Secon Chance	Goodwill Industries

See Attachment #1 for a list of Signatory Officials and Contact Information for each agency.

Mandated partners not available in the service delivery area for LWDA 20, and, therefore, not part of this MOU include: *Native American Programs* and programs under the *Second Chance Act*.

IV. EFFECTIVE DATES AND TERM OF MOU

This MOU shall be binding upon each party hereto upon execution by said party and become effective on July 1, 2023. The term of this MOU shall be for a period of three (3) years. The parties will review the MOU at least once every three (3) years to identify any substantial changes that have occurred, if any.

This MOU will also service as the primary “roadmap,” which may require updates as additional decisions and actions are taken to not only fulfill the MOU requirements but move the partnership towards the achievement of mutually agreed upon goals and strategies.

V. THE LOCAL ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

Through this MOU, Geaux Jobs-LWDA 20 intends to create a one-stop delivery system that brings together workforce development, education, and other services in a seamless, customer-focused service delivery network that enhances access to the program services with the goal of improving long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance. The One-Stop Partners commit to administering the separately funded programs as a set of integrated, streamlined services to customers.

Job seekers, students, employers, and other customers will be provided access to services through a combination of strategies that includes co-location, contract for services, direct delivery of services, cross-training of partner staff, and electronic linkages to the partner agencies programs and services.

It is understood that the development and implementation of this system will require mutual trust and teamwork between all parties. It is further acknowledged that the system will evolve over time, as it is determined by the ever-changing needs of the local area. Consistent with federal law, partner agencies agree to make available to individuals and employers, through the One-Stop Delivery System, career and training services that are applicable to their programs.

Every local area is required to have at least one (1) Comprehensive American Job Center (AJC) that provides universal access to the full range of employment, training, and education services. A comprehensive AJC is a physical location where job seekers and employers have access to programs, services, and activities of all required one-stop system partners. Geaux Jobs-LWDB20 has certified the AJCs in LWDA 20, hereby known and acknowledged as “Geaux Jobs.”

- A. Service Locations- Customers will have access to a broad menu of services and information at one (1) comprehensive and five (5) satellite AJCs within the local area. Geaux Jobs staff will be present at comprehensive and affiliate sites during normal working hours (i.e., 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday). Offices will close from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. every Thursday for Staff Development Training.

American Job Center Name	Address
Ascension-Gonzales-Affiliate Site	1060 East Worthey Street Gonzales, Louisiana 70737
Iberville/WBR/Plaquemine-Affiliate Site	23510' Railroad Avenue Plaquemine, Louisiana 70764
Livingston- Affiliate Site	29940 South Magnolia Livingston, Louisiana 70754
Washington Parish-Affiliate Site	537 Kentucky Avenue Bogalusa, Louisiana 70427
Geaux Jobs Comprehensive American Job Center	403 Market Street Hammond, Louisiana 70401

VI. OVERVIEW OF PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

A. The Geaux Jobs Workforce Development Board, in its role of creating a One-Stop Delivery System in the 10-parish Geaux Jobs-Local Workforce Development Area, will be responsible for the following:

- Assist the Local Elected Officials in fulfilling the requirements of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014
- Coordinate the implementation of the MOU.
- Convene partners to build affiliation and commitment.
- Assess satisfaction of customers and partners within the system.

- Expand partnership and increase integrated service delivery.
 - Arrange and offer cross-partner frontline staff training; and
 - Develop policies and oversee the quality and design of the system.
- B. The One Stop Operator will serve as a managing partner as mandated in WIOA. The One Stop Operator will be responsible for the following:
- Assist partners in creating a seamless delivery of services to shared customers; and
 - Ensure the integrated service delivery processes and procedures within the comprehensive center are effective and efficient.
- C. Each of the One Stop Partners is responsible for carrying out their individual program requirements but will utilize the One-Stop Delivery System to increase successful outcomes for their clients. The Quick Reference Guide and Handbook outlines services provided by each MOU Partner and has been made a part of this Agreement and included herein as Attachment #2.
- D. All partners agree to participate in joint planning, local workforce plan development, and modification of services and activities designed to accomplish the following:
- Accessibility of applicable partner services to shared customers via the one-stop delivery system.
 - Participation in the operation of the one-stop delivery system, consistent with the terms of the MOU and requirements of authorized laws
 - Participation in cross-organizational training to promote staff development and awareness. Cross-training will allow staff from differing programs to understand every program and to share their expertise about the needs of specific populations so that all staff can better serve all customers.
 - Participation in the development and implementation of an effective participant referral system.
 - Share relevant, updated program information to partner agencies to support system orientation processes.
 - Active participation in regular partner meetings devoted to the planning, evaluation and continuous improvement of all programs and services provided through the One-Stop System

VII. PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS

In consideration of the mutual aims and desires of the partners participating in this Agreement, and in recognition of the public benefit to be derived from the effective implementation of the programs involved, the partners agree to the following expectations mentioned below and in the One-Stop Services Matrix, incorporated herein as Attachment #3.

For a service to be deemed “accessible,” a partner must provide access to the service through at least one of the following methods:

- Co-location- Program staff from partner agency is physically present at the Geaux Jobs Comprehensive Center at a pre-determined and scheduled date and time that has been made available, in advance, to system customers.
- Cross-Information Sharing/Customer Referral- Geaux Jobs staff and partner staff are trained to provide general information regarding all MOU partner programs, services, and activities that may be made available to the customer through the partner organization and is authorized to make referrals.
- Direct Access Through Real-time Technology- Access through two-way communication and information between clients and the partner that results in services being provided. Examples may include the following:
 - Identification of a single point of contact for service delivery at the partners’ program
 - Email or instant messaging
 - Facilitated phone calls between partners, agency staff and customers.
 - Live chat via electronic communication platforms such as Zoom, Team, and Google Meets; and
 - Referrals via Unite US/Unite-Louisiana online platform.

VIII. REFERRAL PROCESS

It is understood that the partners of this MOU will provide referrals for services with the express goal of optimal utilization of all partner and community resources to achieve mutually shared outcomes of participants who receive services by multiple MOU partners. Although co-location is desired when economically and practically feasible, an efficient customer service and referral system has been established that supports customer access to programs and services of all system partners using state-of-the-art technology and electronic linkages and tracking mechanisms.

All partner staff shall assist with referrals and access to information to their partner programs. The purpose of a common referral system is to:

- Ensure services to customers that support their specific goals in achieving education and/or employment services that lead to self-sufficiency.
- Ensure customers do not have to provide the same information (e.g., PII) more than once to receive services from within the MOU Partner Network
- Ensure a seamless “hand-off” of customers from one partner to another for the provision of services to mitigate gaps and/or unreasonable delays in services.

A mutually acceptable referral process and form has been adopted by all parties to this Agreement with the commitment to evaluate and modify the established process, as needed, to reflect continuous improvement efforts. Partners further agree to provide orientation of other relevant partner programs and services for their respective customers, upon request or based on an assessed need. Pertinent program information for each partner agency will be made available at every location participating in the One-Stop System. This process will allow one-stop the local system to achieve its goal of having a “no wrong door” approach to serving customers.

The Universal MOU Partner Referral Form has been made a part of this Agreement and is included herein as Attachment #4.

IX. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING AGREEMENT (IFA)

Joint infrastructure funding is critical in establishing the foundation needed to effectuate an integrated service delivery strategy whereby MOU partners share the costs associated with operating a local workforce development office within a local workforce system. Therefore, under WIOA, each required partner must contribute a portion of its funding, or in-kind services, towards maintaining the AJC system (i.e., Geaux Jobs-LWDA 20/ American Job Center) under WIOA.

Partners agree to participate in the development of the IFA which includes cost allocation and infrastructure sharing and describes how the cost of the services and operating cost of the system will be funded and abide by those plans. Subject to the availability of funds and funding agency approval, partners will contribute a “fair share” of funding proportionate to the use of services by individuals attributable to the partner’s programs. The IFA has been made a part of this Agreement and can be found herein as Attachment #5.

X. SYSTEM OUTCOMES

Through the One-Stop Delivery System, the partner programs are committed to providing high-quality services to a shared client base that lead to successful employment outcomes. The partners agree to work toward accomplishing the following system outcomes:

- Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly those with significant barriers to the attainment of education and/or employment goals.

- Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrolling of customers into partner programs, as appropriate.
- Improve access to activities leading to recognized post-secondary credentials; and
- Meet or exceed shared performance measures.

XI. DATA SHARING

Partners agree that the collection, use, and disclosure of the Personally Identifiable Information (PII) of customers is subject to various legal requirements as set forth in federal and State privacy laws. Partners acknowledge that the execution of this MOU, in and of itself, does not function to satisfy all these requirements.

All data collected, used, and disclosed by MOU Partners, including customer PII, shall be subject to the following requirements:

- Collection, use, and disclosure of customer records, and the PII contained therein, as defined under FERPA, shall comply with FERPA and applicable State privacy laws.
- Confidential data contained in UI wage records must be protected in accordance with the requirements set forth in CFR 361.38
- Customer data may be shared with other programs, for those programs' purposes, within the partnership network only after the informed written consent of the individual has been obtained, where required.
- Customer data will be kept confidential, consistent with federal and State privacy laws and regulations.
- All data exchange activity will be conducted in machine readable format (e.g., HTML, PDF) and in compliance with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 794(d)).

XII. OTHER PROVISIONS

Withdrawal: Parties understand that implementation of the one-stop system is dependent on the good faith efforts of *every partner* to work together to improve services within the community. The parties also agree that this is a project where different methods of working together and providing services are being explored. Should any partner withdraw from this MOU in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, they shall provide written notification of their intent to withdraw to all parties at least *thirty (30) days prior* to the effective date of the withdrawal. Should any partner withdraw, this MOU shall remain in effect with respect to the other MOU partners.

Modification: This MOU may be modified at any time by written consent of the parties that

are signatories hereto. The parties agree to amend this MOU to reflect changes in the operations and/or available resources, as necessary, to accomplish the optimum delivery of services in accordance with WIOA and the related regulations, directives, and guidelines of the supervising agencies.

Assignment: Assignment of responsibilities under this MOU by any of the parties shall be effective upon written notice to the Geaux Jobs-Local Workforce Development Board 20 (Geaux Jobs-LWDB 20). Any assignee shall also commit, in writing, to the terms of this MOU.

Confidentiality of Participant Information: To the extent permitted by law, the parties agree that information exchanged about participants shall remain private and confidential in accordance with the most restrictive confidentiality requirements of any of the parties collecting, receiving, or sharing information, as it pertains to similar information based on written advice by each agency providing information.

Americans with Disabilities Act and Amendments Compliance: The parties agree to ensure their policies, procedures, programs, and services comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and its amendments, to provide equal access to all customers with disabilities. Additionally, partners agree to fully comply with the provisions of WIOA, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 29 CFR Part 37 and all other regulations implementing the aforementioned laws.

Capacity Building/Professional Development: The partners commit to promoting capacity building and professional development for staff to increase awareness and understanding of serving individuals with barriers to employment and individuals with disabilities.

Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity: Partners shall not lawfully discriminate, harass, or allow harassment against any employee, applicant for employment, or program applicant due to gender, race, color, ancestry, religion, national origin, veteran status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, age, sexual orientation, or marital status. The partners agree to comply with the provision of the Fair Employment and Housing Act and related applicable regulations.

Funding of Services: It is expressly understood that this MOU does not constitute a binding financial commitment for any agency or agency program's provision of their specific services to eligible customers. The decision to provide financial assistance to customers pursuant to this MOU shall be made by each partner agency in accordance with their respective laws, regulations, and/or policies.

Non-Appropriation of Non-Funding: The parties hereto acknowledge that each of the partner agencies represented are funded by various governmental bodies and/or other non-federal funding sources, through numerous programs, and, as a result cannot commit to participation or obligations that have the effect of obligating funding that has not been appropriately budgeted, obligated, allocated, or authorized. The parties further acknowledge

that certain funding may be subject to legislative approval, or subject to legislative changes and/or modifications that preclude the agency from making unilateral financial commitments.

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, And Voluntary Exclusion:

The parties hereto certify that neither its agency nor its principles are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency.

Dispute Resolution: Should any dispute arise under this MOU; the parties hereto shall first attempt to resolve all disputes informally. Any party may call a meeting of all parties to discuss and resolve disputes. Should the informal resolutions efforts fail, the dispute shall be referred to the Chairperson of the Geaux Jobs-LWDB 20 who shall place the dispute on the agenda of a regular or special meeting of the LWDB's Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall attempt to mediate and resolve the dispute. In the event the Executive Committee cannot resolve the dispute, the Executive Committee shall refer the matter for resolution to the Agency of the parties involved in the dispute, the LWDB, or the State Board, as appropriate.

Severability: If any part of this MOU is found to be invalid, or unenforceable, or is otherwise stricken, the rest of this MOU shall remain in force, provided that the remaining provisions are not rendered useless to accomplish the principal purpose of this MOU.

Entire MOU: It is understood and agreed that the entire MOU between the Local Workforce Partners of LWDA 20 is contained herein. All items referred to in this MOU as Attachments are, in fact, attached hereto and deemed to be part of this MOU. Further, it is understood that this MOU supersedes all oral or written Agreements and negotiations between the parties relating to the subject matter hereof.

Authority of Signatories: The individuals signing below (Attachment #1) have the authority to commit the agency/party they represent to the terms of this MOU and do so by signing in the appropriate sections of this MOU. (attachments can be presented if requested)

Cooperative Efforts to Support Individuals with Disabilities

LWDA 20 has launched multiple initiatives to improve services for people with disabilities.

- **Technical Assistance and Staff Training:** Regular training sessions help staff recognize and address the unique needs of individuals with disabilities, ensuring compliance with ADA standards.
- **Employer Collaboration:** The Board collaborates with local employers to promote inclusive hiring practices and provide on-the-job accommodation.
- **Community Partnerships:** LWDA 20 works with mental health organizations, rehabilitation offices, and other community agencies to expand service offerings and improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

By maintaining these agreements and fostering collaboration, LWDA 20 ensures that individuals with disabilities receive equitable access to workforce services and are empowered to achieve their employment goals.

C. Plan Development and Public Comment

1. *Describe the process used by the Local Board, consistent with WIOA Sec. 108(d), to provide a 30- day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of the local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education and labor organizations (§ 679.560(b)(19)).*

Coordination with Regional and Local Plan Programs

The development of this local plan entailed thorough and regular collaboration among Board representatives and mandated partners. LWDA 20 comprises members who represent core partners, thereby ensuring a diversity of perspectives and alignment across programs. These representatives also serve on the Board's Program Committee, which convenes bimonthly in addition to full Board meetings. The Program Committee is instrumental in planning and coordinating the programs and activities detailed in the Combined Plan. Throughout the planning process, committee members contributed valuable input to various sections of the local plan, ensuring it aligns with the collective goals and priorities of the region.

Public Comment on the Local Plan

LWDA 20 has made the Regional and Local Plan available for public comment to ensure transparency. The draft plan is accessible on Geaux Jobs's website (www.geauxjobs.org) for a 30-day public review period, as mandated, before its final submission to the Louisiana Workforce Commission. Core partners have also been provided with copies of the plan for their review and feedback.

Comments and suggestions submitted via email during this period are shared with the Board and considered for incorporation, ensuring that the plan reflects the needs and priorities of the

broader community.

This approach emphasizes LWDA 20's goal of aligning regional and local workforce initiatives with stakeholder and public input.

2. *Provide a summary of the public comments received and how this information was addressed by the CEO, partners and the Local Board in the final plan.*

- After the 30-day public comment period and review by the LWDB board there were no public comments or modifications to the plan.

3. *Provide information regarding the regional and local plan modification procedures.*

Plan modifications adhere to state and federal guidelines. The Board evaluates local labor market data and program performance metrics annually to decide if plan adjustments are needed. Proposed modifications undergo the same public comment process as the original plan, maintaining transparency and stakeholder engagement.

REGIONAL / LOCAL PLAN SIGNATURES

By signing the Regional / Local Plan, all signatories attest that:

1. They submit this plan on behalf of the region and the local areas within that region;
2. The planning was done with leaders throughout the region and represents the collective thinking of those regional representatives;
3. The information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge;
4. The regional plan and accompanying local plans represent the local workforce development boards' efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other State and Local programs in the planning region;
5. They will operate the local system in accordance with the regional plan, their respective local area plan, and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies and rules.

Local Area Name: Second Planning District Consortium- LWDA 20

Name of Chief Elected Official for the LWDA: Charles R. Miller, Jr.

Signature and Date:



06/11/2025

Address: 206 East Mulberry St, Amite, LA 70422 Telephone Number: 985.748.3211

E-Mail Address: Rmiller@tangipahoa.org

Name of Local Workforce Development Board Chairman: Saddle Mannino Bennet

Signature and Date:



06/10/2025

Address: 305 N. Oak St Hammond, LA 70401 Telephone Number: 985-340-0106

E-Mail Address: smbennett@manninos.com

Name of Local Workforce Development Board Director: Tina Roper

Signature and Date:



06/10/2025

Address: 305 N. Oak St Hammond, LA 7040 Telephone Number: 985-340-0106

E-Mail Address: troper@tangipahoa.org

CHAPTER 4: OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES: LOCAL WORKFORCE AREA 21

A. Coordination of Planning Requirements

1. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA 21), coordinated by EmployBR, has developed and maintains a comprehensive **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** with all required one-stop partners in accordance with WIOA regulations (20 CFR Part 678.705). The MOU outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner agency, describes the integrated service delivery system, delineates cost-sharing agreements, and ensures that workforce development services are provided in a customer-focused and coordinated manner.

This Memorandum of Understanding, including any subsequent modifications, is incorporated by reference into this plan and serves as the foundation for the ongoing collaboration between EmployBR, the One-Stop Operator, and all core and required partners within the Baton Rouge area.

2. Service Integration Action Plan (SIAP)

EmployBR has also developed a **Service Integration Action Plan** that outlines how workforce development partners will align services, processes, and staff in accordance with the **Louisiana Integrated Service Delivery Policy (OWD 2-23.2)**. The SIAP ensures consistent, high-quality service delivery across partner programs and locations, prioritizing seamless customer experience and efficient resource utilization. The plan includes action items for cross-training, shared data usage, customer flow mapping, and integrated referral systems.

The Service Integration Action Plan, and any subsequent modifications, is incorporated by reference into this plan as a guiding document for workforce system alignment and performance improvement in the local area.

B. Use of Technology in the One-Stop Delivery System

1. Integrated, Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management (§ 679.560(b)(20))

EmployBR has implemented an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management system to enhance accessibility, efficiency, and service coordination across WIOA programs. Through the use of **virtual intake interviews** conducted via web monitors and mobile devices, clients can complete eligibility screenings and enroll in services without needing to visit a Career Center in person.

EmployBR also utilizes the **Voss Greater visitor management system**, streamlining in-person service delivery by allowing customers to self-check-in via iPads, track wait times, and direct visits to appropriate staff members. All case management and service documentation are captured in the **HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment)** statewide system, ensuring real-time service tracking, co-enrollment, and eligibility documentation that meets federal and state reporting requirements.

EmployBR continuously evaluates system upgrades to ensure technology evolves with client needs, with particular attention to security, accessibility, and efficiency.

2. Facilitating Access to Services Using Technology and Other Means (§ 679.560(b)(5)(ii))

EmployBR facilitates access to workforce services for all residents, including those in remote or underserved areas, through several strategies:

- **Virtual Services:** Clients can access career counseling, job search support, intake, and eligibility determination remotely through the HiRE platform and virtual meetings.
- **Mobile Outreach:** EmployBR brings workforce services into the community by conducting mobile job fairs, workshops, and intake events at libraries, schools, and partner locations.
- **Digital Communication:** Important updates, job announcements, and resources are distributed through EmployBR's website, social media, and email newsletters to reach broad audiences.
- **Assistive Technology:** Workforce centers are equipped with assistive technology including JAWS screen readers, translation devices, and enhanced accessibility software for individuals with disabilities or language barriers.

These approaches ensure that services are accessible across all parts of East Baton Rouge Parish, supporting greater workforce participation.

C. Supporting Combined State Plan Strategies and Collaboration with Core Programs

1. Expanding Access to Employment, Training, Education, and Supportive Services (§ 679.560(b)(2)(i))

EmployBR supports the Louisiana Combined State Plan by expanding access to workforce services for eligible individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, through the following strategies:

- **Scaling Up Integrated Education and Training (IET):**
EmployBR partners with Adult Education providers and Baton Rouge Community College to promote IET programs. Clients can work toward HiSET (GED) attainment, strengthen basic skills, and simultaneously pursue industry-recognized credentials in high-demand fields such as healthcare, information technology, and skilled trades.
- **Leveraging Dual Credit Program Successes:**
Building on successful dual enrollment programs between high schools and community colleges, EmployBR is working with education and training providers to expand dual-credit opportunities into sectors like logistics, construction, and digital technology for youth and young adults.
- **Promoting Prior Learning Assessments (PLA):**
EmployBR works with higher education partners to inform students about the availability of PLAs, which allow for faster credentialing based on prior work or military experience. Information is shared during career advising sessions and outreach campaigns.
- **Targeted Marketing to Underemployed and Mature Workers:**
EmployBR is refining marketing strategies to reach underemployed individuals and mature workers who may need only minimal upskilling. Social media campaigns, email outreach, and community workshops help connect these groups to short-term credential and direct employment opportunities.

2. Facilitating Career Pathways Development and Co-Enrollment (§ 679.560(b)(2)(ii))

EmployBR promotes career pathway development and supports co-enrollment across core programs through:

- **Career Pathways Expansion:**
Career pathways are developed with regional employers and training providers, particularly in healthcare, construction, and IT sectors.

Pathways are structured to include stackable credentials leading to progressive wage increases and career advancement.

- **Integrated Service Delivery and Co-Enrollment:**
Clients are assessed at intake for eligibility across multiple programs, and co-enrollment is encouraged when it enhances outcomes. Staff use the HiRE system to manage co-enrollment in Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation services.
- **Cross-Training Staff:**
EmployBR holds regular cross-training sessions among core partner staff to ensure seamless referrals and shared understanding of career pathway opportunities and support services.

3. Improving Access to Recognized Postsecondary Credentials (§ 679.560(b)(2)(iii))

EmployBR is committed to increasing credential attainment for local residents by:

- **Expanding Access to Stackable Credentials:**
EmployBR partners with training providers to promote short-term certification programs that are portable, industry-recognized, and lead to employment in in-demand fields.
- **Financial Support through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs):**
EmployBR uses WIOA ITAs to fund tuition, supplies, and certification costs for eligible participants pursuing approved programs on Louisiana's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
- **Employer Engagement:**
Business Services staff work directly with employers to identify needed credentials and align training efforts with real-time labor market demand.

Through these coordinated efforts, EmployBR ensures individuals have clear, supported pathways to careers offering long-term economic security.

D. Local Coordination Strategies

1. Coordination of Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities (§ 679.560(b)(6))

EmployBR coordinates Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth employment and training activities through a fully integrated service delivery system:

- **Adult and Dislocated Worker Services** include career

assessments, individualized employment plans, supportive services, job placement assistance, and training services funded through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) or On-the-Job Training (OJT) agreements.

- **Youth Services** focus on career exploration, HiSET attainment, work experience, and credentialed occupational skills training for out-of-school youth.
- Staff maintain strong coordination with core and required partners, using shared case management tools and cross-referral processes, to ensure seamless service delivery and co-enrollment where appropriate.

EmployBR's One-Stop Operator plays a critical role in facilitating regular partner meetings and integrated planning.

2. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy Activities (§ 679.560(b)(12))

EmployBR supports coordination with Adult Education and Literacy providers by:

- **Reviewing Title II Local Applications:**
EmployBR evaluates Adult Education provider applications for alignment with local workforce needs, ensuring programs support career pathways, integrated education and training (IET), and co-enrollment initiatives.
 - **Formal Partnerships:**
EmployBR maintains Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Adult Education providers to promote co-enrollment and service integration, particularly for individuals needing basic skills development or English language acquisition.
 - **Service Integration:**
EmployBR staff refer eligible participants to Adult Education for HiSET prep, basic literacy, and English as a Second Language (ESL) services, while simultaneously supporting career exploration and credential pathways.
-

3. Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services (§ 679.560(b)(11))

EmployBR integrates Wagner-Peyser services into the one-stop delivery system by:

- **Co-locating Wagner-Peyser Staff:**

Wagner-Peyser Employment Services staff are located within EmployBR Career Centers and collaborate daily with WIOA-funded staff.

- **Shared Service Delivery:**
Job seekers are jointly served through job matching, resume assistance, interview preparation, career counseling, and referral to WIOA-funded training where appropriate.
 - **Business Services Alignment:**
Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Business Services teams work together to deliver customized recruitment events, job fairs, and labor market information to employers.
-

4. Coordination of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (§ 679.560(b)(13))

EmployBR coordinates closely with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) to serve individuals with disabilities:

- **Formal Referral Processes:**
EmployBR and LRS maintain mutual referral systems to ensure individuals receive comprehensive services tailored to their abilities and career goals.
 - **Co-Enrollment:**
Clients are encouraged to co-enroll in WIOA Title I and Title IV programs when appropriate, leveraging resources such as assistive technology, skills training, and job placement support.
 - **Accessibility Commitments:**
EmployBR's Career Centers are fully ADA-compliant, and staff are trained to support accessibility needs, using tools such as JAWS screen readers and translation devices.
-

5. Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education (§ 679.560(b)(9))

EmployBR partners with local school districts, charter schools, and postsecondary institutions to align education and workforce investment activities:

- **Youth Engagement:**
EmployBR staff collaborate with high schools to deliver career readiness workshops, dual-enrollment information, and direct connections to Youth Services programming.

- **Postsecondary Alignment:**
EmployBR works with Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC), LSU, and Southern University to link job seekers to degree, certification, and apprenticeship programs aligned with regional labor market demand.
-

6. Supporting State Strategies and Perkins Career Pathways Alignment (§ 679.560(b)(1)(ii))

EmployBR supports the Louisiana Combined State Plan and Perkins V Career and Technical Education (CTE) strategies by:

- **Career Pathways Development:**
Working with secondary and postsecondary institutions to design and promote CTE pathways in high-demand industries.
 - **Collaboration with Perkins Planning Teams:**
Participating in Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments to ensure workforce needs are reflected in local education and training plans.
 - **Dual Enrollment and Early Career Exposure:**
Encouraging youth to pursue dual-credit and early college initiatives aligned with industry-recognized credential pathways.
-

7. Supportive Services Coordination (§ 679.560(b)(10))

EmployBR's Supportive Services Policy ensures that eligible participants receive necessary support to complete employment and training activities, including:

- **Transportation Assistance:**
EmployBR offers gas cards, bus passes, and mileage reimbursement to participants facing transportation barriers.
- **Other Supportive Services:**
Participants may receive assistance with uniforms, tools, licensing fees, childcare referrals, and emergency housing resources.

Coordination occurs through direct service delivery at EmployBR centers, referral partnerships with community-based organizations, and case management within HiRE to track needs and services provided.

E. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities

1. Description and Assessment of Adult and Dislocated Worker Activities (§ 679.560(b)(6))

EmployBR provides a wide range of employment and training services to Adult and Dislocated Worker populations through its comprehensive One-Stop system, including:

- **Career Services:**
 - Intake and eligibility determination
 - Career counseling and Individual Employment Plan (IEP) development
 - Labor market information and career exploration assistance
 - Job search, placement assistance, and job readiness workshops
- **Training Services:**
 - Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for approved programs listed on Louisiana's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)
 - On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs
 - Work Experience (WEX) opportunities
 - Apprenticeship connections
 - Customized Training programs based on employer needs
- **Supportive Services:**
 - Transportation assistance, uniforms, tools, licensing fees, and other support to eliminate barriers to employment and training.

EmployBR continuously assesses the effectiveness of these activities through participant performance outcomes, employer feedback, and local labor market demand to ensure services meet the evolving needs of East Baton Rouge Parish residents.

2. Coordination with Statewide Rapid Response Activities (§ 679.560(b)(7))

EmployBR coordinates closely with the Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC) Rapid Response Unit to provide timely services to businesses and workers impacted by layoffs or closures:

- **Employer Engagement:**
When a layoff is announced, EmployBR Business Services staff immediately coordinate with LWC Rapid Response teams to schedule on-site meetings and worker orientation sessions.
- **Worker Transition Services:**
Affected workers are offered information sessions on reemployment services, unemployment insurance, skills training opportunities, career counseling, and supportive services available through EmployBR Career Centers.
- **Layoff Aversion:**
EmployBR proactively engages employers to explore options to prevent layoffs, such as retraining existing workers or connecting businesses to economic development incentives.

Through this collaboration, EmployBR helps to minimize the economic impact of layoffs and expedite the transition of dislocated workers back into the workforce.

F. Youth Workforce Investment Activities

1. Description and Assessment of Youth Activities (§ 679.560(b)(8))

EmployBR offers a robust set of Youth Workforce Investment Activities designed to prepare young adults, particularly out-of-school youth (OSY) and individuals with disabilities, for success in education and employment.

Youth Services Provided:

- **Tutoring and HiSET (GED) Preparation:**
Supporting youth to complete secondary education or its recognized equivalent.
- **Work Experience (WEX):**
Providing paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships, job shadowing, and pre-apprenticeship opportunities to expose youth to career pathways.
- **Occupational Skills Training:**
Connecting youth to credentialed programs aligned with local high-demand occupations through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).
- **Leadership Development Opportunities:**
Offering activities that foster responsibility, leadership, and community engagement.
- **Supportive Services:**
Addressing barriers by providing transportation, uniforms, tools, and emergency assistance as needed.
- **Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling:**
Including drug and alcohol counseling, mental health referrals, and career

advisement.

- **Financial Literacy Education:**
Teaching youth budgeting, credit management, and understanding of paycheck deductions.

Successful Models Identified:

- EmployBR has successfully utilized the **Earn and Learn model**—combining work experience with academic instruction—as a best practice for youth workforce engagement.
- **Partnerships with Adult Education providers** have expanded opportunities for youth to pursue basic skills improvement while simultaneously preparing for employment.
- **Co-enrollment with Vocational Rehabilitation Services** supports youth with disabilities by blending educational, career exploration, and assistive services.

Youth activities are assessed regularly for effectiveness through performance indicators such as credential attainment rates, measurable skills gains, and employment outcomes post-program exit.

2. Minimum Expenditure Rate for Out-of-School Youth

EmployBR meets and often exceeds the WIOA requirement that at least **75%** of Title I Youth funding be expended on services to **out-of-school youth (OSY)**.

Strategies to meet this requirement include:

- Prioritizing outreach to disconnected youth populations, including foster youth, youth involved with the justice system, and youth with disabilities.
- Expanding partnerships with community organizations and education agencies to identify and serve OSY.
- Designing program offerings such as occupational training, HiSET preparation, and paid work experiences to meet the specific needs and interests of OSY participants.

EmployBR tracks and monitors expenditures closely through its fiscal system to ensure compliance with federal requirements and effective resource allocation toward youth most in need of workforce services.

G. Services to Individuals with Barriers to Employment

1. Priority of Service for Public Assistance Recipients, Low-Income Individuals, and Basic Skills Deficient Individuals (§ 679.560(b)(21))

EmployBR ensures priority of service is given to the following groups when providing individualized career and training services funded under WIOA Title I:

- Recipients of public assistance (such as TANF or SNAP)
- Low-income individuals (as defined under WIOA guidelines)
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient

Priority of service is embedded into EmployBR's intake, eligibility, and case management processes. Career Center staff verify and document eligibility for priority groups during initial enrollment using the HiRE system and ensure that these individuals are referred first for available training opportunities, supportive services, and employment assistance.

Regular training is provided to frontline staff to reinforce the importance of priority of service compliance, and performance monitoring is conducted to verify consistent application across all Career Centers.

2. Ensuring Equitable Access to Workforce and Educational Services

EmployBR is committed to ensuring equitable access to services for all individuals and actively works to address disparities through the following actions:

- **Data Disaggregation and Analysis:**
EmployBR analyzes participant data by race, gender, age, disability status, and other characteristics to identify gaps in service delivery and outcomes. These insights inform continuous improvement efforts.
- **Equity Goal Development and Action Planning:**
EmployBR collaborates with education partners to develop shared equity goals aimed at improving access and success rates for historically underserved populations. Action plans are incorporated into local operational strategies.
- **STEM Career Exposure:**
EmployBR promotes career pathways in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields to high school students, with a specific focus on young women, minorities, and low-income youth. Career exploration fairs, guest speaker series, and STEM-focused

internships are provided.

- **Mentorship Expansion:**
EmployBR is exploring partnerships with local nonprofits and business associations to expand mentoring programs for adults, particularly those who are displaced workers transitioning into new careers.
- **Workforce Staff Training on Equity:**
Career Center and administrative staff receive ongoing professional development focused on data-driven approaches to addressing equity gaps, cultural competency, and inclusive service delivery.
- **Strategic Location of Workforce Services:**
EmployBR ensures Career Centers and service points are strategically located in proximity to high-need communities, with mobile service events used to reach remote and underserved populations when necessary.

Through these deliberate strategies, EmployBR advances equitable service delivery and supports the State's broader equity-focused workforce goals.

H. Training Policies and Activities in the Local Area

1. Meeting the Annual Training Expenditure Requirement

EmployBR is committed to meeting and exceeding the state-mandated training expenditure requirements for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB 21) allocates at least 40% of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to training activities, as required by Louisiana Workforce Commission policy.

To achieve this, EmployBR uses a combination of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), On-the-Job Training (OJT), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and customized training models.

Regular monitoring of budget usage ensures funds are being allocated strategically and timely. Staff performance metrics include tracking training enrollments and expenditures to ensure alignment with expenditure goals.

2. Encouraging Use of Work-Based Learning Strategies

EmployBR actively promotes work-based learning as a high-impact strategy for career development. Key activities include:

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):**
Partnerships with local employers provide hands-on, paid training opportunities, with employers reimbursed for a portion of trainee wages.
- **Internships and Paid Work Experience:**
Particularly used in Youth programs and transitional employment models to help individuals gain relevant experience.
- **Incumbent Worker Training (IWT):**
Helps employers upskill their current workforce, improve retention, and remain competitive in regional markets.
- **Registered Apprenticeships:**
EmployBR works with the Louisiana Workforce Commission and local trade unions to support apprenticeship opportunities in high-demand sectors.

Goals:

- Expand OJT agreements with local businesses by 20% annually.
 - Increase participation in paid internships by youth and re-entry populations.
 - Launch at least one sector-based IWT initiative annually.
-

3. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

EmployBR provides training services through ITAs in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G). Eligible individuals can access funds for occupational training in high-demand industries as identified by the Local Board.

Policy Highlights:

- Maximum funding caps and duration limits are established and reviewed annually.
- Participants must select training from the Louisiana Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
- Career advisors assist customers in evaluating training options and completing ITA paperwork.
- Training must lead to industry-recognized credentials aligned with regional labor market needs.

Informed Customer Choice:

EmployBR ensures informed customer choice by providing labor market data, performance outcomes of training providers, and access to career guidance counselors before enrollment.

When contracts for training are used (e.g., for cohort-based training), they are coordinated with ITAs to ensure alignment with workforce goals and customer needs.

4. Training Provider Approval and Continuous Improvement

EmployBR follows the Louisiana Workforce Commission's Eligible Training Provider (ETP) policy and contributes to the approval and review of providers on the state's ETPL.

Local Board Responsibilities Include:

- Ensuring training providers meet performance benchmarks.
- Reviewing provider completion and employment outcomes.
- Offering technical assistance to providers not meeting standards.
- Coordinating sector-specific roundtables to align provider offerings with employer demand.

Through regular review and engagement, EmployBR ensures training providers support the employment goals of both jobseekers and local industry sectors.

I. WIOA Title I-B Workforce FundTransfers and Flexibility

1. Transfer of Funds Between Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

The EmployBR Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB 21) authorizes the transfer of up to **100%** of funds between the **Adult** and **Dislocated Worker** funding streams annually, in accordance with WIOA Sec. 133(b)(4) and guidance from the Louisiana Workforce Commission.

Transfers are based on:

- Real-time analysis of labor market demand and client need.
- Enrollment trends in each program.
- Strategic planning to optimize resource use and outcomes.

These transfers are documented in the local budget and require Board and LWC approval to ensure compliance.

2. Use of Funds for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

EmployBR uses WIOA Title I-B funds to support **Incumbent Worker Training**, particularly for:

- Retention and upskilling of current employees.
- Assisting small to medium-sized businesses in targeted industries.
- Supporting businesses through modernization and technological change.

Eligibility & Criteria:

- Must be for private-sector employers.
- Employees must have an established work history.
- Employers contribute a matching share (cash or in-kind).

EmployBR prioritizes IWT programs that promote equity, regional economic growth, and increased earning potential for participants.

3. Use of Funds for Transitional Jobs

EmployBR supports **transitional jobs** for individuals with barriers to employment, particularly:

- Reentry populations.
- Individuals experiencing chronic unemployment.
- Public assistance recipients with limited work history.

These **time-limited, wage-paid** jobs provide structured, supportive work experience in partnership with local non-profits, public agencies, and community-based employers. Participants also receive wraparound services and career coaching.

EmployBR allocates funds annually for transitional jobs based on projected community need and collaborates with partners to ensure job placements align with real employment pathways.

4. Use of Funds for Pay-for-Performance Contracts

EmployBR may allocate funds for **Pay-for-Performance (P4P) contracts** as outlined in WIOA Sec. 133(b)(2-3). These contracts tie funding to the achievement of specific, measurable outcomes, such as:

- Credential attainment.
- Job placement and retention.
- Wage progression after training.

Potential P4P Focus Areas:

- Long-term unemployed.
- Low-income youth.
- Individuals with significant barriers to employment.

P4P is currently under evaluation for pilot use, particularly in high-need zip codes within East Baton Rouge Parish. Any deployment will be developed in compliance with USDOL guidance and state policies, with Board oversight.

CHAPTER 5: PERFORMANCE GOALS AND EVALUATION- LOCAL WORKFORCE AREA 21

A. Local Levels of Performance and Evaluation

1. WIOA Performance Measures

EmployBR negotiates performance targets annually with the Louisiana Workforce Commission and the Chief Elected Official (Mayor-President of East Baton Rouge Parish), in accordance with WIOA Section 116(c). These measures include:

- **Employment Rate (2nd Quarter after Exit)**
- **Employment Rate (4th Quarter after Exit)**
- **Median Earnings (2nd Quarter after Exit)**
- **Credential Attainment Rate**
- **Measurable Skill Gains**
- **Effectiveness in Serving Employers**

These metrics are applied across Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and used to measure the performance of EmployBR's service providers and the One-Stop Operator. EmployBR monitors real-time performance data via the HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) system and internal dashboards to assess provider compliance and service quality.

**Negotiated Performance Levels for WIOA
East Baton Rouge Parish (LWDA 21)**

	PY 2024	PY 2025
WIOA Title I Adult		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	69.9%	69.9%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	70.7%	70.7%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$6,655	\$6,655
Credential Attainment Rate	71.0%	71.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	66.8%	66.8%
WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	70.5%	70.5%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	68.0%	68.0%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$7,100	\$7,100
Credential Attainment Rate	78.0%	78.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	71.6%	71.6%
WIOA Title I Youth		
Employment Rate 2 nd quarter after exit	68.4%	68.4%
Employment Rate 4 th quarter after exit	69.9%	69.9%
Median Earnings in the 2 nd quarter after exit	\$3,071	\$3,071
Credential Attainment Rate	60.5%	60.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	48.6%	48.6%

2. Additional State Performance Measures

The State Board also monitors additional indicators such as:

- **Customer satisfaction scores**
- **Youth literacy/numeracy gains**
- **Outreach to underserved populations**
- **Sector partnership development**
- **Wage progression**

EmployBR uses these to track internal quality benchmarks, staff productivity, employer engagement levels, and community impact beyond federal metrics.

B. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

1. Service Delivery Strategies to Expand

EmployBR will continue to expand successful strategies with proven outcomes, including:

- **Integrated Education and Training (IET)** partnerships with adult education providers.
- **Work-Based Learning (WBL)** programs including On-the-Job Training (OJT) and incumbent worker training.
- **Sector-focused hiring events** in high-demand fields such as healthcare, logistics, and skilled trades.
- **Youth internships and pre-apprenticeship programs** supported by business and school district collaborations.

These programs have demonstrated improved employment and retention outcomes, higher employer satisfaction, and credential attainment.

2. Service Delivery Strategies to Curtail

EmployBR is evaluating the scale-down of:

- **Short-term generic career readiness workshops** that are not sector-specific.
- **Non-targeted job fairs** with low employer participation or poor ROI in job placement.
- **Training programs without labor market relevance**, especially where post-training employment rates remain low.

Such strategies will be replaced with demand-driven approaches aligned to industry feedback and performance analytics.

3. New Service Strategies to Address Regional Needs

EmployBR will launch the following new service models based on ROI analysis and stakeholder input:

- **Expanded digital access and virtual coaching** through EmployBR's reimagined website and AI-enabled chat support to reduce geographic and transportation barriers.
- **Industry-informed training programs** co-designed with employer associations and LCTCS institutions to ensure alignment with real hiring needs.
- **Stackable credential pathways** that incorporate soft skills and technical training for emerging workers and career changers.

Data Collection for ROI and Barrier Identification:

EmployBR will collect and analyze the following data:

- Enrollment-to-employment conversion rates.
- Earnings progression post-exit.
- Training program completion rates by demographic.
- Surveys capturing participant challenges (childcare, transportation, tech access).
- Employer hiring satisfaction post-placement.

Cost-Effective Barrier Solutions:

- **Transportation assistance** (e.g., CATS bus passes or rideshare vouchers).
- **Childcare referrals** via partnerships with local providers.
- **Digital literacy training and device loan programs.**
- **Onsite support navigators** at American Job Centers.

These evidence-based investments will be guided by a commitment to equity, efficiency, and employer alignment.

CHAPTER 6: TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & ASSURANCES: LOCAL WORKFORCE AREA 20

A. Fiscal Management

- 1. Entity Responsible for the Disbursal of Grant Funds**
The **East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor-President**, as the **Chief Elected Official (CEO)**, has designated the **City of Baton Rouge / Parish of East Baton Rouge - Division of Human Development and Services** as the **grant recipient and fiscal agent** for WIOA Title I funds. This entity is responsible for the disbursal of WIOA grant funds as per WIOA Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), under the oversight of EmployBR, the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB 21).
- 2. Local Procurement Policies and Competitive Procurement Process**
EmployBR follows the **City of Baton Rouge's Office of Community Development and Human Services procurement policies**, which align with federal and state regulations including the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200). Competitive procurement for WIOA-funded subgrants and contracts is carried out through a **Request for Proposals (RFP)** or **Request for Quotes (RFQ)** process. All procurements are publicly posted, and responses are evaluated based on clear criteria such as cost, performance, experience, and ability to deliver services effectively.
Contracts are awarded based on best value to the public, in accordance with established thresholds and procedural requirements.
A copy of the current procurement policy is included as an attachment to this plan.

B. Physical and Programmatic Accessibility

- 1. Compliance with WIOA Sec. 188 and ADA Requirements**
EmployBR ensures that all One-Stop Career Centers and affiliated sites are fully compliant with WIOA Sec. 188 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This includes maintaining **accessible facilities, assistive technologies, programmatic accommodations, and communications support** for individuals

with disabilities.

All one-stop partners and operators undergo **regular accessibility assessments** and provide **staff training** on disability awareness, accommodation strategies, and inclusive service delivery.

EmployBR also collaborates with organizations such as **Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS)** to enhance supports for individuals with physical, cognitive, or developmental disabilities.

2. **Cooperative Agreements to Support Disability Access**

EmployBR has executed **cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding** with local agencies including **LRS, Goodwill Industries, and local educational institutions** to ensure the **integration of and access to services** for individuals with disabilities. These agreements support coordinated service delivery, shared referral processes, staff cross-training, and access to assistive technologies.

EmployBR also hosts **joint training sessions** with partners and engages in cooperative efforts to increase employer engagement and work-based learning opportunities for customers with disabilities.

Copies of executed cooperative agreements are attached as part of this submission.

C. Plan Development and Public Comment

1. **Public Comment Period and Stakeholder Engagement**

In accordance with WIOA Sec. 108(d), EmployBR released the draft Local Plan for a **30- day public comment period**, publishing the notice on its official website (www.employbr.com), as mandated, before its final submission to the Louisiana Workforce Commission. Core partners have also been provided with copies of the plan for their review and feedback.

2. Comments and suggestions submitted vial email during this period are shared with the Board and considered for incorporation, ensure that the plan reflects the needs and priorities of the broader community

3. **Plan Modification Procedures**

EmployBR adheres to the Louisiana Workforce Commission's (LWC) guidelines for **regional and local plan modifications**. Plan updates are initiated when there are:

- Significant changes in economic conditions or funding.
 - Changes in board membership or structure.
 - Modifications to strategies, goals, or performance measures.
- Modifications are submitted for review to the Local Board and Chief Elected Official before being forwarded to LWC for final approval. Public notification and stakeholder input are obtained for all major changes.

REGIONAL / LOCAL PLAN SIGNATURES

By signing the Regional / Local Plan, all signatories attest that:

1. They submit this plan on behalf of the region and the local areas within that region;
2. The planning was done with leaders throughout the region and represents the collective thinking of those regional representatives;
3. The information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge;
4. The regional plan and accompanying local plans represent the local workforce development boards' efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and to coordinate these resources with other State and Local programs in the planning region;
5. They will operate the local system in accordance with the regional plan, their respective local area plan, and applicable federal and state laws, regulations, policies and rules.

Local Area Name: LWDA 21

Name of Chief Elected Official for the LWDA: Emile "Sid" Edwards, Mayor-President

Signature and Date: Emile "Sid" Edwards 6-25-25

Address: 222 Saint Louis St., Baton Rouge LA 70802

Telephone Number: 225.393.3000

E-Mail Address: sedwards@brla.gov

Name of Local Workforce Development Board Chairman: Elizabeth Beckham

Signature and Date: Elizabeth Beckham 6/24/25

Address: 215 Highiandia Dr. Baton Rouge, LA 70810 **Telephone Number:** 225-300-8157

E-Mail Address: ebeckham@turner-industries.com

Name of Local Workforce Development Board Director: Amanda Stanley

Signature and Date: Amanda Stanley 06/16/2025

Address: 4522 Plank Rd. Baton Rouge, LA 70805

Telephone Number: 225-358-4579

E-Mail Address: astanley@brla.gov