WIOA STATE PLAN FOR
THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO

CONTENTS

WIOA State Plan for the State of New Mexico 1

Overview 4

Options for Submitting a State Plan 5

How State Plan Requirements Are Organized 7

I. WIOA State Plan Type 10

Combined Plan partner program(s) 11

II. Strategic Elements 12

a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis 13

b. State Strategic Vision and Goals 75

c. State Strategy 78

III. Operational Planning Elements 82

A. State Strategy Implementation 83

b. State Operating Systems and Policies 110

IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs 153

V. Common Assurances (for all core programs) 155

VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs 157

Program-Specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B 158

Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services) 190

Program-Specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs 231

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (General) 248

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (Blind) 324

VII. Program-Specific Requirements For Combined State Plan Partner Programs 407

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) 408

Appendix 1. Performance Goals for the Core Programs 422

Table 1. Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) 423

Table 2. Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) 424

Table 3. Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) 425

Table 4. Credential Attainment Rate 426

Table 5. Measureable Skill Gains 427

Table 6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers 428

Table 7. Combined Federal Partner Measures 429

Appendix 2. Other State Attachments (Optional) 430

OVERVIEW

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

OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

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

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

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

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

* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

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

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:
    - State Strategy Implementation,
    - State Operating Systems and Policies,
    - Assurances, and
    - Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
    - Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs.

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.* While discussion of and strategies for every target population is not expected, States must address as many as are applicable to their State's population and look beyond strategies for the general population.

---

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

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, or WIA, to foster better alignment of federal investments in job training, integrate service delivery across programs, improve efficiency in service delivery, and ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. Under WIOA, the State Plan communicates the State's vision for the New Mexico workforce system and serves as a vehicle for aligning and integrating this system across federal programs. This strategic plan accomplishes one of WIOA's principal areas of reform which is to plan across core programs. As such, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions submits this Combined State Plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to the U.S. Secretary of Labor outlining a four-year workforce development strategy for New Mexico's workforce development system. The Combined Plan includes the six core programs plus one Combined Plan partner program, as listed below.

- Adult Program (WIOA Title I)
- Dislocated Worker Program (WIOA Title I)

- Youth Program (WIOA Title I)
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (WIOA Title II)
- Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965)

Susana Martinez, Governor of the State of New Mexico, has created a vision for the state workforce development system which incorporates the critical need for integrating workforce development and economic development activities.

“Transform New Mexico into the nation’s leader as a state of employability, where the workforce system supports both the needs of private, public, and non-profit employers by providing a trained and employable workforce needed for businesses to grow and profit when appropriate, and allow all employers to become more effective and efficient. This vision will meet the needs of New Mexico citizens by delivering education and training programs which will result in meaningful employment, an increased quality of life and per capita income.”

The workforce system in New Mexico is a network of state, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all jobseekers, including those with barriers to employment, secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

New Mexico’s workforce service delivery system provides services to jobseeker and business customers throughout thirty-three counties covering 121,298.2 square mile radius, fifth largest land mass in the nation, where an estimated 2,085,572 people call New Mexico home. The designated four regional Workforce Development Areas in New Mexico include Central, Eastern, Northern and Southwestern. Each Workforce Development Area has a Local Workforce Development Board that administers employment and training programs through the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers (NMWCCs), or one-stops. Each local board develops and implements an integrated services and functional management plan. Service integration involves co-location of partners, where appropriate; collaborative partnerships in which service integration eliminates duplication and improves efficiency; functional alignment where staff are organized by function not funding stream for seamless service delivery within each center. These centers serve as the central point for WIOA partners, and their unique programs and cross training of employees in many programs enhances customer service and provides both job seekers and employers with easy access to information.

Through this Combined State Plan, New Mexico aims to share understanding of the workforce needs across the state and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches for addressing the needs of businesses and workers, including individuals with barriers to employment. Focused on meeting the objectives and priorities for the development of a competitive workforce, core partners and various stakeholders came together to prioritize, strategize and assemble a plan for meeting federal and state goals for creating a business driven workforce investment system. In addition, the State Workforce Board will work to convene several advisory committees to guide ongoing strategic planning in the areas of workforce and education planning, data and performance, youth, workforce system service delivery, and business engagement. As such, this plan reflects an enhancement in coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery to the state’s various populations.

The strategies in this WIOA Combined State Plan are based on an analysis of the economic, workforce, and workforce development for New Mexico and its substate regions, included in the WIOA Combined State Plan. Topics discussed include: Projected Employment Growth in New Mexico's Industries; Projected Employment Growth in New Mexico's Substate Areas; Projected Occupational Employment Growth; Occupations by region; Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations; Employers Employment Needs; Employment and Unemployment; Labor Market Trends; Employment by Occupation; Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce; and Skills Gap Analysis. Analysis of the current workforce includes sections on People with Disabilities; Long-Term Unemployed; Veteran Status; Native Americans; Older Individuals; Low Income; and English Language Learners.

The Wagner-Peyser Agricultural Outreach Plan, submitted by the State Monitor Advocate in coordination with the Wagner-Peyser program, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program's State Plan, submitted by the Aging and Long Term Services Department, are included in the WIOA Combined State Plan.

In an effort to solicit public response to the plan, the plan was posted on the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions' website and distributed electronically to the State and Local Workforce Development Boards for review and comment. Comments and suggestions received were considered and incorporated into the plan as appropriate. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, housed within the Public Education Department, and the Commission for the Blind, both solicited input from their respective State Rehabilitation Councils, as well as from a series of public hearings they hosted. The Adult Education and Literacy and Senior Community Service Employment programs' portions of this plan also include input from a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including those involved in local service delivery.

I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

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

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program. No

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

COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

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

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) No

Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4))) No

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))) No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)) No

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.) No

Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law) No

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

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development No

Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)) No

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))] No

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

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

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

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

1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

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

I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

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

II. EMERGING INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATION

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

III. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in 1 and 2 above, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

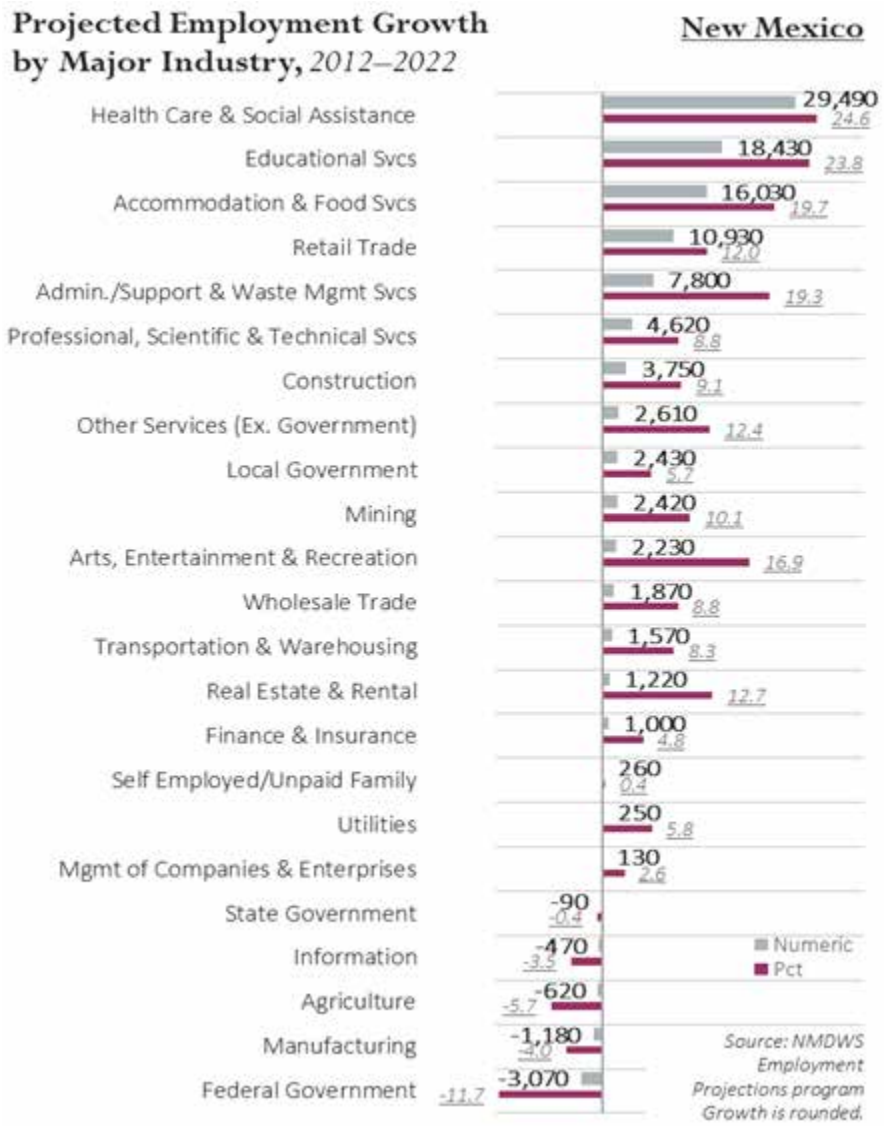
PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN NEW MEXICO'S INDUSTRIES

The following sections, II.a.1.A and B, include analyses of the State's economic conditions and workforce characteristics. This information allows the State to develop data–driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth.

Employment in New Mexico is projected to increase by approximately 12 percent between 2012 and 2022, or approximately 101,610 jobs (rounded). Around 35 percent of annual openings (10,780) are anticipated to be new openings driven by increased demand. The remaining 65 percent of annual openings (19,760) are projected to be openings from replacement needs, as employers replace workers leaving the occupation (e.g., retirement, occupational change).

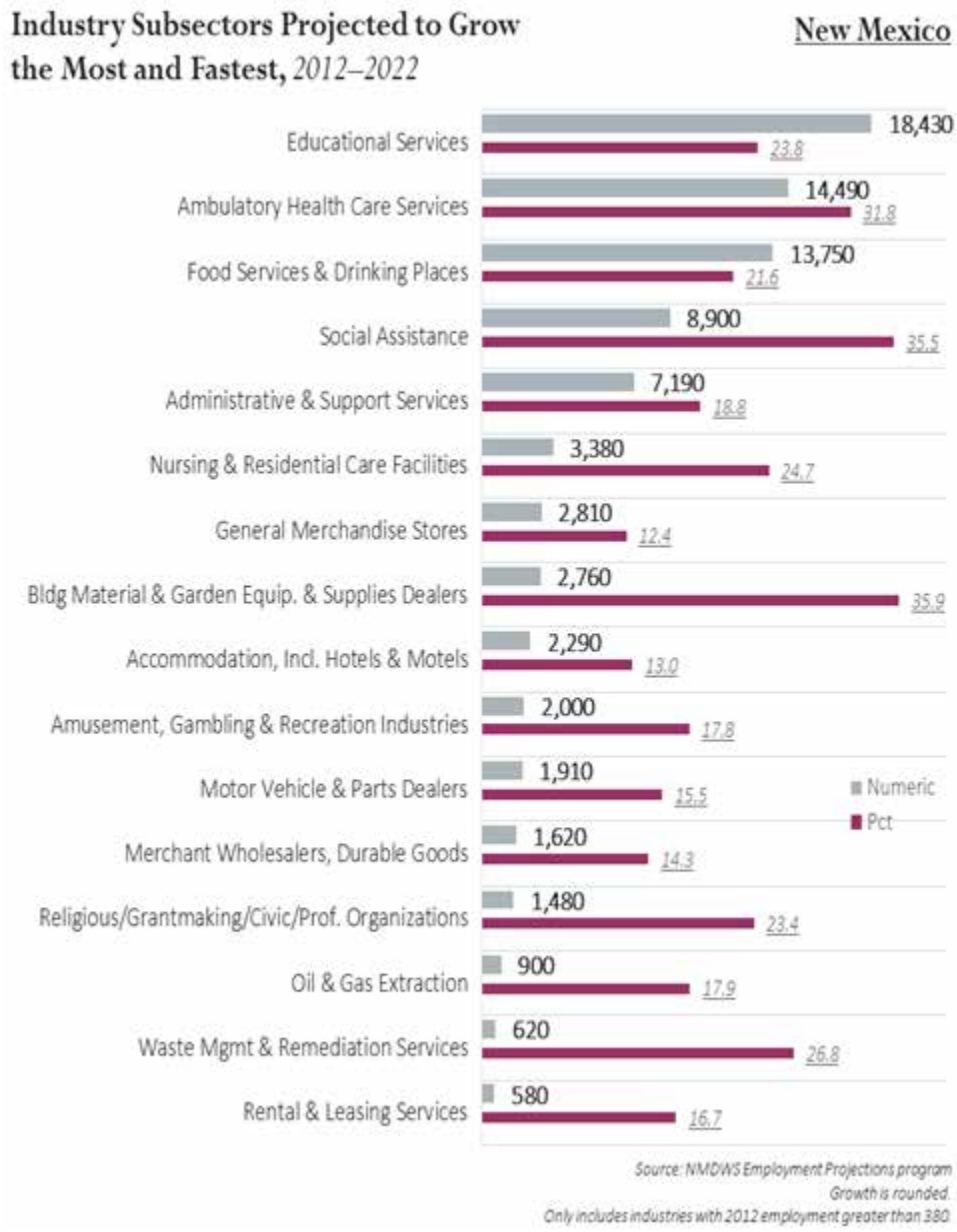
Employment growth in each of four industries is projected to comprise over 10 percent of net growth over the projection period. These industries include: health care and social assistance, with 29,490 more jobs, representing 29.0 percent of net projected growth; educational services, with 18,430

more jobs, representing 18.1 percent of net projected growth; accommodation and food services, with 16,030 more jobs, representing 15.8 percent of net projected growth; and retail trade, with 10,930 more jobs, representing 10.8 percent of net projected growth.



New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) also produces industry employment projections for nearly 100 industry subsectors. Growth in educational services, with just one subsector, educational services, leads growth in all other subsectors, primarily due to its size. Three of the four health care and social assistance subsectors are found within the top six subsectors projected to grow the most and the top five projected to grow the fastest (of the subsectors meeting both criteria). Three retail subsectors are projected to experience significant employment increases, with the building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers subsector projected to grow the fastest (35.9 percent). The four subsectors comprising accommodation and food services and administrative and support and waste management and remediation services (listed as administrative and support services in the corresponding charts) are also listed. Within accommodation and food services, employment in the food services and drinking places subsector

is projected to grow by over 21 percent. The waste management and remediation services subsector in administrative and support services is projected to grow by 26.8 percent.



PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH IN NEW MEXICO'S SUBSTATE AREAS

NMDWS produces industry and occupational employment projections for New Mexico's four workforce regions and four metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs). This section presents industry projections for each substate area. Growth rates in some industries don't vary much across the regions and MSAs. The following sections identify industries in which substate projected growth is notably strong when compared with growth at the state level. Growth in these industries meets one or more of the following criteria.

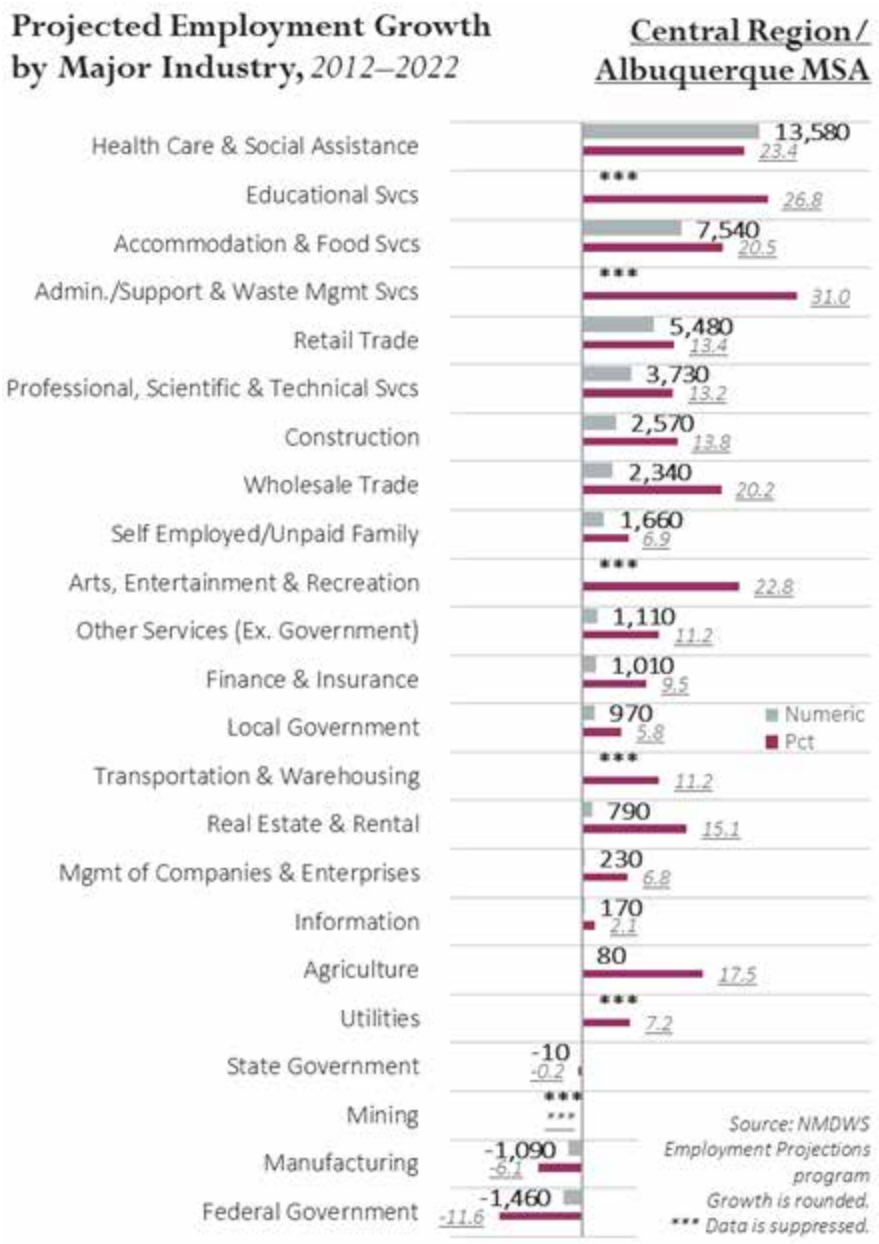
The industry's share of total growth in the region places it within the top ten industries for share of total growth.

1. The industry's share of total regional growth is notably larger than the industry's share of total statewide growth (i.e., growth has a greater impact in the region than in the state).
2. The industry's employment is projected to grow more quickly in the region than in the state as a whole.
3. The industry's growth rate is substantially higher than the industry's rate at the statewide level.

CENTRAL REGION/ALBUQUERQUE MSA

The Central Region and Albuquerque MSA represent the same geography. Employment within the region is projected to increase by about 56,730, or 14.9 percent, reaching approximately 436,470 (rounded) in 2022. The health care and social assistance and educational services sectors are projected to see the largest increase in jobs, with employment also growing quickly (by more than 23 percent in each). The following industries represent those in which regional projected growth is notably strong when compared to growth at the statewide level.

- Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services
- Wholesale trade
- Self–employed and unpaid family workers
- Professional, scientific, and technical services

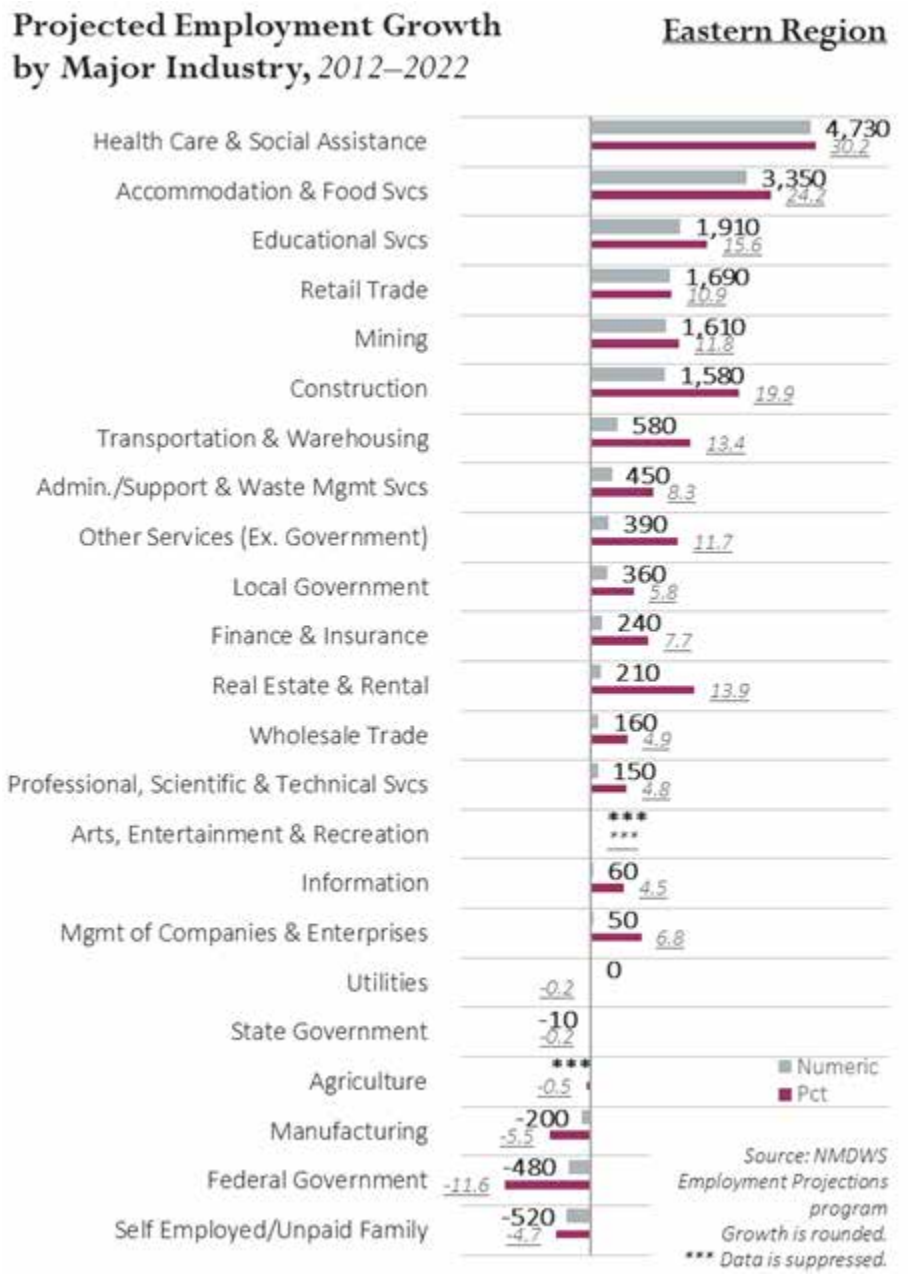


EASTERN REGION

Employment in the Eastern Region is projected to increase from approximately 139,730 (as of 2012) to 156,100 (rounded) in 2022. This represents growth of 16,370 jobs, or 11.7 percent. The health care and social assistance and accommodation and food services industries are projected to see the largest and fastest employment growth. Industries that are anticipated to see comparatively strong growth in the Eastern Region include:

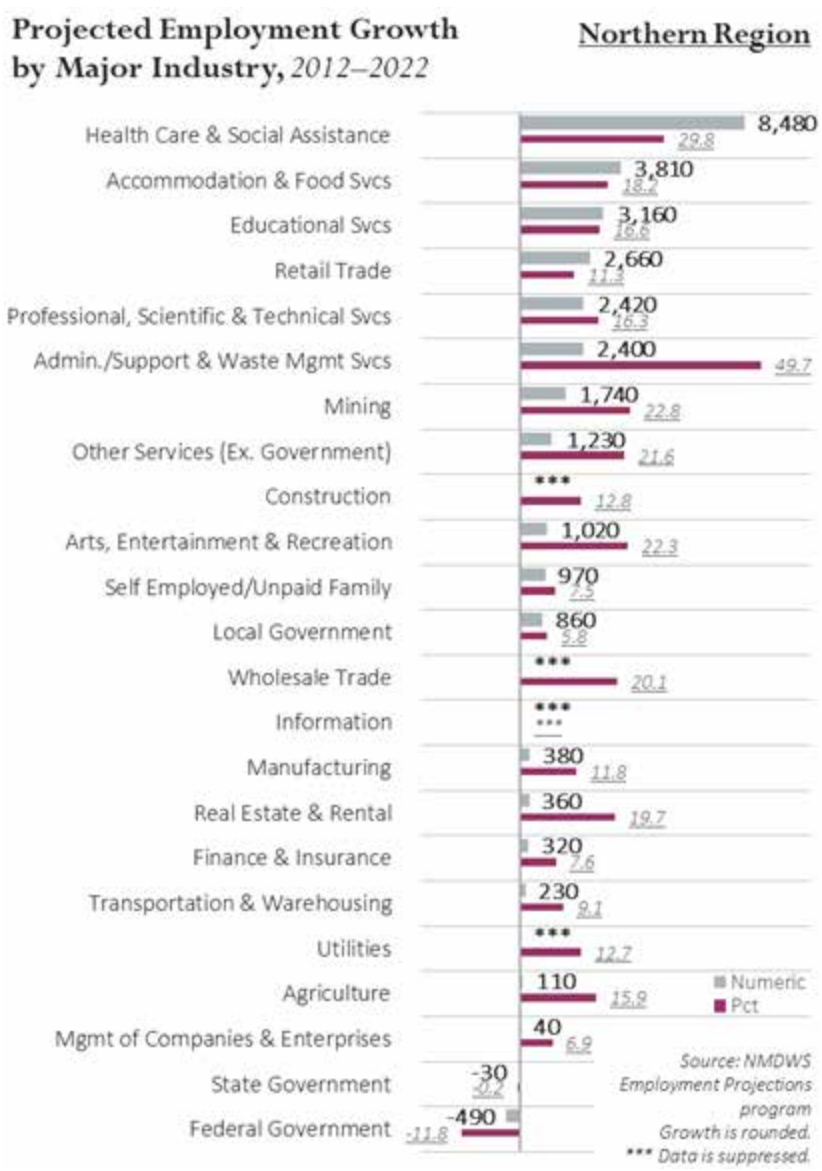
- Accommodation and food services
- Construction
- Mining
- Transportation and warehousing

The mining industry is a particularly significant industry in the Eastern Region, primarily in Eddy and Lea Counties. Mining activity directly and indirectly impacts employment and economic activity in many other industries, including those listed above.



NORTHERN REGION AND FARMINGTON AND SANTA FE MSAS

Employment in the Northern Region, which includes the Farmington and Santa Fe MSAs, is projected to grow by approximately 32,250 (rounded), or 16.1 percent, from 200,840 in 2012 to 233,090 in 2022. The region is projected to see its employment grow more quickly than any other New Mexico region and all of its MSAs. Interestingly, a large portion of this growth is projected to occur in the non–MSA areas of the north.



The healthcare and social assistance and accommodation and food services industries are projected to see the largest increases in employment. Employment in many of the region's industries is expected to grow more quickly than at the state level. Notable industries in which growth is projected to be comparatively strong (when compared to state measurements) include professional, scientific, and technical services and mining. In addition, while projected growth in manufacturing and agriculture comprises a small percentage of total growth, the increase in employment is particularly significant considering that manufacturing is anticipated to grow in the Northern Region only, while agriculture is only expected to increase in the Northern and Central Regions.

In the Northern Region, much of the projected employment growth is expected to occur outside of the two MSAs. Employment in the Farmington MSA is projected to grow by 6,850 (13.0 percent), with employment increasing from 52,480 to 59,330 (rounded). Employment in the Santa Fe MSA is projected to grow slower than employment in the other three MSAs. An increase from 65,160 to about 70,830 (rounded) represents approximately 5,670 new jobs, or growth of 8.7 percent.

The following represent the industries for which projected employment growth is significant in the Farmington MSA.

- Mining
- Retail trade
- Wholesale trade
- Transportation and warehousing
- Accommodation and food services

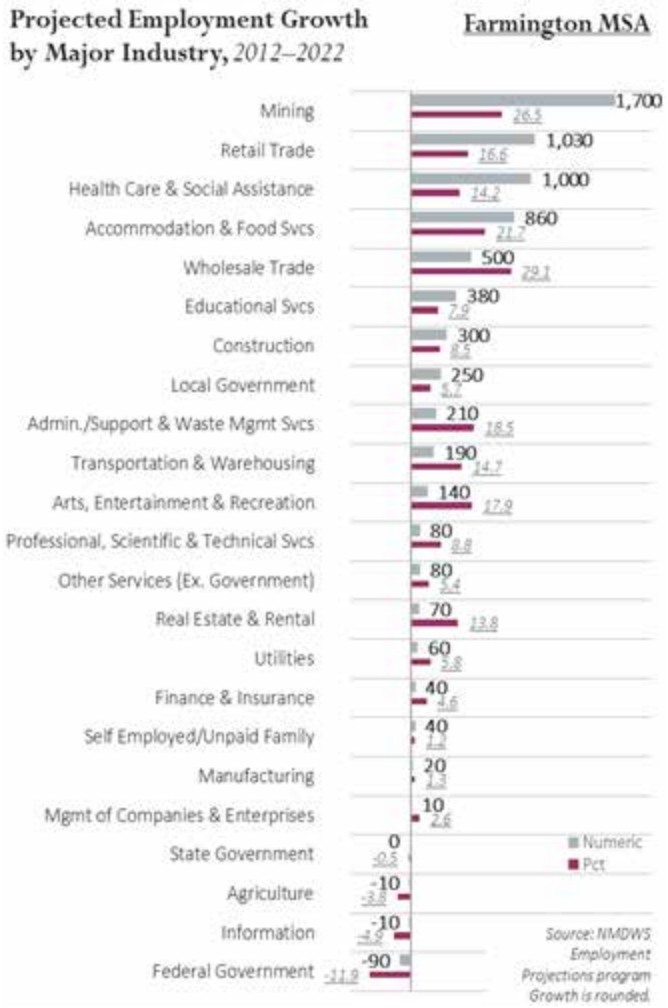
Within the Santa Fe MSA, the following industries are projected to see comparatively strong employment growth:

- Construction
- State government
- Finance and insurance

Projected Employment Growth by Major Industry, *2012–2022*

Santa Fe MSA

Source: NMDWS Employment Projections program
Growth is rounded.



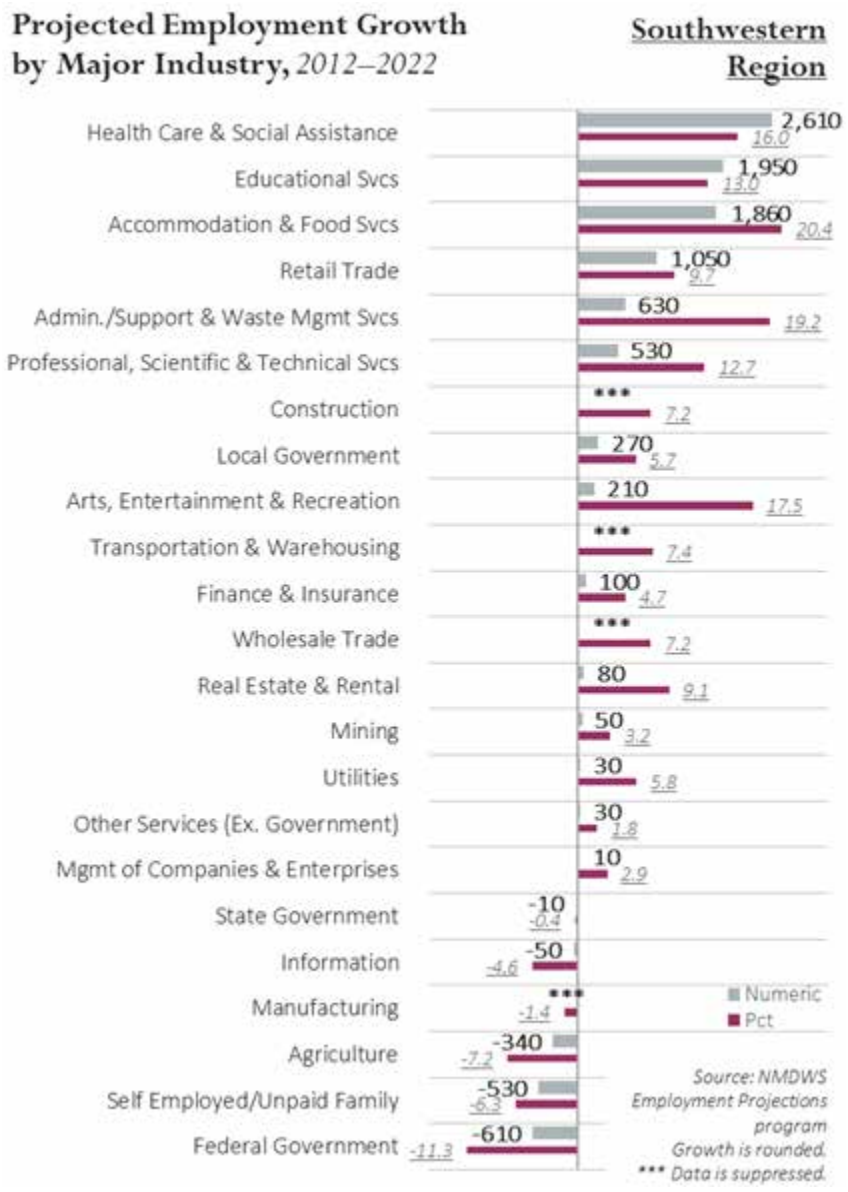
Employment growth in mining is almost entirely expected to come from growth within the Farmington MSA, while growth in state government is projected to occur solely in the Santa Fe MSA (the only substate area in which state government is projected to grow). In addition, the construction industry, which was hard–hit by the Great Recession, is anticipated to see employment grow much more quickly in Santa Fe than in the state as a whole (growth of nearly 20percent compared to growth of just over 9 percent).

Growth in many industries is projected to be strongest in the non–MSA areas of the Northern Region. Two industries—agriculture and information—are projected to experience their only employment growth outside of the two MSAs. Additionally, manufacturing is projected to experience nearly all of its growth (about 84 percent) in the non–MSA areas. Other industries in which regional projected employment growth is strong compared to growth at the state level include:

- Health care and social assistance
- Administrative support and waste management services
- Professional, scientific, and technical services
- Information

SOUTHWESTERN REGION AND LAS CRUCES MSA

The Southwestern Region, which includes the Las Cruces MSA, is projected to see employment grow by 8,360 (from 105,780 in 2012 to 114,140 in 2022, rounded), or about 7.9 percent. This growth rate is the slowest of all four regions and all MSAs, and employment in only six of the 23 major industry sectors is projected to grow faster in the region than in the state. Health care and social assistance and educational services are projected to experience the most growth, although at a slower rate than at the state level. Professional,scientific, and technical services is a critical industry when evaluating projected growth. Employment is projected to grow by 12.7 percent (530 jobs), a rate which is 3.9 percentage points higher than that of the state. Accommodation and food services is also projected to grow more quickly in the region than instate (20.4 percent versus 19.7 percent). Although the difference in growth is just 0.6 percentage points, growth in the industry represents over 22 percent of net projected growth in the region.

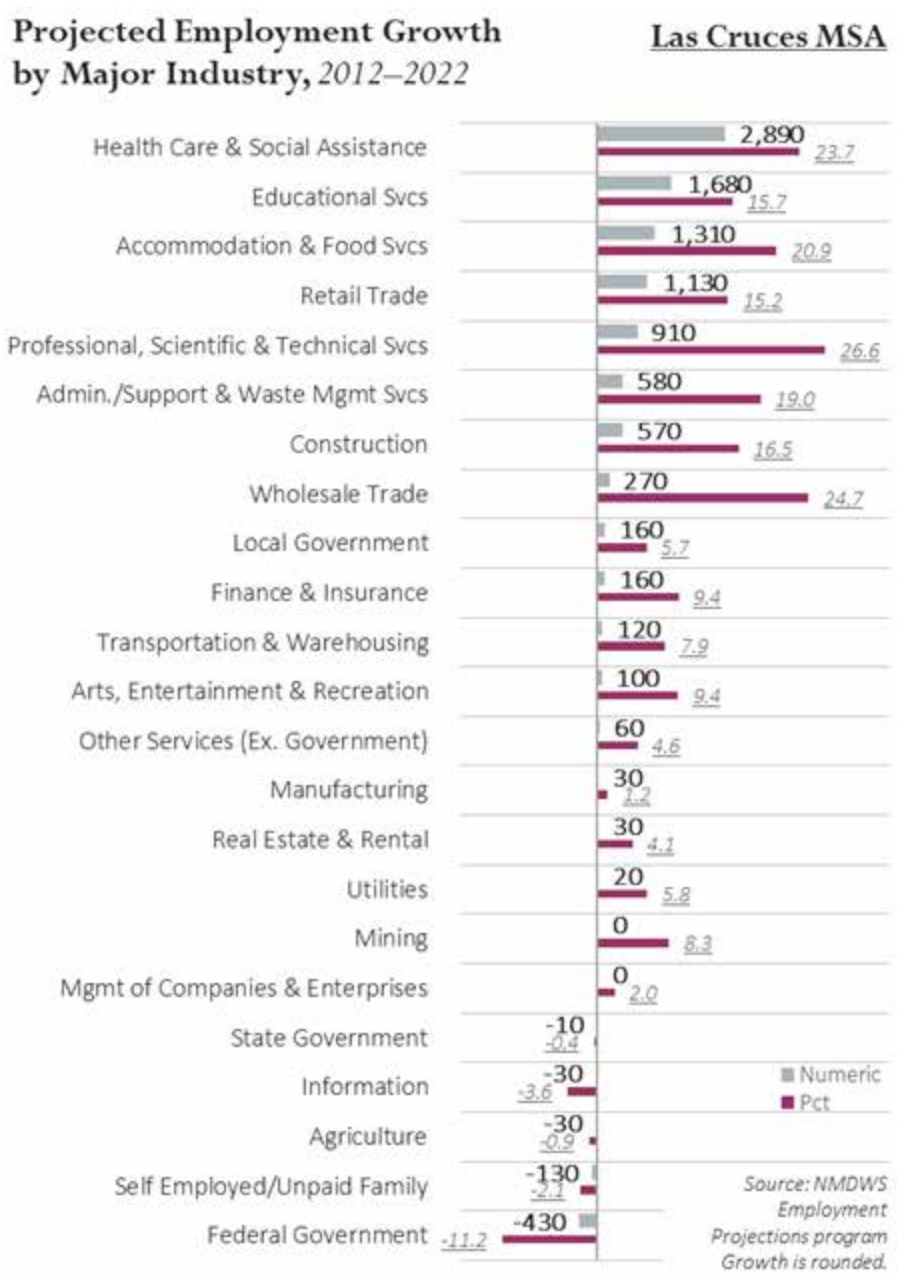


The majority of growth in the Southwestern Region is projected to occur in the Las Cruces MSA, with employment growing by 12.4 percent, or 9,380 (rounded). Employment is anticipated to increase from 75,450 in 2012 to 84,830 in 2022.

Industries in which employment growth is comparatively strong in Las Cruces include:

- Construction
- Professional, scientific, and technical services
- Retail trade
- Wholesale trade

Employment growth in the Las Cruces MSA is anticipated to drive growth in the region over the ten–year period. With this rate being much faster than that of the region as a whole, the non–MSA areas are anticipated to actually experience a decline in employment.



PROJECTED OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT GROWTH NEW MEXICO

Projected employment growth between 2012 and 2022 is anticipated to result in approximately 30,540 job openings a year (rounded), of which 35 percent (10,780) are projected to be new openings from growth, while the remaining 65 percent (19,760) are projected to come from the need to replace workers leaving their occupation.

Over half of all projected new jobs fall within five major occupational groups—food preparation and serving–related; personal care and–service; education, training, and library; office and administrative support; and sales and related occupations. Each of these groups is projected to see employment grow by more than 8,000 over the projection period. The top three occupations are projected to grow by more than 19 percent each. Other fast–growing occupational groups include healthcare support; community and social services; healthcare practitioners and technical; and computer and mathematical occupations.

While projected employment growth consists of new jobs created from increasing demand, projected job openings include new job openings alongside those due to existing jobs becoming available after a person leaves the occupation. The number of projected job openings typically corresponds with projected employment growth; this is the case across the majority of occupational groups. Of the major occupational groups, only three are projected to see more job openings from growth than

replacement needs. These groups are education, training, and library; personal care and service; and healthcare support.

NMDWS produces occupational employment projections for over 800 detailed occupations. The majority of occupations are projected to grow by fewer than 100 jobs over the projection period, with around 200 occupations projected to grow by more than 100 jobs and 30 occupations projected to see employment decline by 2022.The following detailed occupations are projected to grow both quickly and by a large number of jobs.

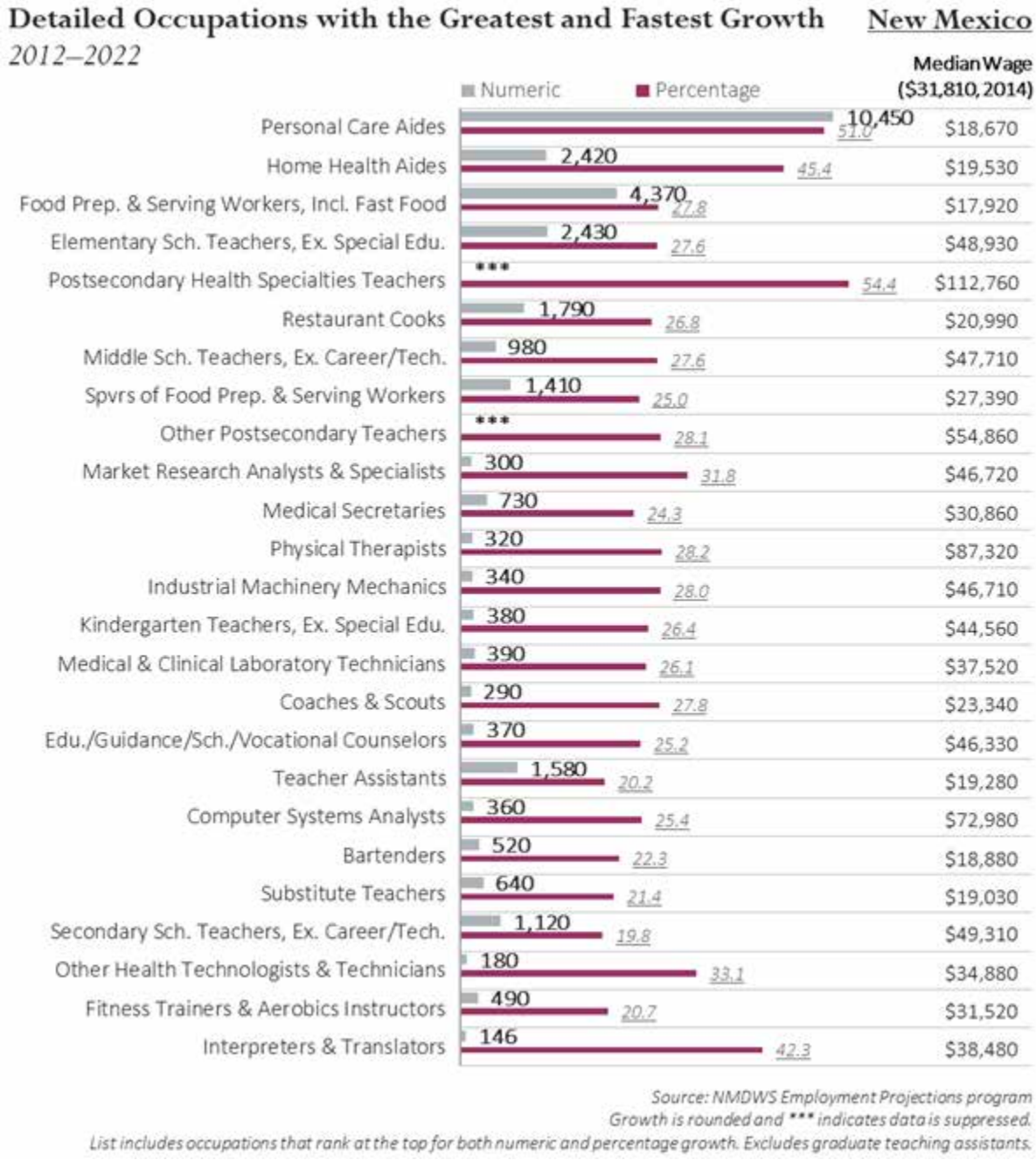
LARGE OCCUPATIONS

- Personal care aides (ranked third in total employment as of 2012)
- Food preparation and serving workers (ranked eighth)
- Elementary school teachers (ranked nineteenth)
- Teacher assistants (ranked twenty–third)

FAST–GROWING OCCUPATIONS

- Industrial machinery mechanics
- Physical therapists
- Coaches and scouts

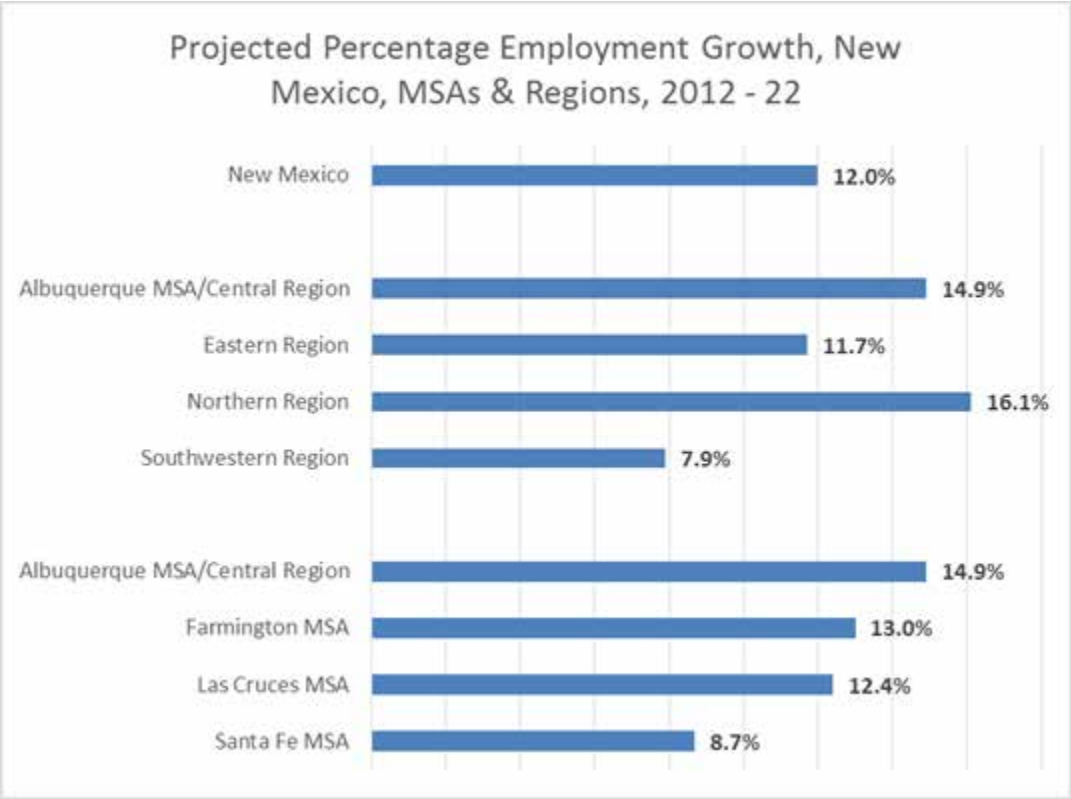
- Market research analysts and specialists
- Postsecondary health specialties teachers
- Other health technologists and technicians
- Interpreters and translators



OCCUPATIONS BY REGION

The Albuquerque MSA is projected to see the fastest employment growth over the 10–year projection period (14.9 percent) of all four MSAs; Santa Fe's employment growth is projected to grow the slowest (8.7 percent). The Northern Region is projected to see its employment grow the fastest

(16.1 percent) of all four regions, with the Southwestern Region's employment growing the slowests (7.9 percent).



EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Emerging demand industry sectors and occupations can be identified by their high growth rates. Emerging industries and occupations hold a key to New Mexico competitiveness and prosperity.

NMDWS created a specific methodology to identify "Star Occupations," or those that meet multiple positive criteria related to employment growth. Star Occupations are some of the fastest growing, with the most annual openings and the highest median wages.

Star Occupations are ranked based on three criteria: (1) employment growth rate (must be above 12.0, the all–occupation average); (2) number of annual job openings (must be above 50); and (3) median annual wage (must be above the all–occupation median of $31,490 as of 2013). A combined ranking is calculated for each occupation based on these three criteria, and occupations that rank among the highest are identified as Star Occupations.

Elementary and middle school teachers top the list of best occupational opportunities in New Mexico. Their designation as a Star Occupation is driven by both projected annual job openings and wages, although the wages for both are lower than many other occupations requiring a bachelor's degree. The list includes six education occupations, five health care practitioner and technical occupations, three management occupations, and three computer and mathematical occupations. While the Star Occupations span nearly all education levels, more than half require at least a bachelor's degree.

New Mexico's *STAR* Occupations

	Occupation		Annual Openings	Median Annual Wage	Education Required for Entry
5-STAR	25-2021	Elementary School Teachers ∞	440	$49,000	Bachelor's Degree
	25-2022	Middle School Teachers ∞	180	$47,130	Bachelor's Degree
	29-1123	Physical Therapists	60	$84,610	Doctorate/Prof. Degree
	11-9111	Medical & Health Services Mgrs	90	$88,560	Bachelor's Degree
	25-2031	Secondary School Teachers ∞	270	$49,200	Bachelor's Degree
	29-1141	Registered Nurses	540	$64,070	Associate's Degree
	11-1021	General & Operations Mgrs	500	$79,140	Bachelor's Degree
	13-1111	Management Analysts	140	$60,890	Bachelor's Degree
	25-2012	Kindergarten Teachers ∞	80	$44,850	Bachelor's Degree
	49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	70	$46,450	High School Diploma/Equiv.
4-STAR	15-1121	Computer Systems Analysts	60	$73,180	Bachelor's Degree
	25-1199	Postsec. Teachers, All Other	60	$54,090	Doctorate/Prof. Degree
	19-3031	Clinical, Counseling & Sch. Psychologists	70	$61,570	Doctorate/Prof. Degree
	47-5013	Oil/Gas/Mining Svc Unit Operators	140	$50,350	Less than High School
	11-9032	Elem./Secondary Edu. Administrators	60	$75,590	Master's Degree
	21-1012	Edu./Guid./Sch./Vocational Counselors	70	$48,540	Master's Degree
	29-2012	Medical & Clinical Lab. Technicians	80	$33,510	Associate's Degree
	15-1133	Systems Software Developers	60	$85,560	Bachelor's Degree
	15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	110	$42,500	Some College, No Degree
3-STAR	39-9031	Fitness Trainers & Aerobics Instructors	80	$31,690	High School Diploma/Equiv.
	43-1011	Spvrs of Office & Administrative Workers	340	$42,720	High School Diploma/Equiv.
	29-2061	Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses	120	$44,830	Postsec., Non-Degree Award
	25-2052	K-Elem. Special Ed. Teachers	50	$48,340	Bachelor's Degree
	21-1021	Child, Family & School Social Workers	60	$36,560	Bachelor's Degree
	41-3099	Sales Reps, Services, All Other	70	$48,010	High School Diploma/Equiv.
	29-2041	Emergency Medical Techs & Paramedics	70	$34,960	Postsec., Non-Degree Award
	31-9091	Dental Assistants	70	$31,560	Postsec., Non-Degree Award
	43-3011	Bill & Account Collectors	70	$31,770	High School Diploma/Equiv.

∞ Excludes preschool through kindergarten special education teachers and middle through postsecondary school special, career, and technical education teachers.

EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

For both existing and emerging demand industry sectors and occupations, employers will need workers with the following knowledge, skills, and abilities:

KNOWLEDGE

Administration and Management — Knowledge of business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and–coordination of people and resources.

Computers and Electronics — Knowledge of circuit boards, processors, chips, electronic equipment, and computer hardware and software, including applications and programming.

Customer and Personal Service — Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.

Education and Training — Knowledge of principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.

English Language — Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words.

Mathematics — Knowledge of arithmetic,algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications.

Medicine and Dentistry — Knowledge of the information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive health–care measures.

Psychology — Knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.

Therapy and Counseling — Knowledge of principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for career counseling and guidance.

SKILLS

Active Learning — Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem–solving and decision–making.

Active Listening — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

Critical Thinking — Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

Monitoring — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.

Reading Comprehension— Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.

Speaking — Talking to others to convey information effectively.

Coordination — Adjusting actions in relation to others’ actions.

Instructing — Teaching others how to do something.

Service Orientation — Actively looking for ways to help people.

Social Perceptiveness — Being aware of others’ reactions and understanding why they react as they do.

ABILITIES

Deductive Reasoning — The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.

Inductive Reasoning — The ability to combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).

Information Ordering — The ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).

Oral Comprehension — The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.

Oral Expression — The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.

Problem Sensitivity — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.

Written Comprehension — The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing

Written Expression — The ability to communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.

Speech Recognition — The ability to identify and understand the speech of another person.

ASSESSMENTS

NMDWS administers WorkKeys, a job skills assessment system measuring “real world” skills that employers say are critical to job success. Once applicants complete the WorkKeys assessments, the skill level results can be used along with a resume,interview, company test, and other company hiring criteria to help employers choose the best candidate.

Each individual that scores at least a 3 on each of the core assessments qualifies for a Career Readiness Certificate, a portable credential that confirms the workplace skills possessed by that individual. The National Career Readiness Certificate is a portable credential that promotes skills and career development for individuals and confirms to employers that they possess basic workplace skills in Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information.

WorkKeys can assess skill level requirements for specific jobs, evaluate skill levels for potential applicants, and evaluate the skill levels of current employees for company advancement opportunities.

Applied Mathematics: This assessment measures the skill people use when they apply mathematical reasoning, critical thinking, and problem–solving techniques to work–related problems. The test

questions require the examinee to set up and solve the types of problems and do the types of calculations that actually occur in the workplace. Skill levels range from 3 to 7.

Reading for information: It measures the skill people use when they read and use written text in order to do a job. The written texts include memos, letters, directions, signs, notices, bulletins, policies, and regulations. Skill levels range from 3 to 7.

Locating Information: It measures the skill people use when they work with workplace graphics. Examinees are asked to find information in a graphic or insert information into a graphic. They also must compare, summarize, and analyze information found in related graphics. Skill levels range from 3 to 6.

Applied Technology: This test focuses on reasoning, not math, and measures the skill people use when they solve problems with machines and equipment found in the workplace. This skill includes four areas of technology: electricity, mechanics, fluid dynamics, and thermodynamics. Skill levels range from 3 to 6.

Business Writing: The WorkKeys *Business Writing* test measures the skill individuals use when they write an original response to a work–related situation. Components of the BUSINESS WRITING skill include sentence structure, mechanics, grammar, word usage, tone and word choice, organization and focus, and development of ideas. Skill levels range from 1 to 5.

Observation: The WorkKeys assessment *Observation* measures an employee's skills in observing, following, understanding, and evaluating processes, demonstrations and other on–the–job procedures. Skill levels range from 3 to 6.

Workplace Observation: WorkKeys *Workplace Observation* is the skill that individuals use to visually observe a workplace event, notice details, and remembers instruction, procedures, processes, and demonstrations in order to generalize to workplace situations that may be similar or very different from what was observed. Employees must pay careful attention to steps that are followed, to safety procedures, and to quality control standards. Skill levels range from 1 to 5.

Listening for understanding: Measures the ability to follow, understand, and evaluate work–related processes—skills that are essential to reaching full productivity as quickly as possible, designed specifically for computerized delivery. Skill levels range from 1 to 5.

Employers use level scores to decide who to hire and promote. Level scores are based on WorkKeys job profiles—a snapshot of the skills needed for a particular job. The following table shows the median skill level for the STAR occupations listed in the Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations section.

Median Skill Level by Skill Area and STAR Occupation

Occupation	Education Required for Entry	Applied Math	Reading for Info	Locating Info	Applied Tech	Business Writing	Workplace Observation	Listening for Understanding
29–1141 Registered Nurses	Associate's Degree	5	5	4	4	3		

Occupation	Education Required for Entry	Applied Math	Reading for Info	Locating Info	Applied Tech	Business Writing	Workplace Observation	Listening for Understanding
29–2012 Medical and Clinical Lab Technicians	Associate's Degree	3	5	4				
25–2021 Elementary School Teachers	Bachelor's Degree	3	4	4				
25–2022 Middle School Teachers	Bachelor's Degree	3	4	4				
11–9111 Medical & Health Services Managers	Bachelor's Degree	3	4	4				
25–2031 Secondary School Teachers	Bachelor's Degree	4	5	5				
11–1021 General & Operations Managers	Bachelor's Degree	5	5	4	5	3	2	
13–1111 Management analysts	Bachelor's Degree	3	4	4	3			
25–2012 Kindergarten Teachers	Bachelor's Degree	4	4	4				
15–1121 Computer Systems Analysts	Bachelor's Degree	5	4	4	3			
15–1133 Systems Software Developers	Bachelor's Degree	7	5	5				
25–2052 K–Elementary Special Ed Teachers	Bachelor's Degree	4	5	5				
21–1021 Child, Family and School Social Workers	Bachelor's Degree	4	4	4	3			
29–1123 Physical Therapists	Doctorate/Prof Degree	4	6	5				
19–3031 Clinical, Counseling and School Psychologists	Doctorate/Prof Degree	5	5	5				
49–9041 Industrial Machinery Mechanics	High School Diploma/Equiv.	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
39–9031 Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	High School Diploma/Equiv.	4	4	4				
43–1011 Supervisors of Office and Admin Workers	High School Diploma/Equiv.	4	5	4	4	3	3	
41–3099 Sales Reps, Services, All Other	High School Diploma/Equiv.	5	5	5	4	3		
43–3011 Bill and Account Collectors	High School Diploma/Equiv.	3	4	4	3			

Occupation	Education Required for Entry	Applied Math	Reading for Info	Locating Info	Applied Tech	Business Writing	Workplace Observation	Listening for Understanding
47–5013 Oil/Gas/Mining Svc Unit Operators	Less than High School	5	5	5				
11–9032 Elementary/Secondary Education Administrators	Master's Degree	5	5	5	5	4		
21–1012 Edu./Guid/Sch/Vocational counselors	Master's Degree	4	4	4	4	3		
29–2061 Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses	Postsec., Non–DegreeAward	4	5	4				
29–2041 Emergency Medical Techs and Paramedics	Postsec., Non–DegreeAward	3	5	4	3			
31–9091 Dental Assistants	Postsec., Non–DegreeAward	3	4	4				
15–1151 Computer User Support Specialists	Some College, No Degree	3	4	4	3	5		

B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA.* This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups** in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes: Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. ** Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

I. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

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

II. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

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

III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

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

IV. SKILL GAPS

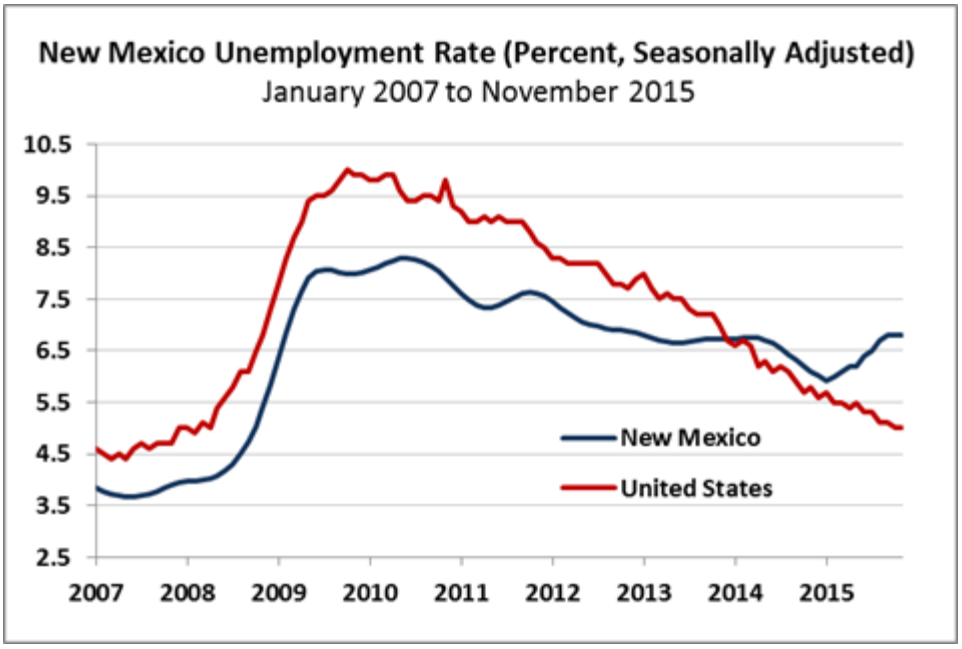
Describe apparent ‘skill gaps’.

WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

This Combined State Plan includes an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA, which includes individuals with disabilities among other groups in the state and across regions identified by the State.

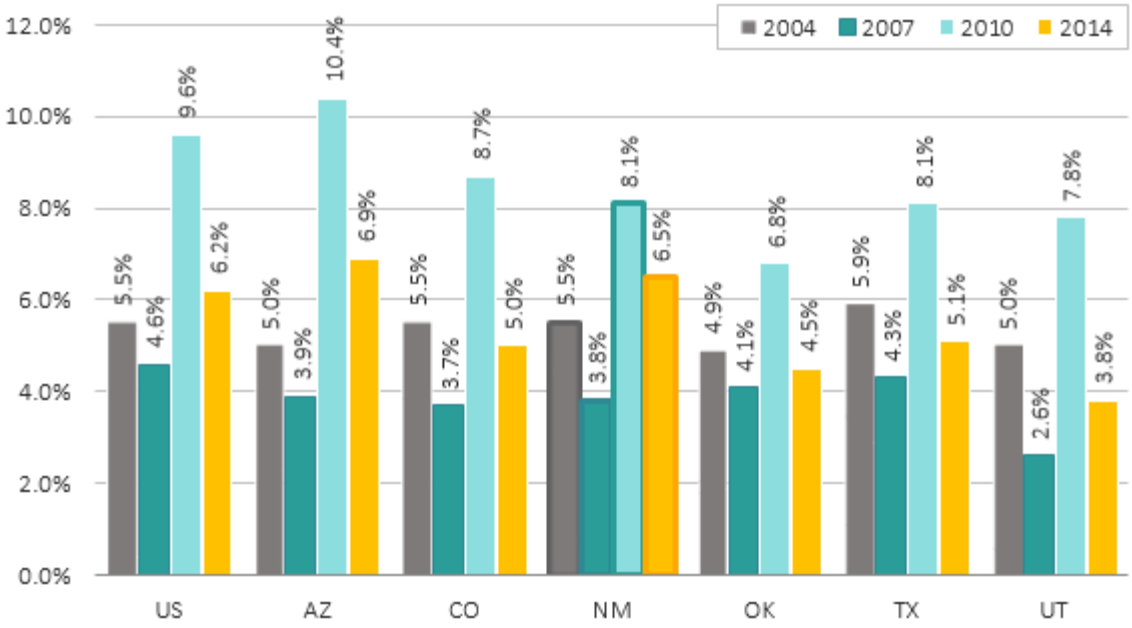
UNEMPLOYMENT IN NEW MEXICO AND SUBSTATE REGIONS

New Mexico’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.8 percent in November 2015, unchanged from October and up from 6.1 percent a year ago. The national unemployment rate was 5.0 percent, unchanged from October and down from 5.8percent in November 2014.



Annual average unemployment rates for the nation as a whole and the six neighboring states were remarkably similar for 2004, ranging from 4.9 percent in Oklahoma to 5.9 percent in Texas, with joblessness at 5.0 percent for Arizona and Utah and 5.5 percent for New Mexico, Colorado, and the U.S. By 2007, unemployment had dipped to 4.6 percent nationally and fallen even more sharply for New Mexico, at 3.8 percent, and most of its nearby states. The recession’s impacts boosted rates significantly between 2007 and 2010. Recovery between 2010 and2014 was slower for New Mexico than for the other areas, although unemployment rates were down across the board.

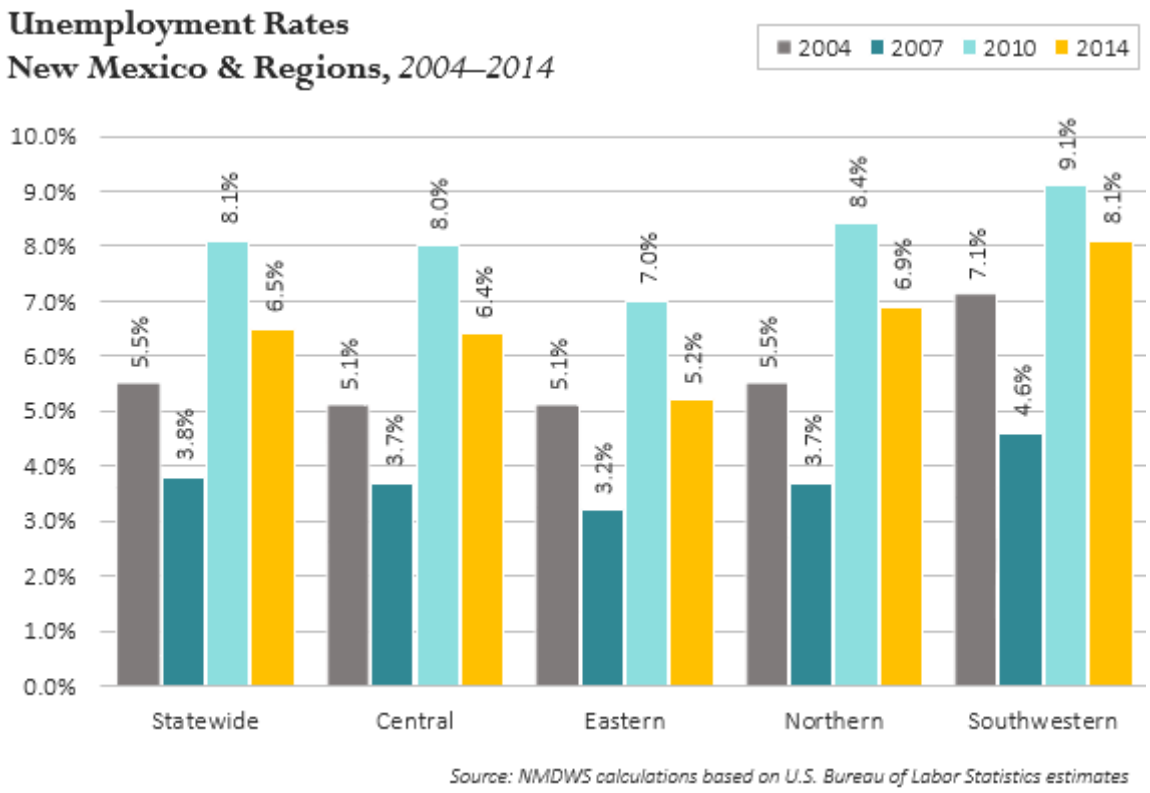
Unemployment Rates
New Mexico & Neighboring States, *2004–2014*



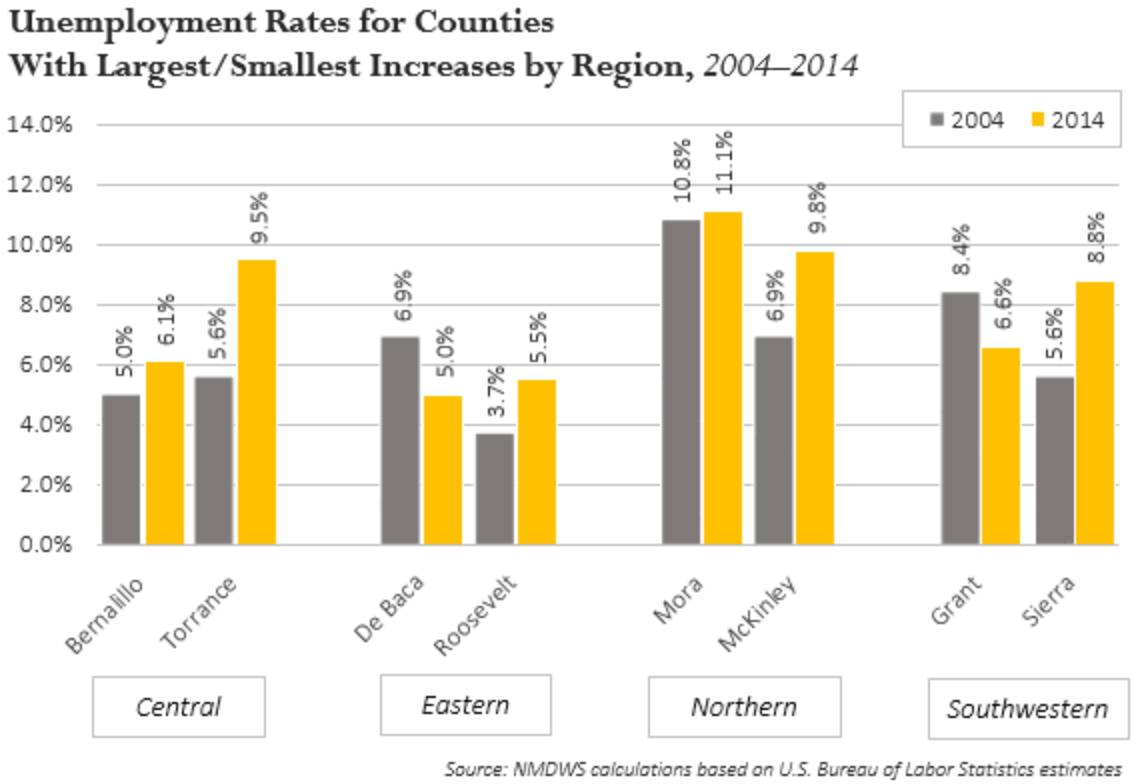
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Central Region's unemployment rate was 0.4 point below the statewide level for 2004 (5.1 percent to 5.5 percent), before the deficit narrowed to 0.1 percent for each of the later reference years (2007, 3.7 percent to 3.8 percent; 2010, 8.0 percent to 8.1 percent, and 2014, 6.4 percent to 6.5 percent). Unemployment rates in the Eastern Region were lower than statewide levels for all four years, at 5.1 percent, 3.2 percent, 7.0 percent, and 5.2 percent, while those in the Southwestern Region were higher, at 7.1 percent, 4.6 percent, 9.1percent, and 8.1 percent. Joblessness in the Northern Region equaled that for the state as a whole in 2004, at 5.5 percent, was 0.1 point lower for 2007, 3.7 percent to 3.8 percent, and exceeded the statewide level for both 2010, 8.4 percent to 8.1 percent, and 2014, 6.9 percent to 6.5 percent.

County–level unemployment rate changes provide insight into the recessionary effects seen in the workforce regions. From 2007 to 2010, joblessness increased most sharply in the Northern Region, up 4.7 percentage points, with San Juan County's unemployment rate up by 6.0 percentage points. Los Alamos County posted the state's smallest change, at 1.5 percentage points. Southwestern Region unemployment increased 4.5 percentage points, boosted by a 10.4 percentage point increase for Luna County, typically the state's highest unemployment rate county. Central Region unemployment grew by 4.3 percentage points (matching the statewide increase), led by Torrance County's gain of 7.2 percentage points. The Eastern Region increase totaled 3.8 percentage points, with Lea County up 5.4 percentage points.



Statewide joblessness fell by 1.6 percentage points between 2010 and 2014, as the recovery slowly progressed. The Eastern Region's unemployment rate dipped by1.8 percentage points, with Lea County's rate, buoyed by a strong recovery in the oil and gas sector, down 3.6 percentage points. The Central Region's drop was 1.6 percentage points, led by Torrance County's decrease of 2.3 percentage points. The unemployment rate fell by 1.5 percentage points in the Northern Region, with San Juan County's level falling by 3.1 percentage points. The Southwestern Region's decline of 1.0 percentage point was led by a 4.5 percentage point drop for Catron County. Thirty–two of New Mexico's 33 counties posted unemployment rate declines between 2010 and 2014, ranging from Catron County's 4.5 percentage points to McKinley County's 0.1 percentage point. Los Alamos County's unemployment rate increased by 0.4 percentage point for the period. Twenty–six of New Mexico's counties posted unemployment rate gains between 2004 and 2014, although this period does include the previously mentioned 2009–2010 series breaks, which complicate comparisons. Torrance County, up 3.9 percentage points, registered the largest increase and De Baca County, down 1.9 percentage points, the largest decrease.



EMPLOYMENT

EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

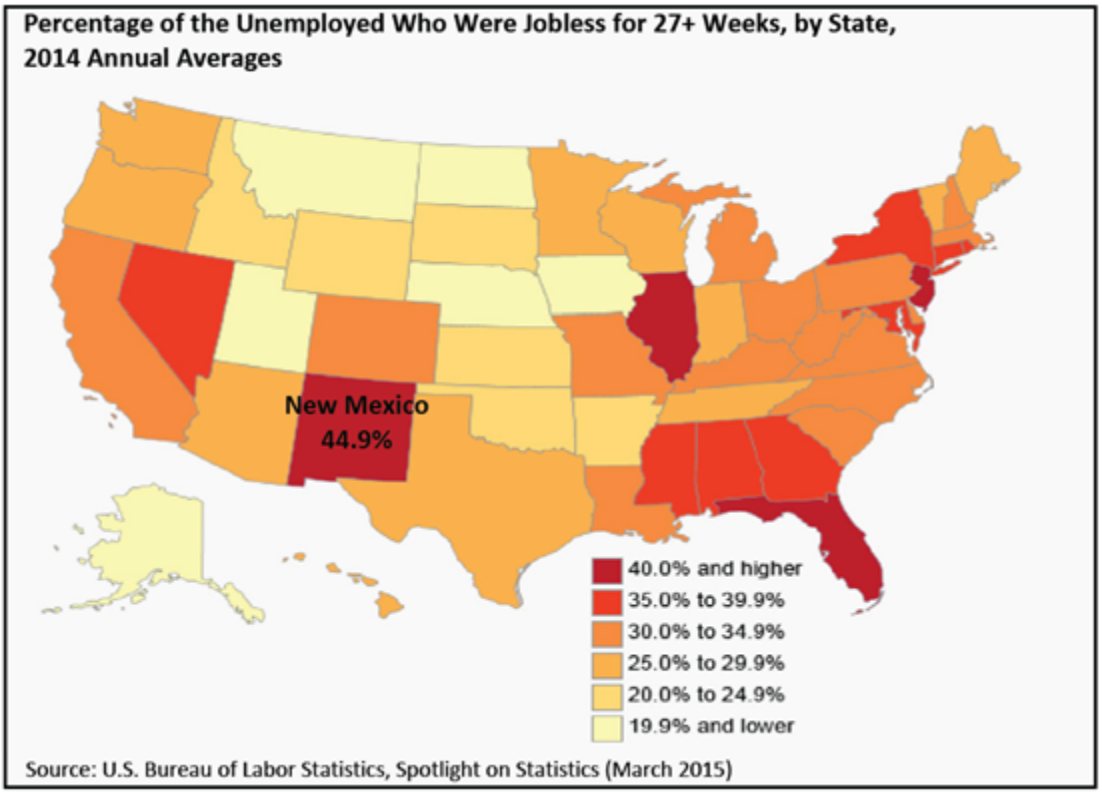
- Total: 1,248,25
- In the labor force: 908,609
- Employed: 817,860
    - With a disability: 52,869
        - With a hearing difficulty: 15,838
        - With a vision difficulty: 11,931
        - With a cognitive difficulty: 15,070
        - With an ambulatory difficulty: 21,025
        - With a self–care difficulty: 4,415
        - With an independent living difficulty: 8,336
    - No disability: 764,991
- Unemployed: 90,749
    - With a disability: 10,372
        - With a hearing difficulty: 2,234
        - With a vision difficulty: 2,356
        - With a cognitive difficulty: 5,031
        - With an ambulatory difficulty: 3,499
        - With a self–care difficulty: 845
        - With an independent living difficulty: 2,282
    - No disability: 80,377
- Not in labor force: 339,644

- With a disability: 93,789
    - With a hearing difficulty: 18,795
    - With a vision difficulty: 18,823
    - With a cognitive difficulty: 48,431
    - With an ambulatory difficulty: 58,108
    - With a self–care difficulty: 25,297
    - With an independent living difficulty: 45,841
- No disability: 245,855

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011–2013 3–Year Estimates, Table B18120: Employment Status by Disability Status and Type

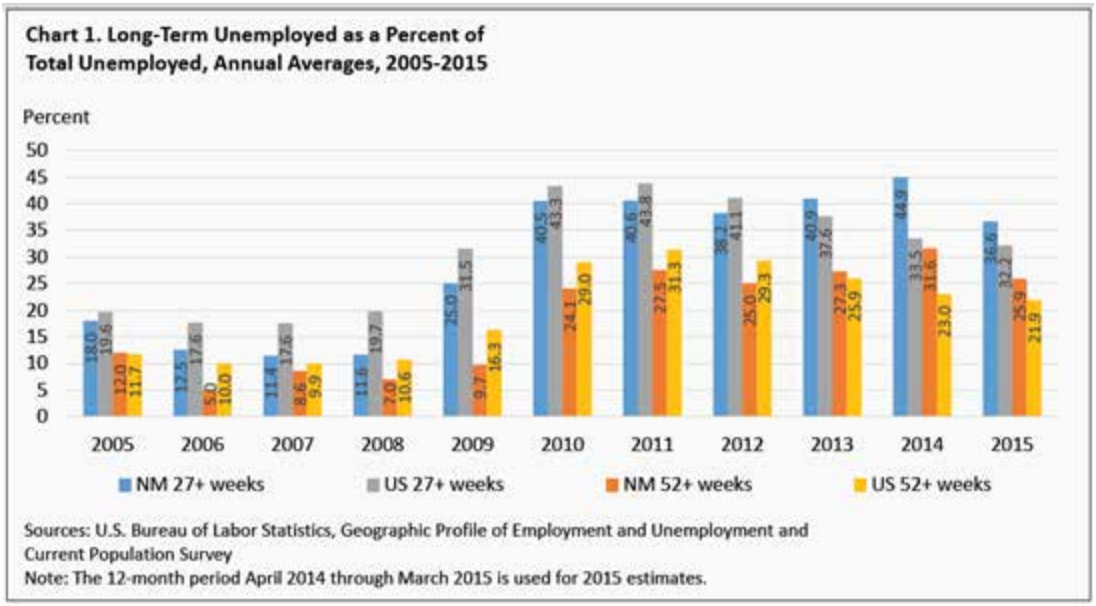
LONG TERM UNEMPLOYED

New Mexico's share of long–term unemployment (defined as unemployed 27 weeks or more) in 2014 was the second highest in the nation, at 44.9 percent, trailing only that of the District of Columbia. Nationally, 33.5 percent of the unemployed were out of work 27 weeks or more for calendar year 2014.



The 2014 estimate represented a peak level. For the 12 months ending in March 2015, the long–term unemployment share decreased, placing New Mexico tenth highest among all states—a significant improvement. In fact, New Mexico's 8.2 percentage point decline between the 12 months ending in December 2014 and the 12 months ending in March 2015 was far greater than for any other state, with Colorado, at 5.5 percentage points, posting the second–largest decrease.

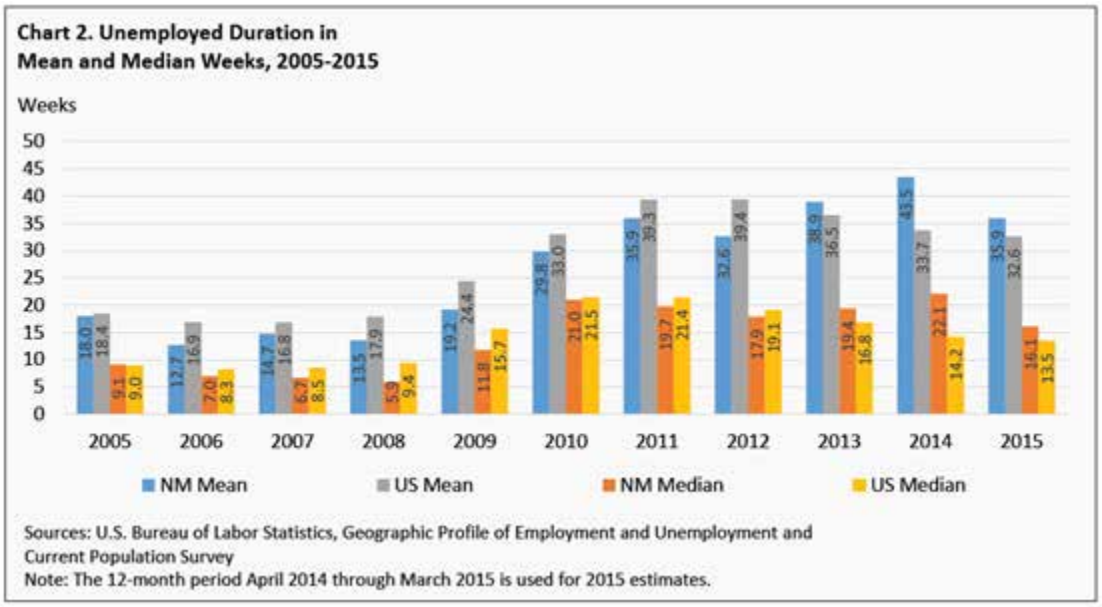
In 2014, five states posted long–term unemployment shares exceeding 40 percent, as shown in the above map: District of Columbia, 49.2 percent; New Mexico, 44.9 percent; New Jersey, 41.4 percent; Illinois, 40.3 percent; and Florida, 40.2 percent. Recessionary impacts sharply increased New Mexico's long–term unemployment between 2008 and 2009, as displayed in Chart 1, with shares increasing from 11.6 percent to 25.0 percent for those unemployed 27 weeks or more and from 7.0 percent to 9.7 percent for those unemployed 52 weeks or more. A year later, in 2010, 40.5 percent of jobless New Mexicans were unemployed for at least 27 weeks and 24.1 percent for at least 52 weeks.



Rates for both categories peaked in 2014, at 44.9 percent for those unemployed 27 weeks or more and 31.6 percent for those unemployed 52weeks or more, before dipping to 36.6 percent and 25.9 percent, respectively, for the 12–month period ending in March 2015. National shares for the most recent period were 32.2 percent for those unemployed 27 weeks or more and 21.9percent for those unemployed 52 weeks or more, down from 33.5 percent and 23.0 percent, respectively, for calendar year 2014. For 2006 through 2008, before the national recession's effects took hold, New Mexico's share for those jobless 27 weeks or more hovered at just over 10 percent, while the share for those unemployed 52 weeks or more ranged between 5.0 percent and 8.6 percent. The numbers for both categories were down from the elevated levels that followed the March through November 2001 U.S. recession. For comparison, U.S. shares for 2007 forward started rising earlier and remained at modestly higher levels than the New Mexico estimates until 2013, when the New Mexico numbers began increasing again, after slight dips in 2012, to their 2014 peaks.

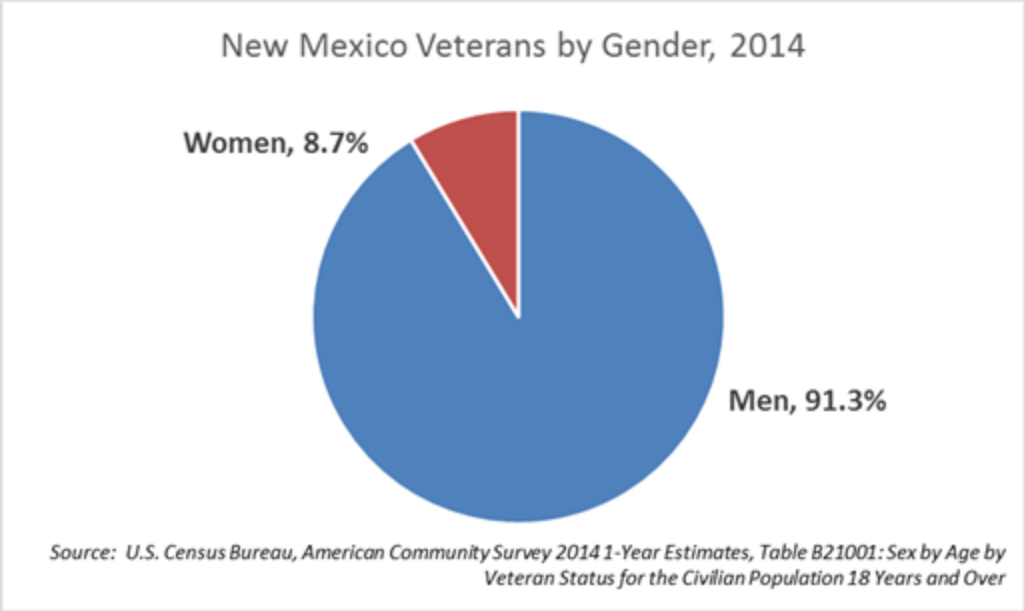
New Mexico's mean and median unemployment duration numbers followed a similar pattern, as shown in Chart 2. Mean duration stood at 13.5 weeks for 2008, little changed from the previous two years, before more than doubling by 2010, to 29.8 weeks, and more than tripling by 2014, to 43.5 weeks. For the 12 months ending in March 2015, the mean fell to 35.9 weeks. Changes in median unemployment duration, meanwhile, though less pronounced, produced a nearly identical trend. The median level, which gradually dipped from 9.1 weeks in 2005 to 5.9 weeks in 2008, increased to 11.8 weeks in 2009, ranged between 17.9 and 21.0 weeks from 2010 through 2013, and peaked at 22.1 weeks for 2014. The drop to 16.1 weeks for the 12 months ending in March 2015 marked a six–year low. For both mean and median— mirroring the pattern for long–term unemployment shares—

New Mexico duration estimates generally moved in tandem with the national estimates for the reference period, though at marginally lower levels and beginning their rise slightly later, until New Mexico durations eclipsed U.S. levels in 2013.



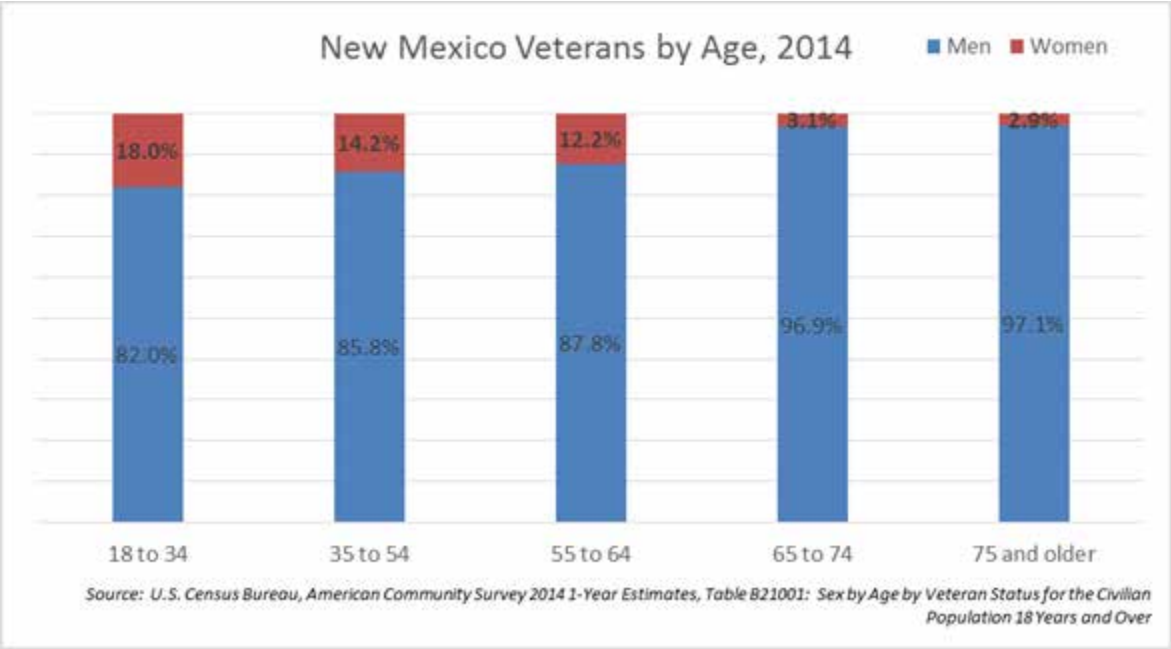
VETERAN STATUS

In 2014, there were 152,055 veterans living in New Mexico. This represents 9.6 percent of the total population 18 years and older. Men made up 91.3 percent of the veteran population in New Mexico, while 8.7 percent were women.

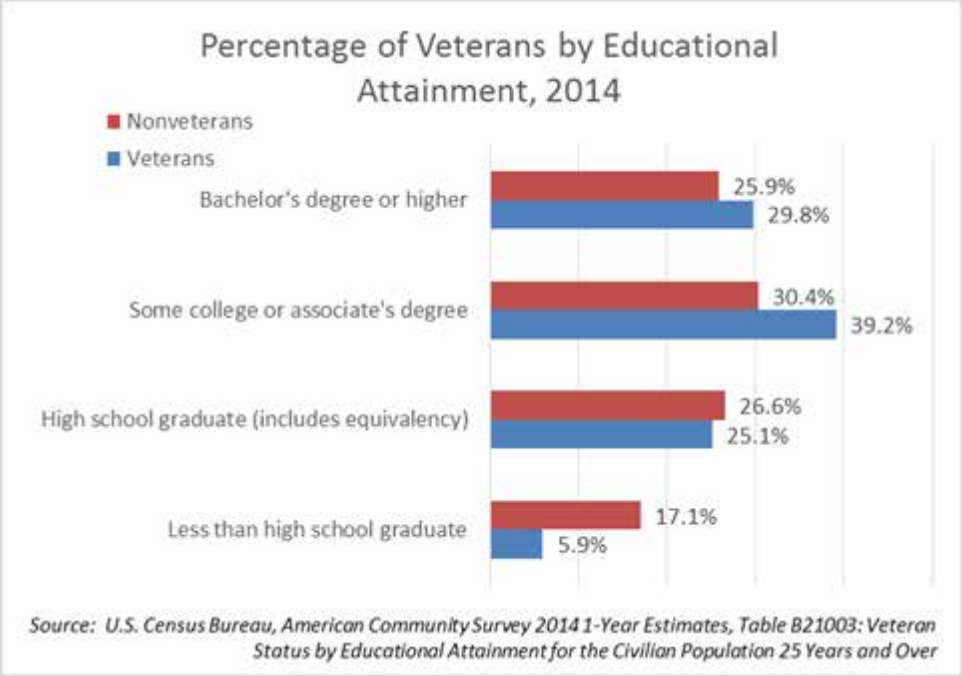


The percentage of female veterans has increased over time as the number of women serving has increased. Females only make up 2.9 percent of veterans that are 75 years of age or older. Females

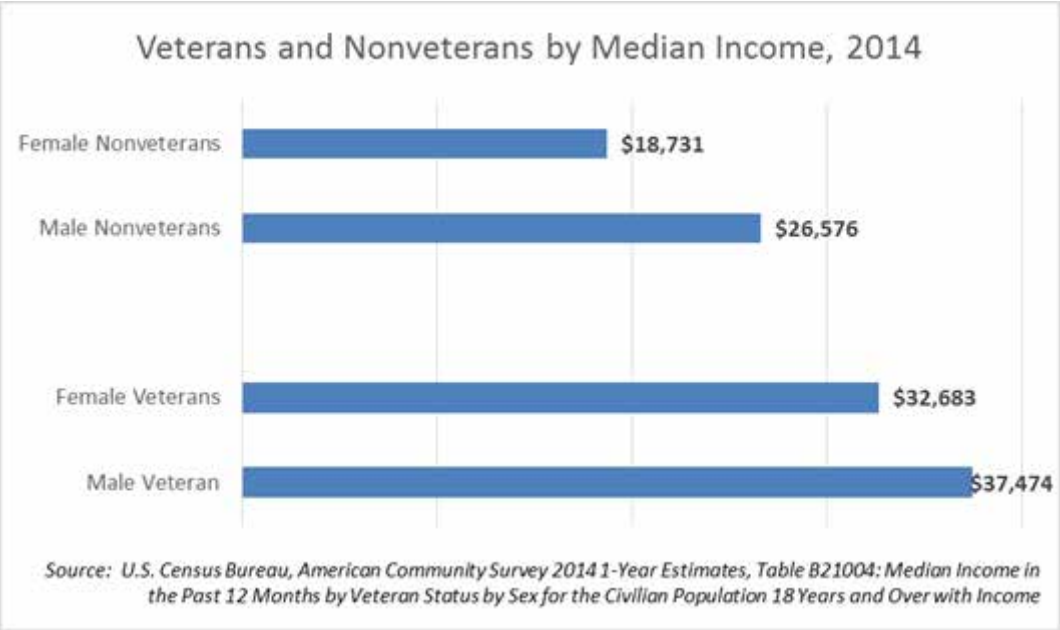
make up 14.2 percent of veterans between 35 and 54 and, within the youngest age group (those veterans between 18 and 34), 18 percent of veterans are female.



Veterans typically have a higher level of education than nonveterans. Only 5.9 percent of veterans have less than a high school diploma (or equivalent), as compared to 17.1 percent of nonveterans. This is partially due to the requirement that potential recruits have a high school diploma or equivalent to enlist. Nearly 69 percent of veterans have more than a high school degree, compared to 56.3 percent of nonveterans. Almost 30 percent of veterans hold a bachelor's degree or higher qualification, compared to 25.9 percent of nonveterans. The availability of several programs to assist veterans in their education through the GI Bill and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs may also contribute to these statistics.

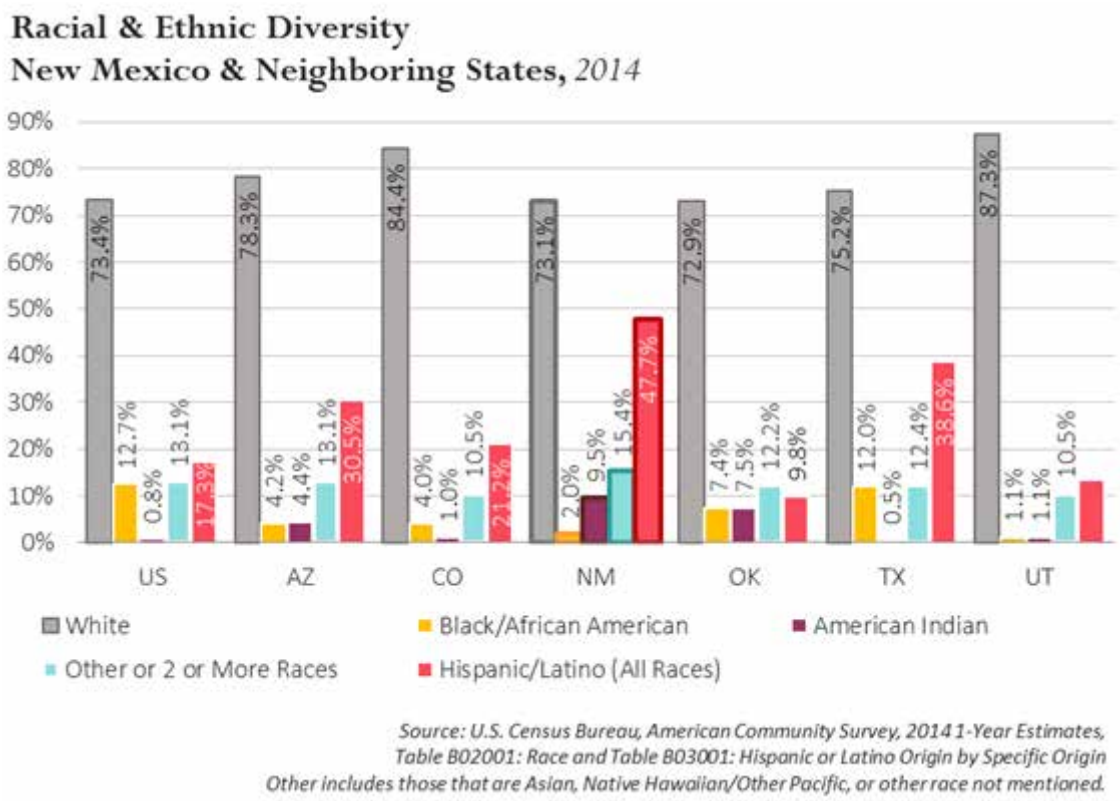


Veterans earn more income, on average, each year than nonveterans. This is likely correlated to some degree with the average higher educational attainment of veterans. In 2014, the median annual income of male veterans was $37,474, compared to $26,576 of male nonveterans. Female veterans typically earn less than male veterans, reflecting an overall trend in the general population in which men earn more than women, on average. The median income of female veterans is $32,683, compared to $18,731 of female nonveterans.



NATIVE AMERICAN

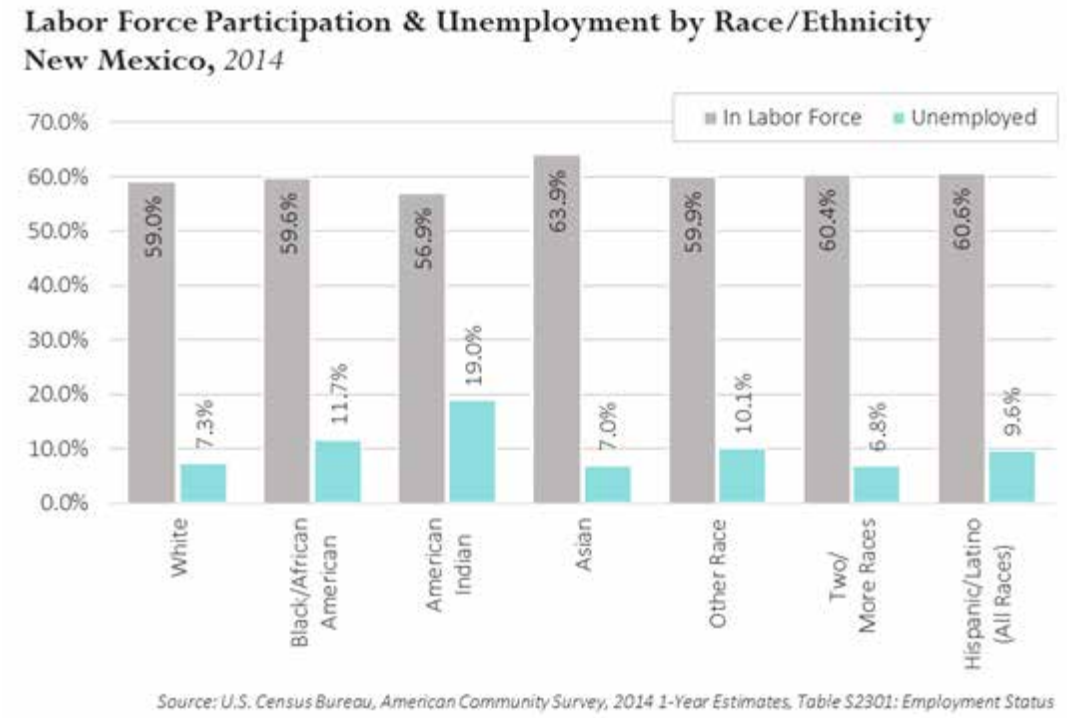
New Mexico is uniquely diverse in terms of both race and ethnicity. The percentage of people in New Mexico identifying as non–white (26.9 percent) is greater than the same share nationally (26.6 percent) and is only exceeded among neighboring states by Oklahoma, with 27.1percent. Based on the 2010 decennial census, the ten states with the largest American Indian and Alaska Native alone–or–in–combination populations in 2010 were California, Oklahoma, Arizona, Texas, New York, New Mexico, Washington, North Carolina, Florida, and Michigan. However, American Indians in New Mexico comprise 9.1 percent of the total population, in 2014, which is the largest share of all neighboring states and the second largest of all U.S. states (after Alaska at 14.3 percent). Oklahoma had the next largest share among neighboring states, with 7.5 percent, followed by Arizona with 4.4 percent. New Mexico also had the largest proportion of people identifying as having two or more races (15.4 percent). On the other hand, the state had the second lowest share of African Americans in its population (2.0 percent). Only Utah had a smaller share, with 1.1 percent.

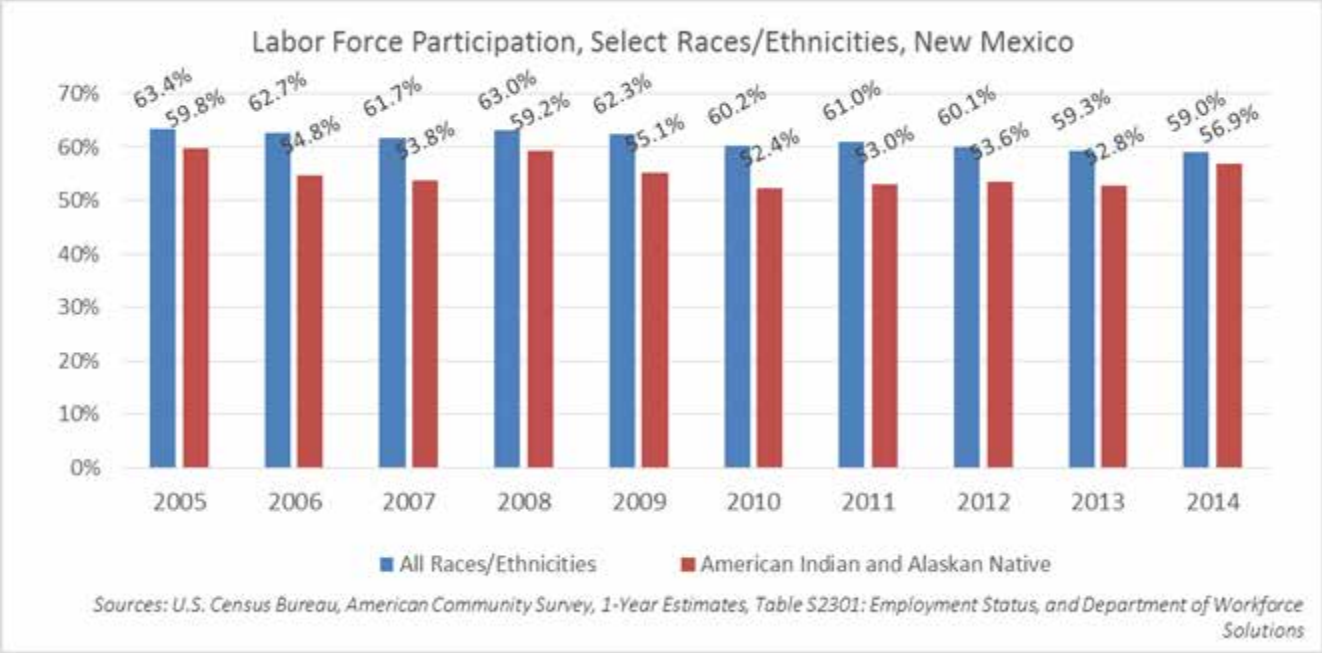


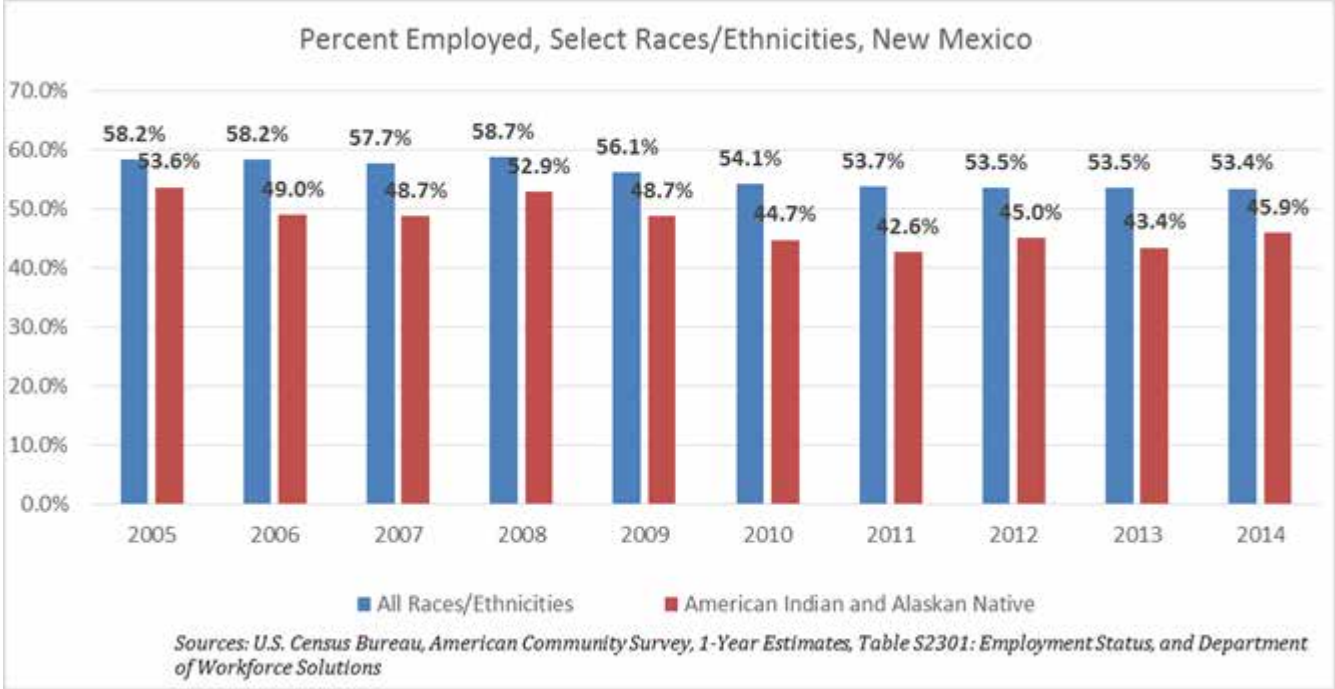
New Mexico is also ethnically unique—being one of only four states identified in the 2010 decennial census as majority minority (i.e. the population contains less than50 percent non–Hispanic whites). Hispanics or Latinos of all races made up 47.7 percent of New Mexico's total population, by far the largest share among neighboring states and exceeding the national share by over 30 percentage points.

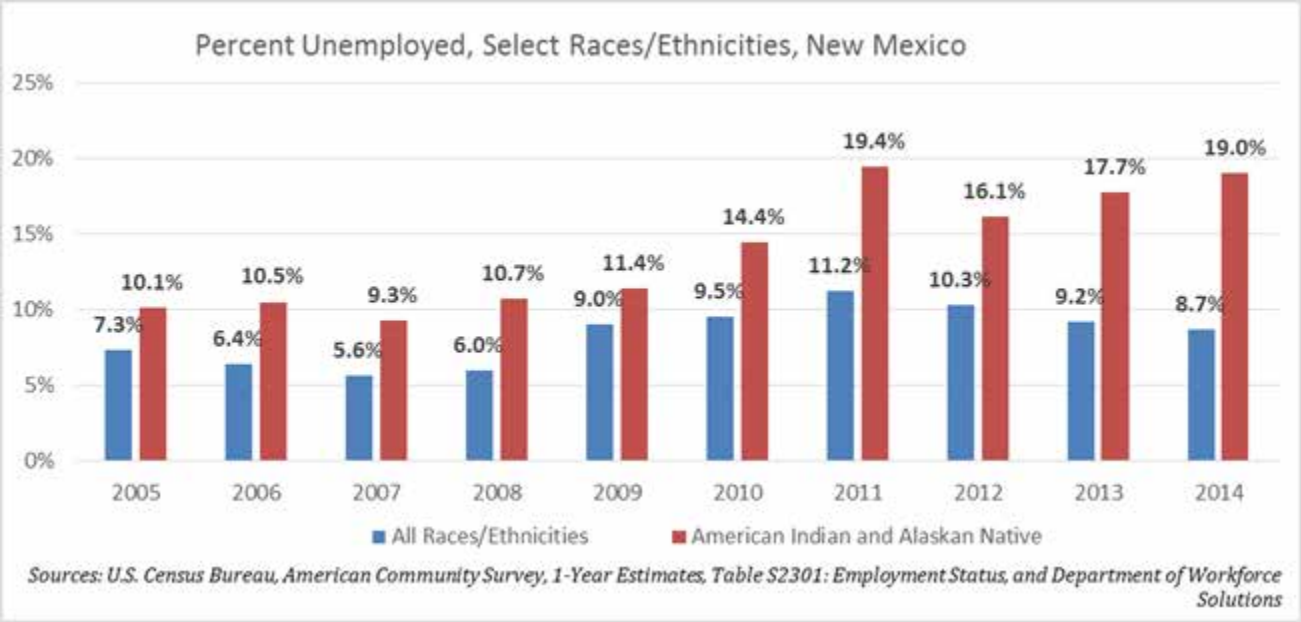
Nevertheless, the labor force participation rate of American Indians was 56.9 percent, 2.1 percentage points lower than the New Mexico average of 59.0 in 2014, and lower than the national average of 57.7 percent for all American Indians. This group, along with those persons that identify themselves as Black/African American in New Mexico, also experienced some of the highest

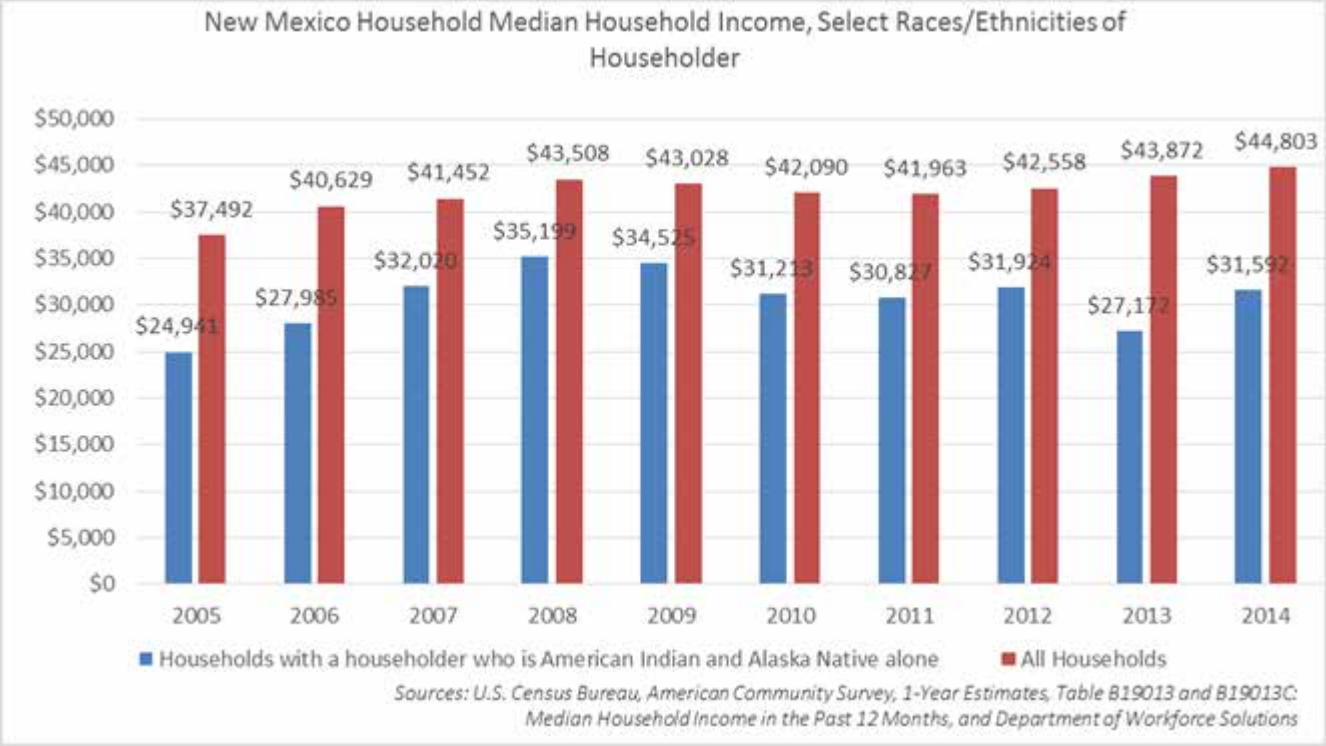
unemployment rates during that year. American Indian New Mexicans saw 19 percent of their labor force unemployed in 2014, the highest of all racial and ethnic groups.





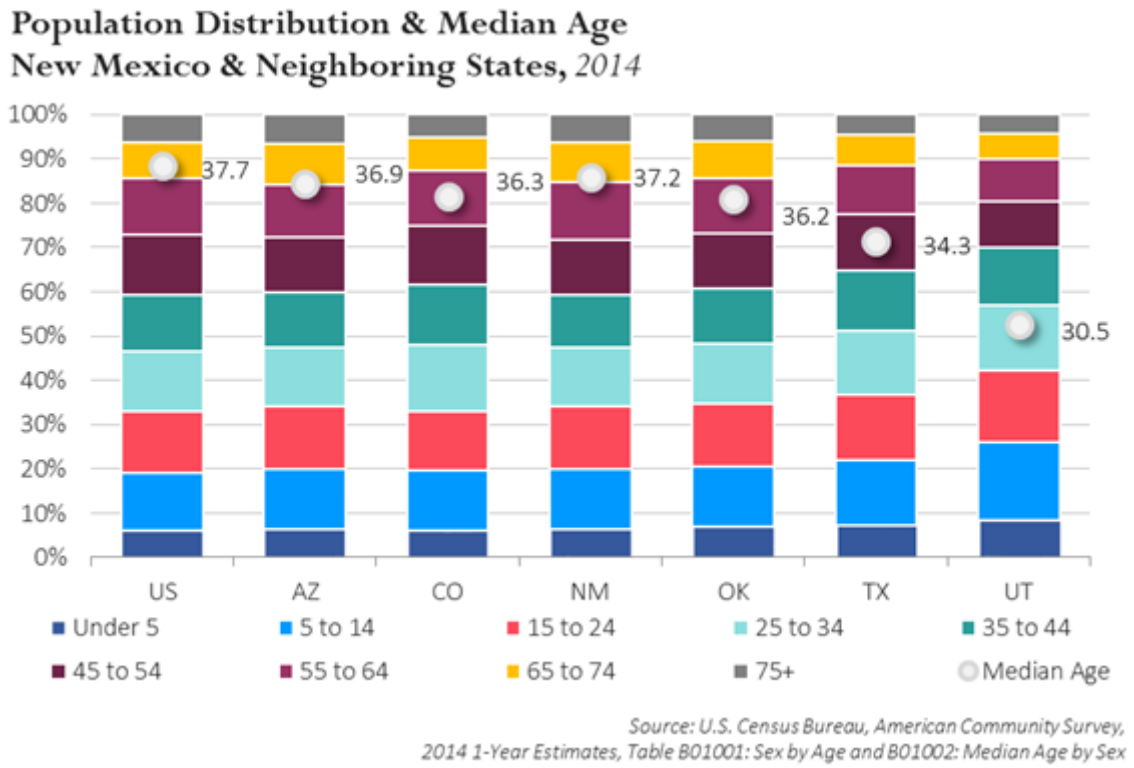

Percent Employed, Select Races/Ethnicities, New Mexico
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
58.2%
53.6%
58.2%
49.0%
57.7%
48.7%
58.7%
52.9%
56.1%
48.7%
54.1%
44.7%
53.7%
42.6%
53.5%
45.0%
53.5%
43.4%
53.4%
45.9%
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
All Races/Ethnicities
American Indian and Alaskan Native
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, Table S2301: Employment Status, and Department of Workforce Solutions


Percent Unemployed, Select Races/Ethnicities, New Mexico
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
7.3%
10.1%
6.4%
10.5%
5.6%
9.3%
6.0%
10.7%
9.0%
11.4%
9.5%
14.4%
11.2%
19.4%
10.3%
16.1%
9.2%
17.7%
8.7%
19.0%
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
All Races/Ethnicities
American Indian and Alaskan Native
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-Year Estimates, Table S2301: Employment Status, and Department of Workforce Solutions



OLDER INDIVIDUALS

As the oldest members of the baby boomer generation (referring to those born between 1946 and 1964) has moved into the over 65 age category, the nation has seen an increase in its elderly population. This trend is particularly noticeable in New Mexico. In 2014, the median age in the state was 37.2, which was older than any other neighboring state, but younger than the national median age (37.7).



In the same year, people 55 and older made up 28.2 percent of New Mexico's population. This was a larger share than that of the nation (27.1 percent) and all other neighboring states. New Mexico also had the smallest share of people aged between 25 and 44 years of age, compared to neighboring states and the nation. Between 1994 and 2014, the share of the population between the ages of 20 and 64 years—i.e. the majority of the working–age population—grew by about 30 percent. The portion of the population 65 and older grew by about 75 percent. In contrast to this, the state has a considerable under–25 population, making up 34.1 percent of the total population. This is equal to the percentage of under–25 year olds in Arizona, larger than that of the nation and Colorado, but still less than the share of people under–25 in each of Oklahoma, Texas and Utah.

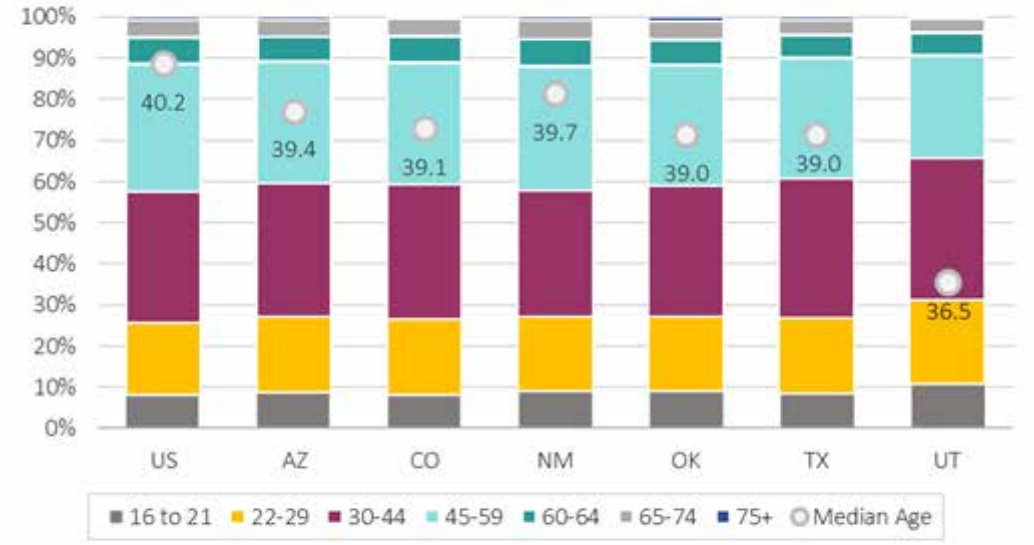
In 2014, nearly 77 percent of workers 25 to 44 years participated in the labor force, the highest rate of any other age cohort. Between 2009 and 2014, however, the labor force participation for this age cohort fell by 3.3 percentage points. The number of workers 55 to 64 years also declined by 3.3 percentage points during this time frame. Only 57.9 percent of this age group were still participating in the labor force in 2014.The group with the second highest rate of participation in the workforce were workers 45 to 54 years, at 76 percent. This group had a participation rate in 2009 of 78.2 percent. Labor force participation for workers between 16 and 19 years declined by 1.1 percentage points. Traditionally, less of a percentage of this age group participates in the labor force. Partly, this is because many people within this age group are still living as dependents with parents, possibly still continuing their education. Nevertheless, it is also true that competition increases in contracted labor markets, especially among workers with less experience or less developed skills, making it more difficult to obtain a job. Between 2009 and 2014, labor force participation grew for workers 65 to 74, the only age cohort that showed an increase. In this age group, the labor force participation rate grew by 1.6 percentage points.

The median age of New Mexico's labor force was 39.7 years in 2014, up from 39.5 in 2009. This represented the highest median age when compared with other neighboring states, and came closest to the median age for the U.S. labor force of 40.2 years. The median age of other neighboring states' labor forces ranged from Arizona's, at 39.4 years, to that of Utah, which had the lowest median age, at 36.5 years.

New Mexico's median age grew by 0.2 years from 2009 to 2014, the same age increase as the U.S., which rose from 40.0 in 2009 to 40.2 over the same time period. Out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia the state with the highest age increase was Utah. Although having the lowest median age in the nation in 2014, Utah's median age rose from 35.2 years in 2009 to 36.5 years in 2014. The District of Columbia showed the biggest fall in median wage, declining from 36.6 years in 2009 to 34.6 years in 2014.

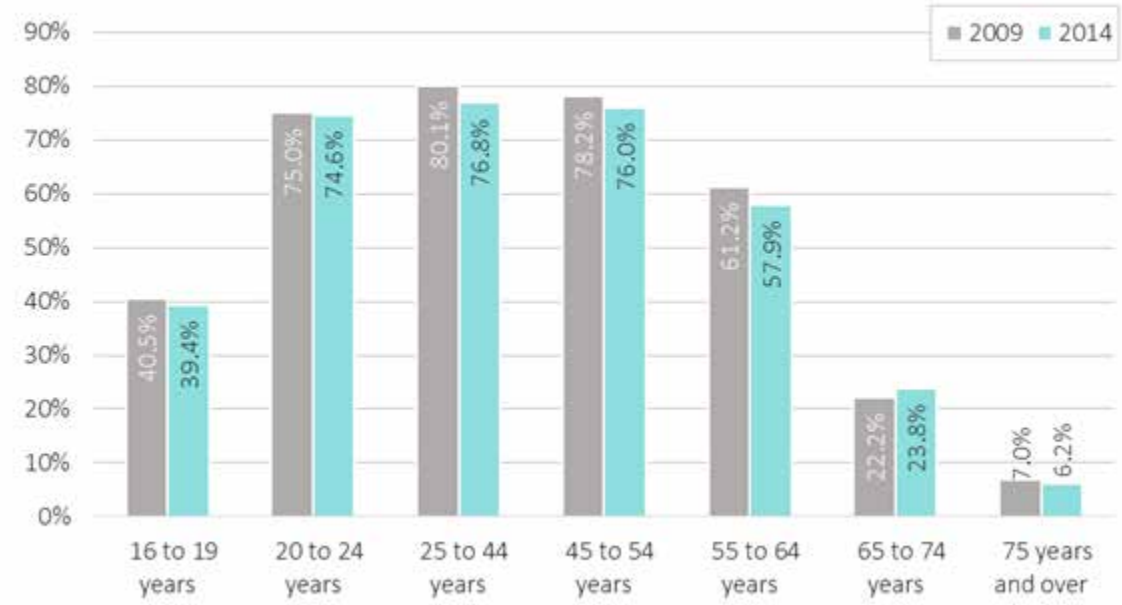
New Mexico's distribution of labor force participation is weighted towards older workers when compared with neighboring states. Workers 60 to 64 years account for 6.7 percent of the labor force and workers aged 65 to 74 make up 4.6 percent of the labor force. These rates are higher than the U.S. average, which was 6.5 percent and 4.2 percent, respectively. New Mexico's rate for these two age groups was also higher than our neighboring states. The state with the second highest rate of 60 to 64 year olds in the labor force amongst neighboring states was Colorado, with 6.6 percent. Oklahoma's labor force rate for workers aged 65 to 74 most closely resembled New Mexico, with 4.5 percent participating in the labor force. Workers between 22 and 29 years account for 18.3 percent of the labor force, and workers between 30 and 44 years account for 30.5 percent. In New Mexico, only 0.8 percent of workers 75 years and above participated in the labor force, matching the rate of Arizona and the U.S. for this age group. Oklahoma had the highest rate among neighboring states, with 1.1 percent of workers 75 and above participating in the labor force.

Labor Force Distribution & Workforce Median Age
New Mexico & Neighboring States, *2014*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014 1-Year Estimates, Table B23001: Sex by Age by Employment Status and Table B23013: Median Age by Sex for Workers 16 to 24 Years Data is for the labor force population 16 years and older. Median age is for workers 16 to 64.

Labor Force Participation by Age Cohort
New Mexico, *2009 & 2014*



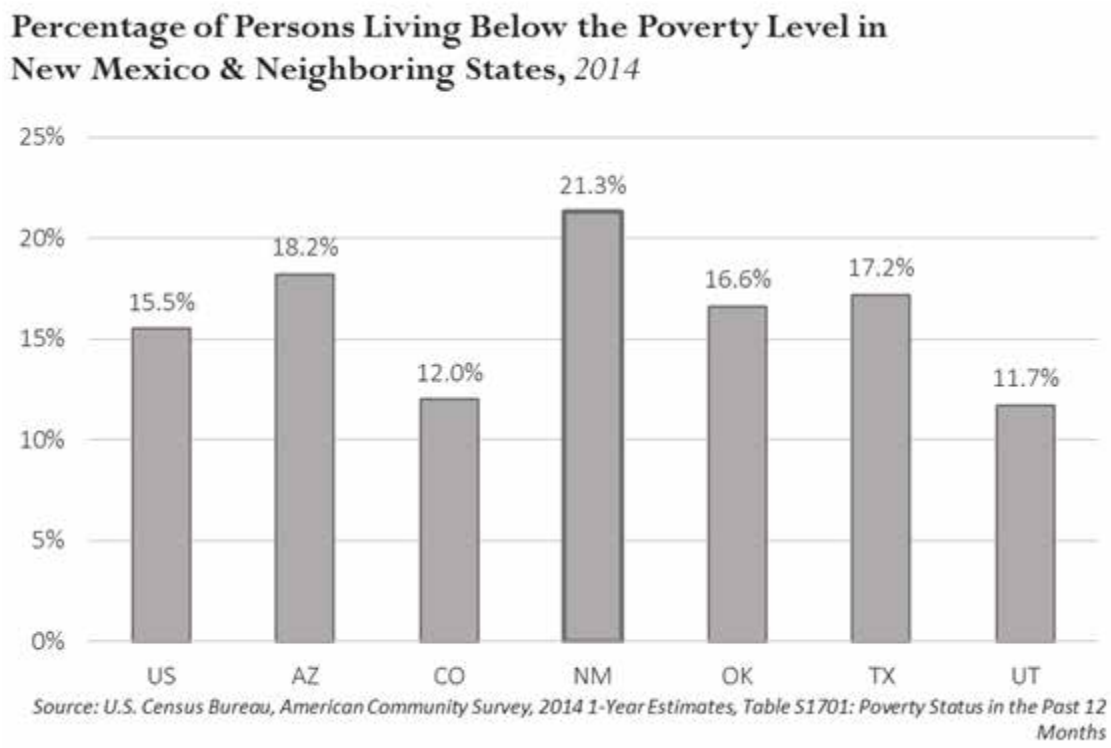
Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009 and 2014 1-Year Estimates, Table S2301: Employment Status

LOW INCOME

Reducing New Mexico's poverty level is an important goal in any plan to strengthen the economy, attract new business, and improve the living standards of the population. Poverty is a multifaceted issue that is not only strongly influenced by educational attainment and employment opportunities

but is deeply intertwined with a variety of societal factors such as purchasing power, health, and community development. Successfully reducing the state's poverty level and increasing income and employment would likely generate enhanced economic development opportunities that benefit all New Mexicans.

The percentage of people living below the poverty level in New Mexico was 21.3 percent in 2014, down from 21.9 percent. This percentage is above all neighboring states and almost six percentage points above the U.S. average of 15.1 percent. New Mexico has the largest share of people living below the poverty level than any other state in the U.S., except Mississippi (21.5 percent). Almost 35 percent of American Indians and over 25 percent of Hispanics/Latinos lived below the poverty level in 2014. Almost 36 percent of people with less than a high school graduation lived below the poverty level.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

In New Mexico, 5.4 percent of all households had no one living in the household age 14 and over who speaks English only or speaks English "very well". Households speaking an Asian and Pacific Island language had the highest rate, at 21.7 percent.

Limited English Speaking Households in New Mexico: No one age 14 and over speaks English only or speaks English "very well"

	Estimate
All households	5.4%
Households speaking Spanish	13.7%

	Estimate
Other Indo–European languages	11.9%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	21.7%
Other languages	8.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014 1–Year Estimates, Table S1602: Limited English Speaking Households

In New Mexico, 10.7 percent of people ages 65 and over speak English less than “very well”, compared to 4.7 percent of people ages 5 to 17 years old. In the prime working ages of 18 to 64 years old, 28.4 percent reported they speak English “very well” and 9.9 percent reported they speak English less than “very well”.

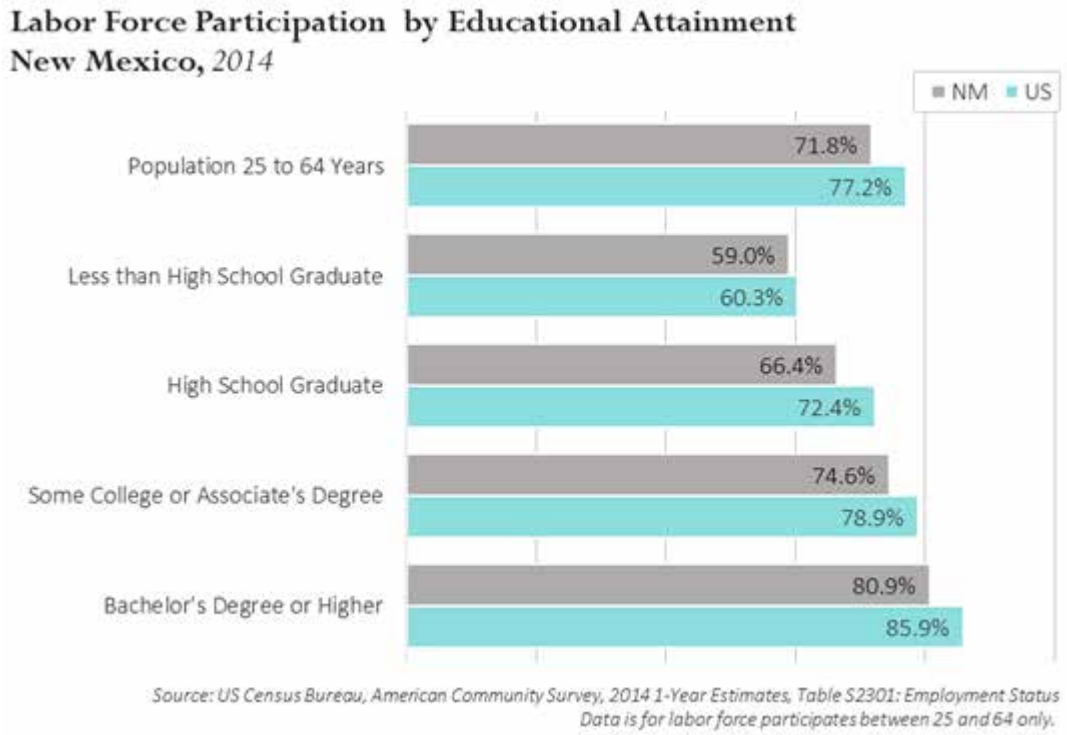
Ability to Speak English, by Age Group, New Mexico, 2014

-	Speak only English	Speak English "very well"	Speak English less than "very well"
5 to 17 years old	67.2%	28.1%	4.7%
18 to 64 years old	61.7%	28.4%	9.9%
65 years old and over	64.4%	24.9%	10.7%

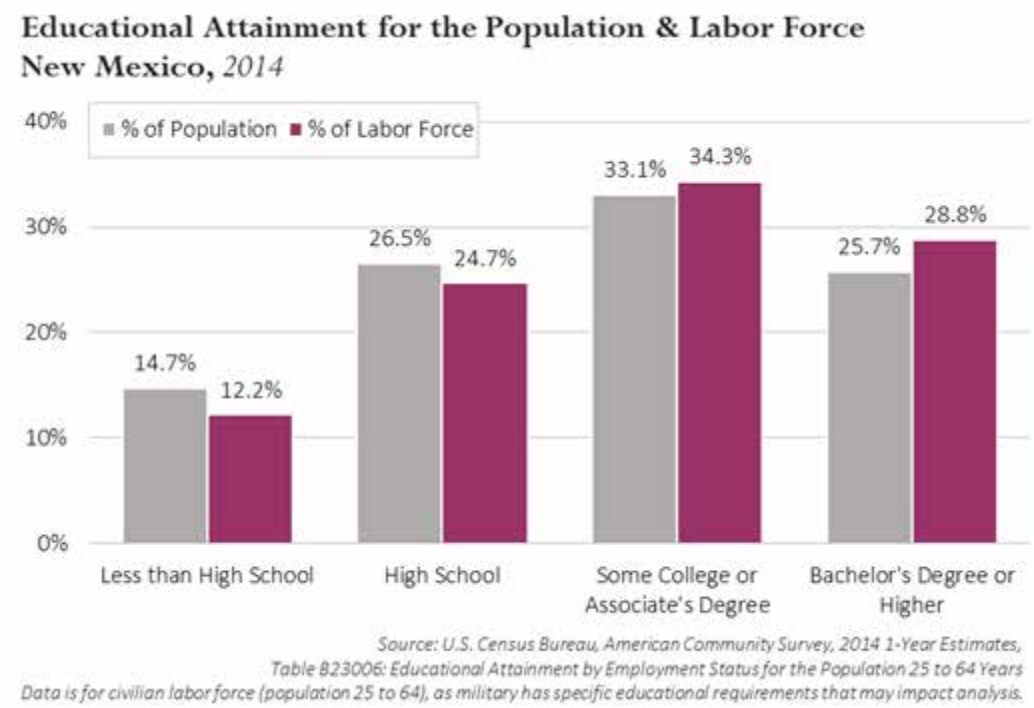
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey,2014 1–Year Estimates, Table C16004: Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over

EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

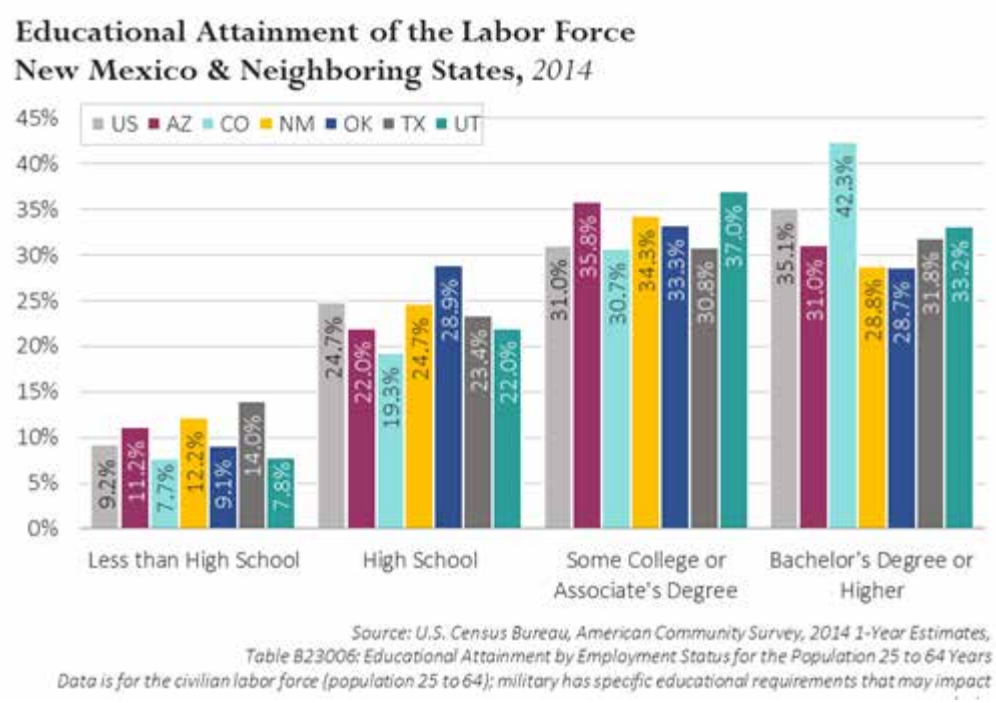
Labor force participation in New Mexico is lower than in the nation as a whole across all levels of educational attainment. People in New Mexico with a high school diploma or High School Equivalency had a labor force participation rate that was 6.0 percentage points lower than those educated equivalently in the nation as a whole in 2014. Only 59.0 percent of those without a high school diploma or High School Equivalency participated in the labor force. This rate is very similar to the U.S. as a whole, where 60.3 percent of individuals without a high school diploma or High School Equivalency participated in the labor force In 2014, 71.8 percent of people between 25 and 64 participated in the labor force in New Mexico. Of those with a bachelor’s degree or higher, 80.9 percent participated in the labor force. In 2014, individuals with some college or an associate’s degree in New Mexico had a labor force participation rate of 74.6 percent.



In 2014, 28.8 percent of New Mexico's labor force had earned a bachelor's degree or higher. This share was lower than the national average of 35.1 percent and was the second lowest when compared to surrounding states. Oklahoma had the smallest share of its labor force holding a bachelor's degree or higher, at 28.7 percent, while Colorado had the largest share, at 42.3 percent. The share of New Mexico's labor force that had earned a high school diploma was 24.7 percent, which was equal to the national average;the share of the state's population that had earned a high school diploma was 26.5 percent. About 85.3 percent of the population and 87.8 percent of the labor force had at least a high school diploma or equivalent, meaning that 12.2 percent of the labor force had not attained that level of education. This share was higher than the national average of 9.2 percent, and higher than the shares in surrounding states, except Texas, in which 14.0 percent of its labor force had not attained that level of education.

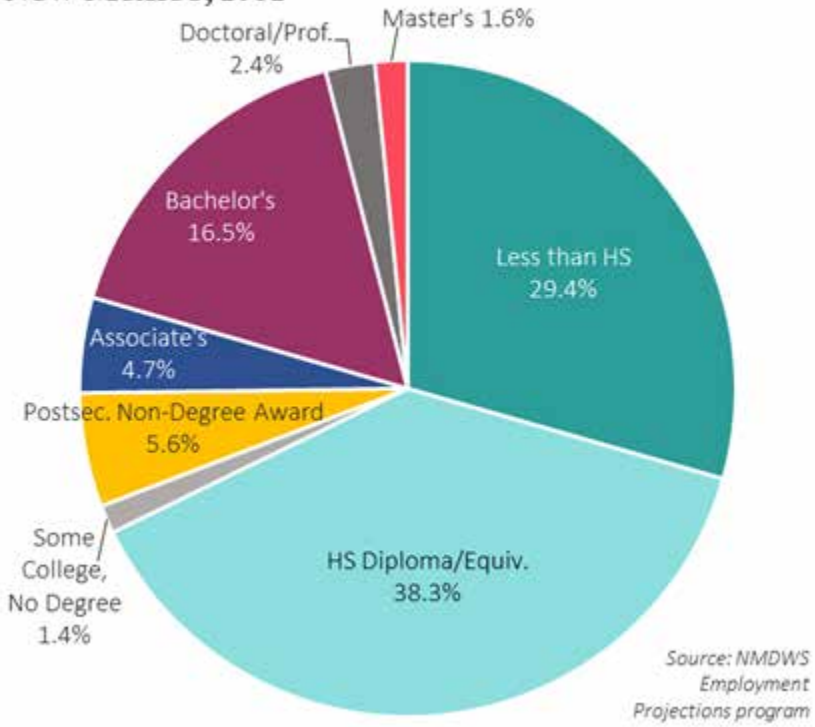


The educational attainment of New Mexico's labor force may be adequately suited to the current demands of the state's employers. Although nearly 29 percent of New Mexico's workforce had earned a bachelor's degree or higher as of 2014, only about 21 percent of jobs in the state actually required that level of education (as of 2012). Therefore, some workers may be employed in positions that do not demand the degree of education they have earned. It is important to note that education level does not always reflect the entire skill set needed for a particular position. In addition, employers may screen out candidates who have not earned a bachelor's degree for certain positions. Higher educational attainment often leads to long–term career advancement, and improves the likelihood that an employee will earn a promotion. Finally, states with workforces that are highly educated will have a competitive advantage in attracting new employers, especially those in industries related to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

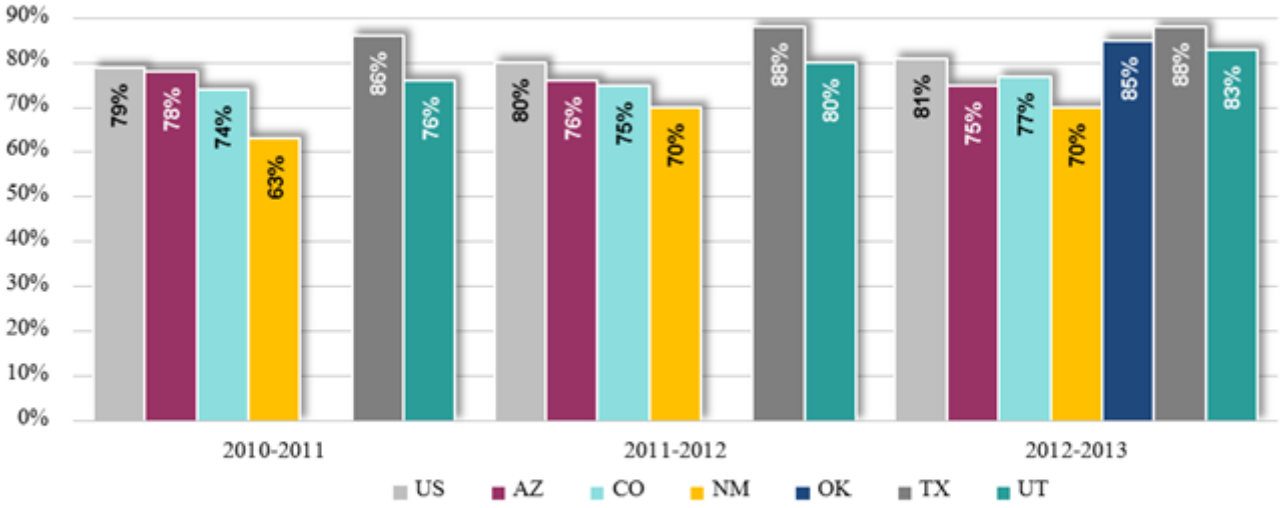


New Mexico's high school students have attained below–average graduation rates. For the 2012–2013 school year, New Mexico was ranked forty–eighth of all reporting states in public high school graduation rates. This measures the percentage of students who graduated in four years with a high school diploma. New Mexico's graduation rate was 63 percent in the 2010–2011 school year, much less than the national average of 79 percent. New Mexico's rate increased to 70 percent in the 2012–2013 school year, but it still fell short of the national average of 81 percent. New Mexico's graduation rate was the lowest of all neighboring states in the 2012–2013 school year; Arizona had the second lowest rate, at 75 percent, and Texas had the highest rate, at 88 percent.

Employment by Educational Requirement
New Mexico, *2012*



Graduation Rate
New Mexico, School years 2010-11 to 2012-13

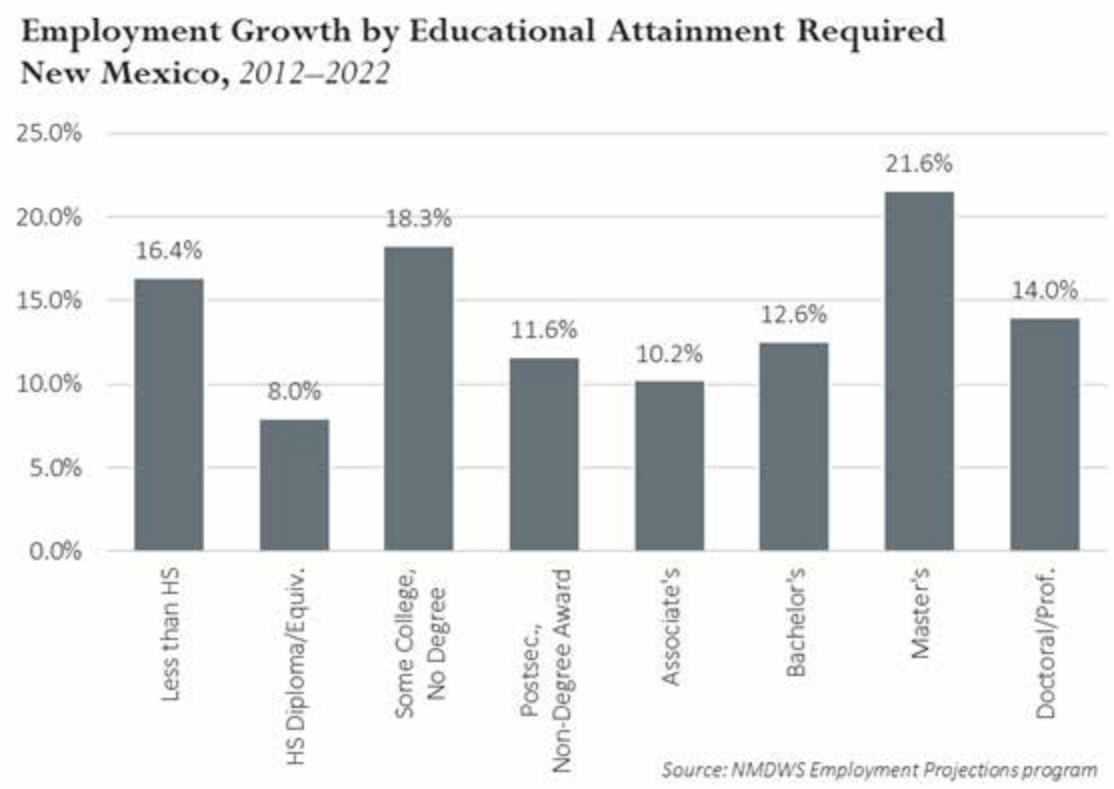


Source: National Center for Education Statistics
The adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) represents an estimate of the percentage of students who graduate in four years with a high school diploma.
Note: Oklahoma rates are not available for the 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 school years.

SKILLS GAPS

Understanding the future distribution of employment is imperative to developing new educational programs, and enhancing existing programs, that are responsive to market demand. The education of today's students should align with the needs of business so that workforce shortages do not develop or increase. Occupational employment projections provide critical information on worker demand. Coupled with supply data from educational institutions, educators and policy makers can focus efforts and outreach on key programs, geographies, and student populations, effectively ensuring that workforce demand and supply can move in the direction of equilibrium. The ultimate result of informed decision making is the reduction of skills mismatches and skills gaps, as workers successfully provide the skills demanded by employers and employers provide improved,quality job opportunities for New Mexico's workforce.

About two–thirds (68 percent) of New Mexico's jobs require a high school diploma/equivalent or less, based on standard occupational education requirements determined by the U.S. DOL. Occupations with this education requirement are projected to add approximately 66,600 jobs between 2012 and 2022; this represents a growth rate of 11.6percent and the largest numerical growth over the ten–year period when compared to jobs that have higher education requirements. However, the jobs that are projected to see the fastest rate of growth are jobs requiring a master's degree. Although these jobs will only expand by approximately 2,900 openings, this represents a high growth rate of 21.6 percent, given the smaller demand pool of about 16,400 jobs in 2022. Furthermore, jobs requiring a bachelor's degree. are expected to grow at a rate of 12.6 percent to a total of about 156,900 jobs in 2022, representing an increase of approximately 17,500 new jobs.



Between May 2012 and April 2015,over 55,000 WorkKeys assessments were taken by both employed and unemployed individuals. The count of skill level, by skill area and for all education

levels, appears below. A skills gap can be identified by comparing the WorkKeys results to the median skill level recommended for the STAR occupations listed in the Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations section.

WorkKeys Assessment Results – Count of Skill Level, by Skill Area, for all Education levels

Skill Area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Applied Mathematics	1,038	2,032	2,974	3,284	1,916	526	11,770		
Reading for Information	391	615	5,402	6,294	3,081	1,052	16,835		
Locating Information	1,070	3,087	9,753	2,601	39	16,550			
td>Applied Technology	133	48	26	22	6	235			
Business Writing	6	90	224	339	208	83	950		
Workplace Observation	790	1,279	3,207	1,457	474	31	7,238		
Listening for Understanding	8	22	351	776	850	255	2,262		
TOTAL	3,436	1,391	3,782	8,354	19,687	12,570	5,042	1,578	55,840

SKILLS GAP BY HIGHEST DEGREE

A skills gap can be identified by comparing the recommended median skill level for an occupation to the results of the WorkKeys assessments. For example, two STAR Occupations that require an associate's degree recommend a median test score of 5 in Reading for Information, but 235 assessments had a test score of below 5. This difference identifies a skills gap. All assessments that do not meet the median test score of at least one STAR occupation is highlighted in yellow. Please note that there were 10,225 assessments that had no education level indicated. This information has not been included in the tables below. Also excluded from the tables below were assessment results for skill areas that were not indicated as necessary for that STAR occupation.

ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE

Recommended Median Skill Level for STAR Occupations Requiring an Associate's Degree

Occupation	Applied Mathematics	Reading for Information	Locating Information	Business Writing	Workplace Observation
29–1141 Registered Nurses	5	5	4	4	3
29–2012 Medical and Clinical Lab Technicians	3	5	4		

WorkKeys Assessment Results – Count of Skill Level, by Select Skill Areas, Highest Degree = Associate

Skill Area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Applied Mathematics	22	–	–	55	129	284	224	67	781
Reading for Information	4	–	–	12	219	536	407	147	1,325
Locating Information	22	–	–	142	839	330	7	–	1,340
Business Writing	1	5	27	40	21	8	–	–	102
Workplace Observation	85	112	342	172	54	3	–	–	768

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Recommended Median Skill Level for STAR Occupations Requiring a Bachelor's Degree

Occupation	Applied Mathematics	Reading for Information	Locating Information	Applied Technology	Business Writing	Workplace Observation
25–2021 Elementary School Teachers	3	4	4			
25–2022 Middle School Teachers	3	4	4			
11–9111 Medical & Health Services Managers	3	4	4	3		
25–2031 Secondary School Teachers	4	5	5			
11–1021 General & Operations Managers	5	5	4	5	3	2
13–1111 Management analysts	3	4	4	3		
25–2012 Kindergarten Teachers	4	4	4			
15–1121 Computer Systems Analysts	5	4	4	3		

Occupation	Applied Mathematics	Reading for Information	Locating Information	Applied Technology	Business Writing	Workplace Observation
15–1133 Systems Software Developers	7	5	5			
25–2052 K–Elementary Special Ed Teachers	4	5	5			
21–1021 Child, Family and School Social Workers	4	4	4	3		

WorkKeys Assessment Results – Count of Skill Level, by Select Skill Areas, Highest Degree = Bachelor's

Skill Area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Applied Mathematics	4	20	55	151	217	115	562		
Reading for Information	9	4	85	299	416	233	1,046		
Locating Information	15	47	555	396	12	1,025			
Applied Technology	3	6	2	4	1	16			
Business Writing	7	18	53	49	29	156			
Workplace Observation	54	72	275	170	90	7	668		

DOCTORATE/PROFESSIONAL DEGREE

Recommended Median Skill Level for STAR Occupations Requiring a Doctorate/Prof. Degree

Occupation	Applied Mathematics	Reading for Information	Locating Information
29–1123 Physical Therapists	4	6	5
19–3031 Clinical, Counseling and School Psychologists	5	5	5

WorkKeys Assessment Results – Count of Skill Level, by Skill Area, Highest Degree= Doctorate

Skill Area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Applied Mathematics	4	–	–	2	3	5	10	6	30
Reading for Information	1	–	–	–	6	6	10	12	35

Skill Area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Locating Information	2	–	–	3	13	14	1	–	33

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR EQUIVALENT AND SOME COLLEGE, NO DEGREE

Recommended Median Skill Level for STAR Occupations Requiring a High School Diploma or Equivalent and Some College, No Degree

Occupation	Applied Mathematics	Reading for Information	Locating Information	Applied Technology	Business Writing	Workplace Observation	Listening for Understanding
49–9041 Industrial Machinery Mechanics	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
39–9031 Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	4	4	4				
43–1011 Supervisors of Office and Admin Workers	4	5	4	4	3	3	
41–3099 Sales Reps, Services, All Other	5	5	5	4	3		
43–3011 Bill and Account Collectors	3	4	4	3			
15–1151 Computer User Support Specialists	3	4	4	3	5		

WorkKeys Assessment Results – Count of Skill Level, by Skill Area, Highest Degree= High School Diploma or Equivalent

Skill Area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Applied Mathematics	372	843	1,398	1,552	817	167	5,149		
Reading for Information	170	260	2,686	3,294	1,441	395	8,246		
Locating Information	477	1,462	4,839	1,169	11	7,958			
Applied Technology	66	23	15	8	3	115			
Business Writing	3	62	139	187	95	21	507		
Workplace Observation	505	873	1,985	847	247	14	4,471		

Skill Area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Listening for Understanding	7	14	186	410	382	120	1,119		

LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL

Recommended Median Skill Level for STAR Occupations Requiring Less Than High School

Occupation	Applied Mathematics	Reading for Information	Locating Information
47–5013 Oil/Gas/Mining Svc Unit Operators	5	5	5

WorkKeys Assessment Results – Count of Skill Level, by Skill Area, Highest Degree= Less Than High School

Skill Area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Applied Mathematics	116	–	–	209	327	349	193	40	1,234
Reading for Information	42	–	–	72	531	469	134	26	1,274
Locating Information	99	–	–	289	746	159	1	–	1,294

MASTER'S DEGREE

Recommended Median Skill Level for STAR Occupations Requiring a Master's Degree

Occupation	Applied Mathematics	Reading for Information	Locating Information	Business Writing	Workplace Observation
11–9032 Elementary/Secondary Education Administrators	5	5	5	5	4
21–1012Edu./Guid/Sch/Vocational counselors	4	4	4	4	3

WorkKeys Assessment Results – Count of Skill Level, by Skill Area, Highest Degree= Master's

Skill Area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Applied Mathematics	–	–	–	7	17	34	69	48	175
Reading for Information	1	–	–	2	15	73	111	92	294
Locating Information	1	–	–	15	140	122	4	–	282
Business Writing	1	3	5	14	19	17	–	–	59
Workplace Observation	14	16	73	50	24	2	–	–	179

POSTSECONDARY, NON–DEGREE AWARD

Recommended Median Skill Level for STAR Occupations Requiring Postsec., Non–Degree Award

Occupation	Applied Mathematics	Reading for Information	Locating Information	Applied Technology
29–2061 Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses	4	5	4	
29–2041 Emergency Medical Techs and Paramedics	3	5	4	3
31–9091 Dental Assistants	3	4	4	

WorkKeys Assessment Results – Count of Skill Level, by Skill Area, Highest Degree= Trade/Proprietary School Certification

Skill Area	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Applied Mathematics	22	77	175	216	120	26	636		
Reading for Information	12	22	379	572	305	85	1,375		
Locating Information	43	196	899	190	1	1,329			
Applied Technology	1	6	2	3	2	14			

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in *Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce* above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in *Employers' Employment Needs* above. This must include an analysis of –

A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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

---

* Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled

Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

To address the strengths and weaknesses of New Mexico's economy and workforce conditions, the State's workforce system partners serve a broad spectrum of the state's population, providing training and services to adults and youth, including dislocated workers, low-income individuals, migrants and seasonal farm workers, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including older individuals, individuals with limited English-speaking proficiency, and individuals with disabilities. Workforce system partners are responsible for the delivery of a broad range of services focused on education, workforce education and training for this diverse pool of participants. Core and required partners agree through Memoranda of Understanding to make their core services available and seamless as directed by the operator of the Workforce Connection Center. These partners will also participate in cross-training, and establish with the local board areas, shared success indicators, operating strategies and procedures, and customer flow, where appropriate, for effective seamless service delivery.

The State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, the Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, as well as other key one-stop delivery system partner programs, are first briefly described below.**OTHER SECTIONS OF THIS PLAN PROVIDE MORE DETAILED INFORMATION REGARDING EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES, AND HOW THE PARTNERS WILL COORDINATE TO DELIVER SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA.**

- WIOA Adult, Dislocated and Youth - WIOA provides for career and training services at the State's 21 Workforce Connection Centers, also called one-stops. The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, in coordination with the Wagner-Peyser (WP) Employment Service (ES), are pivotal pieces of the one-stop delivery system, and the foundation of the workforce system. The system provides universal access to career and training services to meet the diverse needs of participants. WIOA made some significant reforms to how services are delivered in the one-stop delivery system to adults, dislocated workers, and youth, providing for enhanced access and flexibility for work-based training options, such as Registered Apprenticeship, on-the-job training, customized training, and incumbent worker training. Training is supported through a robust Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), comprised of entities with a proven capability of securing quality employment outcomes for participants. Other types of career and training services offered include comprehensive and specialized skill assessments, literacy activities, career planning, and labor market information.
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Services - A key role of this program is to identify potential matches between employers and jobseekers. Employment Services staff work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Local Workforce Development Boards and Workforce Connection Centers to provide universal access to an integrated array to workers, jobseekers, and employers, such as entry, review, and maintenance of job listings in the New Mexico Workforce Connection On-Line System (NMWCOS), specialized assessment and testing of applicants, job search assistance, reemployment services to unemployment insurance claimants, labor market information, evaluation and assessment of knowledge, skills, and abilities, and referral to training and support services. The program's service

delivery approach includes self-service, facilitated self-help, and staff-assisted services, and involves a number of other tools and resources.

- Adult Education - The Adult Education Program supports the development of the workforce by providing foundational education necessary for such employment, and can benefit from better connections to the State's one-stop center resources. Adult Education programs provide opportunities for learning basic literacy skills; placement and retention in employment and workplace programs; obtaining an High School Equivalency (HSE); enrolling in post-secondary education programs; and English Language Acquisition (ELA) and civics. Adult Education in New Mexico includes 27 programs that provide adult literacy, workplace adult education, family literacy instruction, ELA instruction, integrated English literacy and civics education and activities, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training.
- Vocational Rehabilitation - New Mexico has two vocational rehabilitation programs. The Commission for the Blind (Commission), an independent state agency, serves individuals who are blind or visually impaired, while the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), which is housed within the New Mexico Public Education Department, serves individuals with all other disabilities. Both programs focus on preparing their respective participants for suitable work. DVR serves all eligible New Mexicans with disabilities other than participants in vocational rehabilitation through the Commission. These programs provide guidance and counseling, transition services, job search and placement, assistive technology and equipment, as well as other services tailored to the specific needs of their respective clients. DVR and the Commission very occasionally provide service to mutual participants, and work together to avoid duplication of services.
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) - The Combined Plan incorporates the state plan of one of the WIOA required partner, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, submitted by the Aging and Long Term Services Department. SCSEP provides employment and training services to older New Mexicans. The program has two goals: assisting income-eligible persons, age 55 or older, to obtain employment; and providing community service through paid, part-time, training positions. Enrolled participants receive work experience and on-the-job training to develop new or improved skills; and support to overcome barriers to employment, such as lack of self-confidence, lack of English language fluency, or physical disabilities. Three organizations work together to provide services for these older adults with low incomes in New Mexico, including Goodwill Industries International, the National Indian Council on Aging, and the New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department.
- Other Required Partner Programs - WIOA designates a number of required partners in the one-stop system. If these partners carry out their activities in a given local area, they are required to make their core services available at one-stop centers, provide funding for one-stop administration, if co-located, and provide representation on the local boards, where applicable. Each local area has one comprehensive one-stop center that provides access to physical services of the core programs and other required partners. In addition to the core programs and the Senior Community Service Employment Program, the following partner programs provide access through the Workforce Connection Centers for individuals with multiple needs to access the services: Community Service Block Grant Employment and Training, Housing and Urban Development Employment and Training, Job Corps, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) Program, Native American programs, Postsecondary Vocational Education/Perkins Act programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamp Employment and Training programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act programs, Unemployment Insurance, and Veterans Title 38 Workforce programs.

B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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

WIOA PROGRAMS. The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, in coordination with the Wagner-Peyser (WP) Employment Service (ES), are pivotal pieces of the one-stop delivery system, and the foundation of the workforce system. The system provides universal access to career and training services to meet the diverse needs of participants. WIOA made some significant reforms to how services are delivered in the one-stop delivery system to adults, dislocated workers, and youth, providing for enhanced access and flexibility for work-based training options, such as Registered Apprenticeship, on-the-job training, customized training, and incumbent worker training.

Local boards should encourage more effective program design to keep youth, age 14 to 24, engaged through the following activities and services:

- tutoring and study skills training.
- alternative ways to obtain a secondary diploma.
- paid and unpaid work experience.
- occupational skills training.
- leadership development opportunities.
- financial literacy training.
- comprehensive guidance and counseling.

Local boards and youth providers are encouraged to consider the use of other promising practices and program partnerships to continuously engage youth, such as the following.

- Recruit youth in pairs by asking, “Who else do you know?,” and tap social media outlets.
- Develop a peer recruitment team as a paid work experience.
- Partner with or co-enroll youth with WIOA Adult, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, or TANF.
- Ensure appropriate links to entities that will encourage youth participation, i.e. local education agencies, housing authorities, law enforcement, Job Corp representatives, YouthBuild initiatives, etc.

WAGNER-PEYSER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. A key role of this program is to identify potential matches between employers and jobseekers. Employment Services staff work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Local Workforce Development Boards and Workforce Connection Centers to provide universal access to an integrated array to workers, jobseekers, and employers, such as entry, review, and maintenance of job listings in the New Mexico Workforce Connection On-Line System (NMWCOS), specialized assessment and testing of applicants, job search assistance, reemployment services to unemployment insurance claimants, labor market information, evaluation and assessment of knowledge, skills, and abilities, and referral to training and support services.

Employers must be engaged more effectively as partners in shaping and implementing workforce solutions. Core partners should work collectively to make businesses aware of all the public workforce system programs and services available and to educate businesses on how partner agencies work together to integrate service delivery to customers. A uniform single point of contact for all the programs would minimize the service calls made by the multiple programs. Training must

be administered to job seekers based on input from the companies that need and eventually will employ these job seekers.

Employers define a skilled worker by their job requirements and determine the skills and skill levels required of workers to be successful in the workplace. To ensure the workforce system works, employers must be engaged as partners to manage their demand for workers in a way that ensures the workforce system knows and understands their needs and expectations. This approach optimizes investments by targeting training resources to local and regional employer skill needs and employers will use a system that provides them with a clear point of entry, matches skills training with real world job requirements, and delivers reliable, skilled workers in a timely manner.

ADULT EDUCATION. Adult Education is an essential foundation for building New Mexico's economy and preparing New Mexico workers to fill the middle skill jobs of the future. The Adult Education Program supports the development of the workforce by providing foundational education necessary for employment, and can benefit from better connections to the State's one-stop center resources. Adult Education provides opportunities for learning basic literacy skills; placement and retention in employment and workplace programs; obtaining a High School Equivalency (HSE); enrolling in post-secondary education programs; and English Language Acquisition (ELA) and civics. Adult educators help adult students to design individual learning plans that correspond to their personal needs and goals.

The Adult Education program resides in the New Mexico Higher Education Department, and includes 27 programs that provide adult literacy, workplace adult education and literacy, family literacy instruction, English language acquisition instruction, integrated English literacy and civics education and activities, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training. As appropriate, these services are also provided in classes at local provider locations, in one-to-one tutoring, and in classes at employer workplaces. Increasingly, local programs are providing hybrid face-to-face/distance classes using various technology platforms. Most local providers are housed at community colleges and branch campuses.

Annually, Adult Education serves between 16,000 and 23,000 learners aged 16 and over, not enrolled in high school, and basic skills deficient, as follows.

- English Language Acquisition (ELA) 35-40%
- Low literacy (grades 0-4) 15-18% • Mid level (grades 5-8) 35-40%
- High literacy (grades 9+) 6-10%

Adult Education serves adults who are unemployed and employed adults, on public assistance, have disabilities, or are incarcerated adults. Participant barriers can include education and training deficits, language issues, child care and transportation problems, as well as isolation and geography. The Adult Education program is also challenged to serve students ranging from low-to-no literacy ("most in need") to those almost college ready. While one-third of participants come to the program already employed, their job and family situations are not always conducive to furthering their education.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION. New Mexico has two vocational rehabilitation programs. The Commission for the Blind (Commission), an independent state agency, serves individuals who are blind or visually impaired, while the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), which is housed within the New Mexico Public Education Department, serves individuals with all other disabilities. Both programs focus on preparing their respective participants for suitable work. DVR serves all

eligible New Mexicans with disabilities other than participants in vocational rehabilitation through the Commission. These programs provide guidance and counseling, transition services, job search and placement, assistive technology and equipment, as well as other services tailored to the specific needs of their respective clients. DVR and the Commission very occasionally provide service to mutual participants, and work together to avoid duplication of services.

The DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION serves New Mexicans with disabilities toward suitable employment. To be eligible for services an applicant must have a physical or mental impairment, which constitutes a substantial impediment to employment, and can benefit from DVR services in terms of an employment outcome. Services to participants are individualized and are based on a comprehensive evaluation of the person's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. Some of the types of services available include the following.

- Medical, psychological, and vocational evaluations
- Counseling and guidance
- Medical and psychological treatment
- Help with expenses due to participation in rehabilitation
- Job search and placement services
- Transition-to-work services for disabled high school students
- Supported employment persons with severe disabilities
- Rehabilitation technology
- Vocational and other training
- Disability and employment assessment
- Occupational licenses, tools, and other equipment
- Assistance with small-business plan development
- Interpreter services
- Help to maintain work
- Post-employment Services
- Special modifications to vehicles Vocational counseling and guidance by vocational rehabilitation counselors is the primary service to participants.

An Individualized Plan for Employment is developed in partnership with the participant, and legal guardian, when appropriate. This plan is the basis for what services will be provided, how the services will be provided, the timeline for services and how progress will be measured toward achieving the employment outcome. Any addition or change to planned services, the vocational goal, service providers or timeframes is accomplished by amendment to the service plan, which is again developed and approved by the participant and the VR counselor. Because each participant's needs and goals are individualized, services provided vary significantly between participants and plans. Some services are available to all participants, if needed to participate in services and achieve employment, such as assessment to determine eligibility and/or vocational rehabilitation needs, referral to services offered by other agencies that can aid in accomplishing vocational goals, interpreter services, rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility services, reader services, job search, placement and retention services and post-employment services.

The barriers to employment that DVR's participants face are as varied as the participants themselves. Each individual has unique challenges depending on impediments caused by a disability or disabilities; lack of available resources, supports, services and accommodations; socioeconomic factors; lack of family and other natural supports; limited or no access to

transportation; a limited job market; attitudinal barriers; cultural barriers; structural barriers and other factors.

COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND. The Commission for the Blind's customers fall in to one of two basic population groups, the first being individuals seeking to be employed and receiving vocational rehabilitation services, and the second being persons seeking to live independently in their homes and communities and receiving independent living services. While the Commission serves children, youth, adult, and older individuals, strategies in the WIOA state plan focus on the population of persons receiving vocational rehabilitation services who want to remain or become employed. The Commission typically opens a vocational rehabilitation case starting at age 14, and provides the following services:

- guidance and counseling,
- transition services that can include participation in a summer youth training program called STEP,
- assistive equipment, such as computers equipped with screen readers or screen enlargement software, specialized Braille computers, video magnifiers or other rehabilitation technology,
- assistive technology and other supports to become or remain employed in a specific job,
- six to nine months of intensive blindness skills training at the Commission's Orientation Center,
- six to nine months of training at a blindness training program in a different state,
- independent living training,
- assistive technology training,
- support attending college or graduate school,
- job placement services, and
- support in starting a self-employment business.

Vocational rehabilitation services are provided to individuals who need and can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services as it relates to an employment outcome. The services are provided through an Individualized Plan for Employment. The Commission for the Blind provides services through eight vocational rehabilitation counselors dispersed throughout the state. These counselors are required to obtain a graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling or closely related field and certification from the Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling. The Commission also operates a residential training program with eight highly qualified teachers in Alamogordo where individuals who are blind receive six to nine months of intensive training in Braille, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, personal management, home management, and industrial arts.

The Commission's challenges include the need to provide intensive services to overcome blindness, particularly for clients needing to overcome the inability to read and access printed materials, live independently, use technology, travel safely and independently, or access transportation, as well as the lack of public transportation in rural areas. Other significant challenges for the Commission include having to serve a rapidly growing population of children with a condition called Optic Nerve Hypoplasia, which is now the leading cause of blindness in children and which has increased by 600 percent in the last 30 years, as well as a growing number of persons with diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma, and a growing population of seniors with age-related macular degeneration, but who are wanting to continue to work. Additionally, the Commission is seeing a population of blind transition students who are graduating from public schools without adequate Braille and other blindness skills, requiring the agency to provide more intensive training.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP). The Combined Plan incorporates the plan of one of the WIOA required partners, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), submitted by the Aging and Long Term Services Department. SCSEP provides employment and training services to older New Mexicans. The program has two goals: assisting income-eligible persons, age 55 or older, to obtain employment; and providing community service through paid, part-time, training positions. Enrolled participants receive work experience and on-the-job training to develop new or improved skills; and support to overcome barriers to employment, such as lack of self-confidence, lack of English language fluency, or physical disabilities. Participants are encouraged to take advantage of all available training offered by SCSEP providers, the WIOA programs, the Workforce Connection Centers, and other training sources. Trainees are placed in community service positions within governmental entities or private, not-for-profit organizations. Three organizations work together to provide services for these older adults with low incomes in New Mexico, including Goodwill Industries International, the National Indian Council on Aging, and the New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. WIOA designates a number of required partners in the one-stop system. If these partners carry out their activities in a given local area, they are required to make their core services available at one-stop centers, provide funding for one-stop administration, if co-located, and provide representation on the local boards, where applicable. Each local area has one comprehensive one-stop center that provides access to physical services of the core programs and other required partners.

To address the strengths and weaknesses of New Mexico's economy and workforce conditions, the State's workforce system partners serve a broad spectrum of the state's population, providing training and services to adults and youth, including dislocated workers, low-income individuals, migrants and seasonal farm workers, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including older individuals, individuals with limited English-speaking proficiency, and individuals with disabilities. Workforce system partners are responsible for the delivery of a broad range of services focused on education, workforce education and training for this diverse pool of participants.

Core and required partners agree through Memoranda of Understanding to make their core services available and seamless as directed by the operator of the Workforce Connection Center. These partners will also participate in cross-training, and establish with the local board areas, shared success indicators, operating strategies and procedures, and customer flow, where appropriate, for effective seamless service delivery.

C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

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

WIOA ADULT, DISLOCATED AND YOUTH. WIOA programs provide for career and training services at the State's 21 Workforce Connection Centers, also called one-stops. The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, in coordination with the Wagner-Peyser (WP) Employment Service (ES), are pivotal pieces of the one-stop delivery system, and the foundation of the workforce system. The system provides universal access to career and training services to meet the diverse needs of participants.

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions provides oversight of WIOA programs by contracting with four Local Workforce Development Boards to provide a variety of services, such as job training and employment services. The CEOs in each local area serve as the local grant recipients for WIOA funds allocated to the local area. The State Administrative Entity allocates WIOA funds for services to youth, adults, and dislocated workers based on the U.S. Department of Labor-mandated formulas. Availability of WIOA funds is predicated upon receipt of federal allocations, and subject to required formula disbursements and rescission. Upon receipt of a fully executed grant agreement and all required attachments, the funds are made available to the local boards.

WAGNER-PEYSER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions also administers Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, which it does from the state level through its Employment Services Division, along with the administration of Trade Adjustment Assistance, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Rapid Response, and Veterans programs. NMDWS receives funding from USDOL to hire and oversee state merit staff responsible for direct delivery of the Wagner Peyser employment services and the other related services to jobseekers and employers. Merit staff is located throughout 18 field offices and the programs are co-located with the WIOA programs in every local board area.

Employment Services are provided as part of the one-stop delivery system. Currently, each local workforce development area has at least one comprehensive workforce development center that includes, at a minimum, three partners: WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, and access to Unemployment Insurance services. Each Employment Services field office is assigned a site manager who ensures the workforce centers are universally accessible, customer centered, and training is job-driven. This includes providing easy access to and assistance with workforce related activities, such as looking for a job, exploring work preparation and career development services, as well as seamless referral to WIOA employment, on-the-job-training, and occupational training programs. Employment Services staff follow required guidelines regarding referral and placement.

NM WORKFORCE CONNECTION ON-LINE SYSTEM (NMWCOS). NMWCOS gives employers access to a database of job seekers in NM. Employers can enter, update, and archive job listings securely. The New Mexico Workforce Connection On-Line System is available free of charge to employers and jobseekers. Employers can post their own jobs or provide job listing information to Workforce Connection Center staff for the matching and referral of qualified job seekers. Workforce Connection Center staff can access both employer job listings and job seeker accounts entered into the system. The job listing information allows Workforce Connection Center staff to evaluate the hiring requirements of the employer, as well as the qualifications of the job seeker.

The workforce system also supports employers by providing customized screening and referral of qualified participants in career and training services to employers; customized employment-related services to employers, employer associations, or other such organizations on a fee-for-service basis that are in addition to labor exchange services available to employers under Wagner-Peyser; and, activities to provide business services and strategies that meet the workforce investment needs of area employers, as determined by the local boards and consistent with their local plans.

ADULT EDUCATION. The Adult Education Program supports the development of the workforce by providing foundational education necessary for such employment, and can benefit from better connections to the State’s one-stop center resources. Adult Education programs provide opportunities for learning basic literacy skills; placement and retention in employment and workplace programs; obtaining an HSE; enrolling in post-secondary education programs; and English

Language Acquisition (ELA) and civics. The Adult Education program resides in the New Mexico Higher Education Department, and includes 27 programs that provide adult literacy, workplace adult education and literacy, family literacy instruction, English language acquisition instruction, integrated English literacy and civics education and activities, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training. As appropriate, these services are also provided in classes at local provider locations, in one-to-one tutoring, and in classes at employer workplaces. Increasingly, local programs are providing hybrid face-to-face/distance classes using various technology platforms. Most local providers are housed at community colleges and branch campuses; one is at Alamo Navajo school district; and four are at community-based organizations.

Annually, Adult Education serves between 16,000 and 23,000 learners aged 16 and over, not enrolled in high school, and basic skills deficient. This includes adults who are unemployed and employed adults, on public assistance, have disabilities, or are incarcerated adults. All Adult Education a programs provide services free of charge to the community, and all books and necessary materials are provided.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION. New Mexico has two vocational rehabilitation programs. The Commission for the Blind (Commission), an independent state agency, serves individuals who are blind or visually impaired, while the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), which is housed within the New Mexico Public Education Department, serves individuals with all other disabilities. Both programs focus on preparing their respective participants for suitable work. DVR serves all eligible New Mexicans with disabilities other than participants in vocational rehabilitation through the Commission. These programs provide guidance and counseling, transition services, job search and placement, assistive technology and equipment, as well as other services tailored to the specific needs of their respective clients. DVR and the Commission very occasionally provide service to mutual participants, and work together to avoid duplication of services.

DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation serves New Mexicans with disabilities toward suitable employment. Services to participants are individualized and are based on a comprehensive evaluation of the person's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. Vocational counseling and guidance by vocational rehabilitation counselors is the primary service to participants. An Individualized Plan for Employment is developed in partnership with the participant, and legal guardian, when appropriate. This plan is the basis for what services will be provided, how the services will be provided, the timeline for services and how progress will be measured toward achieving the employment outcome. Because each participant's needs and goals are individualized, services provided vary significantly between participants and plans. Some services are available to all participants, if needed to participate in services and achieve employment, such as assessment to determine eligibility and/or vocational rehabilitation needs, referral to services offered by other agencies that can aid in accomplishing vocational goals, interpreter services, rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility services, reader services, job search, placement and retention services and post-employment services.

COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND. The Commission for the Blind's customers fall in to one of two basic population groups, the first being individuals seeking to be employed and receiving vocational rehabilitation services, and the second being persons seeking to live independently in their homes and communities and receiving independent living services. While the Commission serves children, youth, adult, and older individuals, strategies in the WIOA state plan focus on the population of persons receiving vocational rehabilitation services who want to remain or become employed. The Commission typically opens a vocational rehabilitation case starting at age 14. Vocational

rehabilitation services are provided to individuals who need and can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services as it relates to an employment outcome. The services are provided through an Individualized Plan for Employment. The Commission for the Blind provides services through eight vocational rehabilitation counselors dispersed throughout the state. These counselors are required to obtain a graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling or closely related field and certification from the Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling.

The Commission also operates a residential training program with eight highly qualified teachers in Alamogordo where individuals who are blind receive six to nine months of intensive training in Braille, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, personal management, home management, and industrial arts. The Commission's challenges include the need to provide intensive services to overcome blindness, particularly for clients needing to overcome the inability to read and access printed materials, live independently, use technology, travel safely and independently, or access transportation, as well as the lack of public transportation in rural areas. Other significant challenges for the Commission include having to serve a rapidly growing population of children with a condition called Optic Nerve Hypoplasia, which is now the leading cause of blindness in children and which has increased by 600 percent in the last 30 years, as well as a growing number of persons with diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma, and a growing population of seniors with age-related macular degeneration, but who are wanting to continue to work. Additionally, the Commission is seeing a population of blind transition students who are graduating from public schools without adequate Braille and other blindness skills, requiring the agency to provide more intensive training.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP). The Combined Plan incorporates the plan of one of the WIOA required partners, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), submitted by the Aging and Long Term Services Department. SCSEP provides employment and training services to older New Mexicans. The program has two goals: assisting income-eligible persons, age 55 or older, to obtain employment; and providing community service through paid, part-time, training positions. Enrolled participants receive work experience and on-the-job training to develop new or improved skills; and support to overcome barriers to employment, such as lack of self-confidence, lack of English language fluency, or physical disabilities. Participants are encouraged to take advantage of all available training offered by SCSEP providers, the WIOA programs, the Workforce Connection Centers, and other training sources. Trainees are placed in community service positions within governmental entities or private, not-for-profit organizations. Three organizations work together to provide services for these older adults with low incomes in New Mexico, including Goodwill Industries International, the National Indian Council on Aging, and the New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department.

OTHER REQUIRED PARTNER PROGRAMS. WIOA designates a number of required partners in the one-stop system. If these partners carry out their activities in a given local area, they are required to make their core services available at one-stop centers, provide funding for one-stop administration, if co-located, and provide representation on the local boards, where applicable. Each local area has one comprehensive one-stop center that provides access to physical services of the core programs and other required partners.

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

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

1. VISION

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

NMDWS aims to deliver job-driven training and opportunities and business services for New Mexico citizens and employers, through its locally administered, integrated service delivery system of Workforce Connection Centers, throughout the state. NMDWS accomplishes its goals by focusing on the priorities set by the Governor of the State of New Mexico, Susana Martinez.

VISION STATEMENT: The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions will be a leader in and a facilitator of a competitive workforce for the benefit of all New Mexicans. Governor's vision for youth "Leverage resources and eliminate duplication which calls for the alignment of community, regional and state organizations and agencies in order to provide youth the support they need to achieve education and employment success." MISSION STATEMENT: Educate, Empower, and Employ.

GOALS: To be a business-driven department, understanding the needs of all employers with a focus on the employability of all New Mexicans; to be an integral part of all economic development and education initiatives; to be efficient and responsive to the diverse needs of New Mexico's employers and workforce; and to be a "GATEWAY" to employment.

2. GOALS

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

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

---

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

** Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

Governor's Key Workforce System Goals

- The workforce system will become an employer-driven system, and is not driven by government agencies, public education systems, or program providers.
- The workforce system will continuously strive to maintain the maximum allowed flexibility to approve programs, allocate funding, measure outcomes and refine programs and funding as needed to drive business growth through an effective model for achieving employability.
- The workforce system will exist to serve two customer groups: Employers who can grow the state's economy and revenue through a prospering and expanding business which relies, in a large part, on a trained, competent, and employable workforce; and New Mexico citizens who must strive to remain employable and skilled for current and future jobs.
- The workforce system will continuously work toward the alignment of resources, policies, and metrics to ensure the workforce system meets the employability requirements of business.

3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

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

Appendix I, Performance Goals for the Core Programs, includes the New Mexico's expected levels of performance based on primary indicators of performance for core programs, as described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. The State has also reached agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan. As such, Appendix I also includes the the core programs' negotiated performance targets for all measures not considered "baseline." "Baseline" indicators will not be used in the end of the year performance calculations and will not be used to determine failure to achieve adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. New Mexico is expected to collect and report on all indicators, including those that that have been designated as "baseline". The actual performance data reported by States for indicators designated as "baseline" in the first two years of the Combined Plan will serve as baseline data in future years.

4. ASSESSMENT

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

The State will continue to assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce investment system in New Mexico in relation to the strategic vision and goals and use results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements. The State Workforce Development Board, which is appointed by the Governor to provide vision and direction for the workforce system, is required to develop and improve the statewide WIOA-funded activities and the one-stop delivery system, including development of linkages to ensure coordination and prevent duplication among the programs and activities. The Board fulfills this function by providing direction for the development of

the WIOA Strategic Plan and developing comprehensive state performance measures to assess the effectiveness of workforce investment activities. To assist the board in fulfilling its duties, it establishes committees to provide oversight and direction in the following areas.

- To promote and support business engagement.
- To coordinate program data to evaluate the return on investment of workforce programs and services.
- To design systems and programs that coordinate and leverage WIOA resources.
- To coordinate state agency efforts to progress toward comprehensive, customer-driven one-stop centers.

The Board also reviews, evaluates and reports annually on the performance of all workforce development activities administered by state agencies involved with workforce development. Key areas of focus include developing linkages with the public education and higher education agencies to ensure coordination of vocational education, apprenticeship, adult education and literacy, employment training programs and vocational rehabilitation programs with other workforce development and training programs. Any problems identified by the State Board will be included in the annual report on strategic plan implementation and the measures that will be taken to address those problems.

C. STATE STRATEGY

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

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

This information addresses II.c.1, as well as II.c.2, directly below, regarding State Strategy.

The state's workforce system is made up of numerous programs, services, and initiatives administered by multiple governmental entities, including state agencies, educational institutions, and education and training providers. System partners are responsible for the delivery of a wide range of workforce education and training programs and related services, as well as education programs that support career preparation and advancement. This interrelated system of programs and agencies often serve common customers and are charged with achieving similar employment and education outcomes for their targeted customer groups.

Because meeting the challenge of preparing our workforce requires setting ambitious goals, clear direction, a comprehensive framework and a statewide commitment to their accomplishment, the strategic planning process was designed to identify and focus on issues that affect multiple system programs and agencies or address broader workforce issues. Several key issues were identified that will be addressed by system partners during the strategic plan period. The following discusses the State's specific strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals, which also take into account the state of New Mexico's economy and workforce, the State's workforce development and education and training activities, and activities to address the needs of target and special populations previously discussed. The Operational Elements section of this report provides more detail about the activities to be conducted to achieve these strategic priorities.

Strengthen workforce development and education linkages.

This strategy reflects continued focus on aligning adult education and literacy, occupational training, and postsecondary education in support of workforce development needs. Having a common vision among state partners and local providers for how adult education aligns with core programs and one-stop partners is critical to establishing strong partnerships with core programs and other necessary community partners to successfully serve adult learners. This strategy involves:

- improving alignment between workforce training and education and promote cross-agency planning, communication, and goal setting between the Adult Education Program and workforce system partners through State Board and State Administrative Entity partnerships; and
- working to improve developmental education programs and curricula by: collaborating with employers and industry organizations to ensure postsecondary and adult education curricula

are relevant to the needs of growing industry sectors and credentials validated by employers; integrating remedial material directly into occupational skills training to ensure postsecondary and adult education remedial course work and curricula are relevant to the job market; improving adult education and postsecondary collaboration and curriculum alignment to provide better remediation for matriculated postsecondary students; and leveraging resources across workforce development and the Adult Education Program, when possible.

Emphasize work-based experiences for target populations.

WIOA places a keen emphasis on work-based experiences across target groups, particularly youth, individuals with barriers to employment, and individuals with disabilities, as a means to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or reenter competitive employment. WIOA also provides enhanced access and flexibility for work-based training options, such as Registered Apprenticeship, on-the-job (OJT), customized, and incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and internships. Registered Apprenticeship should be used more often as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers and industries. OJT continues to be a key method of delivering training services to adults and dislocated workers, and states and local areas have the flexibility under WIOA to increase the reimbursement level to up to 75 percent. Incumbent worker training can be used to help avert potential layoffs of employees, or to increase the skill levels of employees so they can be promoted. Transitional jobs are a new type of work-based training allowed under WIOA that allows local boards to use up to 10 percent of their adult and dislocated worker funds to provide subsidized time-limited work experiences for individuals with barriers to employment. In addition, by offering internship opportunities to college students, companies can improve the workforce pipeline and identify talented individuals who they can hire and keep in New Mexico after they graduate. As such, workforce system partners together will work to engage businesses more effectively as partners in shaping and implementing this workforce solution by:

- promoting the value of occupational learning through paid work experience on the job, such as through the development of apprenticeships, paid internships, incumbent worker or customized training, and transitional jobs;
- encouraging public/private partnerships among business, education, community and civic organizations, and economic development to create work-based training opportunities that both feed career pathways for job seekers and satisfy job-driven strategies of employers and industries;
- using skills assessments and credentialing to promote the value of job ready individuals to potential employers in developing work-based experiences; and
- exploring the offerings of other related programs, outside of the state plan, that offer opportunities to help individuals gain increased skills and experience that can lead to potential future job opportunities and employment.

Emphasize broader participation in career pathways and sector strategies.

Improving the skills, knowledge, and credentials of American workers is critical to economic stability and growth. WIOA emphasizes career pathways and sector strategies as effective strategies for increasing the employability, employment, earnings, and other outcomes for job seekers. The new law requires states and localities to collaborate with adult education, postsecondary education, and other partners to establish career pathways systems that make it easier for individuals to attain the skills and credentials needed for jobs in their regional economy, as well as to develop effective sector partnerships. Effective sector strategies tend to be occupationally focused and driven by employers organized within a sector. Effective career pathway efforts may be developed and

operate mainly within community and technical colleges, but need to have considerable input from employers in growth sectors. In addition, the selection of training services should always be conducted in a manner that maximizes customer choice, is linked to in-demand occupations, informed by training provider performance, and coordinated, to the extent possible with other sources of assistance. As such, workforce system partners will work towards developing and sustaining innovative approaches to sector strategies and career pathways by:

- coordinating strategic planning efforts around high-demand sectors with local industries, community colleges, adult education programs, and workforce boards as a means to building and leveraging those partnerships;
- incentivizing collaboration between local boards, and education and training providers to explore career pathway models that begin in community colleges and combine classroom instruction and academic credential attainment with paid work experience, including such models that integrate basic skills instruction with postsecondary courses; and
- supporting the needs of regional economies by using and relying on labor market analysis and other information, such as job vacancy postings: to identify and capitalize on areas with growth opportunity and gaps in service where workforce development activities can be strengthened; to educate businesses on the types of customized solutions that can be developed to meet their needs; and to inform regional strategies and local decision making and policies.

Increase coordination efforts between employment and training activities and partner programs to improve the quality of participants' experiences and interactions with the workforce system.

WIOA emphasizes the need for states and local boards, workforce center operators and partners to increase coordination of programs and resources to support a comprehensive system that seamlessly provides integrated services that are accessible to all jobseekers, workers and businesses. In an effort to govern the core programs as one system, the core partners have come together to mutually assess the strategic needs of each program and identify areas where service strategies can be aligned. This strategy is particularly critical as it relates to activities carried out in the local area for target populations, including recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, as well as for individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities. Reassessing the one-stop delivery system and what is needed to achieve seamless service delivery models that put the customer first is particularly critical as it relates to activities carried out in the local area for the target populations. As such, to ensure the workforce system meets the employment and skill needs of all workers and employers, system partners will:

- work to align resources to support integrated service delivery to ensure that interested partners and agencies - whether focused on education, workforce development, or human and social services - are aware of a joint commitment for improved collaboration and coordination across programs and funding sources;
- formalize points of contact within partner programs to provide for more seamless referral processes and more robust follow-up activities to ensure positive outcomes of participants referred to other partner programs;
- improve ability of staff in the workforce centers to assist all individuals, including individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment by providing coordinated technical assistance and staff training and development for one-stop centers, partners, and eligible training providers on the provision of services to individuals with barriers to employment;

- identify and coordinate outreach efforts to shared customers, as well as the provision of information and customized solutions to shared employers, where appropriate;
- support universal accessibility to services and products for all customers, including special and targeted populations, i.e. dislocated workers, low-income individuals, migrants and seasonal farm workers, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including older individuals, individuals with limited English-speaking proficiency and/or basic skills deficiency, and individuals with disabilities; and
- work to continuously improve quality of services by periodically and collectively assessing common performance outcomes, customer service experiences, and the strength of collaborative efforts across partners, as a means to identify and expand the most effective workforce activities within New Mexico's workforce development system.

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

This response is covered in the previous section, II.c.1, above.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that support the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II.(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

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

State Board Overview The State Workforce Development Board is appointed by the Governor to provide vision and direction for the workforce system and make recommendations to the Governor regarding the workforce system and its overall effectiveness. The State Workforce Development Board and the Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions work in collaboration to ensure the Governor's vision for workforce development is implemented successfully.

The State Workforce Development Board is comprised of the following positions in accordance with WIOA:

• *The Governor*

• *Representatives of State Legislature:*

o One member from the State House of Representatives

o One member from the State Senate

• *Representatives of Business:*

o Owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of business and other employers with optimum policy making or hiring authority. At a minimum, business representatives must comprise 51% of the board membership.

• *Representatives of Workforce:*

o Two or more representatives of labor organizations

o One or more members of a labor organization or Registered Apprenticeship program

• *Representatives of Government*

o Lead state officials with primary responsibility for core programs*

o Two or more chief elected officials representing cities or counties

• *Other Representatives Governor May Appoint:*

o State agency officials from agencies that are one-stop partners

o State agency officials responsible for economic development or juvenile justice programs o Individuals who represent an Indian tribe or tribal organization o State agency officials responsible for education programs, including chief executive officers of institutions of higher education

**The lead state officials with primary responsibility for core programs in New Mexico will include, the cabinet secretaries for the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, New Mexico Higher Education Department, New Mexico Public Education Department, and Commission for the Blind.*

The State Workforce Development Board establishes overarching strategies and framework for the local boards to follow in developing local plans that are consistent with the State Plan; establishes accountability measures and expectations for the implementation of the local board plans; conducts annual (or more frequent) review of local boards plans and progress; ensures compliance with criteria for membership on a local boards; receives and communicates public comments regarding the activities of the local boards to ensure accountability and transparency; recommends action consistent with state rule and policy if local board outcomes are not achieved and are not consistent with the principles, strategies, and vision described in this State Plan.

The workforce and community-related expertise of committees is essential to the mission and administration of WIOA, as well as the workforce system's services and programs. The following provides information about the proposed State Board committee designations.

Proposed State Workforce Development Board Committee Designations

Business Engagement Committee:

This committee will support the development and execution of statewide employer engagement to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, gaps and employability of the New Mexico workforce. They will review and analyze data to be used as the basis for a more comprehensive plan of action for enhancing the employability of job seekers through relevant training and education.

Data and Performance Committee:

This committee will spearhead the acquisition and coordination of data across agencies to develop state performance measures to evaluate the overall effectiveness and return on investment of workforce/training programs and services. While recognizing the need for appropriate privacy safeguards, this committee will work to establish the necessary data sharing agreements to enable an integrated tracking process to better assess how well the state's investment in individuals receiving career services yield successful outcomes. These efforts will provide a basis for setting priorities, goals, and benchmarks across agencies based on solid data.

Workforce/Education Coordination Committee:

This committee will work to engage and challenge stakeholders to design systems and programs that coordinate and leverage WIOA resources; improve consistent and standardized assessment of basic skills; and increase the attainment of relevant credentials validated by employers. The committee will promote a strong partnership between community colleges and the public workforce system and explore options to more effectively target resources to support and sustain successful projects and demonstrated effectiveness.

Workforce System and Performance Committee:

This committee will promote engagement between the State Workforce Development Board and Local Workforce Development Boards. It will communicate State Workforce Development Board vision, goals, and expectations for the workforce system; provide guidance in establishing a process for one-stop certification.

Youth Committee:

This committee will engage stakeholders and develop an ongoing, collaborative strategy for delivering comprehensive youth services, particularly as WIOA emphasizes 75% of youth funds are to be spent on out-of-school youth.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

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

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

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

NMDWS is designated as the State Administrative Entity for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and supports the State Workforce Development Board, which provides leadership, vision and strategy for New Mexico's workforce system, as discussed earlier. In this role, the Department strives to promote and support a workforce system that creates value and offers employers, individuals, and communities the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity. Specifically, NMDWS is the lead agency responsible for the fiscal and program administration of the following core programs as specified in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

- Adult Program (WIOA, Title I),
- Dislocated Worker Program (WIOA, Title I),
- Youth Program (WIOA, Title I)
- Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III)

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions provides oversight of WIOA programs by contracting with four Local Workforce Development Boards to provide a variety of services, such as job training and employment services. The boards represent a wide variety of individuals, businesses, and organizations throughout the local area who work to:

- promote and broker effective relationships between the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), economic development, education, and workforce partners throughout the local area;

- develop a strategy to continuously improve and strengthen the workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs to promote economic growth;
- participate and collaborate closely with the required and other partners of the workforce development system, including public and private organizations; and
- integrate and align a more effective, job-driven workforce development system.

The CEOs in each local area serve as the local grant recipients for WIOA funds allocated to the local area. The State Administrative Entity allocates WIOA funds for services to youth, adults, and dislocated workers based on the U.S. Department of Labor-mandated formulas. Availability of WIOA funds is predicated upon receipt of federal allocations, and subject to required formula disbursements and rescission. Funds the local boards do not expend within the specified period are subject to reversion to the State pursuant to applicable law. Upon receipt of a fully executed grant agreement and all required attachments, the funds are made available to the local boards. Allocation letters, notices of increases and/or decreases in funding, or reallocation must be incorporated as modifications to this agreement.

WIOA provisions related to local governance of the workforce system took effect on July 1, 2015. As such, the State requires Chief Elected Officials and Local Workforce Development Boards to constitute WIOA-compliant boards through the appropriate local board appointments. For each local area the members of local boards must be selected by the CEOs consistent with criteria established pursuant to WIOA section 107(b)(1) and must meet the composition requirements of WIOA section 107(b)(2). Local boards must comply with New Mexico Open Meetings Act and Inspection of Public Records Act. Additionally, local board must elect chairpersons from among the business representatives on the boards.

The Local Workforce Development Boards integrate service delivery within a framework of one-stop partners that work to support the needs of jobseekers, workers, and employers. This structural framework is referred to as the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers, and participating entities are called workforce system partners. While there are 21 Workforce Connections Centers, each of the four local board areas has at least one comprehensive center. Each board area adopts local policies based on state-level policy and guidance to govern the activities of the Workforce Centers, as the local boards are charged with enhancing the range and quality of workforce development services available to job seekers and businesses through a coordinated approach among partner agencies.

<u>Adult and Dislocated Worker Services</u>

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

Basic Career Services. Basic career services must be made available to all individuals seeking services served in the one-stop delivery system, and include:

- determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs;

- outreach, intake, and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system;
- initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs;
- labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including the provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
- provision of information on nontraditional employment;
- provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs;
- provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including job vacancy listings in labor market areas;
- information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed;
- information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs;
- provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers;
- provision of information about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's one-stop delivery system;
- provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including: child care; child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); assistance through the earned income tax credit; housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program;
- assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA; and
- provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim.

Individualized Career Services. If Workforce Connection Center staff determine that individualized career services are appropriate for an individual to obtain or retain employment, these services must be made available to the individual at the one-stop centers. Workforce center staff may use recent previous assessments by partner programs to determine if individualized career services would be appropriate. These services include:

- comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
- development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to

achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers;

- group and/or individual counseling and mentoring; o career planning (e.g. case management); o short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;
- internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
- workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, or training, or employment;
- financial literacy services;
- out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

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

Youth Services

The Governor's vision for youth includes ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to develop and achieve career goals through education and workforce training. Youth services should be business driven consistent with all other services within a region and state with the goal of building the workforce of the future. Activities should include but are not limited to:

- career awareness regarding targeted industry and demand occupations;
- quality educational employment opportunities consistent with local and state goals and priorities; and
- strategies that help prepare youth for success in a range of postsecondary education and career opportunities specifically those defined as high growth and high demand.

WIOA funds provided to the states provide local workforce development areas resources to deliver a comprehensive array of youth services that focus on assisting low-income youth with one or more barriers to employment prepare for post-secondary education and employment opportunities, attain educational and/or skills training credentials, and secure employment with career/promotional opportunities. Services must include tutoring, alternative secondary school offerings, summer employment opportunities linked to academic and occupational learning, paid and unpaid work experiences, occupational skill training, leadership development opportunities, supportive services, mentoring, follow-up services, and comprehensive guidance and counseling.

Wagner-Peyser Employment Services

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions also administers Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, which it does from the state level through its Employment Services Division, along with the administration of Trade Adjustment Assistance, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Rapid Response, and Veterans programs. NMDWS receives funding from USDOL to hire and oversee state merit staff responsible for direct delivery of the Wagner Peyser employment services and the other related

services to jobseekers and employers. Merit staff is located throughout 18 field offices and the programs are co-located with the WIOA programs in every local board area.

Employment Services are provided as part of the one-stop delivery system. Currently, each local workforce development area has at least one comprehensive workforce development center that includes, at a minimum, three partners: WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, and access to Unemployment Insurance services. Each Employment Services field office is assigned a site manager who ensures the workforce centers are universally accessible, customer centered, and training is job-driven. This includes providing easy access to and assistance with workforce related activities, such as looking for a job, exploring work preparation and career development services, as well as seamless referral to WIOA employment, on-the-job-training, and occupational training programs.

All of the Basic Career Services offered by the WIOA programs must be made available by Wagner-Peyser staff in coordination with other one-stop center partners. Employment Services staff may also make available the Individualized Career Services, particularly for those individuals with barriers. Wagner-Peyser services are free of charge for individuals. Employment Services staff work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Local Workforce Development Boards, site managers and operators, and other workforce partners, to effectively serve both employers and jobseekers. A key role of this program is to identify potential matches between employers and jobseekers. The program's service delivery approach includes self-service, facilitated self-help, and staff-assisted services, and involves a number of other tools and resources as follows.

Worker and Jobseeker Services:

- Job search assistance
- Reemployment services to unemployment insurance claimants
- Labor market information
- Evaluation and assessment of knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Referral to training and support services
- Veterans priority of service

Employer Services:

- Outreach to promote the use of Workforce Connection Center facilities and services
- Entry, review, and maintenance of job listings in the New Mexico Workforce Connection On-Line System (NMWCOS)
- Filling job listings
- Specialized assessment and testing of applicants
- Workforce Connection Online System technical assistance
- Recruitment assistance, i.e. job fairs
- Training services
- Response to layoffs and business closures

NM Workforce Connection On-Line System (NMWCOS). NMWCOS gives employers access to a database of job seekers in New Mexico. Employers can enter, update, and archive job listings securely. The New Mexico Workforce Connection On-Line System is available free of charge to employers and jobseekers. Employers can post their own jobs or provide job listing information to Workforce Connection Center staff for the matching and referral of qualified job seekers. Workforce Connection Center staff can access both employer job listings and job seeker accounts entered into

the system. The job listing information allows Workforce Connection Center staff to evaluate the hiring requirements of the employer, as well as the qualifications of the job seeker. Employment Services staff follow required guidelines regarding referral and placement.

In addition to assistance with job listings, recruitment assistance can be provided to employers, including provision of interview rooms, job fair assistance, specialized testing, on-site staff assistance, and labor market information.

NMCOS Services for *Jobseekers* include:

- online self-registration,
- resume creation,
- online job matching,
- ability to browse jobs and contact employers immediately,
- e-mail notification of matches, if requested,
- current labor market information,
- access to career tools and training resources,
- access to job notices from external job listings, and
- access labor market information.

NMCOS Services for *Employers* include:

- online self-registration,
- online job listing and job matching in real time,
- ability to view résumés and contact job seekers immediately,
- e-mail notification of matches, if requested,
- current labor market information, and
- other recruiting tools and information.

Other Employer Services. The workforce system also support employers by providing customized screening and referral of qualified participants in career and training services to employers; customized employment-related services to employers, employer associations, or other such organizations on a fee-for-service basis that are in addition to labor exchange services available to employers under Wagner-Peyser; and, activities to provide business services and strategies that meet the workforce investment needs of area employers, as determined by the local boards and consistent with their local plans. In addition, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit administered at the state level that is available to employers that hire workers in designated target groups that have barriers to employment. Employers can potentially get a tax credit ranging from $1,200 to $9,600 depending on the target group. The tax credit is designed to help job seekers gain on-the-job experience, move towards economic self-sufficiency, and at the same time help reduce employers' federal tax liability. WOTC target groups include qualified TANF recipients, qualified veterans, qualified ex-felons, designated community residents, vocational rehabilitation referrals, qualified food stamp recipients, qualified social security income recipients, and long-term family assistance recipients.

<u>Adult Education</u>

Adult Education in New Mexico is administered by the New Mexico Higher Education Department, which provides leadership, services, support, and technical expertise to Adult Education program personnel, students, partners and communities. At the State level, the Director of the Adult

Education Division reports to the Secretary of New Mexico Higher Education Department. The Division oversees a Fiscal Office, a Program Improvement Office, and Operations Research for Adult Education, High School Equivalency Testing, and a Volunteer Literacy Tutoring program. The last two functions are funded by state legislative appropriation and are not governed by WIOA. The remainder of the Adult Education and Literacy Division is funded through WIOA and a state legislative appropriation to the Higher Education Department to fulfill WIOA Maintenance of Effort requirements.

The program has 27 education providers. At the local level, each provider is attached to a fiscal agent. Four of the 27 providers are attached to a community based non-profit organization; one is attached to the Alamo Consolidated School Board; and the remainders are attached to public postsecondary institutions. Each local provider has a program manager and a data technician, as well as instructional and administrative staff. Each local program provides instructional services using a curriculum aligned with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education's College and Career Readiness Standards, including literacy, high school equivalency preparation, workplace readiness training, basic technology skills, and English Language acquisition. Six programs have English Language/Civics grants through WIOA. In addition, eleven programs work in collaboration with college career and technical education departments to teach integrated basic education and skills training leading to an industry-recognized certification. In addition to instructional services, each program provides student assessment services, transition advising, and a variety of student support services, including referral to other entities for needed non-educational services.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

New Mexico has two vocational rehabilitation programs. The Commission for the Blind (Commission), an independent state agency, is the lead vocational rehabilitation entity serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired, while the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), situated within the Public Education Department, is the lead vocational rehabilitation entity serving individuals with all other disabilities. Both programs focus on preparing their respective participants for suitable work. DVR serves all eligible New Mexicans with disabilities other than participants in vocational rehabilitation through the Commission for the Blind. A memorandum of understanding between DVR and the Commission has existed for many years to coordinate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, processing of referrals, transitioning of cases, handling of joint cases, sharing of office space, sharing of confidential information, and representation on the State Workforce Board. The State funding allotment is distributed by the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitative Services Administration (RSA) between the two agencies. When the VR agencies receive funding from RSA for caseloads, they each distribute this money by operational region, which is further distributed down to individual employee caseloads. Vocational rehabilitation counselors manage caseload budgets to provide services for the individuals assigned to their caseload.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation helps individuals with disabilities find or retain suitable employment by providing vocational guidance, assistance, and services on an individualized basis. DVR is broken up into nine regions across the state, with each region having two to four field offices. Each region is managed by an area Program Manager and three Field Operation directors currently oversee each area. Also, one Administrative Field Operations Director oversees the administrative needs, i.e. facilities and fleet, of all the areas.

DVR contributes to the development of the workforce through the provision of individualized assessments, vocational counseling, planning and services necessary to address barriers to employment faced by individuals with disabilities. This also includes relationships with other state agencies, community providers, secondary and post-secondary schools, businesses, government employers and others as part of coordinating services to participants. DVR takes a customized approach to finding suitable employment for individuals with disabilities. Ideally employment goals meet the criteria for demand occupations, but occasionally the Division will need to seek specific employment situations for people with disabilities.

Employers are supported by a professional team that specializes in preparing DVR consumers for employment through pre-employment training, college and technical education, and working to match the best talent with the right jobs. DVR helps employers identify possible accommodations for people with disabilities who require such accommodations to perform a job, or can direct employers to other beneficial resources. DVR partners with other state and private agencies to host job fairs and in-office hiring events. DVR works collaboratively with employers to coordinate services for retention and promotion of their current staff who are eligible for DVR services through job coaching. Consultative services provide guidance on matters related to job retention for a person with a disability, job analysis, and adaptive technology guidance. Staff also offer employers information on financial incentives for hiring and training DVR clients.

The Commission for the Blind provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, who need and can benefit from these services as it relates to an employment outcome. The Commission has eight vocational rehabilitation counselors located throughout the state, including four in Albuquerque, one in Las Vegas, one in Farmington, one in Roswell, and one in Las Cruces. The Commission typically opens a vocational rehabilitation case starting at age 14, and provides services through an Individualized Plan for Employment. As discussed earlier, examples of the types of services provided include guidance and counseling; transition services that can include participation in a summer youth training program or STEP; the provision of technological equipment, such as computers equipped with screen readers or screen enlargement software, specialized Braille computers, video magnifiers, or other rehabilitative technology; support attending college or graduate school; job placement services; support in starting a self-employment business; or provision of needed assistive technology to become or remain employed in a specific job.

The Commission also operates a residential training program in Alamogordo, New Mexico where individuals who are blind can receive six to nine months of intensive training in Braille, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, personal management, home management, and industrial arts. The training is provided by eight highly qualified teachers. The Orientation Center is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and certified by the National Blindness Professional Certification Board.

Vocational Rehabilitation and the One-stop Delivery System. The one-stop delivery system in New Mexico offers assessment and development tools, strong relationships with business and specialized programs that benefit New Mexicans looking for work. Under the combined state plan, the VR agencies will work to strengthen their relationships with NMDWS and the Local Workforce Development Boards to make referral and coordination of service to participants as seamless as possible. WIOA places greater emphasis on providing work experiences to VR participants, especially students transitioning from school to work. DVR, in particular, can particularly benefit from the expertise and established business relationships that the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions offers to expand work experience opportunities for participants. As such, DVR staff will work with the workforce development centers to arrange for VR-focused presentations when needed

and assist with special events such as job fairs and training workshops. Workforce centers will also assist with presentations and trainings at VR offices. DVR also plans to ramp up its efforts to support the transition of students and youth with disabilities from secondary education to postsecondary education and employment.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

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

The following is a revised response.

Registered Apprenticeship

WIOA emphasizes the importance of Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship through many new statutory provisions (e.g. required representation on State and Local Boards, programs stay on the Eligible Training Provider List as long as they remain registered and pre-apprenticeship as a youth program service). WIOA also provides for enhanced access and flexibility for work-based training options and encourages the use of Registered Apprenticeships as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers and industries.

The Department of Workforce Solutions is the State Apprenticeship Agency for New Mexico responsible for apprenticeship within the state. There are currently 38 registered apprenticeship programs in New Mexico with approximately 1,300 apprentices; the majority of registered apprenticeship programs are in the building and construction trades. A nine-member council, called the State Apprenticeship Council, provides advice and guidance to the State Apprenticeship Agency on the operation of the state's apprenticeship system. The Registered Apprenticeship program works to ensure quality training by combining on-the-job training with theoretical and practical classroom instruction to prepare exceptional workers for industry. Employers work with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to create program standards in written agreements that specify the length of a participant's training, the related technical instruction, an outline of the skills that person will need to learn, and the wages the participant will earn.

Examples of steps workforce partners in New Mexico are currently taking to expand apprenticeship and other work experiences that lead to higher earnings include:

- pursuing grant opportunities (see grant descriptions below) to support the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship and other work experiences in the state, described below;
- working to ensure core partner programs have a meaningful place on the local workforce boards, to strengthen relationships with local one-stops and local businesses through these board interactions;
- integrating Registered Apprenticeship into workforce planning and policy;
- promoting work-based learning and identifying ways to use WIOA resources to support Registered Apprenticeship; and
- exploring ways to serve through apprenticeships target populations, such as individuals with disabilities, with low income, low literacy levels;

Apprenticeship Grants.

Apprenticeship USA Accelerator Grant - New Mexico was recently awarded a $200,000 Apprenticeship USA Accelerator Grant for the performance period of June 1, 2016 through May 31, 2018. The purpose of the grant is to work to assess the State's goals for apprenticeship expansion , how those goals align with the State's overall education, workforce and economic development objectives, and to develop a comprehensive strategy to achieve those goals. As a part of the grant, the State will work to leverage resources from federally supported programs, particularly the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) funds to support Registered Apprenticeships through job training, classroom instruction (using Individual Training Accounts), and supportive services, including child care, transportation, etc. NMDWS is in the process of action planning to assess the following.

- The status of the State's readiness to leverage resources and co-investment for Registered Apprenticeship expansion based on leveraged resources from federally supported programs, particularly the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds to be used to support Registered Apprentices through on-the-job training, classroom instruction (using Individual Training Accounts), case management, and supportive services, including child care, transportation, and other services.
- The status of the State's readiness to demonstrate stronger integration with the WIOA system through performance goal setting based on:

o Percentage of Registered Apprentices co-enrolled in WIOA;

o Total number of Registered Apprentices receiving WIOA services;

o Total number of Sponsors utilizing WIOA services;

o Total number of Registered Apprentices receiving on-the-job training, supportive services, and classroom training through Individual Training Accounts.

These grant funds will enable the Registered Apprenticeship program in New Mexico to strengthen partnerships with local workforce development boards to encourage and expand the use of apprenticeships. Part of this effort will include training of local board, one-stop center, and partner program staff on the importance of apprenticeships as a work-based experience for jobseekers, as well as the appropriate ways to braid Registered Apprenticeship and WIOA funding to support and coordinate apprenticeships across all core partner programs.

The following is a description of a U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant, called SUNPATH, which was recently awarded to the state. This particular grant focuses on technology and healthcare career pathways. This grant can provide a direct linkage to another recently awarded grant, called the American Apprenticeship Initiative Grant (which is described in the section on "Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials.") Such a linkage could ideally lead to apprenticeships in IT Health, as both grants share similar courses of study, occupation goals, and industry credentials.

SUNPATH Grant. New Mexico was awarded a $14,999,863 U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants for the period of October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2018 to implement Pathways Acceleration in Technology and Healthcare (SUN PATH). Through partnerships and data exchanges among the New Mexico

Department of Workforce Solutions, New Mexico Higher Education Department, including its Adult Education Division, four-year colleges, state and local boards, and community organizations, the SUNPATH program addresses gaps in access to and consistency in program delivery for health career pathways, infrastructure and support for accelerating students through credential completion and into the workforce, and alignment and accountability across institutions and systems. SUNPATH goals include expanding capacity and systemic improvements in the delivery of healthcare career pathways that align with industry needs; increasing attainment of degrees, certifications, and industry-recognized credentials; and creating strategic alignment between education and workforce systems, resulting in improved employment outcomes, retention, and average earnings. Over the four-year period of the grant, the SUNPATH program is projected to result in the attainment of 2,665 credentials and the new or retained employment of 3,129 participants.

Apprenticeship and Low Literacy Levels. Workforce partners will pursue the help of local adult education programs in designing and implementing apprenticeship programs that can integrate basic skills training into apprenticeship programs specific to individual businesses or industries. Adult education programs serve people both with and without high school credentials. As such, apprenticeship programs may even be able to be attached to some basic education and skills training taking place with the adult education programs in collaboration with postsecondary institutions.

Apprenticeship and Individuals with Disabilities. Under WIOA, VR programs must spend 15 percent of funding on students with disabilities. As such, some specific work is already being done in New Mexico to explore and expand the use of apprenticeships as a service strategy for improving outcomes for individuals with disabilities. For instance, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist has been working with a one-stop youth provider on finalizing an MOU to serve youth with disabilities. Additionally, a DVR Business Specialist has been working on the development of partnerships with the Workforce Training Center and Road Runner Food Bank to increase vocational readiness training programs which will be provided to students and youth with disabilities.

Additionally, core partners have begun to have conversations about how the state can further expand opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including individuals who are blind or visually impaired. While individuals who are blind or visually impaired have often faced significant obstacles in participating in apprenticeship programs, the Commission for the Blind plans to increase efforts to consider and identify Registered Apprenticeships for consumers who might be appropriate candidates for such apprenticeship. Ultimately VR programs are optimistic about improved accessibility to the RA programs for the clients they serve. Examples of ideas of how this can be accomplished in New Mexico include pursuing:

- the facilitation of a working group made up of the State Apprenticeship Agency, the vocational rehabilitation programs, and the adult education program to determine and target which industries, occupations, and employers are best suited for expanding Registered Apprenticeship programs in New Mexico;
- case management services and the development of “how-to” aids to assist staff in getting clients registered as WIOA Title I participants, as appropriate, to assist staff in navigating interactions with potential apprenticeship sites with the goal of facilitating formal agreements and assurances around that braiding of funds across programs and employers;
- regular technical assistance and best practices sharing across all partner programs to increase awareness of RA and opportunities for individuals with disabilities;
- coordinated marketing and outreach strategies as a means of identifying participants across all programs who are appropriate candidates for RA;

- ways the VR programs can assist disabled veterans with guidance and services to maintain their employment through RA programs;
- training initiatives such as Tech to Hire, and NM Career Solutions and internships, as New Mexico has a portal for getting out-of-school youth engaged in searching for job opportunities; and
- agreements through MOUs with partners and contracts with service providers to guide and govern resources for youth with disabilities, such as vocational training and initiatives to obtain high school equivalency.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The Workforce Connection Centers receive referrals from TANF that have resulted in some positive achievements for the WIOA programs, particularly the Youth program. This has allowed youth to participate in training and employability development services while receiving child care and other support services from this partner program. The Workforce Connection Centers work with local business to identify job openings and determine the level of skill needed to perform job functions. TANF participants are then tested through WorkKeys for their occupational skill level and scores are matched against the employer's job criteria to find suitable employment. If the participant does not meet the WorkKeys skill level required for the position they are interested in, an online skills remediation program called KeyTrain is utilized to help the participant get to the level they need to qualify for the position. The goal of this interagency collaboration is to help individuals find meaningful employment and end their dependence on public assistance. In addition, the TANF program is working with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to provide TANF staff with access to the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System to improve the ability to appropriately match TANF clients with online job vacancies.

Internships

Governor Susana Martinez directed state agencies to create an online "Students Work" internship portal that will connect New Mexico college students with employers through a wide range of internship offerings. By encouraging more students to gain professional work experience with New Mexico companies while in college, the goal is to build a more skilled and talented workforce pipeline for New Mexico businesses and keep more of the State's students in New Mexico after they graduate. The NM Department of Workforce Solutions will collaborate with the Higher Education Department to establish the online portal, cultivate internship postings from New Mexico companies, and generate robust participation by college students and higher education institutions across the state. The "Students Work" internship portal will build upon and complement other initiatives designed to improve the degree to which the state's education system meets the needs of the state's workforce, including the expanded use of early college high schools, the mapping of workforce needs against degrees produced, and the targeted use of loan repayment programs to keep key talent working in New Mexico. Mission: Graduate, a cradle-to-career education initiative with the goal of 60,000 graduates with certificates and degrees by 2020, is also working with the NM Department of Workforce Solutions to leverage the department's online jobs database as a tool for employers to post internship positions and recruit students, to help match students and employers.

College and Career Readiness

The New Mexico Public Education Department has a College and Career Readiness Bureau that is dedicated to providing students with seamless education from secondary through post-secondary studies, and offers integration of academic foundations and occupational skills. College and career

readiness is the unifying force that propels students from a solid foundation in primary and secondary learning into rigorous career and technical education programs and college completion goals. The Bureau has begun a Career Readiness Initiative that identifies employer engagement as one of several goals, which aims to identify and deploy scalable career pathways that advance priority industry sectors through proactive and ongoing engagement of employers. Through this initiative, the Public Education Department has engaged the Department of Workforce Solutions' support to help close the gap between career pathways and workforce opportunities through the sharing of data analyses of New Mexico's workforce and economy.

The Department of Workforce Solutions' Economic Research & Analysis Bureau is the principal source of labor market information for the state, collecting and analyzing data in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Employment and Training Administration. The Bureau also conducts surveys and data analysis in addition to drawing from additional economic measures to assess the health of the economy and forecast future economic trends. As such, the Department of Workforce Solutions is committed to supporting the Career Readiness Initiative in the following ways.

- Maintaining an MOU with the Public Education Department to cover the data exchange and analyses needed for this initiative.
- Sharing the results of the Job Vacancy Survey of employers which focuses on current workforce needs and the experience, certification, and educational requirements associated with vacant jobs opportunities.
- Publishing the State of the Workforce Report, is an overview of our state's population, labor force participation, current and future workforce demands, occupational and wage data, and industry employment.
- Publishing the Annual Social and Economic Indicators, a helpful statistical abstract, and the New Mexico Employment Projections which projects the long-term growth trends of New Mexico's industries and occupations for a ten-year period.

Job Corps

Job Corps, a U.S. DOL vocational training program for disadvantaged youth and young adults, is one of seven programs authorized under Title I of WIOA and a required partner in the local one-stop systems. In some areas of the state Job Corps shares workspace as a part of a Resource Sharing Agreement. Job Corps participants receive social, academic, career and technical education, and service-learning opportunities, primarily in a residential setting. Program objectives focus on participants obtaining secondary school diplomas or recognized credentials leading to careers in high-demand industries or occupations. Job Corps representatives sit on local boards, the boards outreach to potential program participants through their Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth providers, and referrals are received from one-stop partner programs.

AmeriCorps

The AmeriCorp program, which is administratively housed within the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, is guided by a bipartisan board of Commissioners, appointed by the Governor, that provide oversight and accountability for grants that lead to volunteer initiatives throughout the state. The funding provides for opportunities for adult individuals with a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate to make an intensive commitment to volunteer service. Per a report published by the Corporation for National and Community Service, volunteering helps individuals gain increased social connections, and increased skills and experience that lead to potential future job

opportunities and employment. For instance, volunteers have a 27 percent higher likelihood of finding a job after being out of work than non-volunteers. If volunteers are gaining or updating skills that are needed in the workplace through their volunteer activities, those skills may make them more attractive to and productive for employers and increase their chances of becoming employed. Four things workforce system partners can do to promote volunteering are:

- learn more about how volunteering can be helpful to jobseekers;
- promote volunteering as a strategy for finding work on state and local board websites, newsletters, and other materials provided through Workforce Connection Centers;
- help clients emphasize their volunteer service in terms of work experience; and
- explore ways to use and work with the AmeriCorps program to connect people to job opportunities.

In addition, most AmeriCorps members receive student loan deferment, and training, and may receive a living allowance and health insurance. Program completers can receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award to help pay for college, graduate school, or vocational training or to repay student loans. Finally, U.S. DOL acknowledges in state guidance to states, Unemployment Insurance Program Letter 16-12 issued April 19, 2012, that volunteerism can be a viable and successful strategy that supports reemployment and does not need to interfere with unemployment compensation recipients' responsibilities to be able and available for work and actively seeking work.

Native American Programs

As allowed under WIA, now WIOA, the Navajo Nation was designated as an interstate region directly under the United States Department of Labor. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was developed between Arizona, New Mexico and the Navajo Nation to separate administration of the WIA, now WIOA, program and placed it directly under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Labor. The agreement required each state to identify appropriate funding stream allocations based upon the funding formula. The allocations were reverted back to the United States Department of Labor whereupon United States Department of Labor directly negotiated program terms and conditions, submittal of plans, allocation of funding, oversight and monitoring requirements, and negotiation of performance measures accountability with the Navajo Nation. Within the MOA, WIA, and now WIOA, performance requirements should remain the sole responsibility of the Navajo Nation exempting the partner States from this accountability. This approach continues to enable the Navajo Nation to implement and administer a streamlined, consistent and efficient workforce delivery system in the various states and report to only one authority, the Division of Indian and Native American Programs (DINAP). The agreement consolidated WIA, now WIOA, funds from New Mexico and Arizona and Utah at the federal level into one funding stream which flows from DINAP directly to the Navajo Nation. The agreement also ensures that performance measures accountability tied to these funds will continue to be automatically negotiated and overseen by the DINAP, removing New Mexico, Arizona and Utah from accountability.

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

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

The Workforce Connection Centers provide universal access to an integrated array of services to workers, jobseekers, and employers.

Functional Organization and Alignment of One-Stops. The one-stop delivery system brings together a series of partner programs and entities responsible for workforce development, educational, and other human resource programs to collaborate in the creation of a seamless customer-focused delivery network that enhances access to the programs' services. Partners, programs, and providers collocate, coordinate, and integrate activities so that individuals seeking assistance will have access to information and services that lead to positive employment outcomes for individuals seeking services. Workforce Connection Centers have MOUs with their business and career center partners that require services to be integrated and delivered according to customer need rather than program focus. The following functional alignment elements are incorporated into each comprehensive and affiliate center through their respective workforce system operator and functional management structure.

- Welcome function - Services associated with the welcome function include activities such as registration, orientation to services, provision of labor market information, resource room access, and initial assessment.
- Skill and career development function - This function assists customers that require more than informational self-directed services, and includes training and supportive services.
- Business services function - This function is responsible for building relationships with employers through regional initiatives including sector partnerships and business alliances, and includes business outreach, recruitment and referral for job vacancies, job development and job candidate qualification review.

Local boards designate an operator to ensure seamless service delivery within each center, whose duties include organizing and co-locating partner staff by function in accordance with state policy and guidance; establishing a service delivery model that is customizable to the needs of individual customers; and developing operational procedures and protocols that promote effective and seamless service delivery. Each comprehensive center is required to use a customer flow model that identifies customer needs upon entry and provides immediate engagement and connectivity to services during the customer's first visit. Customers are served jointly by WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and other partner staff, specifically at basic service levels. Parties to the MOU have jointly developed and mutually implemented processes for common intake and referral and agree to cross-train staff on services of each participating workforce center partner.

Priority Populations. Section 134(c) (3) (E) of WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities. Under this section, one-stop center staff responsible for these funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services. Under WIA, priority was required to be given to public assistance recipients and low-income individuals when states and local areas determined that allocated funds were limited. Under WIOA, priority will be provided regardless of the level of funds.

Youth. WIOA outlines a broader youth vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework through which states and local areas can leverage other Federal, state, local, and philanthropic resources to support in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY). Under WIOA, the goal is to fund high-quality services for all youth and young adults, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, culminating with a good job along a career

pathway, enrollment in post-secondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship. Under WIOA, work experience becomes the most important of the program elements. Local youth programs must expend not less than 20 percent of the funds allocated to them to provide ISY and OSY with paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component. Types of youth work experiences can include summer employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities. Notably, WIOA shifts the primary program focus of Title I Youth formula programs to support the educational and career success of OSY. A minimum of 75 percent of WIOA youth funds is required to be spent on OSY, which is an increase from the minimum of 30 percent under WIA. WIOA Youth programs will provide a needed continuum of services to help disconnected youth navigate between the educational and workforce systems.

Local boards should encourage more effective program design to keep youth, age 14 to 24, engaged through the following activities and services:

- tutoring and study skills training.
- alternative ways to obtain a secondary diploma.
- paid and unpaid work experience.
- occupational skills training.
- leadership development opportunities.
- financial literacy training.
- comprehensive guidance and counseling.

The Eastern Area Workforce Development Board has a successful partnership with Adult Education in most of its workforce centers as the program has been a good source of referrals to both the WIOA Youth and Adult programs but it has been infinitely more effective in locations where the programs are housed together. For instance, in Ruidoso, Adult Education is located in the one stop center, and in Roswell the Youth staff are housed with Adult Education at the area college which enables Youth staff to meet with their customers at the completion of their training for the day, which keeps the youth from having to go to another location to check in or turn in attendance records. Also when a student is scheduled to attend class but does not, the on-site staff is notified immediately in order to address why they are not in training. The coordination of services between the programs has increased attendance, increased the rate of completion for High School Equivalency (HSE) and decreased the amount of time the youth spends in the Adult Education program working toward their HSE.

Local boards and youth providers are encouraged to consider the use of other promising practices and program partnerships to continuously engage youth, such as the following.

- Recruit youth in pairs by asking, “Who else do you know?,” and tap social media outlets.
- Develop a peer recruitment team as a paid work experience.
- Partner with or co-enroll youth with WIOA Adult, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, or TANF.
- Ensure appropriate links to entities that will encourage youth participation, i.e. local education agencies, housing authorities, law enforcement, Job Corp representatives, YouthBuild initiatives, etc.

Individuals with Disabilities. Title IV of WIOA amends the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 by significantly revising requirements for state vocational rehabilitation services programs, particularly with regard to their role as core partners in the workforce development system. WIOA fosters new opportunities for

innovation and collaboration across Federal, State, and local agencies, private organizations, and employers. The law authorizes increased access to employment, education, training, and support services to assist individuals with disabilities, including youth and students with disabilities, to succeed in the competitive labor market. The VR programs are critical components in the workforce development system and New Mexico seeks to create and maintain strong partnerships with them.

While individuals with disabilities are a vital and integral part of our society, some individuals with disabilities face particular barriers to high-quality employment. RSA envisions the state VR programs as working with other workforce development system partners to assist workers with disabilities by providing them with the necessary services and supports so that they can acquire the skills and credentials that they need to have the opportunity to pursue in-demand jobs and careers. In so doing, the State's VR programs leadership in the one-stop system is critical to growing our economy, ensuring that everyone who works hard is rewarded, and building a strong middle class. Embedded throughout WIOA, including the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, is the principle that individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, are capable of achieving competitive integrated employment when provided the necessary skills and supports. WIOA strengthens the foundation for the establishment of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system that serves all individuals in need of education and employment services, including individuals with disabilities, and employers in a manner that is customer-focused and that supports an integrated service delivery model. Workforce Connection Centers and partners will provide job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, such as individuals with disabilities, with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages. Additionally, these one-stop centers will work with employers to identify, recruit, and hire skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce.

VR agencies will coordinate the delivery of services to youth with disabilities, especially youth with the most significant disabilities, with other providers in the state who serve this population to ensure they receive the necessary services and supports to achieve competitive integrated employment. While the VR program has always provided transition services to eligible students with disabilities, the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, expands the population eligible to receive certain services and permits a wider range of services to students who are transitioning from school to post-school activities. Section 113 of the Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies to reserve at least 15 percent of their funding allotment to coordinate with local educational agencies in providing, or arranging for the provision of, pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services and in need of such services. Because of these amendments, VR agencies now have an opportunity to provide VR services to a broader population of students and youth with disabilities to assist them in preparing for and obtaining competitive integrated employment. VR agencies will work with State and local educational agencies to ensure that the services provided are coordinated and seamless across the various programs that support transition for students and youth with disabilities from secondary education to postsecondary education and employment.

Veterans. The Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) and the Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) will continue to provide job search assistance and information to veterans and eligible persons they serve at workforce centers, and on the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System to assist them in finding suitable employment. The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions ensures that the New Mexico Jobs for Veterans' State Grant staff are properly integrated at the local Workforce Connection Center's. NMDWS also makes optimal use of the services and linkages to other veteran service providers in the state to enhance the employability

and placement of veterans seeking employment and training related services. The methods of delivery of these services include partnerships with other veterans' service providers by co-facilitation with representatives from the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, Employer Support for the Guard and Reserves, state rehabilitation programs, college's veterans' resource centers when possible, or by maintaining close working relationships when location differences make co-facilitation impractical. The State Veterans' Coordinator facilitates workshops with statewide organizations and professional groups on topics of veterans and disabled veterans' employment; the value of hiring veterans, GI Bill benefits for apprenticeships, on-the-job training and work-study programs.

Veteran's staff works closely with WIOA partners, institutions of higher learning, other governmental, non-profit agencies and private sector partners who provide training or education benefits to prepare veterans with job opportunities. The DVOP positions provide outreach assistance to veterans, particularly those who have a disability and need intensive services to remove barriers to employment. A full range of available employment and training services to veterans include job search, job development, resume writing, dress for success, and interviewing skills. LVER staff conduct outreach to employers to encourage job development for all veterans and to establish a network of employers and service providers for veterans seeking assistance through the workforce system; make referrals to vocational and training institutions; and work to capitalize on resources, such as the WIOA training dollars with veterans' preference. LVERs are also team members in the Business Services sections of the Workforce Connection Centers, meeting with and assisting employers with posting job orders, organization of job fairs, and identifying job vacancies and skills needed for in-demand, high-demand or high-wage careers.

An example of a successful local partnership on behalf of veterans involves the Northern Area Workforce Development Board. Board staff are encouraged to "think outside the box" in the provision of innovative practical methods of meeting the training needs of their communities. In an effort to reach the dislocated worker population, the Sante Fe New Mexico Workforce Connection began to work with the Army National Guard in Santa Fe County to recruit eligible veterans. Many military service personnel operate large vehicles and heavy equipment while in active duty but when they return home are unable to work in these occupations because they do not have the required licensure. A project was developed in conjunction with the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board and the National Guard that enables veterans who had driven large trucks and heavy equipment during active duty to obtain their Commercial Driver's License (CDL). National Guard employees were selected to take a course that upon completion enabled them to become certified CDL instructors. The CDL course took place onsite at the National Guard Compound using their trucks. The Board was able to provide financial assistance for the instructor training and the National Guard absorbed equipment costs, staff salaries, room, and board. This is the first project of its kind in the country.

In addition, the State expects workforce partners to advocate for the viability of the State's military installations. This can be done through collaborations with the New Mexico's Office of Military Base Planning and Support, which is administratively attached to the Economic Development Department, and is responsible for:

- informing the Governor and the Governor's Homeland Security Adviser about issues impacting the military bases in the state, including infrastructure requirements, environmental needs, military force structure possibilities, tax implications, property considerations and issues requiring coordination and support from other state agencies;

- serving as a liaison with the community organizations whose purpose is to support the long-term viability of the military bases;
- communicating with the staff of the State's congressional delegation; and
- identifying issues, preparing information, and providing presentations necessary for the Military Base Planning Commission to carry out its duties.

The Office supports Military Base Planning Commission, whose duties include the following:

- obtaining and evaluating information about the federal government's considerations, plans, policies and initiatives relating to military base realignment and closure;
- obtaining and evaluating information relating to the impact of federal military base realignment and closure plans on the state's economy and the military base area's local economy;
- working with and providing assistance to established community organizations that have as their purpose the support of the long-term viability of the military bases in their local area;
- ensuring collaboration among the community organizations and an understanding of the joint efforts between the military bases in the state;
- working with and providing assistance to the State's congressional delegation on matters relating to federal base realignment and closure plans; and
- advising the governor on measures necessary to ensure the continued presence of military bases in the state.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

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

Employers must be engaged more effectively as partners in shaping and implementing workforce solutions. Core partners should work collectively to make businesses aware of all the public workforce system programs and services available and to educate businesses on how partner agencies work together to integrate service delivery to customers. A uniform single point of contact for all the programs would minimize the service calls made by the multiple programs. Training must be administered to job seekers based on input from the companies that need and eventually will employ these job seekers. Employers define a skilled worker by their job requirements and determine the skills and skill levels required of workers to be successful in the workplace. To ensure the workforce system works, employers must be engaged as partners to manage their demand for workers in a way that ensures the workforce system knows and understands their needs and expectations. This approach optimizes investments by targeting training resources to local and regional employer skill needs and employers will use a system that provides them with a clear point of entry, matches skills training with real world job requirements, and delivers reliable, skilled workers in a timely manner.

The Central Area Workforce Development Board emphasizes that subsidizing the work experience wages is perhaps the biggest plus in engaging employers, along with the upfront training and consistent support throughout the program. The Board's Youth provider, YDI, Inc., has learned that providing that initial training, consistent visits to the worksite, and offering hands-on support throughout the program, will more than likely retain that employer for a long time. Relationship

building lends to a successful placement and work experience, and has resulted in an increase in retention of the Board's youth participants at their worksite following completion of subsidized hours.

Local boards should continue to facilitate communication with business, education, community and civic organizations, and economic development partners in an effort to address local and regional workforce development issues and to identify joint solutions for addressing industry-based skill shortages, aid employers in upgrading skills of workers, and prepare the unemployed for entry-level positions. This includes continuing to offer services, such as the following, to employers in priority industries.

- developing job descriptions;
- recruiting applicants and coordinating employer interviews;
- providing online access for posting job vacancies and searching qualified applicants;
- organizing hiring events and providing pre-employment screening;
- providing labor market data and analyses;
- administering employer incentive programs and identifying tax credits; and
- providing a full range of job seeker skill set assessments.

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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

This response collectively addresses sections III.A.2.E thru H, with regard to Partner Engagement with Educational al Institutions, Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers, Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access, and Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials.

Educational programs must result in credentials that are aligned with the requirements of business or the economy. Training services are needed to significantly improve the employment and earnings potential of WIOA participants, especially the target groups discussed earlier. Training should be strategically targeted towards demand occupations based on economic and labor market data by targeting resources, and goals must be established for industry-recognized credential attainment. Local boards should collaborate with education and training providers to develop and implement innovative training programs that increase credential attainment, including integrated education and training programs that combine adult education and occupational skills instruction. Boards should also work toward developing and measuring regional and statewide outcomes for credential attainment.

New Mexico was awarded a $14,999,863 U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants for the period of October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2018 to implement Pathways Acceleration in Technology and Healthcare (SUN PATH). Through partnerships and data exchanges among the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, New Mexico Higher Education Department, including its Adult Education Division, four-year colleges, state and local boards, and community organizations, the SUNPATH program addresses gaps in access to and consistency in program delivery for health career pathways, infrastructure and support for accelerating students through credential completion and into the workforce, and alignment and accountability across institutions and systems. SUNPATH goals include expanding capacity and systemic improvements in the delivery of healthcare career

pathways that align with industry needs; increasing attainment of degrees, certifications, and industry-recognized credentials; and creating strategic alignment between education and workforce systems, resulting in improved employment outcomes, retention, and average earnings. Over the four-year period of the grant, the SUNPATH program is projected to result in the attainment of 2,665 credentials and the new or retained employment of 3,129 participants.

An example of another successful partnership involves the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board, which established a program called PRO-TEC in conjunction with Santa Fe Community College and its adult service provider, SER Jobs for Progress, Inc. that was funded by Santa Fe County. This program enabled 20 individuals to participate, at no cost, in a program that prepared them for entry-level administrative and professional positions. PRO-TEC was designed as the first step in the attainment of stackable skills in the realm of Microsoft certifications. It also prepared individuals to enter the labor market through a class on workplace expectations and behaviors, resume writing, and general pre-employment skills. The successful completers were then provided with an 80-hour internship with local employers to try out their new skills and in some cases, it enabled the employer to try out a potential employee. Several of the individuals who participated in the PRO-TEC program either secured employment or continued with their education toward particular employment sectors.

At the Central Area Workforce Development Board, the Youth provider is always searching for grants in career pathways that will supplement the services of WIOA and provide additional resources and/or staff for WIOA participants. For instance, the Youth provider has been able to secure four programs/grants in which the collaborative work is still in place or has been sustained past the grant period including the following.

- Argus Program - developed an entry career pathway into green building by collaborating with Central New Mexico Community College's Workforce Training Center on a weatherization class and certification.
- YouthBuild Program - developed an integrated Adult Education certification training with Home Builders Institute in the home building and construction industry.
- National Council of La Raza Career Pathways - developed an integrated Adult Education certification training with Quality Health Management in the healthcare industry for dental assistants; and developed an entry career pathway into the financial services industry by providing bank teller certification training.

F. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS.

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

See section III.A.2.E, above which provides a collective response to sections III.A.2.E thru H, with regard to Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions, Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers, Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access, and Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials.

G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

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

See section III.A.2.E, above which provides a collective response to sections III.A.2.E thru H, with regard to Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions, Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers, Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access, and Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials.

H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

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

The following is a revised response offered in conjunction with the relevant pieces of the response previously provided in *section III.A.2.E* as it pertains to Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials.

In general, educational programs must result in credentials that are aligned with the requirements of business or the economy. Training services are needed to significantly improve the employment and earnings potential of WIOA participants, especially the target groups discussed earlier. Training should be strategically targeted towards demand occupations based on economic and labor market data by targeting resources, and goals must be established for industry-recognized credential attainment. In New Mexico, many Registered Apprenticeship programs have articulation agreements with post-secondary institutions by which apprentices receive related instruction and also acquire post-secondary credentials leading to an Associate's Degree. Local boards should continue to collaborate with education and training providers to develop and implement innovative training programs that increase credential attainment to include Registered Apprenticeships, as well as integrated education and training programs that combine adult education and occupational skills instruction. Boards should also work toward developing and measuring regional and statewide outcomes for credential attainment.

Expanding the availability and effectiveness of education and OJL programs that are aligned to critical competencies in dynamic fields requires both innovations and new pathways for training in in-demand and labor-gapped occupations. This also requires employers and institutions of higher education to rethink workforce development. Specifically, employers must rely less on degree attainment and more on industry certifications as a hiring qualification for IT jobs. Post-secondary institutions need to move beyond traditional classroom- and time-based course structures. As such, New Mexico is participating in several state and local initiatives that will work to improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates, as follows.

<u>American Apprenticeship Initiative Grant</u>

The State was recently awarded an American Apprenticeship Initiative Grant through the Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) in the amount of $2.9 million for the performance period of October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2020. This grant will enable The New Mexico Information Technology Apprenticeship Program (NM ITAP) to offer On-the-Job Learning (OJL) and Job-Related Technical Instruction (RTI) in New Mexico within the Albuquerque metropolitan area. NM ITAP will include five career paths: IT Developer, IT Security, IT Systems, IT User Support, and Health IT. This new program will be spearheaded by lead partner, Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), which is the largest post-secondary institution in the state by enrollment. Apprenticeship employer partners include the largest employer, the State of New Mexico; the largest municipality, the City of Albuquerque; the largest healthcare employer, Presbyterian Healthcare Services; the area's lead private-public research institution, Sandia National Laboratories (a subsidiary of Lockheed Martin Corporation) and three Albuquerque-based national IT managed services providers.

The program will provide training and apprenticeships in high-growth, high-quality careers to incumbent and new hires with a focus on recruiting persons of color, women, veterans, and the un- and under-employed. NM ITAP will create pipelines to H-1B-industries, serving 300+ participants (18+ years old), all of whom will participate in both OJL and RTI. Examples of the types of innovations and training to be implemented with grant funds include:

- Utilizing demonstrated competencies and national IT certifications to align workers' skills - CNM IT training is based on credentials, certification content, and competencies, and employers determine desired certifications/credentials for apprenticeship occupations.
- Recruiting low-skill and entry-level workers to fill quality middle-skill jobs - CNM and employer partners will move individuals from un- and under-employment to careers with salaries above median wages. NM ITAP will include WorkKeys testing to map various aptitude and knowledge areas against apprenticeships, then provide coaching and support. For thosewithout baseline skills, CNM has remedial and IT on-ramp classes.
- Providing wrap-around support - Each participant will have ongoing support with academic planning, apprenticeship support, and other needs from an Achievement Coach.
- Creating shareable systems - CNM training will include a sharable outcome tracking system, course dissemination, and articulation agreements, to raise participation and reduce duplication.

This grant also involves policy work with the Department of Workforce Solutions to lay the foundation for future IT apprenticeships, as these innovations and training structures support the State's strategies to increase workforce development and education linkages, develop skill-based workforce systems, and create economic development and workforce partnerships.

<u>USDOL Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant</u>

New Mexico was also awarded a $14,999,863 U.S. Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants for the period of October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2018 to implement Pathways Acceleration in Technology and Healthcare (SUN PATH). Through partnerships and data exchanges among the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, New Mexico Higher Education Department, including its Adult Education Division, four-year colleges, state and local boards, and community organizations, the SUNPATH program addresses gaps in access to and consistency in program delivery for health career pathways, infrastructure and support for accelerating students through credential completion and into the workforce, and alignment and accountability across institutions and systems. SUNPATH

goals include expanding capacity and systemic improvements in the delivery of healthcare career pathways that align with industry needs; increasing attainment of degrees, certifications, and industry-recognized credentials; and creating strategic alignment between education and workforce systems, resulting in improved employment outcomes, retention, and average earnings. Over the four-year period of the grant, the SUNPATH program is projected to result in the attainment of 2,665 credentials and the new or retained employment of 3,129 participants.

Other Local Initiatives

An example of another successful partnership involves the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board, which established a program called PRO-TEC in conjunction with Santa Fe Community College and its adult service provider, SER Jobs for Progress, Inc. that was funded by Santa Fe County. This program enabled 20 individuals to participate, at no cost, in a program that prepared them for entry-level administrative and professional positions. PRO-TEC was designed as the first step in the attainment of stackable skills in the realm of Microsoft certifications. It also prepared individuals to enter the labor market through a class on workplace expectations and behaviors, resume writing, and general pre-employment skills. The successful completers were then provided with an 80-hour internship with local employers to try out their new skills and in some cases, it enabled the employer to try out a potential employee. Several of the individuals who participated in the PRO-TEC program either secured employment or continued with their education toward particular employment sectors.

At the Central Area Workforce Development Board, the Youth provider is always searching for grants in career pathways that will supplement the services of WIOA and provide additional resources and/or staff for WIOA participants. For instance, the Youth provider has been able to secure four programs/grants in which the collaborative work is still in place or has been sustained past the grant period including the following.

- Argus Program - developed an entry career pathway into green building by collaborating with Central New Mexico Community College's Workforce Training Center on a weatherization class and certification.
- YouthBuild Program - developed an integrated Adult Education certification training with Home Builders Institute in the home building and construction industry.
- National Council of La Raza Career Pathways - developed an integrated Adult Education certification training with Quality Health Management in the healthcare industry for dental assistants; and developed an entry career pathway into the financial services industry by providing bank teller certification training.

I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES.

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

Alignment with economic development is a critical component of workforce development programs and clearly workforce development must be a critical component of states' future economic growth strategies. In the past, recruiting new companies was the backbone of economic development and often worked on the assumption that jobs were in short supply, not job seekers. New Mexico must position workforce development to coexist with economic development in a number of ways including coordinating strategic planning between workforce and economic development agencies;

using economic data to drive workforce development decisions; and recognizing workforce development programs contribute to the pipeline of skilled workers for business and industry.

The Eastern Area Workforce Development Board's youth contractor and one-stop operator manager are both part of the South Central New Mexico Economic Development Association. The initial meeting included 125 employers and the group has performed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis for three counties including, Mescalero, Lincoln, and Otero. The group is aggressively pursuing several projects for a regional economic development initiative to expand the economic base for the region. Additionally, The Southwestern Workforce Development Board has strong and effective partnerships with over 15 training providers in the region. It works with economic development offices and chambers of commerce to disseminate information about the services offered at the New Mexico Workforce Connection centers. In addition, the Southwestern area has a strong agricultural industry where there are over a dozen federal, state, educational, and community based organizations that collaborate with the NM Workforce Connection Centers to serve the needs of agricultural workers and employers.

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

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

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

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

This response addresses both III.b.1.A and B, with regard to the State's operating systems, which include labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, and job banks, that together support implementation of State strategies, as well as the data collection and reporting processes of core programs and activities.

NMDWS

NMDWS administers a common management information system, called the Workforce Connection On-Line System, described earlier. The Workforce Connection Centers use the system not only for registering job applicants, housing resumes, and job postings for job matching purposes, but also for the purposes of data entry, case management, and state and federal performance reporting. The Workforce Connection On-Line System integrates data collection, participant demographics, case management, and performance reporting for not only Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Wagner-Peyser, but also Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers, Veterans, Trade programs. The system is also used for data collection and reporting for all partners located in comprehensive and affiliate centers. NMDWS has established both user access and data sharing agreements to support access to information and information sharing between the partners as allowed by authorizing law and regulation. The system also provides access to labor market information to support business and job seekers in need of training or employment assistance.

The Economic Research and Analysis (ER&A) Bureau within NMDWS supports workforce development and planning by providing labor market information to assist businesses and job seekers in their decision making. Policy makers rely upon labor market information for informed policy development and to identify solutions that are appropriate for the state of New Mexico and the local communities served by local boards. Through customized reports ER&A supports local communities in their economic development initiatives aimed at attracting employers into a local area. Ultimately the objective is to provide accurate and timely labor market information in a usable format to assist in matching workforce needs with those of job seekers. Local boards rely on this labor market information in a number of ways. For instance, the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board indicates it uses the information to establish their occupations in demand for an individual training account contract. The information also assists them in determining the workforce needs of employers in their local area and the state, and allows them to make quantitative decisions about the types of trainings programs needed in the area. This information also helps them assist employers who want to know the average wage for a specific position, the type of credential needed

for an occupation, the number of jobs available in a certain area, or whether there will be a decline in the need the occupations.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data. NMDWS staff leverages the Workforce Connection On-Line system as data consolidation point for access to quarterly unemployment insurance (UI) wage records from the UI data base for participants that exit following receipt of services. This wage data is uploaded to the Workforce Connection On- Line System to meet federal reporting requirements. The Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES) are used to obtain wages received from outside the state of New Mexico. This wage data is also uploaded into the Workforce Connection On-Line system and is used to calculate performance outcomes.

Access to wage records has been an important issue for many years and is an even greater priority under WIOA. Use of wage records for WIOA core program performance and eligible training provider performance reporting purposes, and disclosure of wage records for certain federal evaluations are mandatory under WIOA (WIOA Section 116(e)(4)). State workforce, training, and education programs are required to use quarterly wage records to measure the progress of the State on the State and local performance accountability measures, and for obtaining the information required in the Eligible Training Provider List (WIOA Sections 116(i) and 121(d)). Quarterly wage records are the employer-provided wage reports collected under authority in Section 1137 of the SSA (42 USC 1320b-7). These are the reports state UI agencies obtain for UI tax liability and benefit eligibility determination purposes, and also use to detect improper payments. Confidentiality and disclosure of wage records are governed by the regulations at 20 CFR Part 603.

Like other state UI agencies, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions coordinates disclosure of wage records for the mandated purposes for the state to be in compliance with WIOA requirements. To facilitate access to wage records for these purposes, DOL (ETA, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Chief Evaluation Office) is undertaking a number of activities in partnership with other Federal agencies to enable efficient and secure access to confidential wage data as envisioned under WIOA. As such, New Mexico awaits additional guidance and extensive technical assistance in this area from U.S. DOL, which expects to issue specific guidance about wage record access issues in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, including issues related to cross matching wage records with educational data, which is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

Wage information, defined in 20 CFR Part 603.2(k), includes the three data categories or elements that states must use for WIOA performance reporting purposes: wages, Social Security Number(s), and employer information. Federal regulations at 20 CFR Part 603.5(e) permit states to disclose confidential unemployment compensation (UC) information “to a public official for use in the performance of his or her official duties.” Performance of official duties means “administration or enforcement of law or the execution of the official responsibilities of a Federal, State, or local elected official.” Generally, under these regulations, disclosures of confidential UC information that WIOA requires are already permissible. The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions will work collaboratively with one-stop partners to meet the requirements for use of wage records under WIOA.

<u>Adult Education</u>

Adult Education uses a web-based system, called Literacy, Adult, and Community Education System (LACES) to track student progress through educational functioning levels, through high school

equivalency attainment, through transition to employment, and to postsecondary education and training. Program providers use LACES to collect and enter student data, including demographic information, employment and income status, and education completed at entry. The local providers also track student program participation, including attendance, test scores, and comprehensive information regarding teachers and class enrollment. The Adult Education Division monitors data quality and provides quarterly data matches with the DiplomaSender database for high school equivalency attainment, NMDWS for employment entry and wage information, and Higher Education Department's database, called DEAR, for entry into state public postsecondary institutions. Data match information is then imported into LACES. Local providers report to the State office semiannually. Adultreports annual performance to the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) at the U.S. Department of Education. The program year is from July 1 through June 30, and the annual report to OCTAE is due December 31 following the end of the program year.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Commission for the Blind

The vocational rehabilitation programs use a case management system called Accessible Web-based Activity Reporting Environment (AWARE) that is specifically designed for vocational rehabilitation programs. This system enables counselors to manage cases, managers to monitor cases, and the agency to prepare and submit required reports to RSA in a timely manner. All client data is captured and maintained in the AWARE case management system, such as information on client employment outcomes, including position title, employer, wages, hours, benefits, etc., and is provided to the Rehabilitation Services Administration, U. S. Department of Education through quarterly and annual reports. The company that programs the software will revise the system to produce any WIOA required data. Due to the especially strict confidentiality requirements imposed by the Rehabilitation Act and the sensitive nature of information about disabilities and medical conditions, the case management system is a closed system, accessible only by authorized employees. NMDWS has established a data sharing agreement to provide necessary wage data to support the programs' activities.

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

NMDWS administers a common management information system, called the Workforce Connection On-Line System, described earlier. The Workforce Connection Centers use the system not only for registering job applicants, housing resumes, and job postings for job matching purposes, but also for the purposes of data entry, case management, and state and federal performance reporting. The Workforce Connection On-Line System integrates data collection, participant demographics, case management, and performance reporting for not only Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and Wagner-Peyser, but also Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers, Veterans, Trade programs. The system is also used for data collection and reporting for all partners located in comprehensive and affiliate centers. NMDWS has established both user access and data sharing agreements to support access to information and information sharing between the partners as allowed by authorizing law and regulation. The system also provides access to labor market information to support business and job seekers in need of training or employment assistance.

Also, see the response in III.b.1.A, immediately above, which addresses the other tools used to collect and report data for other partner programs and activities.

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

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (E.G., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING BENCHMARKS, AND ITS GUIDANCE TO ASSIST LOCAL BOARDS, CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS, AND LOCAL ONE-STOP PARTNERS IN DETERMINING EQUITABLE AND STABLE METHODS OF FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SEC. 121(H)(1)(B). BEGINNING WITH THE STATE PLAN MODIFICATION IN 2018 AND FOR SUBSEQUENT STATE PLANS AND STATE PLAN MODIFICATIONS, THE STATE MUST ALSO INCLUDE SUCH GUIDELINES.

State-level WIOA Program Policies

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions has state-level policies and technical assistance guides that support the implementation of the State's strategies, including co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes. Two State Technical Assistance Guides exist regarding WIOA that govern eligibility for the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs, and other programmatic processes. Also, the following policies were developed to support the State vision for a business-driven, skill based, and integrated workforce system under the Workforce Investment Act and will be revised as necessary to comply with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act once federal regulations have been finalized.

<u>Governance and Delivery of Workforce Services</u>

- Local Governance policy provides guidance on the appointment of local boards and outlines the roles, responsibilities and authority of the chief elected officials and the local boards in regard to the local workforce system.
- One Stop Delivery System policy provides local boards and other workforce system sub-recipients with instruction and guidance on the New Mexico one-stop delivery system and emphasizes, encourages and supports the continued development of a seamless statewide one-stop delivery system that is business-driven, skills-based, and accessible. This policy envisions a statewide system focused on quality and seamless service to business and job seekers through coordination among the programs and activities carried out by workforce system partners.
- Memorandum of Understanding policy provides guidance and direction to the local workforce development boards on the development of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between local boards and workforce system partners. A memorandum of understanding is mandated by federal law as the mechanism that serves as the blueprint from which the system operates. The MOU is the agreement between one stop partners and the local workforce development boards to establish a process to maintain and govern the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local areas.
- Service Integration policy communicates the goal of universal access to basic career services is to be achieved through close integration of Wagner-Peyser, WIA (now WIOA) Adult and Dislocated Worker and other partners in the New Mexico Workforce Connection

Centers. This policy is intended to improve customer access to service through the creation of a seamless system of workforce services. Service integration requires partners to work collaboratively in the delivery of services available under multiple programs.

- Co-Enrollment policy provides instruction and guidance regarding co-enrollments across funding streams and serves to encourage coordination and leveraging of resources among workforce system partners. In this policy, the State Administrative Entity (NMDWS) outlines its expectations on co-enrollment and the framework for case management; file management and documentation requirements to support co-enrollment.

Business Driven Services

- Individual Training Accounts policy provides instruction and guidance on the use and administration of individual training accounts. It is the responsibility of the local board and local service provider to assist customers in making informed choices regarding career paths and training through the dissemination of information on state and local targeted industries and occupations in demand. Customer choice shall be exercised within designated targeted industry and demand occupations.

Strong Youth Programs

- Youth Activities policy emphasizes the broad range of youth activities and coordinated services to include opportunities for assistance in both academic and occupational learning, developing leadership skills, and preparing for further education and training and eventual employment. The varied services may be provided in combination or alone during a youth's participation. Strong connections are to exist between youth program activities and the Workforce Connection Centers so that youth learn early how to access the services and continue to use those services throughout their working lives.

Ensuring Priority of Services for Targeted Populations

- Priority of Service policy prioritizes use of WIOA Adult formula funds for services to recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals and individuals that are basic skills deficient, in addition to priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses of veterans.

Commitment to Accountability

- Oversight and Monitoring policy ensures monitoring activities have been standardized to accomplish the following: ensure resources are efficiently and effectively used for authorized purposes and are protected from waste, fraud, and abuse; ensure reliable and timely information is captured and reported to serve as the basis for improved decision-making and required reporting.
- Incentives, Sanctions and Technical Assistance policy establishes the framework for implementing sanctions and corrective actions, and providing technical assistance to local boards and other sub-recipients. This will ensure accountability of local boards and other sub-recipients in meeting the needs of employers and job seekers; ensure performance in reaching outcome measures; ensure adequate returns on New Mexico investments; and support New Mexico in achieving its goals.
- Grievance and Complaint Resolution Procedures policy was developed to ensure that no individual will be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in the administration of or in connection with,

any such program or activity because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief or, for any beneficiary, because of the beneficiary's citizenship status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or for participation in any Title I financially assisted program or activity. The policy establishes procedures for processing complaints and grievances, which apply to all levels of the New Mexico workforce system. This policy covers equal opportunity requirements, discrimination grievances, local and state complaints; and criminal fraud and abuse complaints.

Wagner-Peyser Policies

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions maintains an Employment Services Manual, a handbook providing processes and procedures for the administration of Wagner Peyser Employment Services and to highlight how these services support the primary mission of the State's workforce system. The guide, which establishes a comprehensive resource for Employment Service information and operational guidance, communicates expectations for program design and service deliver, and ensures a consistent level of service. The guide will be revised to reflect the changes imposed by the passage of WIOA.

Adult Education Policies

The Adult Education program has policies that govern allowable activities; student assessment; local provider monitoring; performance measures; the local provider funding process; target populations; and evaluation of need of Title II activities. SEE THE ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM SPECIFIC STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS FOR MORE DETAILS.

Vocational Rehabilitation Policies

Both VR agencies have policies that support implementation of the State's strategies. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DVR and the Commission has existed for many years to coordinate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to persons who are deaf-blind. The MOU was revised in fiscal year 2013 to update provisions for the coordination of services, processing of referrals, transitioning of cases, handling of joint cases, sharing of office space, sharing of confidential information, and representation on the State Workforce Board.

The VR agencies have the ability to enter into "cooperative agreements" with partner entities, and are required to have cooperative agreements with specific entities such as higher education. As such, the VR agencies have MOUs with the New Mexico Department of Public Education regarding consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services; transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs; roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

Both VR agencies maintain a Manual of Operating Procedures which will be updated to reflect WIOA and other changes, as appropriate. The manuals provide guidance for assessment, determination of eligibility, order of selection, if necessary, service provision, documentation, case closure and other topics having to do with direct service provision. In addition, the VR agencies have policies that

govern interaction with core partners, such as referrals and transfers to and from the agencies. In addition, the VR agencies provide services that are customized to the unique needs and “informed choice” of the individual consumer who has the right to challenge decisions that they do not agree with, which includes an impartial due process hearing.

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

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

New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS)

NMDWS is designated as the State Administrative Entity for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and supports the State Workforce Development Board, which provides leadership, vision and strategy for New Mexico’s workforce system, as discussed earlier. In this role, the Department strives to promote and support a workforce system that creates value and offers employers, individuals, and communities the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity. Specifically, NMDWS is the lead agency responsible for the fiscal and program administration of the following core programs as specified in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

- Adult Program (WIOA, Title I),
- Dislocated Worker Program (WIOA, Title I),
- Youth Program (WIOA, Title I)
- Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III)

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions provides oversight of WIOA programs by contracting with four Local Workforce Development Boards to provide a variety of services, such as job training and employment services. The boards represent a wide variety of individuals, businesses, and organizations throughout the local area who work to:

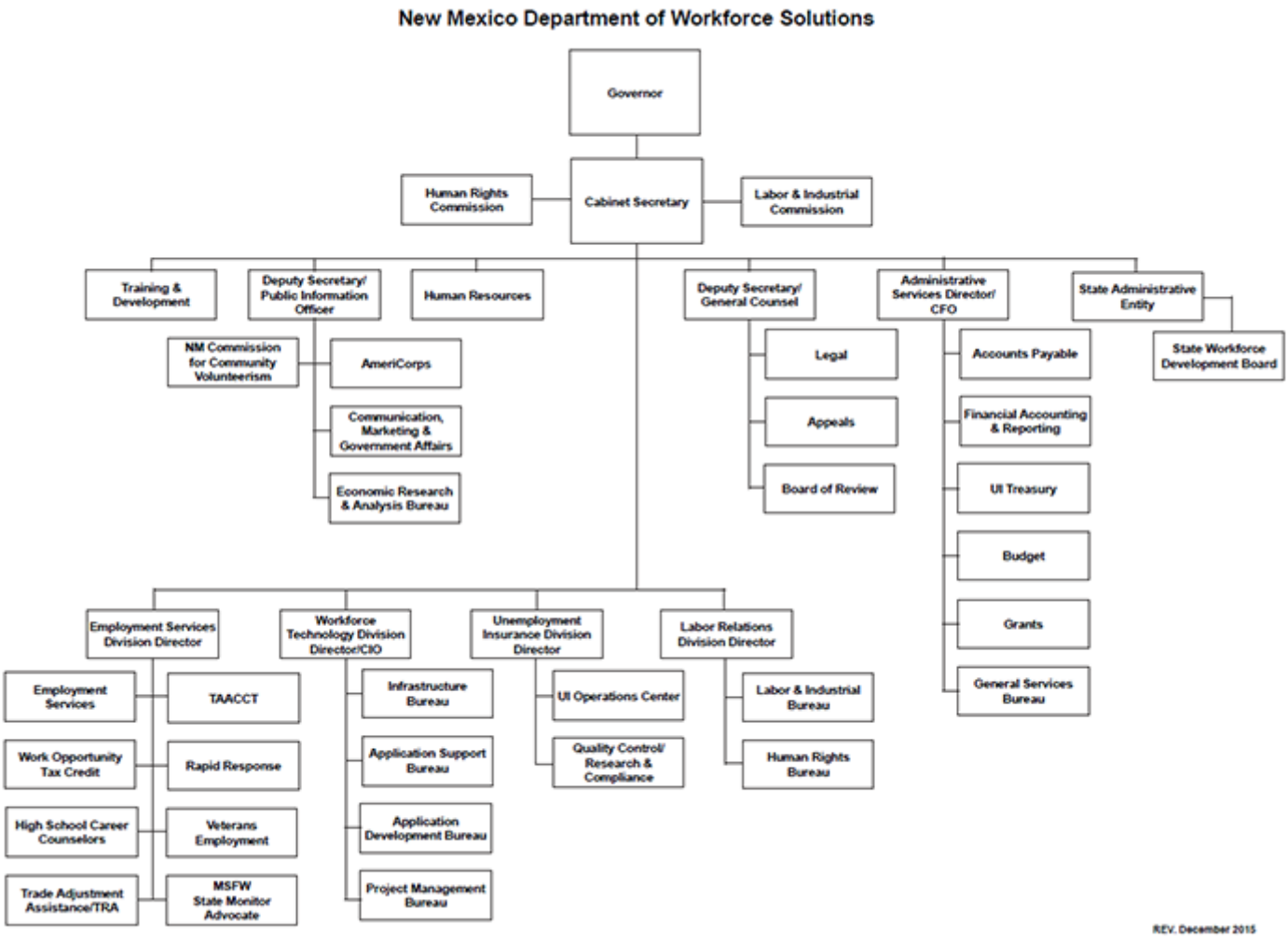
- promote and broker effective relationships between the Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), economic development, education, and workforce partners throughout the local area;
- develop a strategy to continuously improve and strengthen the workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs to promote economic growth;
- participate and collaborate closely with the required and other partners of the workforce development system, including public and private organizations; and
- integrate and align a more effective, job-driven workforce development system.

The CEOs in each local area serve as the local grant recipients for WIOA funds allocated to the local area. The State Administrative Entity allocates WIOA funds for services to youth, adults, and dislocated workers based on the U.S. Department of Labor-mandated formulas. Availability of WIOA funds is predicated upon receipt of federal allocations, and subject to required formula disbursements and rescission. Funds the local boards do not expend within the specified period are subject to reversion to the State pursuant to applicable law. Upon receipt of a fully executed grant agreement and all required attachments, the funds are made available to the local boards. Allocation

letters, notices of increases and/or decreases in funding, or reallocation must be incorporated as modifications to this agreement.

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions also administers Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, which it does from the state level through its Employment Services Division, along with the administration of Trade Adjustment Assistance, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Rapid Response, and Veterans programs. NMDWS receives funding from USDOL to hire and oversee state merit staff responsible for direct delivery of the Wagner Peyser employment services and the other related services to jobseekers and employers. Merit staff is located throughout 18 field offices and the programs are co-located with the WIOA programs in every local board area. Employment Services are provided as part of the one-stop delivery system. Currently, each local workforce development area has at least one comprehensive workforce development center that includes, at a minimum, three partners: WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, and access to Unemployment Insurance services.

Each Employment Services field office is assigned a site manager who ensures the workforce centers are universally accessible, customer centered, and training is job-driven. This includes providing easy access to and assistance with workforce related activities, such as looking for a job, exploring work preparation and career development services, as well as seamless referral to WIOA employment, on-the-job-training, and occupational training programs. Employment Services staff work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Local Workforce Development Boards, site managers and operators, and other workforce partners, to effectively serve both employers and jobseekers. A key role of this program is to identify potential matches between employers and jobseekers. The program’s service delivery approach includes self-service, facilitated self-help, and staff-assisted services, and involves a number of other tools and resources. The organizational chart for New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, in which the WIOA and Wagner-Peyser programs are situated, follows.

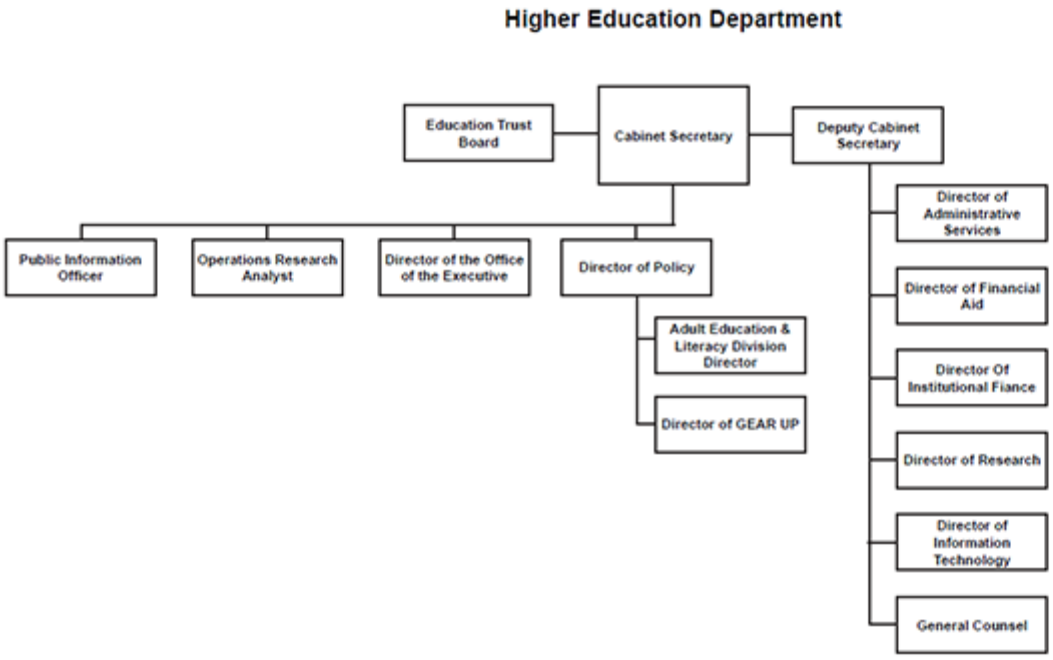


New Mexico Higher Education Department, Adult Education Divsion

Adult Education in New Mexico is administered by the New Mexico Higher Education Department, which provides leadership, services, support, and technical expertise to Adult Education program personnel, students, partners and communities. At the State level, the Director of the Adult Education Division reports to the Secretary of New Mexico Higher Education Department. The Division oversees a Fiscal Office, a Program Improvement Office, and Operations Research for Adult Education, High School Equivalency Testing, and a Volunteer Literacy Tutoring program. The last two functions are funded by state legislative appropriation and are not governed by WIOA. The remainder of the Adult Education Division is funded through WIOA and a state legislative appropriation to the Higher Education Department to fulfill WIOA Maintenance of Effort requirements.

The program has 27 education providers. At the local level, each provider is attached to a fiscal agent. Four of the 27 providers are attached to a community based non-profit organization; one is attached to the Alamo Consolidated School Board; and the remainders are attached to public postsecondary institutions. Each local provider has a program manager and a data technician, as well as instructional and administrative staff. Each local program provides instructional services using a curriculum aligned with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and

Adult Education's College and Career Readiness Standards, including literacy, high school equivalency preparation, workplace readiness training, basic technology skills, and English Language acquisition. Six programs have English Language/Civics grants through WIOA. In addition, eleven programs work in collaboration with college career and technical education departments to teach integrated basic education and skills training leading to an industry-recognized certification. In addition to instructional services, each program provides student assessment services, transition advising, and a variety of student support services, including referral to other entities for needed non-educational services. The organizational chart for the New Mexico Higher Education Department, in which Adult Education is situated, follows.

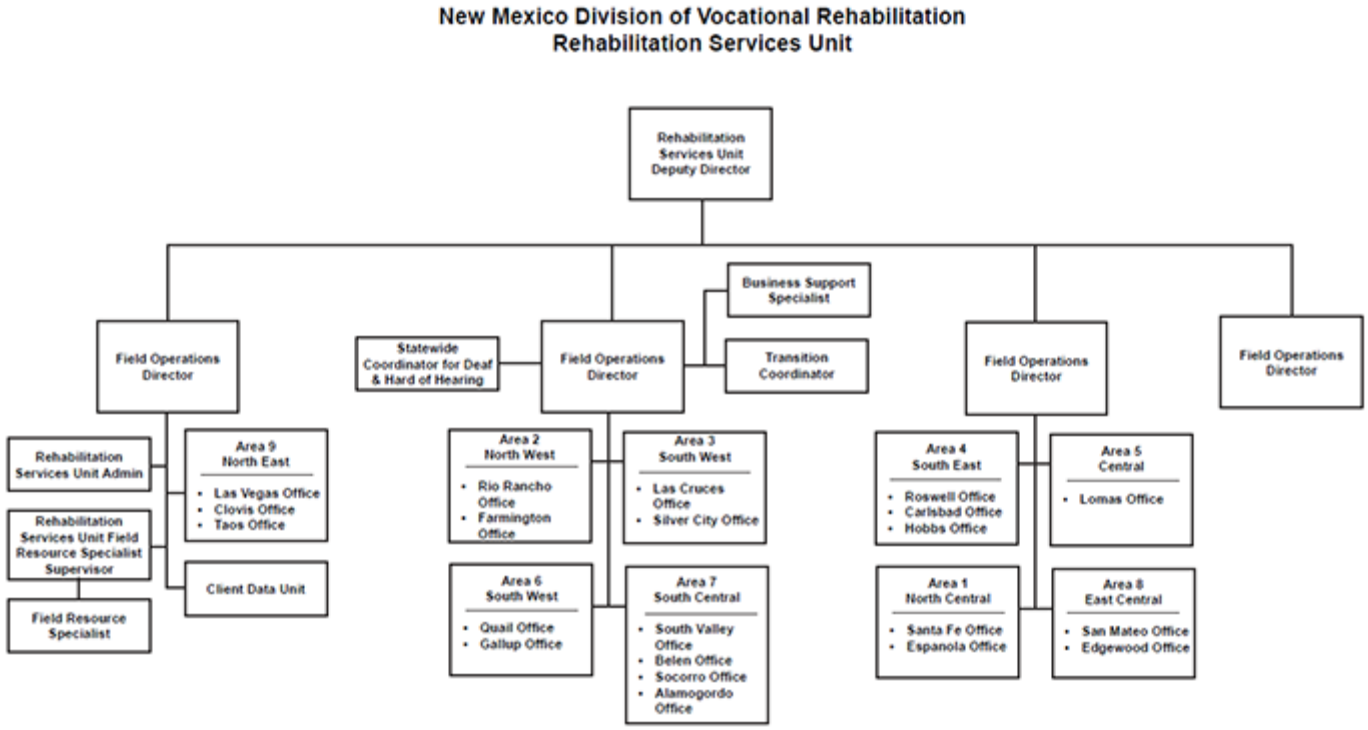


Vocational Rehabilitation

New Mexico has two vocational rehabilitation programs. The Commission for the Blind (Commission), an independent state agency, is the lead vocational rehabilitation entity serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired, while the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), situated within the Public Education Department, is the lead vocational rehabilitation entity serving individuals with all other disabilities. Both programs focus on preparing their respective participants for suitable work. A memorandum of understanding between DVR and the Commission has existed for many years to coordinate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, processing of referrals, transitioning of cases, handling of joint cases, sharing of office space, sharing of confidential information, and representation on the State Workforce Board. The State funding allotment is distributed by the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitative Services Administration (RSA) between the two agencies. When the VR agencies receive funding from RSA for caseloads, they each distribute this money by operational region, which is further distributed down to individual employee caseloads. Vocational rehabilitation counselors manage caseload budgets to provide services for the individuals assigned to their caseload.

New Mexico Public Education Department, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

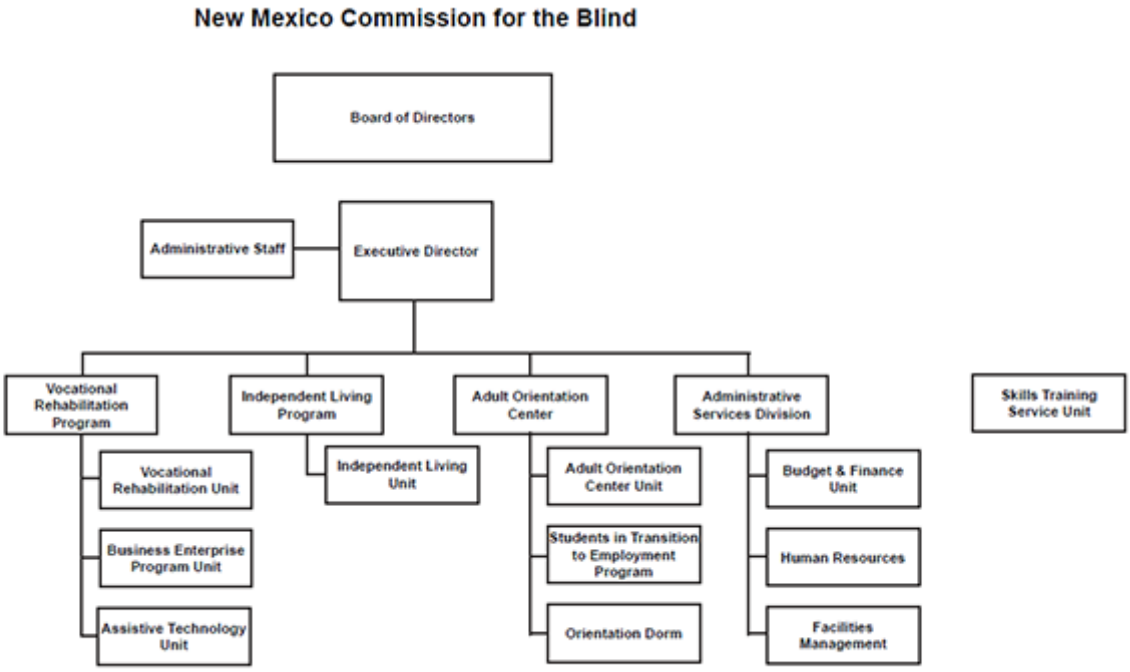
DVR helps individuals with disabilities find or retain suitable employment by providing vocational guidance, assistance, and services on an individualized basis. DVR is broken up into nine regions across the state, with each region having two to four field offices. Each region is managed by an area Program Manager and three Field Operation directors currently oversee each area. Also, one Administrative Field Operations Director oversees the administrative needs, i.e. facilities and fleet, of all the areas. The organizational chart for the New Mexico Department of Public Education, in which DVR is situated, follows.



Commission for the Blind

The Commission for the Blind provides vocational rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired, who need and can benefit from these services as it relates to an employment outcome. The Commission has eight vocational rehabilitation counselors located throughout the state, including four in Albuquerque, one in Las Vegas, one in Farmington, one in Roswell, and one in Las Cruces. The Commission typically opens a vocational rehabilitation case starting at age 14, and provides services through an Individualized Plan for Employment. As discussed earlier, examples of the types of services provided include guidance and counseling; transition services that can include participation in a summer youth training program or STEP; the provision of technological equipment, such as computers equipped with screen readers or screen enlargement software, specialized Braille computers, video magnifiers, or other rehabilitative technology; support attending college or graduate school; job placement services; support in starting a self-employment business; or provision of needed assistive technology to become or remain employed in a specific job. The Commission also operates a residential training program in Alamogordo, New Mexico where individuals who are blind can receive six to nine months of intensive training in Braille, orientation

and mobility, assistive technology, personal management, home management, and industrial arts. The training is provided by eight highly qualified teachers. The Orientation Center is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities and certified by the National Blindness Professional Certification Board. The organizational chart for the New Mexico Commission for the Blind, an independent agency, follows.



B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

The State Workforce Development Board is appointed by the Governor to provide vision and direction for the workforce system and make recommendations to the Governor regarding the workforce system and its overall effectiveness. The State Workforce Development Board and the Cabinet Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions work in collaboration to ensure the Governor's vision for workforce development is implemented successfully.

The State Workforce Development Board is comprised of the following positions in accordance with WIOA:

• *The Governor*

• *Representatives of State Legislature:*

o One member from the State House of Representatives

o One member from the State Senate

• *Representatives of Business:*

o Owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of business and other employers with optimum policy making or hiring authority. At a minimum, business representatives must comprise 51% of the board membership.

• *Representatives of Workforce:*

o Two or more representatives of labor organizations

o One or more members of a labor organization or Registered Apprenticeship program

• *Representatives of Government:*

o Lead state officials with primary responsibility for core programs*

o Two or more chief elected officials representing cities or counties

• *Other Representatives Governor May Appoint:*

o State agency officials from agencies that are one-stop partners

o State agency officials responsible for economic development or juvenile justice programs

o Individuals who represent an Indian tribe or tribal organization

o State agency officials responsible for education programs, including chief executive officers of institutions of higher education

**The lead state officials with primary responsibility for core programs in New Mexico will include, the cabinet secretaries for the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, New Mexico Higher Education Department, New Mexico Public Education Department, and Commission for the Blind.*

On May 26, 2016, NMDWS submitted a letter to USDOL to provide clarification and confirmation regarding the questions posed about the composition of the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and the timing of the SWDB's approval of New Mexico's first WIOA Combined State Plan (State Plan).

It is important to note that the terminology used in the State Plan as originally submitted was used due to certain non-mandatory positions on the SWDB being evaluated for future membership. That analysis is consistent with the provisions set forth in WIOA to create a SWDB which is business led, functional in size, and representative of the key components of the state's workforce development system. Governor Martinez's office is working diligently to fill the current vacancies on the board, as well as finalize decisions regarding the non-mandatory/additional members of the board.

The composition of the SWDB was articulated in the State Plan, and that composition was in place on February 24, 2016 when the proposed State Plan was voted on by the SWDB. In addition, the bylaws of the SWDB set forth the criteria for a quorum for all board meetings. Quorums are defined as follows:

Article Ten: Quorum

1. The quorum for all State Workforce Development Board meetings scheduled and announced as required by the open meetings act shall be those members of the current State Workforce Board present and eligible to vote. A minimum of ten (10) members must be present.
2. The quorum for committee meetings shall be those members of the committee present and eligible to vote.
3. Board members may not participate by phone in order to constitute a quorum.

The February 24, 2016 meeting of the SWDB was attended by (18) voting board members in person, and (1) board member participating via teleconference. Based on the following membership roster (board members voting on 2/24/16 are highlighted) you will see that a quorum was in attendance, and in accordance with the SWDB's bylaws.

It is the intent of the Executive Committee of the SWDB to review the current bylaws upon the issuance of final federal regulations governing WIOA, along with the anticipated federal response to the State Plan, to ensure that any and all components of the bylaws which need to be revised are done so in a timely manner. This review will coincide with a complete review of all applicable statutes, regulations, and policies which will require updating when all final guidance on WIOA has been issued.

1. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

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

On May 26, 2016, NMDWS submitted a letter to USDOL to provide clarification and confirmation regarding the questions posed about the composition of the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and the timing of the SWDB's approval of New Mexico's first WIOA Combined State Plan (State Plan).

It is important to note that the terminology used in the State Plan as originally submitted was used due to certain non-mandatory positions on the SWDB being evaluated for future membership. That analysis is consistent with the provisions set forth in WIOA to create a SWDB which is business led, functional in size, and representative of the key components of the state's workforce development system. Governor Martinez's office is working diligently to fill the current vacancies on the board, as well as finalize decisions regarding the non-mandatory/additional members of the board.

The composition of the SWDB was articulated in the State Plan, and that composition was in place on February 24, 2016 when the proposed State Plan was voted on by the SWDB. In addition, the bylaws of the SWDB set forth the criteria for a quorum for all board meetings. Quorums are defined as follows:

Article Ten: Quorum

1. The quorum for all State Workforce Development Board meetings scheduled and announced as required by the open meetings act shall be those members of the current State Workforce Board present and eligible to vote. A minimum of ten (10) members must be present.
2. The quorum for committee meetings shall be those members of the committee present and eligible to vote.

3. Board members may not participate by phone in order to constitute a quorum.

The February 24, 2016 meeting of the SWDB was attended by (18) voting board members in person, and (1) board member participating via teleconference. Based on the following membership roster (board members voting on 2/24/16 are highlighted) you will see that a quorum was in attendance, and in accordance with the SWDB's bylaws.

It is the intent of the Executive Committee of the SWDB to review the current bylaws upon the issuance of final federal regulations governing WIOA, along with the anticipated federal response to the State Plan, to ensure that any and all components of the bylaws which need to be revised are done so in a timely manner. This review will coincide with a complete review of all applicable statutes, regulations, and policies which will require updating when all final guidance on WIOA has been issued.

Position	Description	Members
The Governor (WIOA Section 101(b)(1)(A))	The Governor	· Governor Susana Martinez · Designee Jessica Gonzales
Representatives of State Legislature (WIOA Section 101(b)(1)(B))	One member of each chamber of the State legislature (to the extent consistent with State law), appointed by the appropriate presiding officers of such chamber.	· Senator John Arthur Smith · Representative Monica Youngblood
Representatives of Business (WIOA Section 101(b)(1)(C)(i))	The majority of the board must consist of representatives of business who: · are owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of businesses, or other business executives or employers with optimum policy-making or hiring authority, and who, in addition, may be members of a Local Board described in section 107(b)(2)(A)(i); · represent businesses (including at least on representative of small business), or organizations representing businesses and provide employment opportunities that, at a minimum, include high-quality, work-relevant training and development in in- demand industry sectors or occupations in the State; and are appointed from among individuals nominated.	· Bryn Davis - Sapphire Energy · Justin Winfield - Bubba's Fireworks · Dale Dekker - Dekker/Perich/Sabatini · Ella Leeper - Desert Paper · Joan Schlueter -On-Site Hiring · John Rockwell -Sierra Peaks/Marpac · Julia Vasquez- Christus St. Vincent · Kari Mitchell - Las Cruces Machine, Mfg. & Engineering · Vacant (Pending reappointment) - Vacated by Kirby Jefferson · Vacant (Pending reappointment) - Vacated by Michael Kozeliski · Vacant (pending reappointment) -

Position	Description	Members
		Vacated by Dave Sepich · Vacant (Pending reappointment) - Vacated by Sharon Rogers · Vacant (Pending reappointment) - Vacated by Drew Dolan · Suzanne Quillen - Ernest Health, Inc. · Tim Rabon - Mesa Verde Inc. · Bob Grassberger - SRD Economic Consulting LLC
Representatives of Workforce (WIOA Section 101(b)(1)(C)(ii))	Not less than 20 percent shall be representatives of the workforce within the State, who must include: · Two or more representatives of labor organizations, who have been nominated by State labor federations; · One or more representative, who must be a member of a labor organization or a training director, from a joint labor- management registered apprenticeship program, or if no such joint program exists in the State, such a representative of a registered apprenticeship program in the State; In addition to the representatives enumerated above, the Governor may appoint one or more representatives of the following organizations to contribute to the 20 percent requirement: representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of individuals with barriers to employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth.	· Vince Alvarado - SMU 495 · Karla Kuglar - Associated Builders and Contractors · Richard Meyer - Iron Workers 495 · Rene Lowden- Job Corps · Vacant (Pending reappointment) - Vacated by Chris Sanchez, YDI, Inc. · Vacant (Pending reappointment) · Vacant (Pending reappointment)
Representatives of Government ((WIOA Section 101(b)(1)(C)(iii))	The balance of State Board membership must include: the lead State officials with primary responsibility for the core programs; and two or more chief elected officials (collectively representing both cities and counties, where appropriate) In addition to the representatives enumerated above, the Governor may appoint such other representatives such as: · the State agency officials from agencies that are one-stop partners (including additional one-stop partners whose programs are covered by the State plan, if any);	· Secretary Celina Bussey-DWS (WP/WIA) · Secretary Hanna Skandera- PED (DVR) · Secretary Barbara Damron- HED (ABE) · Scott Eckstein- Mayor of Bloomfield · Vacant (Pending reappointment) · Secretary Jon Barela- EDD · Dr. Kathie Winograd -

Position	Description	Members
	· State agency officials responsible for economic development or juvenile justice programs in the State; · individuals who represent an Indian tribe or tribal organization, as such terms are defined in section 166(b); and · State agency officials responsible for education programs in the State, including chief executive officers of community colleges and other institutions of higher education.	President, CNM CC · Dr. Becky Rowley- President, Clovis CC · Secretary Brent Earnest - HSD · Greg Trapp- NM Commission of the Blind · Doug Calderwood - Aging & Long Term Services

2. BOARD ACTIVITIES

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

The State Workforce Development Board establishes overarching strategies and framework for the local boards to follow in developing local plans that are consistent with the State Plan; establishes accountability measures and expectations for the implementation of the local board plans; conducts annual (or more frequent) review of local boards plans and progress; ensures compliance with criteria for membership on a local boards; receives and communicates public comments regarding the activities of the local boards to ensure accountability and transparency; recommends action consistent with state rule and policy if local board outcomes are not achieved and are not consistent with the principles, strategies, and vision described in this State Plan.

The workforce and community-related expertise of committees is essential to the mission and administration of WIOA, as well as the workforce system's services and programs. The following provides information about the proposed State Board committee designations.

<u>Proposed State Workforce Development Board Committee Designations</u>

Business Engagement Committee:

This committee will support the development and execution of statewide employer engagement to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, gaps and employability of the New Mexico workforce. They will review and analyze data to be used as the basis for a more comprehensive plan of action for enhancing the employability of job seekers through relevant training and education.

Data and Performance Committee:

This committee will spearhead the acquisition and coordination of data across agencies to develop state performance measures to evaluate the overall effectiveness and return on investment of workforce/training programs and services. While recognizing the need for appropriate privacy safeguards, this committee will work to establish the necessary data sharing agreements to enable an integrated tracking process to better assess how well the state's investment in individuals

receiving career services yield successful outcomes. These efforts will provide a basis for setting priorities, goals, and benchmarks across agencies based on solid data.

Workforce/Education Coordination Committee:

This committee will work to engage and challenge stakeholders to design systems and programs that coordinate and leverage WIOA resources; improve consistent and standardized assessment of basic skills; and increase the attainment of relevant credentials validated by employers. The committee will promote a strong partnership between community colleges and the public workforce system and explore options to more effectively target resources to support and sustain successful projects and demonstrated effectiveness.

Workforce System and Performance Committee:

This committee will promote engagement between the State Workforce Development Board and Local Workforce Development Boards. It will communicate State Workforce Development Board vision, goals, and expectations for the workforce system; provide guidance in establishing a process for one-stop certification.

Youth Committee:

This committee will engage stakeholders and develop an ongoing, collaborative strategy for delivering comprehensive youth services, particularly as WIOA emphasizes 75% of youth funds are to be spent on out-of-school youth.

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

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

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

The core programs are currently assessed each year based on a mix of federal and state performance accountability measures. New Mexico is aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. We look forward to Departments of Labor and Education working with States to inform future guidance and best practices on how best to assess not only core programs, but also one-stop delivery system partner program services, and Combined State Plan partner program success.

The following information provides the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs based on performance accountability measures during the preceding two-year period.

WIOA Programs. We expect performance under WIOA to be tracked against the six primary indicators of performance, related to employment in the 2nd and 4th quarters, median earnings, credential attainment, measurable skills gains, and effectiveness in serving employers. Performance

under WIA was tracked against six common performance measures, including entered employment, retention, average earnings, placement in employment or education, attainment of degree or certificate, and literacy or numeracy gains. The collective performance of each of the four local boards against these measures is what makes up the state's overall performance. Performance outcomes from plan year 2014 indicate that New Mexico met all the negotiated performance levels by meeting or exceeding all WIA common measures, and met or exceeded negotiated performance levels for all, but one measure in plan year 2013, as average earnings for the Adult program came in just short of the negotiated performance level.

Additionally, program and fiscal monitoring activities are in place to ensure programs achieve intended results; to ensure federal and state resources are efficiently and effectively used for authorized purposes and are protected from waste, fraud, and abuse; to ensure reliable and timely information is captured and reported to serve as the basis for improved decision-making and required reporting; and to promote continuous improvement at all levels of the workforce system. Some of the monitoring activities include reviews of accounting and monitoring systems, budget methodologies, cash management practices, cost allocation plans, purchasing and procurement procedures, internal controls, programs results or outcomes, reporting accuracy, and recordkeeping.

Wagner-Peyser. Employment Services performance is tracked against three measures, including entered employment, employment retention, and average earnings. Performance outcomes from both plan years 2013 and 2014 indicate that New Mexico met or exceeded all the negotiated performance levels of the Wagner-Peyser program. Oversight of the Wagner Peyser program involves program performance tracking, federal reporting, monitoring of field office operations, technical assistance, and corrective action plans, if needed.

Adult Education. Adult Education is assessed by OCTAE annually based on a standard of continuous program improvement, as well a rigorous comparison of performance measures among states. Annual evaluations form the basis of negotiating annual state performance targets with OCTAE. Targets are negotiated annually with U.S. Department of Education based on past performance and comparative performance across states. Periodically OCTAE conducts weeklong site monitoring visits to evaluate State practices, which includes intensive visits to samples of local provider programs. In addition to continuous fiscal and data desk monitoring, the Adult Education Division conducts program monitoring visits to all local providers every two years, which includes administrative, instructional, fiscal, and data process evaluations. A written report includes recognition of promising practices, recommendations for improvement, and, if necessary, a corrective action plan to be further monitored by the State office. Besides these regular visits, the state office reviews each program's annual single audit prior to awarding funding and places programs on corrective action plans if the audit indicates that is necessary. Local program effectiveness, quality, and improvement are also taken into account in determining the amount of funding allocated each year to each program.

The core performance measures tracked by the Adult Education Program include the following.

- Entered Employment - number entering employment / number unemployed at program entry.
- Retained Employment - number retaining employment / number employed at program entry.
- High School Equivalency (HSE) - number attaining high school equivalency / number taking HSE tests.
- Postsecondary Education or Training (Current Year) - number entering postsecondary within current program year / number passing HSE or entering with a high school credential.

- Postsecondary Education or Training (Prior Program Year) - number entering postsecondary within current program year / number passing HSE or entering with a high school credential in prior year.

In fiscal year 2014, the Adult Education program exceeded its targets for retained employment and high school equivalency, but was not able to meet targets for other core measures. In fiscal year 2015, the program further improved its performance against its retained employment target, exceeded its target for entered employment, and came close to meeting its target for postsecondary education or training in the current year. The Adult Education program also tracks the educational functioning level of its participants to determine the percentage of students who have completed each literacy level based on Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as Second Language standards.

Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. The two vocational rehabilitation programs are measured by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), which has established Standards and Indicators, which the agencies must report on to the legislature each year. The Indicators are:

- 1.1 Number of Case Closures with an Employment Outcome.
- 1.2 Percentage of Case Closures that Received Services with an Employment Outcome.
- 1.3 Percentage of Case Closures with a Competitive Employment Outcome. (Note: Competitive Employment also includes self-employment, Business Enterprises Program participation, or supported employment in an integrated setting.)
- 1.4 Percentage of Case Closures with Significant Disabilities with a Competitive Employment Outcome.
- 1.5 Ratio of Average Closure Wage to Average State Wage
- 1.6 Difference Between the Percentage of Case Closures with Employment Outcomes that are Self Support at Application versus Self Support at Closure. (Note: Self Support means the individual reported their own income as the largest single source of economic support.)
- 2.1 Ratio of Minority to Non-Minority Service Rate.

The VR agencies are required to submit reports to RSA that include data used to track trends of persons applying for VR services, and determinations of eligibility made by the state VR agency. Also, identification of persons with significant disabilities, Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) development, service implementation and program outcomes are key program measurements that provide a general assessment of state VR programs and their accomplishments.

<u>Division of Vocational Rehabilitation</u>

The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation exceeded over half of the Standards and Indicators for VR performance consistently over the past seven years. The last four years starting in 2012 have been particularly strong in the Division exceeding at least five of the seven Indicators. In 2015 the Division exceeded Indicators for 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 2.1.

<u>Commission for the Blind</u>

The Commission has historically rated at or near the top in the nation on the three "primary Indicators. The Rehabilitation Services Administration did not report on a new set of Standard and Indicators for the federal fiscal year that ended on September 30, 2014. As a result, the last two set of available performance measures are for federal 2012 and federal 2013. According to the last set of Standards and Indicators, for 2013, the Commission ranked first in the nation on Primary Indicator

1.3, first on Primary Indicator 1.4, and eighth on Primary Indicator 1.5. Though not a Primary Indicator, the Commission also ranks first on indicator 1.6. The Commission has in the past ranked first on all three Primary Indicators, and would have come close to ranking first on all three Primary Indicators had the Standards and Indicators been issued this year. According to the Standards and Indicators issued for federal fiscal year 2012, the Commission ranked first in the nation on Primary Indicator 1.3, first on Primary Indicator 1.4, and ninth on Primary Indicator 1.5. Though not a Primary Indicator, the Commission also ranked first on indicator 1.6.

B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS

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

Lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. This may include choosing to set additional indicators of performance. New Mexico awaits additional federal guidance on the integration of performance reporting.

Each of the one-stop partners will strive to achieve the locally-negotiated performance standards of quality service for its customers, employees, and partners. Each is committed to meeting or exceeding the various performance measures laid out in their grants or programs. Each partner will work cooperatively with other partners to achieve performance measures of the four core programs.

According to local board MOUs, one-stop partners are committed to the performance indicators of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act placing participants into unsubsidized employment, increasing job retention, removing barriers to employment, providing meaningful education and training activities leading to jobs with self-sufficiency. The partners are equally committed to meeting the needs of both job seekers and employers. Customer surveys will be utilized to gauge progress and to gather information for continuous improvement.

C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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

The following information provides the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs based on performance accountability measures during the preceding two-year period.

WIOA Programs. Performance under WIA was tracked against six common performance measures, including entered employment, retention, average earnings, placement in employment or education, attainment of degree or certificate, and literacy or numeracy gains. The collective performance of each of the four local boards against these measures is what makes up the state's overall performance. Performance outcomes from plan year 2014 indicate that New Mexico met all the negotiated performance levels by meeting or exceeding all six measures, and met or exceeded

negotiated performance levels for all, but one measure in plan year 2013, as average earnings for the Adult program came in just short of the negotiated performance level.

Additionally, program and fiscal monitoring activities are in place to ensure programs achieve intended results; to ensure federal and state resources are efficiently and effectively used for authorized purposes and are protected from waste, fraud, and abuse; to ensure reliable and timely information is captured and reported to serve as the basis for improved decision-making and required reporting; and to promote continuous improvement at all levels of the workforce system. Some of the monitoring activities include reviews of accounting and monitoring systems, budget methodologies, cash management practices, cost allocation plans, purchasing and procurement procedures, internal controls, programs results or outcomes, reporting accuracy, and recordkeeping.

Wagner-Peyser. Employment Services performance is tracked against three measures, including entered employment, employment retention, and average earnings. Performance outcomes from both plan years 2013 and 2014 indicate that New Mexico met or exceeded all the negotiated performance levels of the Wagner-Peyser program. Oversight of the Wagner Peyser program involves program performance tracking, federal reporting, monitoring of field office operations, technical assistance, and corrective action plans, if needed.

Adult Education. Adult Education is assessed by OCTAE annually based on a standard of continuous program improvement, as well a rigorous comparison of performance measures among states. Annual evaluations form the basis of negotiating annual state performance targets with OCTAE. Targets are negotiated annually with U.S. Department of Education based on past performance and comparative performance across states. Periodically OCTAE conducts weeklong site monitoring visits to evaluate State practices, which includes intensive visits to samples of local provider programs. In addition to continuous fiscal and data desk monitoring, the Adult Education Division conducts program monitoring visits to all local providers every two years, which includes administrative, instructional, fiscal, and data process evaluations. A written report includes recognition of promising practices, recommendations for improvement, and, if necessary, a corrective action plan to be further monitored by the State office. Besides these regular visits, the state office reviews each program's annual single audit prior to awarding funding and places programs on corrective action plans if the audit indicates that is necessary. Local program effectiveness, quality, and improvement are also taken into account in determining the amount of funding allocated each year to each program.

The core performance measures tracked by the Adult Education Program include the following.

- Entered Employment - number entering employment / number unemployed at program entry.
- Retained Employment - number retaining employment / number employed at program entry.
- High School Equivalency (HSE) - number attaining high school equivalency / number taking HSE tests.
- Postsecondary Education or Training (Current Year) - number entering postsecondary within current program year / number passing HSE or entering with a high school credential.
- Postsecondary Education or Training (Prior Program Year) - number entering postsecondary within current program year / number passing HSE or entering with a high school credential in prior year.

In fiscal year 2014, the Adult Education program exceeded its targets for retained employment and high school equivalency, but was not able to meet targets for other core measures. In fiscal year 2015, the program further improved its performance against its retained employment target,

exceeded its target for entered employment, and came close to meeting its target for postsecondary education or training in the current year. The Adult Education program also tracks the educational functioning level of its participants to determine the percentage of students who have completed each literacy level based on Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, and English as Second Language standards.

Vocational Rehabilitation Programs. The two vocational rehabilitation programs are measured by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), which has established Standards and Indicators, which the agencies must report on to the legislature each year. The Indicators are:

- 1.1 Number of Case Closures with an Employment Outcome.
- 1.2 Percentage of Case Closures that Received Services with an Employment Outcome.
- 1.3 Percentage of Case Closures with a Competitive Employment Outcome. (Note: Competitive Employment also includes self-employment, Business Enterprises Program participation, or supported employment in an integrated setting.)
- 1.4 Percentage of Case Closures with Significant Disabilities with a Competitive Employment Outcome.
- 1.5 Ratio of Average Closure Wage to Average State Wage
- 1.6 Difference Between the Percentage of Case Closures with Employment Outcomes that are Self Support at Application versus Self Support at Closure. (Note: Self Support means the individual reported their own income as the largest single source of economic support.)
- 2.1 Ratio of Minority to Non-Minority Service Rate.

The VR agencies are required to submit reports to RSA that include data used to track trends of persons applying for VR services, and determinations of eligibility made by the state VR agency. Also, identification of persons with significant disabilities, Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) development, service implementation and program outcomes are key program measurements that provide a general assessment of state VR programs and their accomplishments.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation exceeded over half of the Standards and Indicators for VR performance consistently over the past seven years. The last four years starting in 2012 have been particularly strong in the Division exceeding at least five of the seven Indicators. In 2015 the Division exceeded Indicators for 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, and 2.1.

Commission for the Blind

The Commission has historically rated at or near the top in the nation on the three "primary Indicators. The Rehabilitation Services Administration did not report on a new set of Standard and Indicators for the federal fiscal year that ended on September 30, 2014. As a result, the last two set of available performance measures are for federal 2012 and federal 2013. According to the last set of Standards and Indicators, for 2013, the Commission ranked first in the nation on Primary Indicator 1.3, first on Primary Indicator 1.4, and eighth on Primary Indicator 1.5. Though not a Primary Indicator, the Commission also ranks first on indicator 1.6. The Commission has in the past ranked first on all three Primary Indicators, and would have come close to ranking first on all three Primary Indicators had the Standards and Indicators been issued this year. According to the Standards and Indicators issued for federal fiscal year 2012, the Commission ranked first in the nation on Primary Indicator 1.3, first on Primary Indicator 1.4, and ninth on Primary Indicator 1.5. Though not a Primary Indicator, the Commission also ranked first on indicator 1.6.

D. EVALUATION

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

Lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. This may include choosing to set additional indicators of performance. New Mexico awaits additional federal guidance on the integration of performance reporting.

Each of the one-stop partners will strive to achieve the locally-negotiated performance standards of quality service for its customers, employees, and partners. Each is committed to meeting or exceeding the various performance measures laid out in their grants or programs. Each partner will work cooperatively with other partners to achieve performance measures of the four core programs.

According to local board MOUs, one-stop partners are committed to the performance indicators of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act placing participants into unsubsidized employment, increasing job retention, removing barriers to employment, providing meaningful education and training activities leading to jobs with self-sufficiency. The partners are equally committed to meeting the needs of both job seekers and employers. Customer surveys will be utilized to gauge progress and to gather information for continuous improvement.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

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

The following is a revised response.

New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS)

WIOA Fiscal Section

Procedure Manual

Subject

Determination of Annual WIOA Allotments to Local Areas for Program Year 2016

Effective Date07/01/2016

Scope

NMDWS is the statewide administrative entity charged with oversight of federal funds which flow through to local boards for payment of federal dollars under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Associated Materials

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Procedures

Each year, DWS WIOA Fiscal Section will calculate Local Area's formula distribution of WIOA funds using the following procedures:

- Staff will review U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Training & Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL17-15) used by USDOL to provide States with Program Year (PY16) and (FY17) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) annual allotments. The TEGL provides the PY16 and FY17 distributions by funding stream: Adult and Dislocated Worker and the PY16 allotment for Youth.

- Staff will develop New Mexico's preliminary WIOA allotment from TEGL 17-15. Compare to prior year's allotment to determine overall funding increases or decreases in funding. Calculate state reservation of funds (5% State Administration, 10% Statewide Activities, and 15% State Rapid Response) to arrive at amount of funds available for distribution to local areas including the Navajo Nation.

- Staff will obtain LMI data from DWS ER&A and enter into a spreadsheet that calculates the fair share allocation utilizing the 6-part formula for Dislocated Worker and the 3-Part Formulas for Adult and Youth. This spreadsheet is designed to calculate the following local area funding stream allocations:

<u>Dislocated Worker Funding</u>

Staff will use the spreadsheet for the Six-Part Formula to determine each Local Areas allocation using the relative share of the following six data categories in accordance with the TEGL 17-15:

1. Insured Unemployed
2. Unemployed Concentrations
3. MLS Data
4. Declining Industry
5. Farmer/Rancher
6. Long term Unemployed

Raw data will be used to develop six-part formula Average Index of Need, and the Average Index of Need will be used to calculate Fair Share Allocations (20% to each part, except Farmer/Rancher due to a decline in BEA Agricultural Employment average from 2004 to 2014).

Adult Funding

Staff will use the spreadsheet for the Three-Part Formula to determine each Local Areas allocation using the relative share of the following three data categories in accordance with the TEGL 17-15:

1. Number of Economically Disadvantaged (2000 Census) Adults 22-72
2. Number of Excess Unemployed
3. Number of Substantial Unemployed

Raw data will be used to develop three-part formula Indexes of Need, and funds will be distributed in fair share allocation (33 1/3% to each part) based on Index of Need for each part.

Youth Funding

Staff will use the spreadsheet for the Three-Part Formula to determine each Local Areas allocation using the relative share of the following three data categories in accordance with the TEGL 17-15:

1. Number of Economically Disadvantaged, Youth 16-21
2. Average Number of Excess Unemployed for the 12 month period, July
3. 2014-June 2015
4. Average Number of Substantial Unemployed for 12 month period, July
5. 2014-June 2015

Raw data will be used to develop three-part formula Indexes of Need, and funds will be distributed in fair share allocation (33 1/3% to each part) based on Index of Need for each part.

Spreadsheets break out calculations by:

- Fair Share Allocation (by County within Local Area) of State Set asides (5% and 10%).
- Fair Share Allocation (by County within Local Area) of Administrative Dollars
- Fair Share Allocation (by County within Local Area) of Program Dollars

Spreadsheets reflect calculations by:

- Program Year (PY16) Fair Share Local Area Allocation by County within Local Area and by program and Administrative funds.
- Fiscal Year (FY17) Fair Share Local Area Allocation by County within Local Area and by program and Administrative funds.

Note: Navajo Nation is a Local Area for the purpose of fair share allocation based on raw data.

Using a spreadsheet designed to calculate the 90% Hold Harmless amounts, staff will enter the prior two years' Actual Local Area Allocations to arrive at the 2-year average allocation for each area. Staff will multiply the 2-year average by 90% to arrive at the 90% amount of the prior 2-year average. This is the minimum amount of funding that local areas should receive if the 90% hold

harmless amounts are used as a minimum allocation amount. This spreadsheet will calculate the ratable increases and decreases and adjust the final allocation accordingly.

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

The following is a revised response.

New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS)

WIOA Fiscal Section

Procedure Manual

Subject

Determination of Annual WIOA Allotments to Local Areas for Program Year 2016

Effective Date07/01/2016

Scope

NMDWS is the statewide administrative entity charged with oversight of federal funds which flow through to local boards for payment of federal dollars under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Associated Materials

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Procedures

Each year, DWS WIOA Fiscal Section will calculate Local Area's formula distribution of WIOA funds using the following procedures:

- Staff will review U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Training & Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL17-15) used by USDOL to provide States with Program Year (PY16) and (FY17) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) annual allotments. The TEGL provides the PY16 and FY17 distributions by funding stream: Adult and Dislocated Worker and the PY16 allotment for Youth.

- Staff will develop New Mexico's preliminary WIOA allotment from TEGL 17-15. Compare to prior year's allotment to determine overall funding increases or decreases in funding. Calculate state reservation of funds (5% State Administration, 10% Statewide Activities, and 15% State Rapid Response) to arrive at amount of funds available for distribution to local areas including the Navajo Nation.

- Staff will obtain LMI data from DWS ER&A and enter into a spreadsheet that calculates the fair share allocation utilizing the 6-part formula for Dislocated Worker and the 3-Part

Formulas for Adult and Youth. This spreadsheet is designed to calculate the following local area funding stream allocations:

Dislocated Worker Funding

Staff will use the spreadsheet for the Six-Part Formula to determine each Local Areas allocation using the relative share of the following six data categories in accordance with the TEGL 17-15:

1. Insured Unemployed
2. Unemployed Concentrations
3. MLS Data
4. Declining Industry
5. Farmer/Rancher
6. Long term Unemployed

Raw data will be used to develop six-part formula Average Index of Need, and the Average Index of Need will be used to calculate Fair Share Allocations (20% to each part, except Farmer/Rancher due to a decline in BEA Agricultural Employment average from 2004 to 2014).

Adult Funding

Staff will use the spreadsheet for the Three-Part Formula to determine each Local Areas allocation using the relative share of the following three data categories in accordance with the TEGL 17-15:

1. Number of Economically Disadvantaged (2000 Census) Adults 22-72
2. Number of Excess Unemployed
3. Number of Substantial Unemployed

Raw data will be used to develop three-part formula Indexes of Need, and funds will be distributed in fair share allocation (33 1/3% to each part) based on Index of Need for each part.

Youth Funding

Staff will use the spreadsheet for the Three-Part Formula to determine each Local Areas allocation using the relative share of the following three data categories in accordance with the TEGL 17-15:

1. Number of Economically Disadvantaged, Youth 16-21
2. Average Number of Excess Unemployed for the 12 month period, July
3. 2014-June 2015
4. Average Number of Substantial Unemployed for 12 month period, July
5. 2014-June 2015

Raw data will be used to develop three-part formula Indexes of Need, and funds will be distributed in fair share allocation (33 1/3% to each part) based on Index of Need for each part.

Spreadsheets break out calculations by:

- Fair Share Allocation (by County within Local Area) of State Set asides (5% and 10%).
- Fair Share Allocation (by County within Local Area) of Administrative Dollars

- Fair Share Allocation (by County within Local Area) of Program Dollars

Spreadsheets reflect calculations by:

- Program Year (PY16) Fair Share Local Area Allocation by County within Local Area and by program and Administrative funds.
- Fiscal Year (FY17) Fair Share Local Area Allocation by County within Local Area and by program and Administrative funds.

Note: Navajo Nation is a Local Area for the purpose of fair share allocation based on raw data.

Using a spreadsheet designed to calculate the 90% Hold Harmless amounts, staff will enter the prior two years' Actual Local Area Allocations to arrive at the 2-year average allocation for each area. Staff will multiply the 2-year average by 90% to arrive at the 90% amount of the prior 2-year average. This is the minimum amount of funding that local areas should receive if the 90% hold harmless amounts are used as a minimum allocation amount. This spreadsheet will calculate the ratable increases and decreases and adjust the final allocation accordingly.

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

The following is a revised response.

New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS)

WIOA Fiscal Section

Procedure Manual

Subject

Determination of Annual WIOA Allotments to Local Areas for Program Year 2016

Effective Date07/01/2016

Scope

NMDWS is the statewide administrative entity charged with oversight of federal funds which flow through to local boards for payment of federal dollars under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Associated Materials

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Procedures

Each year, DWS WIOA Fiscal Section will calculate Local Area's formula distribution of WIOA funds using the following procedures:

- Staff will review U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Training & Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL17-15) used by USDOL to provide States with Program Year (PY16) and (FY17) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) annual allotments. The TEGL provides the PY16 and FY17 distributions by funding stream: Adult and Dislocated Worker and the PY16 allotment for Youth.

- Staff will develop New Mexico's preliminary WIOA allotment from TEGL 17-15. Compare to prior year's allotment to determine overall funding increases or decreases in funding. Calculate state reservation of funds (5% State Administration, 10% Statewide Activities, and 15% State Rapid Response) to arrive at amount of funds available for distribution to local areas including the Navajo Nation.

- Staff will obtain LMI data from DWS ER&A and enter into a spreadsheet that calculates the fair share allocation utilizing the 6-part formula for Dislocated Worker and the 3-Part Formulas for Adult and Youth. This spreadsheet is designed to calculate the following local area funding stream allocations:

<u>Dislocated Worker Funding</u>

Staff will use the spreadsheet for the Six-Part Formula to determine each Local Areas allocation using the relative share of the following six data categories in accordance with the TEGL 17-15:

1. Insured Unemployed
2. Unemployed Concentrations
3. MLS Data
4. Declining Industry
5. Farmer/Rancher
6. Long term Unemployed

Raw data will be used to develop six-part formula Average Index of Need, and the Average Index of Need will be used to calculate Fair Share Allocations (20% to each part, except Farmer/Rancher due to a decline in BEA Agricultural Employment average from 2004 to 2014).

<u>Adult Funding</u>

Staff will use the spreadsheet for the Three-Part Formula to determine each Local Areas allocation using the relative share of the following three data categories in accordance with the TEGL 17-15:

1. Number of Economically Disadvantaged (2000 Census) Adults 22-72
2. Number of Excess Unemployed
3. Number of Substantial Unemployed

Raw data will be used to develop three-part formula Indexes of Need, and funds will be distributed in fair share allocation (33 1/3% to each part) based on Index of Need for each part.

<u>Youth Funding</u>

Staff will use the spreadsheet for the Three-Part Formula to determine each Local Areas allocation using the relative share of the following three data categories in accordance with the TEGL 17-15:

1. Number of Economically Disadvantaged, Youth 16-21
2. Average Number of Excess Unemployed for the 12 month period, July
3. 2014-June 2015
4. Average Number of Substantial Unemployed for 12 month period, July
5. 2014-June 2015

Raw data will be used to develop three-part formula Indexes of Need, and funds will be distributed in fair share allocation (33 1/3% to each part) based on Index of Need for each part.

Spreadsheets break out calculations by:

- Fair Share Allocation (by County within Local Area) of State Set asides (5% and 10%).
- Fair Share Allocation (by County within Local Area) of Administrative Dollars
- Fair Share Allocation (by County within Local Area) of Program Dollars

Spreadsheets reflect calculations by:

- Program Year (PY16) Fair Share Local Area Allocation by County within Local Area and by program and Administrative funds.
- Fiscal Year (FY17) Fair Share Local Area Allocation by County within Local Area and by program and Administrative funds.

Note: Navajo Nation is a Local Area for the purpose of fair share allocation based on raw data.

Using a spreadsheet designed to calculate the 90% Hold Harmless amounts, staff will enter the prior two years' Actual Local Area Allocations to arrive at the 2-year average allocation for each area. Staff will multiply the 2-year average by 90% to arrive at the 90% amount of the prior 2-year average. This is the minimum amount of funding that local areas should receive if the 90% hold harmless amounts are used as a minimum allocation amount. This spreadsheet will calculate the ratable increases and decreases and adjust the final allocation accordingly.

B. FOR TITLE II:

1. MULTI-YEAR GRANTS OR CONTRACTS

Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

The following is a revised response.

The New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) is the State's eligible agency for administering Adult Education and Literacy programs under WIOA. NMHED will award multi-year grants on a competitive basis to eligible providers within the state to develop, implement, and improve adult education and literacy activities under WIOA. The subgrant Request for Proposals (RFP) process will follow state procurement rules and federal guidelines under WIOA and will take

place in spring, 2017. The New Mexico Higher Education Department will award funding to local providers beginning July 1, 2017 for a four year cycle which applies to all local grant recipients, with the requirement that each year the local provider submit and extension application to be considered for funding. The RFP process for the next multi-year grant cycle will occur in spring of 2021 for funding to begin July 1, 2021.

Funding will be used to provide services in all four workforce board regions. The amount of funding allocated to each provider will be determined by a formula which takes into account the literacy needs of the local service area, the number of participants served, and core performance indicators under WIOA.

The RFP process for program year 2017-18 will follow these steps:

- February 2017: NMHED publishes NOFA and RFP aligned with New Mexico Combined State Plan
- February-March 2017: NMHED provides technical assistance to inquiries from eligible potential providers. NMHED recruits candidates for reviewing committee to score AEFLA grant proposals.
- March 2017: AEFLA grant proposals due at NMHED.
- March-April 2017: Review committee reviews and scores grant proposals.
- April 2017: NMHED reviews budgets and other grant requirements to rank RFP responses according to scores.
- April-May 2017: NMHED announces eligible providers that will receive funding.
- July 1 2017: AEFLA providers begin 4-year grant cycle of programming and funding.

NMHED will not distribute any new federal funds for a funding cycle without a statewide public Notification of Funding Availability (NOFA) and RFP. The NOFA will be advertised statewide and sent to all known eligible service providers. The NOFA announcement and the RFP will cover all funding categories and programs available for current year distribution. Any announcement will be contingent upon State Plan approval by U. S. Departments of Labor and Education. The NOFA and RFP will be sent to all requesting parties. All eligible recipients for WIOA sections 225, 231, and/or 243 will be allowed the same opportunity to apply for funds regardless of the priorities they address and will follow the same RFP process.

The funding set aside for Integrated English literacy and civics education (IEL/Civics) will be distributed in a separate RFP process. The process will be the same, and the program-specific content and criteria for evaluation will be specific to the WIOA requirements for IEL/Civics education programs.

Demonstrated effectiveness of eligible providers' proposals will be determined by performance data related to the provider's record of improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the State's RFP for grants to eligible providers. To demonstrate effectiveness, eligible providers will include in their proposal at least two years of credible data recording outcomes serving the goals under Title II of WIOA; at least two years of the provider's annual independent audits for fiscal responsibility; and cost-benefit analyses for the two years preceding grant proposal.

2. ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS

Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

The following is a revised response.

NMHED will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds, and it will ensure that it is using the same grant announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers by using this process:

- Using the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and Request for Proposals (RFP) process described under “multi-year grants and contracts”;
- Issuing public notice through these venues:

o Publication of the NOFA, including instructions for receiving a copy of the RFP, in the Albuquerque Journal, a newspaper with statewide circulation;

o Mailing a copy of the NOFA to all existing adult education and family literacy services; and

o Publication of the NOFA and RFP on the NMHED website;

- Sending a copy of the RFP to all who request it;
- Following the State’s procurement process as it is applicable to grants. Should additional funding become available in the case of the withdrawal of a provider during the term of a grant, the same process will be used to provide services in the applicable service area and it will be open to all eligible agencies throughout the state; and
- Using the same process for EL/Civics grant competitions.

All applicants eligible under Sections 225, 231, and 243 of WIOA will submit applications directly to NMHED, the eligible agency. They will not be required to apply through another agency or agencies in a multi-tiered process. The application process is designed so that direct application to NMHED is clearly evident and nonnegotiable. Direct application is the norm, regardless of whether an applicant would be considered a grantee or a contractor.

NMHED requires all eligible providers for sections 225, 231, and/or 243 to use the same application process. This ensures that all applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria. NMHED ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants or contracts. It also ensures that the same grant or contract announcement, application, and proposal process is used for all eligible providers through the grant management system. During the initial period of the grant submission process, any eligible agency that contacts NMHED with an interest in participating will be provided the information needed. NMHED believes that these approaches meet the requirements specified in AEFLA and is satisfied that every effort is made to ensure direct and equitable access.

C. TITLE IV VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR). New Mexico has two vocational rehabilitation programs. The Commission for the Blind (Commission), an independent state agency, is the lead vocational rehabilitation entity serving individuals who are blind or visually impaired, while the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), situated within the Public Education Department, is the lead vocational rehabilitation entity serving individuals with all other disabilities. Both programs focus on preparing their respective participants for suitable work. DVR serves all eligible New Mexicans with disabilities other than participants in vocational rehabilitation through the Commission for the Blind. A memorandum of understanding between DVR and the Commission has existed for many years to coordinate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, processing of referrals, transitioning of cases, handling of joint cases, sharing of office space, sharing of confidential information, and representation on the State Workforce Board. The State funding allotment is distributed by the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitative Services Administration (RSA) between the two agencies. When the VR agencies receive funding from RSA for caseloads, they each distribute this money by operational region, which is further distributed down to individual employee caseloads. Vocational rehabilitation counselors manage caseload budgets to provide services for the individuals assigned to their caseload.

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

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

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

THE FOLLOWING RESPONSE COLLECTIVELY ADDRESSES THE RESPONSES FOR THE ENTIRE DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION SECTION OF THIS PLAN, III.B. 6.A.1 THRU 4.

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions has established a standardized agreement process for external entities seeking to meet WIOA compliance. The Department strongly encourages program providers to utilize the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System to conduct case management where appropriate. The Department makes adjustments to the system

configuration to accommodate this expanded use and provide direct user access for these entities to serve their participants. For entities that have established case management systems, NMDWS provides a mechanism to request and receive wage data electronically within the constraint of existing rules and regulations.

NMDWS is currently working to upgrade the Workforce Connection Online System to establish appropriate performance reporting tools. In addition, the Department is working to modify the base data set available within the system to more effectively produce the Eligible Training Provider List. NMDWS has expanded its relationships with several educational institutions to create a tie to educational program data and enable these institutions to perform the necessary advanced analytics to determine more advance program outcome tracking.

Upcoming collaborations include supporting the NM Higher Education Department and specifically Santa Fe Community College TAACCCT grant efforts. In addition, NMDWS is also working with several state agencies to standardize eligibility verification as it relates to employment or wage confirmation. The Department is working directly with the State's Human Services Department to establish an integrated workforce system that will provide for real time secured data sharing for both internal staff program support and individual participant servicing.

While recognizing the need for appropriate privacy safeguards, data sharing will be established among the partner agencies to enable more efficient use of all resources being applied to the benefit of each customer. Additionally this data will be assessed with the guidance of the State Workforce Development Board to allow aggregation of data and assessment of the services provided. NMDWS and the State Workforce Development Board will continue to coordinate agreements with its partner agencies to establish an integrated tracking and accounting process to enable tracking of services provided to all individuals receiving career services so that actual performance outcomes can be correlated to the investments being made in this area. These efforts will allow the Board to determine where opportunities for improvement exist and identify which practices and programs are yielding the best outcomes. The existing agreements will continue to be refined and implemented in order to facilitate this activity while maintaining compliance with existing regulations established to safeguard the privacy of the individual customer.

LOCAL LEVEL EFFORTS. Local board grant agreements require the local boards to develop strategies for using technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the local workforce development system for employers, and workers and jobseekers through the following:

- facilitating connections among the intake and case management information systems of the one-stop partner programs to support a comprehensive workforce development system in the local area;
- facilitating access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including access in remote areas;
- identifying strategies for better meeting the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including strategies that augment traditional service delivery, and increase access to services and programs of the one-stop delivery system, such as improving digital literacy skills; and leveraging resources and capacity within the local workforce development system, particularly for individuals with barriers to employment.

WIOA identifies the one-stop system as the service delivery system for programs funded under the Act and its partner programs. New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers have been designated as New Mexico's one-stop delivery system. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be

developed with the agreement of the CEOs of the local workforce development region and entered into between the local board areas and the workforce system partners in the Workforce Connection Centers, to establish a process to govern and maintain the operation of each of the comprehensive and affiliate workforce connection center.

According to local board MOUs, one-stop partners share a common database to promote the efficient delivery of services to jobseekers and employers. Partners to the MOUs agree, subject to State and local policies governing confidentiality and other restrictions, to share information where possible. Strategies to improve resource sharing and streamlined referral between partners has the potential to greatly increase effective outreach and service to businesses with whom Workforce Solutions already has a strong relationship.

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

This response in III.B.6.A.1, above, addresses this requirement.

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

This response in III.B.6.A.1, above, addresses this requirement.

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

This response in III.B.6.A.1, above, addresses this requirement.

Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. Separately, the Departments of Labor and Education anticipate working with States to inform future guidance and possible information collection(s) on these accountability systems. States should begin laying the groundwork for these fiscal and management accountability requirements, recognizing that adjustments to meet the elements above may provide opportunity or have impact on such a fiscal and management accountability system.

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

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

Lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. This may include choosing to set additional indicators of performance. New Mexico awaits additional federal guidance on the integration of performance reporting.

Each of the one-stop partners will strive to achieve the locally-negotiated performance standards of quality service for its customers, employees, and partners. Each is committed to meeting or exceeding the various performance measures laid out in their grants or programs. Each partner will work cooperatively with other partners to achieve performance measures of the four core programs.

According to local board MOUs, one-stop partners are committed to the performance indicators of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act placing participants into unsubsidized employment, increasing job retention, removing barriers to employment, providing meaningful education and training activities leading to jobs with self-sufficiency. The partners are equally committed to meeting the needs of both job seekers and employers. Customer surveys will be utilized to gauge progress and to gather information for continuous improvement.

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

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

NMDWS staff leverages the Workforce Connection On-Line system as data consolidation point for access to quarterly unemployment insurance (UI) wage records from the UI data base for participants that exit following receipt of services. This wage data is uploaded to the Workforce Connection On- Line System to meet federal reporting requirements. The Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES) are used to obtain wages received from outside the state of New Mexico. This wage data is also uploaded into the Workforce Connection On-Line system and is used to calculate performance outcomes.

Access to wage records has been an important issue for many years and is an even greater priority under WIOA. Use of wage records for WIOA core program performance and eligible training provider performance reporting purposes, and disclosure of wage records for certain federal evaluations are mandatory under WIOA (WIOA Section 116(e)(4)). State workforce, training, and education programs are required to use quarterly wage records to measure the progress of the State on the State and local performance accountability measures, and for obtaining the information required in the Eligible Training Provider List (WIOA Sections 116(i) and 121(d)). Quarterly wage records are the employer-provided wage reports collected under authority in Section 1137 of the SSA (42 USC 1320b-7). These are the reports state UI agencies obtain for UI tax liability and benefit eligibility determination purposes, and also use to detect improper payments. Confidentiality and disclosure of wage records are governed by the regulations at 20 CFR Part 603.

Like other state UI agencies, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions coordinates disclosure of wage records for the mandated purposes for the state to be in compliance with WIOA requirements. To facilitate access to wage records for these purposes, DOL (ETA, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Chief Evaluation Office) is undertaking a number of activities in partnership with other Federal agencies to enable efficient and secure access to confidential wage data as

envisioned under WIOA. As such, New Mexico awaits additional guidance and extensive technical assistance in this area from U.S. DOL, which expects to issue specific guidance about wage record access issues in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, including issues related to cross matching wage records with educational data, which is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

Wage information, defined in 20 CFR Part 603.2(k), includes the three data categories or elements that states must use for WIOA performance reporting purposes: wages, Social Security Number(s), and employer information. Federal regulations at 20 CFR Part 603.5(e) permit states to disclose confidential unemployment compensation (UC) information "to a public official for use in the performance of his or her official duties." Performance of official duties means "administration or enforcement of law or the execution of the official responsibilities of a Federal, State, or local elected official." Generally, under these regulations, disclosures of confidential UC information that WIOA requires are already permissible. The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions will work collaboratively with one-stop partners to meet the requirements for use of wage records under WIOA.

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

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

Local Board grant agreements require the boards to comply with the terms and conditions set forth in the Computer Matching and Privacy Protection Act (CMPPA) Agreement, which is part of the Information Exchange Agreement (IEA) between the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions. The boards will not duplicate, disseminate, or disclose such data without first obtaining through the Department, SSA's prior written approval. The boards understand that access, use, or disclosure of social security data in a manner or purpose not authorized by the CMPPA may be subject to civil and criminal sanctions pursuant to applicable federal statutes. Information technology resources must not be used to reveal confidential or sensitive information, client data, or any other information covered by existing state or federal privacy or confidentiality laws, regulations, rules, policies, procedures, or contract terms. Users who engage in the unauthorized release of confidential information via the state's information technology resources, including but not limited to newsgroups or chat rooms, will be subject to sanctions in existing policies and procedures associated with unauthorized release of such information. Sensitive or confidential data passing over an external network connection must be encrypted to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the information.

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

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

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all U.S. DOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, as is the case with WIOA priority described earlier, priority must be provided in the following order:

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

Veterans' staff works closely with WIOA partners, institutions of higher learning, other governmental, non-profit agencies and private sector partners who provide training or education benefits to prepare veterans with job opportunities. New Mexico has a process for the referral of veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist. DVOPs provide assistance and information to the veterans and eligible persons they serve at workforce centers, and the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System also assists these veterans in finding suitable employment. The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions ensures that the New Mexico Jobs for Veterans' State Grant staff are properly integrated with other the local Workforce Connection Center staff. Local boards have partnerships with other veterans' service providers by co-facilitation with representatives from the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, Employer Support for the Guard and Reserves, state rehabilitation programs, colleges' veteran's resource centers when possible, and/or by maintaining close working relationships when location differences make co-facilitation impractical. The DVOP positions provide outreach assistance to veterans, particularly those who have a disability and need intensive services to remove barriers to employment. The full range of available employment and training services are made available to veterans, including job search, job development, resume writing, dress for success, and interviewing skills.

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

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

The following is a revised response.

New Mexico envisions a workforce development system with one-stop centers, programs, and services that are accessible for all customers, and fully compliant with accessibility requirements for individuals with disabilities, as follows.

- *One-stop centers will reflect a welcoming environment to all customer groups who are served by the centers.* This means LWDBs must ensure one-stop center staff are sensitive to the needs of individuals with disabilities and be prepared to provide necessary accommodations. These staff should be trained and equipped with the knowledge of accommodation policies, procedures and resources, skills in serving special populations, and motivation to provide superior service to customers with disabilities
- *One-stop centers must reflect innovative and effective service design to ensure meaningful access to all customers.* LWDBs should ensure one-stop centers are physically and programmatically accessible to all customers, including individuals with disabilities. In so doing, one-stop centers should use principles of universal design and human-centered design, such as:

o considering flexibility in space usage;

o ensuring physical building access;

o using pictorial, written, verbal, and tactile modes to present information to customers with disabilities or limited English proficiency;

o providing clear lines of sight to information for seated or standing users;

o providing computer station accessibility;

o providing adaptive technologies, such as accessible computer software;

o supporting and sustaining availability of customer information and service access through the Internet; and

o providing adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistants.

- *One-stop centers should be assessed for physical and programmatic accessibility*. LWDBs must evaluate accessibility of one-stops to ensure the aforementioned accessibility categories are in n place, and that front-line staff members are trained to adequately assist individuals with disabilities, and trained in the use assistive technologies, to ensure American Job Centers meet or surpass federal, state, and local accessibility standards. LWDBs should also explore ways through the sharing of best practices to promote and develop employment opportunities for job seekers with disabilities, including the provision of career guidance and placement services.
- *One-stops must adhere to federal and state privacy laws in serving customers*. In the sharing of information within and one-stop centers and among partner programs, such as for referrals, LWDBs must ensure one-stop center staff properly secure customer information in accordance with personally identifiable information guidelines, and facilitated as appropriate, with the necessary memoranda of understanding or other forms of confidentiality and data sharing agreements, consistent with federal and state privacy laws and regulations. Data should only be shared with other programs, for those programs' purposes, only after an informed written consent of the individual has been obtained, where required.
- *One-stop centers must commit to continuous improvement in service delivery*. LWDBs should ensure one-stop centers develop and maintain policies and procedures to evaluate effectiveness of accessibility and overall customer satisfaction, as well as for making improvements based on data and feedback, such as customer accommodation requests.

- *One-stop centers must leverage relationships with other programs to more effectively serve customers with barriers.* This means LWDBs must develop collaborative relationships with agencies and programs that have customers facing economic challenges, culture differences, language difficulties, stigmas, and disabilities to support long-range planning and design of universally accessible services. This also includes working with local partner agencies and organizations who also serve individuals with disabilities in the community to coordinate outreach efforts, and to more effectively provide supportive services, such as transportation services and health and human resources.
- *One-stop centers should explore opportunities to expand capacity for serving customers with barriers.* The State and LWDBs can work to support and expand the capacity of existing workforce center services to better serve individuals with disabilities and other barriers through staff development, translation services, special equipment, and other accommodations.

State Guidance to Locals

Through WIOA grant agreements, Local Workforce Development Boards assure and certify that in administering programs under the contract, they will fully comply with WIOA and all other applicable laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Local board MOUs with one-stop partners specify that parties to the MOU will assure that Workforce Connection Center facilities are both programmatically and architecturally accessible; programs are accessible to individuals with disabilities; and methods exist by which costs will be handled for reasonable accommodations.

Highlights of Current Local Activities

Below are some examples of how the LWDBs are trying to make the one-stop centers more assessable to individuals with disabilities.

- Installation of automatic, push button doors;
- Assistive devices, such as TTY machines;
- Lift tables and other products for people with disabilities;
- Computers with enhanced keyboard for clients that have visual problems;
- Community Outreach Program for the Deaf (COPD) provides interpreter services;
- Local policies regarding Reasonable Accommodation, Disability Related Non-Discrimination and EEOC complaints; and
- One-stop staff are active in the School to Work Transition Alliance (SWTA) helping to develop better ways to reach out and accommodate individuals.

Certification Policy

New Mexico has developed criteria for one-stop certification that embodies the WIOA vision overall and provides a clear framework for consistency of service delivery state-wide. In accordance with Section 121(g) of WIOA, Local Workforce Development Boards must certify the one-stop center every three years. The certification process is important to setting a minimum level of quality and consistency of services in one-stop centers across the state. The certification criteria allow states to set standard expectations for customer-focused seamless services from a network of employment, training, and related services that help individuals overcome barriers to becoming and staying employed.

The State Workforce Development Board has the authority and responsibility for recommendations to the Office of the Governor who will certify workforce development systems and centers within the state. The State Board must establish criteria and procedures for certification, and allow local boards to use additional certification factors in order to respond to labor market, economic, and demographic conditions and trends in the local area. The criteria must assess the effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement of one-stop centers and the one-stop delivery systems. Examples of the types of criteria to be used in the certification process will include:

- determination of whether individuals are eligible to receive assistance;
- initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs;
- labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance, and career counseling;
- recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers;
- referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services; and
- performance and program cost information on eligible providers of training services.

The state policy will also include a requirement for local boards to conduct self-assessments of the one-stop based on the certification standards and measures. Self-assessment is one of the most important and productive components of the certification process, as it affords partners the opportunity to fully map system services and resources and identify areas of duplication and inefficiency to address. Self-assessment results will also serve as the basis for the system's "corrective action" and continuous improvement planning. At the State level, system self-assessment results could be aggregated to identify common and widespread areas of need, allowing the State to prioritize statewide technical assistance support accordingly.

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

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

The following is a revised response.

The State works to ensure one-stop centers meet the needs of English Language Learners in the following ways.

- Bilingual staff in the Workforce Connection Centers are involved in providing all services offered in the centers, including assisting non-English speakers during job fairs, with interviewing, and employer engagement. Most of these staff are Spanish-English bilingual, and some staff are also Navajo-English bilingual. LWDBs will continue to recruit and hire bilingual staff across the state.
- Every Workforce Connection Center will continue to have and use the LanguageLine phone interpretation services.
- NMDWS has an inventory of all publications produced and printed for the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers and has begun to translate publications including pamphlets,

brochures, and guides regarding various programs and services available to job seekers, students, and employers.

- NMDWS will inventory all signage, including New Mexico Workforce Connection outside signs, posters in the resource rooms, access signage, etc. and work to translate signage into Spanish and any other additional/requested languages, as appropriate.

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

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

The workforce system in New Mexico is a network of state, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all jobseekers, including those with barriers to employment, secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

New Mexico's workforce service delivery system provides services to jobseeker and business customers throughout thirty-three counties covering 121,298.2 square mile radius, fifth largest land mass in the nation, where an estimated 2,085,572 people call New Mexico home. The designated four regional Workforce Development Areas in New Mexico include Central, Eastern, Northern and Southwestern. Each Workforce Development Area has a Local Workforce Development Board that administers employment and training programs through the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers (NMWCCs), or one-stops. Each local board develops and implements an integrated services and functional management plan. Service integration involves co-location of partners, where appropriate; collaborative partnerships in which service integration eliminates duplication and improves efficiency; functional alignment where staff are organized by function not funding stream for seamless service delivery within each center. These centers serve as the central point for WIOA partners, and their unique programs and cross training of employees in many programs enhances customer service and provides both job seekers and employers with easy access to information.

Through this Combined State Plan, New Mexico aims to share understanding of the workforce needs across the state and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches for addressing the needs of businesses and workers, including individuals with barriers to employment. Focused on meeting the objectives and priorities for the development of a competitive workforce, core partners and various stakeholders came together to prioritize, strategize and assemble a plan for meeting federal and state goals for creating a business driven workforce investment system. In addition, the State Workforce Board will work to convene several advisory committees to guide ongoing strategic planning in the areas of workforce and education planning, data and performance, youth, workforce system service delivery, and business engagement. As such, this plan reflects an enhancement in coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery to the state's various populations.

The Combined Plan incorporates the plan of one of the WIOA required partners, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), submitted by the Aging and Long Term Services Department. SCSEP provides employment and training services to older New Mexicans. The program has two goals: assisting income-eligible persons, age 55 or older, to obtain employment; and providing community service through paid, part-time, training positions. Enrolled participants receive work experience and on-the-job training to develop new or improved skills; and support to overcome barriers to employment, such as lack of self-confidence, lack of English language fluency, or physical disabilities. Participants are encouraged to take advantage of all available training offered by SCSEP providers, the WIOA programs, the Workforce Connection Centers, and other training sources. Trainees are placed in community service positions within governmental entities or private, not-for-profit organizations. Three organizations work together to provide services for these older adults with low incomes in New Mexico, including Goodwill

Industries International, the National Indian Council on Aging, and the New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that—

1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts; Yes

2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes; Yes

3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs; Yes

4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board; Yes

5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities; Yes

6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3); Yes

7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable; Yes

8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program; Yes

9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs; Yes

10. The State has a One-Stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); Yes

11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and Yes

12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor. Yes

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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

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

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

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

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

The designated four regional Workforce Development Areas in New Mexico include Central, Eastern, Northern and Southwestern. Each Workforce Development Area has a Local Workforce Development Board that administers employment and training programs through the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers (NMWCCs), or one-stops.

The four local workforce development boards are as follows:

- Central Area Local Workforce Development Board
- Eastern Area Local Workforce Development Board
- Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board
- Southwestern Area Local Workforce Development Board

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

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions has a policy to provide guidance and process for the designation and redesignation of workforce development areas in New Mexico, along with the process for appealing designation decisions. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act mandates that the State Workforce Development Board must assist the Governor in designation of workforce development areas, as required in WIOA Section 106, and that an appeals process must be in place.

The Governor of the State must designate local workforce development areas within the State tthrough consultation with the State Board; and after consultation with Chief Elected Officials and after consideration of comments received through the public comment process as described in Section 102 (b)(2)(E)(iii)(II). WIOA further states that the considerations should include:

- extent to which the areas are consistent with the labor market areas in the State;

- extent to which the areas are consistent with regional economic development areas in the State; and
- extent to which the areas have available the federal and non-federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under subtitle B and other applicable provisions of this Act, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and area career and technical education schools.

WIOA states that a unit of general local government (including a combination of such units) or grant recipient that requests, but is not granted designation of an area as a local area, may submit an appeal to the State under an appeal process established in the State Plan. WIOA requires that existing federally recognized workforce areas are designated during the first two program years, which is referred to as Initial Designation, and again after the first two program years, which is referred to as Subsequent Designation. Units of local government that desire to become a new local workforce area should follow the New Area designation requirements.

Definitions.

- The term ‘‘performed successfully’’, used with respect to a local area, means the local area met or exceeded the levels of performance for primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) (or, if applicable, core indicators of performance described in section 136(b)(2)(A) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as in effect the day before the date of enactment of this Act) for each of the last two consecutive years for which data are available preceding the determination of performance under this paragraph.
- The term ‘‘sustained fiscal integrity,’’ used with respect to a local area, means that the Secretary or the State in place of the Secretary has not made a formal determination, during either of the last two consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area misexpended funds provided under subtitle B (or, if applicable, title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 as in effect prior to the effective date of such subtitle B) due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration.
- Business Leader - A business member of the Local Workforce Development Board or representative of other business organization, such as a chamber of commerce.
- Community Leader - An officer or director of an association, community or civic organization whose focus or activities are related to the services provided by the one-stop delivery system.

INITIAL WIOA DESIGNATION FOR EXISTING REGIONS. Existing workforce regions operating in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 may request initial designation as a Local Workforce Development Area if they have performed successfully and sustained fiscal integrity. A request for initial designation must be submitted to the State by May 1, 2015 for consideration for the next program year (July 1 - June 30). An area seeking initial designation must address the following:

- Submit the request in writing to the State.
- Provide evidence that the area, in program years 2012 and 2013, met or exceeded the agreed upon adjusted levels of performance for the common measures, as defined by existing performance agreements, and was not subject to the sanctions process resulting from missing the same measure two years in a row.
- During program years 2012 or 2013, the U.S. Secretary of Labor or the State in place of the Secretary, has not made a formal determination that the grant recipient or administrative

entity for the local area has misexpended funds due to willful disregard, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration.

- In program years 2012 and 2013, was committed to providing quality service through continuous improvement efforts and implemented plans that supported sector partnerships or career pathways; or enhanced services to employers, or outreach efforts to the local community.

The State will recommend approval to the Governor of a local area's request that satisfies these requirements in accordance with WIOA section 106(b) (2). Initial designation as a local area will remain valid until June 30, 2017.

SUBSEQUENT WIOA DESIGNATION. Local areas that receive initial designation may request subsequent designation as a local workforce development area if they have performed successfully, sustained fiscal integrity, and met the requirements for involvement in regional planning. A request for subsequent designation for those receiving initial designation for July 1, 2015 must be submitted to the State by the date to be designated by the State but no later than May 30, 2017, for consideration for the next program year (July 1 - June 30). An area seeking subsequent designation must address the following:

- Submit the request in writing to the State.
- Provide evidence that the area, in program years 2014 and 2015, met or exceeded the negotiated levels of performance for primary indicators of performance and was not subject to the sanctions process resulting from missing the same measure two years in a row.
- Provide assurance that during program years 2014 or 2015, the U.S. Secretary of Labor, or the State in place of the Secretary, has not made a formal determination that the grant recipient or administrative entity for the local area has misexpended funds due to willful disregard, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration.
- Provide evidence that the area, if a part of a planning region, has fulfilled its obligations to engage in regional planning efforts during program years 2015 and 2016.
- Provide evidence that the area, in program years 2014 and 2015, was committed to providing quality service through continuous improvement efforts and implemented plans that supported sector partnerships or career pathways; enhanced services to employers; or outreach efforts to the local community.

The State will recommend approval to the Governor of a local area's request that satisfies these requirements in accordance with WIOA section 106(b)(2).

WIOA DESIGNATION FOR NEW AREAS. Any unit of general local government may request designation as a local workforce development area under WIOA. New local area designations will only become effective on July 1 of the next program year. In order for designation to be approved for the start of the next program year, the following steps and timeline must be met. A statement of intent to request designation must be submitted to the State. The full request for designation as a local workforce development area must include the following components and steps.

• Submit the request in writing to the State that clearly states the circumstances for the request of designation.

• The request must also address and explain how the following criteria are met.

- Consistency with natural labor market areas.

- Consistency with regional economic development areas.
- Existence of education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and career and technical education schools in the area.
- Submission of a service delivery plan that includes a description of resources that would be available to the area to provide services.
- Coordination of multiple resources within areas that are based on labor markets and natural travel patterns of local residents.
- Local support of the implementation strategies to provide quality services to employers and individuals by county commissioners, municipal elected officials including mayors and/or city council members, where appropriate, and business or community leaders within the area as demonstrated by letters of support or a vote of support by a city council or other applicable board.
- Local ownership, exhibited by strong involvement of local elected officials and community leaders on the Local Workforce Development Board.
- Local capacity to manage funds, provide oversight of programs, and provide for the proper stewardship of public funds.
- Evidence that the area, in the two program years for which data is available prior to the request, met or exceeded the adjusted levels of performance for primary indicators of performance and was not subject to the sanctions process resulting from missing the same measure two years in a row, if applicable.
- Assurance that during the two program years prior to the request, the U.S. Secretary of Labor, or the State in place of the Secretary, has not made a formal determination that the grant recipient or administrative entity for the local area has misexpended funds due to willful disregard, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration, if applicable.

• The request must address how the proposed new area designation will impact those other workforce areas from which it is withdrawing. It should be understood by any county, city or combination of such seeking designation, that the new area will only secure the formula allocated funds for each WIOA funding stream based on the formula factors as defined by WIOA.

• If opposition to the request is voiced by municipalities or counties within the area seeking designation, then the requesting county, city or combination of such will address their request at a public hearing. If a hearing is necessary, it will be held within 45 days of receipt of the request.

• The State will take the request and comments from the public hearing and make a recommendation to the full State Workforce Development Board within 25 days of the public hearing.

• The State Workforce Development Board will submit its recommendation to the Governor within five business days of the State Board vote.

• The final decision rests with the Governor and shall be made prior to May 29th, four weeks prior to the beginning of the fiscal and program year (July 1st).

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

APPEALS PROCESS. An area or areas seeking to be designated or re-designated, as a Local Workforce Development Area, which has requested but has been denied its request for designation

or re-designation as a Local Area, may appeal the decision to the State Workforce Development Board, as follows.

- An appeal must be in writing and filed with the State within fourteen (14) days after notification of the decision.
- The appeal must contain a specific statement of the grounds upon which the appeal is sought.
- The State Workforce Development Board will have 60 days to review the appeal and make a recommendation to the Governor.
- The final decision rests with the Governor.
- If the decision of the appeal reverses the decision it will become effective July 1st of the following year.
- If a decision on the appeal is not rendered in a timely manner or if the appeal does not result in designation, the entity may request review by the Secretary of Labor, under the procedures set forth at 20 CFR 667.640(a).

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

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING. The State follows the requirements of WIOA section 121(h)(2)(E), relating to determinations for infrastructure funding, which states that the local board, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners in a local area may fund the costs of infrastructure of one-stop centers in the local area through methods agreed on by the local board, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners, or through the state infrastructure funding mechanism, if no consensus agreement on methods is reached. NMDWS, as the State Administrative Entity, has a Memorandum of Understanding policy that provides guidance and direction to the local workforce development boards on the development of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between local boards and workforce system partners. The MOU is the agreement between one stop partners and the local workforce development boards to establish a process to maintain and govern the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local areas, as required by federal law. The policy states that each MOU must contain, at a minimum, the following components.

- Description of the services to be provided through the one-stop delivery system.
- Description of the functional organization, customer flow, and service delivery.
- Methods for referral of individuals to workforce system partners.
- Duration of the MOU and the procedures for amending the MOU.
- A resource sharing agreement (RSA) and a cost allocation plan (CAP) are included as addendums to the MOU and updated as needed. Resource sharing agreements outline how services and operating costs of the system will be funded; methodology for cost sharing; and invoicing and payment processes. Cost allocation plans outline partner cost based on accepted a methodology.

The policy also includes a dispute resolution process that states if a dispute arises over the administration of part of the MOU, the parties must meet and confer. If consensus is not achieved, the final decision regarding all disputes resides with the NMDWS cabinet secretary as State Administrative Entity designated to act on behalf of the Governor.

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

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

This section explains statewide activities as it relates to Rapid Response, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and other statewide initiatives. When the Governor receives set aside funding, those dollars go towards supporting such statewide activities, and to shore up the previously discussed activities of WIOA-funded programs.

RAPID RESPONSE. Rapid Response is typically initiated when the state Dislocated Worker Unit or Rapid Response team learns of impending layoffs. Many companies will contact the Rapid Response team to notify them of a layoff and invite them to come on site to help the dislocated workers. In accordance with the Worker Adjustment and Retraining (WARN) Act, a WARN notice is required when a business with 100 or more full-time workers is laying off at least 50 people at a single site of employment or employs 100 or more workers who work at least a combined 4,000 hours per week, and is a private for-profit business, private non-profit organization, or quasi-public entity separately organized from regular government. The WARN Act requires employers to provide written notice at least 60 calendar days in advance of covered plant closings and mass layoffs. An employer's notice assures that assistance can be provided to affected workers, their families, and the appropriate communities through the State Rapid Response Dislocated Worker Unit, and gives workers and their family transition time to seek alternative jobs or enter skills training programs.

State Rapid Response teams respond within 12 to 24 hours of notification of a layoff by coordinating with the employer to provide on-site information to the workers and employers about employment and retraining services that are designed to help participants find new jobs. In cases of natural disaster, response teams will also coordinate with FEMA and other entities. Rapid Response services may include information on unemployment insurance, job search and placement assistance; labor market information (occupational information and economic trends); on-the-job training; classroom training; and/or referral to basic and remedial education. Teams also address at-risk companies and workers by educating employers about layoff aversion strategies.

THE TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PROGRAM. The TAA program is a federal program that provides a path for employment growth and opportunity through aid to U.S. workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade. The State provides early intervention to worker groups on whose behalf a TAA petition has been filed. A petition must be filed with the U.S. Department of Labor by or on behalf of a group of workers who have lost or may lose their jobs or experienced a reduction in wages as a result of foreign trade. After the Department of Labor investigates the facts behind the petition, it applies statutory criteria to determine whether foreign trade was an important cause of the threatened or actual job loss or wage reduction. If the Department grants the petition to certify the worker group, individual workers in the group may apply for TAA benefits and services through the Workforce Connection Centers. TAA offers a variety of benefits and services to support workers in their search for reemployment, including opportunities to obtain the skills, resources, and support they need to become reemployed. The program benefits and services available to individual workers are administered by the State. Program eligibility, technical assistance, and oversight are conducted by state merit staff. This includes job training, job search and relocation allowances, income support, and assistance with healthcare premium costs. These services are administered by cooperating state agencies using federal funds.

TAA participants come from a variety of backgrounds and industries, and therefore many enter the program with a wide array of skills and experience. However, the majority of TAA participants who enter the program face similar challenges in obtaining reemployment, which can include no post-secondary degree, job skills solely in the manufacturing sector, and an average age of 46 with over 12 years of experience in a specific job that may no longer exist. The TAA program has been developed through legislation, regulation, and administrative guidance to best serve the needs of this unique population.

The State administers the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program in both Albuquerque and Silver City, which pays for 100 percent of books, tuition, fees, and supplies for qualified individuals. In 2015, New Mexico was awarded a $15 million grant from the Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT), called the New Mexico Skill Up Network: Pathways Acceleration in Technology and Health Care (SUN PATH). Participants include TAA workers, veterans and low-skilled adults. The grant funds half the salaries and office space of seven of the State's Employment Services staff who work with the consortium of New Mexico colleges as job development coaches. The goals of the grant are to:

- expand capacity and systemic improvements in the delivery of healthcare career pathways that align with industry needs.
- increase the attainment of degrees, certifications, and industry-recognized credentials; and
- create strategic alignment between education and workforce systems, resulting in improved employment outcomes, retention, and average earnings.

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

As discussed earlier, Rapid Response teams provide services to employers and workers in mass layoff situations and conducting claim filing activities, when needed. Rapid Response staff serves as a key point of contact for businesses and are also be used to educate employers about layoff aversion strategies. Rapid Response is typically initiated when the state Dislocated Worker Unit or Rapid Response team learns of impending layoffs. Many companies will contact the Rapid Response team to notify them of a layoff and invite them to come on site to help the dislocated workers. In accordance with the Worker Adjustment and Retraining (WARN) Act, a WARN notice is required when a business with 100 or more full-time workers is laying off at least 50 people at a single site of employment or employs 100 or more workers who work at least a combined 4,000 hours per week, and is a private for-profit business, private non-profit organization, or quasi-public entity separately organized from regular government. The WARN Act requires employers to provide written notice at least 60 calendar days in advance of covered plant closings and mass layoffs. An employer's notice assures that assistance can be provided to affected workers, their families, and the appropriate communities through the State Rapid Response Dislocated Worker Unit, and gives workers and their family transition time to seek alternative jobs or enter skills training programs.

State Rapid Response teams respond within 12 to 24 hours of notification of a layoff by coordinating with the employer to provide on-site information to the workers and employers about employment and retraining services that are designed to help participants find new jobs. In cases of natural disaster, response teams will also coordinate with FEMA and other entities. Rapid Response

services may include information on unemployment insurance, job search and placement assistance; labor market information (occupational information and economic trends); on-the-job training; classroom training; and/or referral to basic and remedial education. Teams also address at-risk companies and workers by educating employers about layoff aversion strategies.

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

In cases of natural disaster or other emergency situations, response teams will also coordinate with FEMA and other entities to provide additional assistance to local areas that experience such dislocation events that exceed the capacity of the local area to respond with existing resources. Rapid Response services may include information on unemployment insurance, job search and placement assistance; labor market information (occupational information and economic trends); on-the-job training; classroom training; and/or referral to basic and remedial education.

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

THE TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PROGRAM. The TAA program is a federal program that provides a path for employment growth and opportunity through aid to U.S. workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade. The State provides early intervention to worker groups on whose behalf a TAA petition has been filed. A petition must be filed with the U.S. Department of Labor by or on behalf of a group of workers who have lost or may lose their jobs or experienced a reduction in wages as a result of foreign trade. After the Department of Labor investigates the facts behind the petition, it applies statutory criteria to determine whether foreign trade was an important cause of the threatened or actual job loss or wage reduction. If the Department grants the petition to certify the worker group, individual workers in the group may apply for TAA benefits and services through the Workforce Connection Centers. TAA offers a variety of benefits and services to support workers in their search for reemployment, including opportunities to obtain the skills, resources, and support they need to become reemployed. The program benefits and services available to individual workers are administered by the State. Program eligibility, technical assistance, and oversight are conducted by state merit staff. This includes job training, job search and relocation allowances, income support, and assistance with healthcare premium costs. These services are administered by cooperating state agencies using federal funds.

TAA participants come from a variety of backgrounds and industries, and therefore many enter the program with a wide array of skills and experience. However, the majority of TAA participants who enter the program face similar challenges in obtaining reemployment, which can include no post-

secondary degree, job skills solely in the manufacturing sector, and an average age of 46 with over 12 years of experience in a specific job that may no longer exist. The TAA program has been developed through legislation, regulation, and administrative guidance to best serve the needs of this unique population.

The State administers the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program in both Albuquerque and Silver City, which pays for 100 percent of books, tuition, fees, and supplies for qualified individuals. In 2015, New Mexico was awarded a $15 million grant from the Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT), called the New Mexico Skill Up Network: Pathways Acceleration in Technology and Health Care (SUN PATH). Participants include TAA workers, veterans and low-skilled adults. The grant funds half the salaries and office space of seven of the State's Employment Services staff who work with the consortium of New Mexico colleges as job development coaches. The goals of the grant are to:

- expand capacity and systemic improvements in the delivery of healthcare career pathways that align with industry needs.
- increase the attainment of degrees, certifications, and industry-recognized credentials; and
- create strategic alignment between education and workforce systems, resulting in improved employment outcomes, retention, and average earnings.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. IF THE STATE IS UTILIZING WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS (E.G. ON-THE-JOB TRAINING, INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING, TRANSITIONAL JOBS, AND CUSTOMIZED TRAINING) AS PART OF ITS TRAINING STRATEGY AND THESE STRATEGIES ARE NOT ALREADY DISCUSSED IN OTHER SECTIONS OF THE PLAN, DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGIES FOR HOW THESE MODELS ENSURE HIGH QUALITY TRAINING FOR BOTH THE PARTICIPANT AND THE EMPLOYER.

Alternative Training Models

New Mexico provides the following types of training allowed by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act:

- occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
- on-the-job training;
- incumbent worker training;
- programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;
- training programs operated by the private sector;
- skill upgrading and retraining;
- entrepreneurial training;
- transitional jobs;
- job readiness training;
- adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition;
- integrated education and training programs; and
- customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

The following section highlights New Mexico's approach to select training models.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT). OJT provides financial assistance to employers who agree to train WIOA eligible and suitable individuals. The financial assistance is compensation for the extraordinary costs associated with training participants and the costs associated with lower productivity of new employees. The purpose of an OJT is placement of individuals into appropriate skilled employment. Local boards are not required to procure employers for OJT and customized training. However, if a local board chooses to offer OJT, it must establish local policies for identifying employers for OJT. Local boards must administer OJT pursuant to a contract instead of using an individual training account. local boards may engage in OJT opportunities with existing employers in the workforce area or new or relocating businesses as appropriate. Any public, private non-profit, or private sector employer may utilize OJT, with the some exceptions. OJTs involve participant eligibility, employer orientation, participant orientation, training plans, and duration and reimbursement requirements.

CUSTOMIZED TRAINING. Overall, customized training is training designed to meet the needs of a specific employer, or group of employers. It can be provided for the introduction of new technologies, or new production or service procedures, upgrading existing skills, workplace literacy, or other appropriate purposes identified by the local board. The employer must commit to employ, or continue to employ, the worker(s) upon successful completion of any form of customized training. Customized training focuses on the needs of business and is conducted to employ or continue to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training. It enables trainees to obtain industry or employer-recognized skills identified by the employer and the employer pays for not less than 50 percent of the cost of the training.

INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING. Incumbent worker training provides both workers and employers with the opportunity to build and maintain a quality workforce. Incumbent worker training can be used to help avert potential layoffs of employees, or to increase the skill levels of employees so they can be promoted within the company and create backfill opportunities for the employers. Under section 134(d)(4) of WIOA, local boards can use up to 20 percent of their Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to provide for the federal share of the cost of providing Incumbent worker training. Incumbent worker training needs to take into account the following factors:

- characteristics of the participants in the program;
- relationship of the training to the competitiveness of a participant and the employer; and
- other factors the State or local boards may determine appropriate (i.e. the number of employees participating in the training, wage and benefit levels of those employees, and the existence of other training and advancement opportunities provided by the employer).

TRANSITIONAL JOBS. Transitional jobs are a new type of work-based training that is allowed under WIOA. Transitional jobs are time-limited work experiences that are subsidized and are in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history, and are combined with comprehensive career and supportive services. The goal of transitional jobs is to establish a work history for the individual that demonstrates success in the workplace, and develops the skills that lead to entry into and retention in unsubsidized employment. Unlike OJT, there is no assumption that the individual will be retained in their transitional job after the experience is over, though that would be a successful experience and outcome. Under section 134(d) (5) of WIOA, local boards may use up to 10 percent of their adult and dislocated worker funds to provide transitional jobs to individuals. If local areas choose to use transitional jobs as part of their service delivery strategy, they should adopt policies and identify

employers (public, private or nonprofit) that can provide quality experiences for individuals to eventually obtain unsubsidized employment. Additionally, these policies should include plans on the amount reimbursements would be for the jobs, what supportive services should be included, and any limits on the duration of the transitional job.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS (ITAS). Training services, when determined appropriate, must be provided either through an ITA or through a training contract. Training services must be linked to in-demand employment opportunities in the local area or planning region or in a geographic area in which the adult or dislocated worker is willing to commute or relocate. The intent of the ITA is to augment the quality of skills training, to meet the needs of both employers and job seekers alike. ITAs are funded with Adult and Dislocated Worker funds authorized under WIOA and they pay for training in demand occupations. The local boards, in partnership with the State identify training providers whose performance qualifies them to receive WIOA funds to train adults and dislocated workers. The State requires local board policy for ITAs to address processes, such as those related assessment, counseling, and development of an individual employment plan; documentation of participant training-related financial assistance needs; assurance that training services are restricted to occupations in demand; award limits; and monitoring of the local internal ITA processes.

Contracts for services may be used instead of an ITA in instances such as on-the-job training, which may include placing participants in a Registered Apprenticeship program, customized training, incumbent worker training, or transitional job. Additionally, a local board may determine that providing training through a combination of ITAs and contracts is the most effective approach. This approach could be used to support placing participants in programs such as Registered Apprenticeship and other similar types of training. The local board must establish criteria to be used in determining demonstrated effectiveness offered by a community-based organization or other private organization, particularly, as it applies to the special participant population to be served, based on set criteria.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP (RA). WIOA emphasizes the importance of Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship through many new statutory provisions (e.g. required representation on State and Local Boards, programs stay on the Eligible Training Provider List as long as they remain registered and pre-apprenticeship as a youth program service). WIOA also provides for enhanced access and flexibility for work-based training options and encourages the use of Registered Apprenticeships as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers and industries.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL INCORPORATE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP INTO ITS STRATEGY AND SERVICES.

As discussed earlier, WIOA emphasizes the importance of Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship through many new statutory provisions (e.g. required representation on State and Local Boards, programs stay on the Eligible Training Provider List as long as they remain registered and pre-apprenticeship as a youth program service). WIOA also provides for enhanced access and flexibility for work-based training options and encourages the use of Registered Apprenticeships as a career pathway for job seekers and as a job-driven strategy for employers and industries.

Registered Apprenticeship is a structured occupational training program that combines on-the-job training and related instruction in which workers learn the practical and conceptual skills required for a skilled occupation, craft, or trade. The five core components of Registered Apprenticeship are employer involvement, structured on-the-job training with mentoring, involvement of Related Training

and Instruction (RTI), rewards for skill gains, and national occupational credentials. Apprentices work as they complete their classes with their work schedule determined by their respective employers. When they graduate, apprentices receive a nationally recognized Certificate of Completion and will have earned the highly skilled “journeyworker” designation. The program can last one to five years, depending on the occupation. For employers, benefits include skilled workers trained to industry/employer specifications, reduced turnover, a pipeline for new skilled workers, and reduced worker compensation costs due to an emphasis on safety training. For apprentices and journey workers, benefits include jobs that usually pay higher wages, higher quality of life and skills versatility, portable credentials recognized nationally and often globally, and opportunities for college credit and future degrees.

The Department of Workforce Solutions is the State Apprenticeship Agency for New Mexico responsible for apprenticeship within the state. There are currently 38 registered apprenticeship programs in New Mexico with approximately 1,300 apprentices; the majority of registered apprenticeship programs are in the building and construction trades. A nine-member council, called the State Apprenticeship Council, provides advice and guidance to the State Apprenticeship Agency on the operation of the state’s apprenticeship system. The process of apprenticeship program registration with federal and state government agencies is standards-based, designed to ensure that working apprentices, program sponsors, and the general public can gain a clear understanding of the training content and the measures that are in place to ensure ongoing quality.

The Registered Apprenticeship program works to ensure quality training by combining on-the-job training with theoretical and practical classroom instruction to prepare exceptional workers for industry. Employers work with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to create program standards in written agreements that specify the length of a participant’s training, the related technical instruction, an outline of the skills that person will need to learn, and the wages the participant will earn. These agreements must be approved by NMDWS before apprentices can start their training.

In New Mexico, the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs are partnering with the Registered Apprenticeship program to encourage and expand the use of apprenticeships in the state by training local board staff on the importance of apprenticeships as a work-based experience for jobseekers and gaining technical assistance from the federal level on how to develop new apprenticeship programs, as well as the appropriate ways to braid Registered Apprenticeship and WIOA funding to support them. The steps New Mexico is currently taking to expand apprenticeship opportunities include:

- pursuing technical assistance and best practices for how to expand RA in New Mexico;
- integrating Registered Apprenticeship into workforce planning and policy;
- promoting work-based learning and identifying ways to use WIOA resources to support Registered Apprenticeship;
- pursuing new opportunities for Registered Apprenticeships through focusing on services to employers; and
- supporting career pathways for youth through Registered Apprenticeship.

3. PROVIDE THE PROCEDURE, ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA, AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR DETERMINING TRAINING PROVIDER INITIAL AND CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS (WIOA SECTION 122).

Training providers must be active on an Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), which is comprised of entities with a proven capability of securing quality employment outcomes for participants. Each local board, through one-stop centers, makes this list available as required by WIOA. The application process for training providers largely remains the same as that of WIA; however, WIOA established additional requirements, specifically to provide more information and criteria for initial and subsequent eligibility to receive funds. These requirements ensure both the quality of the training programs and the opportunity for customer-informed choice regarding the available programs. The local boards will continue to solicit training and education providers to submit applications for eligibility to receive WIOA funds for educational programs. Programs must support targeted occupations and lead to a postsecondary credential or an industry-recognized credential/certificate.

The following types of training providers are subject to the ETPL requirements in order to receive WIOA Title I funds to provide training services to eligible individuals through ITAs:

- institutions of higher education that provide a program of training that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential;
- apprenticeship programs registered by the USDOL Office of Registered Apprenticeship;
- public or private training providers, including joint labor-management organizations, pre-apprenticeship programs, and occupational/technical training; and
- Providers of adult education and literacy activities provided in combination with occupational skills training (i.e. I-BEST).

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION PROCESS. All applications for the ETPL will be completed using the New Mexico Workforce Connection On-Line System. Training providers may apply for initial eligibility at any time. The online application process for training providers starts with verifying the training provider is licensed, certified, or authorized by the New Mexico Department of Higher Education, or the relevant state agency with oversight, to operate training programs. If a provider is in compliance with the oversight agency, the provider can proceed to the next step in the application process. If a provider is not in compliance with the oversight agency, the provider will not be able to apply for inclusion on the ETPL until they meet the necessary requirements. Postsecondary institutions located outside New Mexico that offer distance education may be authorized to operate programs in New Mexico if the institution is an approved Eligible Training Provider in their home state.

Training providers applying for initial eligibility must provide the following information through the online application:

- Describe program/training to be offered;
- Provide information on cost of attendance, including costs of tuition and fees;
- Identify type of industry-recognized certificate or credential, including recognized post-secondary credentials;
- Indicate if the provider has developed the training in partnership with a business;
- Indicate the in-demand industry sectors and occupations best fit with the training program;
- Outline the prerequisites or skills and knowledge required prior to the commencement of training; and

- Agree to provide performance information for all students regardless of funding source and/or support state action to acquire the information.

Once the online application is submitted, the LWDB will be notified to approve, deny, or request further information within 30 days of the receipt of a complete application. If the LWDB takes no action on an application, the application will be reviewed for approval at the state level.

Registered apprenticeship programs are not subject to the eligibility criteria or application requirements. While registered apprenticeship programs are automatically eligible, not all registered apprenticeship sponsors may wish to be included on the list. Registered apprenticeship programs will automatically be included on the State list until they lose their registration or they indicate they do not wish to be included.

CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY FOR TRAINING PROVIDERS. After the initial eligibility period of one year, training providers must be reviewed, updated and approved for continued eligibility every two years. Applications for continued eligibility must show the training provider is still authorized by the appropriate oversight agency. The continued eligibility application is required for any training provider that has previously been on the list. Dropping off the list for a period of time does not return a provider to an initial eligibility status. Continued Eligibility for Training Programs. Training programs must be entered in the Workforce Connection On-Line System, updated and approved as necessary to ensure accurate and current information. In addition to updating training program information, the following information must be provided:

- Total number of participants enrolled in the program;
- Total number of participants completing the program;
- Total number of participants exiting the program;
- Information on recognized post-secondary credentials received by program participants;
- Information on the program completion rate for such participants;
- Description of how the provider will ensure access to training services throughout the State, including rural areas and through the use of technology;
- Description of how the providers provide training services to individuals who are employed and/or individuals with barriers to employment;
- Information reported to state agencies on federal and state training programs other than programs within WIOA; and
- Performance information for all students regardless of funding source and/or support state action to acquire the information.

TRANSITION OF ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDERS UNDER WIA. To ensure a smooth transition to WIOA, eligible training providers under WIA continue to be eligible until June 30, 2016 with the current ETPL valid and in place until that date. Local Workforce Development Boards will review all current Eligible Training Provider applications to determine compliance with WIOA requirements between September 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016. Applications reviewed and determined WIOA compliant will be approved in the Workforce Connection On-Line System by the Local Workforce Development Boards. During 2016, minimum performance targets will not be set as eligibility criteria for training providers/programs to remain on the ETPL. Until performance data is available, the State will provide alternate information related to performance using existing data. Once training providers have two years of data for the WIOA performance indicators, the State will collect the required information, determine performance outcomes and make the performance data available through the Workforce Connection On-Line System.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions as the State Administrative Entity is responsible for the following.

- establishing requirements for the ETPL system;
- establishing eligibility criteria, information requirements, and procedures for training providers;
- developing an approval process for local boards for training providers that have met minimum eligibility criteria;
- taking appropriate enforcement actions against providers that intentionally provide inaccurate information, or that substantially violate the requirements of WIOA;
- disseminating the State ETP list, accompanied by performance and cost information for each provider for use by the public and the local boards;
- hosting the ETPL through a web-based platform;
- establishing the web application and tracking system for use by training providers and local boards; and
- reviewing and monitoring training provider applications for minimum eligibility criteria and performance requirements.

Local Workforce Development Boards are responsible for the following:

- identification of in-demand sectors or occupations for the local area using relevant labor market information;
- priority consideration for programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area;
- following procedures to review training provider applications within 30 days of the receipt of a complete application;
- working with the State to ensure there are sufficient numbers and types of providers of training services, including eligible providers with expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities and eligible providers with expertise in assisting adults in need of adult education and literacy activities;
- ensuring the distribution and use of the ETPL throughout the local area and providing information to the customer to make an informed choice;
- removal of an eligible training provider from the ETPL with appropriate justification; and
- informing and supporting the appeal process for training providers rejected as an Eligible Training Provider or later removed for cause.

The State's ETPL policy contains further details, such as exceptions to the ITA and ETPL requirements.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS. Training providers and/ or programs that have not been in existence for at least two years will be required to provide or support acceptable data sharing action to collect student data for the time period available. Performance information will be published online for each training provider on the ETPL. Programs with less than 10 students enrolled will not be included in performance data.

ETPL REMOVAL PROCESS. Local Workforce Development Boards shall inform the State in writing to inform of the removal of an eligible training provider/program and include the reason(s) for removal. The local boards must inform the training provider in writing; include the reason(s) for the removal; and provide information on the appeal process. The following conditions for removal include:

- knowingly supplying false performance information, misrepresenting costs or services, or that substantially violate requirements of WIOA law or regulations;
- failing to meet the established criteria. Situations that will result in removal include but are not limited to failure to meet established performance levels; failure to provide all required performance information for subsequent eligibility; failure to maintain accreditation required for professional licensure;
- temporary inability to meet the objectives of the approved program(s); and
- debarment by the Federal government.

APPEALS PROCESS. Training providers can appeal the rejection of their program for inclusion on the ETPL or the subsequent termination of eligibility. An appeal must be submitted in writing via email to the Department of Workforce Solutions, State Administrative Entity within 14 days after notification of the decision to remove. The appeal must include the justification for the appeal. The training provider also has the right to request a hearing to discuss their appeal. An ETP appeals board will be assembled by the State Administrative Entity. The appeals board will schedule a hearing and make a decision within 60 days of appeal. This will be a final decision.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDING BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM.

PRIORITY POPULATIONS. Section 134(c) (3) (E) of WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities. Under this section, one-stop center staff responsible for these funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services. Under WIA, priority was required to be given to public assistance recipients and low-income individuals when states and local areas determined that allocated funds were limited. Under WIOA, priority will be provided regardless of the level of funds.

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions has state-level policies that support the implementation of the State's strategies, including ensuring priority of services for targeted populations, as described in the list of policies below. Also, NMDWS issues State Technical Assistance Guides regarding WIOA that govern eligibility for the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs, and other programmatic processes.

The WIOA Eligibility State Technical Assistance Guide discusses Order of Priority, as follows:

Priority of Service must always be given to covered persons (i.e. veterans and eligible spouses, including widows and widowers) regardless of whether or not the priority of service is in place. Priority of service is required for the provision of career services and training services, including individual training accounts, veterans' priority as well as priority to public assistance recipients and low income individuals required in WIOA regulations will be established as follows:

- First priority will be provided to recipients of public assistance, low-income or individuals who are basic skills deficient who are also veterans or eligible spouses of veterans.

- Second priority will be provided to recipients of public assistance, low-income, or individuals who are basic skills deficient who are not veterans or spouses of veterans.
- Third priority will be provided to veterans or eligible spouses of veterans who are not recipients of public assistance, low-income or basic skills deficient.
- Last priority will be provided to Adults in need of service who are not recipients of public assistance, not low-income or basic skills deficient.

In addition, NMDWS has a Priority of Service policy that prioritizes use of WIOA Adult formula funds for services to recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals and individuals that are basic skills deficient, in addition to priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses of veterans.

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

The State acknowledges and follows WIOA Section 133(b)(4) that allows a local board to transfer funds between adult employment and training activities, and dislocated worker employment and training activities. Although the State does not have a formal policy or state technical assistance guide related to the transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs, the State Administrative Entity communicated a procedure to local board administrators regarding such transfers, stating that local boards may transfer up to and including 100 percent of the funds allocated to the local area between adult employment and training activities; and dislocated worker employment and training activities. Local Boards must request the transfer with appropriate justification and the Governor must approve the transfer.

C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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

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

* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

WIOA outlines a broader youth vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework through which states and local areas can leverage other federal, state, local, and philanthropic resources to support in-school youth (ISY) and OSY. WIOA affirms the Department's commitment to providing high-quality services for all youth and young adults, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, such as pre-apprenticeships or internships, and culminating with a good job along a career pathway, enrollment in post-secondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship.

The Youth Program delivers a comprehensive array of services that focus on assisting transitional youth ages 14-24, particularly youth who are disadvantaged and have one or more barriers to

employment. The goal of the program is to prepare these youth for post-secondary education and employment opportunities, attain educational and/or training credentials, and secure employment that has a positive career outlook. Local board grant agreements require funds allocated to a local area for eligible youth under WIOA to be used to provide an objective assessment of academic and skill levels, and service needs of each participant, service strategies that are linked to participant performance, and identification of career pathways that include education and employment goals. Youth service providers support the 75 percent out-of-school youth and 20 percent work experience expenditure rate as required by WIOA.

Youth Services

Grant agreements with local boards require the boards to hold local youth providers and programs responsible for making the following services available to youth participants:

- tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence- based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent or for a recognized postsecondary credential;
- alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
- paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include: summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities;
- occupational skill training;
- education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- leadership development opportunities;
- supportive services;
- adult mentoring;
- follow-up services;
- comprehensive guidance and counseling;
- financial literacy education;
- entrepreneurial skills training;
- services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area; and
- activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

As it relates to program design, the grant agreements with local boards spell out required components of youth programs, which must be incorporated into youth provider contracts and reflected in contract scope of work. Funds allocated to a local area for eligible youth under WIOA section 128(b) must be used to carry out, for eligible youth, programs that:

- provide an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant, which assessment shall include a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes (including interests and aptitudes for nontraditional jobs), supportive service needs, and developmental needs of such participant, for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants;
- develop service strategies for each participant that are directly linked to 1 or more of the indicators of performance described in WIOA section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii), and that shall identify career pathways that include education and employment goals, appropriate achievement

objectives, and appropriate services for the participant taking into account the assessment conducted; and

- provide - activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential;preparation for postsecondary educational and training opportunities; strong linkages between academic instruction; preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate cases, and; effective connections to employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the local and regional labor markets.

PAY FOR PERFORMANCE CONTRACTS. At the discretion of the local board, boards may implement a pay-for-performance contract strategy for certain elements, for which the local board may reserve and use not more than 10 percent of the total funds allocated to the local area under WIOA section 128(b).

OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH (OSY) EXPENDITURE REQUIREMENT. WIOA requires a minimum OSY expenditure rate of 75 percent for Youth formula-funded program. The 75 percent expenditure rate is a minimum requirement; therefore, local areas may spend up to 100 percent of their local area Youth funds on OSY as directed by local board policy. The OSY expenditure rate for local area funds is calculated after subtracting funds spent on administrative costs. Determination of whether a local area meets the 75 percent OSY expenditure requirement is made upon completion of expenditures of all funds in the specific program year's allotment. Local areas must track funds spent on work experience beginning with plan year 2015 WIOA funds.

EXPANDED WORK EXPERIENCE FOCUS. Work experience is a critical WIOA youth program element. For plan year 2015 WIOA youth funds, local areas must implement the 20 percent minimum work experience expenditure rate. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education may include the following four categories: summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; pre-apprenticeship programs; internships and job shadowing; and on-the-job training opportunities. Program expenditures on the work experience program element include wages as well as staffing costs for the development and management of work experiences. The 20 percent minimum is calculated based on non-administrative local area youth funds and is not applied separately for ISY and OSY. Staffing costs must be reasonable and not exceed 10 percent of the work experience expenditures. Local areas must track funds spent on the 20 percent work experience requirement beginning with plan year 2015 WIOA funds.

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

The following is a revised response.

The state is committed to providing high-quality services for youth and young adults. The Governor's vision for youth includes ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to develop and achieve career goals through education and workforce training. Youth services should be business driven consistent with all other services within a region and state with the goal of building the workforce of the future.

WIOA places a keen emphasis on the need to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth and encourages the alignment of core and other partner programs to better serve this target population. As such, through grant agreements with its four local boards, the state has communicated the required minimum out-of-school youth expenditure rate of 75 percent for the Youth formula-funded program. As it relates to program design, these agreements spell out required components of youth programs, which must be incorporated into youth provider contracts and reflected in contract scope of work.

Specifically, funds allocated to a local area for eligible youth under WIOA section 128(b) must be used to carry out the following program elements.

- Youth programs must provide an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant. Assessment must include a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes (including interests and aptitudes for nontraditional jobs), supportive service needs, and any developmental needs, to identify appropriate services and career pathways for participants.
- Youth programs must develop service strategies for each participant that are directly linked to one or more of the indicators of performance, as described in WIOA section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii). Programs must use assessments to identify career pathways that include education and employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate services for the participant.
- Youth programs must provide activities that:
    - lead to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential
    - prepare participants for postsecondary educational and training opportunities;
    - include strong linkages between academic instruction;
    - prepare participants for unsubsidized employment opportunities, as appropriate; and
    - provide effective connections to employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the local and regional labor markets.

LWDBs will be required to identify and select a youth provider with staffing that specializes in positive youth development and engagement, dropout prevention and leadership and work skills readiness. Involving core and other program partners, as appropriate, in conversations with the youth providers will ensure alignment in program design and service delivery for the targeted OSY population. Local boards and partner programs must collectively explore ways to leverage funds and resources to assist youth with barriers to employment, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational and credential attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, such as pre-apprenticeships or internships, culminating with a good job along a career pathway, enrollment in post-secondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship. Examples of services that can be coordinated across core and partner programs for OSY, where appropriate, include the following.

- *Career awareness regarding targeted industry and demand occupations.* Specifically, this involves youth service provider support of youth work readiness and career path development into occupations that are based on appropriate skills levels, with an ultimate goal of ensuring youth have access to options based on their interests and skill levels.
- *Quality educational employment opportunities consistent with local and state goals and priorities.* Specific activities include partnership with local universities, community colleges and technical training providers to identify and develop opportunities for out-of-school youth. For instance, creating a linkage between youth service providers and providers of adult

education to jointly serve youth who lack high school equivalency (HSE) by simultaneously enrolling them in both an HSE course, as well as a credit-bearing course through the WIOA Youth program, could ideally lead to a post-secondary credential or other certification, gainful employment, or even self-sufficiency (particularly if the TANF population is targeted). An emphasis on high school credit recovery, high school equivalency and high school diploma completion and other certification programs will broaden employment opportunities for out of school, at-risk youth and youth with disabilities.

- *Strategies that help prepare youth for success in a range of postsecondary education and career opportunities specifically those defined as high growth and high demand.* Specific activities includes working with local business and employers to understand needs, development of partnerships with universities, community colleges and trade schools to create training opportunities based on those needs. Additionally, LWDBs should communicate and share with school districts' Carl Perkins liaisons to guide classroom instructions and guidance counselor activities.
- *Other youth service strategies.* Specific activities can include tutoring, alternative secondary school offerings, summer employment opportunities linked to academic and occupational learning, paid and unpaid work experiences, occupational skill training, leadership development opportunities, supportive services, mentoring, follow-up services, and comprehensive guidance and counseling.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED.*

* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

The following is a revised response.

WIOA outlines a broader youth vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework through which states and local areas can leverage other federal, state, local, and philanthropic resources to support in-school youth (ISY) and OSY. The Youth Program focuses on assisting transitional youth ages 14-24, particularly youth who are disadvantaged and have one or more barriers to employment. The goal of the program is to prepare these youth for post-secondary education and employment opportunities, attain educational and/or training credentials, and secure employment that has a positive career outlook.

Local board grant agreements require funds allocated to a local area for eligible youth under WIOA to be used to provide an objective assessment of academic and skill levels, and service needs of each participant, service strategies that are linked to participant performance, and identification of career pathways that include education and employment goals. Youth service providers support the 75 percent out-of-school youth and 20 percent work experience expenditure rate as required by WIOA.

Grant agreements with LWDB also require the local youth providers and programs to implement activities following the guidance from WIOA. All of the providers include "youth specialists" available to conduct outreach, assessments, individual and group skills development, and some case management. LWDB will be required to ensure the youth providers include delivery of the 14 elements of service in their overall scope. The following describe services currently in place as well as areas LWDB will further develop:

1. **Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidenced-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent or for a recognized postsecondary credential** - Regional LWDB, in partnership with youth serving organizations such as Youth Development, Inc., Help NM and Regional IX Educational Cooperative, focus on all these components as an essential service for youth. All youth providers are implementing tutoring and study skills via group and individual instruction. Evidenced-based dropout prevention activities include case management, mentoring, follow up, incentive based approaches for school attendance. All youth providing agencies support courses for GED completion and all work closely with local school districts regarding access to alternative school options for credit recovery and diploma completion. All youth providers closely monitor youth involved in postsecondary educational opportunities to address challenges and barriers; as well as opportunities to enhance overall performance and outcome.

2. **Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services** - Regional LWDB will engage in partnership development with local community colleges, alternative educational programs for at-risk youth and young adults, such as YouthBuild, specialized Charter Schools, homeless/runaway shelters and independent and transitional living projects designed specifically for youth and young adults; additionally high school credit recovery and/or GED preparation programs offered through via night schools; community centers, faith based organizations and employers, such as the GED/Trade co-enrollment underway in the Central Region. Strategies to be explored and expanded include partnership with juvenile justice, including youth drug courts.

3. **Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational educational** - Regional LWDB are currently engaged in implementing summer employment opportunities in partnership with local school districts, and city and county governments; On the job training programs currently exist in all four regions - OJT opportunities currently focused on converting internships;

4. **Occupational skills training** - LWDB in Central (?) and Northern regions of the state benefit from an agreement currently in place with local community colleges to training entry level health care skills and early childhood certification courses; additionally the state has a Job Corps program and YouthBuild. All four LWDB currently offer job readiness skill development to assist youth with career awareness, communication, and social and soft skill improvement. Strategies to be explored and expanded includes staff training and awareness on youth engagement and expansion of internships and apprenticeships programs statewide.

5. **Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for specific occupational cluster** - As stated above, two community colleges are currently offering specific training in health care cluster (CNA) and early childhood certification. Additionally Job Corps, YouthBuild, and GED/Trade co-enrollment programs are available, however not statewide. Strategies to be explored and expanded includes creation of additional focused occupational clusters with local community colleges.

6. **Leadership development opportunities** - currently in New Mexico, youth serving agencies Youth Development, Inc. and HELP-NM include civic engagement, peer-to-peer mentorship; service learning and leadership skill development as part of their overall work. Additionally projects such as Mission Graduate, organized in the central region, focuses on awareness of the importance of youth engagement and leadership development as a core principle to increase graduation and employability of youth. Strategies to be explored include statewide technical assistance and training for LWDB on positive youth engagement approaches.

7. **Supportive services** - activities currently underway statewide include identifying items needed to enable youth to successfully enter and maintain employment. Case management is the primary vehicle used to identify these needs, as well as resource development to identify partners to support urgent and immediate needs such as transportation (ie, bus passes), child care, work uniforms and supplies, etc.. Strategies to be explored includes a comprehensive review of support services currently being provided and available funds, as well as identification of community partners and funding available for youth specific needs.

8. **Adult mentoring** - Youth providers such as Youth Development, Inc., Help NM and Region IX Cooperative currently include adult mentoring in their services. Youth have access to youth specialists who provide support. Mission Graduate, current partner with the Central Region includes an adult mentoring component. Strategies to be explored includes exploration of statewide projects such as My Brother's Keeper, Together for Brothers and the Making Connections Project, as well as projects funded through NM Children Youth and Families Department to learn how adult/mentorship components offered align with the goals of employment.

9. **Follow-up Services** - Youth providing agencies such as Youth Development, Inc., Help NM and Region IX currently conduct follow up with youth as needed. Follow up includes one-on-one review of employment/training status, advocacy with employers and training/educational institutions, as well as feedback/survey from youth about services and supports. Strategies to be explored includes increased partnership with youth to inform additional follow-up services needed to increase overall success, ie, "Let's ask youth what works best!"

10. **Comprehensive guidance and counseling** - Youth providing agencies such as Youth Development, Inc., Help NM and Region IX currently have youth specialists available to meet with youth one-on-one. This service includes assessment, career exploration and guidance, and one-on-one support.

11. **Financial literacy education** - Youth providing agencies Youth Development, Inc. and HELP-NM utilize the FDIC's Money Smart Program© that includes curriculum modules on banking and financial goal setting.

12. **Entrepreneurial skills training -** Youth provider HELP-NM is expanding partnership with the Small Business Development Centers to provide low cost training and consultation. Youth Development, Inc. provides referrals to agencies that can provide consultation and guidance. Strategies for improvement include expanding partnerships with mentioned agencies to identify activities geared specifically for youth, explore opportunities to create greater awareness of the needs of youth and how to build skills training that fits their needs.

13. **Services that provide labor market and employment information about in demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area; -** This service is foundational for all the LWDB. Each board is required to review current labor and employer needs, and to understand what occupations are needed in the local area. All LWDB currently are engaged in development of summer and seasonal employment opportunities available for youth. Strategy to be explored includes developing information specific to youth employment; beginning to understand what occupations are available specifically for youth, specifically in relationship to internships and registers apprenticeships.

14. **Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training -** Youth providing agencies such as Youth Development, Inc., Help NM and Region IX

currently have youth specialists available to meet with youth. Their services include assessment, career exploration and guidance, as well as group and one-on-one training on postsecondary education and training preparedness. Youth specialists are also linked to postsecondary institutions, receiving updates on registration/eligibility requirements. Strategies to be explored includes, review of postsecondary and training partnerships to understand challenges and barriers experienced by youth - use information to drive transition focus; “What helped prepare youth best? What failed and why?”

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII).

State Definitions:

- “Requires additional assistance to complete and educational program, or to secure and hold employment” - Because the State has chosen not to define “additional assistance” as it relates to WIOA Youth program eligibility, each local board has the responsibility for determining its own definition of this eligibility category. If a local board wishes to use this eligibility category, a local policy must be developed that specifies what conditions must be met for a youth to require additional assistance and what documentation is needed to demonstrate this eligibility category. In each local area, not more than five percent of the in-school youth under WIOA Section 129(3) (B) may be eligible under “individual who requires additional assistance” to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

5. INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION, AS DEFINED IN LAW, FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ATTENDING SCHOOL AS SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(I) AND SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(I). IF STATE LAW DOES NOT DEFINE “NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL” OR “ATTENDING SCHOOL” INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.

The following is a revised response.

New Mexico State statute addresses the definition of “attending school” in terms of a “qualified student,”, and New Mexico Administrative Code addresses “not attending school,” in terms of “disenrollment,” as follows.

2013 New Mexico Statutes, Chapter 22 - Public Schools, Article 8 - Public School Finance,Section 22-8-2 - Definitions. (2009)

As used in the Public School Finance Act:

…

B. "membership" means the total enrollment of qualified students on the current roll of a class or school on a specified day. The current roll is established by the addition of original entries and

reentries minus withdrawals. Withdrawals of students, in addition to students formally withdrawn from the public school, include students absent from the public school for as many as ten consecutive school days; provided that withdrawals do not include students in need of early intervention and habitual truants the school district is required to intervene with and keep in an educational setting as provided in Section 22-12-9 NMSA 1978.

…

M. "qualified student" means a public school student who:

(1) has not graduated from high school;

(2) is regularly enrolled in one-half or more of the minimum course requirements approved by the department for public school students; and

(3) in terms of age:

(a) is at least five years of age prior to 12:01 a.m. on September 1 of the school year;

(b) is at least three years of age at any time during the school year and is receiving special education services pursuant to rules of the department; or

(c) has not reached the student’s twenty-second birthday on the first day of the school year and is receiving special education services pursuant to rules of the department.

…

New Mexico Administrative Code, 6.10.4

Title 6, Primary and Secondary Education, Chapter 10, Public School Administration - Procedural Requirements, Part 4, Disenrollment When A Student Is Not Legally Enrolled In School.

6.10.4.1

ISSUING AGENCY:

Public Education Department

6.10.4.2

SCOPE:

This rule applies to local school boards and school districts.

6.10.4.3

STATUTORY AUTHORITY:

This rule is adopted pursuant to Sections 22-2-1 and 22-2-2, NMSA 1978.

6.10.4.6

OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of this rule is to establish procedures for the disenrollment of students who are not legally enrolled in school.

6.10.4.7

DEFINITIONS:

As used in this rule the following words, terms and phrases shall have the meaning set forth in this paragraph:

A. "Administrative authority" means the local school district superintendent, a principal or the designee of such person.

B. "Disenrollment" means discontinuance of the student’s attendance at school.

C. "Enrollment" means registration as a student on the rolls of the local school district.

D. "Invalid enrollment" refers to an enrolled student or a conditionally enrolled student who has not met the requirements of law for enrollment in school, either as to age, residence, immunization, or other reasons, or has not complied with conditional enrollment requirements.

F. "School" means public school.

G. "School day" means each day of the school year during which the membership of students is computed pursuant to the Public School Finance Act.

H. "Student" means a "qualified student" eligible to attend public school, as that term is defined in Section 22-8-2, NMSA 1978.

6.10.4.8

LIMITATION ON ENROLLMENT:

Where a student is found to have an invalid enrollment the student shall be disenrolled from school in accordance with the procedure set forth in Section 6.10.4.9 NMAC below.

6.10.4.9

PROCEDURE:

Where the administrative authority has reason to believe a student is enrolled under an invalid enrollment the administrative authority shall take the following action:

A. Preliminary notice of contemplated action of disenrollment. The administrative authority shall give a preliminary notice of contemplated action of disenrollment to the student, through his/her parent or guardian, of the contemplated disenrollment and the reasons therefore. The preliminary notice shall be in writing, and mailed to the student not later than ten (10) school days before the notice of disenrollment is to be mailed. The preliminary notice shall state that: (1) the student has a right to respond, either in writing or in person, to the administrative authority before the date of the contemplated action of disenrollment, and (2) the student may attempt to resolve the matter informally by presenting adequate evidence to the administrative authority to refute the alleged reasons for the contemplated action of disenrollment.

B. Stay of proceedings. Where the question of the student's enrollment is under review by an

administrative agency in the state of New Mexico or any court of competent jurisdiction, and written documentation has been filed with the administrative authority establishing the pendency of the action, all proceedings under this rule shall be stayed pending final determination of the question by that agency or court.

C. Notice of disenrollment. Where the student has not presented satisfactory evidence to cure the invalid enrollment and has been afforded notice as required by Subsection A of Section 6.10.4.9 NMAC above, the administrative authority shall give written notice to the student, through his/her parent or guardian, that the student will be disenrolled. The notice of disenrollment shall be mailed ten (10) school days after the mailing of the preliminary notice of contemplated action of disenrollment. The notice of disenrollment must include a copy of this rule and must advise the student, through his/her parent or guardian, of the following.

(1) Subject to the procedure in Subsection C, Paragraph (2) of Section 6.10.4.9 below, if satisfactory evidence to refute the alleged reasons for the contemplated action of disenrollment is not submitted to the administrative authority within ten (10) school days from the date of mailing of the notice of disenrollment, the student will be disenrolled.

(2) The student may, at any time within ten (10) school days after the date of mailing of the notice of disenrollment, present the administrative authority with an oral or written request for a hearing on the matter.

(a) The hearing shall be held within five (5) school days after receipt of a request for hearing.

(b) The student may appear at the hearing, with or without counsel, to refute the alleged reasons for the disenrollment.

(c) The student may present witnesses or evidence at the hearing, as well as question any witnesses supporting disenrollment.

(3) Within five (5) school days after the hearing, the hearing officer shall issue and mail to the student, through his/her guardian, the decision setting forth his/her decision and the reasons therefore.

(4) If the hearing officer decides in favor of the student, the matter shall be closed. If the hearing officer decides against the student, the student shall be disenrolled from school five (5) school days from the date of mailing of the decision.

(5) If no request for a hearing is received within the time provided, the student shall be disenrolled from school and shall be permitted to re-enroll only when all legal requirements for enrollment are met.

D. Hearing officer. The administrative authority may designate one or more of its staff to act as hearing officer for disenrollment matters; who, upon referral of the case from the administrative authority, shall follow the procedures set forth herein to afford the student and his/her parent or guardian due process.

E. Hearing procedure. The hearing shall be set within five (5) school days after an oral or written request for hearing is received by the administrative authority.

(1) The administrative authority/hearing officer shall conduct the hearing informally but with dignity, firmness and fairness appropriate to the importance of the proceedings.

(2) Written minutes of the proceedings shall be kept. A verbatim transcript shall not be required.

(3) The hearing shall be conducted to afford the student due process, and shall provide:

(a) an opportunity for the student and his/her parent or guardian to respond at the hearing;

(b) the right to present evidence;

(c) the right to confront adverse witnesses;

(d) the right of cross examination;

(e) the right to be represented by counsel;

(f) the right to have a decision based solely on the applicable legal rules and the evidence presented at the hearing.

(4) Within five (5) school days after the hearing, the hearing officer shall prepare and mail to the student, through his/her parent or guardian, a written decision and the reasons therefore.

6. IF NOT USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE SPECIFIC STATE DEFINITION.

State Definitions:

“Basic skills deficient” -

- For Adult - An individual who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.
- For Youth - An individual who computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below the eighth grade level on a generally accepted standardized test or comparable score on a criterion-referenced test.

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)

2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)

3. THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING AN IDENTIFICATION OF SUCCESSFUL PROVIDERS OF SUCH ACTIVITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

Not Applicable. New Mexico is not a single-area state.

E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their Title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;

3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;

4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:

A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;

B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;

C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;

D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND

E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESS USED TO:

A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;

B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;

C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;

D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.

E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE'S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT

The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver;

Not Applicable. New Mexico is not requesting such waiver.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient; Yes

2. The state has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; Yes

3. The state established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members. Yes

4. The state established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2). Yes

5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership. Yes

6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the state consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the state in determining the distributions. Yes

7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7). Yes

8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan. Yes

9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I. Yes

10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report. Yes

11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure

compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3); Yes

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

All program-specific requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

Professional Development. The career consultants located in the local one stops are trained to assist claimants to transition into the workforce while meeting the requirements to obtain their benefit payments. They are to provide services to help claimants gain employment while detecting any possible fraudulent activity for the purposes of deterring claimants from obtaining benefits through willful misrepresentation. As such, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions has a Training and Development Department with staff who train Employment Services employees in the field to support awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance program. The training includes the Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program components, which covers the following mandatory activities and services.

- UI eligibility interviews
- Individual Employment Plans (IEPs)
- Work readiness determinations (i.e. WorkKeys tool)
- Assessment of possible employment barriers (i.e. child care, transportation, etc.)
- Availability of partner program resources (i.e. Trade Adjustment Assistance, WIOA, and Veterans' Programs)
- Use of the Workforce Connection Online System for work search
- Case Notes and Documentation Procedures for case management

Other types of training provided to Employment Services staff by NMDWS include the marketing and use of WorkKeys; customer service techniques and complaint resolution; front desk operations, and other workflows for jobseeker intake and employer assistance.

2. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM, AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION.

The following is a revised response.

All training described below is conducted by the NMDWS in-house Training Unit.

NMDWS has recently implemented a new training approach for local office staff in the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers which we have called "UI Lite." This was introduced at the recent

Employment Services (ES) Managers' Conference attended by all local office managers and consisted of:

- Pre-conference submission of ES staff UI questions that are recurring in the local offices.
- Presentation to managers on the answers to their questions, along with further discussion.
- Discussion of any other UI challenges customers in the field have been experiencing and going to the local offices for assistance.
- Referral information for UI related issues, including UI Trainer, and UI direct line contact information.

As a result of the success of this approach, beginning in 2016, the UI Trainer will conduct "UI Lite" sessions with field staff to continue to address customer needs. "UI Lite" Training will be conducted primarily by the UI Trainer, who is also responsible for the training of all NMDWS UI employees. This ensures that the information is accurate and consistent regardless of the NMDWS employee's or partner's role. This approach is more effective than a formal classroom training at this point since the department is researching, evaluating, and tailoring the training specific to the UI needs in the local offices. As the unit gathers more information, the Trainer will develop curricula and conduct formal trainings based on the identified needs. "UI Lite" sessions will be held on a regional basis, allowing local offices in each area the flexibility to have staff participate in these invaluable discussions and Q&A directly with the UI Trainer. These trainings will include multiple sessions for each region, thereby accommodating local office workflow, while at the same time ensuring each staff member is afforded the opportunity to attend the live trainings.

Local office and UI staff are also trained on the RESEA program requirements. RESEA is a national program that has components of both UI and Employment Services processes. As part of the RESEA program:

o Staff receive training on UI eligibility requirements to include NM Statutory definitions of able, available, and actively seeking work.

o Staff are trained on NM State Work Search Requirements and are directed to review customer work search contacts. Staff have access to UI system to review each customer's electronically submitted work search activities.

o Staff report, on a daily basis, all RESEA UI-related activity to the central UI Operations Center for purposes of creating and adjudicating eligibility issues.

The Training Unit also provides an "Employment Services - New Employee Onboarding" that includes training about basic UI resources such as how to log into UI system, UI Operations Center business hours, contact information, and general information on how to file a claim/receive other UI services.

All NMDWS Wagner-Peyser staff, partners, and other parties will be notified of and invited to attend all trainings.

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE.

The following is a revised response.

Customers who come into the local office with UI-related questions are assisted in the following ways:

1. UI Correspondence

- By the end of 2016, NMDWS will be launching the “UI Correspondence Module” on the main NMDWS website (www.dws.state.nm.us). The module will be readily available on the website and can be accessed by all local office and partner staff when assisting individuals with UI issues as well as by individuals working independently on computers in the resource rooms in the Workforce Connection Centers. The correspondence module includes the top 25 pieces of UI claims correspondence and the top 25 pieces of UI tax correspondence and provides a helpful tool for individuals applying and certifying for benefits and for employers to get answers to frequently asked questions about letters they receive from the department. Once an individual has searched in the module for the type of letter they received, they can click on the title to find answers to questions including: why this letter was sent to them, what the letter means, what they can do next, where they are in the claims or tax process, and who they can contact if they have further questions. They are also reminded that the answers to these questions are general answers for informational purposes only and not specific to their own claim. At the bottom of the screen, they will also find sample letters in PDF format that they can view to see if this matches the letter that they may have received. The department has provided PDF samples of many of the standard letters in an effort to provide our customers with more information related to the Unemployment Insurance program. These PDFs include translated samples of letters that are not specific to any individual claim and are for general purposes only in order to better assist our customers.
- Staff are able to direct customers to the “View Correspondence” section of the UI Tax & Claims system to retrieve correspondence and any accompanying instructions.
- For further assistance that falls outside of the scope of the local offices, staff assist customers with contacting UI Operations Center, either via direct phone line or electronically.

2. Outreach Material and Communication Tools

- NMDWS launched the “What You Should Know about UI” video and information series on the main NMDWS website and the NMDWS YouTube channel, and is accessible to NMDWS employees and partner staff in the Workforce Connection Centers. “What You Should Know About UI” includes several topic areas for both individuals receiving benefits and employers paying Unemployment Insurance taxes in New Mexico. In addition to the information available on each of the pages, each topic area includes a short video. Spanish versions available for select videos.

o 10 Things

o Minimize UI Taxes

o UI Fraud

o Common Mistakes

o Search for Work

o UI Taxes

o Appeals

o Login UI System

o Login UI System (Spanish)

- On the NMDWS main website (www.dws.state.nm.us), “How Do I” questions are available for individuals filing or certifying for benefits. These FAQs cover information from filing for benefits to the callback features on the 1-877-664-6984 toll-free number for the UI Operations Center.
- In order to provide robust information to individuals interacting with local office and partner staff, various publications are designed, routinely updated, and printed, and then are provided to all Workforce Connection Centers, local staff, and partners around the state. The department has been diligent over the last year to provide all UI publications in English and Spanish, and in print as well as in PDF on various websites including www.dws.state.nm.us and www.jobs.state.nm.us. These publications include: The UI Handbook; “UI Program Overview” brochure; “UI Quick Facts”; and various additional information about logging into the UI Tax & Claims system and work search requirements.

3. Filing a Claim

- Customers who want to file a claim and who come into the local offices are assisted with general information, then provided with direct access to an onsite computer and/or direct telephone line to file the claim.
- Staff are currently asked to keep this information generic due to the potential complexities of each customer situation and the desire to avoid inconsistencies and errors.
- NMDWS went to a centralized UI customer interface several years ago to ensure consistency and have found that this is a more effective approach.

4. RESEA

- As part of the RESEA program described in the previous section:

o Staff have access to the UI system to review each customer’s electronically submitted work search activities.

o Staff report, on a daily basis, all RESEA UI-related activity to the central UI Operations Center for purposes of creating and adjudicating eligibility issues.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Coordination and Reemployment Assistance. If an unemployment insurance claimant is required to register and seek work, the claimant must have an active job seeker account while receiving UI benefits or appealing a determination. Job seekers self-register by completing the online application in the internet based New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System or can register in person in a Workforce Connection Center. Workforce Connection Centers generally provide public-access computers for online self- registration, and staff-assisted registration.

This background information in the job seeker's account serves as the foundation for resumes; advertisement of job seeker skills and experience to employers; assisting staff in performing a good match when connecting job seekers to job listings; and positioning the job seeker to take advantage of the full functionality of the Workforce Connection On-Line System.

The UI claimant must meet the following criteria.

- Able - means the claimant must be able to perform suitable work.
- Available - means claimant must be ready and willing to accept suitable work if a job is available.
- Actively Seeking Work - means claimant must be actively looking for work.
- Claimants are required to certify that they meet the three criteria above weekly by phone or internet.
- Claimants must keep a written record of all contacts for audit purposes.

Employment Service staff assist UI claimants with their work search and ensure the following:

- UI claimants receive the full range of employment services available to facilitate their earliest return to work, including referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources; and
- UI claimants requiring assistance in seeking work receive the necessary guidance and counseling to ensure they make a meaningful and realistic work search.

UI claimants and employers can request to use Workforce Connection Center equipment to address matters related to their UI claims, including appeals, without providing specific information on the claim. Workforce Connection Centers must ensure that UI claimants and employers have access to resources and assistance at all times during a Workforce Connection Center's regular business hours, including access to telephones, computers, fax machines, and a location in which to participate in a UI telephone appeal hearing, if needed.

UI plays a significant role in supporting the reemployment of claimants. The workforce system connects skilled workers with employers who need them, and UI claimants have recent attachment to the workforce, making them a significant part of the available labor pool. Reemployment assistance also includes a focus on military veterans receiving unemployment compensation for ex-service member (UCX) compensation. Military veteran claimants under the UCX program are given priority of service.

Similar to WIA, WIOA designates the state UI program as a required one-stop partner. As such, local areas have included UI as a required partner in their Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the local boards, the Chief Elected Official, and the one-stop partners that address the operation of the one-stop delivery system. This arrangement facilitates UI claimants' access the full range of one-stop services both online and in-person through the one-stop centers. Employment Services staff provides reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals through its Rapid Response and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) programs to help ensure these individuals are searching for and registering for work, and participating in reemployment services.

Rapid Response. As discussed earlier, Rapid Response teams provide services to employers and workers in mass layoff situations and conducting claim filing activities, when needed. Rapid Response staff serves as a key point of contact for businesses and are also be used to educate employers about layoff aversion strategies.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA). Employment Services staff also connect UI claimants to reemployment services through RESEA. The State identifies UI claimants who are most likely to exhaust their benefits and need job search assistance to return to work, and refer them to reemployment services. Through RESEA, New Mexico is able to focus on the reemployment of these individuals. Through RESEA, the State strives to reduce the number of customers who exhaust unemployment benefits through individualized and targeted employment services and counseling, as well as referrals to training.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Coordination and Reemployment Assistance. If an unemployment insurance claimant is required to register and seek work, the claimant must have an active job seeker account while receiving UI benefits or appealing a determination. Job seekers self-register by completing the online application in the internet based New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System or can register in person in a Workforce Connection Center. Workforce Connection Centers generally provide public-access computers for online self- registration, and staff-assisted registration.

This background information in the job seeker's account serves as the foundation for resumes; advertisement of job seeker skills and experience to employers; assisting staff in performing a good match when connecting job seekers to job listings; and positioning the job seeker to take advantage of the full functionality of the Workforce Connection On-Line System.

The UI claimant must meet the following criteria.

- Able - means the claimant must be able to perform suitable work.
- Available - means claimant must be ready and willing to accept suitable work if a job is available.
- Actively Seeking Work - means claimant must be actively looking for work.

- Claimants are required to certify that they meet the three criteria above weekly by phone or internet.
- Claimants must keep a written record of all contacts for audit purposes.

Employment Service staff assist UI claimants with their work search and ensure the following:

- UI claimants receive the full range of employment services available to facilitate their earliest return to work, including referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources; and
- UI claimants requiring assistance in seeking work receive the necessary guidance and counseling to ensure they make a meaningful and realistic work search.

UI claimants and employers can request to use Workforce Connection Center equipment to address matters related to their UI claims, including appeals, without providing specific information on the claim. Workforce Connection Centers must ensure that UI claimants and employers have access to resources and assistance at all times during a Workforce Connection Center's regular business hours, including access to telephones, computers, fax machines, and a location in which to participate in a UI telephone appeal hearing, if needed.

UI plays a significant role in supporting the reemployment of claimants. The workforce system connects skilled workers with employers who need them, and UI claimants have recent attachment to the workforce, making them a significant part of the available labor pool. Reemployment assistance also includes a focus on military veterans receiving unemployment compensation for ex-service member (UCX) compensation. Military veteran claimants under the UCX program are given priority of service.

Similar to WIA, WIOA designates the state UI program as a required one-stop partner. As such, local areas have included UI as a required partner in their Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the local boards, the Chief Elected Official, and the one-stop partners that address the operation of the one-stop delivery system. This arrangement facilitates UI claimants' access the full range of one-stop services both online and in-person through the one-stop centers. Employment Services staff provides reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals through its Rapid Response and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) programs to help ensure these individuals are searching for and registering for work, and participating in reemployment services.

Rapid Response. As discussed earlier, Rapid Response teams provide services to employers and workers in mass layoff situations and conducting claim filing activities, when needed. Rapid Response staff serves as a key point of contact for businesses and are also be used to educate employers about layoff aversion strategies.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA). Employment Services staff also connect UI claimants to reemployment services through RESEA. The State identifies UI claimants who are most likely to exhaust their benefits and need job search assistance to return to work, and refer them to reemployment services. Through RESEA, New Mexico is able to focus on the reemployment of these individuals. Through RESEA, the State strives to reduce the number of customers who exhaust unemployment benefits through individualized and targeted employment services and counseling, as well as referrals to training.

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Coordination and Reemployment Assistance. If an unemployment insurance claimant is required to register and seek work, the claimant must have an active job seeker account while receiving UI benefits or appealing a determination. Job seekers self-register by completing the online application in the internet based New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System or can register in person in a Workforce Connection Center. Workforce Connection Centers generally provide public-access computers for online self- registration, and staff-assisted registration.

This background information in the job seeker's account serves as the foundation for resumes; advertisement of job seeker skills and experience to employers; assisting staff in performing a good match when connecting job seekers to job listings; and positioning the job seeker to take advantage of the full functionality of the Workforce Connection On-Line System.

WIOA designates the state UI program as a required one-stop partner. As such, local areas have included UI as a required partner in their Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the local boards, the Chief Elected Official, and the one-stop partners that address the operation of the one-stop delivery system. This arrangement facilitates UI claimants' access the full range of one-stop services both online and in-person through the one-stop centers. Employment Services staff provides reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals through its Rapid Response and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) programs to help ensure these individuals are searching for and registering for work, and participating in reemployment services.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Coordination and Reemployment Assistance. If an unemployment insurance claimant is required to register and seek work, the claimant must have an active job seeker account while receiving UI benefits or appealing a determination. Job seekers self-register by completing the online application in the internet based New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System or can register in person in a Workforce Connection Center. Workforce Connection Centers generally provide public-access computers for online self- registration, and staff-assisted registration.

This background information in the job seeker's account serves as the foundation for resumes; advertisement of job seeker skills and experience to employers; assisting staff in performing a good match when connecting job seekers to job listings; and positioning the job seeker to take advantage of the full functionality of the Workforce Connection On-Line System.

The UI claimant must meet the following criteria.

- Able - means the claimant must be able to perform suitable work.
- Available - means claimant must be ready and willing to accept suitable work if a job is available.

- Actively Seeking Work - means claimant must be actively looking for work.
- Claimants are required to certify that they meet the three criteria above weekly by phone or internet.
- Claimants must keep a written record of all contacts for audit purposes.

Employment Service staff assist UI claimants with their work search and ensure the following:

- UI claimants receive the full range of employment services available to facilitate their earliest return to work, including referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources; and
- UI claimants requiring assistance in seeking work receive the necessary guidance and counseling to ensure they make a meaningful and realistic work search.

UI claimants and employers can request to use Workforce Connection Center equipment to address matters related to their UI claims, including appeals, without providing specific information on the claim. Workforce Connection Centers must ensure that UI claimants and employers have access to resources and assistance at all times during a Workforce Connection Center's regular business hours, including access to telephones, computers, fax machines, and a location in which to participate in a UI telephone appeal hearing, if needed.

UI plays a significant role in supporting the reemployment of claimants. The workforce system connects skilled workers with employers who need them, and UI claimants have recent attachment to the workforce, making them a significant part of the available labor pool. Reemployment assistance also includes a focus on military veterans receiving unemployment compensation for ex-service member (UCX) compensation. Military veteran claimants under the UCX program are given priority of service.

Similar to WIA, WIOA designates the state UI program as a required one-stop partner. As such, local areas have included UI as a required partner in their Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the local boards, the Chief Elected Official, and the one-stop partners that address the operation of the one-stop delivery system. This arrangement facilitates UI claimants' access the full range of one-stop services both online and in-person through the one-stop centers. Employment Services staff provides reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals through its Rapid Response and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) programs to help ensure these individuals are searching for and registering for work, and participating in reemployment services.

4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

Employment Services are provided as part of the one-stop delivery system. Currently, each local workforce development area has at least one comprehensive workforce development center that includes, at a minimum, three partners: WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker services, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, and access to Unemployment Insurance services. Each Employment Services field office is assigned a site manager who ensures the workforce centers are universally accessible, customer centered, and training is job-driven. This includes providing easy access to and assistance with workforce related activities, such as looking for a job, exploring work preparation and career development services, as well as seamless referral to WIOA employment, on-the-job-training, and occupational training programs. Employment Services staff follow required guidelines regarding referral and placement.

All of the Basic Career Services offered by the WIOA programs must be made available by Wagner-Peyser staff in coordination with other one-stop center partners. Employment Services staff may also make available the Individualized Career Services, particularly for those individuals with barriers. Wagner-Peyser services are free of charge for individuals. Employment Services staff work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Local Workforce Development Boards, site managers and operators, and other workforce partners, to effectively serve both employers and jobseekers. A key role of this program is to identify potential matches between employers and jobseekers. The program's service delivery approach includes self-service, facilitated self-help, and staff-assisted services, and involves a number of other tools and resources as follows.

Worker and Jobseeker Services:

- Job search assistance
- Reemployment services to unemployment insurance claimants
- Labor market information
- Evaluation and assessment of knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Referral to training and support services
- Veterans priority of service

The New Mexico Workforce Connection On-Line System is available free of charge to employers and jobseekers. Employers can post their own jobs or provide job listing information to Workforce Connection Center staff for the matching and referral of qualified job seekers. Workforce Connection Center staff can access both employer job listings and job seeker accounts entered into the system. The job listing information allows Workforce Connection Center staff to evaluate the hiring requirements of the employer, as well as the qualifications of the job seeker. NMCOS Services for jobseekers include:

- online self-registration,
- resume creation,
- online job matching,
- ability to browse jobs and contact employers immediately,
- e-mail notification of matches, if requested,
- current labor market information,
- access to career tools and training resources,
- access to job notices from external job listings, and
- access labor market information.

Employment Services staff also connect UI claimants to reemployment services through RESEA. Through RESEA, New Mexico is able to focus on the reemployment of these individuals. Through RESEA, the State strives to reduce the number of customers who exhaust unemployment benefits through individualized and targeted employment services and counseling, as well as referrals to training.

E. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE--

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

Language, limited education, and lack of training opportunities are barriers that make it difficult for MSFWs to find and retain employment. MSFWs generally require a lot of assistance finding and securing employment. New Mexico farm workers predominately speak Spanish, so educational needs include English Language Acquisition (ELA) training and assistance with High School Equivalency (HSE) completion. Also, New Mexico farm workers continue to have a difficulty locating housing that is available and affordable. For instance, migrant farm workers cannot sign year-long leases and have difficulty passing credit checks and therefore makes housing difficult to acquire.

Employer's needs in New Mexico vary my crop and location. In the Southern part of the state there are enough farm workers locally and migrant workers to fill the jobs of harvesting the crops. However in the other parts of the state (Eastern and Northern), where there is a lack of farm workers, the agricultural employers rely on the H2A program to bring and hire workers from Mexico, Peru and Australia to work during the harvest season.

Nationwide and local employment declines are the result of multiple factors, such as automation of farm processes and increased competition from other countries, especially the U.S.'s bordering neighbors. Based on information from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, science and technology have created major changes in farming. Bioengineered crops, more resistant to pests and weather conditions, allow farmers to produce more with less effort. Technological changes in farming equipment and process automation have made production more efficient and less dependent on field workers. For example, branding and vaccinating of herds in ranching operations are mostly mechanized, while the use of GPS and improved transportation systems has reduced the time needed for many ranching tasks.

Further, New Mexico's unemployment rate and the surplus of employment opportunities in the construction industry where experience and education are not a factor are drawing workers away from farm work.

A. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE.

AGRICULTURAL CROP AND LABOR DATA

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the National Agricultural Statistics Service, cooperatively issue the New Mexico Agricultural Statistics on an annual basis. This publication is the primary source of information for the MSFW needs assessment. It identifies labor intensive agricultural crops throughout New Mexico, including approximate start, ending, and peak period dates by county.

The nature of the agriculture industry makes it very difficult to determine income, employment, and wages for farms and their workers. A large portion of agriculture workers are self-employed and counted as such by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Many are migrant workers who change their location of work frequently and/or work seasonally.

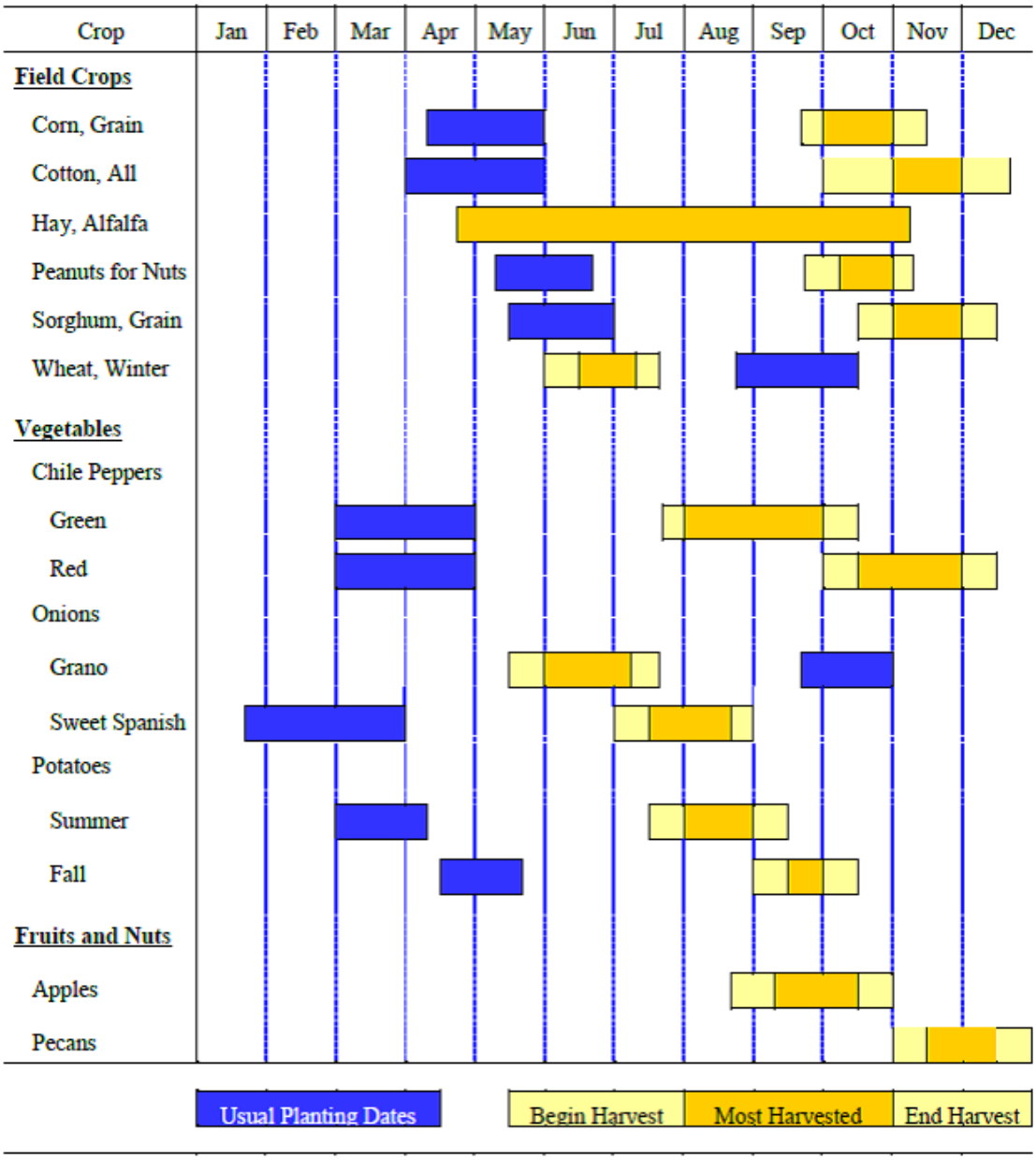
There are several sources that gather information on employment in agriculture operations. Three main sources are the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), the USDA's Census of Agriculture, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). This analysis mainly presents employment from the BEA. BEA employment estimates include full-time and part-time workers and differentiate between all workers and those that are self-employed. The BEA measures self-employed farm workers by estimating proprietor employment.

Farm proprietors' employment is a count of operators running sole proprietorship and partnership farms estimated from USDA data. It is important to look at proprietors' employment for the agriculture industry because the vast majority of agriculture workers are proprietors. BEA data likely does not include a complete count of all migrant, undocumented, or seasonal workers. In addition, the BEA does not count unpaid workers. The number of farms using migrant workers, and the number of unpaid workers is from the Agricultural Census.

ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY

The following tables are a summary of the previous program year's Agricultural crop activity, indicating each major MSFW labor intensive agricultural crops, the months of activity for each crop, and activity by county.

Planting and Harvesting Dates



Miscellaneous Crops and Livestock[1/]

Crop	Farms	Acres Harvested	Principal counties
Apples	1,153	1,740	Lincoln, Otero, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe
Apricots	210	75	Doña Ana, Otero, Rio Arriba
Cantaloupe	446	208	Doña Ana, San Juan, Sandoval
Cherries (Sweet)	229	159	Mora, Otero, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe
Cucumbers	488	120	Rio Arriba, San Juan
Grapes	516	1,153	Not published
Grass Seed	12	283	Not published
Lettuce	93	543	Doña Ana
Nursery Crops	115	1,035	Not published
Oats	27	158	Mora, Rio Arriba, Sandoval
Peaches	605	230	Bernalillo, Doña Ana, Rio Arriba, Valencia
Pears	436	189	Bernalillo, Lincoln, Rio Arriba, Taos
Pistachios	76	513	Not published
Pumpkins	105	1,879	Not published
Snap Beans	423	216	Luna, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe
Sod	5	1,049	Not published
Squash	553	404	McKinley, San Juan
Sweet Corn	589	500	Rio Arriba, Roosevelt, Sandoval, San Juan
Tomatoes	758	220	Bernalillo, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe
Watermelons	593	1,458	Not published

Livestock	Farms	Head	Principal counties
Bison	43	5,156	Not published
Ducks	171	4,868	Not published
Geese	131	3,036	Not published
Horses	7,635	50,723	Doña Ana, McKinley, Rio Arriba, San Juan
Llamas and Alpacas	70	1,051	Bernalillo, Santa Fe
Mules, Burros and Donkeys	798	1,860	Colfax, McKinley, San Juan, Valencia
Turkeys	220	6,425	Not published

[1/] 2012 Census of Agriculture

Organic Survey- New Mexico: 2014

	Farms	Acres	Quantity	Value of Sales $1,000
Organic Farms	116	34,431	---	34,431
Total Sales	116	---	---	21,860
Less than $1,000	9	---	---	4
$1,000 - $2,499	13	---	---	21
$2,500 - $4,999	8	---	---	34
$5,000 - $9,999	20	---	---	135
$10,000 - $19,999	9	---	---	120
$20,000 - $39,999	13	---	---	354
$40,000 - $49,999	8	---	---	350
$50,000 - $99,999	10	---	---	691
$100,000 - $249,999	14	---	---	1,684
$250,000 - $499,999	6	---	---	2,377
$500,000 or more	6	---	---	16,090
Crops	105	---		7,210.0
Vegetables	53	148	---	1,752.0
Beans, Snap *(cwt.)*	7	6	30	10.4
Broccoli *(cwt.)*	8	5	18	4.4
Carrots *(cwt.)*	21	7	61	16.9
Cauliflower *(cwt.)*	8	5	280	44.4
Garlic *(cwt)*	20	8	207	67.5
Herbs, Fresh Cut *(lbs.)*	6	1	66	3.3
Lettuce *(cwt)*	13	8	681	105.5
Peppers, Bell *(cwt)*	17	7	248	25.1
Potatoes *(cwt)*	8	4	70	3.8
Spinach *(cwt.)*	9	5	135	19.0
Squash *(cwt)*	17	7	327	39.5
Tomatoes *(cwt.)*	42	18	3,412	786.7
Other vegetables *(cwt.)*	28	49	4,284	599.2
Fruit *(lbs)*	44	230	---	1/
Apples *(lbs)*	5	4	29,664	25.8
Grapes *(tons)*	9	3	5	5.0
Pecans *(lbs)*	17	1/	216,546	1/
Black Berries *(lbs.)*	9	2	10,642	58.9
Field Crops	26	10,507	---	3,691.0
Hay *(tons)*	12	1,876	5,421	1,046.0
Sorghum, Silage *(tons)*	8	2,914	12,125	642.2
Wheat *(bushels)*	5	1,836	47,423	579.0

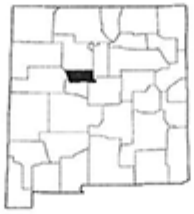
	Farms	Peak Inventory	Quantity Sold	Value of Sales $1,000
Beef Cows	6	122	72	103.2
Other Cattle	8	3,431	2,947	2,705.6
Chickens	18	349	1/	1/

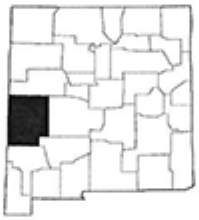
Expenses	Farms	Total $1,000
Total Organic Production	116	14,542
Organic Certification	105	176
Fertilizer, Lime, and Soil Conditioners	69	125
Chemicals, Beneficial Insects and Organic Materials for Pest Control	46	59
Gasoline, Fuels, and Oils	105	619
Seed, Plants, Vines, and Trees	76	234
Hired Labor and Contract Labor	75	2,556
Livestock Purchased or Leased	16	1,513
Feed Purchased	17	1/
Interest	47	759
Property Taxes Paid	86	141
Rent and Lease for Land, Buildings, and Machinery	15	461
Custom Work and Custom Hauling	41	600
Repairs, Supplies, and Maintenance	94	591
Utilities	99	368
All Other Production Expenses	54	1/

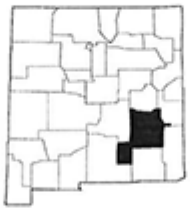
Sales Outlets	Farms	Percent of Sales
Consumer Direct Sales	83	26
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)	10	---
Direct-to-Retail Sales:	40	3
Wholesale Market Sales:	51	71
First Point of Sales:		
Local	102	49
Regional	25	1/

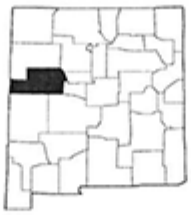
1/ Not published to avoid disclosing individual information

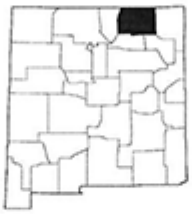
County Profiles

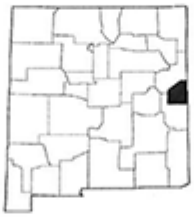
Census 2012		Bernalillo County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	1,006			Cattle and Calves		7,000	31
Land in Farms (Acres)	350,638			Sheep and Lambs		500	20
Sheep and Lambs	765						
Value of Products Sold	$18,131,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$18,023						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$23,168						
Avg. Net Farm Income	-$4,262	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank

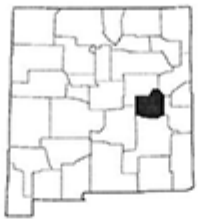
Census 2012		Catron County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	351			Cattle and Calves		26,000	17
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,077,534			Beef Cows		15,100	12
Avg. Size of Farm	3,070						
Value of Products Sold	$12,742,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$36,301						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$43,923						
Avg. Net Farm Income	-$3,922	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank

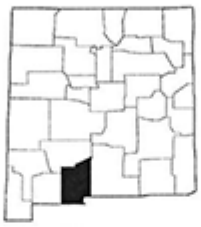
Census 2012		Chaves County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	595			Cattle and Calves		165,000	2
Land in Farms (Acres)	2,482,827			Beef Cows		25,500	1
Avg. Size of Farm	4,173			Milk Cows		85,000	1
Value of Products Sold	$388,099,000			Sheep and Lambs		11,200	3
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$652,267						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$608,242						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$59,098	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Corn, Silage	10,500	32.50	343,000	Tons	1
		Hay, Alfalfa	33,000	5.75	190,000	Tons	1
		Hay, Other	2,500	4.00	10,000	Tons	6

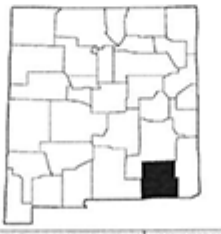
Census 2012		Cibola County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	522			Cattle and Calves		11,800	29
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,558,974			Beef Cows		7,700	21
Avg. Size of Farm	2,987			Sheep and Lambs		2,700	9
Value of Products Sold	1/						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	1/						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$13,937						
Avg. Net Farm Income	-$2,675	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank

Census 2012		Colfax County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	290			Cattle and Calves		19,500	22
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,962,965			Beef Cows		10,200	16
Avg. Size of Farm	6,769			Sheep and Lambs		200	21
Value of Products Sold	$35,744,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$123,256						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$116,096						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$37,468	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Hay, Alfalfa	3,500	3.15	11,000	Tons	11
		Hay, Other	2,000	1.40	2,800	Tons	11

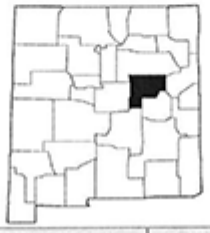
Census 2012		Curry County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	600			Cattle and Calves		225,000	1
Land in Farms (Acres)	880,822			Beef Cows		7,600	22
Avg. Size of Farm	1,468			Milk Cows		76,000	2
Value of Products Sold	$447,315,000			Sheep and Lambs		200	21
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$745,526						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$666,016						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$107,850	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Corn, Silage	12,900	21.00	274,000	Tons	2
		Hay, Other	12,500	2.75	34,200	Tons	1

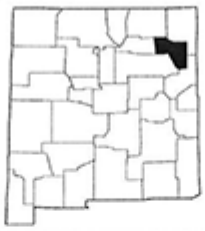
Census 2012		De Baca County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	203			Cattle and Calves		16,100	26
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,068,067			Beef Cows		9,500	19
Avg. Size of Farm	5,261			Sheep and Lambs		600	16
Value of Products Sold	$23,967,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$118,064						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$112,653						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$26,516	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Hay, Alfalfa	8,500	4.80	41,000	Tons	6
		Hay, Other	500	2.60	1,300	Tons	12

Census 2012		Doña Ana County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	2,184			Cattle and Calves		83,000	5
Land in Farms (Acres)	659,970			Beef Cows		7,500	23
Avg. Size of Farm	302			Milk Cows		37,000	4
Value of Products Sold	$351,032,000			Sheep and Lambs		800	14
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$160,729						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$150,695						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$13,245	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Chile	1,900	---	20,700	Tons	2
		Corn, Silage	6,200	24.00	149,000	Tons	4
		Cotton, Upland	4,800	1,370	13,700	Bales	2
		Alfalfa	18,600	7.65	142,000	Tons	2

Census 2012		Eddy County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	551			Cattle and Calves		52,000	7
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,141,956			Beef Cows		15,700	10
Avg. Size of Farm	2,073			Milk Cows		10,000	7
Value of Products Sold	$119,564,000			Sheep and Lambs		1,900	10
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$216,994						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$189,252						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$35,318	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Cotton, Upland	4,700	1,266	12,400	Bales	3
		Hay, Alfalfa	20,400	5.60	114,000	Tons	3
		Hay, Other	2,300	3.20	7,400	Tons	8

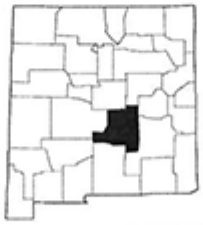
		Grant County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	407			Cattle and Calves		26,500	14
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,064,487			Beef Cows		16,700	5
Avg. Size of Farm	2,615			Sheep and Lambs		100	27
Value of Products Sold	$14,543,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$35,732						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$39,907						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$1,974	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Hay, Other	500	2.40	1,200	Tons	13

Census 2012		Guadalupe County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	372			Cattle and Calves		21,000	19
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,643,213			Sheep and Lambs		3,100	7
Avg. Size of Farm	4,417						
Value of Products Sold	$17,709,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$47,605						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$49,082						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$8,751	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank

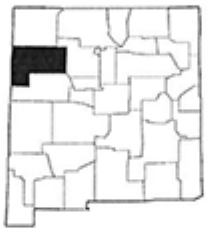
Census 2012		Harding County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	202			Cattle and Calves		21,000	19
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,034,059			Beef Cows		11,500	15
Avg. Size of Farm	5,119						
Value of Products Sold	$13,495,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$66,807						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$66,313						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$10,143	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank

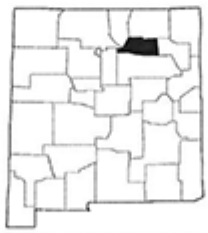
Census 2012		Hidalgo County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	171			Cattle and Calves		26,500	14
Land in Farms (Acres)	930,271			Beef Cows		15,300	11
Avg. Size of Farm	5,440						
Value of Products Sold	$29,154,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$170,488						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$120,495						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$60,858	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Alfalfa	3,500	6.00	21,000	Tons	8

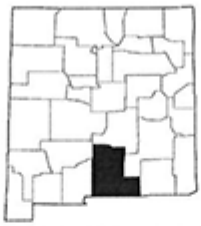
Census 2012		Lea County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	460			Cattle and Calves		84,000	4
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,981,988			Beef Cows		18,900	3
Avg. Size of Farm	4,309			Milk Cows		31,000	5
Value of Products Sold	$188,926,000			Sheep and Lambs		1,500	12
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$410,708						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$374,667						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$51,555	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Cotton, Upland	14,000	597	17,400	Bales	1

Census 2012		Lincoln County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	704			Cattle and Calves		27,500	13
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,271,368			Beef Cows		16,600	6
Avg. Size of Farm	1,806			Sheep and Lambs		8,700	4
Value of Products Sold	$77,247,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$109,726						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$106,229						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$7,714	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank

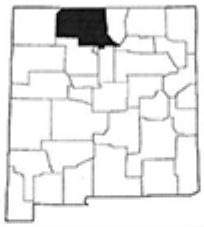
Census 2012		Luna County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	190			Cattle and Calves		18,500	24
Land in Farms (Acres)	550,174			Sheep and Lambs		100	27
Avg. Size of Farm	2,896						
Value of Products Sold	$62,482,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$328,852						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$292,674						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$49,327	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Chile	2,200	---	23,600	Tons	1
		Hay, Alfalfa	6,500	7.85	51,000	Tons	5
		Hay, Other	1,500	3.85	5,800	Tons	9

Census 2012		McKinley County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	2,297			Cattle and Calves		26,500	14
Land in Farms (Acres)	3,022,704			Beef Cows		17,600	4
Avg. Size of Farm	1,316			Sheep and Lambs		26,500	1
Value of Products Sold	$8,389,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$3,652						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$8,386						
Avg. Net Farm Income	-$4,269	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Hay, Alfalfa	500	2.00	1,000	Tons	14

Census 2012		Mora County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	597			Cattle and Calves		14,000	28
Land in Farms (Acres)	778,031			Sheep and Lambs		200	21`
Avg. Size of Farm	1,303						
Value of Products Sold	$11,623,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$19,468						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$21,228						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$2,895	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Hay, Alfalfa	4,500	1.40	6,400	Tons	12
		Hay, Other	6,000	.65	3,900	Tons	10

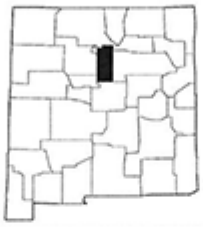
Census 2012		Otero County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	486			Cattle and Calves		17,000	25
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,223,746			Beef Cows		10,200	16
Avg. Size of Farm	2,518			Sheep and Lambs		2,800	8
Value of Products Sold	$14,635,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$30,112						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$36,701						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$3,654	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank

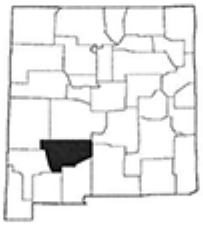
Census 2012		Quay County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	553			Cattle and Calves		32,500	11
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,518,085			Beef Cows		15,900	9
Avg. Size of Farm	2,745			Sheep and Lambs		600	16
Value of Products Sold	$36,789,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$66,526						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$77,029						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$9,259	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Other Hay	9,000	1.60	14,500	Tons	4

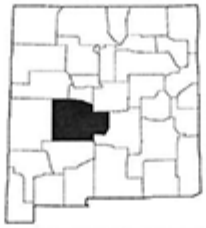
Census 2012		Rio Arriba County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	1,892			Cattle and Calves		26,000	17
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,432,897			Beef Cows		16,500	7
Avg. Size of Farm	757			Sheep and Lambs		3,200	6
Value of Products Sold	$18,979,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$10,031						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$14,179						
Avg. Net Farm Income	-$1,791	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank

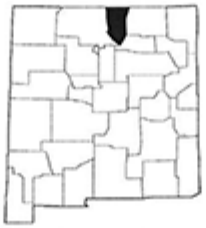
This image cannot currently be displayed.

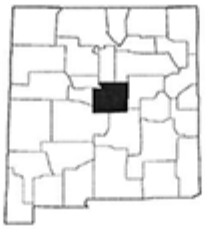
Census 2012		San Miguel County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	877			Cattle and Calves		33,500	10
Land in Farms (Acres)	2,350,432			Beef Cows		19,300	2
Avg. Size of Farm	2,680			Sheep and Lambs		200	21
Value of Products Sold	$18,631,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$21,244						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$26,475						
Avg. Net Farm Income	-$1,681	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Hay, Other	1,000	1.20	1,200	Tons	12

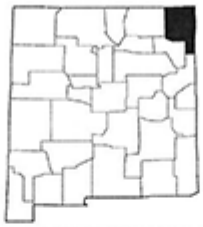
Census 2012		Santa Fe County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	715			Cattle and Calves		9,000	30
Land in Farms (Acres)	717,704			Beef Cows		3,700	25
Avg. Size of Farm	1,004			Sheep and Lambs		600	16
Value of Products Sold	$12,776,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$17,869						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$30,717						
Avg. Net Farm Income	-$9,769	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Other Hay	600	0.65	400	Tons	11

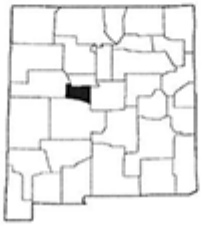
Census 2012		Sierra County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	256			Cattle and Calves		18,600	23
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,250,136			Sheep and Lambs		200	21
Avg. Size of Farm	4,883						
Value of Products Sold	$39,347,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$153,697						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$145,573						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$15,884	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Hay, Alfalfa	2,000	7.40	14,800	Tons	9

Census 2012		Socorro County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	704			Cattle and Calves		46,500	8
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,271,368			Beef Cows		16,200	8
Avg. Size of Farm	1,806			Milk Cows		11,100	6
Value of Products Sold	$77,247,000			Sheep and Lambs		700	15
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$109,726						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$106,229						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$7,714	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Hay, Alfalfa	12,000	5.10	61,000	Tons	4
		Hay, Other	3,000	4.15	12,500	Tons	5

Census 2012		Taos County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	983			Cattle and Calves		5,100	24
Land in Farms (Acres)	313,414			Sheep and Lambs		600	16
Avg. Size of Farm	319						
Value of Products Sold	$8,415,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$8,560						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$10,924						
Avg. Net Farm Income	-$1,204	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank

Census 2012		Torrance County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	589			Cattle and Calves		43,000	9
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,864,589			Sheep and Lambs		5,000	5
Avg. Size of Farm	3,166						
Value of Products Sold	$58,520,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$99,355						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$98,833						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$9,583	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Hay, Alfalfa	6,000	6.15	37,000	Tons	7
		Hay, Other	2,000	4.20	8,400	Tons	7

Census 2012		Union County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	353			Cattle and Calves		61,000	6
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,967,370			Sheep and Lambs		100	27
Avg. Size of Farm	5,573						
Value of Products Sold	$98,138,000						
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$278,013						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$231,871						
Avg. Net Farm Income	$61,227	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank
		Corn, Grain	17,400	201	3,500,000	Bu.	1
		Hay, Alfalfa	1,000	6.20	6,200	Tons	13
		Hay, Other	5,000	3.00	15,000	Tons	3

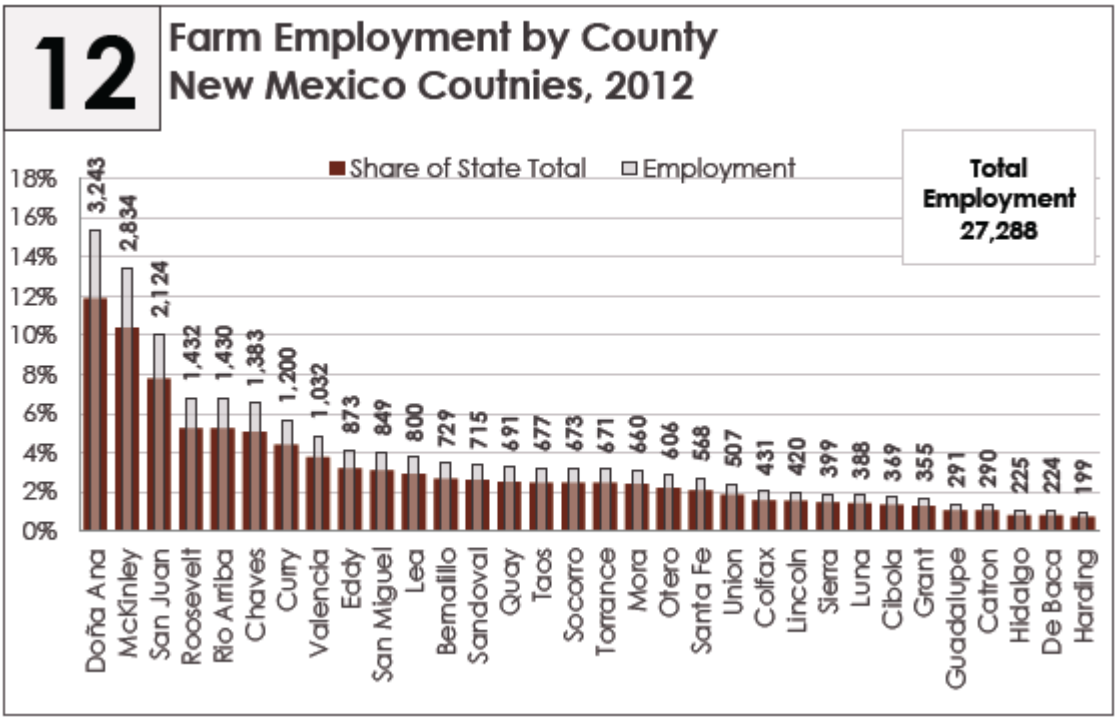
Census 2012		Valencia County		Livestock – Jan 1, 2015		Head	Rank
Number of Farms	1,607			Cattle and Calves		30,000	12
Land in Farms (Acres)	669,727			Beef Cows		9,100	20
Avg. Size of Farm	417			Milk Cows		9,000	8
Value of Products Sold	$55,765,000			Sheep and Lambs		1,000	13
Avg. Farm Value Sold	$34,701						
Avg. Farm Expenses	$39,585						
Avg. Net Farm Income	-$3,672	Crops 2014	Acres	Yield	Production	Unit	Rank

1/ Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farm or ranch.

ASSESSMENT OF AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT

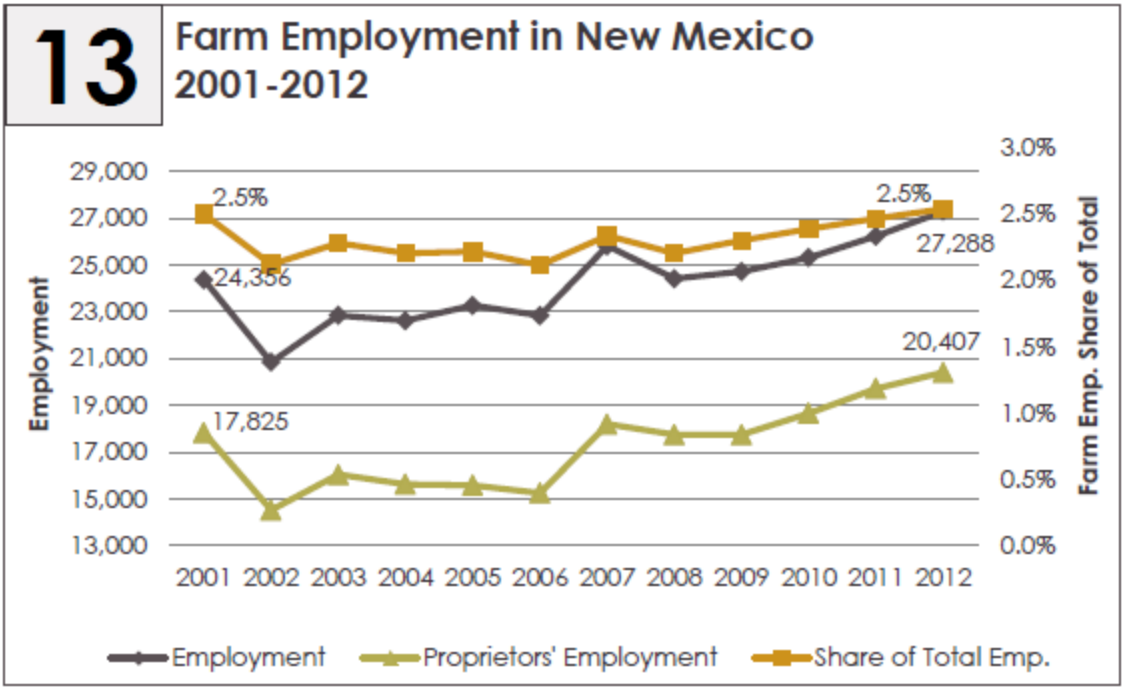
As of 2012, there were 27,288 workers in the agriculture industry in New Mexico. Of these farm workers, approximately 75 percent were proprietors (20,407). In nonfarm industries, about 20 percent of workers were proprietors. Based on Agricultural Census data, approximately 107 farms had hired migrant labor and 19 had hired migrant labor on a contract basis (though the number of migrant workers is not available). In addition, the Census reported that 12,120 of New Mexico farms had unpaid workers, amounting to 28,701 unpaid workers, overall. While BEA and the Census are not directly comparable, information from each source provides a better outlook on difficult-to-measure agriculture employment.

Exhibit 12 provides farm employment at the county level, which is primarily driven by the number of farms in the county. The variety or range of commodities produced, farm size, and number of proprietors, however, also contribute to the demand for farm workers. There does appear to be a connection between proprietor employment and market values and cash receipts of products sold. Seven of the 10 counties with the greatest market values and cash receipts were amongst the counties with the lowest percentages of proprietors' employment.



As Exhibit 12 shows, Doña Ana, McKinley, and San Juan counties, the top three counties in the state based on number of farms, had the largest farm employment in New Mexico as of 2012. Doña Ana is a top agricultural producer in the state, and approximately 3,243 workers, or 11.9 percent of all New Mexico farm workers, were employed in that county. McKinley and San Juan counties, where over 90 percent of farm workers were self-employed proprietors, had about 5,000 workers combined (which comprised 18.2 percent of all farm employment in the state). The median number of farm workers in New Mexico, as of 2012, was around 670. Of the 10 counties that generated the greatest market values and cash receipts of commodities sold, Luna, Socorro, and Union counties all had fewer or the same number of workers as the statewide median.

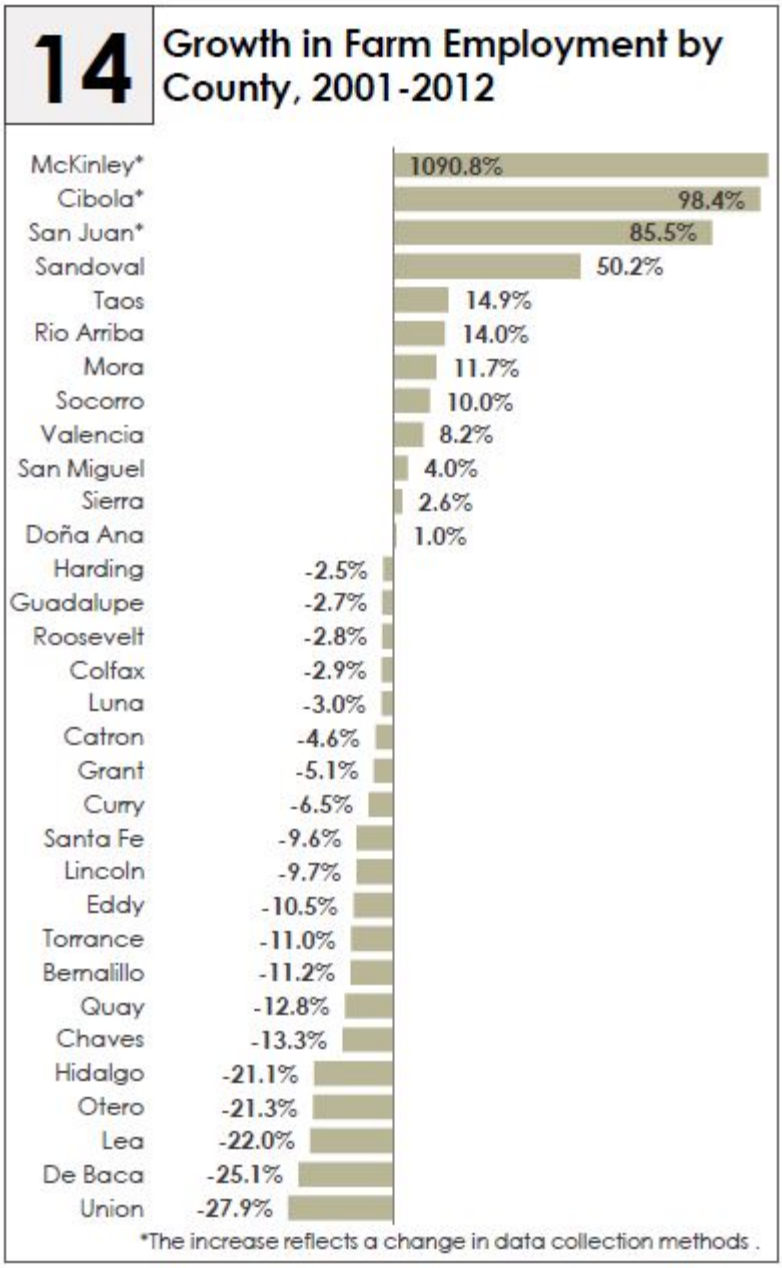
Exhibit 13 provides an illustration of farm employment between 2001 and 2012. Based on total farm employment estimates, employment grew by 12 percent between 2001 and 2012, or 1.1 percent annually. During the same period, total employment grew by 10.2 percent or 0.9 percent annually. The farm employment share of total employment remained fairly steady between 2001 and 2012. The industry saw drops in its share of total employment in the first half of the decade, followed by fairly steady growth between 2006 and 2012. The concentration of proprietors' employment in the agriculture industry has increased in recent years. Between 2001 and 2010, proprietors' employment comprised around 60 percent of total farm employment on average. Between 2010 and 2012, proprietors' employment exceeded 70 percent of total farm employment.



While it would appear that farm employment grew faster than total employment, much of the farm employment growth seen in the state can be attributed to changes in data collection methods related to small, minority-owned farms, as opposed to actual new farms and/or farm workers. For example, during the 2007 Agricultural Census, the USDA made a concentrated effort to capture small, minority-owned farms, like those owned by American Indians. An increase in farms reporting data caused the spike in 2007 employment evident in Exhibit 13. Due to changes in data collection efforts, at least some of the employment growth seen in the state during the 11-year period was actually due to new reporting of existing farms, as opposed to new farm operations or new farm workers. In fact, it is possible that reporting changes caused close to all of the measured growth in farm employment in the state.

Exhibit 14 provides employment growth by county between 2001 and 2012. McKinley, Cibola, and San Juan counties have the largest populations of American Indians, and all three counties showed drastic increases in reported farm employment during varying times of the 11-year period. At least some of this growth is related to the USDA's efforts to collect better information on small, minority farmers. If growth in McKinley, Cibola, and San Juan counties is removed, the state actually experienced a decline in farm employment over the 11-year period. Outside of these three counties,

only nine other counties saw farm employment increase over the period. Lea, De Baca, and Union counties all saw the largest decreases in farm employment.



Even if New Mexico's employment did decline between 2001 and 2012 (in the case that growth in McKinley, Cibola, and San Juan was not all new employment), the state's farm employment still did not decline as significantly as the nation's. Between 2001 and 2012, U.S. farm employment declined by over 14 percent.

Nationwide and local employment declines are the result of multiple factors, such as automation of farm processes and increased competition from other countries, especially the U.S.'s bordering neighbors. Based on information from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, science and technology

have created major changes in farming. Bioengineered crops, more resistant to pests and weather conditions, allow farmers to produce more with less effort. Technological changes in farming equipment and process automation have made production more efficient and less dependent on field workers. For example, branding and vaccinating of herds in ranching operations are mostly mechanized, while the use of GPS and improved transportation systems has reduced the time needed for many ranching tasks.

B. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWS IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION.

AGRICULTURAL CROP AND LABOR DATA

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the National Agricultural Statistics Service, cooperatively issue the New Mexico Agricultural Statistics on an annual basis. This publication is the primary source of information for the MSFW needs assessment. It identifies labor intensive agricultural crops throughout New Mexico, including approximate start, ending, and peak period dates by county.

The nature of the agriculture industry makes it very difficult to determine income, employment, and wages for farms and their workers. A large portion of agriculture workers are self-employed and counted as such by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Many are migrant workers who change their location of work frequently and/or work seasonally.

There are several sources that gather information on employment in agriculture operations. Three main sources are the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), the USDA’s Census of Agriculture, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). This analysis mainly presents employment from the BEA. BEA employment estimates include full-time and part-time workers and differentiate between all workers and those that are self-employed. The BEA measures self-employed farm workers by estimating proprietor employment.

Farm proprietors’ employment is a count of operators running sole proprietorship and partnership farms estimated from USDA data. It is important to look at proprietors’ employment for the agriculture industry because the vast majority of agriculture workers are proprietors. BEA data likely does not include a complete count of all migrant, undocumented, or seasonal workers. In addition, the BEA does not count unpaid workers. The number of farms using migrant workers, and the number of unpaid workers is from the Agricultural Census.

FARM OPERATOR CHARACTERISTICS

The USDA Agricultural Census collects some information on gender, ethnicity, and race of farm operators, including principal, second, and third operators. This data differs from that reported by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), but it is a very helpful supplement to understanding the composition of the agricultural workforce. The farm operator is the person who runs the farm, making the day-to-day management decisions. The operator could be an owner, hired manager, cash tenant, share tenant, and/or a partner. If land is rented or worked on shares, the tenant or renter is the operator. The USDA collects data for up to three operators per farm.

As of 2012, about 34 percent of all farm operators were women. As shown in Exhibit 15, the number of women operators increased by 17.5 percent between the 2007 and 2012 censuses. While the number of women operators increased over the 5-year period, their share of total operator employment remained fairly steady. Women are less represented in the principal operator category. As of 2012, approximately 38 percent of all women operators were principal operators. While this represents an increase of nearly 3 percent from 2007, the contrast between women operators and men operators, where 81 percent wereprincipal operators, is stark. Women's share of total principal operator employment also decreased slightly between 2007 and 2012; women principal operators comprised about 19 percent of all principal operators in 2012, a decline from about 22 percent in 2007.

15 Women Operators
New Mexico, 2007 and 2012

	2007	2012	Pct Chg 07-12
All Operators	**31,201**	**37,166**	**19.1%**
Principal Operator	20,930	24,721	18.1%
Percentage of all Operators	*67%*	*67%*	--
Women Operators	**10,712**	**12,584**	**17.5%**
Principal Operator	4,646	4,777	2.8%
Percentage of all Operators	*43%*	*38%*	--
Full Owners	3,992	2,574	-35.5%
Part Owners	483	529	9.5%
Tenants	171	1,674	878.9%

New Mexico has a diverse group of agricultural operators that somewhat reflects the racial and ethnic composition of the state. When looking at ethnicity, approximately 13,195 operators (36 percent of all operators) were Spanish/Hispanic/ Latino. (See Exhibit 16.) The number of Spanish/Hispanic/ Latino operators grew by about 48 percent between 2007 and 2012, and the percentage of these operators of all agricultural operators increased from 29 to 36 percent over the period. This group experienced the largest and fastest growth of any other minority ethnic or racial group. Spanish/Hispanic/Latino operators are more likely to be principal operators than other groups; 71 percent were the principal operator of the farm in 2012. While the number of principal operators increased, the percentage of Spanish/Hispanic/ Latino principal operators decreased. The majority of Spanish/Hispanic/Latino principal operators were also full owners of the farm that they operated.

16 Operator Statistics-Ethnicity & Race New Mexico, 2007 and 2012

	2007	2012	Pct Chg 07-12
All Operators	**31,201**	**37,166**	**19.1%**
Principal Operators	20,930	24,721	18.1%
Percentage of all Operators	*67%*	*67%*	--
Spanish/Hispanic/Latino	**8,904**	**13,195**	**48.2%**
Principal Operator	6,475	9,377	44.8%
Percentage of all Operators	*73%*	*71%*	--
Full Owners	4,621	7,010	51.7%
Part Owners	1,854	2,262	22.0%
Tenants	300	475	58.3%
All Races (Principal Operators)	**20,930**	**24,721**	**18.1%**
American Indian	4,493	5,202	15.8%
Asian	26	29	11.5%
Black/African American	50	39	-22.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	13	9	-30.8%
White	16,234	19,293	18.8%
More than One Race	114	149	30.7%
American Indian**	**6,611**	**7,439**	**12.5%**
Principal Operator	4,493	5,202	15.8%
Percentage of all Operators	*68%*	*70%*	--
Full Owners	4,228	877	-79.3%
Part Owners	147	610	315.0%
Tenants	118	3,715	3048.3%

** Note that large variations are likely changes in data collection methodology and reporting between the two censuses.

New Mexico also has a large percentage of American Indian farm operators. Exhibit 16 highlights American Indian operators. About 20 percent of all farm operators were American Indian (or Alaskan Native) in 2012. This is a slight decrease from 21 percent in 2007. The number of American Indian farm operators increased by 12.5 percent. As with Spanish/Hispanic/Latino operators, American Indian operators were more likely to be principal operators; as of 2012, 70 percent were principal operators of the farm on which they were employed, and American Indian principal operators represented 21 percent of all principal operators. American Indian operators, however, are more likely to be tenants as opposed to full or part owners. Finally, American Indian operators are more likely to be women than other racial groups. As of 2012, 40 percent of all American Indian operators were women, compared to 38 percent across all racial groups.

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions is aware of the obligation to provide services to its customers in their dominant and/or preferred language of communication. Every Workforce Connection Center has two to three Spanish-English bilingual staff persons available to ensure assistance is provided as needed. The Farmington Workforce Connection Center has a Navajo-English bilingual staff person available to provide assistance as needed.

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions has been staffed with a full-time Monitor Advocate as of April 22, 2004. The Las Cruces Workforce Connection Center and the Deming Workforce Connection Center are the only designated “significant” and “bilingual” offices for PY16 - PY19. The Las Cruces Outreach Worker conducts outreach in Dona Ana County (Las Cruces/Hatch) and Luna County.

2. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

See E.2.A. below.

A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES.

Contacting Farmworkers The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions will continue to conduct the MSFW Outreach Program through personal contact with MSFW’s through farm labor contractors, community groups, labor camps, churches, employers and schools. MSFW groups will be visited at their worksites during a convenient time. The outreach worker will include face-to-face contact while they are employed in the fields weeding, thinning crops, transplanting and harvesting various crops throughout New Mexico.

New Mexico plans to contact approximately 1,000 MSFWs during PY16. In the event an outreach worker is assigned to work at least half-time from the Deming Workforce Connection office, the number of MSFWs contacts could approach 1, 000 to 1,500. During the peak harvest period (May-November), the outreach worker will perform outreach services five days per week. The rest of the year the outreach duties will be limited to three times per week. Another goal is to establish formal cooperative agreements with agencies that have direct and daily contact with MSFWs and their families.

The outreach policy of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions is to inform MSFWs of the entire gamut of services that are available. Publications concerning Job Service information, UI information and health and safety procedures are handed to MSFWs at the time of initial contact and periodically thereafter.

B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH WORKERS. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS

WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM, INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWS IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

The following is a revised response.

Wagner-Peyser has an outreach worker who supports the MSFW program. The outreach worker, as well as the State Monitor Advocate, is included in all trainings provided to Employment Services staff. The trainings include information on one-stop center services, such as availability of referrals to training, supportive services, career services, specific employment opportunities, as well as the employment service complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and farmworker rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

The outreach worker and State Monitor Advocate also attend conferences, such as national, regional and State Monitor Advocate conferences to obtain the most current information related to the MSFW program, and to collaborate and learn from other states serving the MSFWs.

C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES.

The following is a revised response.

The outreach policy of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions is to inform MSFWs of the entire array of services available across core programs through the local one-stop centers. The outreach worker often goes out into the field to talk to farmworkers about their employment concerns and needs and provides Employment Services notices to farmworkers to inform them of available services in the one-stop centers and similar offices in the surrounding area.

The types of services the outreach worker and State Monitor Advocate provide to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop centers include:

- Assistance with getting farmworkers registered in the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System, the state's employment exchange system described earlier in the state plan.
- The provision of publications on initial contact regarding Job Service information, UI information, and health and safety procedures, on initial contact and periodically thereafter.
- Identification of UI eligibility issues and providing meaningful assistance to farmworkers with filing UI claims.

- The provision of information to farmworkers regarding basic summary of farm worker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.
- Displaying all required posters informing farmworkers of their rights with respect to terms and conditions of employment for farmworker clients visiting this office.
- Offering Agricultural Spanish Workshops to farmworkers to explain all services provided by the local one-stop centers. Agricultural Employer Forums are offered to all agricultural employers and are provided in English/Spanish.

- Coordinating services and referrals between the WIOA and Wagner Peyser programs as these programs are co-located in most local offices as a way to provide the entire gamut of available services to MSFWs.
- Reaching out to farmworkers on their jobs, at their homes, and other gathering places to encourage them to visit the local one-stop centers to obtain employment and/or training services.

D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

The following is a revised response.

The training for the State merit staff outreach worker is conducted by the NMDWS in-house Training Department. The outreach worker and the State Monitor Advocate are included in all trainings provided to Employment Services staff. The trainings are geared towards both how to best serve jobseekers, as well as employers. As mentioned previously, the trainings include information on one-stop center services, including availability of referrals to training, supportive services, career services, and specific employment opportunities, as well as training on the employment service complaint system, and information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and farmworker rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

The trainings related to how to provide employers with high-quality services is conducted by NMDWS Training Department staff for Employment Services and Business Services staff, which includes the outreach worker for MSFW and the State Monitor advocate. The training covers how to serve employers' needs related to:

- job postings and candidate referrals;
- recruitment/hiring services;
- assessments (ProveIt, WorkKeys etc.), including position profiling;
- on-site hiring events;
- outreach to employers to assess needs for services, including providing proposals on and services to meet needs;
- reporting in compliance with USDOL requirements; and
- use of the NM Workforce Connection Online System, the state's labor exchange system.

The outreach worker and State Monitor Advocate also attend conferences, such as national, regional and State Monitor Advocate conferences to obtain the most current information related to the MSFW program, and specifically, the MAFO, Inc. Conference to collaborate and learn from other states serving the MSFWs regarding both jobseeker and employer needs. These conferences also allow an opportunity for State merit staff to network with and hear the needs of employers who also attend them.

E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS.

OUTREACH COORDINATION. The Las Cruces Outreach Worker will continue to maintain ongoing contact with the following organizations that provide services in and around Dona Ana and Luna

counties: Home Education Livelihood Program, Inc. (HELP-NM), Motivation Education & Training, Inc. (MET), NM Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the DWS Collaborative Agencies quarterly meetings by the on-site managers. These meetings include agencies such as Ben Archer Health Clinics, SNM Legal Aid, Tierra del Sol Housing Corporation, El Paso Workforce Solutions Borderplex, Motivation Education Training, Inc. (MET), New Mexico State University, University of New Mexico, UT El Paso, Home Education Livelihood Program-New Mexico, Inc. (HELP-NM), and the Farm Labor Contractors Coordinated Enforcement through the annual Agricultural Employer Forum in which the outreach worker will be exposed to all kinds of training relating to the agricultural community.

Some of the resources available to the MSFW program in identifying agricultural employers include county extension agent offices, New Mexico Agricultural Statistics Services, New Mexico Department of Agricultural, New Mexico State University and the New Mexico Chili Association.

3. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM.

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

(A) PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

I. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS;

II. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES.

ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. Significant local office efforts will plan to make a concerted outreach effort to contact agricultural employers who are expected to utilize migrant and seasonal farmworkers. The number of agricultural employers to be contacted for job openings by significant Workforce Connection Centers will be approximately 25 agricultural employers, as many of the agricultural employers do not routinely utilize the services provided by the local offices. However efforts will be made to increase the number of employers providing job openings. The significant Workforce Connection Centers in the area are expected to register approximately 1,500 MSFWs.

Other services that will be provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop centers include:

- Providing of information to farmworkers explaining the services available at the local one-stop centers.
- Providing Employment Services notices to farmworkers at their initial point of contact and as needed, to inform them of all services available in the Workforce Connection Centers and similar offices in the surrounding area.
- Conducting interviews of farmworkers on a one-on-one basis and/or in groups.
- Providing farmworker assistance with completing necessary forms and explanation of the importance of retaining work related documents, as well as the purpose of those documents.

- Coordinating, facilitating, and cosponsoring the Work Search Skills Enhancement Program (WSSEP) which includes New Mexico Legal Aid, Texas Legal Aid, and USDOL Wage & Hour, to benefit MSFWs and their families.
- Expanding the concept of MSFWs to include services for the whole family, and thus adopting and implementing a holistic approach to MSFW needs and issues.
- Providing farmworkers with a basic summary of farm worker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.
- Providing all required posters informing farmworkers of their rights with respect to terms and conditions of employment for farmworker clients visiting this office. Farm Labor Contractors are supplied with all required Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Protection Act posters for posting at job sites for viewing by their employees.
- Offering Agricultural Spanish Workshops to farmworkers to explain all services provided by the local one-stop centers. Agricultural Employer Forums are offered to all agricultural employers and are provided in English/Spanish to explain all services provided at the local one-stop center.
- Providing informational pamphlets in English and Spanish.
- Coordinating services and referrals between the WIOA and Wagner Peyser programs as these programs are co-located in most local offices to provide the entire gamut of services that are available to MSFWs.
- Urging those farmworkers who have been reached through the State's outreach efforts by the outreach worker at their working, living and gathering locations to go to the local one-stop center to obtain a full range of employment and training services.

WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth providers and Wagner-Peyser staff both have a full-time presence in most of the local offices. For instance, the Southwest Region coordinates WIOA Title 1 section 167 efforts with the the region's provider, Home Education Livelihood Program-New Mexico (HELP-NM), which is is located in both significant offices (Las Cruces WCC and Deming WCC). This allows referrals to be made easily and services to be provided through comprehensive one-on-one service. Outreach efforts will also be coordinated with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups, as well as with the WIOA programs.

The Southwestern Area Local Workforce Development Board has a goal to establish objectives and action steps that serve the workforce needs of employers and job seekers. The key objectives are to:

- offer WIOA services to agricultural employer and job seekers;
- enhance and cultivate a network of organizations whose mission and target population is similar with WIOA and Wagner-Peyser;
- coordinate employment and training services that are offered at the workforce centers and with other training programs, such as the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program and WIOA Sec. 167 grantees from New Mexico and El Paso, Texas;
- participate in the agricultural outreach planning and services with other programs and organizations, such as, the Annual Agricultural Employer Conference and Farmworker Forum;
- participate in establishing annual measurable goals with the workforce partners for the delivery of services;
- participate in the reporting performance measures and outcomes;
- monitor the effectiveness of the Welcome Function with agricultural employers and job seekers, through the local workforce board's one-stop operator; and

- work with the State Monitor Advocate to identify the strengths and weaknesses of systems and services at the local level.

(B) MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM. The employment service complaint system will be marketed to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups and Employment Services notices, which include information on the employment service complaint system, will be provided to them. The Workforce Connection Centers (i.e. local one-stops) will assist MSFWs in filing complaints (both Job Service and non-Job Service related), and reporting apparent violations when necessary. Wagner-Peyser staff will attend any meetings sponsored by farmworker advocacy groups and, not only inform attendees of services available to the farmworker community through the Workforce Connection Centers, but also provide detailed information on the employment service complaint system.

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) maintains interagency cooperation with all state, federal enforcement and complaint resolution. The SMA evaluates all local office complaint records and logs for accurate timely processing and complaint resolution. The SMA also ensures bilingual complaint posters are strategically displaced in all proper locations. These posters include the State Monitor Advocate's name, address and phone number.

The MSFW program will continue to educate about, explain, and promote the Job Service and non-Job Service complaint system to the MSFWs and agricultural employers to ensure the utilization by both farmworkers and agricultural employers.

(C) MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

The following is a revised response.

H2A allows U.S. employers to bring and hire workers from another country. The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) is used by the local offices to prove that the U.S. has enough workers to refer and fill the H2A job orders and prevent the displacement of U.S. workers. Employers have to file an ETA-790 form and follow the process through the Foreign Labor Certification Unit to get their job order cleared and approved so the job order can go to the local offices for referral and job placement.

The State makes efforts to market the ARS to agricultural employers to improve its publicity. For instance, State staff do file searches in the system for qualified applicants and conduct outreach to such applicants via letters and phone calls to notify them of job openings. State staff work with employers to fill job orders and match applicants to their job descriptions and skills requirements.

4. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

(A) COLLABORATION

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA

intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

The following is a revised response.

- The PY 2016 Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) was developed in coordination with various stakeholders, including NMDWS and the American Job Centers who serve MSFWs on New Mexico.
- NMDWS has informal agreements with community partners and MSFW service providers including an NFJP grantee as follows.
    - HELP New Mexico (the NFJP grantee),
    - Motivation, Employment and Training (MET) El Paso,
    - Las Cruces ISD,
    - Dona Ana Community College, and
    - local health and housing organizations,
- NMDWS will work to expand these partnerships over the next four years to build upon and increase collaboration with new and existing partners to improve and increase services to MSFWs.

(B) REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT.

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT. The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) prepared the PY 2016 Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). The SMA coordinated the organizing, planning and writing of the AOP, with input from the Las Cruces and Deming WCCs. This plan was placed online at website: www.dws.state.nm.us for public comment and feedback was solicited from the following:

- Home Education Livelihood Program, Inc.-New Mexico-167.
- Migrant - Department of Education • Department of Agriculture
- All agencies that serve the MSFW population have been given information at the DWS Agencies meeting.
- The AOP was posted for a 30-day comment period on the NMDWS website. No formal comments were received.

(C) DATA ASSESSMENT.

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

DATA ASSESSMENT. In assessing New Mexico's Labor Exchange Agricultural Reporting System (LEARS) for PY11 to PY-14, New Mexico has met all five Equity Service Level Indicators and all seven Minimum Service Level Indicators for PY-11 to PY-14.

(D) ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS. As stated before, a working relationship exists with the Home Education Livelihood Program-New Mexico (167-HELP-NM), Legal Services of Southern New Mexico and La Clinica de Familia to ensure coordination of efforts and to respond to the local needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

The MSFW program will promote Employment Services available to employers by participating in employer conferences, workshops and seminars that respond to the needs of the agricultural community in a general and the migrant and seasonal farmworker population in particular.

We will continue to educate about, explain, and promote the Job Service and non-Job Service complaint system to the MSFWs and agricultural employers to ensure the utilization by both MSFWs and agricultural employers.

(E) STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the Agricultural Outreach Plan.

F. WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); Yes

2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers; Yes

3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and Yes

4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. Yes

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

New Mexico has adopted the Common Core Standards for its K–12 school system. The New Mexico Higher Education Department has adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) developed by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education at the U.S. Department of Education to align with the Common Core. We have purchased courseware for use in the classroom and online that currently aligns with the Common Core and iNACOL standards. We estimate that a completed detailed alignment with the CCRS will be completed by April, 2016.

Our professional development will ensure teacher preparation in all levels of pedagogy that run from introducing material, to basic questioning, to advanced technology item types, to unit level activities that require learners to demonstrate a higher level of understanding having them write responses that combine calculations with explanations and integrated knowledge from other areas. This professional development is built on “Standards to Action” developed by OCTAE to support excellence in teaching in the CCRS environment and to help teachers prepare students for the Webb’s Depth of Knowledge measures used in all three major High School Equivalency tests. The combination of courseware and professional development is aimed at training teachers to develop and deliver hybrid courses aligned with the CCRS, the new High School Equivalency tests, and preparation to enter postsecondary education and career pathways.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide the adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of local activities.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- Workforce preparation activities; or
- Integrated education and training that—

1. Provides adult education and literacty activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Competitive Process: The New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) is the State's eligible agency for administering Adult Education and Literacy programs under WIOA. NMHED will award multi-year grants on a competitive basis to eligible providers within the state to develop, implement, and improve adult education and literacy activities under WIOA. The subgrant Request for Proposals (RFP) process will follow state procurement rules and federal guidelines under WIOA and will take place in spring, 2017. The New Mexico Higher Education Department will award funding to local providers beginning July 1, 2017 for a four year cycle which applies to all local grant recipients, with the requirement that each year the local provider submit and extension application to be considered for funding. The RFP process for the next multi-year grant cycle will occur in spring of 2021 for funding to begin July 1, 2021. Funding will be used to provide services in all four workforce board regions. The amount of funding allocated to each provider will be determined by a formula which takes into account the literacy needs of the local service area, the number of participants served, and core performance indicators under WIOA. The RFP process for program year 2017-18 will follow these steps: • February 2017: NMHED publishes NOFA and RFP aligned with New Mexico Combined State Plan • February-March 2017: NMHED provides technical assistance to inquiries from eligible potential providers. NMHED recruits candidates for reviewing committee to score AEFLA grant proposals. • March 2017: AEFLA grant proposals due at NMHED. • March-April 2017: Review committee reviews and scores grant proposals. • April 2017: NMHED reviews budgets and other grant requirements to rank RFP responses according to scores. • April-May 2017: NMHED announces eligible providers that will receive funding. • July 1 2017: AEFLA providers begin 4-year grant cycle of programming and funding. NMHED will not distribute any new federal funds for a funding cycle without a statewide public Notification of Funding Availability (NOFA) and RFP. The NOFA will be advertised statewide and sent to all known eligible service providers. The NOFA announcement and the RFP will cover all funding categories and programs available for current year distribution. Any announcement will be contingent upon State Plan approval by U. S. Departments of Labor and Education. The NOFA and RFP will be sent to all requesting parties. All eligible recipients for WIOA sections 225, 231, and/or 243 will be allowed the same opportunity to apply for funds regardless of the priorities they address and will follow the same RFP process. The funding set aside for Integrated English literacy and civics education (IEL/Civics) will be distributed in a separate RFP process. The process will be the same, and the program-specific content and criteria for evaluation will be specific to the WIOA requirements for IEL/Civics education programs. Demonstrated effectiveness: Demonstrated effectiveness of eligible providers' proposals will be determined by performance data related to the provider's record of improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the State's RFP for grants to eligible providers. To demonstrate effectiveness, eligible providers will include in their proposal at least two years of credible data recording outcomes serving the goals under Title II of WIOA; at least two years of the provider's annual independent audits for fiscal responsibility; and cost-benefit analyses for the two years preceding grant proposal. Direct and equitable access. NMHED will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds, and it will ensure that it is using the same grant announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers by using this process: • Using the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and Request for Proposals (RFP) process described under "multi-year grants and contracts"; • Issuing public notice through these venues: o Publication of the NOFA, including instructions for receiving a copy of the RFP, in the Albuquerque Journal, a newspaper with statewide circulation; o Mailing a copy of the NOFA to all existing adult education and family literacy services;

and o Publication of the NOFA and RFP on the NMHED website; • Sending a copy of the RFP to all who request it; • Following the State's procurement process as it is applicable to grants. Should additional funding become available in the case of the withdrawal of a provider during the term of a grant, the same process will be used to provide services in the applicable service area and it will be open to all eligible agencies throughout the state; and • Using the same process for IEL/Civics grant competitions. All applicants eligible under Sections 225, 231, and 243 of WIOA will submit applications directly to NMHED, the eligible agency. They will not be required to apply through another agency or agencies in a multi-tiered process. The application process is designed so that direct application to NMHED is clearly evident and nonnegotiable. Direct application is the norm, regardless of whether an applicant would be considered a grantee or a contractor. NMHED requires all eligible providers for sections 225, 231, and/or 243 to use the same application process. This ensures that all applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria. NMHED ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants or contracts. It also ensures that the same grant or contract announcement, application, and proposal process is used for all eligible providers through the grant management system. During the initial period of the grant submission process, any eligible agency that contacts NMHED with an interest in participating will be provided the information needed. NMHED believes that these approaches meet the requirements specified in AEFLA and is satisfied that every effort is made to ensure direct and equitable access. Pre–application Technical Assistance: Prior to any RFP, the NMHED may conduct a pre–application technical assistance conference for potential applicants. An invitation to attend the conference will be attached to the NOFA and RFP. Additionally, the state Adult Education Director, serving as the program officer, will respond in writing to individual questions and clarify the application instructions as requested. All questions and their responses will be made available to all NOFA and RFP recipients. General Proposal Requirements: All proposals must be submitted by the deadline shown in the RFP. Each applicant organization shall submit an application to the NMHED according to the instructions contained in the RFP. Any application not including all the information and assurances required will be deemed non–responsive and rejected. The NMHED will forward all responsive applications to the local workforce board in the region from which they applied for review and comment on their alignment with the regional WIOA plan. Each application must include the information and assurances specified in the instructions, including the following: • A description of how the funds awarded under AEFLA will be spent; • A description of any cooperative or co–enrollment arrangements the eligible provider has with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of Adult Education and literacy activities; • Performance data sufficient to determine demonstrated effectiveness; • Copies of audit reports for the preceding two years; • A description of how the applicant will provide services in alignment with the local plan, including how the applicant will promote concurrent enrollment in programs under Title I of WIOA, as appropriate; • A description of how the applicant will meet the State adjusted levels of performance, including how the applicant will collect data to report on such performance indicators; • A description of how the applicant will fulfill one–stop partner responsibilities as described in WIOA; • A description of how the applicant will provide services in a manner that meets the needs of eligible individuals; • Information that addresses the considerations listed under "General Criteria for Evaluation Grant Proposals" (below); Activities to be funded: • Assurance that funds awarded under AEFLA will be used to provide, establish, or operate one or more programs that provide services or instruction in one or more of the following categories: o Adult Education—academic instruction and educations services below the postsecondary level that include an individual's ability to – Read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its equivalent; – Transition to postsecondary education and training; and – Obtain employment. o Literacy—the ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family, and in society. o Workplace Adult Education and literacy activities—Adult Education and literacy activities in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or off–site location that is designed to improve

the productivity of the workforce. o Family literacy activities—activities of sufficient intensity and quality to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and that better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities: – Parent or family Adult Education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self–sufficiency; – Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children; – Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children; and – Age–appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences. – No funds under this grant may be used for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for Adult Education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals. o English language acquisition activities—a program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language and that leads to – Attainment of a secondary school diploma or its equivalent and • Transition to postsecondary education and training; or • Employment. o Integrated English literacy and civics (Section 243) activities—education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables them to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training. IELCE funding will be awarded under a separate RFP following the same process as the Adult Education and English Language Acquisition RFP. IELCE proposers are required to describe their civics curriculum and instructional materials and how they align with OCTAE's Employability Skills framework or other widely accepted national employability skills framework. Proposers are required to describe how their curricula and instructional materials will be aligned to the national employability skills framework they will be using and how they are based on industry standards. Section 243 applicants are required to describe their relationships with workforce and economic development boards and systems and local employers and how those relations ships will support integrated education and training for speakers of languages other than English, including professionals with credentials and degrees in their native countries. o Workforce preparation activities—activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self–management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment. o Integrated education and training—a service approach that provides Adult Education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. This includes offering courses in collaboration with community colleges that are team–taught by and Adult Education basic skills teacher and a career/technical teacher. Scope, Content, and Organization of funded Local Activities: The State is in the process of implementing the College and Career Readiness Standards. All adult education and English Language Acquisition activities listed above will be based on the CCRS. In their proposals all applicants will be required to describe their two-year plans for supporting the implementation of these standards in their proposed activities, including • How they will address professional development needs of all instructors; • Their plans for selecting or developing curriculum and

instructional materials aligned to these standards; • Monitoring their program progress and ongoing technical assistance needs; and • Providing ongoing technical assistance to their instructors. In addition, all applicants seeking to be funded for workplace education and literacy activities, workforce preparation activities, or integrated education and training activities must show that their contextualized curriculum and instructional materials will be aligned with OCTAE's Employability Skills framework or a comparable national framework. The occupational training component must be based on industry standards. General Criteria for Evaluating Grant Proposals A review team selected by NMHED staff based on published criteria will evaluate the proposals. Each evaluator will complete and evaluation form for each applicant. The scores assigned each proposal by each evaluator will be retained and available for public review upon request. The names of each evaluator will be kept confidential. The NMHED will consider at least the following criteria in deciding to award the funds available under AEFLA. Within the narrative portion of the application, proposers must provide narrative detail to demonstrate how they will meet each Section 231(e) consideration described below. • The degree to which the applicant would be responsive to – o Regional needs as identified under the local plan; and o Serving individuals in the community who were identified in the local plan as most in need of Adult Education and literacy activities, including individuals who – Have low levels of literacy skills; or – Are English language learners; • The ability of the applicant to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities; • Past effectiveness of the applicant in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to me State–adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in WIOA, especially with respect to those who have low levels of literacy; • The extent to which the applicant demonstrates alignment between proposed activities and services with the strategy and goals of the local plan, and the activities and services of the one–stop partners; • Whether the applicant's program – o Is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and o Uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction and align with the College and Career Readiness Standards; • Whether the applicant's activities, including whether reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition delivered by the applicant, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice; • Whether the applicant's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education, in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance; • Whether the applicant's activities provide learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that the individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self–sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; • Whether the applicant's activities are delivered by well–trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means; • Whether the applicant's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce investment boards, one–stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community–based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways; • Whether the applicant's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including those with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs; • Whether the applicant maintains a high–quality information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with the requirements of WIOA) and to monitor program performance; and • Whether the local areas in which the eligible provider is

situated have a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs. Distribution of funding The amount of funding to be made available in each program year to each eligible provider will be determined by a funding formula that takes into consideration the number of eligible individuals served, the need of the eligible provider's service area, and the performance of the eligible provider's program or programs. The funding formula is determined by the NMHED in consultation with Adult Education program directors and financial officers from the eligible provider organizations. Special Rule Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

SPECIAL RULE

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the State will establish and operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of Title II, subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

a. Adult education and literacy activities;
b. Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
c. Secondary school credit;
d. Integrated education and training;
e. Career pathways;
f. Concurrent enrollment;
g. Peer tutoring; and
h. Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional

institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The State uses the same grant announcement and application process for Section 225 funds as it does for Section 231 funds, including the same methods of ensuring direct and equitable access, the same rubric and scoring criteria, and the 13 considerations specified in Section 231(e) of WIOA as part of the review criteria. The New Mexico State Department of Corrections (NMSDC) provides educational services for six satellite facilities. These are located in the following counties: Dona Ana (Southern Correctional), Valencia (Central New Mexico Correctional), Lincoln (Fort Stanton), Santa Fe (Penitentiary of New Mexico), Chavez (Roswell Correctional) and Cibola (Western New Mexico Correctional). Combined, these facilities serve all custody levels. The NMSDC provides educational oversight services to three privately contracted prisons within the state; however, it has no obligations to the county jails. Inmates from the three private prisons and Torrance County Correctional Facility filter into the corrections system on a regular basis. The state's total inmate population averages around 5,000 per month. The Corrections Education Department serves approximately 1,100 inmates per day in all facilities. The NMSDC Education Bureau seeks to develop an effective continuum of vocational education programming between the Corrections Department and the community at large. This includes collaboration with post–release programs throughout the state. Funds are also used to provide staff development to improve teaching strategies in the prisons. The inmate population qualifies as "hardest to serve," and the Bureau stresses family literacy, basic literacy, and HSE completion as it relates to transitioning to postsecondary education and training and to gaining employment after release. The Bureau has developed agreements with postsecondary institutions to provide college courses remotely. In addition, one of the focal educational programs of the Education Bureau is the "Inmate–to–¬Work" program. This recidivism reduction initiative provides comprehensive instruction in employability skills, work maturity skills, and life skills that help inmates link to community resources once released. Students are encouraged to work on their vocational goals as they work towards their High School Equivalency credential. Vocational programs provide employability skills as well. Students learn basic mathematics and reading skills and apply them to trades. These classes include construction and automotive trades, computer repair, horticulture, culinary arts, and small engine repair. The Bureau is establishing comprehensive certification programs that will recognize and record labor market skills. In this way, the time spent in a correctional facility will serve to advance the student's work goals. Through AE funding, inmates can enroll in basic education programs and attain prevocational skills. Inmates receiving Adult Education instruction often have a wide variety of behavior problems, including, but not limited to anger management problems, learning problems, and emotional problems. The Bureau has a special education population within AE classes that has additional needs. Therefore, the student/teacher ratio is lower than in other programs. New Mexico's correctional facilities are governed in part by The Inmate Literacy Act (ILA)—a New Mexico State Statute. The ILA mandates that inmates with greater than eighteen months and less than ten years on their sentence must be programmed into education classes if they do not have their High School Equivalency credentials. The Act provides adults who are incarcerated the opportunity to enhance their basic literacy skills and work towards their HSEs. Approximately 85% (4,250) of New Mexico's prison inmates qualify for services under the Act. The Education Bureau gives a priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. These inmates are housed in a variety of facilities according to their custody classification level. Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ESTABLISH AND OPERATE INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 243 OF WIOA, FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WHO ARE ADULTS, INCLUDING PROFESSIONALS WITH DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS IN THEIR NATIVE COUNTRIES.

The State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs in conjunction with English Language Acquisition (ELA) programs delivered by local providers. Eligibility is established for students in the same way it is for all Adult Education students, regardless of degree or credential attainment. In New Mexico, most English Language Learners are native to the State, some are immigrants, some are refugees, and some have degrees or professional certifications from their countries of origin. The State will leverage past EL/Civics successes to meet the new requirements under WIOA. The State's RFP application for IELCE Section 243 funds will require applicants to describe how they plan to provide literacy, English language acquisition and civics education concurrently and contextually and in combination with integrated education and training. The proposed activities and budget will be reviewed by the State to ensure that they meet all statutory requirements. Typically, eligible providers deliver the classroom (English language acquisition and civics education) instruction to a specific cohort of students, while partnering with another nonprofit or social entrepreneurial organization that then provides or coordinates timely and well-aligned occupational skills training, as appropriate, for particular participants from that cohort of students. For example, an adult education program at a community college partners with a local refugee training center to work with newly arrived refugee women. In this example, the college would provide contextualized English language acquisition instruction that includes general employability, workplace, and financial vocabulary as well as instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. The curriculum includes an overview of important dates/events in U.S. history and their significance to current events. It also includes an overview of the U.S. government at the federal, State, and local levels. Local officials periodically present to classrooms and students have opportunities to observe government in action at such proceedings as legislative, court, and local government hearings, . As appropriate, the training center provides hands-on training and skill building opportunities to practice important interactions with coworkers and supervisors.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL FUND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE II, SUBTITLE C, INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION SERVICES AND HOW THE FUNDS WILL BE USED FOR THOSE SERVICES.

IELCE funding will be competed and awarded under a separate RFP following the same process as the Section 225 and 243 RFP. This ensures that all applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria. The agency ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants or contracts. It also ensures that the same grant or contract announcement, application, and proposal process is used for all eligible providers through the grant management system. During the initial period of the grant submission process, any eligible agency that contacts the agency with an interest in participating will be provided the information needed. The agency believes that these approaches meet the requirements specified in AEFLA and is satisfied that every effort is made to ensure direct and equitable access. The agency uses the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA to fund eligible providers by incorporating each of the considerations into

the narrative portion of the application. The agency attaches a point-based scoring rubric weighting each of the considerations. Applicants must provide narrative detail to demonstrate how they will meet each consideration. IELCE proposers are required to describe their civics curriculum and instructional materials and how they align with OCTAE's Employability Skills framework or other widely accepted national employability skills framework. Proposers are required to describe how their curricula and instructional materials will be aligned to the national employability skills framework they will be using and how they are based on industry standards. Applicants are required to describe their relationships with workforce and economic development boards and local employers and how those relations ships will support integrated education and training for speakers of languages other than English, including professionals with credentials and degrees in their native countries.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA.

Consistent with Section 223, the NMHED has prioritized the following state leadership activities:

The alignment of Adult Education and literacy activities with other core programs and one–stop partners, including eligible providers, to implement the strategy identified in the unified State plan under section 102 or the combined State plan under section 103, including the development of career pathways to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in Adult Education and literacy activities.

Adult Education leadership will maintain membership and participate in the State and regional Workforce Investment Boards. In addition, each local Adult Education provider will convene a broad based Advisory Board from the community it serves. These boards will include members from local businesses, education institutions, one–stops, criminal justice, and other stakeholders in the education of adults and their preparation for career pathways in service of local needs.

Effective alignment among core programs and one–stop partners also requires an interoperable data infrastructure. By March of 2016, the NMHED and DWS will begin a concerted effort to make interagency data systems interoperable by launching a pilot test of a system to facilitate case management and cross–agency reporting in one of New Mexico's four workforce development regions. Three Adult Education providers and three one–stop centers in the Eastern region will participate. The pilot will be evaluated, and its outcome will determine next steps.

Local providers will continue to develop their relationships with business partners by collaborating to provide workplace literacy and English language acquisition instruction and to provide shorter term workplace based projects using mutually developed syllabi to enhance basic workplace skills not necessarily solely based on literacy or numeracy.

The NMHED leadership is engaged in active dialogue with business and education leadership throughout the State in an effort to improve the Department's ability to serve business, build the economy, and to develop the potential of the State's residents to participate productively in their communities and in the State's economy. The State director for Adult Education represents the NMHED on the Job Training Incentive Program Board. The JTIP board awards state funds to business to help subsidize training for New Mexico employees, including interns and those being promoted.

The establishment or operation of high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under section 231(b), including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction as such components relate to adults, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, instruction provided by volunteers or by personnel of a State or outlying area, and the dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to such programs.

New Mexico has an Adult Education Professional Development Steering Committee made up of practitioners from throughout the State. They will develop a professional development system focused on improving instruction and local program administration. The goal is that adult education would empower the students with basic literacy and numeracy skills, social and bureaucratic navigation skills, workplace skills, and lifelong learning skills that will lead to career pathways with sustainable, family supporting wages. The approach is aimed at building capacity within the State to provide professional development as required within a structure designed to meet the needs of AE students in a changing economic environment.

The system will use the Office of Technical and Adult Education's research and research–based professional development curricula to help structure its approach. For example, TEAL (Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy) and "Standards to Action" will help guide the alignment of curricula, particularly reading and writing, with College and Career Readiness Standards and the new High School Equivalency assessments. The extensive resources at LINCS (Literacy and Information Communication System), with its resource collection, online learning community, and professional development training offerings, will support the transformation in teaching that must take place to increase AE students' ability to become contributing participants in their communities and shrink their status as clients.

The professional development system will include a mentoring system for directors, data technicians, and instructors throughout the state. Delivery of professional development will be delivered by way of an annual statewide conference jointly sponsored with the New Mexico Adult Education Association, regional conferences, program specific local training, and online training.

The professional development system will be continuously evaluated based on:

• What changes have been made as a result of professional development and

• Whether intended goals have been achieved.

The purpose of professional development is to effect systemic change. Evaluation will be longitudinal and will involve answering these two questions:

• Do the professional development activities alter long term behavior? and

• What professional development activities improve learner performance?

Professional development evaluation will be formative as well as summative. Evaluation results will be used not only to determine which approaches to abandon and which to continue or evolve, but also which practices to disseminate and enhance.

The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of Adult Education and literacy activities receiving funds under this title.

Technical assistance will be provided in the context of the statewide Title II professional development system, pursuant to program monitoring activities, and as needed by individual local providers and one–stop partners based on performance, demographic, or staff changes, including the development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on the most rigorous or scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition programs, distance education, and staff training.

Technical assistance for the dissemination of best practices will occur as part of the professional development system, as part of the program monitoring process, and by State support to present proven and promising practice studies at state and national conferences. To support development of these practices the NMHED will collaborate with WIOA partners in studying and piloting collaborative projects to support WIOA goals for AEFLA–eligible clients.

The role of eligible providers as a one–stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services.

The NMHED will collaborate with other one–stop partners to provide mutual training and reciprocal workshops among their corresponding eligible providers about client need and eligibility as well as the various services offered. These activities will be directed at discovering unserved needs and duplicated services and at developing efficiencies and clearer, more effective role identities among the partners.

Assistance in the use of technology, including staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system effectiveness.

As part of the professional development system, all eligible AEFLA providers will have available to them both hands–on and pedagogical training about the use of technology in the classroom. As part of the effort to make all appropriate Adult Education classes in New Mexico blended distance and face–to–face, the NMHED is providing an online platform aligned with College and Career Readiness Standards and career pathways, with mapping to KeyTrain and O–Net. As the State implements the platform all local providers are trained by the publisher and, pedagogically, by master teachers, both in the use of the technology and in developing and delivering classes using it.

To improve workforce system effectiveness, the NMHED and the DWS are collaborating in a pilot to begin in March, 2016, to test the effectiveness of a system that provides interoperability among legacy state agency databases. Depending upon the outcome of the pilot, the core programs would share the cost of implementing the system or another that better fulfills New Mexico's needs.

The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in Adult Education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the State.

All monitoring activities described in this plan are designed to evaluate and improve the quality of Adult Education and literacy activities by improving student learning. They are overseen by a Program Improvement Coordinator in the State AE Division in collaboration with an Operations Research Analyst who provides data analysis to support decisions about program improvement activities. The Program Improvement Coordinator works with the New Mexico Adult Education Association and the Professional Development Steering Committee to disseminate information about models of proven or promising practices throughout the State.

Dissemination of information about proven and promising models of practice is disseminated at an annual statewide conference for adult education professionals and during ongoing local program monitoring and evaluation processes.

Funds will also be used to maintain a statewide performance accountability system that includes the following components:

• Maintenance of a statewide management information system;

• Core performance indicators and other quality program indicators;

• Performance measures for each indicator;

• A system for evaluating the effectiveness of Adult Education and literacy activities based on the performance measures;

• On–going needs assessment; and

• Identifying promising practices

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE.

Permissible leadership activities will be carried out in coordination with the required activities above. They will be carried out by building capacity for statewide leadership in the interest of moving students toward successful, productive lives and into career pathways appropriate to their skills and interests. These activities will include;

• Providing technology assistance and training in the use of technology by:

o Teaching basic computer and internet skills, including media literacy skills;

o Teaching workplace technology skills in the context of career pathways;

o Offering training in the use of technology for distance education;

o Providing curricular platforms for hybrid learning in preparation for High School Equivalency testing and transition to postsecondary education and training or career pathway entry.

• Continuing to develop linkages with postsecondary educational institutions, including community colleges. We have the advantage of being administered by the State's Higher Education Department. This administrative connection provides us with opportunities to continue to integrate basic skills instruction with career technical training. We will do this by:

o Bringing to scale team–taught integrated basic education and skills training and

o Enhancing New Mexico's statutory dual credit system to include adult education students.

• Integrating literacy instruction and occupational training, including promoting linkages with employers by

o Forming relationships with employers and providing workplace literacy instruction and

o Providing customized workplace based project learning.

To enhance employee retention and opportunity for advancement:

• Coordinating support services, such as child care, transportation and counseling and coordination with one–stop support services to enhance student retention and success.

• Developing other statewide activities that support Adult Education and literacy to include areas of technical assistance or support, professional development and program performance enhancement in general.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

Effectiveness of state and local agencies in attaining the levels of performance of the core indicators shown below are a major focus of the evaluation process. Both quantitative and qualitative data are reported by local service providers to ensure continuous program improvement and to ensure the core performance indicators are met. All service providers submit annual reports to the NMHED that include performance data on each of the core indicators.

Programs are required to enter and maintain performance and demographic data governed by the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS). For this purpose, the eligible agency maintains a web–based database, LACES, from LiteracyPro. The State Adult Education Office provides training to all local provider data technicians and monitors data for accuracy and currency using desk audits and on–site data audits.

Annual program evaluations address the extent to which service providers have implemented each of the required activities specified in Section 223 of the Act and their outcomes in terms of student learning and progress toward careers. Evaluation of programs is conducted annually using the following:

• Measurement of program effectiveness’

• Identification of best practices and emerging needs;

• Identification of staff needs as they relate to program effectiveness; and

• Identification of trends and barriers that affect program outcomes.

The annual evaluation includes data collection of agency and student performance measures. It also includes documentation of improvements in implementing quality indicators in the areas of instruction, partnerships/community involvement and administration.

Local service providers maintain student records that reflect measurable student progress, demographic information, educational history, basic entry–level skills, employment and household income information, and other specified information necessary to measure outcomes. Students are traced by student codes in the management information system (LACES).

Planning meetings are held quarterly to analyze the results of program data and determine future program needs as they relate to program planning and staff development. Staff development needs are identified at least in part by analyzing student achievement by level. Professional development for instructors, support staff, advisors and volunteers is developed based on these identified needs and on projected needs as the State moves forward with initiatives for program improvement.

Monitoring

Monitoring consists of desk audits and program review site visits. The focus is on program effectiveness and continuous improvement as measured by the quality indicators.

The NMHED conducts on–site program evaluation activities to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act, fiscal accountability, quality program operation, and administrative responsibility. On–site reviews are conducted on a two–year rotation. All programs are evaluated through an on–site visit at least biannually for quality and compliance through a site visit and provided with a program improvement plan and technical assistance to improve quality, effectiveness, and performance.

Service providers are required to conduct a self–evaluation prior to the on–site Review using the Site Monitoring Checklist provided. Each program must address areas of need in its annual evaluation report as identified through the on–site evaluation.

The review utilizes a Site Monitoring Checklist developed by the eligible state agency in 2014–2015 and made available to all service providers as a performance guide. On–going professional development training is conducted to ensure that all service providers are knowledgeable of the requirements and procedures.

If, at any time, a program is found to be out of compliance with Federal or State requirements, the provider is placed on probation for up to a year as they fulfill a Corrective Action Plan. Failure to comply with the plan may lead to reduction of removal of funding pursuant to State Adult Education policies and procedures.

Reporting

All local providers are required to submit a semi–annual self–evaluation report by February 15 of each year. These reports include an analysis of performance data for the first half of the program year, descriptions of any new initiatives, promising practices, as well as any issues to be addressed and how that will be done. Local providers also submit an annual report by August 31 of each year. The annual report reflects participation levels and performance for the entire program year.

Local providers are assessed annually based on performance accountability measures for funding purposes. The local programs are funded based on providing assessment and instructional services to students for 40 hours or more (75% of total funding awarded). 20% of funding is awarded based on program improvement over the preceding 3 years, measured by:

• Aggregate gains in educational functioning levels;

• Attainment of High School Equivalency credentials by those who entered without them;

• Entering employment by those who entered the program unemployed;

• Retaining employment by those who entered the program employed; and

• Transition to postsecondary education or training by those who obtained or entered with a High School Equivalency credential.

An additional portion of the 20% performance set–aside is measured based on whether or not the program reached negotiated statewide federal targets.

CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan. Yes

2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program. Yes

3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan. Yes

4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law. Yes

5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan. Yes

6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan. Yes

7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan. Yes

8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program. Yes

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **New Mexico Higher Education Department**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Barbara Damron**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to OCTAE_MAT@ed.gov

ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions). Yes

2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA. Yes

3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA. Yes

4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities; Yes

5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and Yes

6. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Yes

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (GENERAL)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

_____

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meets quarterly, and each member is involved in a minimum of one working committee to assist in the facilitation of SRC goals. The current SRC sub–committees include the Executive Committee, the State Plan/Outcomes Committee, the Memberships, Training and Awards Committee and the Legislative and Outreach Committee. SRC members represent all geographical regions of the state, ethnicities, and most importantly, individuals with disabilities. The Council has provided recommendations to the Division on an on–going basis and as part of its annual reporting process.

SRC Recommendations for 2016:

• The SRC continues to recommend that consistency be achieved in the top administrative positions of NMDVR to provide continuity of management and oversight, and to facilitate continuous staff development and effectiveness.

Agency Response: The agency has filled the positions of Administrative Services Unit Deputy Director and Rehabilitation Services Unit Deputy Director The agency is actively seeking candidates for a Director. NMDVR has prioritized filing vacancies, which includes those in high–level administrative positions.

• The SRC recommends that a designated SRC member be involved as a liaison with the NMDVR committee that works on the MOP that will be updated to ensure compliance with WIOA.

Agency Response: The agency welcomes feedback from the SRC on Manual of Operating Procedures (MOP) updates to ensure compliance with WIOA prior to public hearings on those

updates. The agency also encourages participation by the SRC in promoting public hearings on the MOP.

• The SRC recommend that counselor training or the “Rehab Academy” be re–implemented by NMDVR to ensure that all new VR counselors have a good foundation in the rehabilitation process.

Agency Response: The agency continues to provide the “Rehab Academy” and continues to update content to best meet the needs of new VR Counselors and Rehabilitation Technicians as well as those staff requiring updates. The Academy curriculum is currently being revised and expanded. NMDVR is open to providing the SRC an update on Academy in the coming calendar year. The Academy will also be discussed in the New Mexico Unified State Plan.

• The SRC strongly recommends that NMDVR follow federal requirements for SRC members to review potential Independent Fair Health (Hearing) Officer candidates prior to implementing a contract for services. The SRC further recommends that any new Fair Hearing Officer receive routine training on VR processes and protocols to ensure understanding of the issues presented during the FairHearing process.

Agency Response: NMDVR will ensure that federal requirements for the selections and training of impartial Hearings Officers are followed and SRC review is a part of this process. NMDVR legal department intends to prepare and provide an official training in March of 2016, where several members of different organizations will be invited to participate.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR enhance advertisement of SRC Quarterly Meetings and Public Forums to include the DVR web site (the SRC Section and perhaps on the under HOT TOPICS), as well as the Governor’s website, websites of local collaborates, and sister state agencies; such as the Commission for the Blind, The Governor’s Commission on Disability, and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. These efforts would be in line with the public notices that must be published in advance of each meeting / public forum per the State’s Open Meetings Act.

Agency Response: The agency is willing to enhance promotion of SRC Quarterly Meetings and Public Forums. To the extent the other state agencies are willing, the agency welcomes their assistance in posting notices.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR enhance advertisement of the SRC with quarterly meetings forboth staff and consumers.

Agency Response: NMDVR welcomes ideas from the SRC on enhancement of notifications to staff and participants. Recent reassignments of IS duties as well as a high priority on filling vacancies, will aid in consistency of website updates and email notifications.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR investigate how best to implement and assure shorter application periods for DVR clients who reapply for services after case closure, especially in cases for whom post– employment status is not feasible.

Agency Response: Application for services is a federally mandated and individualized process. NMDVR is not in a position to develop arbitrary procedures to expedite application for former participants that are not being opened under post–employment status. NMDVR does use existing data to determine eligibility whenever feasible.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR evaluate its process for documentation requirements around consumer purchases and services. At this time the public has expressed concern that these processes require unnecessarily exhaustive documentation to justify need, especially when such services are obvious, necessary, and may have been provided to the individual client previously.

Agency Response: NMDVR continues to evaluate purchase documentation requirements and is committed to streamlining processes whenever feasible given legal and accounting principle requirements. Some processes have been put into place as a direct response to findings by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Previous provision of a service to a participant is not a guarantee that the same service will be provided again. Provision of services must consistently be based on their necessity toward employment outcome.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR investigate best practices regarding vendor billing procedures, and that a policy be considered to enhance the communication between the Division and the vendor when there appears to be a problem in order to avoid prolonged timelines of authorization for consumer service delivery.

Agency Response: Fiscal processes involve the state procurement system as a whole. That being said, NMDVR has initiated an extensive project toward improvement of billing procedures and processes. There are currently seven Field Operations Specialists (FOS) whose primary function is to increase accuracy and efficiency in financial transactions related to participant services. The agency intends to increase the number of FOS. These specialists have already increased the agency's capacity to improve communication time and effectiveness with vendors. It is expected that communication and processes with vendors will continue to be enhanced as these specialists become more experienced and additional FOS are hired.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR look into best practices to clarify agency assistance in establishing and maintaining consumers who are pursuing Self–Employment Plans due to the increasing number of requests in this arena. One recommendation on this would be to have a small primer that can be given to DVR clients along with guidelines in setting up Self–Employment Plans while incorporating a soundbusiness plan.

Agency Response: NMDVR continues to review operating procedures related to self–employment plans. Participants developing business plans are routinely referred to the Small Business Administration and Contract business development experts (at agency expense) for assistance in completing a business plan. NMDVR also routinely directs participants to current Manual of Operating Procedure guidance on business plan process. The agency is open to exploring further written guidance that can be available to participants in the future.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR implement a tracking a resolution process that increases the efficacy of addressing common complaints and/ or case reviews specific to an Area Office. The same would hold true with a rise of complaints and / or case reviews in a specific AreaOffice.

Agency Response: NMDVR welcomes the suggestion for a more standardized tracking system and will consider this option.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR increase partnerships statewide and in the local venues with service providers of youth transition, to look for opportunities to work together in order to enhance the ability to meet transition requirements under WIOA.

Agency Response: NMDVR has already implemented a strategy toward increased statewide partnerships including the development of Intergovernmental Agreements and contracts toward accomplishing Pre–Employment Transition Services requirements under WIOA.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meets quarterly, and each member is involved in a minimum of one working committee to assist in the facilitation of SRC goals. The current SRC sub–committees include the Executive Committee, the State Plan/Outcomes Committee, the Memberships, Training and Awards Committee and the Legislative and Outreach Committee. SRC members represent all geographical regions of the state, ethnicities, and most importantly, individuals with disabilities. The Council has provided recommendations to the Division on an on–going basis and as part of its annual reporting process.

SRC Recommendations for 2016:

• The SRC continues to recommend that consistency be achieved in the top administrative positions of NMDVR to provide continuity of management and oversight, and to facilitate continuous staff development and effectiveness.

Agency Response: The agency has filled the positions of Administrative Services Unit Deputy Director and Rehabilitation Services Unit Deputy Director The agency is actively seeking candidates for a Director. NMDVR has prioritized filing vacancies, which includes those in high–level administrative positions.

• The SRC recommends that a designated SRC member be involved as a liaison with the NMDVR committee that works on the MOP that will be updated to ensure compliance with WIOA.

Agency Response: The agency welcomes feedback from the SRC on Manual of Operating Procedures (MOP) updates to ensure compliance with WIOA prior to public hearings on those updates. The agency also encourages participation by the SRC in promoting public hearings on the MOP.

• The SRC recommend that counselor training or the "Rehab Academy" be re–implemented by NMDVR to ensure that all new VR counselors have a good foundation in the rehabilitation process.

Agency Response: The agency continues to provide the "Rehab Academy" and continues to update content to best meet the needs of new VR Counselors and Rehabilitation Technicians as well as those staff requiring updates. The Academy curriculum is currently being revised and expanded. NMDVR is open to providing the SRC an update on Academy in the coming calendar year. The Academy will also be discussed in the New Mexico Unified State Plan.

• The SRC strongly recommends that NMDVR follow federal requirements for SRC members to review potential Independent Fair Health (Hearing) Officer candidates prior to implementing a contract for services. The SRC further recommends that any new Fair Hearing Officer receive routine training on VR processes and protocols to ensure understanding of the issues presented during the FairHearing process.

Agency Response: NMDVR will ensure that federal requirements for the selections and training of impartial Hearings Officers are followed and SRC review is a part of this process. NMDVR legal department intends to prepare and provide an official training in March of 2016, where several members of different organizations will be invited to participate.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR enhance advertisement of SRC Quarterly Meetings and Public Forums to include the DVR web site (the SRC Section and perhaps on the under HOT TOPICS), as well as the Governor's website, websites of local collaborates, and sister state agencies; such as the Commission for the Blind, The Governor's Commission on Disability, and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. These efforts would be in line with the public notices that must be published in advance of each meeting / public forum per the State's Open Meetings Act.

Agency Response: The agency is willing to enhance promotion of SRC Quarterly Meetings and Public Forums. To the extent the other state agencies are willing, the agency welcomes their assistance in posting notices.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR enhance advertisement of the SRC with quarterly meetings forboth staff and consumers.

Agency Response: NMDVR welcomes ideas from the SRC on enhancement of notifications to staff and participants. Recent reassignments of IS duties as well as a high priority on filling vacancies, will aid in consistency of website updates and email notifications.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR investigate how best to implement and assure shorter application periods for DVR clients who reapply for services after case closure, especially in cases for whom post– employment status is not feasible.

Agency Response: Application for services is a federally mandated and individualized process. NMDVR is not in a position to develop arbitrary procedures to expedite application for former participants that are not being opened under post–employment status. NMDVR does use existing data to determine eligibility whenever feasible.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR evaluate its process for documentation requirements around consumer purchases and services. At this time the public has expressed concern that these processes require unnecessarily exhaustive documentation to justify need, especially when such services are obvious, necessary, and may have been provided to the individual client previously.

Agency Response: NMDVR continues to evaluate purchase documentation requirements and is committed to streamlining processes whenever feasible given legal and accounting principle requirements. Some processes have been put into place as a direct response to findings by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Previous provision of a service to a participant is not a guarantee that the same service will be provided again. Provision of services must consistently be based on their necessity toward employment outcome.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR investigate best practices regarding vendor billing procedures, and that a policy be considered to enhance the communication between the Division and the vendor when there appears to be a problem in order to avoid prolonged timelines of authorization for consumer service delivery.

Agency Response: Fiscal processes involve the state procurement system as a whole. That being said, NMDVR has initiated an extensive project toward improvement of billing procedures and processes. There are currently seven Field Operations Specialists (FOS) whose primary function is to increase accuracy and efficiency in financial transactions related to participant services. The agency intends to increase the number of FOS. These specialists have already increased the agency's capacity to improve communication time and effectiveness with vendors. It is expected that communication and processes with vendors will continue to be enhanced as these specialists become more experienced and additional FOS are hired.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR look into best practices to clarify agency assistance in establishing and maintaining consumers who are pursuing Self–Employment Plans due to the increasing number of requests in this arena. One recommendation on this would be to have a small primer that can be given to DVR clients along with guidelines in setting up Self–Employment Plans while incorporating a soundbusiness plan.

Agency Response: NMDVR continues to review operating procedures related to self–employment plans. Participants developing business plans are routinely referred to the Small Business Administration and Contract business development experts (at agency expense) for assistance in completing a business plan. NMDVR also routinely directs participants to current Manual of Operating Procedure guidance on business plan process. The agency is open to exploring further written guidance that can be available to participants in the future.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR implement a tracking a resolution process that increases the efficacy of addressing common complaints and/ or case reviews specific to an Area Office. The same would hold true with a rise of complaints and / or case reviews in a specific AreaOffice.

Agency Response: NMDVR welcomes the suggestion for a more standardized tracking system and will consider this option.

• The SRC recommends that NMDVR increase partnerships statewide and in the local venues with service providers of youth transition, to look for opportunities to work together in order to enhance the ability to meet transition requirements under WIOA.

Agency Response: NMDVR has already implemented a strategy toward increased statewide partnerships including the development of Intergovernmental Agreements and contracts toward accomplishing Pre–Employment Transition Services requirements under WIOA.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

None rejected.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

Waiver not requested.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

Waiver not requested.

3. ALL STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Waiver not requested.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the servivces and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

The Division has developed and maintained interagency agreements with agencies that carry out activities and which do not carry out activities under the statewide workforce investment system. Some of the agencies not under the state workforce investment system are: The Veteran's Affairs Administration, The New Mexico Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; The Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, The Department of Health, and the Developmental Disabilities Support Services Division, to provide supported employment services to individuals on the developmental disabilities waiver and Jackson Class members. The Department also has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Public Education Department to further effect school–to–work transition services throughout the state including Roswell Job Corp. Further contracts are in place with the Centers of Independent Living; in the state, services include job seeking skills training, job placement and Self–Advocacy and supportive services.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

Technology has become one of the primary engines for economic activity, education, and innovation in the Nation, and throughout the world. The commitment of the United States to the development and utilization of technology is one of the main factors underlying the strength and vibrancy of the economy of the United States.

The Division works with Governor's Commission on Disabilities and New Mexico Tap (NMTAP), North East Regional Education Cooperative (REC 4), New Mexico Highlands (NMHU), New Mexico Division Rehab Area 9 work collaboratively in providing Strategies for Technology Assistance in Rural Settings (STARS). NMTAP is also the designated agency for the AT Act and provides AT support throughout the State of NM.

NEREC began a brand new project as of the 2013–14 school year focused on providing AT (Assistive Technology) support to students and adults in this northeastern portion of NM. We have entitle this project S.T.A.R.S.: Strategies for Technology Assistance in Rural Settings.

There is a significant need in rural Northeastern New Mexico for a range of assistive technology (AT) equipment, services, and supports. Most schools and vocational rehabilitation agencies in this quadrant of the state are in areas not readily accessible to these resources, and people with disabilities often do without accommodations that would greatly enhance their opportunities to succeed academically, in training and in careers. The STARS model provides significantly increased access to assistive technology, a critical component of a system of supports.

In general terms, New Mexico is slipping in national rankings of post–secondary education success. We are now 48th in the nation (down from 43rd in 1990) in academic degree completion for students age 25 to 34. Only 12% of New Mexicans who enroll in college have attained an associate or bachelor's degree after four years in college, compared to 31% nationally. New Mexico ranks 42nd among states related to rates of first–time freshmen returning to college after one year. (New Mexico Secretary of Higher Education, Jose Garcia in address to Luna Community College Board, July 31,2013).

This project will facilitate access to AT for students and adults with disabilities in rural Northeastern New Mexico and assist them in transitioning to higher levels of educational achievement and employment. Easy regional access to NMTAP–ABLE (NM Technical Assistance Program– Assistive Bank of Loan Equipment) equipment will facilitate dissemination of information about available assistive devices, and we will demonstrate systems and assistive technology at a dedicated site on the New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) campus. We will train and support students and adults with disabilities, teachers, ancillary professionals, parents, and families in use of AT in rural Northeastern New Mexico communities with high minority populations, high unemployment, and low measures of academic and employment success. The targeted service area includes San Miguel, Mora, Guadalupe, Colfax, Union, and Harding Counties.

With the assistance of the GCD (Governor's Commission on Disability) and NMTAP, we will establish a model regional ABLE loan bank with regional demonstrations and trainings at NEREC/NMHU. We will have equipment on loan to students in secondary schools as well as to clients active through the Division for Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). NEREC will maintain inventory control and tracking of equipment on loan.

For this initiative, the NEREC and the participating school districts will identify an Assistive Technology Liaison at each school. These individuals will have an adequate foundation in technology and experience working with students with disabilities. These AT liaisons will receive training in applied AT in educational settings, and will meet with teachers, ancillary service providers including SLPs, OTs, and special education directors to identify students with AT needs and assist in setting up evaluations. When students are identified and evaluated, the AT evaluators will train AT liaisons in supporting teachers and ancillary staff who work with students to master the selected technology and provide ongoing support in its use.

An important component of the proposed project will be training and support to parents and families in assisting use of AT in the home and community environment. School social workers will serve as a link to parents and families and will connect them to training through NEREC.

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to work in collaboration with the NMTAP–ABLE Program toward the implementation and sustainability of Assistive Technology programs across the state.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

The Division will seek out guidance from its Federal Cognizant Agency in FFY 2017 toward a collaborative arrangement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, entering into an appropriate Memorandum of Agreement. Currently, the Division does not participate in programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States, however it has worked cooperatively, in conjunction with other state and non–profit organizations, which includes USDA Forest Service at the local level since FFY 2011 to actively promote and refer participants for Schedule A application. This has led to the employment of multiple NMDVR participants with the US Forest Service.

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

At this time, the Division does not have formal agreements with other federal programs. NMDVR has been collaborating with other NM state agency partners in supporting and funding “Partners for Employment”. This innovative state–wide contract brings together a variety of both in–state and out of state vocational experts to develop and implement the Discovery process for individuals with the most significant disabling conditions. This process, as well as other non–traditional career development paths, is intended to support and encourage vocational strategies which result in successful employment outcomes for participants. The majority of individuals served as a result of this collaboration are receiving direct training and support by nationally known experts employed by Marc Gold and Associates. In the last several months, NMDVR has participated in and been intimately involved in agency training provided by Marc Gold and Associates. In turn, NMDVR counselors are working directly with employment teams who have made the commitment to support NMDVR participants toward meeting their specific vocational objectives.

In early FY14 NMDVR, was approached to partner with the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD), UNM Hospital, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD), and Best Buddies (Long term provider) where ten (10) students and (2) adults began cohort 1 Project Search program at UNM Hospital. Results from cohort one (1): nine (9) interns completed the program with 75% employment placement success within the community, (5 interns were placed at UNM Hospital, 2 placed at Embassy Suites, 1 placed at University of New Mexico). Project Search is in its third year of achieving successful employment outcomes for youth and adults that are eligible to receive Supported Employment services. The Division is working in collaboration with a variety of businesses statewide to expand Project Search opportunities.

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to work in collaboration with the Center for Development and Disability toward the implementation and sustainability of Project Search programs across the state. DVR collaborates with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to

provide information on SSA benefits and Ticket to Work. NM DVR employs a Certified Benefits Advisors throughout each Project Search site. Services available to DVR participants include Benefits Advisement Counseling to address Social Security Disability/ Social Security Income concerns and to address benefits income and impact to employment. The Division has established a replica of Project Search in New Mexico. Currently UNM Hospital and Hilton Garden Inn Gallup are providing training and internship rotations for 19 students. Project Search allows for three (3) rotations to occur at in various departments. These rotations provide candidates with the opportunity to learn the skills and abilities needed to be successful in the community and subsequently in a career of their choice. Job coaches and teachers will be on site at all times teaching curriculum and job skills. The goal of Project Search is to assure that each candidate will be employed following the completion of the year–long program. Collaboration with several state partners, including the NM Albuquerque Public School (APS) district, Gallup McKinley schools, UNM/CDD, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD), UNM Hospital,Hilton Garden Inn Gallup, and Best Buddies (Albuquerque Long term provider) and Empowerment (Gallup Long term provider) have been established.

In an effort to expand programs and services to individuals and youth who are eligible for Supported Employment services; New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed intergovernmental agreements with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to implement Partners for Employment initiatives and Project Search. New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with the founders of Project Search out of Cincinnati, Ohio to expand services statewide with a focus on rural areas throughout the state. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD), UNM Hospital, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD, Best Buddies, Adelante, Empowerment, Albuquerque Public Schools, Rio Rancho Public Schools, Gallup McKinley schools, Office of Special Education and Rehab Services (OSERS) and Project Search founders have given approval to replicate this program in New Mexico. Five (5) future sites for Project Search have been slated to begin in August of 2017 and are expected to run through June o f2018.

Youth Development Inc. (YDI) and the Office of the State of New Mexico, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), are establishing a collaborative partnership to facilitate the transition of youth (ages 14 to 22) from YDI Educational programs to the achievement of their desired post–school outcomes, with a focus on employment; post–secondary education; training and lifelong learning; community participation; and healthy lifestyles; as well as facilitating provision of transition services to all participants who attend YDI programs. YDI and DVR enter into this formal collaboration for the provision of services that allows youth to obtain training through the provision of Career Planning: (the provision of a client–centered approach in the delivery of service, designed to provide job, education, and career counseling, as appropriate during program participation and after job placement). Career Pathway: (a combination of rigorous and high–quality education, training, and other services that includes counseling to support individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals).

In FFY 2014, collaboration with New Mexico School for the Deaf through statewide outreach and Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing has led to improved outreach and coordination with multiple state school districts toward referral of deaf/hard of hearing transition students to NMDVR. Coordination of School–to–Work transition services that include having a team of specialists to collaborate with school transition specialists to conduct outreach, inform, instruct, and coordinate transition services for individuals covered by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Additionally, creating access to transition services for

students 14 years of age and utilizing staff (transition coordinator, VR counselors specializing in transition, and VR counselors serving transition students) to collaborate with agencies that provide transition services to develop comprehensive transition plans. Coordination and training events have also begun at agency field staff meetings. While these efforts target a specific population, they have the added benefit of strengthening communications between transition specialists at NMSD as well as state wide school districts and NMDVR field staff. This can benefit all transitioning youth.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

The Division previously reported legislation to affect a State Use contract program. A vendor was identified and the State Use contracting system is fully operational. The agency conforms to the provisions of this legislation and contracts are submitted to the State Use vendor agency for first right of refusal whenever appropriate.

The vendor for the state use contract is Horizons of New Mexico. This non-profit agency works on behalf of the New Mexico Council for Purchasing from Persons with Disabilities to foster contracts for its members outside of the normal bid process as long as services are at fair market price. Horizons of New Mexico maintains a list of approved services available through its members with disabilities and the state refers to this vendor for those services.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. DSU'S PLANS

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The Division is an organizational unit of and works with the Public Education Department to facilitate the transition of students who are receiving special education services from the provision of a free appropriate public education under the responsibility of an educational agency. The Division also works with local education agencies to coordinate student referrals to the Division field offices and provide for eligibility determination of the student for vocational rehabilitation services and the development and approval of the Individual Plan for Employment before the student leaves the school setting.

With the implementation of WIOA on July 1, 2015 each local office of DVR now must: (1) attend IEP meetings for students with disabilities when invited, (2) work with local workforce development boards, One–stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, (3) work with schools, to coordinate and guarantee the provisions of pre–employment transition services, (4) attend person–centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under Title 19 of the Social Security Act, when invited (WIOA 422). DVR is also now required to increase spending to at least 15% of section 110 state allotments for provision of pre– employment transition services, which for NMDVR is $2.5 million per year, and which cannot be used to pay administrative costs of providing pre–employment services (WIOA 419). To accomplish the new requirements under WIOA, NMDVR must expand its current workforce.

Services provided by DVR in collaboration with the local educational agency who are eligible or potentially eligible for DVR services include: Job Exploration Counseling, Work–based learning experiences such as internships, counseling on opportunities for postsecondary training, Job readiness skills training to develop social and independent living skills, and self–advocacy skills. Implementation of effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces; developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary educational experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment; providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities; disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section; coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.);

Currently the Division is establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving local Regional Educational memberships, states, local educational agencies, designated state units, developmental disabilities agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goal of this section; and disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally un–served populations.

Order of Selection was implemented in February of 2011. Memoranda of Understanding with Local Education Agencies have been revised to address Order of Selection, however all Order of Selection categories are open and there are no waiting lists currently in place. No waiting lists are anticipated to be necessary in FFY 2017. The Individual Plan for Employment must, at a minimum, identify the long–term vocational rehabilitation goal, intermediate vocational rehabilitation objectives, and goals and objectives related to enabling students with disabilities to live independently. These vocational rehabilitation goals and objectives are to be consistent with the student's individual education plan. The Division makes every effort to develop and implement the transition student's Individual Plan for Employment prior to leaving high school. The Division's role and responsibilities are defined by a formal plan developed by the Public Education Department and, as appropriate, memoranda of agreement with local educational agencies responsible for the free appropriate public education of students with disabilities receiving special education services.

The Public Education Department, of which NMDVR is a division, is the State Education Agency (SEA).The memorandum of understanding with the Public Education Department serves to facilitate the integration and coordination of services to eligible secondary education students in providing a continuum of services that will meet the needs of all Individuals with Disabilities Education Act eligible students. The integrated continuum of services is to be flexible enough to meet the needs of all IDEA eligible students to qualify for DVR services within the available resources, maximize opportunity for students and eliminate limitations and obstacles. Currently Public Education Department is working with Regional Educational Cooperative Memberships to establish intergovernmental agreements.

The MOU further outlines: A. Assure that all students with disabilities as defined by the IDEA and its implementing regulations receive appropriate services; B. Coordinate services to students with disabilities so as to maximize learner outcomes and provide for a successful transition to appropriate employment as specified in student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); C. Formalize referral procedures with appropriate agency(ies) to ensure students with disabilities are provided with opportunities for services; D. Coordinate services delivery and follow–up/along with the education/rehabilitation services continuum; E. Establish joint trainings to provide staff development

and other training activities for Local Educational Agency (LEA) transition specialists and other individuals involved in transition planning. F. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the New Mexico Public Education Department was executed in 2004 and remains in effect. Review of the MOU indicates that required elements are in place and updates to the current document are planned to be in place in 2017.

The MOU with the Public Education Department as the SEA defines responsibilities of both the SEA and designated state agency (NMDVR) for leadership, consultation and technical assistance to educational agencies in planning and providing transition services (including VR services) to students with disabilities. This includes technical assistance to aid in facilitation of student IEPs, as appropriate. The MOU identifies NM Public Education Department as the lead agency, establishes that no funds will be exchanged between the parties under the MOU, and provides procedures for dispute resolution between the parties under the MOU. The MOU describes processes for reporting by NMDVR to NMPED regarding VR counselor assignments to New Mexico high schools and service information provided to schools, students and families.

The agreements with individual Local Education Agencies identify: 1. Policies, practices, and procedures that can be coordinated between the agencies, including definitions, eligibility criteria for vocational rehabilitation services, policies and procedures for making referrals, procedures for outreach students receiving special education services and in need of transition service, practices and procedures also address time–frames for evaluation and follow–up with students; 2. The roles of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; 3. Procedures for providing training, consultation, and technical assistance to assist staff of State and local educational agencies as to the availability, benefits of, and eligibility criteria for vocational rehabilitation services; 4. Available resources, including sources of funds for the development and expansion of services; 5. The financial responsibility of each agency in providing services to students with disabilities who are receiving special education services consistent with State law; 6. Procedures for resolving disputes between the agencies that are parties to the agreement; and 7. All other components necessary to ensure meaningful cooperation among agencies, including procedures to facilitate the development of local teams to coordinate the provision of services to students with disabilities, sharing data, and coordinating joint training of staff providing transitionservices.

The Division works with local education agencies throughout New Mexico to provide school–to–work transition. Rehabilitation counselors are assigned to all public high schools throughout the state. Division counseling staff and rehabilitation technicians are deployed on a regional basis. Area Division program managers and local counseling staff work with local education agencies to ensure that students with disabilities are afforded the opportunity to apply for vocational rehabilitation services. Referrals are made at the local level from local education agencies or schools to the Division’s field offices.

The Mentoring Diverse Abilities program funding has ended, however transition services continue to be provided by both NMDVR and the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs throughout the state.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH

DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

Currently the Division is establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving local Regional Educational memberships, states, local educational agencies, designated state units, developmental disabilities agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goal of this section; and disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally un–served populations.

Order of Selection was implemented in February of 2011. Memoranda of Understanding with Local Education Agencies have been revised to address Order of Selection, however all Order of Selection categories are open and there are no waiting lists currently in place. No waiting lists are anticipated to be necessary in FFY 2017.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

The Individual Plan for Employment must, at a minimum, identify the long–term vocational rehabilitation goal, intermediate vocational rehabilitation objectives, and goals and objectives related to enabling students with disabilities to live independently. These vocational rehabilitation goals and objectives are to be consistent with the student's individual education plan. The Division makes every effort to develop and implement the transition student's Individual Plan for Employment prior to leaving high school. The Division's role and responsibilities are defined by a formal plan developed by the Public Education Department and, as appropriate, memoranda of agreement with local educational agencies responsible for the free appropriate public education of students with disabilities receiving special education services.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

The Public Education Department, of which NMDVR is a division, is the State Education Agency (SEA).The memorandum of understanding with the Public Education Department serves to facilitate the integration and coordination of services to eligible secondary education students in providing a continuum of services that will meet the needs of all Individuals with Disabilities Education Act eligible students. The integrated continuum of services is to be flexible enough to meet the needs of all IDEA eligible students to qualify for DVR services within the available resources, maximize opportunity for students and eliminate limitations and obstacles. Currently, Public Education Department is working with Regional Educational Cooperative Memberships to establish intergovernmental agreements.

The MOU further outlines: A. Assure that all students with disabilities as defined by the IDEA and its implementing regulations receive appropriate services; B. Coordinate services to students with disabilities so as to maximize learner outcomes and provide for a successful transition to appropriate employment as specified in student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); C. Formalize referral procedures with appropriate agency(ies) to ensure students with disabilities are provided with opportunities for services; D. Coordinate services delivery and follow–up/along with the

education/rehabilitation services continuum; E. Establish joint trainings to provide staff development and other training activities for Local Educational Agency (LEA) transition specialists and other individuals involved in transition planning. F. The current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the New Mexico Public Education Department was executed in 2004 and remains in effect. Review of the MOU indicates that required elements are in place and updates to the current document are planned to be in place in 2017.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

The MOU with the Public Education Department as the SEA defines responsibilities of both the SEA and designated state agency (NMDVR) for leadership, consultation and technical assistance to educational agencies in planning and providing transition services (including VR services) to students with disabilities. This includes technical assistance to aid in facilitation of student IEPs, as appropriate. The MOU identifies NM Public Education Department as the lead agency, establishes that no funds will be exchanged between the parties under the MOU, and provides procedures for dispute resolution between the parties under the MOU. The MOU describes processes for reporting by NMDVR to NMPED regarding VR counselor assignments to New Mexico high schools and service information provided to schools, students and families.

The agreements with individual Local Education Agencies identify: 1. Policies, practices, and procedures that can be coordinated between the agencies, including definitions, eligibility criteria for vocational rehabilitation services, policies and procedures for making referrals, procedures for outreach students receiving special education services and in need of transition service, practices and procedures also address time–frames for evaluation and follow–up with students; 2. The roles of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; 3. Procedures for providing training, consultation, and technical assistance to assist staff of State and local educational agencies as to the availability, benefits of, and eligibility criteria for vocational rehabilitation services; 4. Available resources, including sources of funds for the development and expansion of services; 5. The financial responsibility of each agency in providing services to students with disabilities who are receiving special education services consistent with State law; 6. Procedures for resolving disputes between the agencies that are parties to the agreement; and 7. All other components necessary to ensure meaningful cooperation among agencies, including procedures to facilitate the development of local teams to coordinate the provision of services to students with disabilities, sharing data, and coordinating joint training of staff providing transition services.

The Division works with local education agencies throughout New Mexico to provide school–to–work transition. Rehabilitation counselors are assigned to all public high schools throughout the state. Division counseling staff and rehabilitation technicians are deployed on a regional basis. Area Division program managers and local counseling staff work with local education agencies to ensure that students with disabilities are afforded the opportunity to apply for vocational rehabilitation services. Referrals are made at the local level from local education agencies or schools to the Division’s field offices.

The Mentoring Diverse Abilities program funding has ended, however transition services continue to be provided by both NMDVR and the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs throughout the state.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The Division ensures the appropriate use of community rehabilitation programs to the maximum extent feasible. The Division purchases a broad range of services for clients through local community rehabilitation programs.

These services consist of but are not limited to: 1. Medical, neuropsychological; psychiatric, psychological, social, and vocational services; 2. Testing, fitting, or training in the use of prosthetic and orthotic devices; 3. Recreational therapy; 4. Physical and occupationaltherapy; 5. Speech, language, and hearing therapy inclusive of purchase of hearing aids; 6. Psychiatric, psychological, and social services, including behavior management services; 7. Assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs; 8. Rehabilitation technology; 9. Assistive technology; 10. Job development, placement, and retentionservices; 11. Orientation and mobility services for individuals who areblind; 12. Extended employment; 13. Psycho–social rehabilitation services; 14. Supported employment services and extended services; 15. Services to family members when necessary to the vocational rehabilitation of the individual; 16. Personal assistance services; 17. Services similar to the services described above.

Most services purchased from community rehabilitation programs are on an individualized basis addressing the specific barriers to employment as a result of an individual's disabling condition. Where applicable, community programs must be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The Division requires services be purchased in conformance with State laws which regulate professional practices (ex.: psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, etc.). When appropriate to the individualized needs of a participant of vocational rehabilitation services, community rehabilitation programs are utilized toward an employment outcome. Contractual agreements are frequently utilized with community rehabilitation programs.

A cooperative agreement with a private non–profit service provider may also be established via a Memorandum of Understanding or Memorandum of Agreement.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may be utilized with community rehabilitation providers as appropriate which does not require an exchange of agency funds but is a legal document describing a bilateral agreement between parties. This document expresses a convergence of will between the parties indicating an intended common line of action, rather than a legal commitment.

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) may be utilized as a written document between parties to cooperatively work together on an agreed upon project or to meet an agreed upon objective. The purpose of an MOA is to have a written understanding of the agreement between parties. The MOA can also be a legal document that is binding and holds the parties responsible to their commitment or it may be a partnership agreement that is not legally binding.

Almost all agreements the division has with private nonprofit organizations are contracts. DVR is currently coordinating with Youth Development Inc. New Mexico to develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) specific to serving youth with disabilities, however this MOU is not yet in place.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

Supported employment services provided by the Division consist of case services made available through the Title VI–B funds of the Rehabilitation Act. Title VI–B funds for Federal Fiscal Year 15 equaled $244,500.00.

Title I funds of the Rehabilitation Act (available for general, basic vocational rehabilitation services) are used for supported employment services upon depletion of Title VI–B funds. The Division procures supported employment services on a case–by–case basis from local rehabilitation programs that have committed long–term funding to the individual participants. Area supervisors conduct direct negotiations of fee for service procurement schedules of supported employment services. The local area supervisors, counselors, Statewide Supported Employment Coordinator and administrative staff monitor the scope and quality of supported employment services available to DVR participants. Supported employment service providers are required to submit monthly reports to the Division including the local area counselor and supervisor. Reports highlight client progress and satisfaction, as well as pertinent demographic data. The review, compilation, and analysis of the monthly cumulative reports obtained from the contract vendor enable the Division to monitor the quality of job coaching. The DVR counselor reviews these reports with the contract provider to ensure that the scope of services comply with supported employment guidelines and are consistent with the vocational needs of the participant.

The quality of supported employment services is measured in terms of integration achieved by the individual at the work–site along with the amount of wages earned. To increase the level of integration, the Division emphasizes the individualized placement model. This information is documented in the participant case files and monitored on a monthly basis. The scope and extent of services provided to clients under the Individualized Plan for Employment for supported employment continues to be the same as those available to individuals under the Title I program. This is in accordance with Division operating procedures. All services are provided on an equitable basis within the constraints of available funding.

DVR has implemented several intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) and/or Memorandum of Agreements (MOUs) in cooperation with other state agencies including the Department of Health (DOH), Developmental Disabilities Support Division (DDSD), Center for Development and Disabilities (CDD), Albuquerque Public Schools (APS), as well as the Department of Aging and Long Term Services. These cooperative agreements aid in facilitating the transition from Title VI–B funding to a long–term funding source for Supported Employment Services. The transition to extended employment occurs when the time spent by the job coach with the DVR participant in a supported employment program decreases to an average of 8 hours (20%) per week or less.

NOTE****DVR is aware that under the proposed provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that 50% of allocated SE funding will be utilized towards services to youth.

The Division does not target specific disability groups to provide supported employment services. However, long– term support funding by the state is currently available for those individuals who are either developmentally disabled or who have significant disabling mental illness.

Provision of Supported Employment as it relates to Mental Health Service

The Department of Human Services provides administrative support to and houses the Behavioral Health Collaborative to provide a long–term funding mechanism for Behavioral Health recipients. Behavioral Health Services and funding is allocated through the Collaborative to provide comprehensive and vocational services to individuals with significant disabling mental illness. Both mechanisms mentioned above are used to fund long–term supported employment services and extended services.

Project Search and Partners for Employment

In an effort to expand programs and services to individuals and youth who are eligible for Supported Employment services; New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed intergovernmental agreements with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to implement Partners for Employment initiatives and Project Search. New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with the founders of Project Search out of Cincinnati, Ohio to expand services statewide with a focus on rural areas throughout the state. Project Search is in its third year of achieving successful employment outcomes for youth and adults that are eligible to receive Supported Employment services. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with a variety of businesses statewide to expand Project Search opportunities.

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to work in collaboration with the Center for Development and Disability toward the implementation and sustainability of Supported Employment programs across the state. Services that are provided at Center for Development and Disability include education, advocacy, and outreach in the field of Supported Employment. Services are available through Partners for Employment to participants and their families, community providers, job developers, job coaches, employers, as well as, educational facilities. DVR also collaborates with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide information on SSA benefits and Ticket to Work.

NM DVR employs Certified Benefits Advisors throughout each area of the state. Services available to DVR participants include Benefits Advisement Counseling to address SSD(I) to address benefits income and impact to employment.

The NM Department of Health is the state agency responsible for administering Developmental Disabilities Waiver funding under Title XIX of the Social Security Act. Behavioral Health Services are administered through state– wide Health Maintenance Organizations(HMO).

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) is a viable resource in the State of New Mexico for enhancing and building the diversity of the New Mexico's labor force and can be an integral part of any employer's search for qualified, skilled career employees. Employers are supported by a professional team that specializes in preparing NMDVR consumers for employment through pre–employment training, college and technical education, and finally matching the best talent with the right jobs.

Personnel

Advancing New Mexico's economy and business climate by empowering and supporting the workforce system is the mission of the NMDVR. NMDVR created the position of the Business Support Specialist (BSS) in 2014 to begin to shift the agencies priorities of meeting the workforce needs of New Mexico's businesses. NMDVR is working towards fully embracing the dual customer role of serving the workforce needs of New Mexico's business community while building the needed talent through our NMDVR job seeker clientele. NMDVR is working towards fully embracing the dual customer role of serving the workforce needs of New Mexico's business community while building the needed talent through our NMDVR job seeker clientele. The employment specialist, called Business Support Specialist (BSS) was centralized in the state of New Mexico and assigned to work with NMWorkforce Central Region, Albuquerque, NM.

In FFY 2015, DVR Business Support Specialist:

• Was involved in distribution of over 350 employer recruitment Job Fair Lead/Hiring Event events held by Central Region Workforce events • Arranged and notified staff of 10 On–The–Job Training (OJT) experiences for DVR job seekers • Notified NMDVR in Central Region of employers who were seeking to recruit staff • Had contact in 2015 with 25 businesses in New Mexico to discuss recruiting and hiring people with disabilities • Since 2014, more than 10 business have been directly contacted by NMDVR Business Support Specialist to facilitate hiring needs

In order to prepare staff for shift in dual consumer shift BSS has implemented the following trainings for staff:

1. Labor Market Analysis for the purposes of gaining a comprehensive understanding of target occupational environment, analyzing job trends and factors, and to promote strategic placement activities for NMDVR consumers. BSS will continue to work with agency on a methodology to track and monitor Candidate Screening Activities (CSA) for the purposes of marketing vacancy announcements, finding suitable job candidates, provide consumers detailed job information and/or initial job matching. Staff will continue to be provided with Candidate Training Programs (CTP) which better prepares applicable consumers for job expectations, responsibilities, and essential job functions of targetoccupations.

2. Caseload Statistical Analysis (CSA) to support agency job placement strategies; AWARE Service J utilization. Activities may include analyzing specific caseloads or units to identify job–ready consumers. Development of standards and criteria have been completed and initial phases of implementation by staff have been developed and trained. Caseload Analysis/Tracking. BSS has requested that NMDVR staff begin to utilize AWARE database feature of "Service J" as a utility to track within the caseload those who are job ready.

3. Field–Based Staff Development to increase capacity, knowledge, awareness, and understanding of the external business environment and strategies/best practices for developing effective business relationships. This training is conducted outside of office site, within the community, to gain the unique perspective and understanding of the targeted external business environment. BSS has begun to request staff members come to outreach meetings at local businesses throughout the state.

4. Community Partners Referral Development to facilitate and/or conduct outreach and marketing activities on agency services for the potential development of new or increased referrals. In late 2015 it was discussed and identified that tracking measures between Workforce Partners needs to be implemented. In 2016, BSS will make strides towards a comprehensive referral tool. Innovation and Expansion—Train and Place Models

An important outcome of listening to business needs includes the development of specialized training programs either with other workforce partners or solely developed with NMDVR consumers, helping NMDVR job seekers obtain the needed curriculum instruction, experience and recruitment assistance necessary to meet the talent needs of specific employers.

NMDVR is currently partnered with the Road Runner Food Bank (RRFB) to develop and provide training for individuals with disabilities in a multifaceted setting.

This regional program is set to begin its pilot in Albuquerque–area retail locations in 2016. The development of this program is the first of its' kind for NMDVR with hopes of gaining statewide traction. Building on the success of the Skills to Work model, also called Place and Train. Dependent on it success, BSS will work with businesses throughout New Mexico to implement this model in their workplaces. Two initiatives were included in the New Mexico Blueprint for Prosperity that will allow DVR to expand place and train opportunities for job seekers with disabilities and New Mexico businesses to target job seekers with disabilities, including veterans with service– related disabilities, in their recruitment and hiring.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

In an effort to expand programs and services to individuals and youth who are eligible for Transitional Employment services; New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed intergovernmental agreements with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to implement Partners for Employment initiatives and Project Search, New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with the founders of Project Search out of Cincinnati, Ohio to expand services statewide with a focus on rural areas throughout the state. Project Search is in its third year of achieving successful employment outcomes for youth and adults that are eligible to receive Supported Employment services. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with a variety of businesses statewide to expand Project Search opportunities.

Collaboration with Statewide Workforce Investment System: NMDVR has had representatives on the Youth Standing Committee, and School to Work Transitional Alliance. Representatives address the issues and interests of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system, both in developing policy and influencing service delivery.

The Division has increased its collaboration through participation with provider agencies; as well as independent and statewide entities to promote “Employment First” principles for individuals with the

most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment Although the Navigator program is completed, it did serve to increase awareness of vocational rehabilitation services and employment–related needs of people with disabilities at local One–stops. The result is that One–stop staff have established and continue to maintain contact with NMDVR counselors throughout the state.

Please see Section c.4. (Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth) for information regarding Project Search. This is an example of coordination with employers to provide required pre-employment transition services to students in addition to services for out-of-school youth. Further coordination with employers continues to be developed through the collaborations described above.

The Operator of the One–stop Provider in the Central and Northern regions of New Mexico sits on the State Rehabilitation Council as a business representative. He has committed to improving greater collaboration and resource sharing in both regions.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

The NMDVR Benefits Advisement Services Coordinator attends the Medicaid Advisory Council meeting quarterly to remind and update all council members about employment issues and Medicaid. The Benefits Advisement Services Coordinator also has a strong relationship with the Medicaid eligibility trainers and supervisors. In addition, NMDVR maintains a strong relationship with University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM CDD). NMDVR staff have developed short training videos on different working issues and have teamed with UNM CDD units to provide statewide trainings in addition to an annual Ticket to Work Job Fair.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

An Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) has been entered into between the New Mexico Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division and the Department of Aging and Long Term Services to accomplish joint implementation for supported employment under: the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C 795(b)(1) and 721(a)(11); 8.314.5 New Mexico Administrative Code and Walter Stephens Jackson, et.al. vs. Los Lunas Center for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, et.al. CIV No.87–0839–JP/LCS. The purpose of this IGA is intended to implement the following protocol and provision of services. The IGA outlines joint responsibilities of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Developmental Disabilities Support Division, as well as targeted outcomes for each agency. The IGA defines ongoing support services.

Services that are: 1. Needed to support and maintain an individual with significant disabilities in supported employment, 2. Based on a determination by the designated State Unit of the individual's needs as specified in an Individualized Plan for Employment; and 3. Furnished by the designated State Unit in 34 CFR 363.4(c)(3) and following transition, by one or more extended services providers throughout the individual's term of employment in a particular job placement or multiple

placements if those placements are being provided under a program of transition to employment. 4. Include, at a minimum, twice–monthly monitoring to assess employment stability at the work site of each individual in supported employment (unless the Individualized Plan for Employment provides for off–site monitoring), and based upon that assessment, the coordination or provision of specific services at or away from the work site, that are needed to maintain employment stability. If off–site monitoring is determined to be appropriate, there must be contact with the employer each month.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

The Division does not target specific disability groups to provide supported employment services. However, long– term support funding by the State is currently available for those individuals who are either developmentally disabled or who have significant disabling mental illness.

Behavioral Health Services are administered through state– wide Health Maintenance Organizations(HMO).

NMDVR is a member of New Mexico's Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative. During the past four years, work continued toward intra–agency collaboration specifically dealing with behavioral health services among all 17 agencies/divisions of the BHPC. Under the terms of an agreement reached with the State Behavioral Health Services Division, NMDVR continues to facilitate and monitor employment services for people within the BHSD system and to assist others in making connections with that system. Coordination of services among BHSD, NMDVR, regional employment providers, and mental health providers can increase successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

NMDVR has a Staff Development Unit that works closely with Human Resource unit to determine analysis of personnel needs and resources. In addition, Management staff regularly reviews the field staffing issues to assist in planning for future staffing needs. Staff Development unit is specifically assigned to maintain training databases in order to determine valuable training efforts to prepare

staff for their various positions within the agency. Although NMDVR has determined to no longer support the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development in its previous form of supporting staff towards educational goals, the intention is to maintain support to all staff in professional development through various alternate methods.

In preparation for its budget request, the Division annually assesses the supply of qualified professionals and paraprofessionals available to the Division to ensure an adequate staffing base. With the implementation of Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act the agency has closely reviewed staffing needs and planned appropriately to advocate for an increase to the Divisions total workforce in the coming years.

Staff Development Unit is also responsible for providing updated training information to include Licensures, Certifications and various training completions relevant to their positions. Staff participation in training is entered into databases which are routinely reviewed to ensure updated information is accurate. SDU Staff is also responsible for providing any updated licensure or certification information to Staff Development Unit.

The Division maintains professional vocational rehabilitation counselors to provide direct client services. These counselors manage individual caseloads. The total number of counselors employed corresponds with a ratio of approximately one counselor per 31,599 of the general population, the number of positions filled as allowed by the State Personnel Office, and the available budget as approved by the State Legislature and Congress. Under this current methodology the Division has 66 caseloads to serve a statewide population base of 2,085,572. Ideally, the Division would like to decrease this ratio by increasing the number of employed Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. This particular goal has been on–going and will continue to be supported moving forward in order to establish more workable caseload sizes. The Division has determined that 23 new counselor positions will be necessary to adequately meet the growing population needs, and provide the appropriate support to our Transition students. Therefore, a total of 89 counselor positions employed with in the agency is ideal. In addition, the agency has expansion goals for positons in the following personnel categories 2–Program Managers, 2– Administrative Assistants, 1–Field Operations Specialist Supervisor, 4 – Field Operations specialist, 14–Supervisor Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, 2 – Transition Coordinators, 2– Business Support specialists. DVR is currently making efforts to fill all key positions in addition to advocating for the additional staff. This goal will remain a priority of the agency as will the effort to reduce the vacancy rate to under 10 percent or less.

When fully staffed, the Division employs 121 direct service positions consisting of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Rehabilitation Technicians, and Caseload Secretaries in the Rehabilitation Services Unit (RSU). There are 66 vocational rehabilitation counselor positions for the 66 caseloads located throughout the state. The Division also employs 34 rehabilitation technicians and 21 caseload secretaries providing direct services to DVR clients. The ratio of counselor to rehabilitation technician and caseload secretaries varies throughout the state given the available resources. A typical ratio is one caseload secretary and one rehabilitation technician to two vocational rehabilitation counselors. In some offices in rural locations, DVR staff is usually one counselor and one rehabilitation technician. The Division employs 13 individuals with Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, (CRC) designation. All have Masters Degrees. Seven of these individuals are caseload Rehabilitation Counselors located throughout the State providing direct services to DVR clients. Another 6 certified individuals occupy other professional positions located in the Division as follows:

Administrative Services RSU Field Operations Directors = Two Position RSU Program Managers = Four Positions The Division encourages eligible staff to attain and maintain CRC designation.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

The Division maintains professional vocational rehabilitation counselors to provide direct client services. These counselors manage individual caseloads. The total number of counselors employed corresponds with a ratio of approximately one counselor per 31,599 of the general population, the number of positions filled as allowed by the State Personnel Office, and the available budget as approved by the State Legislature and Congress. Under this current methodology the Division has 66 caseloads to serve a statewide population base of 2,085,572. Ideally, the Division would like to decrease this ratio by increasing the number of employed Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. This particular goal has been on–going and will continue to be supported moving forward in order to establish more workable caseload sizes. The Division has determined that 23 new counselor positions will be necessary to adequately meet the growing population needs, and provide the appropriate support to our Transition students. Therefore, a total of 89 counselor positions employed with in the agency is ideal. In addition, the agency has expansion goals for positons in the following personnel categories 2–Program Managers, 2– Administrative Assistants, 1–Field Operations Specialist Supervisor, 4 – Field Operations specialist, 14–Supervisor Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, 2 – Transition Coordinators, 2– Business Support specialists. DVR is currently making efforts to fill all key positions in addition to advocating for the additional staff. This goal will remain a priority of the agency as will the effort to reduce the vacancy rate to under 10 percent or less.

When fully staffed, the Division employs 121 direct service positions consisting of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Rehabilitation Technicians, and Caseload Secretaries in the Rehabilitation Services Unit (RSU). There are 66 vocational rehabilitation counselor positions for the 66 caseloads located throughout the state. The Division also employs 34 rehabilitation technicians and 21 caseload secretaries providing direct services to DVR clients. The ratio of counselor to rehabilitation technician and caseload secretaries varies throughout the state given the available resources. A typical ratio is one caseload secretary and one rehabilitation technician to two vocational rehabilitation counselors. In some offices in rural locations, DVR staff is usually one counselor and one rehabilitation technician. The Division employs 13 individuals with Certified Rehabilitation Counselor, (CRC) designation. All have Masters Degrees. Seven of these individuals are caseload Rehabilitation Counselors located throughout the State providing direct services to DVR clients. Another 6 certified individuals occupy other professional positions located in the Division as follows:

Administrative Services RSU Field Operations Directors = Two Position RSU Program Managers = Four Positions

The Division encourages eligible staff to attain and maintain CRC designation.

In consideration of current staffing the information is completed below:

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Total Positions: 66 Current Vacancies: 12 Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 8

Rehabilitation Technicians Total Positions: 34 Current Vacancies: 6 Projected Vacancies over the next 5 years: 9

Caseload Secretary Total Positions: 21 Current Vacancies: 9 Projected vacancies over the next 5 years: 7

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

The Division maintains professional vocational rehabilitation counselors to provide direct client services. These counselors manage individual caseloads. The total number of counselors employed corresponds with a ratio of approximately one counselor per 31,599 of the general population, the number of positions filled as allowed by the State Personnel Office, and the available budget as approved by the State Legislature and Congress. Under this current methodology the Division has 66 caseloads to serve a statewide population base of 2,085,572. Ideally, the Division would like to decrease this ratio by increasing the number of employed Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. This particular goal has been on–going and will continue to be supported moving forward in order to establish more workable caseload sizes. The Division has determined that 23 new counselor positions will be necessary to adequately meet the growing population needs, and provide the appropriate support to our Transition students. Therefore, a total of 89 counselor positions employed with in the agency is ideal. In addition, the agency has expansion goals for positons in the following personnel categories 2–Program Managers, 2– Administrative Assistants, 1–Field Operations Specialist Supervisor, 4 – Field Operations specialist, 14–Supervisor Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, 2 – Transition Coordinators, 2– Business Support specialists. DVR is currently making efforts to fill all key positions in addition to advocating for the additional staff. This goal will remain a priority of the agency as will the effort to reduce the vacancy rate to under 10 percent or less.

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation maintains a relationship with New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU), Las Vegas, New Mexico. NMHU is the only in–state college that provides a graduate program in Vocational Rehabilitation. Currently, NMHU has 39 students currently enrolled in their graduate Counseling Program and 10 of those students are identified in the Rehabilitation track. NMHU has graduated 7 individuals from the Rehabilitation program as of the completion of spring 2015. In 2014, NMHU had 19 total graduates from the Rehabilitation track. NMHU reports that no student in the 2015 class is being supported by RSA dollars.

All graduates of NMHU’s Rehabilitation Counseling Program are eligible to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. As of last October, 2014, 28 NMHU students took the CRC examination. Since 2010, 33 graduates from NMHU have become licensed in the state of New Mexico and other states.

Goal/Activity: In further maintaining and developing a strong relationship, NMHU will continue to request DVR presence on their curriculum Advisory Council to ensure that coursework is aligned with Agency goals. DVR will review collaboration efforts in terms of hosting interns from NMHU to

complete their internship within NMDVR. No internships were established between NMDVR offices in 2014 or 2015. Individuals from within the agency have taught courses in Foundations of Rehabilitation, Transition, and Job Placement in NMHU's Rehabilitation Counselor Master's program.

New Mexico Highlands University remains as an accredited program and their accreditation is valid through 2020, however the school is reviewed annually in order to hold full accreditation.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation maintains a relationship with New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU), Las Vegas, New Mexico. NMHU is the only in–state college that provides a graduate program in Vocational Rehabilitation.

New Mexico Highlands University Students enrolled: 10

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of theose institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation maintains a relationship with New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU), Las Vegas, New Mexico. NMHU is the only in–state college that provides a graduate program in Vocational Rehabilitation.

All graduates of NMHU's Rehabilitation Counseling Program are eligible to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. As of last October, 2014, 28 NMHU students took the CRC examination. Since 2010, 33 graduates from NMHU have become licensed in the state of New Mexico and other states.

New Mexico Highlands University Graduates from the previous year: 19

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

NMDVR utilizes various information to plan for projected needs to expand the number of FTE's as well as realign distribution of work accordingly within the agency to best meet our participant needs. Management staff continually meet to discuss the various staffing issues and determine the agency need in planning for vital positions. Management and Staff Development Unit collects Human Resource data as well as field data to plan for upcoming staffing needs. The information collected provides Management information on upcoming retirements, vacancy rates, educational requirements and new FTE development. The goal for NMDVR is to continually review workforce

data to plan for and predict future needs of the agency in order to avoid service delays to participants. Staff Development Unit will work closely with Management as well Higher Education establishments to provide, develop and support potential recruitment possibilities. The implementation of Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act has provided the agency the opportunity to expand the pool of eligible applicants for Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor positions. The previous standard of Master's Degree has been amended to Bachelor's degree per WIOA. WIOA has also expanded the definition of related degrees to be considered appropriate to meet the educational standards to work effectively in the field of Vocational Rehabilitation. Over the past year, the agency has been able to staff many vacant caseloads due to this new practice, and has reduced the vacancy rate for Counselor positions to 18%. Although the agency has made many efforts to obtain qualified employees the goal remains to lower the vacancy rate and maintain current staff.

In response, the Division has implemented strategies that have impacted significant reduction in the turnover rate and will provide a valuable incentive to employee retention.

1) Employees of the Division are covered by the State Personnel Act:

2) The Division has committed to hiring and compensating staff at competitive salaries (appropriate placement); The Division is also making strides to offer opportunity for internal advancement based on educational accomplishments. The agency intends to review current VRC pay bands to provide variances based on educational and certification qualifications.

3) State of New Mexico employees are offered a competitive employment benefits package, including premium health care coverage and having the option to retire with 25 years of services (75% of average of top three years' salary) for staff hired before 2012 and 30 years of service thereafter;

4) State Personnel Board Rules allow for VR Counselors to be paid a supervisory differential for assuming supervisory responsibilities inclusive of training staff in effective case management and best practices;

5) The Division offers training and continuing education opportunities not available with other state Agencies.

The Division experiences some barriers in hiring qualified staff particularly in isolated work locations. The State Personnel Director, pursuant to the direction of the State Personnel Board, establishes, maintains and in conjunction with state agencies, administers a pay plan for all positions throughout the classified service. The State Personnel Director conducts an annual survey of Total Compensation (means of all forms of cash compensation and the dollar value of the employer–sponsored benefit package.)

The comparison market is comprised of private and public entities within the state of New Mexico, regional state government employers, and Central, Western, and Southwestern state government employers. The pay plan offers many compensation tools for agencies to utilize to help management attract qualified applicants as well as retain employees who contribute to the overall success of the organization, motivate employees to maintain high standards of productivity and service, and reward employees for their specific contributions to the achievement of the organizational goals and objectives.

The Division has committed funds for retraining efforts to ensure that all personnel, particularly vocational rehabilitation counselors, meet the highest requirements in the state applicable to that particular profession. In providing for training programs, the Division takes into consideration succession planning and capacity building as well as evolving issues such as amendments to the Rehabilitation Act, WIOA, the Workforce Investment Act, Ticket– to–Work, consumer informed choice,etc.

The Division has been largely successful in recruiting individuals with disabilities as well as those from minority groups. The Division continues to hire individuals with disabilities whenever those individuals are viable candidates. Job accommodations for staff with disabilities are routinely provided to maintain employment. The Division advertises job openings on the Internet at DVRgetsjobs.com, in addition to State Personnel Office listings; both are available nationally to anyone with Internet access. The Division uses the State Personnel automated data system to account for the number of employees, status of individual employees as probationary, permanent, temporary, or term and related information such as salary, earned leave balance, etc. Vacancies are reported on a routine basis and used to monitor hiring activities. All new hires, promotions and transfers require the approval of the Division Director.

In addition, the Division will continue to provide training to all staff interested in increasing their job skills. The goal of Staff Development Unit is to respond to agency initiatives in order to provide valuable internal training supports to enhance knowledge, skills and abilities to the various agency positions. SDU will continue to collaborate with internal staff identified as experienced in their respective positions to support the training of new employees in their various areas. SDU will make efforts to collaborate with Management to identify options for implementation of a mentorship modality to be adopted by the agency in order to provide an expansion of quality training and hands–on support for new staff.

The Division’s strategic planning effort includes a Goal Area of Career Development and Succession Planning for all staff. The Division is well aware of the need to hire and retain well qualified staff.

NMDVR is proactively working toward the future in terms of career development and succession planning. With the expanded application pool based on WIOA educational standards for VRC positions there is an obvious increased need for training to new staff in specific VR topics. SDU advisory committee will be reestablished to address the many challenges and changes in our ability to support various educational endeavors that our staff may seek.

It is hoped that the above listed measures will encourage well–qualified staff to elect remaining employed with the Division beyond retirement eligibility during anticipated upcoming shortages of qualified workers.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR

OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

The Division developed state licensure for vocational rehabilitation counselors through its parent agency, the New Mexico Public Education Department in 2001. This licensure, endorsed in rule by the Public Education Department is required of all vocational rehabilitation counselors working for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and is commensurate with national standards under CSPD.

In January 2002, a policy requiring all VR counselors to apply for state licensure by December 2002 was adopted. Counselors who are not eligible for the highest level of state licensure are required to be tracked through direct work experience for the established time frame in order to obtain licensure.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

In 2015, DVR amended the academic standard for the Job Related Qualifications Standard to meet the new WIOA standard. The New Mexico Public Education Department licensure appropriate to VRC positions within the NMDVR is Primary and Secondary Education School Personnel–Licensure Requirements for Ancillary and Support Personnel Licensure in Rehabilitation Counseling Pre K–12. The NMDVR is working with PED to utilize 5 pathway options to support our VRC's towards state licensure as follows:

Pathway 1 Master's Degree in RehabilitationCounseling(earned from a regionally accredited college/university)

Pathway 2 Master's Degree in school counseling, vocational counseling or other related field (earned from a regionally accredited college/university);and Verification of 1 year of experience in Rehabilitation Counseling Or: 15 semester hours of credit in rehabilitation counseling in the areas of vocational/transition assessment, medical aspects of disability, psychosocial and/or psycho–cultural aspects of disability, case management in rehabilitation counseling, issues and practices in rehabilitation counseling, or placement aspects of rehabilitation counseling

Pathway 3 Bachelor's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling (earned from a regionally accredited college/ university); and Verification of 1 year of direct vocational rehabilitation job experience
Pathway 4 Bachelor's Degree in school counseling, vocational counseling or other related field (earned from a regionally accredited college/university);and Verification of 2 years of direct vocational rehabilitation job experience Or: 5 semester hours of credit in rehabilitation counseling in the areas of vocational/transition assessment, medical aspects of disability, psychosocial and/or psycho–cultural aspects of disability, case management in rehabilitation counseling, issues and practices in rehabilitation counseling, or placement aspects of rehabilitation counseling

Pathway 5 Possess a certificate issued by the Commissionon Rehabilitation Counselor Certification

Currently, all DVR counselors have applied for licensure and/or background check. It should be noted that new counselors have 90 days from their start date to apply for their license. Licensure application includes a criminal background check. All applications are monitored for compliance. If

new DVR counselors do not meet the experience requirement for State Licensure, they are directed to proceed with the background check, and apply for licensure upon gaining the necessary experience. Initial VR counselor licenses must be renewed after three years.

State licensure is identified in policy as top priority and required for continued employment. Identified documents to be submitted in the credentials package for licensureinclude: 1. Official college transcripts of all degrees received; 2. Copy of Certified Rehabilitation Counselor certification, ifapplicable; 3. Work history in a rehabilitation field; 4. Copies of course syllabi from courses related to counseling and guidance; vocational counseling; disability; psycho–social or psycho–cultural aspects of disability; case management in rehabilitation counseling; and placement aspects in rehabilitation counseling. 5. Criminal background information 6. Fingerprints

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

The Division continues to work cooperatively with the Public Education Department to issue State Licensure for rehabilitation counselors. The Division is coordinating with the State Personnel Office to incorporate the qualifications that are required for licensure into the requirements for vocational rehabilitation counselors within the State’s compensation and classification system and develop pay equity to better reflect the qualifications of licensed counselors.

Counselors are encouraged to submit credentials and meet the qualification requirements of the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor designation as this is the highest recognized level of a qualified counselor under the licensure rule.

CRC credits are made available to the agency each year through an application process with Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. As trainings are made available to our staff internally the application is submitted for approval to CRCC in order to determine if CEU’s on the VR topics presented to staff are within the established guidelines. Should the training meet the standard then CRCC allows the agency to provide CEU’s to CRC staff.

In terms of participation in external trainings, staff participate in various trainings that do offer CEU opportunities. Promotion of CEU’s in order to maintain Certification standards is encouraged for staff. NM DVR has an established approval process to support training(s) by allowing employees to enter training requests. Training requests are entered into our Training Administration System where the employee provides details on training objectives, and availability of CEU’s offered by the Training Provider. The process begins with the employee entering a request for training, direct manager reviewing and approving the request, Unit Head reviewing and approving the request and finally our Staff Development Unit to approve and generate purchase orders to cover the registration costs for

participation in the training. NM DVR encourages all staff to continually seek training opportunities for career development, and furthermore supports CEU's for CRC staff.

All new hires for VRC positions are reviewed by SDU to provide the best direction towards meeting licensure requirements.

The Division maintains a Staff Development Unit (SDU) that is designated to provide for professional and paraprofessional development of all staff from various training facilities. All employees are encouraged to continually update their job skills and knowledge by taking advantage of training available to them through the SDU. Training can be internal to the agency, state sponsored training and training external of the agency through institutions of higher education, private vendors, professional training organizations – any training that a staff member would appreciate taking to enhance job performance with particular emphasis on assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology. The goal of SDU is to provide continual educational and training opportunities that are meaningful to staff to return to their respective positions in their various areas and provide quality services.

SDU provides and monitors a series of required training that is available to all new employees. NMDVR policy provides that all employees repeat several of these courses on a regular basis. These on–demand, computer–based courses include: Fraud Awareness, Federal Grants Management, Sexual Harassment Prevention, Civil Rights, Workplace Bullying–Violence Prevention, Mileage and Per Diem, Email Essentials and Substance Abuse & the Drug– Free Workplace Act. Counselors and Rehabilitation Technicians also complete on–line courses of VR 101: Determining Eligibility and Writing the Individualized Plan for Employment. A Preventing Retaliation Claims Webinar is required for Managers and Supervisors as is a yearly refresher on Employment Related Conflict Resolution. State Personnel Office also does require Supervisors to partakein State sponsored management training.

Staff Development Unit is also charged with coordination of New Employee Orientation (NEO). This day–long event is held quarterly at the State Office and features presentations from agency leaders. The emphasis is on agency culture and "Succeeding at the NMDVR". NEO is one part of a comprehensive onboarding program currently being developed to increase employee engagement and retention by helping new staff feel welcome and appreciated.

B. ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

SDU also offers Rehabilitation Academy to new counselors and rehabilitation technicians (rehabilitation secretaries are highly encouraged to attend). Participants from the Native American partner agencies and community based programs are invited to attend Rehab Academy when space is available.

The Academy is taught over a two week period in a spaced learning manner and focuses on comprehensive assessment, eligibility, IPE development, case management vocational counseling, job placement, Ticket–to–work, supportive employment and transition. Sample cases are discussed and developed throughout the training. The academy is designed to follow VR process so new staff learn to make appropriate eligibility decisions as well as decisions about suitable vocational goals.

Participants give the Academy high marks in terms of content and satisfaction with content delivery. SDU makes good use of technology in offering the training.

SDU will implement an Academy training for new Support Staff in terms of Rehabilitation Technicians and Vocational Secretaries in relation to their job duties and fiscal processes adapted by the agency. All new staff as well as established support staff are encouraged to attend this new addition to the training options of the agency. The training will empathize the support duties respective to caseloads, participants and vendors.

The Division uses a customized software application called the Training Administration System (TAS) to track employee training progress. This software provides the information necessary to summarize the training requested and completed on an individual basis. It provides the data necessary to analyze overall progress of individuals and groups of employees toward obtaining and retaining required credentials. The system offers the agency the ability to track all employees' training and enables employees to request training offered by other vendors.

The SDU routinely acquires and disseminates research and information via electronic mail and Agency Intranet. Enhancements have been made to the SDU webpage which now includes training announcements, Rehab Academy materials, and an archive of recorded webinars. The SDU intranet page will also be updated with new upcoming training opportunities based on professional development topics. The addition to this feature will support both management and staff to identify valuable training within related VRtopics.

Although SDU has been understaffed over the past year, the intention is for SDU to continue to collaborate with partners from TACE and UA Currents to develop new training, conduct training needs assessment and then utilize this information to support more training development for the agency. UA Currents offers workshops andseminars in various topics related to Rehabilitation Counseling all geared to sharpen counselors' skills and abilities in serving citizens of New Mexico who have disabilities. The training topics are always based on expressed needs, whether by management or by committees such as the agency's Health and Safety Committee. SDU has recently been working with UA Currents to develop a series of trainings to implement into the Agency sponsored Rehabilitation Academy.

In moving forward with the expansion of training opportunities SDU will continue to coordinate with leaders from other units and representation by various positions within the agency to collaborate and identify valuable trainings that maintain the integrity of the training provided to all staff.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

In New Mexico, there are large portions of the general population whose first language is Spanish or an American Indian dialect. When necessary, the Division obtains the services of interpreters of Spanish and other languages. However, Division staffing, which is consistent with the percentage of minority population and the general population, includes many individuals who are able to communicate in Spanish and native languages. This is most beneficial in terms of providing services to applicants and eligible individuals with limited English speaking ability.

Although not a requirement, the Division may give preference to individuals who are bilingual or multilingual in applying for Division jobs. Many of the Division's field offices have at least one individual who can speak Spanish or an American Indian dialect. The Division's EEO Plan reflects the State's diversity. The Division successfully recruits graduates of New Mexico Highlands University's Vocational Rehabilitation master's program. Many of these graduates are from various minority groups.

In addition, the Division employs several individuals skilled in communicating in American Sign Language. When necessary, interpreters are hired to fulfill communication needs. Video Relay Interpreter equipment has also been installed in more rural field offices where use of live interpreters is quite limited. Staff in those offices have completed training in use of the equipment.

Telecommunications, sensory and other technological aids and devices may be used to assist individual applicants and clients to participate in and benefit from the rehabilitation program. The Division may purchase, lease, or utilize equipment from loan banks to meet these needs, as appropriate. Division staff may consult experts in rehabilitation technology and assistive devices to address client needs. Vocational evaluations and rehabilitation engineering services are purchased through qualified vendors. Other services purchased through qualified vendors include accessibility studies, job modifications, and identifying essential functions of jobs for employers and employees. The Division also employs some staff capable of performing these services.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Division is organizationally placed under the Public Education Department, as is the Special Education Unit, which administers state services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Division has and will continue to coordinate with the Special Education Unit and will coordinate its professional development activities with those provided under IDEA. This activity will be implemented under the auspices of the Secretary of Education. The licensure rules for Rehabilitation Counselors in New Mexico are in agreement with the Public Education Department requirements and competencies applicable to both the school systems to effect school–to– work transition in the high schools and the Division. The Statewide Transition Coordinator provides routine Transition training to all field staff with emphasize on the staff directly providing transition services. IDEA, IEP's, Diagnostic Data are all represented through Transition Services. The Transition Coordinator also provides up–to– date information to staff regarding IDEA and acts as the liaison between DVR and Public Education Department. The agency will continue to encourage Transition Coordinator to maintain a board seat on IDEA, School–to–work Transition Alliance and maintain relations to support Regional Education Cooperative Memberships, and NM Youth Committee. It is the intention of the agency to continue cooperation and coordination with the personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

The Division jointly conducts with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) continuing statewide studies to determine the needs of individuals with disabilities within the State and the best methods to meet those needs. The Division periodically conducts surveys through its programs, projects and activities to ensure that the annual evaluation of effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program meets the goals and objectives set forth in the State Plan, and does not impede the accomplishments of the purpose and policy of federal funding.

As part of the development of the State Plan, the continuing statewide studies include:

1) A triennial comprehensive assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant disabilities who reside in the State, 2) A triennial review of the effectiveness of outreach procedures used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who are unserved and under–served by the vocational rehabilitation system; and 3) A triennial review of the broad variety of methods to provide, expand, and improve vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including individuals receiving supported employment services.

The Division has historically conducted a statewide needs assessment and consumer satisfaction survey of the effectiveness of the State's Vocational Rehabilitation program in providing vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services, especially to individuals with the most significant disabilities. In recent years, this has been interrupted due to budgetary constraints. The Division, in cooperation with the SRC, had an evaluation completed in July of 2015. The evaluation analyzes the extent to which the Division has achieved the goals and priorities established in the State Plan and annual amendments to the plan; and that the Division is in compliance with the evaluation standards and performance indicators established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The State Rehabilitation Commission (SRC) also conducted a consumer satisfaction survey to assist in gaining consumer feedback and assessing consumer perceptions of the program. The SRC contracted with Davis Innovations, Inc. (DI) to perform the 2015 Consumer Satisfaction Survey of randomly selected participants with an "active program status." The results of the assessment (completed in July of 2015) identified Vocational Rehabilitation needs of respondents.

Overall, the NMDVR Consumer Satisfaction Survey findings demonstrate that the NMDVR staff is providing program participants with an extremely satisfying level of service. The high number of consumers that reported being satisfied with the NMDVR services supports this finding. The results show that 86.2% of the respondents reported being either extremely satisfied or satisfied. Compared to the 2012 Consumer Satisfaction survey, which showed 63.0% of the respondents stated being satisfied with NMDVR's services, this represents a 23.2% increase in overall consumer satisfaction since 2012.

Similarly, almost 100% of the respondents reported being treated with courtesy and respect by their counselors (97.7% said "Yes"). Likewise, when asked if the other NMDVR staff treated them with

courtesy and respect, 96.6% said "Yes." Compared to the 2012 Consumer Satisfaction survey, which showed 83.2% stating NMDVR staff were courteous, this represents an increase of 14.5% in staff courteousness. The NMDVR counselors also received high customer satisfaction ratings for their responsiveness. Respondents stated being very satisfied or satisfied with their counselor's response to emails and phone calls (86.9%). Likewise, when asked if their counselor was responsive to their requests for service, 95.2% stated "Yes." The majority of respondents also reported they feel NMDVR understands their disability (86.0% stated "Yes).

Of the respondents' reported barriers to employment, education and training was reported to be the biggest challenge with 58.7% of the consumers citing this as a barrier. The respondents' desire for education and training is further exemplified by the areas with which they identified needing assistance (job development 43.1%; education 41.7%; training 43.1%). Medical services were cited as the second most common barrier to employment at 33.3%, with transportation and mental health services being cited equally as the third and fourth most common barrier (27.0%). Ultimately, the goal of DVR is the employment of individuals with disabilities. In general, the employment rates of people with disabilities in the United States after receiving vocational rehabilitation services are consistently found to be around 60% (Source: A. Dutta, R. Gervey, F. Chan, C. Chou, and N. Ditchman, "Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Employment Outcomes for People with Disabilities: A United States Study," J Occup Rehabil. 18, 2008, pgs. 326–34.). The fact that NMDVR clients exhibited a 53.6% employment rate shows that services provided to clients by NMDVR staff are approaching national average performance.

Recommendations Based on the tabulated results of the survey and the suggestions provided by the respondents, Davis Innovations offers NMDVR the following recommendations:

Update NMDVR Program Participant Contact List – To maximize the number of survey responses and thus generate greater statistical significance, DI recommends the NMDVR update their program participant contact list. Out of 500 consumer names and addresses DI received from NMDVR, nine (9) were duplicates; and 139 were returned by the Post Office with "undeliverable names/addresses." Also, a 70% survey response is an extremely optimistic response rate. Based on this survey response rate of 25%, DI recommends a survey mailing of 1400 to known individuals at known addresses to achieve a survey with 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error for the current set of 5,871 open NMDVR cases.

Provide Staff and Counselors with Training and Support – Overall, respondents' reported NMDVR counselors and staff as being responsive, courteous, and helpful. However, similar to the 2012 survey results, respondent responses to the open–ended questions revealed that participant interactions with NMDVR staff are complicated. In order to fully respond to the cited barriers to employment identified in the Summary of Results section of this report, DI recommends ongoing training for counselors. In addition, in the instances of counselor turnover, DI recommends the staff that interacts with consumers receive cross training to better assist consumers who are between assigned counselors.

Enhance Participants' Access to Training, Education, and Job Support Services – To meet the NMDVR consumer's need for job training and education, DI recommends enhancing training programs to provide greater access to these needed services. Furthermore, engaging in "best practices research" such as documented in the research literature can provide NMDVR policy makers with methods to improve service provision.

New Mexico DVR has implemented two additional programs that are intended to expand and increase Supported Employment services throughout the state. These services are targeted to youth and individuals who have been identified as most severely disabled through innovative programs under the umbrella of Partners for Employment. The first program, Project Search was implemented in 2012–2013 to provide opportunities in collaboration with statewide school districts, and business partners in conjunction with DOH, toward access to employment opportunities that are unique and innovative in serving individuals with significant disabilities. Partners for Employment is identified as the statewide entity to oversee and manage a variety of Supported Employment Programs. This program is intended to serve and support individuals with a variety of disabling conditions.

The Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program is designed to provide a network of providers for Social Security beneficiaries to obtain employment outcome services. NMDVR is no longer an Employment Network, however the division continues to provide services and information to participants related to Social Security Benefits. This includes five field staff located throughout the state that specialize in benefits advisement. NMDVR and Behavioral Health Services: NMDVR is a member of New Mexico's Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative. During the past four years, work continued toward intra–agency collaboration specifically dealing with behavioral health services among all 17 agencies/divisions of the BHPC. Under the terms of an agreement reached with the State Behavioral Health Services Division, NMDVR continues to facilitate and monitor employment services for people within the BHSD system and to assist others in making connections with that system. Coordination of services among BHSD, NMDVR, regional employment providers, and mental health providers can increase successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

The NMDVR Benefits Advisement Services Coordinator attends the Medicaid Advisory Council meeting quarterly to remind and update all council members about employment issues and Medicaid. The Benefits Advisement Services Coordinator also has a strong relationship with the Medicaid eligibility trainers and supervisors. In addition, NMDVR maintains a strong relationship with University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM CDD). NMDVR staff have developed short training videos on different working issues and have teamed with UNM CDD units to provide statewide trainings in addition to an annual Ticket to Work Job Fair.

Collaboration with agencies providing services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals: Beginning in FFY 2013, NMDVR has participated in a collaborative effort with NM School for the Deaf, NM Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, NM Workforce Connection, Community Outreach Program for the Deaf and NM Public Education Department. Representatives from these agencies meet on a regular basis to explore and implement improvements in service provision to deaf and hard of hearing individuals. This collaboration continues to increase resource information sharing between representatives of the above agencies, Ticket–to–Work overview information for coalition representatives, increased awareness of specific needs and issues of Transition students who are deaf/hard of hearing, and improved collaboration regarding referral of deaf and hard of hearing Transition students to vocational rehabilitation services statewide. In FFY 2014, information and awareness presentations have begun with both NMDVR field offices and school districts. This effort will continue state–wide. Some members of this coalition attended the Pepnet Summit in January 2014. Efforts are underway to propose a Memorandum of Understanding between member groups toward increased sharing of service outcome data.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

NMDVR recognizes the need to address the vocational rehabilitation needs of minorities. One such measure is to work toward the improvement of community rehabilitation programs within the state to address rehabilitation needs of minorities, especially those in remote rural communities.

Central western New Mexico is a very large territory inclusive of Indian Reservation land. American Indian populations have access to four community rehabilitation providers through their local tribal affiliations when resident on Indian land. However, for non–American Indian populations access to community rehabilitation programs is limited to one provider and again funding is an issue relative to acquiring supported employment services. There are four staff in the Gallup DVR office serving a geographic community of almost 80 miles to the east, 25 miles to the Arizona state line, not less than 80 miles to the south, and not less than 50 miles to the north. Outside of Gallup the services available to American Indian populations become even more limited, there is not much available in terms of community rehabilitation programs in central western New Mexico.

The Division continues to explore ways to improve services to American Indian populations as well as increasing staff competencies with respect to cultural differences. Division resources will determine priority and further development of these broad general goals of Career Development, Successful Employment Outcomes, and DVR–SRC Collaboration:

1. Career Development: Develop, create, increase, and improve specific training at Rehabilitation Academy specific to / incorporating Native American issues such as: a. cultural competency issues, b. identifying / listing statewide community services providers specific to Native Americans and making this information available to all counseling staff / teams c. best practices in developing professional relationships with the 121 Programs in the state (who's who, where located, 121 Program Strengths, and their employment outreach activities) d. the array of services 121 programs offers (what they actually offer / provide and not what is specified by law, to learn how best to dovetail DVR services / strengths with 121 Program services /strengths e. dual participation of Native Americans in both 121 Programs and State VR, citing the laws / rules that govern this f. have 121 Program Directors participate and/or do the topic presentations / training at Rehabilitation Academy g. identifying best practices already employed by DVR counseling staff / teams that could be shared with attendees of Rehabilitation Academy.

Successful Employment Outcomes: h. Target increased successful employment outcomes of Native American participants as a strategic goal of the Division. This will help give focus and direction to achieving such a goal. i. Explore self–employment opportunities with Native American DVR participants who have expressed desire to remain in their community with their business and / or those who want to locate their business in both their community and in the larger community j. Develop working collaborative partnerships with statewide community services providers with outreach and /or specific services to Native American populations, such as Zia Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America, Inc.; Abrazos Family Support Services: Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs; Native American Disability Las Center, Inc.; and of course, the Centers for Independent Living throughout the state. k. Many DVR counselors and staff who have expertise and / or have established networks with services to

Native American populations: Gallup, Farmington, Rio Rancho, Taos, and other DVR venues. Their expertise, networking connections, and best practices should be garnered and made available to all DVR counseling staff / teams.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

There are rural locations throughout the state where population is scarce and distances vast from community to community with few rehabilitation community providers. These rural locations are itinerantly served by DVR offices in larger communities with many community rehabilitation services providers stretching their resources as best they can to extend services.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

Collaboration with Statewide Workforce Investment System: NMDVR has had representatives in the State and all of the local Workforce Investment boards since their inception in 2000. Representatives address the issues and interests of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system, both in developing policy and influencing service delivery.

Although the Navigator program is completed, it did serve to increase awareness of vocational rehabilitation services and employment–related needs of people with disabilities at local One–Stops. The result is that One–Stop staff have established and maintain contact with NMDVR counselors throughout the state.

The Operator of the One–Stop Provider in the Central and Northern regions of New Mexico sits on the State Rehabilitation Council as a business representative. He has committed to improving greater collaboration and resource sharing in both regions.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

Youth with a disability: Services provided to an individual with a disability, aged 14–24, not in school; or who does not qualify for services under IDEA. VR may provide youth with disabilities who are in transition from secondary school to postsecondary education and employment. The term is typically associated with services provided under the Workforce System.

Student with a disability: A student who is eligible for and receiving special education under IDEA or be considered a person with a disability under Section 504, and not younger than the earliest age allowable under IDEA or a state established age if lower, and not older than 21 or a higher age if set by state law as permitted under IDEA. Individualized plan developed by the public school systems for a special education student which identifies educational goals, objectives and services to be provided to the student. In the state of New Mexico when a student reaches age 14, his or her IEP should also include a transition plan that addresses services and support focused towards post–school outcomes.

Services provided by DVR to students with disabilities and youth with disabilities in collaboration with local educational & community agencies to provide exploration and other services such as counseling and self–advocacy training in the early stages of the transition process.

Required activities of Pre–Employment Transition Services (PETS) include: Job Exploration Counseling, Work–based learning experiences such as internships, counseling on opportunities for

postsecondary training, Job readiness skills training to develop social and independent living skills, and self–advocacy skills.

The Division can authorize activities which include: implementation of effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces; developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary educational experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment; providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities; disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section; coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.); applying evidence–based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of this section; developing model transition demonstration projects; establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving states, local educational agencies, designated state units, developmental disabilities agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goal of this section; and disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally un–served populations.

With the implementation of WIOA in July, 2015 the Division will now be required by law to significantly add to the demographics of clients that are served in all DVR offices. Each local office of DVR now must: (1) attend IEP meetings for students with disabilities when invited, (2) work with local workforce development boards, One–stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, (3) work with schools, to coordinate and guarantee the provisions of pre–employment transition services, (4) attend person–centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under Title 19 of the Social Security Act, when invited (WIOA 422). NMDVR is also now required to increase spending to at least 15% of section 110 state allotments for provision of pre–employment transition services, which for NMDVR is $2.5 million per year, which cannot be used to pay administrative costs of providing pre–employment services (WIOA 419). To accomplish the new requirements under WIOA, NMDVR must expand its current workforce.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

Geographically, New Mexico is a large state in land mass with many areas of the state sparsely populated. Many rural areas have few, if any, community rehabilitation providers (CRPs). Along with Rio Grande corridor from Taos in the northern part of the state to Las Cruces in the south, is a concentration of community rehabilitation providers in the larger communities of the Greater Albuquerque Metropolitan area, Socorro, and Las Cruces. The northeast quadrant, southeast quadrant, and the southwest quadrant are the areas most affected by the lack of service providers.

A case in point: the town of Raton in the northeast quadrant currently has no CRP available to provide supported employment services. It is noted that before supported employment services can be agreed upon with a CRP, the individual must also be on the Developmental Disabilities Medicaid Waiver for the long–term funding. A service provider will need to be capable of offering services to the communities of Cimarron (41 miles) and the community of Angel Fire (80 miles) one way. Other communities served by the DVR office, such as Clayton (83 miles), Eagle Nest (65 miles), Springer (38 miles), Maxwell (about 23 miles), and Ute Park (about 50 miles) Many of these areas do not

have the benefit of CRP services. Note: all mileage is one–way distance and the listed communities are not all inclusive of northeast New Mexico served by the DVR Office.

The same holds true for southeastern New Mexico in Lea County. There are two community rehabilitation providers in the town of Hobbs where DVR has a two–person office. Both of these community rehabilitation providers are available only to individuals who live in Lea County to such places as Tatum (50 miles north) and Eunice (50 miles south). One provider specializes in mental health while the other provider specializes in developmental disabilities. All recipients of these services must have long–term funding in place before supported employment services are rendered.

In Southwestern New Mexico, DVR has a two–person office in Silver City where there are two community rehabilitation providers. Both providers make services available to residents in Silver City and Deming (50 miles) but not to the other communities served by the DVR office such as Mimbres (30 miles), Lordsburg (50 miles), Animas (80 miles), and Reserve (85 miles). Note: all mileage is one–way distance and the listed communities are not all inclusive of northeastern New Mexico served by the DVR Office.

3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT .

The Division can authorize activities which include: implementation of effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces; developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary educational experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment; providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities; disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section; coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.); applying evidence–based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of this section; developing model transition demonstration projects; establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving states, local educational agencies, designated state units, developmental disabilities agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goal of this section; and disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally un–served populations.

With the implementation of WIOA in July, 2015 the Division will now be required by law to significantly add to the demographics of clients that are served in all DVR offices. Each local office of DVR now must: (1) attend IEP meetings for students with disabilities when invited, (2) work with local workforce development boards, One–stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, (3) work with schools, to coordinate and guarantee the provisions of pre–employment transition services, (4) attend person–centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under Title 19 of the Social Security Act, when invited (WIOA 422). NMDVR is also now required to increase spending to at least 15% of section 110 state allotments for provision of pre–employment transition services, which for NMDVR is $2.5 million per year, which

cannot be used to pay administrative costs of providing pre–employment services (WIOA 419). To accomplish the new requirements under WIOA, NMDVR must expand its current workforce.

NMDVR is proposing a three–year expansion plan in which it plans to add 50 FTE's over the next three years, or 16 FTE's per year starting in SFY 17. This will include 21– Transition Specialist Vocational Counselors (TRVC) and 2– Transition Coordinators. Justification for the additional FTE's are based on that NM currently has 195 high schools that will need transition services from NMDVR with our proposed TRVC additions. This allows for each TVRC to serve 9 high schools and carry a caseload of 83 transition students a year. Currently NMDVR is spending on average $940,000 a year on pre–employment transition services. The requested 21 TVRC positions are needed to, at a minimum, double our transition expenditures to meet WIOA requirements of $2.5 million. The two transition coordinators are needed to fulfill the requirement of WIOA for the Southern and Northern sections of the state. A Comprehensive Statewide Assessment needs to be done in SFY 17 to determine the needs for Individuals with Disabilities for transition career services and pre–employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Division is an organizational unit of and works with the Public Education Department to facilitate the transition of students who are receiving special education services from the provision of a free appropriate public education under the responsibility of an educational agency. The Division also works with local education agencies to coordinate student referrals to the Division field offices and provide for eligibility determination of the student for vocational rehabilitation services and the development and approval of the Individual Plan for Employment before the student leaves the school setting.

To accomplish the new requirements under WIOA, NMDVR must expand its current workforce. The Public Education Department, of which NMDVR is a division, is the State Education Agency (SEA). Currently the memorandum of understanding with the Public Education Department serves to facilitate the integration and coordination of services to eligible secondary education students in providing a continuum of services that will meet the needs of all Individuals with Disabilities Education Act eligible students. The integrated continuum of services is to be flexible enough to meet the needs of all IDEA eligible students to qualify for DVR services within the available resources, maximize opportunity for students and eliminate limitations and obstacles. Public Education Department is working with Regional Educational Cooperative Memberships to establish intergovernmental agreements.

Currently the Division is establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving local Regional Educational memberships, states, local educational agencies, designated state units, developmental disabilities agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goal of this section; and disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally un–served populations.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

The total number of New Mexicans with disabilities who could potentially be eligible for services and who may or may not apply for vocational rehabilitation services is unknown at this time. Although NMDVR remains on an Order of Selection, all categories have been, and continue to be open since September 2012. There are currently no wait lists for services.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

The following estimates are for non–PETS services in FFY2017:

Number of eligible individuals in the state who will receive services provided with funds under Part B Title I: FFY 2017 Estimate = 9,500.

Estimates for Pre–employment Transition Services: In addition to the above estimates, NMDVR expects to provide specific Pre–employment Transition Services (PETS) to students with disabilities as directed in the Rehabilitation Act as amended in WIOA in 2014. Estimated number to be Served: 2,500

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

Number of eligible individuals in the state who will receive services provided with funds under Part B Title VI: FFY 2017 Estimate = 420.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

Category (non–PETS)

Priority 1: Most Significantly Disabled Title I 1,670

Priority 1: Most Significantly Disabled Title VI 420

Priority 2: Significantly Disabled Title I 6,840

Priority 3: All Other Eligible Title I 570

PETS Category

Priority 1

Estimated Cost:$ 877,057

Estimated Number to be Served:550

Average Cost per Student: $1,594

Priority 2

Estimated Cost: $1,496,156

Estimated Number to be Served: 1,800

Average Cost per Student: $ 831

Priority 3

Estimated Cost: $ 206,067

Estimated Number to be Served: 150

Average Cost per Student: $1,373

Total Estimated Cost: $2,579,580

Total Estimated Number to be Served: 2,500

Total Average Cost Per Student: $1,032

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

NMDVR continues to have all priority categories open. From fall 2012 to present (FFY 2016), all eligible participants are being served and no wait lists are in place.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

NMDVR has requested state matching funds for State FY 2017 necessary to drawn down all available federal match. The estimates below are subject to approval of the increased state matching funds.

The following estimates are for non–PETS services in FFY2017:

• Number of eligible individuals in the state who will receive services provided with funds under Part B Title I: FFY 2017 Estimate = 9,500. • Number of eligible individuals in the state who will receive services provided with funds under Part B Title VI: FFY 2017 Estimate = 420. • Number of eligible individuals in the state who achieve a suitable (consistent with client's skills, aptitudes, and interests) employment outcome for a minimum of 90 days: FFY 2017 Estimate =800. • Number of eligible individuals in the state who are most significantly/significantly disabled persons achieving a suitable (consistent with clients skills, aptitudes, and interests) employment for a minimum of 90 days: FFY 2017 Estimate = 740. • Estimated costs of services: FFY 2017 budgeted for non–PETS services

approximately $9,218,252. • The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is under an Order of Selection. The table below provides estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order.

Category (non–PETS) Priority 1, Title I: Most Significantly Disabled Estimated Funds: $3,134,206 Estimated Number to be Served:1,670 Average Cost of Services $1,877

Priority 1, Title VI: Most Significantly Disabled Estimated Funds: $244,500 Estimated Number to be Served: 420 Average Cost of Services: $582

Priority 2, Title I: Significantly Disabled Estimated Funds: $5,346,586 Estimated Number to be Served: 6,840 Average Cost of Services: $782

Priority 3, Title I: All Other Eligible Estimated Funds: $737,460 Estimated Number to be Served: 570 Average Cost of Services: $1,294

Total Estimated Funds: $9,462,752 Total Estimated Number to be Served: 9,500

Estimates for Pre–employment Transition Services: In addition to the above estimates, NMDVR expects to provide specific Pre–employment Transition Services (PETS) to students with disabilities as directed in the Rehabilitation Act as amended in WIOA in 2014.

With final regulations pending, it is difficult to estimate the number of students that will be provided the five core services under PETS. Below is a chart providing estimates based on the expected fifteen percent set–aside amount of Title I funds for these services. That amount is estimated at $2,579,580 if all state match is available.

PETS Category

Priority 1

Estimated Cost:$ 877,057

Estimated Number to be Served:550

Average Cost per Student: $1,594

Priority 2

Estimated Cost: $1,496,156

Estimated Number to be Served: 1,800

Average Cost per Student: $ 831

Priority 3

Estimated Cost: $ 206,067

Estimated Number to be Served: 150

Average Cost per Student: $1,373

Total Estimated Cost: $2,579,580

Total Estimated Number to be Served: 2,500

Total Average Cost Per Student: $1,032

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

Mission Statement: The mission of the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to encourage and assist the efforts of New Mexicans with disabilities to reach their goals for working and living in their communities.

Vision Statement: Every New Mexican with a disability has the opportunity to contribute to the quality of life and the economic prosperity of the state.

The State Rehabilitation Council and the Division jointly reviewed the results of the 2015 updates to the Satisfaction and Needs survey reported below, taking into account Standards and Indicators and input from the SRC.

Goals and priorities identified by the Division take into account the results of comprehensive statewide needs assessment report of May 2012 addressed later in this text. An update was performed in 2015.

State Goals and Priorities align with Federal Standards and Indicators. For purposes of this Attachment, the reported figures are Federal Fiscal Year.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

State Goals and Priorities will now need to align with the new Federal Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA. These measures include: Employment in the 2nd quarter, Employment in the 4th quarter, Median Earnings, Credential Attainment, Measureable Skills Gains, and Effectiveness in Serving Employers. The Division plans to develop and collect these measures during the Performance Years of 2016 and 2017 to develop baseline measures for future expected levels of performance.

State Goals and Priorities were aligned to provide the appropriate level quality services to increase the number of individuals with disabilities, as stipulated by the data sets below, while assisting them to gain, regain, preserve, or develop their ability to pursue employment.

Projected and Actual Federal Standards and Indicators from previous years were reported by Federal Fiscal Year as described below.

Provide at the appropriate level quality services to increase the number of individuals with disabilities, as stipulated by the data sets below, while assisting them to gain, regain, preserve, or develop their ability to pursue employment.

A. Projected number of clients served for FFY 2017 – 9,500.

– 2014 Projected/Actual: 11,377/9,418 – 2015 Projected/Actual: 11,500/9,437

B. Increase the number of persons achieving an employment outcome consistent with the client's skills, abilities, aptitudes, and interests. Employment outcomes will be for a minimum of 90 days, FFY 2017 Projected 800.

– 2014 Projected/Actual: 760/768 – 2015 Projected/Actual: 800/778

C. Increase the number of clients with significant disabilities served (coded significant disability at eligibility), FFY 2017 Projected 6,840.

– 2014 Projected/Actual:10,808/5,072 – 2015 Projected/Actual:10,900/5,060

D. Increase the number of persons with most significant/significant disabilities achieving an employment outcome consistent with their skills, abilities, aptitudes, and interests, FFY 2017 Projected 740.

– 2014 Projected/Actual: 725/699 – 2015 Projected/Actual: 740/715

Individuals with the most significant disabilities, include their need for supported employment services. The following goals and activities for supported employment are planned during 2014–2015: Continue to provide Title VI–B services to clients in active status in pursuit of goals established in Individualized Plans for Employment. Approximately 420 clients will be provided Title VI–B services during the 2017 Federal Fiscal Year. This is not significant increase in participants, however, this will include an emphasis on services to youth with most significant disabilities as directed in the 2014 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act.

– 2014 Projected/Actual: 340/400 – 2015 Projected/Actual: 350/409

Strategies to enhance and increase Title VI–B services: 1. Continue to use Title VI–B funds for case services exclusively. Funds will be allocated to the Area Offices where the direct delivery of services takes place. These funds will be monitored quarterly and reallocated to the Area Offices based on need. Title I funds will also be used for supported employment services once Title VI–B funds are exhausted or if Title VI–B funds are rolled up into Title1 at the federal level. 2. Continue to purchase supported employment services from programs on either a fee–for–services basis or through milestone payments developed regionally and/or through specific Memorandum of Understanding

with other state agencies, for clients with the most significant disabilities. 3. Continue to seek long–term funding support from agencies providing supported employment. The Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health, provides long term funding for supported employment to provider agencies under the Developmental Disabilities Waiver and Mi Via Waivers. The Division works collaboratively with the Behavioral Health Services Division, Department of Health, New Mexico Department of Human Services, and the NM Behavioral Health Collaborative to assure ongoing support services for individuals with severe disabling mental illness served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. 4. The Division continues to work with other state agencies under memoranda of understanding focusing on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities under supported employment plans. 5. Individual placements in integrated work settings at wages comparable to non–disabled peers performing similar work continue to beemphasized. 6. The Division has increased its collaboration through participation with provider agencies; as well as independent and statewide entities to promote “Employment First” principles for individuals with the most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. One result of this collaboration in FFY 2014 was the training of 16 field staff in the Discovery process for non– traditional career development. Discovery is a customized employment process that gathers information through activities of daily living that can be translated into possibilities for meaningful and purposeful job placement. The goal of this activity is successful employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible for Supported Employment. 7. The Division has established statewide liaisons in supported employment to assist the statewide Supported Employment Coordinator in technical assistance and conducting staff training relevant to supported employment policy and service provision. Division liaisons are active participants and attendees in supported employment trainings provided by experts at the local, regional, and national level. Division liaisons participate regularly in regional quarterly meetings held between collaborating agencies and the Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health. 8. The Division has a devoted staff person who provides guidance and technical assistance to staff, service providers, and other stakeholders. This individual also compiles information and data, and tracks Supported Employment activities. 9. The Division continues to support and promote strategies to assure employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. 10. NMDVR has an Intergovernmental Agreement with UNM Center for Development and Disability to continue training programs under Project Search. This intensive career training program includes multip0le youth with most significant disabilities. This effort is in keeping with the emphasis on serving this population via Title VI finds with the 50% set aside establish under WIOA.

Overarching Division strategies addressing rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities and individuals with the most significant disabilities include their need for supported employment services. The primary strategy directly related to addressing rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities and those with significant disabilities including supported employment needs is to reduce turnover and fill vocational rehabilitation counselor positions. The Division is addressing both career development and succession planning in our long–term strategic planning goal of having an operational, comprehensive Career Development/Succession Planning system capable of meeting the expansion needs and innovation needs of the rehabilitation services delivery system inclusive of administrative supports to competently reinforce the rehabilitation services delivery system. The agency has surveyed staff in terms eligibility for retirement, whether staff are interested in returning to employment after retirement, and the career enhancement needs of staff so that they can prepare themselves for potential movement into leadership roles. NMDVR has made decreasing the vacancy rate a priority and is committed to maintaining low vacancy rates in FFY 2017 and beyond.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

See following Sections.

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

Statewide Needs Assessment Goals and priorities identified by the Division are based on an analysis of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment report of July 2015. Some of the findings from the Statewide Needs Assessment are as follows:

Overall, the NMDVR Consumer Satisfaction Survey findings demonstrate that the NMDVR staff is providing program participants with an extremely satisfying level of service. The high number of consumers that reported being satisfied with the NMDVR services supports this finding. The results show that 86.2% of the respondents reported being either extremely satisfied or satisfied. Compared to the 2012 Consumer Satisfaction survey, which showed 63.0% of the respondents stated being satisfied with NMDVR's services, this represents a 23.2% increase in overall consumer satisfaction since 2012.

Similarly, almost 100% of the respondents reported being treated with courtesy and respect by their counselors (97.7% said "Yes"). Likewise, when asked if the other NMDVR staff treated them with courtesy and respect, 96.6% said "Yes." Compared to the 2012 Consumer Satisfaction survey, which showed 83.2% stating NMDVR staff were courteous, this represents an increase of 14.5% in staff courteousness.

The NMDVR counselors also received high customer satisfaction ratings for their responsiveness. Respondents stated being very satisfied or satisfied with their counselor's response to emails and phone calls (86.9%). Likewise, when asked if their counselor was responsive to their requests for service, 95.2% stated "Yes." The majority of respondents also reported they feel NMDVR understands their disability (86.0% stated "Yes"). Of the respondents' reported barriers to employment, education and training was reported to be the biggest challenge with 58.7% of the consumers citing this as a barrier. The respondents' desire for education and training is further exemplified by the areas with which they identified needing assistance (job development 43.1%; education 41.7%; training 43.1%). Medical services was cited as the second most common barrier to employment at 33.3%, with transportation and mental health services being cited equally as the third and fourth most common barrier (27.0%).

It is noted that the State's Goals and Priorities outlined in this Attachment align with the Standards and Indicators. However, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) has recommended the following to support and enhance the State's Goals and Indicators:

Ultimately, the goal of DVR is the employment of individuals with disabilities. In general, the employment rates of people with disabilities in the United States after receiving vocational rehabilitation services are consistently found to be around 60% . The fact that NMDVR clients exhibited a 53.6% employment rate shows that services provided to clients by NMDVR staff are approaching national average performance.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

State performance now align with the new Federal Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA. These measures include: Employment in the 2nd quarter, Employment in the 4th quarter, Median Earnings, Credential Attainment, Measureable Skills Gains, and Effectiveness in Serving Employers. The Division plans to develop and collect these measures during the Performance Years of 2016 and 2017 to develop baseline measures for future expected levels of performance in these areas.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) has implemented a corrective action, as of July 1, 2014, for State Fiscal Year 2015. As of that date, the period of eligibility criteria was implemented and applied to all federal grant expenditures. All grant expenditures, and the associated match, have been recorded in the year of appropriation, which is within the twelve-month of the initial grant period. NMDVR implemented a revised accounting process to ensure the recording of federal grant expenditures and associated state match expenditures, as well as program income and funds transfers from other agencies that also are used as match, in the state SHARE accounting system.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES.

Description of Priority categories

It is the policy of NMDVR to provide vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals under an order of selection. Under the order of selection, the Division has established three priority groups. Every individual determined to be eligible for services is placed in the appropriate priority group based upon the documentation used to determine eligibility and/or vocational rehabilitation needs. Selection and placement in a priority group is based solely upon the significance of the eligible individual’s disability, and is not based upon the type of disability, geographical area in which the individual lives, projected type of vocational outcome, age, sex, race, color, creed, religion, or national origin of the individual.

The priority groups are:

(1) Priority Group 1. Eligible individuals with a most significant disability are persons:

a. Who have a severe physical or mental impairment which seriously impedes the individuals functional capacities in three or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, cognitive abilities, or work tolerance or attendant factors) in terms of an employment outcome;and b. whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple and intensive vocational rehabilitation services in order to result in an employment outcome.

(2) Priority Group 2. Eligible individuals with a significant disability are persons: a. who have a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, cognitive abilities, or work tolerance or attendant factors) in terms of an employment outcome; and b. for whom vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

(3) Priority Group 3. Other Eligible individuals are persons with a disability who meet eligibility criteria, but do not meet the definition of a significant or most significant disability.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

Budget reductions experienced during fiscal years 2009–2013 had resulted in limited financial and personnel resources. Analysis of available resources resulted in a projection that by February, 2011, NMDVR lacked sufficient resources to provide services to all eligible individuals. The Division, in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, determined the necessity of implementation of an order of selection which ensures service delivery to eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities, first, individuals with significant disabilities second, and individuals with a disability third.

FFY 2017 is budgeted at approximately $9,462,752, including $244,500 Title VI funding, for non–PETS services. Program income remains budgeted a t$400,000. It is estimated that NMDVR will serve 9,500 individuals for federal fiscal year 2017. This projection could change based on funding and personnel available to serve participants. NMDVR continues to have all priority categories open. As of fall 2012, all eligible participants are being served and no wait lists are in place.

Vacancy rates, while recently improving, have been the primary factor necessitating remaining in an Order of Selection. At present, it is unknown whether the PETS set aside requirement will trigger a return to wait lists.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

Priority Category 1 Number of individuals to be served: 2,185 Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services: 66 Number of individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services: 131 Cost of services: $3,378,706

Priority Category 2 Number of individuals to be served: 6,840 Estimated Number of individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services: 547 Estimated Number of individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services: 273 Cost of services: $5,346,586

Priority Category 3 Number of Individuals to be served: 475 Estimated number of individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services: 19 Estimated number of individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services: 71 Cost of services: $ 737,460

PETS Category

The 2014 amendment to the Rehabilitation Act under WIOA includes a 15% set–aside of federal match for Pre– employment services (PETS) to students with disabilities. The following chart estimates the number of students, timeline and cost for PETS services. Since students who are potentially eligible for VR services may receive PETS, there is a potential that some students who are not yet eligible for NMDVR services would continue to receive the five core PETS services (job exploration counseling, work–based learning experiences, counseling regarding post– secondary opportunities, workplace readiness training and self–advocacy training). Students found eligible, but not yet in “Service” status under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IEP), would be placed on a wait list for services if a list for their priority group had to be implemented. NMDVR does not anticipate initiating wait lists in FFY 2017, however this could change based on final regulations, funding match, staff vacancies and referral rates.

PETS Priority 1 Estimated Cost:$ 877,057 Estimated Number to be Served:550 Average Cost per Student: $1,594

PETS Priority 2 Estimated Cost: $1,496,156 Estimated Number to be Served: 1,800 Average Cost per Student: $ 831

PETS Priority 3 Estimated Cost: $ 206,067 Estimated Number to be Served: 150 Average Cost per Student: $1,373

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

Time within which goals are to be achieved (all priority categories): 10/01/2016 – 09/30/2017

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order NMDVR shall continue to plan for and provide services to all participants being served under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) prior to, and at the time of implementation of the order of selection irrespective of the severity of the participant’s disability. Participants that have been moved off of the waiting list and who are receiving services will also continue to do so regardless of whether their priority group is closed. Participants shall be placed in priority categories at the time of eligibility determination.

Depending upon Division resources, the categories shall be closed for services in ascending order beginning with Category 3 and proceeding to Categories 2 and 1. Services shall be provided only to those individuals in an open category. Individuals with the most significant disabilities (priority category 1) will be selected for services before all others.

NMDVR will inform each participant on their caseloads:

(1) Of the priority groups in the order of selection; (2) If eligible, of the individual’s assignment to a priority group; (3) Of the individual’s right to appeal that assignment; (4) If eligible and in a priority

group not being served, that they can remain on a waiting list until such time that the priority group is served; and (5) Of information and referral services available to all applicants.

Cases in eligible status within a closed priority group will be placed in delayed status and remain on a waiting list until such time as resources allow for the release of cases to be served. No IPE will be written for cases on the waiting list. Staff will continue to take applications, diagnose and evaluate all applicants to determine eligibility and assign a priority group. If an eligible participant is placed in a closed priority group, the case will go on the waiting list and no IPE will be written.

When analysis of resources indicates the ability to open a priority group, the staff will receive notice along with a list of participants on their caseload who can be removed from delayed status. Eligible participants will be released from delayed status based on priority assignment and their application date, releasing those with the earliest application date. Staff will contact identified participants to develop and implement their Individualized Plan for Employment. Any participant with an IPE that existed prior to the date an order of selection was implemented, irrespective of their priority group, will continue to receive services as planned. Such an IPE may be amended if the changes are necessary for the individual to continue progress toward achieving an appropriate employment outcome, or are other Wise necessary within policy. Persons requiring post–employment services will also be provided the necessary services regardless of priority group assignment.

Information and referral services will remain available to eligible participants who are not in an open priority group. These participants will be given information and guidance, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining or regaining employment, and will be appropriately referred to Federal and State programs (other than the vocational rehabilitation program) including other components of the statewide workforce investment system. No IPE will be written to provide such services to these individuals.

All priority groups were open as of fall 2012. On–going assessment of expenditures, expenditure projections for new (not yet written) Individualized Plans for Employment, PETS set aside requirements and staff vacancies continue to be used to determine the need to close one or more priority categories in FFY2017.

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

NMDVR has not elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of the established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

The 2014 amendment to the Rehabilitation Act under WIOA includes a 15% set–aside of federal match for Pre– employment services (PETS) to students with disabilities. Since students who are potentially eligible for VR services may receive PETS, there is a potential that some students who are not yet eligible for NMDVR services would continue to receive the five core PETS services (job exploration counseling, work–based learning experiences, counseling regarding post– secondary opportunities, workplace readiness training and self–advocacy training). Students found eligible, but not yet in “Service” status under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IEP), would be placed on a wait list for services if a list for their priority group had to be implemented. NMDVR does not anticipate initiating wait lists in FFY 2017, however this could change based on final regulations, funding match, staff vacancies and referral rates.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Continue to provide Title VI–B services to clients in active status in pursuit of goals established in Individualized Plans for Employment. Approximately 420 clients will be provided Title VI–B services during the 2017 Federal Fiscal Year. This is not significant increase in participants, however, this will include an emphasis on services to youth with most significant disabilities as directed in the 2014 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act.

– 2014 Projected/Actual: 340/400 – 2015 Projected/Actual: 350/409

Strategies to enhance and increase Title VI–B services: 1. Continue to use Title VI–B funds for case services exclusively. Funds will be allocated to the Area Offices where the direct delivery of services takes place. These funds will be monitored quarterly and reallocated to the Area Offices based on need. Title I funds will also be used for supported employment services once Title VI–B funds are exhausted or if Title VI–B funds are rolled up into Title1 at the federal level. 2. Continue to purchase supported employment services from programs on either a fee–for–services basis or through milestone payments developed regionally and/or through specific Memorandum of Understanding with other state agencies, for clients with the most significant disabilities. 3. Continue to seek long–term funding support from agencies providing supported employment. The Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health, provides long term funding for supported employment to provider agencies under the Developmental Disabilities Waiver and Mi Via Waivers. The Division works collaboratively with the Behavioral Health Services Division, Department of Health, New Mexico Department of Human Services, and the NM Behavioral Health Collaborative to assure ongoing support services for individuals with severe disabling mental illness served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. 4. The Division continues to work with other state agencies under memoranda of understanding focusing on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities under supported employment plans. 5. Individual placements in integrated work settings at wages comparable to non–disabled peers performing similar work continue to be emphasized. 6. The Division has increased its collaboration through participation with provider agencies; as well as independent and statewide entities to promote “Employment First” principles for individuals with the most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. One result of this collaboration in FFY 2014 was the training of 16 field staff in the Discovery process for non– traditional career development. Discovery is a customized employment process that gathers information through activities of daily living that can be translated into possibilities for meaningful and purposeful job placement. The goal of this activity is successful employment outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible for Supported Employment. 7. The Division has established statewide liaisons in supported employment to assist the statewide Supported Employment Coordinator in technical assistance and conducting staff training relevant to supported employment policy and service provision. Division liaisons are active participants and attendees in supported employment trainings provided by experts at the local, regional, and national level. Division liaisons participate regularly in regional quarterly meetings held between collaborating agencies and the Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health. 8. The Division has a devoted staff person who provides guidance and technical assistance to staff, service providers, and other stakeholders. This individual also compiles information and data, and tracks Supported Employment activities. 9. The Division continues to support and promote strategies to assure employment opportunities for individuals with the most

significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. 10. NMDVR has an Intergovernmental Agreement with UNM Center for Development and Disability to continue training programs under Project Search. This intensive career training program includes multiple youth with most significant disabilities. This effort is in keeping with the emphasis on serving this population via Title VI finds with the 50% set aside establish under WIOA.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

Extended services are provided after DVR case closure and are primarily provided by DD Waiver funding allocated through DOH/DDSD. These funds are intended to provide long term services and support and may include additional employment needs such as long term job coaching, on–site advocacy and job advancement and job retention opportunities as needed for the life–time of the job. Additional resources for long term services and supports may also be provided through natural supports such as family, friends, employers and other community contacts. It is noted that time limits are not defined in the Division's Manual of Operational Procedures; rather, each case is assessed in terms of individual needs for supported employment services.

Youth Development Inc. (YDI) and the Office of the State of New Mexico, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), are establishing a collaborative partnership to facilitate the transition of youth (ages 14 to 22) from YDI Educational programs to the achievement of their desired post–school outcomes, with a focus on employment; post–secondary education; training and lifelong learning; community participation; and healthy lifestyles; as well as facilitating provision of transition services to all participants who attend YDI programs. YDI and DVR enter into this formal collaboration for the provision of services that allows youth to obtain training through the provision of Career Planning: (the provision of a client–centered approach in the delivery of service, designed to provide job, education, and career counseling, as appropriate during program participation and after job placement). Career Pathway: (a combination of rigorous and high–quality education, training, and other services that includes counseling to support individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals).

NMDVR plans to utilize the 50% of Supported Employment funds set aside for youth with most significant disabilities to provide extended services, for up to four years, under the Partners for Employment and Project Search programs described in previous sections as well as extended services related to the partnership with YDI.

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

In an effort to expand programs and services to individuals and youth who are eligible for Supported Employment services; New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed intergovernmental agreements with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to implement Partners for Employment initiatives and Project Search. New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is

working in collaboration with the founders of Project Search out of Cincinnati, Ohio to expand services statewide with a focus on rural areas throughout the state. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD), UNM Hospital, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD, Best Buddies, Adelante, Empowerment, Albuquerque Public Schools, Rio Rancho Public Schools, Gallup McKinley schools, Office of Special Education and Rehab Services (OSERS) and Project Search founders have given approval to replicate this program in New Mexico. Five (5) future sites for Project Search have been slated to begin in August of 2017 and are expected to run through June of 2018.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

The Division continues to expand and improve services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, to individuals who are minorities, or individuals who have been unserved or under–served. Client data is examined to determine increased utilization of services in specific areas. Additionally, testimony received in public hearings that supports this data is considered. When budget expansion request is requested, final approval of such action by the Public Education Department, the Legislature and the Governor enacts the decision. The Divisions FY2017 General Fund Appropriation Request was $6,569,000. This reflects an increase of $876,000 over the FY2016 Operating Budget. The Division continues to collaborate with the Governor’s Commission on Disability on two initiatives: 1) increase direct services and support personnel services to deaf – blind individuals through existing community providers and 2) transfer of the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program from the Division to the Governor’s Commission. This transition is now complete.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS.

NMDVR has distributed video relay interpreter equipment in area offices where live interpreting is limited. Training of field staff on use of this technology is completed. While live interpreters are always the preference, this technology allows for improved access to VR services by deaf and hard of hearing applicants and participants, especially in rural areas.

Assistive technology services and devices are primarily identified as part of the Individualized Plan for Employment on a case–by–case basis for each participant.

The New Mexico Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP) provides a loan bank of technological devices to participants. Staff members on the NMTAP provide technical assistance and demonstrations on various devices. The NMTAP is now transferred to the Governor’s Commission on Disability, but will remain a resource to VR staff and participants.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM.

Benefits advisement services are provided to enhance participation in VR by Social Security disability beneficiaries who tend to be underserved. Services aid to address concerns about the effect of employment on benefits as well as provide information regarding incentives and benefits of employment.

The NMDVR Benefits Advisement Services Coordinator attends the Medicaid Advisory Council meeting quarterly to remind and update all council members about employment issues and Medicaid. The Benefits Advisement Services Coordinator also has a strong relationship with the Medicaid eligibility trainers and supervisors. In addition, NMDVR maintains a strong relationship with University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM CDD). NMDVR staff have developed short training videos on different working issues and have teamed with UNM CDD units to provide statewide trainings in addition to an annual Ticket to Work Job Fair.

The Division continues to explore ways to improve services to American Indian populations as well as increasing staff competencies with respect to cultural differences. NMDVR recently updated a Memorandum of Understanding with Pueblo of Jemez Vocational Rehabilitation towards coordinated provision of services. Coordination and outreach with other American Indian vocational rehabilitation programs in the state is on-going. Addition of a Native American Liaison position is part of the agency's goals, but is not anticipated in the next program year.

NMDVR currently has one contracted Veteran outreach coordinator (VOC) and is working to expand to two VOC's in SFY17. Each VOC will conduct outreach services to either the Southern half or Northern half of the state, separated by the I-40 landmark. Currently the total "veteran clients" reached by the VOC is roughly 160 veterans. VOC is working on compiling data to track their current status individually. Many veterans are moving forward with NMDVR Services and others have been referred to other services (i.e. Social Security, Workforce Solutions, Federal VA, Vet Centers, and many other places) which are intended to help the veterans' readiness for DVR services and employment. The VOC follows each veteran through both external and internal DVR processes to ensure veterans stay engaged in services.

Division resources will determine priority and further development of these broad general goals of Career Development, Successful Employment Outcomes, and DVR–SRC Collaboration:

1. Career Development Develop, create, increase, and improve specific training at Rehabilitation Academy specific to / incorporating Native American issues such as: – Cultural competency issues, – identifying / listing statewide community services providers specific to Native Americans and making this information available to all counseling staff / teams – Best practices in developing professional relationships with the 121 Programs in the state (who's who, where located, 121 Program Strengths, and their employment outreachactivities) – The array of services 121 programs offer (what they actually offer / provide and not what is specified by law, to learn how best to dovetail DVR services / strengths with 121 Program services /strengths – Dual participation of Native Americans in both 121 Programs and State VR, citing the laws / rules that govern this – have 121 Program Directors participate and/or do the topic presentations / training at Rehabilitation Academy – identifying best practices already employed by DVR counseling staff / teams that could be shared with attendees of Rehabilitation Academy

2. Successful Employment Outcomes a. Target increased successful employment outcomes of Native American participants as a strategic goal of the Division. This will help give focus and direction to achieving such a goal. b. Explore self–employment opportunities with Native American DVR participants who have expressed desire to remain in their community with their business and / or those who want to locate their business in both their community and in the larger community c. Develop working collaborative partnerships with statewide community services providers with outreach and /or specific services to Native American populations, such as Zia Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America, Inc.; Abrazos Family Support Services: Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs; Native American Disability Las Center, Inc.; and of course, the Centers for Independent Living throughout the state. d. Many DVR counselors and staff who have expertise and / or have established networks with services to Native American populations: Gallup, Farmington, Rio Rancho, Taos, and other DVR venues. Their expertise, networking connections, and best practices should be garnered and made available to all DVR counseling staff / teams.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES).

With the implementation of WIOA in July 2014 each local office of DVR now must: (1) attend IEP meetings for students with disabilities when invited, (2) work with local workforce development boards, One–stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, (3) work with schools, to coordinate and guarantee the provisions of pre–employment transition services, (4) attend person–centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under Title 19 of the Social Security Act, when invited (WIOA 422). DVR is also now required to increase spending to at least 15% of section 110 state allotments for provision of pre– employment transition services, which for NMDVR is $2.5 million per year, which cannot be used to pay administrative costs of providing pre–employment services (WIOA419).

To accomplish the new requirements under WIOA, NMDVR must expand its current workforce. The Public Education Department, of which NMDVR is a division, is the State Education Agency (SEA). Currently the memorandum of understanding with the Public Education Department serves to facilitate the integration and coordination of services to eligible secondary education students in providing a continuum of services that will meet the needs of all Individuals with Disabilities Education Act eligible students. The integrated continuum of services is to be flexible enough to meet the needs of all IDEA eligible students to qualify for DVR services within the available resources, maximize opportunity for students and eliminate limitations and obstacles.

Public Education Department is working with Regional Educational Cooperative Memberships to establish intergovernmental agreements. NMDVR plans to provide the five core Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) to students throughout the state largely via these intergovernmental agreements. Core PETS services provided directly by agency staff will also be tracked as part of the 15% set-aside.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

The agency Supported Employment Coordinator continues to act as a resource for community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) and vocational rehabilitation staff. While the agency maintains a memorandum of Understanding with the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, efforts will be made to identify additional service providers and to maintain or improve relationships with existing CRPs.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

State Goals and Priorities will now need to align with the new Federal Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA. These measures include: Employment in the 2nd quarter, Employment in the 4th quarter, Median Earnings, Credential Attainment, Measureable Skills Gains, and Effectiveness in Serving Employers. The Division plans to develop data bases to collect these measures during the Performance Years of 2016 and 2017 to develop baseline measures for future expected levels of performance.

Elements of the Division's Performance Improvement Plan includes: 1. Develop innovative strategies to increase program outcomes in difficult economic times. 2. Develop effective partnerships with participants, employers, vendors and others as appropriate, to improve participants' outcomes and therefore program outcomes. 3. Effectively and efficiently monitor and manage activities and expenditures for all programs for optimal performance. 4. Obtain necessary state match to capture all federal rehabilitation dollars available to NM. 5. Effectively implement an Order of Selection for participant services (priority of service) due to funding cuts. 6. Implement innovative technology alternatives to improve communication, climate, and performance. 7. Prepare for retirement or loss of key staff (Recruitment and Retention).

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

NMDVR continues to be actively involved as a Workforce Development partner in New Mexico. A representative from NMDVR attends meetings with other Workforce Development partners. NMDVR has strategized components which will aide other statewide workforce development systems in assisting individuals with disabilities.

Over the past year The DVR Business Support Specialist has been engaged with developing and evaluating the success of strategic workforce planning and developing relationships between NMDVR and other workforce entities in example: Wagner–Pyser, WIOA, YDI, Apprenticeships, and TAA. NMDVR will strive to maintain this high level of cooperation and participation.

Current strategies which complement existing initiatives or programs and supports expansion of successful employment based strategies: • Use of NMDVR AWARE Service J indicator. FY2015 and beyond Service J coding in the AWARE systemwill be relied upon by the Business Support Teams in identification of Employment ready clients. • Continue established partnerships to promote Education, Training and Career (ETC) events on a quarterly or more frequent basis, begin to include

other partners to the events by provide collaboration across partner organizations to increase participation of youths with disabilities to participate in education, training and employment opportunities • Promotional activities geared towards the NMDVR service of ADA consultation which can be utilized by other components/agencies in the statewide workforce development system. • NMDVR will continue to work towards strengthening relationship between OFFCP and NMDVR. • NMDVR will offer training to other agencies with regards to NMDVR services, processes and requirements. • NMDVR will strive towards improvements in communication and coordination of services around individual job seekers to better leverage resources available through multiple systems utilizing a referral process • NMDVR will continue to work with staff for their better understanding of Labor Market strategies. • NMDVR will make strides towards providing employment experiences or On the Job training activities in the community. Through this strategy, mutual customers can provide experience that may lead to permanent employment. • NMDVR will continue expand engagement of the business sector as a partner in developing career pathways for youth with disabilities in high–growth industries

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

The primary strategy to achieve agency's goals and priorities continues to be filling vacant vocational rehabilitation counselor positions and reducing turnover. A statewide hiring freeze in recent years lead to delays in filling vacant positions. Positions are now being advertised and positions continue to be filled.

With the implementation of WIOA in July 2015 DVR will now be required by law to significantly add to the demographics of clients that are served in all DVR offices. Each local office of DVR now must: (1) attend IEP meetings for students with disabilities when invited, (2) work with local workforce development boards, One–stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, (3) work with schools, to coordinate and guarantee the provisions of pre–employment transition services, (4) attend person–centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under Title 19 of the Social Security Act, when invited (WIOA 422). DVR is also now required to increase spending to at least 15% of section 110 state allotments for provision of pre–employment transition services, which for NMDVR is $2.5 million per year, which cannot be used to pay administrative costs of providing pre–employment services (WIOA 419). To accomplish the new requirements under WIOA, NMDVR must expand its current workforce.

NMDVR is proposing a three year expansion plan in which it plans to add 50 FTE's over the next three years, or 16 FTE's per year starting in SFY 16 contingent on funding. The following is a breakdown of positions requested and type of FTE: • 21– Transition Specialist Vocational Counselors(TRVC) • 2– Program Managers (PM) • 2– Administrative Assistance (AA) • Field Operations Specialist Supervisor (FOSS) • 4– Field Operations Specialist (FOS) • Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) • 14– Supervisor Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors(SVRC) • Transition Coordinators • 2 Business Support Specialist

Justification for the additional FTE's are as follows: • General Caseload's demographics have increasing number of mental health disabilities that significantly impact the severity of disabilities served and prolonging DVR services for clients with them. Current 4 year average is NMDVR sees 3000 mental health disabilities a year or 46 clients with significant mental health disabilities per caseload (Aware data) • Current 4 year average for transition students is 1746 clients a year or 27

transition students per caseload. • Currently NM has 195 High schools that will need transition services from NMDVR with our proposed TVRC additions. This allows for each TVRC to serve 9 high schools and carry a caseload of 83 transition students a year. • Currently NMDVR is spending on average $940,000 a year on pre–employment transition services. The requested 21 TVRC positions are needed to, at a minimum, double our transition expenditures to meet WIOA requirements of $2.5 million. • Addition of 2 PM's and 14 SVRC's will bring NMDVR field span of control down from 14 employees per supervisor to an average of 6 per supervisor which is in line with business standards. • Addition FOSS and FOS positions are needed to cover all 10 operational areas of the state, currently DVR only has FTE's to cover 6 out of 10areas. • Operational Area 1 needs an additional VRC to bring their caseload average down to NMDVR average of 91 clients per caseload. Currently with 5 VRC's area 1's average is 126 clients percaseload. • Operational Area 2 needs an additional VRC to bring their caseload average down to NMDVR average of 91 clients per caseload. Currently with 5 VRC's area 2's average is 136 clients per caseload. • 2 more transition coordinators are needed to fulfill the requirement of WIOA for the Southern and Northern sections of the state. • 2 more Business support specialists are need to fulfill the requirement of WIOA and work withemployers in the southern and northern part of the state.

Expanding the number qualified personnel providing direct participant service will do much to address suggestions made as a result of the latest update to the needs assessment. The identified needs of improved customer service and increased access by participants to training programs would both be addressed by increased staff available to serve participants and increased staff time/expertise available to identify, develop and procure specialized training programs.

In addition to expanding the number of personnel, NMDVR is planning customer service trainings to enhance quality and consistency of service. The agency is also providing specific Supported Employment training to current field staff. This will serve to increase staff expertise in identifying customized employment and individualized training strategies for participants.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

NMDVR has been collaborating with other NM state agency partners in supporting and funding "Partners for Employment". This innovative state–wide contract brings together a variety of both in–state and out of state vocational experts to develop and implement the Discovery process for individuals with the most significant disabling conditions. This process, as well as other non–traditional career development paths, is intended to support and encourage vocational strategies which result in successful employment outcomes for participants. The majority of individuals served as a result of this collaboration are receiving direct training and support by nationally known experts employed by Marc Gold and Associates. In the last several months, NMDVR has participated in and been intimately involved in agency training provided by Marc Gold and Associates. In turn, NMDVR counselors are working directly with employment teams who have made the commitment to support NMDVR participants toward meeting their specific vocational objectives.

In early FY14 NMDVR, was approached to partner with the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD), UNM Hospital, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD), and Best Buddies (Long term provider) where ten (10) students and (2) Adults began cohort 1 Project Search program at UNM Hospital. Results from cohort one nine (9) interns completed the program with 75% employment placement success within the community, (5 placed at UNM Hospital, 2 placed at Embassy Suites, 1 placed at University of New Mexico). Project Search is in its third year of achieving successful employment outcomes for

youth and adults that are eligible to receive Supported Employment services. The Division is working in collaboration with a variety of businesses statewide to expand Project Search opportunities.

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation continues to work in collaboration with the Center for Development and Disability toward the implementation and sustainability of Project Search programs across the state. DVR collaborates with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide information on SSA benefits and Ticket to Work. NM DVR employs Certified Benefits Advisors throughout each Project Search site. Services available to DVR participants include Benefits Advisement Counseling to address Social Security Disability and social Security disability Income benefits income and impact to employment.

The Division has established a replica of Project Search in New Mexico. Currently, UNM Hospital and Hilton Garden Inn Gallup are providing training and internship rotations for 19 students. Project Search allows for three (3) rotations to occur at in various departments. These rotations provide candidates with the opportunity to learn the skills and abilities needed to be successful in the community and subsequently in a career of their choice. Job coaches and teachers will be on site at all times teaching curriculum and job skills. The goal of Project Search is that each candidate will be employed following the completion of the year–long program. Collaboration with several state partners, including the NM Albuquerque Public School (APS) district, Gallup McKinley schools, UNM/CD, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD), UNM Hospital, Hilton Garden Inn Gallup, and Best Buddies (Albuquerque Long term provider) and Empowerment (Gallup Long term provider) have been established.

In an effort to expand programs and services to individuals and youth who are eligible for Supported Employment services; New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed intergovernmental agreements with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to implement Partners for Employment initiatives and Project Search. New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with the founders of Project Search out of Cincinnati, Ohio to expand services statewide with a focus on rural areas throughout the state. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD), UNM Hospital, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD, Best Buddies, Adelante, Empowerment, Albuquerque Public Schools, Rio Rancho Public Schools, Gallup McKinley schools, Office of Special Education and Rehab Services (OSERS) and Project Search founders have given approval to replicate this program in New Mexico. Five (5) future sites for Project Search have been slated to begin in August of 2017 and are expected to run through June of2018.

Reserved Title I funds have traditionally been used to support innovation and expansion operations and activities of both the State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council. This support continues.

The Divisions FY2017 General Fund Appropriation Request was $6,569,000. This reflects an increase of $876,000 over the FY2016 Operating Budget.

The Division continues to collaborate with the Governor’s Commission on Disability on two initiatives: 1) increase direct services and support personnel services to deaf – blind individuals through existing community providers and 2) Transfer of the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program from the Division to the Governor’s Commission. This has now been completed and the program continues to be available for NMDVR participants.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

Strategies to address barriers to equitable access of and participation in state Vocational Rehabilitation Services include:

1. Use of Video Relay Interpreter services. NMDVR has distributed video relay interpreter equipment in area offices where live interpreting is limited. Training of field staff on use of this technology is now complete. While live interpreters are always the preference, this technology will allow for improved access to VR services by deaf and hard of hearing applicants and participants, especially inrural areas. 2. Collaboration with Behavioral Health Services. NMDVR continues work toward intra–agency collaboration dealing with behavioral health services among all agency/divisions in the New Mexico Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative(BHPC). 3. Collaborative partnerships with statewide community service providers. 4. Filling vacant rehabilitation counselor positions and reducingturnover. 5. Addressing the issues and interests of individuals with disabilities in the workforce investment system both in developing policy and influencing service delivery, through representation on State Workforce Boards. 6. Strategies to address barriers to equitable access of and participation in state Supported Employment Services include: 7. Continue to use Title VI–B funds for case services exclusively. Funds will be allocated to the Area Offices where the direct delivery of services takes place. These funds will be monitored quarterly and reallocated to the Area Offices based on need. Title I funds will also be used for supported employment services once Title VI–B funds are exhausted, or in the event that Title VI–B funds are rolled into Title I at the federal level. 8. Continue to purchase supported employment services from programs on either a fee–for–services basis or through milestone payments developed regionally and/or through specific Memorandum of Understanding with other state agencies, for clients with the most significant disabilities. 9. Continue to seek long–term funding support from agencies providing supported employment.

The Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health, provides long term funding for supported employment to provider agencies under the Developmental Disabilities Waiver and Mi Via Waivers. The Division works collaboratively with the Behavioral Health Services Division, Department of Health, New Mexico Department of Human Services, and the NM Behavioral Health Collaborative to assure ongoing support services for individuals with severe disabling mental illness served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. NM DVR works diligently with collaborating partners to assure and provide services that will mitigate and/or prevent potential barriers to employment. Some of the activities that DVR participate ininclude:

Active participation on a variety of committees and board memberships that reviews data with the focus on service outcomes with specific goals and objectives that are targeted throughout each fiscal year. As systemic issues are identified, collaboration with partnering agencies are developed to address identified barriers and concerns.

The Division does not target specific disability groups to provide supported employment services. However, long– term support funding by the State is currently available for those individuals who are either developmentally disabled or who have significant disabling mental illness.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

The Division continues to expand and improve services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, to individuals who are minorities, or individuals who have been unserved or under–served.

Client data is examined to determine increased utilization of services in specific areas. Additionally, testimony received in public hearings that supports this data is considered. The following data represents achieved goals as per the most recently completed program year.

State's Goals and Priorities for the Federal Fiscal Year 2015 (October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015): 1. Number of participants served = 9,364 2. Number of persons achieving a viable employment outcome consistent with the client's skills, abilities, aptitudes, interests, and a minimum of 90 days =824 3. Number of participants with most significant/significant disabilities served (coded significant disabilityat eligibility) = 8,501 4. Number of persons with significant disabilities achieving a viable outcome consistent with their skills, abilities, aptitudes, interests, and a minimum of 90 days =519 5. Number of Title VI–B served clients in active status =409

Strategies that contributed to the achievement of goals and priorities are varied as indicated below: 1. Rehabilitation Academy is available to new and less experienced staff, and to more experienced staff as a refresher. 2. Field fiscal processes are being reviewed by Field Operation Specialists in most areas to maximize efficiency while maintaining compliance with all regulations and standards. 3. Case and caseload reviews are conducted by field program managers routinely utilizing standardized instruments and monthly data reports. 4. Coaching and mentoring are provided by field program managers and lead counselors in field program to promote quality service delivery, support and guidance, and consistent practice. 5. Memoranda of Understanding are developed jointly with the Public Education 6. Department, local school districts, the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, the Behavioral Health Division, to promote collaboration and create systemic improvements. 7. Performance appraisal measures have been standardized to enable cumulative performance aligned with agency goals. 8. Staff is recognized annually to promote an additional incentive to exceed individual and agency goals. 9. Attainment of CSPD standards: newer counseling staff are required to become licensed. 10. Efforts are made to attract higher qualified staff. 11. Continued planning and efforts to reduced ratio of staff to Program Managers allowing more time to managers to focus on Area needs, promote staff development, services to clients, and continuous quality improvement. 12. Factoring in data from Participant Satisfaction and Statewide Needs Assessment recommendations for improved best practices.

Comprehensive strategic planning consists of seven major focus areas: 1. Budget Management – Effective Use of Resources 2. Career Development – Positive Organizational Climate 3. Innovative Technology Alternatives for Communication – Effective Use of Resources 4. Optimize funding for Core Program – Effective Use of Resources 5. Quality Participant Outcomes – Successful Participant Outcomes 6. State Rehabilitation Council and Stakeholder Satisfaction and Statewide Needs Assessment – Participant and Stakeholder Satisfaction 7. Streamlining Processes and Internal Controls – Participant and Stakeholder Satisfaction.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

The agency has experienced vocational rehabilitation counselor and staff turnover in recent years, this has created significant staffing challenges. Although vacancies are being filled, there are a number of less experienced counselors on a learning curve. The achieved employment outcome percentage is expected to improve as new counselors become increasing experienced.

The agency is operating under an Order of Selection. In the fall of 2012 all individuals were moved off of the waiting list. The expected increase in the number of participants served and resulting employment outcomes has occurred. However, it will take more time to realize an increase in the employment outcome percentage of all closures (standard 1.2 & 1.6).

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

Number of Title VI-B served clients in active status =409 Strategies to enhance and increase Title VI-B services included:

1. Continue to use Title VI-B funds for case services exclusively. Funds will be allocated to the Area Offices where the direct delivery of services takes place. These funds will be monitored quarterly and reallocated to the Area Offices based on need. Title I funds will also be used for supported employment services once Title VI-B funds are exhausted. 2. Continue to purchase supported employment services from programs on either a fee-for-services basis or through milestone payments developed regionally and/or through specific Memorandum of Understanding with other state agencies, for clients with the most significant disabilities. 3. Continue to seek long-term funding support from agencies providing supported employment. The Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health, provides long term funding for supported employment to provider agencies under the Developmental Disabilities Waiver and Mi Via Waivers. The Division works collaboratively with the Behavioral Health Services Division, Department of Health, New Mexico Department of Human Services, and the NM Behavioral Health Collaborative to assure ongoing support services for individuals with severe disabling mental illness served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. 4. The Division continues to work with other state agencies under memoranda of understanding focusing on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities under supported employment plans. 5. Individual placements in integrated work settings at wages comparable to non-disabled peers performing similar work continue to

beemphasized. 6. The Division has increased its collaboration through participation with provider agencies; as well as independent and statewide entities to promote “Employment First” principles for individuals with the most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment. 7. The Division has established statewide liaisons in supported employment to assist the statewide Supported Employment Coordinator in technical assistance and conducting staff training relevant to supported employment policy and service provision. Division liaisons are active participants and attendees in supported employment trainings provided by experts at the local, regional, and national level. Division liaisons participate regularly in regional quarterly meetings held between collaborating agencies and the Developmental Disabilities Support Division, Department of Health. 8. The Division has a devoted staff person who provides guidance and technical assistance to staff, service providers, and other stakeholders. This individual also compiles information and data, and tracks Supported Employment activities. 9. The Division continues to support and promote strategies to assure employment opportunities for individuals with the most significant disabilities served under supported employment Individualized Plans for Employment.

Strategies that contributed to achievement of goals included use Title VI-B funds for case services exclusively, purchase of supported employment services from programs on either a fee-for-services basis or through milestone payments developed regionally and/or through specific Memorandum of Understanding with other state agencies, long-term funding support from agencies providing supported employment, and working with other state agencies under memoranda of understanding focusing on serving individuals with the most significant disabilities under supported employment plans.

Other strategies that continue to contribute to achievement of supported employment goals are the devoted SE Coordinator who provides technical support as well as intra and interagency coordination. The SE Coordinator, along with identified area Supported Employment Liaisons (one in each area), monitor SE referrals and follow up toward success in supported employment services.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Less case service under Supported Employment occurred due Order of Selection. Case Service is expected to gradually increase as participants have been moved off the waiting lists and are served under Individualized Plans for Employment.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

State Goals and Priorities will now need to align with the new Federal Performance Accountability Measures of Section 116 of WIOA. These measures include: Employment in the 2nd quarter, Employment in the 4th quarter, Median Earnings, Credential Attainment, Measureable Skills Gains, and Effectiveness in Serving Employers. The Division plans to develop data bases to collect these measures during the Performance Years of 2016 and 2017 to develop baseline measures for future expected levels of performance. The division did not meet prior WIA standards and indicators in FFY 2015 for 1.2 and 1.6. Other prior Standards and Indicators were met or exceeded as indicated below: Standards &Indicators INDICATOR 1. EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES 1.1 Achieved Employment Outcomes Numerical (Indicator must exceed or equal previous performance period) • FFY 09: 1545 • FFY 10: 1541 • FFY 11: 1219 • FFY 12: 683 • FFY 13: 740 • FFY 14: 720 • FFY 15: 824 1.2 Achieved Employment Outcomes Percentage (Indicator must = 55.8%) • FFY 09: 55.2 • FFY 10: 52.3 • FFY 11: 50.7 • FFY 12: 43.4 • FFY 13: 40.44 • FFY 14: 47.44 • FFY 15: 45.68 1.3

Percentage Closed Competitive, Self Employed or Business Enterprise Program (Indicator must = 72.6%) • FFY 09: 97.9 • FFY 10: 98.2 • FFY 11: 98.9 • FFY 12: 97.1 • FFY 13: 97.16 • FFY 14: 96.61 • FFY 15: 97.56 1.4 Percentage Closed Competitive, Self Employed or Business Enterprise Program Who Were Significantly or Most Significantly Disabled (Indicator must = 62.4%) • FFY 09: 94.7 • FFY 10: 96.9 • FFY 11: 96.3 • FFY 12: 98.0 • FFY 13: 95.41 • FFY 14: 90.70 • FFY 15: 91.70 1.5 Average Hourly Earnings Competitive, Self Employed or Business Enterprise Program Ratio of Least Minimum Wage to Average Hourly Earnings of all Employed New Mexicans (indicator must = 0.52[Ratio]) • FFY 09: 0.65 • FFY 10: 0.65 • FFY 11: 0.60 • FFY 12: 0.60 • FFY 13: 0.58 • FFY 14: 0.58 • FFY 15: 0.57 1.6 Percentage Closed Competitive, Self Employed or Business Enterprise Program Reporting Own Income as Largest Single Source of Economic Support Reported at Closure as Reported at Application (Indicator must = 53.0 [Mathematical Difference]). • FFY 09: 49.7 • FFY 10: 51.6 • FFY 11: 52.4 • FFY 12: 60.0 • FFY 13: 57.163 • FFY 14: 55.391 • FFY 15: 49.934 2. EQUAL ACCESS TO SERVICES 2.1 Individuals with Disabilities from Minority Background as ratio to all Non–Minority Individuals with Disabilities. (Indicator must = 0.80). • FFY 09: 0.88 • FFY 10: 0.85 • FFY 11: 0.88 • FFY 12: 0.90 • FFY 13: 0.914 • FFY 14: 0.918 • FFY 15: 0.854

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

Reserved Title I funds are used to support innovation and expansion operations and activities of both the State Rehabilitation Council and the Statewide Independent Living Council. This support will continue.

The Division continues to collaborate with the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Commission for the Blind to increase services to deaf – blind individuals through existing community providers.

DVR has been collaborating with other NM state agency partners in supporting and funding “Partners for Employment”. This innovative state–wide contract brings together a variety of both in–state and out of state vocational experts to develop and implement the Discovery process for individuals with the most significant disabling conditions. This process, as well as other non–traditional career development paths, is intended to support and encourage vocational strategies which result in successful employment outcomes for participants. The majority of individuals served as a result of this collaboration are receiving direct training and support by nationally known experts employed by Marc Gold and Associates. In the last several months, NMDVR has participated in and been intimately involved in agency training provided by Marc Gold and Associates. In turn, NMDVR counselors are working directly with employment teams who have made the commitment to support DVR participants toward meeting their specific vocational objectives.

In early FY14 DVR, was approached to partner with the University of New Mexico, Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD) to consider establishing a replica of Project Search in NM. Project Search is an internationally known program that originated at Cincinnati’s Children’s Hospital. It focuses on school–to–work transition age students who are diagnosed with a variety of disabling conditions. The DVR Interim Transition Coordinator had the opportunity to attend the Project Search conference in July. In collaboration with several state partners, including the NM Albuquerque Public School (APS) district, UNM/CDD and the NM University Hospital (UNMH) as well as the Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD) and Best Buddies (a local provider agency), the Project Search founders have given approval to replicate this program in New Mexico. The site for Project Search has been selected and approved. Program space intended for training and internship rotations has been established at UNM Hospital. Teachers

and job coaches have been hired. Ten (10) students and two (2) adult candidates have been interviewed and selected for the program. Project Search allows for three (3) rotations to occur at UNM Hospital in various departments. These rotations provide candidates with the opportunity to learn the skills and abilities needed to be successful in the community and subsequently in a career of their choice. Job coaches and teachers will be on site at all times teaching curriculum and job skills. The goal of Project Search is that each candidate will be employed following the completion of the year–long program. The program is slated to begin in August of 2017 and expected to run through June of 2018.

BENCHMARKING – The NMDVR measures products and services against standards set by the federal government and its own past performance. For the Rehabilitation Services Program, the agency uses Federal Standards and Indicators, set by regulation, which do not require the Rehabilitation Services program to achieve all of the performance measures.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

New Mexico DVR has implemented two additional programs that are intended to expand and increase Supported Employment services throughout the state. These services are targeted to youth and individuals who have been identified as most severely disabled through innovative programs under the umbrella of Partners for Employment. The first program, Project Search was implemented in 2012–2013 to provide opportunities in collaboration with statewide school districts, and business partners in conjunction with DOH, toward access to employment opportunities that are unique and innovative in serving individuals with significant disabilities. Partners for Employment is identified as the statewide entity to oversee and manage a variety of Supported Employment Programs. This program is intended to serve and support individuals with a variety of disabling conditions.

Examples of NMDVR plans to utilize the 50% of Supported Employment funds set aside for youth with most significant disabilities to provide extended services, for up to four years, include Partners for Employment and Project Search.

In an effort to expand programs and services to individuals and youth who are eligible for Supported Employment services; New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has developed intergovernmental agreements with the Center for Developmental Disabilities to implement Partners for Employment initiatives and Project Search. New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is working in collaboration with the founders of Project Search out of Cincinnati, Ohio to expand services statewide with a focus on rural areas throughout the state. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD), UNM Hospital, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DOH/DDSD, Best Buddies, Adelante, Empowerment, Albuquerque Public Schools, Rio Rancho Public Schools, Gallup McKinley schools, Office of Special Education and Rehab Services (OSERS) and Project Search founders have given approval to replicate this program in New Mexico. Five (5) future sites for Project Search have been slated to begin in August of 2017 and are expected to run through June of 2018.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

NMDVR's policy is that all individuals who are eligible and receiving Supported Employment services must at a minimum require these services for a period of 6 months or longer. Transition to extended services is dependent upon individual participant need and stabilization in employment. Therefore, extended services will vary based upon client need.

CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

Name of designated State agency **New Mexico Public Education Department**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Hipolito "Paul" Aguilar**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Deputy Secretary of Education, Interim Director of Vocational Rehabilitation**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.** Yes

2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;** Yes

4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes

7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

FOOTNOTES

_____

Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CERTIFICATIONS FROM THE STATE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Hipolito "Paul" Aguilar**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Deputy Secretary of Education, Interim Director of Vocational Rehabilitation**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Hipolito "Paul" Aguilar**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Deputy Secretary of Education, Interim Director of Vocational Rehabilitation**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:**The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. SUBMISSION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EITHER A STATE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OR STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(21) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**

C. CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(16)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

D. THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION BY THE STATE, OR IF THE STATE SO ELECTS, BY THE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, TO PROVIDE THE AMOUNT OF THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF THE COST OF CARRYING OUT THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(3).

E. THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **No**

F. THE SHARED FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF JOINT PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **No**

G. STATEWIDENESS AND WAIVERS OF STATEWIDENESS REQUIREMENTS, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **No**

H. THE DESCRIPTIONS FOR COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(11) AND (24)(B); AND 606(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. ALL REQUIRED METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(6) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

J. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(7) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

K. THE COMPILATION AND SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSIONER OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS, ESTIMATES, STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, AND PROGRESS REPORTS, AS APPROPRIATE, AND AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(15), 105(C)(2), AND 606(B)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

L. THE RESERVATION AND USE OF A PORTION OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TO THE STATE UNDER SECTION 110 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO

EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, PARTICULARLY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

M. THE SUBMISSION OF REPORTS AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

A. COMPLY WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 101(A)(5)(D) AND (20) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. IMPOSE NO DURATION OF RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT AS PART OF DETERMINING AN INDIVIDUAL'S ELIGIBILITY FOR VR SERVICES OR THAT EXCLUDES FROM SERVICES UNDER THE PLAN ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PRESENT IN THE STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(12) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

C. PROVIDE THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES LISTED IN SECTION 103(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AS APPROPRIATE, TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above **No**

D. DETERMINE WHETHER COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

E. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

F. COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PROVISIONS OF INFORMED CHOICE FOR ALL APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

G. PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO AMERICAN INDIANS WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING IN THE STATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(13) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

H. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SEMIANNUAL OR ANNUAL REVIEWS, AS APPROPRIATE, FOR INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED EITHER IN

AN EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT SETTING IN A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 14(C) OF THE FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT OF 1938, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(14)OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTIONS 101(A)(17) AND 103(B)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT IF THE STATE ELECTS TO CONSTRUCT, UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

J. WITH RESPECT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THE STATE,

I. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT,

A. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENTS; AND

B. STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE, TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ON A STATEWIDE BASIS; AND

II. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (SECTIONS 101(A)(15) AND 101(A)(25)).

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT TITLE VI SUPPLEMENT:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT ASSURES THAT IT WILL INCLUDE IN THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN ALL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 606 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL SUBMIT REPORTS IN SUCH FORM AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUCH PROCEDURES AS THE COMMISSIONER MAY REQUIRE AND COLLECTS THE INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT SEPARATELY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE I AND INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

C. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES WITH ANY OTHER STATE AGENCY THAT IS FUNCTIONING AS AN EMPLOYMENT NETWORK UNDER THE TICKET TO WORK AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 1148 OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.

6. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL EXPEND NO MORE THAN 2.5 PERCENT OF THE STATE'S ALLOTMENT UNDER TITLE VI FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF CARRYING OUT THIS PROGRAM; AND, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR AGENCIES WILL PROVIDE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ENTITIES, NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN AN AMOUNT THAT IS NOT LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF THE COSTS OF CARRYING OUT SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WITH THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR SUCH PURPOSE UNDER SECTION 603(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(G) AND (H) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL USE FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ONLY TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SUCH SERVICES; AND, THAT SUCH FUNDS ARE USED ONLY TO SUPPLEMENT AND NOT SUPPLANT THE FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, WHEN PROVIDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SPECIFIED IN THE INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(A) AND (D), OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

7. PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AS DEFINED IN SECTION 7(39) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT:

I. THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 102(B)(1) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND FUNDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT INCLUDES CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AS AN APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 606(B)(7)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

II. AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT , WHICH IS DEVELOPED AND UPDATED WITH TITLE I FUNDS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 102(B)(3)(F) AND 606(B)(6)(C) AND (E) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE ASSURANCES FROM THE STATE

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

_____

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

BASIS OF INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The State Rehabilitation Council conducted a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, which was reviewed and approved at a meeting of the Council held on December 4, 2015. The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment consisted of the following methods for gathering data: 1. Public Hearings and Town Forums 2. Review of Strategic Plan and Demographic Data 3. Telephone Survey of Consumers 4. Telephone Survey of Key Internal and External Stakeholders

Comments from Public Hearings and Town Forums

Two public hearings and five town forums were initially conducted to gather input on the Combined State Plan for the New Mexico Commission for the Blind. These were followed by a second round of five town forums that took place while the overall Combined Plan was out for the 30 day public comment period. These public meetings were conducted so as to solicit comment from geographically and ethnically diverse populations. To better facilitate public participation, the Commission uses town forums as it helps create a more informal and more inviting atmosphere. Notice for all of these public meetings was published in the Albuquerque Journal, published in local newspapers, placed on the Commission's web page, placed on the Commission's NEWSLINE for the Blind system, posted in Commission offices, emailed to consumer organizations, and emailed to interested persons and stakeholders. The SRC Chair and a majority of SRC members attended both of the public hearings. The SRC Chair also attended three of the town forums, and the SRC Secretary attended two town forums. The Agency Executive Director attended all of the public hearings and town forums, as did the SRC Liaison who took notes of the public hearings and town forums.

The first public hearing was held in Albuquerque during the state convention of the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of New Mexico. This public hearing was held at the Uptown Sheraton Hotel on April 11, 2015. The NFB convention was the only consumer organization convention held in the state in 2015. There were nearly 200 persons registered for the convention, and these persons came from all parts of the state. A town forum was held at the Commission for the Blind office in Las Cruces on October 5, 2015; and another was held at the Commission Orientation Center in Alamogordo on October 6, 2015. The second public hearing was held at the Commission Albuquerque office on November 12, 2015. A town forum was held at the San Juan Center for Independence in Farmington on November 30, 2015; one was held at the City of Las Vegas Museum and Rough Rider Memorial Collection in Las Vegas on December 1, 2015; and one was held at the Commission office in Santa Fe on December 2, 2015. A town forum was held at the Orientation Center in Alamogordo on January 21, 2016; one was held at the Branigan Library in Las Cruces on January 22, 2016; one was held at the Commission office in Albuquerque on January 29, 2016; one was held at the San Juan Center for Independence in Farmington on February 9, 2016; and one was held at the Commission office in Santa Fe on February 12, 2016.

A review of the initial round of public meetings took place at a regular meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council held on December 4, 2015. During the review, the SRC Liaison reviewed the notes of the comments made at the public meetings and through written submissions. A review of the second round of public meetings took place at a special meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council held on February 22, 2016. During the review, the SRC Liaison again reviewed the notes of the comments made at the public meetings.

Strategic Plan and Demographic Data

The State Rehabilitation Council reviewed and discussed the strategic plan and demographic data during the meeting on December 4, 2015. The discussion included a review of the last two year results of the American Community Survey that shows a significant increase in the number of blind and visually impaired persons in New Mexico, a large increase in the number of blind or visually impaired persons who are over 65, and a dramatic increase in the number of blind or visually impaired persons who are under 18. The Council also considered scientific and medical reports on the increasing rate of diabetes in young persons and the impact that it will have on future rates of blindness as more persons will have diabetic retinopathy; the dramatically increasing rate of Optic Nerve Hypoplasia (ONH) and the increasing numbers of consumers with ONH that the Agency can expect in the next 5 to 10 years; the large number of young persons with retinopathy of prematurity; the increasing level of persons deciding to not participate in the workforce as a part of an overall national trend; the impact of the “failure to launch” trend that is resulting in young persons not starting work until later; and the overall aging of the workforce and desire among those older workers to become and remain employed.

Surveys of Consumers and of Key Stakeholders A telephone Survey was conducted using a sample size equal to approximately 10 percent of Commission vocational rehabilitation clients. The sample was randomly and anonymously selected. The sample included cases that were currently open or which had been closed for any reason during the last year. The survey consisted of ten open–ended questions and one multiple–choice question. The survey also included a question designed to measure consumer satisfaction. The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and Consumer Satisfaction Survey were adopted by the Executive Committee of the State Rehabilitation Council, and approved by the State Rehabilitation Council at the meeting held on December 4, 2015. To assure that the survey was anonymous, a random sample was gathered, and the actual survey was conducted by an independent contractor who was not an employee of the Commission for the Blind.

A telephone Survey of key external and internal stakeholders was also conducted as part of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment. The survey consisted of nine open–ended questions that were approved by the State Rehabilitation Council. To assure that the survey was anonymous, the survey was conducted by an independent contractor who was not an employee of the Commission for the Blind.

The survey results were discussed at a meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council held on December 4, 2015. The survey respondents identified a wide variety of needs, including technology, technology training, Braille, math, and cane travel; services for students and youth with the most significant disabilities, in particular work experiences; a need to work collaboratively with the State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, public schools, colleges and universities, transportation providers, and one–stops; a need to add capacity at the Orientation Center, in particular the ability to provide training in a realistic independent living situation as would be possible using the proposed apartments; a need to provide note–taking skills and other job readiness skills to transition–age youth; a need to improve support for underserved populations including individuals in rural locations, individuals who are deaf blind, Native Americans, older individuals who are blind, and youth with disabilities; and a need to increase the number of bilingual staff throughout the agency, plus a need to add more technology staff and more staff in the Albuquerque Skills Center.

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNCIL

The Council met in Albuquerque on December 4, 2015, and again on February 22, 2016. The purpose of the December 4 meeting was to approve the Commission's portion of the State Plan, and the purpose of the February 22 meeting was to approve the Commission's portion of the State Plan as a part of the overall Combined State Plan. Notice of the meetings were provided pursuant to the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, 10–15–1 NMSA 1978, with notice being published in a newspaper of general circulation, placed on the Commission's web page, placed on NEWSLINE for the Blind, and distributed by email to key stakeholders. The Council reviewed and discussed the State Plan attachments, reviewed and discussed the comments that were solicited at the public hearings and town forums, reviewed and discussed the results of the Consumer and key stakeholder surveys, and reviewed and discussed the strategic plan and demographic data. After the review and discussion, the Council discussed, revised, and commented on the established Goals and Priorities. The Goals and Priorities were read individually allowing for thorough opportunity for recommendations and comments on each Goal and Priority. What follows are the approved Goals and Priorities approved at the December 4, 2015 meeting, along with an Agency Summary of how they will meet the Goals and Priorities, Council Comments, and the Agency Response:

Goals and Priorities

a. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by partnering and working with community colleges and one–stop centers to more effectively utilize services available through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner–Peyser programs.

Council Recommendations: The Council agreed that this was an appropriate goal considering the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), in particular the requirements to improve cooperation with core partners. They asked for more specifics on how the agency would meet the goal.

Agency Response: This is a new Goal and Priority and the agency has not undertaken any activities specifically designed to meet it. The agency will work cooperatively with the identified partner entities by designating specific liaisons and points of contact, by providing information, by entering into cooperative agreements where appropriate

b. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by working cooperatively with the New Mexico Department of Health so as to develop opportunities for competitive and integrated employment for persons who are blind or visually impaired, which will be accomplished by working in partnership with the Medical Assistance Division, the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, and the Behavioral Health Services Division.

Council Recommendations: The Council agreed that this was an appropriate goal considering the requirements of WIOA, in particular the requirements to improve interagency cooperation. The Council asked for specifics on how the agency would meet the goal.

Agency Response: This is a new Goal and Priority and the agency has not undertaken any activities specifically designed to meet it. The agency will work cooperatively with the Department of Health, with the Medical Assistance Division, with the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, and with the Behavioral Health Services Division. The agency will designate specific liaisons and points of contact for each of these entities, will provide information as appropriate, and will enter into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Health.

c. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by using the Orientation Center to provide employment preparation training for adults and transition students, including through the addition of an apartment training facility to be constructed adjacent to the Center. The proposed apartment facility will increase the capacity of the Orientation Center, will enable the Orientation Center to provide more realistic training, will eliminate the need to rent costly and less appropriate private apartments, and will reduce the number of instances in which costly out–of–state training will be necessary to meet the needs of consumers.

Council Recommendations: Based on the comments received via the needs assessment, the Council agreed that this is an important goal for the coming year. The Council asked if there was anything else that they could do to help facilitate the apartment approval process.

Agency Response: The agency is working actively to obtain necessary approvals and funding to construct the proposed apartment facility. The agency has conducted planning discussions with the Facilities Management Division, and is hoping to begin construction sometime in the first half of 2017. The agency is planning on seeking capital improvement funding from the state, and will continue to look at whether or not it is feasible to use federal Basic Support funding.

d. Increase the number of consumers served through enhanced Outreach Activities; including media outreach, use of paid advertising, through increased collaboration with ophthalmologists and optometrists, and through the use of the Technology for Children program to conduct outreach to school districts.

Council Recommendations: The Council agreed that outreach is an important activity and that this goal should be continued from the previous year.

Agency Response: The agency will work to increase outreach to the identified groups using the recommended outreach methods. In 2014 and 2015, the agency had positive news coverage of its

vocational rehabilitation program on the front pages of the Albuquerque Journal and the Las Cruces Daily Sun, and in the Alamogordo Daily News and the Santa Fe New Mexican. The agency also participated in radio broadcasts, and staffed a table at the annual meeting of the Academy of Ophthalmology. The agency also sponsored the 2015 Getting in Touch with Literacy conference which drew more than 125 educational professionals and teachers of the blind from throughout the state. In addition, the agency has developed Keystroke, an accessible typing tutor program that works on both the PC and on the Mac, and has developed iFidget for the iPhone. These apps are a part of the Commission's outreach strategy as they are available free of charge to school districts, helping the agency to establish contact and build relationships with individual teachers and local school districts.

e. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes of transition consumers by providing enhanced Pre—Employment Transition Services, including assistive technology where appropriate as a part of an Individualized Plan for employment, by providing assistive technology through the Technology for Children Program, by conducting increased outreach activities, by conducting educational activities to meet the specific needs of transition students, and by increasing proficient use of Braille and Braille math.

Council Recommendations: The Council agreed that this is a necessary goal in light of new WIOA requirements to expand transition services to students with disabilities and youth with the most significant disabilities. The Council asked for specifics regarding how the agency would meet this goal.

Agency Response: The agency will work to increase services and outreach to Pre–Employment Transition Students using the identified methods. . The agency already seeks to be involved in Individualized Education Plan meetings for transition clients starting at age 14, and the agency operates the Students in Transition to Employment Program in Albuquerque and Alamogordo. The agency has also sponsored trainings and certification exams for the National Certification in Literary Braille and the National Certification in Unified English Braille. In addition, the agency has developed Keystroke, an accessible typing tutor program that works on both the PC and on the Mac, and has developed iFidget for the iPhone. These apps are a part of the Commission's outreach strategy as they are available free of charge to school districts, helping the agency to establish contact and build relationships with individual teachers and local school districts.

f. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes achieved by consumers by providing services in a way that genuinely honors the "informed choice" provisions of the Rehabilitation Act, enabling Commission consumers to have the opportunity to obtain employment at higher levels of compensation.

Council Recommendations: The Council agreed that the concept of "informed choice" is fundamental within the public vocational rehabilitation program and that this goal should be continued in the coming year. Agency Response: The agency continues to provide our services in a way that allow our clients to set and obtain high employment goals. This has historically been reflected by strong performance on Indicator 1.5, which measured the average starting salary of our clients against the average state wage. Even though this Indicator is no longer in place under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the agency will continue to provide services that will enable our clients to obtain high starting wages.

g. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes achieved by consumers by providing a quality and expanding Newsline system that gives consumers access to employment listings, business news, and other important information.

Council Recommendations: The Council agreed that Newsline is critical to the ability of blind and visually impaired New Mexicans to access information, news, breaking news, Spanish–language news, and access job listings.

Agency Response: The agency is committed to providing a quality Newsline service. The agency updated the local Newsline software on September 2, 2014, and the agency will be able to add additional publications as a result of this upgrade, including the Alamogordo Daily News. The Agency will continue to sponsor NFB–Newsline in New Mexico.

h. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by creatively and innovatively using the Skills Center to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation consumers and potential vocational rehabilitation consumers, including using it for provision of services to transition students.

Council Recommendations: Based on new WIOA requirements to expand job readiness services to transition–age youth, plus comments received via the needs assessment, the Council believes that this is an important goal for the agency. They asked for specifics on staffing and programs to be offered at the Skills Center.

Agency Response: The agency is committed to using the Skills Center to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation clients. As a result, the agency used the Skills Center to provide training to Students in Transition to Employment Program in 2014 and 2015, and will continue this activity in 2016. The Skills Center was also used to provide support in the area of Braille and technology training, as well as to function as a meeting place for programs related to vocational rehabilitation.

i. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes through the provision of independent living training to vocational rehabilitation consumers, including through the proposed apartment training facility at the Orientation Center.

Council Recommendations: Based on comments received in the needs assessment, the Council is in full support of this goal, in particular the construction of the apartment facility in Alamogordo.

Agency Response: The agency continues to refer vocational rehabilitation clients to receive independent living services, recognizing the need for clients to be able to function independently to become employed. The agency recognizes the benefit of providing training at the Orientation Center that is realistic and appropriate to the individual needs of clients, and is therefore actively seeking to build apartments that can be used to provide more realistic and appropriate training.

j. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes for consumers who are Deaf–Blind through collaboration and partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, with the Community Outreach Programs for the Deaf, and with the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, including through the delivery of assistive technology to consumers who are Deaf–Blind.

Council Recommendations: Based on comments received through the needs assessment, the Council recommends a goal regarding services to persons who are deaf–blind.

Agency Response: The Agency has identified a vocational rehabilitation counselor to take the lead on services related to clients who are Deaf–Blind. The agency also has a cooperative agreement with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and coordinates provision of services to persons who are Deaf–Blind. The agency works with a variety of other partners, including the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Community Outreach programs for the Deaf, the Helen Keller National Center, and the Deaf–Blind Task Force. The agency also participates in the annual Deaf–Blind Awareness Day at the Roundhouse.

k. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes through the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) by shortening the time required for vendors to complete the required training, including by using Randolph–Sheppard Act training offered by the Hadley School for the Blind.

Council Recommendations: The Council is in full support of the agency's Business Enterprise Program and believes that this is an important goal for the agency to pursue.

Agency Response: The agency has adopted the Hadley class as the training method for BEP vendors, and is working with New Mexico programs to create a local provider so that food preparation and cooking methods can be taught locally. It is anticipated that we will have this in place by the middle of 2016.

l. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by strengthening administrative services so as to timely and accurately submit federal reports, to assure compliance with all applicable fiscal regulations, and to comply with all applicable accounting standards.

Council Recommendations: The Council supports this goal in order to ensure that the agency can access its full allocation of federal funds each year. These funds are necessary to provide high–quality Vocational Rehabilitation services to youth and adults throughout New Mexico.

Agency Response: The agency recognizes the need to have strong fiscal programs so as to maximize the receipt of federal funds, and to otherwise provide appropriate vocational rehabilitation services to our clients. To do this, the agency must have in place a sufficient number of qualified fiscal staff to comply with federal fiscal rules, and to appropriately respond to changing fiscal requirements and staffing levels. The agency has submitted its "Single Audit" on time for each of the last four years, and has only had two minor fiscal findings in those three years.

m. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by enhancing overall performance and productivity by engaging in activity designed to mitigate and ameliorate the impacts of blindness and visual impairment, and by engaging in outreach and other activities designed to identify additional potential consumers, and by making the public and medical community more aware of Commission services.

Council Recommendations: The Council decided to continue this Goal.

Agency Response: The agency is engaging in new and innovative approaches to provide services and engage in outreach. The agency has developed the iFidget app for the iPhone to help clients correct inappropriate rocking motions that a small portion of blind individuals develop. The agency also developed a typing program called Keystroke that helps blind persons learn how to type more efficiently, including persons who are Deaf–Blind. The agency has also improved its web page and the way in which notices of meetings is communicated, and has added the ability for interested persons to subscribe to receive notices. The agency has also developed an entirely new web page

that has a more modern appearance, and that will allow for referrals to be made by health care professionals through the web page.

n. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes for consumers by providing enhanced benefits counseling and guidance to reduce concerns related to the loss or reduction of benefits.

Council Recommendations: The Council discussed and decided to continue the Goal, noting the myriad benefits of working.

Agency Response: The agency continues to provide benefits counseling and guidance through a contract with the New Mexico Legal Aid Society. The agency also had staff from Legal Aid provide training on benefits to the vocational rehabilitation counselors. The agency has also provided seminars on benefits to clients.

The goals and priorities described above were jointly developed and agreed to by the Commission for the Blind and the State Rehabilitation Council. They were discussed and approved at the regular meeting held on December 4, 2015.

On February 22, 2016, the State Rehabilitation Council held a special meeting during which the Combined State Plan was discussed and approved. The Council made the following recommendations, and the agency had the following responses:

Council Recommendation: The Council reviewed and affirmed the Goals and Priorities adopted at the December 4 meeting.

Agency Response: The agency concurs.

Council Recommendation: The Council recommended that the Council approve the state plan with a correction to indicate that the Commission for the Blind is a separate state agency.

Agency Response: The agency concurs. Council Recommendation: The Council recommended that the Commission continue to provide Independent Living and Older Blind services through the Commission for the Blind as a separate state agency dedicated to serving persons who are blind or visually impaired.

Agency Response: The agency concurs, and will continue to provide such services, recognizing that the agency has more independent living teachers (9) than vocational rehabilitation counselors (8).

Council Recommendation: The Council recommended that the agency continue to provide Newsline for the Blind and NFB–Newsline.

Agency Response: The agency concurs, and will continue to make provision of Newsline for the Blind and NFB–Newsline a priority.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL’S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

Please see A.1. above

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

Please see A.1. above.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

The Commission is able to provide services to all applicants and is not requesting a waiver at this time.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

3. ALL STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the servivces and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;

Because the Agency recognizes the need for more services to the deafblind population, a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between the Commission for the Blind and the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (CDHH) has been established. The JPA has provided financial support to fund the National Federation of the Blind Newsline program in New Mexico. Newsline allows access to over 365 newspapers around the country, enabling deafblind persons to access critical information that they need to live independent lives. In 2009, the CDHH suspended funding of the JPA, but the Commission is working with the CDHH and legislature to restore funding of the JPA. A representative of the CDHH provided a training to Commission counselors in June 2015.

A Cooperative Agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding between the agency and the State Public Education Department has been established to facilitate the professional relationship between the two agencies. This agreement facilitates the referral process and coordination of services between the agencies, and among the state's school districts. The

Commission for the Blind has the basic responsibility to provide vocational rehabilitation services to all eligible blind residents of New Mexico. The Public Education Department has the basic responsibility to provide an appropriate public education to New Mexico children with disabilities, including those with visual disabilities. The Deputy Director for Vocational Rehabilitation has served on the Statewide Transition Coordinating Council in past years, although the STCC is not currently active. The Agency assures the interagency cooperation with, and utilization of the services and facilities of the Federal, State, and local agencies and programs. This includes programs carried out by the State under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture; Non–educational agencies serving out–of–school youth; and State use contracting programs; to the extent that such agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system. The Agency works with the following rehabilitation services providers: Zuni Entrepreneurial Enterprises, Inc.; New Vistas Center for Independent Living; Developmental Disabilities Planning Council; TRESCO; Laguna–Acoma Vocational Rehabilitation; Navajo Nation Office of Special Education & Rehabilitation Services; Jemez Disabilities Project; Tobosa Developmental Services; Goodwill Industries; Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Support Division; Taos County ARC; Community Options; Helen Keller National Center; Community Outreach Programs for the Deaf; the NM Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons; Albuquerque Center for Hope and Recovery; Yes We Can New Mexico; and the Small Business Development Centers located throughout New Mexico. Relationships with these organizations run the gamut, including referrals, vocational evaluations, job development, job coaching, transportation, consulting, case management, joint case servicing, deaf blind services, supported employment services, and self–employment services. The agency has representation on the SILC. The Agency will explore ways to build better ties with the IL centers and work with the SILC, in an effort to increase staff and consumer awareness of their activities. A representative of the SILC is expected to be appointed to the Agency's SRC in FY 2016, and as such, will be able to keep the Council up to date on their respective current activities.

The agency regularly interacts with the Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD), with a goal of helping to coordinate state services and programs in a way that maximizes employment opportunities for vocational rehabilitation consumers. A representative of the GCD made a presentation at a counselor training in October 2015.

The agency participates on the Ticket to Work Partners group, along with the Social Security Administration, the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and a number of employment networks that serve ticket holders throughout New Mexico. The group regularly meets in the Commission's Skills Center Lecture Hall.

2015 marked the third year in which the Commission participated in the annual Black Expo, sponsored by the New Mexico Office of African American Affairs. The expo has been growing each year and Commission attendance provides an opportunity to conduct outreach to the African American community and provide information regarding VR services available through the commission.

The Commission works closely with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to support veterans with blindness and visual impairments to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment. Generally, the VA purchases technology and other equipment and the Commission provides education and training support, enabling each organization to leverage its strengths in order to serve the needs of veterans.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

The agency Technology Manager is a member of the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program Coordinating Council (NMTAP), formed under the Tech Act. The Technology Manager regularly attends and participates in NMTAP events and meetings. Commission also has a memorandum of Understanding with the Governor's Commission on Disability, the agency that administers NMTAP. The Commission entered into a cooperative agreement with the Governor's Commission on Disability under which $75,000 in Tech Act funding was transferred to the Commission to purchase assistive technology, and to provide demonstrations on that assistive technology.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

The Commission currently does not have an active partnership regarding programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture, but will develop such partnerships in future years.

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

The Agency assures the interagency cooperation with, and utilization of the services and facilities of the Federal, State, and local agencies and programs. This includes programs carried out by the State under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture; Non–educational agencies serving out–of–school youth; and State use contracting programs; to the extent that such agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system. With regard to coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including the provision of pre–employment transition services, the Agency has in place the Students in Transition to Employment program (STEP). The Commission expects 40 – 45 students will be participating in the 2016 STEP program, up from the 31 in summer 2015, as a result of expanded support for students with disabilities and youth with the most significant disabilities. These students come from various locations around the state and are recruited through high school counselors, special education departments, and from individuals who have exited their secondary education program and are not currently in a post–secondary program.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

The Agency assures the interagency cooperation with, and utilization of the services and facilities of the Federal, State, and local agencies and programs. This includes programs carried out by the State under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture; Non–educational agencies serving out–of–school youth; and State use contracting programs; to the extent that such agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system. The executive director serves on the State Use Council and the director of the State Use agency has briefed the vocational rehabilitation counselor team on several occasions, including during FY 16.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. DSU'S PLANS

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

Pre–Employment Transition Services

The Commission believes that assignment of a representative from PED to the SRC will improve the Commission's ability to partner with PED and facilitate the delivery of pre–employment transition services throughout New Mexico, especially in unserved and underserved areas of the state. Similarly, although the Commission's Deputy Director for Vocational Rehabilitation Programs has served on the Statewide Transition Coordinating Council (STCC) in past years, the STCC has not been active for approximately four years. Re–establishment of the STCC could help stakeholders in the transition process work together to coordinate transition services and improve and increase the delivery of pre–employment transition services throughout New Mexico, especially in unserved and underserved areas of the state. Finally, the Commission plans to work closely with local education agencies throughout New Mexico to improve and increase the delivery of pre–employment transition services. This will be accomplished primarily through VR counselors who serve the LEAs within their service territories. In addition, the agency also plans to reclassify one of its VR counselor positions into a lead counselor position with responsibilities for coordinating the agency's transition efforts.

Coordination with Other Education Officials

The Agency recently revised its memorandum of understanding with the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NMSBVI). The MOU is designed to facilitate and coordinate transition services across the state. The agency's Executive Director, Deputy Director, and VR Program Manager are in frequent communication with the superintendent of NMSBVI. Several NMSBVI students will be participating in the Agency's Students in Transition to Employment Program (STEP). Agency staff and NMSBVI Outreach representatives have met, and established communication to discuss issues common to both entities.

To further enhance the number of consumers and improve transition services, the Commission has signed sixteen cooperative agreements with New Mexico school districts and related organizations. These school districts include Aztec, Bloomfield, Carlsbad, Cloudcroft, Clovis, Deming, Farmington, Gadsden, Las Cruces, Los Lunas, Portales, Roswell, Taos, Moriarty–Edgewood, Silver City, and the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Agreements were signed by the agency's Executive Director in meetings with the Special Education Directors of each school district. The Commission is now pursuing cooperative agreements with school districts in Gallup–McKinley County, Cuba, Albuquerque, Alamogordo, Santa Fe, Rio Rancho, Las Vegas, Tucumcari, and Santa Rosa.

The Agency's Executive Director has coordinated meetings with Educational Stakeholders, persons who provide educational services to individuals who are blind, including the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Superintendent, the President of the National Federation of the Blind, the President of Parents of Blind Children, as well as other educational officials responsible for providing special education services to blind students.

PY 2016 marks the tenth year of a MOA with the Department of Health and the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The MOA will administer an allocation from DOH of $80,000, designed to provide assistive technology that, for a disability other than blindness, would be considered durable medical equipment.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;

A memorandum of understanding between the Agency and the State Public Education Department (PED) has been established to facilitate the professional relationship between the two agencies. This agreement facilitates the referral process and coordination of services among the agencies. The Commission for the Blind has the basic responsibility to provide vocational rehabilitation services to all eligible blind residents of New Mexico, with employment being the Agency's goal. The PED has the basic responsibility to provide an appropriate public education to New Mexico children with disabilities, including those with visual disabilities.

A summary of the terms of the MOU between the Commission and PED are as follows:

1. Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post–school activities:

Through adoption of the MOU, the Commission and PED will work towards development of a seamless service delivery system, and work towards methods of facilitating and coordinating services wherever practicable and appropriate.

The Commission and PED maintain different requirements for determination of eligibility, documentation of disability, and the provision of services. The MOU does not require either entity to provide services to persons who would not otherwise be eligible for services, or to provide services that would not otherwise be required by applicable law or regulation.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

2. Transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs:

School personnel make every effort to provide adequate notice to Commission counselors regarding upcoming IEP meetings. Commission counselors make every effort to attend all IEP meetings for their consumers. At the IEP meetings, Commission counselors and school personnel work together to identify necessary services that will both help the consumer complete their secondary education goals and also prepare the consumer for post–secondary work or school. As a result of these coordination efforts, the Commission develops an Individualized Plan for Employment to address the needs of each transition student.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

3. Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services:

The Commission and PED maintain various advisory and governing bodies. To assure maximum coordination of services, both organizations agree to maintain representation on appropriate advisory and governing bodies. The Commission recommends qualified personnel to serve on the Statewide Transition Coordinating Council and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act State Advisory Panel. The PED supports and facilitates the placement of these designated individuals on the respective Council or Panel, subject to any applicable requirements of state or federal regulations or directives from the Governor. The PED recommends a qualified individual to serve on the Commission's State Rehabilitation Council, and the Commission supports and facilitates the placement of this individual on the State Rehabilitation Council, subject to any applicable requirements of state or federal regulations or directives from the Governor.

The Commission has designated qualified personnel to be responsible for provision and coordination of transition services. The Commission's Deputy Director for Vocational Rehabilitation has served on the Statewide Transition Coordinating Council. Similarly, the PED maintains qualified personnel who work to address transition needs of students throughout New Mexico, and a PED representative is expected to be appointed to the agency's Statewide Rehabilitation Council in FY2016.

In the event that either organization is asked by an individual or another agency to provide or assist in obtaining a service that it believes to be the responsibility of the other Party, the Party asked to provide the service shall notify the other Party of its position in order to give the other Party an opportunity to assume proper responsibility. Disagreements over the Parties' responsibilities shall be addressed through the dispute resolution provisions contained in the MOU.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

4. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services:

The Commission and PED understand the importance of providing transition services to eligible students starting at the age of fourteen. Accordingly, both entities agree to develop and coordinate outreach procedures to facilitate identification of eligible individuals and to assure appropriate and

timely delivery of services, to include the development of an IPE as soon as possible after the consumer turns age 14.

To the maximum extent practicable, the PED agrees to share results of Child Find and other outreach activities with the Commission, including identification of specific students who are identified as being blind or visually impaired. The students identified shall be of transition age, but will also include students who are nearing transition age so that the Commission may begin transition services immediately upon the student reaching the age of fourteen. Accordingly, students who are thirteen and identified as being blind or visually impaired shall be identified to the Commission by the PED. The provision of services to these identified students by the Commission shall be in accordance with a MOU that the Commission has with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) that addresses how the Commission and DVR are to coordinate services.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The Agency works with the following non–profit rehabilitation services providers:

NM Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Zuni Entrepreneurial Enterprises, Inc.; New Vistas Center for Independent Living; Developmental Disabilities Planning Council; TRESCO; Laguna–Acoma Vocational Rehabilitation; Navajo Nation Office of Special Education & Rehabilitation Services; Jemez Disabilities Project; Tobosa Developmental Services; Goodwill Industries; Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Support Division; Taos County ARC; Community Options; Helen Keller National Center; Community Outreach Programs for the Deaf; the NM Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons; Albuquerque Center for Hope and Recovery; Yes We Can New Mexico; and the Small Business Development Centers located throughout New Mexico.

The Agency also maintains cooperative partnerships with the Centers for Independent Living throughout the state, and coordinates services through the Statewide Independent Living Council. The Agency has actively worked to expand ties with the IL centers and work with the SILC, in an effort to increase staff and consumer awareness of their activities. A SILC representative is expected to be appointed to the Agency's Statewide Rehabilitation Council in FY2016, and as such, will keep each respective Council up to date on their respective activities. The Commission's Deputy Director for Independent Living programs serves on the SILC.

The manner in which these agreements are established comes from several methods. The Agency receives input directly from consumers and service providers, either through telephone contact or written referrals and requests. Input is received from Public Hearings, the State Rehabilitation Council, the SILC, and the joint planning ventures with various service providers. Needs assessments studies, consumer surveys, and cooperative meetings are also conducted to gather data and information with respect to establishing cooperative agreements. Cooperative agreements typically do not involve any monetary exchange between the agencies. The staff of each agency agrees to cooperate with each other, and reciprocate in referring consumers for services as appropriate.

The Commission is proud of its relationship with the National Federation of the Blind (NFB). The NFB is the largest organization of blind persons in the United States. The Agency incorporated NFB

Newsline as a part of its overall Newsline services in FY 2002, and intends to continue NFB Newsline in PY 2016.

Newsline is an important part of the Commission's outreach program to identify and serve most significantly disabled persons who are minorities, and individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation or supported employment program. Newsline provides access to state and national publications to individuals in all portions of New Mexico, including in the most rural portions of the state. The local Newsline and NFB–Newsline have publications that include newspapers from Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Alamogordo, Farmington, Las Cruces, and Roswell. NEWSLINE also has a Spanish language news category. NFB–Newsline offers prompts in Spanish, and has several Spanish language publications. NFB–Newsline voices can also be customized to meet the needs of individuals who are hard of hearing, and NFB–Newsline offers the ability to download publications for reading on a Braille display. This feature enables individuals who are deaf–blind to access the entire selection of more than 365 national newspapers and magazines. NFB–Newsline also offers a job search feature that enables job seekers to create custom searches of the CareerBuilder job database.

The Commission works closely with the New Mexico affiliate of the NFB as well. The NFBNM has opened its annual state convention agenda to enable the Commission to make reports on its programs and services and to hold public hearings in order to gather comments on the state plan, strategic plan, and agency services. The NFBNM has membership on the Commission's State Rehabilitation Council, representing blind consumers. During 2015, the NFBNM and Commission co–sponsored employer awards to the University of New Mexico and the Albuquerque Public Schools, recognizing the award–winning organizations at the NFBNM's state convention banquet. The Commission has also had a strong relationship with the American Council of the Blind, another prominent organization of individuals who are blind. As with the NFBNM, the New Mexico affiliate of the ACB has opened its state convention agenda to enable the Commission to make reports and hold public hearings to gather comments on the state plan, strategic plan, and agency services. Representatives of the ACBNM have also served on the Commission's State Rehabilitation Council, although the ACBNM has been only minimally active in the past few years.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

In the past, the Agency has worked with the nonprofit organizations listed below for the provision of coordinated supported employment services to consumers who qualify for supported employment. Under the new supported employment provisions of WIOA, the Commission will ensure that: 1. The consumer is engaged in supported employment that is in competitive integrated employment, or in an integrated work setting in which the consumer is working on a short–term basis toward competitive integrated employment; 2. The employment is customized for the individual consistent with his or her strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice; and 3. Expand the provision of supported employment for up to 24 months prior to the transition to extended services.

Extended services may be provided to consumers after successful case closure in order to maintain job stability. These services may include specialized tools and supplies, specialized training, and costs of needed services not otherwise available from long–term funding sources. Under the new supported employment provisions of WIOA, the Commission will be able to cover the cost of extended services for up to four years for youth with the most significant disabilities. The Commission will work with the providers listed below to expand the nature of Commission–funded extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

1. Goodwill Industries of New Mexico, 5000 San Mateo Blvd., Albuquerque, NM. Services included job assessment, job development and placement, intensive on–the–job skills training, and other training and support in order to achieve and maintain job stability. The population served under this agreement included individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of the Commission's supported employment program.

2. Community Options, Inc., 4301 Lomas NE, Albuquerque, NM; 811 St. Michael's Dr. Suite 107, Santa Fe, NM; and 2500 Missouri Ave., Las Cruces, NM. Community Options provided job assessment, job development and placement, on–the–job intensive skills training, other training and support required to achieve and maintain job stability, facilitation of socialization and communication with coworkers, and assistance with transportation arrangements. Individuals served under this agreement are those who meet the eligibility requirements of the Commission's supported employment program.

3. LifeROOTS, 1111 Menaul Blvd N.E., Albuquerque, NM; and 1009 Golf Course Road, Suites 105 & 106, Rio Rancho, NM. LifeROOTS provided job assessment, job development and placement, on–the–job intensive skills training, other training and support in order for the consumer to achieve and maintain job stability, the facilitation of socialization and communication with coworkers, and assistance with transportation arrangements. The populations served under this agreement included individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of the Commission's supported employment program.

4. New Vistas Supported Employment Services, 2890 Trades West Road, Santa Fe, NM. Services included job assessment, job development and placement, on–the–job intensive skills training, other training and support in order for the consumer to achieve and maintain stability on the job, facilitation of socialization and communication with coworkers, and assistance with transportation arrangements. The population served under this agreement included individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of the Commission's supported employment program. 5. Tobosa Developmental Services, 1219 West Summit, Roswell, NM, 88201 Tobosa Developmental Services provided job assessment, job development and placement, on–the–job intensive skills training, other training and support in order for the consumer to achieve and maintain job stability, the facilitation of socialization and communication with coworkers, and assistance with transportation arrangements. The populations served under this agreement included individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of the Commission's supported employment program.

6. The Opportunity Center, 905 10th Street, Suite C, Alamogordo, NM, The Opportunity Center provided job assessment, job development and placement, on–the–job intensive skills training, other training and support in order for the consumer to achieve and maintain job stability, the facilitation of socialization and communication with coworkers, and assistance with transportation arrangements. The populations served under this agreement included individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of the Commission's supported employment program.

7. Zia Therapy Center Inc., 900 W. 1st, Alamogordo, NM. Zia Therapy provided job assessment, job development and placement, on–the–job intensive skills training, other training and support in order for the consumer to achieve and maintain job stability, the facilitation of socialization and communication with coworkers, and assistance with transportation arrangements. The populations served under this agreement included individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of the Commission's supported employment program.

Similar programs in other New Mexico communities will be contacted, as appropriate, to determine their capacity to participate in collaborative efforts regarding the Commission's supported employment program.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

Historically, the commission has eschewed homemaker closures and physical restoration closures, choosing instead to pursue competitive integrated employment and self–employment exclusively. As a result, the Commission has developed effective employer relationships and placement methods that serve adults, students with disabilities, and youth with the most significant disabilities.

Placements

On–the–job training experiences are an effective approach that can result in permanent job placement. This method also helps to overcome doubts that employers have about employing persons with blindness or visual–impairments. Summer jobs serve the dual purpose of overcoming employer doubts while at the same time providing youth with valuable work experience. Successful efforts at Job retention for longtime employees losing their vision also help to show employers that, with proper blindness skills, work methods, and technology, can perform work effectively.

The Students in Transition to Employment Program (STEP) will continue with its efforts to provide work experience and skills training to blind students during the summer months. STEP continues to provide outreach to recruit students with the most significant disabilities, including students from minority backgrounds, and students who are also unserved or underserved. The STEP program is also operated on a residential basis in Alamogordo, which allows students from even the most economically disadvantaged and rural portions of the state to participate. STEP students earn a salary during the employment portion of the program. In addition to providing essential job training and experience, this also has the benefit of serving as a significant incentive for many students from economically disadvantaged families, enabling the Commission to reach and attract more individuals into the program. In addition to the residential program in Alamogordo, STEP offers a commuter program that serves students with disabilities within the Albuquerque metropolitan area, and also offers community placements statewide.

The goal of the STEP Program is to give participating students more exposure to the workplace, enabling them to gain a better appreciation of the real–world expectations of employers, to enable them to gain a better understanding of their career options, and to acquire the job skills that will help

them to achieve the ultimate goal of becoming employed. The STEP program does this through paid job experience. Job placement will be done based upon availability of work sites and the student's career interests and ability. Students will be paid for up to 25 hours a week at minimum wage. Minimum wage is $7.50 hourly throughout New Mexico, except in Albuquerque, where it is $8.75, Santa Fe at $10.84 and Las Cruces at $8.40 per hour.

Alamogordo and Albuquerque students will also receive training designed to enhance their employment skills. An emphasis will be placed upon the development of 'soft' work skills such as dressing appropriately for the job site, communication with coworkers and supervisors, timeliness and reliability, and the importance of a positive attitude. STEP students will also receive training in how to use popular computer applications such as Word and Internet Explorer by using assistive technology such as JAWS or Window–Eyes. Students will also have an opportunity to acquire greater literacy by using Braille. Because the ability to travel independently is essential for successful employment, students will be taught Orientation and Mobility (cane travel).

Students will be taught other essential skills, including how to identify different currency denominations, how to label their clothes and dress appropriately for different job situations, how to shop for groceries, and how to prepare basic meals.

Community–based participants will also receive customized training to serve their individual needs.

Summer employment is a common experience of adults in the workplace. When it comes to the employment of blind and visually–impaired youth, it can be a valuable experience for both the employer and the youth. Although we rarely find blind and visually–impaired youth who are interested in working during the school year, many of them are interested in working during the summer. The Commission has historically been able to fund summer employment opportunities for any youth who were interested, but the Commission will make a greater effort to encourage more youth to take advantage of summer employment opportunities beginning in summer 2016. The Commission supported 31 students in summer employment during summer 2015 and will strive to increase that number to between 40 and 45 in summer 2016. Of course, the Commission will use existing employer relationships and develop new employer relationships to facilitate work opportunities for students who do wish to take advantage of work opportunities after school or on weekends when school is in session.

Employers

The Commission has relationships with a wide variety of employers across New Mexico. Employers cover the landscape of federal government; state, county, and municipal governments; post–secondary educational institutions; public, charter, and private secondary schools; private non–profit businesses; and private for–profit businesses of all sizes and types.

The Commission will utilize existing relationships and develop new relationships in order to create employment opportunities and work experience opportunities for adults, students with disabilities, and youth with the most significant disabilities in competitive integrated settings and self–employment.

In an effort to increase employment and work experience opportunities in competitive integrated settings, the Commission will reach out to federal contractors. The new rules in Section 503 of the Rehab Act introduce a hiring goal for federal contractors and subcontractors that 7 percent of each

job group in their workforce be qualified individuals with disabilities. This is an area of opportunity that has not been fully utilized by the Commission.

The Commission will also partner with business development specialist in one–stop work centers across the state to connect the Commission with employers in those service territories. Such partnerships will serve to improve OJT and permanent placement opportunities for job–ready Commission adults and work experience opportunities for students with disabilities and youth with the most significant disabilities.

The Commission will also assist consumers interested in self–employment to take advantage of provisions of the New Mexico State Use Act. The New Mexico State Use Act, 13–1C–1 NMSA 1978, is an outgrowth of the state's continuing efforts to expand opportunities for its citizens with disabilities. The Act opens state service contracts, including contracts to provide service to the state as business owners and entrepreneurs, to persons with disabilities without their having to competitively bid for the contract — so long as the services are provided at fair market pricing. Again, although the Commission has encouraged self–employment, it has not assisted its self–employed consumers to take full advantage of opportunities afforded by the State Use Act. The Commission will partner with Horizons of New Mexico, the program's agent, to facilitate additional opportunities for self–employed consumers. The Commission's executive director serves on the State Use Council.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

Please see G.1. above.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

The Commission regularly surveys consumers to make sure that consumers are participating in the Medicaid program, including and especially as it relates to work incentives that encourage employment. This includes counseling consumers to apply for the Section 1619(b) program when consumers may lose SSI due to work activity, and to encourage consumers to apply for the Working Disabled Individual Category 043 program when the consumer's income is too high to qualify for the 1619(b) program. Of special note is that it was the Commission that came up with the idea of using the Working Disabled Individual category to address the problem of the 24-month Medicare waiting period. The Commission worked with the state Medical Assistance Division in the development of the Medi-Gap portion of Category 043, which provides Medicaid to persons who have lost SSI due to the start of SSDI, and who thereby lost Medicaid coverage. The Commission also works to make sure that consumers who lose SSI due to the start of Disabled Adult Child benefits maintain Medicaid under Public Law 99-643 and Section 1634(d). The Commission also works to make sure that low-income consumers who may be eligible for Qualified Medicare Beneficiaries (QMB) Specified Low Income Medicare Beneficiaries (SLIMB) or Qualified Individual (QI) are receiving QMB, SLIMB, or QI.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

The Commission has been partnering with the New Mexico Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) for many years. DDSD is responsible for overseeing various Medicaid home–and community–based waiver programs that are designed to help people with disabilities live as independently as possible. The Commission participates in the overall plan of services for eligible consumers by providing supported employment services such as vocational evaluation, vocational training, job development, job coaching, and extended services. New WIOA provisions will now enable the Commission to provide supported employment for up to 24 months and to provide up to 48 months of extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

The agency currently does not have a cooperative agreement with the agency responsible for providing mental health services, but the agency does provide training to staff on how to better serve individuals with mental illness and on the resources available. The agency will develop a cooperative agreement with state agencies that provide mental health services.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

The Commission endeavors to maintain caseload sizes of between 50 and 75 cases per counselor. To ensure the ratio of one counselor to 50 – 75 consumers, the Agency employs eight counselors. The Commission serves approximately 400 VR consumers at any one time. The Commission’s list of functional position titles, Full–time Equivalents), current vacancies, and the number of staff expected to retire in the next five years for each is provided below. Executive Director: 1, 0, 0 Deputy Director for Vocational Rehabilitation Programs: 1, 0, 1 Deputy Director for Independent Living/Building Manager: 1, 0, 1 Deputy Director for Adult Orientation Center: 1, 0, 0 Deputy Director for Finance and Administration: 1, 0, 0 Program Manager for Vocational Rehabilitation Programs: 1, 0, 0 Program Manager for Assistive Technology 1, 0, 0 Program Manager for Business Enterprise Program 1, 0, 0 Chief Financial Officer: 1, 0, 0 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor: 8, 1, 2

Orientation Center Instructor: 8, 2, 3 Rehab/IL Teacher: 9, 0, 3 Assistive Technology Specialist: 4, 0, 0 Business Operations Specialist: 5, 1, 1 Orientation Center Dormitory Supervisor: 1, 0, 0 Orientation Center Dormitory Workers: 5, 0, 2 Coordinator of Technology for Children: 1, 0, 0 Reader/Driver: 8, 0, 3 Accountant/Auditor: 1, 0, 0 Procurement Officer: 1, 0, 0 Accounts Payable Supervisor: 1, 0, 1 HR, Training, and Labor Specialist: 1, 0, 0 IT Network Specialist: 2, 0, 0 Secretary: 10, 0, 1 Office Manager: 1, 0, 0 Receptionist: 1, 0, 0 Maintenance and Repair Worker: 3, 0, 1 Projections of staff needs in five years based upon current consumer trends would require the continued employment of eight counselors to maintain the present ratio of one counselor for every 50 to 75 cases. The Commission will maintain the present ratio of one counselor for every 50 to 75 cases in order to assure optimum services to consumers. It is apparent that improvements in service delivery will not necessarily rely upon expanded numbers of staff, but rather upon the qualities and training of personnel in the existing personnel configuration. The Agency will continue to provide annual intensive staff training, as well as periodic training to meet specific identified needs. In addition, the Agency has implemented the Accessible Web–Based Activity and Reporting Environment (AWARE) case management system, which will free additional time for counselors to serve consumers. Training on the AWARE program began in August of 1999 and is conducted on an ongoing basis. The Agency is serving all consumers that are referred for services, and it is not anticipated that there will be any significant increase in the number of consumers seeking services.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

Please see i.1.A.i. above.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Please see i.1.A.i. above.

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

The Commission has a Memorandum of Understanding with New Mexico Highlands University, located in Las Vegas, New Mexico, which is offering a degree program in vocational rehabilitation counseling. Three of the agency's current counselors either graduated from the New Mexico Highlands program or are currently taking graduate courses at Highlands. New Mexico Highlands has 39 students currently enrolled in their rehabilitation counseling program. They graduated seven students from December 2014 through August 2015, all of whom are eligible for both the New Mexico Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and Certified Rehabilitation Counselor certifications. I am pleased to note that the New Mexico Highlands program is CORE accredited. The MOU with New Mexico Highlands also offers support of intern placements whenever possible, although the agency was unable to host any interns during the past FY. The Commission will continue its positive

relationship with New Mexico Highlands University to assure that NMHU students consider employment with the Commission.

The Commission also recruits counselor candidates from both the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and Texas Tech University. UTEP has 39 students currently enrolled in their rehabilitation counseling program. They graduated fifteen students from December 2014 through August 2015, all of whom are either CRC or eligible to receive CRC certification. Graduates from these programs often include representation from minority populations as well as candidates who speak Spanish.

Although the agency encourages its counselor staff to attend the Highlands University program, the agency recognizes that, depending on individual situations, distance education programs offered by other universities may also serve staff education needs. As such, the Commission has also inquired of the counselor training programs at other universities, including the University of North Texas (part of a well–established consortium between the University of North Texas, San Diego State University, and Georgia State University); as well as the counselor program at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock. A Commission counselor completed the University of North Texas program in spring 2010 and two other counselors took graduate classes there in the last year. Another counselor is currently taking graduate courses at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock.

New Mexico State University had sponsored a graduate program in Orientation and Mobility. Unfortunately, the program was discontinued following the completion of the summer 2009 semester. However, the program has been resurrected and began offering classes again in summer 2014. Two Commission staff members completed the NMSU O and M program. One of these staff members is still with the Commission and provides valuable training expertise for both vocational rehabilitation and independent living consumers. Eight students are currently enrolled in the program. One student graduated in summer 2015, tested, and received their Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) certification.

The Commission also recruits Orientation and Mobility Specialists from Louisiana Tech University. Their Orientation and Mobility Specialist program emphasizes non–visual instruction and the Structured Discovery Model. This model is consistent with the training philosophy of the Commission's Orientation Center in Alamogordo.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

Please see i.1.B.i. above.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of theose institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Please see i.1.B.i. above.

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Commission personnel will meet with public and university personnel to review options for enabling the Commission's rehabilitation teachers to meet certification requirements. The current and projected personnel needs for vocational rehabilitation counselors are stable, and are not expected to increase. This projection of personnel needs is based on the implementation of the AWARE case management program and a trend towards stable vocational rehabilitation caseloads statewide. However, the Commission is aware of changing demographics which may impact this, including the aging of the work force and an increasing rate of blind infants and children who have disabilities in addition to blindness. There are currently eight counselor positions in the vocational rehabilitation program. As previously discussed, the Executive Director of the Commission and his/her designee will continue to meet with university personnel to provide appropriate training to the eight rehabilitation counselors.

The Agency also actively recruits individuals who come from minority backgrounds or who have disabilities, including posting of job announcements on the "blind jobs" and "Rehab Professionals" list services and other blindness related list services. The agency also provides internships and recruits graduates of the New Mexico Highlands rehabilitation counselor program, which generally includes representation from minority populations as well as candidates who speak Spanish and Native American languages.

The Commission has a Memorandum of Understanding with New Mexico Highlands University, located in Las Vegas, New Mexico, which is offering a degree program in vocational rehabilitation counseling. Three of the agency's current counselors either graduated from the New Mexico Highlands program or are currently taking graduate courses at Highlands. New Mexico Highlands has 39 students currently enrolled in their rehabilitation counseling program. They graduated seven students from December 2014 through August 2015, all of whom are eligible for both the New Mexico Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and Certified Rehabilitation Counselor certifications. I am pleased to note that the New Mexico Highlands program is CORE accredited. The MOU with New Mexico Highlands also offers support of intern placements whenever possible, although the agency was unable to host any interns during the past FY. The Commission will continue its positive relationship with New Mexico Highlands University to assure that NMHU students consider employment with the Commission.

The Commission also recruits counselor candidates from both the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and Texas Tech University. UTEP has 39 students currently enrolled in their rehabilitation counseling program. They graduated fifteen students from December 2014 through August 2015, all of whom are either CRC or eligible to receive CRC certification. Graduates from these programs often include representation from minority populations as well as candidates who speak Spanish.

Although the agency encourages its counselor staff to attend the Highlands University program, the agency recognizes that, depending on individual situations, distance education programs offered by other universities may also serve staff education needs. As such, the Commission has also inquired

of the counselor training programs at other universities, including the University of North Texas (part of a well–established consortium between the University of North Texas, San Diego State University, and Georgia State University); as well as the counselor program at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock. A Commission counselor completed the University of North Texas program in spring 2010 and two other counselors took graduate classes there in the last year. Another counselor is currently taking graduate courses at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock.

New Mexico State University had sponsored a graduate program in Orientation and Mobility. Unfortunately, the program was discontinued following the completion of the summer 2009 semester. However, the program has been resurrected and began offering classes again in summer 2014. Two Commission staff members completed the NMSU O and M program. One of these staff members is still with the Commission and provides valuable training expertise for both vocational rehabilitation and independent living consumers. Eight students are currently enrolled in the program. One student graduated in summer 2015, tested, and received their Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) certification.

The Commission also recruits Orientation and Mobility Specialists from Louisiana Tech University. Their Orientation and Mobility Specialist program emphasizes non–visual instruction and the Structured Discovery Model. This model is consistent with the training philosophy of the Commission's Orientation Center in Alamogordo.

Other training for rehabilitation professionals in the fields of blindness, deaf–blind and related disabilities such as diabetes has been continually provided by the Agency to existing professional and support staff. It is anticipated that these efforts will enable the Agency to meet federal certification requirements over the foreseeable future. The Commission will provide additional training in key areas, such as those related to transition services, career assessment, and job placement.

The agency currently uses a manual system for the tracking of data related to each counselor, their training programs and data directly pertinent to the CSPD requirements. A record of the transcripts and course work completed by each counselor is maintained in a file and is used to track progress in achieving the necessary academic requirements.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

The New Mexico Commission for the Blind continues to monitor and update the comprehensive system of personnel development each year, to ensure that an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals are available to the Commission. Qualified counselors are those that have earned Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification, are

eligible to sit for the CRC examination, or have attained a New Mexico License in Rehabilitation Counseling under the Master's level requirements of the state license, as described below.

A. Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling from a regionally accredited college or university. This requirement shall be satisfied by meeting the requirements of Paragraphs (1) or (2) of Subsection A below.

(1) A master's degree awarded by a New Mexico college or university must incorporate the New Mexico Public Education Department's approved competencies in rehabilitation counseling. (2) A master's degree awarded by a college or university outside of New Mexico must be for a rehabilitation counseling program approved by the New Mexico Public Education Department.

B. Master's degree in school counseling, vocational counseling or other related field and the provisions of Paragraphs (1) or (2) of Subsection B below

(1) one (1) year of experience in rehabilitation counseling, or (2) fifteen (15) semester hours of credit in the rehabilitation counseling competency areas of vocational/transition assessment, medical aspects of disability, psychosocial and/or psycho–cultural aspects of disability, case management in rehabilitation counseling, issues and practices in rehabilitation counseling, or placement aspects of rehabilitation counseling.

At present, five of the Agency's seven counselors have CRC certification and the other two have completed Master's degrees in fields other than rehab counseling but are not yet eligible to sit for the CRC and do not yet possess alternative state licensure.

The existing staffing configuration will include current staff as well as new staff hired to fill any positions that should become vacant. As turnover occurs due to retirement or staff leaving their positions, the Agency will make it a high priority to promptly fill any vacant counselor positions with CRC Certified Rehabilitation Counselors. The desired academic qualification for a new counselor is a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. If the pool of candidates does not include a person possessing the desired qualifications, the minimum degree will be a Bachelor's degree with a requirement that the counselor obtain either CRC certification or alternative state licensure within a maximum of four (4) years of the date of hiring. State licensure was enacted in 2000. The agency has set aside funds for counselor training to help counselors meet academic standards.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

The agency's State Rehabilitation Council has recently affirmed its desire that the agency continue to maintain the above qualifications requirements for its VR counselors. In view of new WIOA requirements, the agency will ensure that professional and paraprofessional personnel have a 21st–century understanding of the evolving labor force and needs of individuals with disabilities.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

Vocational rehabilitation counselors attend regular bi–monthly training coordinated by the Deputy Director for VR Programs. The training regularly addresses technology issues, training center issues, employment services issues, transition, post–secondary education and training, and training on various state and local services. Recent presentations from state and local agencies include the Commission for Deaf and Hard–of–Hearing, Community Outreach Programs for the Deaf (deaf–blind services), Governor’s Commission on Disability, Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, Albuquerque Housing Authority, and the Small Business Development Center. The regional representative from the Helen Keller National Center is scheduled to travel to New Mexico in February 2016 to provide training to the Commission’s VR counselor team.

Training on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is being provided to emphasize legal requirements for current and newly hired staff, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. In addition, training will focus on evidenced–based approaches. Content experts from outside the Agency, including from the newly–established technical assistance centers around the country, will be secured in areas where Agency staff does not have the knowledge or expertise necessary to provide the training. This will include training on section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998.

Commission professionals spend eight weeks at the agency’s Orientation Center receiving immersion training. The training is conducted under blindfold, enabling the staff members to learn the same non–visual techniques that their consumers are learning. This creates a belief on the part of the staff that their blind clients really can travel independently, become literate (Braille literate), organize their households and documents, shop and prepare nutritious meals, and keep themselves clean and well–groomed.

Counselors also attend conventions of the two consumer organizations. New counselors who have never attended a national convention are given the option to attend either the ACB or NFB convention. Since the Commission encourages and supports consumer attendance at these conventions for a myriad of reasons, the Commission believes it is essential for counselors to attend so they can speak from personal experience when advising consumers. As for state conventions, counselors are required to attend both conventions initially, then required to attend one or the other in subsequent years. A great deal of learning takes place at both the national and state conventions. The Commission intends to continue this practice in future years. The Commission has a staff of five assistive technology specialists. The Commission provides continuing training in assistive technology to both staff and consumers. The Commission operates a technology training lab in

Albuquerque which provides regular instruction in the use of assistive technology. This training uses a hands–on lab setting to provide instruction in a wide variety of applications, including Microsoft Windows, Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Internet Explorer. The Commission also provides instruction in the use of different types of video magnifiers, Braille note takers, and in the production of Braille documents through the use of Braille translation software and Braille embossers. Training is also provided on the use of Apple Macintosh computers, iPads, and iPhones. These trainings are made available to consumers, parents of consumers, and school professionals. Consumers attending the Adult Orientation Center in Alamogordo also receive instruction in assistive technology as a regular part of their Center training. The Commission has increased individualized training to consumers through the addition of remote utilities, contract trainers, distance education trainers, and virtual classrooms. During FY 2011, the Commission began using textbooks that couple instruction in MS Office applications with specific screen readers and screen magnifiers.

Historically, Commission staff members have served on all four of the local workforce boards and the Executive Director has served on the State Workforce Board. Recent staff separations have caused a few vacancies on local boards, but those vacancies are expected to be filled with Commission staff during PY 2016. These staff members have received training as a part of their service on the various boards. The VR counselors have also received training on the availability of services through the One–Stops, and on how to assist consumers to access those services in the most appropriate fashion.

B. ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

Commission staff receives training in current research through a variety of mechanisms, including attendance at the annual state conference of the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of Persons who are Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), and attendance at the spring and fall meetings of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB). Commission staff has also received updates on current research through viewing of web casts, Webinars, reading of scholarly journals, and attendance at other relevant conferences.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

The Agency provides rehabilitation and independent living services in a State with a large population of persons for whom Spanish is a primary language, and with a significant population of individuals who speak a variety of native languages. The Agency has staff persons who can communicate in some of these languages, and hires interpreters when that is not readily feasible, including a phone–based interpreter service that supports over 150 languages. The Agency has Braille production facilities in each of its field locations, and has provided training to staff in each field office in Braille translation and production. Further, the Agency regularly reproduces material on portable media when requested. All Agency word processing software programs can produce text in large print. The Agency also regularly contracts with sign language interpreters whenever there is a need for a sign language interpreter. The agency has been experimenting with remote video interpreting so as to

more–effectively serve deafblind consumers who require sign language support. This is especially effective in rural areas where it is difficult to schedule human interpreters.

Newly hired Agency personnel who work directly with consumers participate in up to two months of intensive training in the skills of blindness at the Commission's Orientation Center, where two of the classes in the curriculum (Braille and Communications) deal with modes of communication utilized by individuals who are blind.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Agency coordinates with the State Special Education department in participating in the Public Education Department's CSPD activities in order to coordinate the system of personnel development with the personnel development system under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. When appropriate, joint training will be undertaken between the Commission and the Public Education Department to further the coordination of personnel development. The Agency Executive Director maintains a close working relationship with the Public Education Department.

The State Rehabilitation Council had an opportunity to review and provide input and comments in the development of the CSPD Plan.

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

– Both demographic data and survey responses identified a need to provide support to individuals with Optic Nerve Hypoplasia. Some of these individuals will likely require supported employment services as they proceed through the vocational rehabilitation process toward employment. Needs were also identified in the areas of transition services; technology services; training in Braille, math, literacy, technology, and assistive technology; training at the agency's Orientation Center, and in particular the need for the construction of planned apartments to replicate real living situations as a compliment to the current dormitory arrangement; the need for more work experience opportunities, especially for students with disabilities and youth with the most significant disabilities; and services to older adults who would like to obtain or retain employment.

A need to collaborate with workforce partners, but not consolidate services, in order to provide the most effective services possible to blind and visually impaired New Mexicans.

Following is a description of the needs assessment process conducted in support of our state plan submission:

The State Rehabilitation Council conducted a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, which was reviewed and approved at a meeting of the Council held on December 4, 2015. The Comprehensive statewide needs assessment consisted of the following methods for gathering data: 1. Public Hearings and Town Forums 2. Review of Strategic Plan and Demographic Data 3. Telephone Survey of Consumers 4. Telephone Survey of Key Internal and External Stakeholders

1. Public Hearings and Town Forums

The Commission and State Rehabilitation Council jointly held two public hearings in Albuquerque, along with town forums in Alamogordo, Farmington, Las Cruces, Las Vegas, and Santa Fe. Notices were widely distributed, including being published in local newspapers, being posted on NEWSLINE for the Blind, being placed on the Commission web page, and being placed on the Sunshine Portal. The hearings and town forums were designed specifically for the purpose of soliciting input on statewide needs. Public hearings were held during the general sessions of the annual conventions of the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico (total registration for which was almost 200 persons) and at the Commission for the Blind offices in Albuquerque.

The public hearing and town forum process resulted in the following needs being identified:

A need for collaboration, but strongly against consolidation of services. Commenters expressed an overwhelming call for continuing separate services for the blind in New Mexico. Commenters pointed to a homogenization of services which would not serve blind individuals effectively; an increase of caseload sizes by vocational counselor staff; a reduction in resources available to serve blind persons, whose services generally require more money and longer time horizons; concern that consolidation would lead to more hierarchy, more bureaucracy and less autonomy, resulting in reduced flexibility to direct services where they are needed; reduced expertise; member of the Commission Board who himself was a manager in Ohio when it underwent a consolidation and his comments that the result was reduced services for blind persons in Ohio; a need to maintain its own identity and its own State Rehabilitation Council; and commenters who pointed to research studies that separate services for the blind are more efficient and more effective than combined services. An informal vote at the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico convention, with almost 200 in attendance, was almost unanimous in opposition to consolidation. The National Federation of the Blind is the largest organization of blind persons in the United States and the NFB of New Mexico is a strong affiliate of the national organization. Finally, many commenters asked what would be done about the Commission's Independent Living Program, which predominantly serves older individuals who are blind across the state and has nothing to do with vocational training and employment.

A need for a liaison between the Commission and the one–stops.

A need for more blind staff at the Orientation Center.

A need for more teachers who are trained to work with blind students.

A need for more Braille and orientation and mobility services.

2. Review of Strategic Plan and Demographic data.

The State Rehabilitation Council reviewed the current Strategic Plan, the prior needs assessment, the American Community Survey results for New Mexico for persons who report “serious difficulty seeing, and other appropriate demographic data.

The following needs were identified through this process:

A need for more transition services to youth with disabilities in order to meet the increased population in New Mexico, in particular for the growing population of youth with Optic Nerve Hypoplasia, youth with diabetes, youth who are blind as a result of premature birth, and youth with multiple disabilities.

A need to provide additional transition services to combat the Decreasing rates of literacy among blind youth, including in both print and Braille;

A need to provide additional transition services to upgrade the technology and assistive technology skills required for blind and visually impaired youth to succeed in secondary education, post–secondary vocational training/education, and employment.

A need to provide transition services to address the delayed maturation or “failure to launch” syndrome among blind and visually impaired youth.

A need to provide additional academic, social, and independent living skills to youth.

A need for more services to ethnic and racial minority groups which have a greater likelihood for diabetes, which is the leading cause of blindness in adults.

A need to provide services to adults for a longer period of time as a result of the slow economic recovery in New Mexico.

A need to provide a broader set of services to an increasing population of adults with multiple disabilities.

A need to provide Braille skills to adults who did not get the Braille training that they should have received in elementary and secondary school.

A need for technology and assistive technology training to help adults achieve the proficiency that is required to become and remain employed.

A need to provide older individuals with services that will assist them to become and remain employed.

3. Telephone Survey of Commission Consumers

The Commission and State Plan Committee also developed and conducted a telephone consumer Survey, the specific results of which were presented to the State Rehab Council at its meeting on December 4, 2015. The survey instrument was specifically designed to solicit information on the needs of consumers pursuant to 34 CFR Section 361.29. The needs assessment randomly identified ten percent of Commission Consumers and consumers whose cases were closed in the last year. This sample was anonymously surveyed by an independent contractor with respect to the

rehabilitation needs of persons who are blind or visually impaired and the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs. Results were anonymous. A total of 19 persons were contacted and 13 surveys were completed.

The specific survey questions were: a. What do you see as the area of greatest future need? b. What do you see as the area of greatest current need? c. What needs to you see in regard to the aging workforce? d. What needs do you see in regard to blind children and youth? e. What population or group do you see as being most under–served? f. What needs do you see with respect to technology? g. What needs do you see with respect to integration of services? h. What needs do you see with regard to strategic planning? i. What needs do you see with regard to establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs? This includes the Commission for the Blind Orientation Center and planned apartments to be built as a part of the Orientation Center training. j. What other rehabilitation needs do you see? k. Overall, how satisfied are you with Commission's services?

Very satisfied Satisfied Somewhat satisfied Neutral (neither satisfied or dissatisfied) Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

The following needs were identified as a result of this survey process:

A need for more technology services, including those related to hardware, software, and mobile devices.

A need for more technology training in order to prepare consumers for secondary school, post–secondary vocational training or education, and employment.

A need for more training in Braille, cane travel, and other skills.

A need for more services for students with disabilities and youth with the most significant disabilities, including math, Braille, technology, and independent living; as well as additional opportunities for work experiences.

4. Telephone Survey of Key Internal and External Stakeholders

The Needs Assessment Process consisted of interviews with key internal and external stakeholders as well. These key stakeholders were surveyed by an independent contractor with respect to the rehabilitation needs of persons who are blind or visually impaired and the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs. Seven external and eight internal stakeholders were surveyed.

Key External Stake Holders

NFB State President, Adelmo Vigil NFB Association of Blind Students President, Eric Gordon NFB Parents of Blind Children President, Alexia Switzer NFB SAGE Division President, Nancy Burns NMSBVI Superintendent, Linda Lyle VA VIST Coordinator, Trudy Valdez Client Assistance Program Coordinator, Bernadine Chavez Adelante Executive Director, Mike Kivitz Tresco President and Chief Executive Officer, Deb Battista

Key Internal Stakeholders

Commission for the Blind Chair, Art Schreiber Commission State Rehabilitation Council Chair, Tom O'Brien Commission Executive Director, Greg Trapp Commission Deputy Director for Vocational Rehabilitation, Jim Salas Commission Deputy Director for the Orientation Center, Lucy Alexander Commission Technology Manager, Curtis Chong Commission BEP Manager, Diana Martinez Commission Youth Outreach and Technology for Children Coordinator, Kelly Burma The following set of nine questions was asked of these key external and internal stakeholders:

a. What do you see as the area of greatest future need? b. What do you see as the area of greatest current need? c. What needs to you see in regard to the aging workforce? d. What needs do you see in regard to blind children and youth? e. What population or group do you see as being most under–served? f. What needs do you see with respect to technology? g. What needs do you see with respect to integration of services? h. What needs do you see with regard to strategic planning? i. What needs do you see with regard to establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation services? This includes the Commission for the Blind Orientation Center and planned apartments to be built as a part of the Orientation Center training. j. What other rehabilitation needs do you see? The following needs were identified as a result of this survey process:

A need to work more collaboratively with the State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, public schools, colleges and universities, transportation providers, and one–stop employment centers.

A need to add capacity at the Orientation Center, in particular the ability to reproduce an independent living situation such as would be possible with the planned apartments.

A need to provide note taking skills to students and youth in transition to post–secondary school or work.

A need for more work opportunities for students with disabilities and youth with the most significant disabilities.

A need to provide services that meet the specialized needs of youth with Optic Nerve Hypoplasia.

A need to improve support for underserved populations including individuals in rural locations, individuals who are deaf blind, Native Americans, older individuals who are blind, and youth with disabilities.

A need to increase the number of bilingual staff throughout the agency, plus a need to add more technology staff and more staff in the Albuquerque Skills Center.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

– The needs assessment yielded some comments related to Commission staff, such as a need for more bilingual staff. There were a couple of comments related to minority consumers, those being to provide more services to Latinos and Native American adults and youth. Native Americans often wish to stay close to home, which often means reservations and pueblos which have inadequate infrastructure, jobs, and transportation resources.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

– The needs assessment identified a need for more funding and more staff to reach rural and underserved areas of the state. They also covered the landscape in regard to services, expressing needs for more transportation, education, transition, and employment services; as well as a need to provide more services to older individuals with vision and hearing loss.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

There were a number of comments related to the one–stops. There were strong views on collaboration with the one–stops, but against consolidation of the Commission within the workforce development system. The views were consistent among consumers, external stakeholders, and internal stakeholders that separate services for blind adults and youth should be maintained. Comments also recommended and increase in collaboration with local education agencies, state colleges and universities, and state transportation providers.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

There were many comments from consumers, external stakeholders, and internal stakeholders regarding the need to improve services to students with disabilities and youth with the most significant disabilities. Needs identified include technology, technology training, math skills, Braille skills, cane travel skills, independent living skills, and work opportunities.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

Consumers, external stakeholders, and internal stakeholders all commented on the need to expand the agency's Orientation Center in order to serve the growing number of blind and visually impaired individuals in New Mexico. In particular, comments advocated for the construction of apartments on property adjacent to the dormitory which was donated to the Commission. The apartments would provide an independent living experience that is currently being provided through rental apartments 1.5 miles away. Respondents identified how the apartments would enable the Commission to teach real independent living skills, that they would be better than the dorms, that the existence of apartments would attract consumers who currently choose to attend expensive out–of–state training centers which have apartments, that the apartments would provide a more convenient opportunity for consumers with families to participate, and that the apartments would provide a fully accessible independent living opportunity for individuals with physical disabilities.

3. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT .

The needs assessment identified the need to improve the skills of blind and visually impaired youth, in particular in the areas of reading and writing since many are leaving school and do not know how to write a paper; students should be able to stay in their local school district with proper supports; "There is a crisis around braille. Technology can't do it all, students need to learn to read, and research shows changes in the brain when learning to read that help people be more flexible over their lifespan. There are a myriad of things that students who are blind need to learn in order to be successful as an adult and they can't learn them in a 6 hour day at school. They need to learn from an integrated system, home services, early intervention, family, school, and sometimes a residential setting, transition services (from the Commission), adult services in addition if needed. We need to address the whole student. In education we say there is an expanded core curriculum around blindness. And students can be at risk if they don't learn the extra specific things." There were many comments related to the lack of effective services in elementary and secondary education today, including literacy, math, technology, independent living, socialization, independent mobility, independent living, expectations, students with Optic Nerve Hypoplasia, and students with multiple disabilities. Many respondents mentioned a need for additional work opportunities for transition–age youth.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

400

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

350

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

50

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

0

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

0

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

$5,560,500

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The goals and priorities described below were jointly developed and agreed to by the Commission for the Blind and our State Rehabilitation Council.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

In the context of the Agency’s mission statement, a goal of the VR Program is integrated, competitive employment, or supported employment placements. The Agency’s goal is having blind individuals employed and contributing members of society. The Agency strives to find, in the words of our former Executive Director and former Rehabilitation Services Administration Commissioner, "real jobs for real blind people." The mission of the New Mexico Commission for the Blind is to enable persons who are blind to achieve vocational, economic and social equality by providing career preparation, training in the skills of blindness and above all, promoting and conveying the belief that blindness is not a barrier to successful employment, or to living an independent and meaningful life.

The Agency’s priorities include serving individuals with the most significant disabilities. As a result of current funding levels, all eligible individuals seeking rehabilitation services are being served. Should funding levels change, the Commission may adopt an Order of Selection, pursuant to applicable provisions of the Rehabilitation Act.

Cooperative agreements have been established with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Aging and Long Term Services Department, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, Governor’s Commission on Disability, Public Education Department, and Higher Education Department, New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (CDHH), and New Mexico Highlands University.

Input received by the State Rehabilitation Council and Commission staff, including the comprehensive needs assessment conducted during FY 2016, as well as a review of new performance indicators under WIOA, identified operational priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs:

On Friday, February 13, 2015, the Rehabilitation Services Administration announced that it would award 2016 grants based on the 2015 State Plan to reduce the burden of working on two plans at the same time. As a result, the Commission did not submit a State Plan in July of 2015. Instead, the Commission began work on the combined Plan to be submitted pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Accordingly, the Council met on December 4, 2015 and adopted the goals and priorities listed below to be submitted as a part of the combined Plan. Following the public comment period, the SRC met again on February 22, 2016 and affirmed the goals and priorities.

a. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by partnering and working with community colleges and one–stop centers to more effectively utilize services available through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner–Peyser programs.

Agency Response: This is a new Goal and Priority and the agency has not undertaken any activities specifically designed to meet it. The agency will work cooperatively with the identified partner entities by designating specific liaisons and points of contact, by providing information, by entering into cooperative agreements where appropriate.

b. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by working cooperatively with the New Mexico Department of Health so as to develop opportunities for competitive and integrated employment for persons who are blind or visually impaired, which will be accomplished by working in partnership with the Medical Assistance Division, the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, and the Behavioral Health Services Division.

Agency Response: This is a new Goal and Priority and the agency has not undertaken any activities specifically designed to meet it. The agency will work cooperatively with the Department of Health, with the Medical Assistance Division, with the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, and with the Behavioral Health Services Division. The agency will designate specific liaisons and points of contact for each of these entities, will provide information as appropriate, and will enter into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Health.

c. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by using the Orientation Center to provide employment preparation training for adults and transition students, including through the addition of an apartment training facility to be constructed adjacent to the Center. The proposed apartment facility will increase the capacity of the Orientation Center, will enable the Orientation Center to provide more realistic training, will eliminate the need to rent costly and less appropriate private apartments, and will reduce the number of instances in which costly out–of–state training will be necessary to meet the needs of consumers.

Agency Response: The agency is working actively to obtain necessary approvals and funding to construct the proposed apartment facility. The agency has conducted planning discussions with the Facilities Management Division, and is hoping to begin construction sometime in the first half of 2017. The agency is planning on seeking capital improvement funding from the state, and will continue to look at whether or not it is feasible to use federal Basic Support funding.

d. Increase the number of consumers served through enhanced Outreach Activities; including media outreach, use of paid advertising, through increased collaboration with ophthalmologists and optometrists, and through the use of the Technology for Children program to conduct outreach to school districts.

Agency Response: The agency will work to increase outreach to the identified groups using the recommended outreach methods. In 2014 and 2015, the agency had positive news coverage of its vocational rehabilitation program on the front pages of the Albuquerque Journal and the Las Cruces Sun–News, and in the Alamogordo Daily News and the Santa Fe New Mexican. The agency also participated in radio broadcasts, and staffed a table at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. The agency also sponsored the 2015 Getting in Touch with Literacy conference which drew more than 125 educational professionals and teachers of the blind from throughout the state. In addition, the agency has developed Keystroke, an accessible typing tutor program that works on both the PC and on the Mac, and has developed iFidget for the iPhone. These apps are a part of the Commission's outreach strategy as they are available free of charge to school districts, helping the agency to establish contact and build relationships with individual teachers and local school districts.

e. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes of transition consumers by providing enhanced Pre–Employment Transition Services, including assistive technology where appropriate as a part of an Individualized Plan for employment, by providing assistive technology through the Technology for Children Program, by conducting increased outreach activities, by conducting educational activities to meet the specific needs of transition students, and by increasing proficient use of Braille and Braille math.

Agency Response: The agency will work to increase services and outreach to Pre–Employment Transition Students using the identified methods. . The agency already seeks to be involved in Individualized Education Plan meetings for transition clients starting at age 14, and the agency operates the Students in Transition to Employment Program in Albuquerque and Alamogordo. The agency has also sponsored trainings and certification exams for the National Certification in Literary Braille and the National Certification in Unified English Braille. In addition, the agency has developed Keystroke, an accessible typing tutor program that works on both the PC and on the Mac, and has developed iFidget for the iPhone. These apps are a part of the Commission's outreach strategy as they are available free of charge to school districts, helping the agency to establish contact and build relationships with individual teachers and local school districts.

f. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes achieved by consumers by providing services in a way that genuinely honors the "informed choice" provisions of the Rehabilitation Act, enabling Commission consumers to have the opportunity to obtain employment at higher levels of compensation.

Agency Response: The agency continues to provide our services in a way that allow our clients to set and obtain high employment goals. This has historically been reflected by strong performance on Indicator 1.5, which measured the average starting salary of our clients against the average state wage. Even though this Indicator is no longer in place under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the agency will continue to provide services that will enable our clients to obtain high starting wages.

g. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes achieved by consumers by providing a quality and expanding Newsline system that gives consumers access to employment listings, business news, and other important information.

Agency Response: The agency is committed to providing a quality Newsline service. The agency updated the local Newsline software on September 2, 2014, and the agency will be able to add additional publications as a result of this upgrade, including the Alamogordo Daily News. The Agency will continue to sponsor NFB–Newsline in New Mexico.

h. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by creatively and innovatively using the Skills Center to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation consumers and potential vocational rehabilitation consumers, including using it for provision of services to transition students.

Agency Response: The agency is committed to using the Skills Center to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation clients. As a result, the agency used the Skills Center to provide training to the Students in Transition to Employment Program participants in 2014 and 2015, and will continue this activity in 2016. The Skills Center was also used to provide support in the area of Braille and technology training, as well as to function as a meeting place for programs related to vocational rehabilitation.

i. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes through the provision of independent living training to vocational rehabilitation consumers, including through the proposed apartment training facility at the Orientation Center.

Agency Response: The agency continues to refer vocational rehabilitation clients to receive independent living services, recognizing the need for clients to be able to function independently to become employed. The agency recognizes the benefit of providing training at the Orientation Center that is realistic and appropriate to the individual needs of clients, and is therefore actively seeking to build apartments that can be used to provide more realistic and appropriate training.

j. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes for consumers who are Deaf–Blind through collaboration and partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, with the Community Outreach Programs for the Deaf, and with the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, including through the delivery of assistive technology to consumers who are Deaf–Blind.

Agency Response: The Agency has identified a vocational rehabilitation counselor to take the lead on services related to clients who are Deaf–Blind. The agency also has a cooperative agreement with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and coordinates provision of services to persons who are Deaf–Blind. The agency works with a variety of other partners, including the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Community Outreach programs for the Deaf, the Helen Keller National Center, and the Deaf–Blind Task Force. The agency also participates in the annual Deaf–Blind Awareness Day at the Roundhouse.

k. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes through the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) by shortening the time required for vendors to complete the required training, including by using Randolph–Sheppard Act training offered by the Hadley School for the Blind.

Agency Response: The agency has adopted the Hadley class as the training method for BEP vendors, and is working with New Mexico programs to create a local provider so that food

preparation and cooking methods can be taught locally. It is anticipated that we will have this in place by the middle of 2016.

l. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by strengthening administrative services so as to timely and accurately submit federal reports, to assure compliance with all applicable fiscal regulations, and to comply with all applicable accounting standards.

Agency Response: The agency recognizes the need to have strong fiscal programs so as to maximize the receipt of federal funds, and to otherwise provide appropriate vocational rehabilitation services to our clients. To do this, the agency must have in place a sufficient number of qualified fiscal staff to comply with federal fiscal rules, and to appropriately respond to changing fiscal requirements and staffing levels. The agency has submitted its “Single Audit” on time for each of the last four years, and has only had two minor fiscal findings in those four years.

m. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by enhancing overall performance and productivity by engaging in activity designed to mitigate and ameliorate the impacts of blindness and visual impairment, and by engaging in outreach and other activities designed to identify additional potential consumers, and by making the public and medical community more aware of Commission services.

Agency Response: The agency is engaging in new and innovative approaches to provide services and engage in outreach. The agency has developed the iFidget app for the iPhone to help clients correct inappropriate rocking motions that a small portion of blind individuals develop. The agency also developed a typing program called Keystroke that helps blind persons learn how to type more efficiently, including persons who are Deaf–Blind. The agency has also improved its web page and the way in which notices of meetings are communicated, and has added the ability for interested persons to subscribe to receive notices. The agency has also developed an entirely new web page that has a more modern appearance, and that will allow for referrals to be made by health care professionals through the web page.

n. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes for consumers by providing enhanced benefits counseling and guidance to reduce concerns related to the loss or reduction of benefits.

Agency Response: The agency continues to provide benefits counseling and guidance through a contract with the New Mexico Legal Aid Society. The agency also had staff from Legal Aid provide training on benefits to the vocational rehabilitation counselors. The agency has also provided seminars on benefits to clients.

The goals and priorities described above were jointly developed and agreed to by the Commission for the Blind and the State Rehabilitation Council.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

Please see l.2. above.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

Data in this section has not been collected but will be tracked in the future using the AWARE case management system from Alliance Enterprises.

* The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program * The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program * The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit. * Credential attainment rate * Measurable skill gain * Effectiveness in serving employers

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

The agency's last Section 107 Monitoring took place in 2010. Pursuant to that Monitoring, the agency has developed and implemented a Corrective Action Plan, and that Corrective Action Plan has been approved by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The agency also continues to maintain the corrections that were identified and put in place. The agency continues to be audited under its annual Single Audit or OMB A-133 audit. The agency has only had two fiscal findings in the last 4 Single Audits. The last Single Audit was for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 15, and has been submitted to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse in compliance with OMB Circular A-133. The agency SFY 15 audit was submitted on time, and the agency had one finding in its SFY 15 Single Audit. The finding was 2015-001, and stated that the Commission did not have "written Procedures for determining the allowability of costs in accordance with Subpart E-Cost Principles of this part and the terms and conditions of the Federal award." On April 28, 2016, the Commission adopted "Allowable Cost Policy and Procedure," which is intended to resolve finding 2015-001.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES.

The Commission believes that it has enough resources to serve all applicants for services and is not on an order of selection.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

The Commission has set forth as its number one priority the goal of serving individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, with a quality employment outcome as the end result. A supported employment outcome for individuals with multiple or severe disabilities is a priority with these individuals being served in competitive integrated settings pursuant to the Olmstead decision and WIOA. Some of these individuals have recently been de–institutionalized and some live in isolated rural settings. The Commission has sought to enhance supported employment placements in the consumer’s own community to provide employment in familiar surroundings and close proximity to natural supports. This activity is intended to address the lack of placement options in rural portions of the State. The Commission will continue to work with Community Rehabilitation Programs, Native American VR Programs, consumer organizations, disability groups, advocates and other stakeholders to assess the degree to which current staffing patterns and service delivery activities achieve the goal of improving employment outcomes, in competitive integrated settings, in rural portions of the State. These groups will advise Agency management in designing, as necessary, new Agency service patterns to provide a continuum of services to this population. The Agency will seek to increase the number of supported employment consumers during the next year and will continue to review cases for appropriate identification for supported employment. Services typically identified for these consumers include training, transportation, day programs, comprehensive assessments, appropriate assistive technology, job coaching, interpreting, and other vocational services. These services will be provided through purchase of direct services predominantly using Title VI, Part B funds. Extended services have historically been provided through various methods, including the Developmental Disabilities Waiver, the Disabled & Elderly Waiver, the Brain Injury Services Fund, the Working Disabled Individual (Category 043), subsidized employment, Employment–Related Work Expenses, Blind Work Expenses, and by arranging for natural supports. The Agency focuses on developing natural supports through co–workers, family members, and friends whenever possible, and by providing training to potential job coaches, who in turn provide services to enable consumers to obtain and

maintain employment. Fortunately, under new provisions of WIOA, the Commission will be able to fund extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities for up to four years.

Youth services offered under Supported Employment are determined on an individual basis depending on the needs of the consumer. Services to youth with the most significant disabilities begin at age 14, and include representation by Commission counselors at IEP meetings, support in school–based transition programs for youth age 18–21, and summer job experiences. The Commission provides summer employment experiences for supported employment youth through its Students in Transition to Employment Program, which provides employment and training experiences at its Alamogordo training center, its Albuquerque Skills Center, and community–based placements throughout New Mexico.

Another program that will serve youth with the most significant disabilities is the Commission's Technology for Children program, which is also a frequent point of first contact with the agency. This program provides information to the public, parents, and schools about the Commission's vocational rehabilitation program in a way that significantly enhances the agency transition services. It also provides technical assistance and support services that enhance the agency's ability to work cooperatively with school districts. The agency has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department of Health and the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The MOA will administer an allocation from DOH of $80,000, designed to provide assistive technology that, for a disability other than blindness, would be considered durable medical equipment. The Technology Specialist who coordinates the Technology for Children program will continue to provide assistive technology support to economically disadvantaged and rural school districts. The Technology Specialist assigned to the Technology for Children program also speaks Spanish.

Transition to extended services (on–going support services and other appropriate services provided by another state agency, a private non–profit organization, an employer, etc.) may be provided for up to four years following case closure.

Specific goals for PY 2016 include: 1. At least three closures in competitive integrated settings; 2. Closures averaging at least $7.50 per hour; 3. Closures averaging at least fifteen hours worked per week.

The goals and priorities described above were jointly developed and agreed to by the Commission for the Blind and our State Rehabilitation Council.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

The Commission is pleased with the opportunity to provide extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities following the closure of their VR case for a period of up to four years or until the individual turns age 25. The Commission believes this is a particularly beneficial improvement within WIOA. The Commission will initially use the 50% reserve for this purpose. If the 50% reserve is exhausted, the Commission is prepared to utilize regular supported employment funds for this purpose. Finally, if the supported employment funds are exhausted, the Commission is prepared to

use regular VR funds to provide extended services. As the consumer approaches age 25, the Commission will assist in the transition to waiver funding and natural supports for the provision of extended services.

B. HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

Please see n.1. above.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

The Mission of the New Mexico Commission for the Blind is to enable persons who are blind to achieve vocational, economic and social equality by providing career preparation, training in the skills of blindness and above all, promoting and conveying the belief that blindness is not a barrier to successful employment, or to living an independent and meaningful life.

The Commission will make every effort to meet and exceed the performance accountability indicators outlined by WIOA. The Commission’s efforts are also directed toward accomplishment of the goals and priorities identified in description (l), State Goals and Priorities, and description (n), Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Funds:

Services provided to accomplish these objectives include rehabilitation counseling, individualized training, comprehensive blindness training in a residential setting, independent living services provided to vocational rehabilitation consumers, educational and support services, and meaningful opportunities for employment in competitive integrated work settings supported through the provision of assistive technology and other workplace modifications. The Agency also provides career training, training in a variety of blindness skills, and above all, promotes and conveys the philosophy that blindness is not a barrier to employment or any other aspect of a full, meaningful life.

1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities

The Commission is committed to expanding and improving services to blind and visually–impaired New Mexicans who are interested in obtaining, retaining, or advancing in employment. The Commission believes that the first step in this process is to build and improve relationships with core partners under WIOA. Partnerships of this kind will serve to leverage resources of each agency. The first benefit of these relationships will be an opportunity to identify additional consumers who might not have been aware of the availability of Commission services and their potential to engage in integrated and competitive employment. This could include supported employment and non–supported employment consumers as well as students with disabilities and youth with the most

significant disabilities. It can also include individuals who could benefit from training at the Orientation Center, including those who might benefit from the proposed apartment facility at the Orientation Center.

The Commission recognizes that there is a need to expand its assistive technology training services, but is constrained by the lack of qualified trainers with experience in the assistive technology used by persons who are blind or visually impaired. Consequently, the Commission will engage in activities designed to identify additional methods and resources that can help to improve assistive technology training. This will include providing training to existing employees to expand capacity, and use of external contracted trainers who can be brought to New Mexico to provide intensive technology training.

When it comes to placements, the Commission has positive relationships with many employers and employment organizations. However, to improve the opportunity for placements in competitive and integrated settings, the Commission will engage in additional work with federal contractors, which now have goals for hiring persons with disabilities. The Commission will also expand support of self–employment goals, which can be the most appropriate option for many individuals. New Mexico has a strong state use law which provides for “qualified individuals” to engage in competitive and integrated work with state and governmental entities. The agency Executive Director is a member of the New Mexico Council for Purchasing from Persons with Disabilities, which administers the state use program. Accordingly, the Commission will explore ways to more fully utilize the employment opportunities presented by the State Use Act.

2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS.

The Commission believes that assistive technology is an important way to level the playing field for its blind and visually impaired consumers. The agency has an effective process for evaluating consumers to determine their technology and assistive technology needs and purchasing those items, whether they be needed for home, school, or work sites. The software and hardware cover the landscape of traditional technology, including computers, printers, monitors, scanners, tablets, and smart phones; plus assistive technology that includes magnification, speech output, Braille, optical character recognition, book readers, and accessible smart phone apps. The Commission will evaluate its technology staff to better utilize their respective skills and assign training tasks to those who are particularly skilled in that area. Additionally, the Commission will recruit contract trainers who can provide in–person and remote training. Remote training is necessary since New Mexico is a very large state with a relatively small population. The Commission will continue purchasing subscriptions to digital training materials which pair the software application with the assistive technology solution, such as teaching Microsoft Word 2013 with JAWS (JAWS is a popular screen reading program). Although these textbooks are efficient for the self–starter and also serve as an excellent reference, consumers who are not self–starters need a human option. The Commission will also use resources such as the Hadley School for the Blind to provide training on specific applications and operating systems. Finally, the Commission will work on expanding assistive technology training provided at the Orientation Center in Alamogordo through the construction of the proposed apartment facility which will attract additional consumers and expand capacity at the Center. The apartment facility will also enable the Commission to provide assistive technology training to consumers during the summer STEP program, during which time the dormitory is occupied by transition students age 14 to 21.

PY 2016 marks the tenth year of a MOA with the Department of Health and the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The MOA administers an allocation from DOH of $80,000, designed to provide assistive technology that, for a disability other than blindness, would be considered durable medical equipment. This initiative serves blind children that are both transition–age and those not yet transition–age. The Coordinator of the Technology for Children program is thus able to provide assistive technology support to transition consumers, including those residing in economically disadvantaged and rural school districts. The Coordinator of the Technology for Children program also speaks Spanish. The agency will promote the program and solicit applications for program services through its annual letter to the special education directors of all 89 school districts in New Mexico; through new MOUs with individual school districts; and through communication with transition specialist, Teachers of the Visually Impaired, and Orientation and Mobility Specialists throughout the state.

The Commission also works with Community Outreach Programs for the Deaf to register Commission consumers for the iCanConnect program. iCanConnect is another name for the National Deaf–Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP), a federal program designed to provide distance communications technology and training for people with combined hearing and vision disabilities, and to increase opportunities for independence for this underserved population to stay connected with family, friends, service providers, and their communities. There is a wide range of equipment available depending on client needs. Some examples include: Braille devices, Computers, Mobile devices, Phones, and Signalers.

The Commission's Assistive Technology Specialist Supervisor serves on the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP) advisory board, publicizing Commission services an providing consultant services regarding specialized technology for the blind and visually impaired. NMTAP offers free services to New Mexicans with disabilities to help them get the assistive technology services they need. NMTAP is a statewide program designed to increase knowledge of, access to, and acquisition of assistive or adaptive technology for anyone with any disability, anywhere in the state, of any age. Their mission is to help individuals with disabilities enhance their quality of life through the use of assistive technology. To fulfill this mission, the NMTAP staff provides many services to individuals with disabilities, their family members, and service providers, including support to individuals transitioning into higher education, work, or community living.

The Commission received a grant of $75,000 from NMTAP in FY 2014 to outfit its Skills Center. The grant enabled the commission to purchase a variety of computers (both Mac and Windows) and assistive technology, (Braille displays, cameras for optical character recognition systems, note–taking devices, and screen reading and screen magnification software and hardware). The equipment makes it possible for Commission consumers to compare competing products from manufacturers so as to make an informed choice when choosing the technology tools that will work best for their individual situation. The technology is also used to support training in the Skills Center, including specialized workshops for adults/youth and the Students in Transition to Employment summer program for students with disabilities and youth with the most significant disabilities.

The Commission operates the Students in Transition to Employment Program (STEP to provide training and actual work experiences to students and youth who are blind or visually impaired. The Commission will continue to provide the STEP program in Albuquerque, Alamogordo, and through community placements across the state.

The Commission recognizes the need to address growing deficiencies in the computer and Braille skills of students attending public schools, and is developing strategies to address these

deficiencies. These strategies include topical seminars, classes conducted at the Skills Center, and use of programs such as the Hadley School for the Blind. One of the barriers to becoming employed that some students who are blind or visually impaired must address is the tendency to engage in “rocking” behaviors. While only a small portion of persons who are blind or visually impaired actually engage in such behaviors, the stigmatizing habit can prevent these persons from becoming employed in positions consistent with their true abilities. The Commission has therefore developed an iPhone app that is designed to address the behavior. The app, called iFidget, uses the iPhone’s gyroscope to detect the rocking motion and discretely alert the user so that he or she may correct the behavior. The app, which is available as a free download, is also intended to help the Commission to engage in outreach activities, and to build relationships with school districts.

The Commission has also developed a typing application called Keystroke that works on both PC and Mac computers. Keystroke uses advanced metrics to measure typing ability and progress. Keystroke enables the Commission to better meet the needs of consumers, as well as to build relationships with school districts. .

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM.

The Commission plans to conduct outreach to identify and serve individuals who are minorities, including those who have most significant disabilities, and those who are unserved or underserved. The Agency will focus on the following comprehensive initiatives during the upcoming year:

Newsline is an important part of the Commission’s outreach program to identify and serve most significantly disabled persons who are minorities, and individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation or supported employment program. Newsline provides access free of charge to state and national publications to individuals in all portions of New Mexico, including in the most rural portions of the state. The local Newsline and NFB–Newsline have publications that include newspapers from Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Alamogordo, Farmington, Roswell, and Las Cruces, as well as a job search utility that provides blind job seekers with access to the CareerBuilder jobs database. NFB–NEWSLINE also provides publications and prompts in Spanish. NFB–Newsline voices can also be customized to meet the needs of individuals who are hard of hearing, and NFB–Newsline offers the ability to download publications for reading on a Braille display. This feature enables individuals who are deaf–blind to access the more than 400 national newspapers and magazines on NFB–Newsline. Commission counselors, technology specialists, Orientation Center teachers, Business Enterprise Program consultants, and rehab teachers will promote and demonstrate the program to Commission consumers.

In an effort to reach out to populations that have been unserved or underserved, the Commission will continue the operation of field offices, four of which are located in rural portions of the state where there is a greater portion of persons who are unserved or underserved. For example, the northwest section of the State is served by the Farmington office, and is primarily rural and includes a large portion of the Navajo, Jicarilla Apache, and pueblo Native American communities. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Rehab Teacher in Farmington are sensitive to the cultural aspects of the communities they serve. The Rehab Teacher is himself Navajo and speaks Dine Bizaadthe, the Navajo language. The staff in the Las Vegas office is likewise sensitive to the unique cultural aspects of northern New Mexico, and is fluent in Spanish. This is also the case for the Las Cruces office and southern/southwestern New Mexico, where the VR counselor and technology specialist

are bilingual; while the technology trainer in the Roswell office is also bilingual. The Coordinator of the Technology for Children program is bilingual, and there are several teachers and employees at the Orientation Center who are bilingual.

The Vocational Rehabilitation program will establish a process to review cases that have been closed as unsuccessful. The goal will be to reach out to individuals who have exited the system and inquire if they would like their case re–opened. This will enable the Commission to reach additional individuals who come from minority or unserved or underserved populations, giving them an additional opportunity to receive services. The Commission also has a significant percentage of staff members who speak Spanish, enabling the agency to better reach individuals who are monolingual Spanish speakers, or who speak Spanish as their primary language.

The Students in Transition to Employment Program (STEP) will continue with its efforts to provide work experience and skills training to blind students during the summer months, including to students who are from unserved or underserved populations. STEP will continue to engage in outreach to recruit students with the most significant disabilities, including students from minority backgrounds, and students who are also unserved or underserved. The STEP program is also operated on a residential basis in Alamogordo, which allows students from even the most economically disadvantaged and rural portions of the state to participate. STEP students earn a salary during the employment portion of the program. In addition to providing essential job training and experience, this also has the benefit of serving as a significant incentive for many students from economically disadvantaged families, enabling the Commission to reach and attract more individuals into the program. After making 31 placements in 2015, the Commission will strive to place 40 students and youth in summer jobs in 2016.

There are 89 school districts in New Mexico, most of which are in economically disadvantaged and rural portions of the state. Most of these districts do not have teachers who are specifically trained to instruct students who are blind or visually impaired. The Commission will continue sending annual letters to special education directors at each of these school districts in order to make them aware of Commission transition services. Rehabilitation counselors will contact local public school transition coordinators, guidance counselors, or other appropriate personnel to identify children age 13 or over with visual impairments. Counselors will also attend the annual Transition Institute, where they will meet school personnel from around New Mexico. The Commission will also make parents aware of Commission services by making presentations and distributing information to members of parent organizations, such as the National Federation of the Blind Parents of Blind Children Division. These outreach activities will result in additional contacts with teachers and parents, and increase familiarity with Commission services.

The Technology for Children Coordinator will continue to provide services to students from unserved or underserved backgrounds, and to build relationships with school districts that serve students who are unserved or underserved. The Technology for Children program is an important outreach activity, and is also a frequent point of first contact with the agency. It provides information to the public, parents, and schools about the Commission's vocational rehabilitation program in a way that significantly enhances the agency transition services. It also provides technical assistance and support services that enhance the agency's ability to work cooperatively with school districts. The agency has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department of Health and the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The MOA will administer an allocation from DOH of $80,000, designed to provide assistive technology that, for a disability other than blindness, would be considered durable medical equipment. The Technology Specialist who coordinates the Technology for Children program also speaks Spanish.

One of the barriers to becoming employed that some persons who are blind or visually impaired must address is the tendency to engage in “rocking” behaviors. While only a small portion of persons who are blind or visually impaired actually engage in such behaviors, the stigmatizing habit can prevent these persons from becoming employed in positions consistent with their true abilities. The Commission has therefore developed an iPhone app that is designed to address the behavior. The app, called iFidget, uses the iPhone’s gyroscope to detect the rocking motion and discretely alert the user so that he or she may correct the behavior. The app, which is available as a free download, is also intended to help the Commission to engage in outreach activities, and to build relationships with school districts.

The Commission has also developed a typing application called Keystroke that works on both PC and Mac computers. Keystroke uses advanced metrics to measure typing ability and progress. Keystroke enables the Commission to better meet the needs of consumers, as well as to build relationships with school districts.

The Commission recognizes that individuals who are Deaf–Blind are often unserved or underserved, as are eligible individuals who have a hearing impairment. To address this need, the Commission has obtained an affiliate status with the Helen Keller National Center. The Commission will continue to participate in regular meetings held around the state with an HKNC consultant, local/regional school counselors, and community rehabilitation providers. The regional representative from Helen Keller is scheduled to travel to New Mexico in February 2016 to deliver training to Commission counselors. The Agency has also entered into a Joint Powers Agreement and a Memorandum of Understanding with the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing to identify and serve eligible individuals who also have hearing impairments. . In addition, the Commission has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation on how the agencies will serve this population. The MOU is designed to streamline services and avoid unnecessary service delays.

The One–Stop employment system faces special challenges in New Mexico due to the rural nature of the state and the state’s very large geographic area. As a result, there are relatively few One–Stop offices that serve the state. The Commission currently has representation on two of the four local Workforce Development Boards in addition to the executive director serving on the state board. Appointments of commission staff to the other two local boards is expected during PY 2016. Commission representatives on these boards promote Commission services, represent vocational rehabilitation perspectives, educate board members (especially board members from businesses), help Commission consumers to better access the One–Stop services, and also help to make the employees of the One–Stops more aware of Commission services.

The agency has nine Rehab Teachers, which enables the agency to reduce the geographic coverage of each teacher and improve the quality of service delivery statewide. Rehab Teachers are required to assist and participate in local support groups, which help the Commission to identify and serve persons who are from minority backgrounds, or who are otherwise unserved or underserved. The Commission will continue this support group effort, with a special focus on outreach to Native Americans, rural minority populations, and other areas that contain communities of individuals who are unserved or underserved. Approximately 15 support groups are operating throughout the State, with ongoing facilitation being provided in several groups by consumers or former consumers. The majority of the support groups serve consumers in very rural areas with large populations of persons who are minorities, or who are otherwise unserved or underserved. Examples include Farmington, Las Vegas, Silver City, Clovis, and Carlsbad.

In addition to the outreach methods identified above, the Commission will also research the feasibility of paid advertising to reach blind and visually impaired youth and adults who could benefit from Commission services.

The Commission will also work to expand services at the orientation Center in Alamogordo, which serves many individuals from unserved or underserved backgrounds. Many of these individuals come from rural portions of the state, where they did not receive appropriate blindness skills training from their local schools. The agency will work to expand these services through the construction of an apartment facility at the orientation Center in Alamogordo. This proposed apartment facility will enable the Orientation Center to expand capacity and serve more individuals from unserved or underserved backgrounds.

4. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES).

The Commission recognizes the need to expand and improve transition services. Counselors regularly communicate with special education directors, transition specialists, orientation and mobility specialists, and teachers of the visually impaired in their service territories. The Commission communicates each year with each of the special education directors in the 89 school districts throughout New Mexico and has signed MOUs with 16 of those school districts so far in an effort to improve transition services. Counselors also attend training on transition issues, such as the New Mexico Transition Institute and the Southwest Conference on Disability. The Deputy Director for Vocational Rehabilitation Programs has served on the Statewide Transition Coordinating Council for many years, and will encourage the STCC to become more active.

In an effort to improve its transition program, the commission will attempt to reclassify one of its vocational rehabilitation counselor positions into a lead counselor position responsible for transition services. Although the Students in Transition to Employment has been the centerpiece for providing summer work experiences to students with disabilities and youth with the most significant disabilities, the Commission will work with its counselors, local education agencies, and the business development specialists from one–stop centers to expand work opportunities throughout New Mexico. These opportunities will include job shadowing, after–school, weekend, and summer employment. The commission will also deliver employment readiness workshops throughout the year.

Although support of careers requiring post–secondary education, especially graduate education, appears to be an area of newly increased emphasis under WIOA, it has been an emphasis of Commission services for many years. The Commission has identified a trend of an increasing number of blind and visually–impaired students leaving the public school system who are not prepared for post–secondary programs. Consequently, the reading, math, and English literacy classes offered through Adult Basic Education are necessary to prepare these Commission consumers for the post–secondary vocational training and education programs that will ultimately lead to successful careers. The Commission will work with community colleges to ensure that these programs are accessible to blind and visually–impaired students.

The Commission will address the five required Pre–Employment Transition Services as follows:

a. Job exploration counseling:

The commission has historically focused exclusively on employment in competitive integrated settings and self–employment. A large part of the career assessment process is helping the consumer to identify a career that is the best fit for them. The Commission's Career Choice Questionnaire is a template for consumers to research prospective careers, including interviewing individuals currently working in those fields, identifying prospective industry mentors, and job shadowing. The Commission will continue to encourage students and youth to actively research careers in order to find the career that is the right fit.

b. Work–based learning experiences, which may include in–school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;

In addition to the Students in Transition to Employment Program (STEP) summer program, the Commission will expand its transition services to support in–school, weekend and after–school work opportunities for students with disabilities and youth with the most significant disabilities throughout New Mexico. The Commission will partner with local education agencies and one–stops to facilitate these work opportunities.

c. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;

The Commission has long–supported careers requiring post–secondary education, including graduate education. The Commission will continue this practice since careers requiring post–secondary education, including graduate education, often command good salaries and good benefits.

d. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;

In addition to a summer job in a competitive integrated setting, The Commission's Students in Transition to Employment Program includes a significant workplace readiness training component. However, in order to expand workplace readiness training services, the Commission will begin offering additional workshops and seminars. The Commission has recently added staff to its Albuquerque Skills Center specifically for this purpose. The Skills Center will offer seminars and workshops for high school students, college students, and parents. Training will be delivered throughout the year, during summers, school breaks, after school, and through distance delivery methods. Topics cover the landscape, including parent participation, MS Windows, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook, mobile technology, computer operator maintenance, and training on various assistive technology software and hardware; note–taking skills, Braille, math, college success, summer employment preparation, Hadley support days, job readiness, professional dress and appearance, resume writing, job search strategies, mock interviews, Newsline resources (newspapers, magazines, research capabilities, and job search functions); transportation options, and financial literacy.

e. Instruction in self–advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

Although self–advocacy is a regular part of counseling/guidance services, the Commission will develop a more–structured approach to self–advocacy training in order to provide more consistency in this area.

Technology will be an added service in support of each of the above approaches. The Commission has observed that many blind and visually impaired high school students are unable to use a computer sufficiently to take and retrieve their own class notes, conduct Internet research, compose and edit writing assignments, prepare PowerPoint presentations, and manage email. Technology training will be enhanced to fill this need using agency staff, contract trainers, and digital self–paced training materials.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

The Commission plans to build a four unit apartment facility on donated property adjacent to the dormitory at our Orientation Center in Alamogordo. Currently, the dormitory can accommodate up to 15 students. Typical of many dormitory facilities, the Orientation Center dorm provides meal service to students attending the training center. The Commission does rent apartments in a complex approximately 1.5 miles away in order to provide an independent living opportunity for students nearing the end of their center training experience. There is broad agreement that such independent living experiences are essential for center students as they transition from living with parents or family members to living independently.

Goals in Building the Apartment Facility

Should the proposed apartments be built, the Orientation Center will increase overall capacity by 3 to 4 individuals at any one time, allowing for as many as 6 to 8 individuals to be served during any one year. This will help further the integration and competitive employment of persons who are blind or visually impaired.

Should the proposed apartments be built, the Orientation Center will acquire the ability to provide continued training for up to 3 to 4 adult during the months of June and July when the Orientation Center and dormitory are otherwise being used to provide training to transition students aged 14 to 21 as part of the Commission's Students in Transition to Employment (STEP) program. Because of the particular circumstances required to make such continued training appropriate for adults, it is projected that 2 adults will on the average receive such training in any one year. By receiving such continued training, these adults will be able to graduate sooner and with a higher likelihood of success. This will help further the integration and competitive employment of persons who are blind or visually impaired.

Should the proposed apartments be built, the Orientation Center will have an increased number of persons electing to attend training at the Orientation Center rather than decline training or attend more expensive training at an out–of–state training center. It is anticipated that 3 to 4 individuals will elect to attend training each year at the Orientation Center who would not have otherwise elected to receive training, and that an average of 1 to 2 individuals per year will attend training at the Orientation Center rather than attend an out–of–state training center. Because these persons will be served closer to their homes and families and other sources of natural supports, this will help further the integration and competitive employment of persons who are blind or visually impaired.

Results of Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

The Commission for the Blind conducted a Comprehensive Statewide Needs assessment (CSNA) in 2015 that identified the need to "improve the Orientation Center in Alamogordo through the construction of an apartment facility. The CSNA consisted of the following:

a. A review of the Commission's Strategic Plan and a review of relevant demographic data; b. An anonymous survey of 10 percent of Commission consumers who had an open case or a case that was closed within the last year. The interview consisted of ten questions, and was conducted by an independent contractor who was hired specifically for the purpose. One of the ten questions asked was, "What needs do you see with regard to establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation services?" c. An interview with key internal and external stakeholders. The interview consisted of nine questions, and was conducted by an independent contractor hired specifically for the purpose. One of the nine questions asked was, "What needs do you see with regard to establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation services?"

CSNA Results

The Strategic Plan and the demographic data showed an increasing need for additional capacity at the Orientation Center. The Strategic Plan has as a Goal and Priority the building of the apartment facility. The Strategic Plan also identifies a growing population of persons who are blind or visually impaired, and especially of transition age consumers. The demographic data showed a rapidly increasing population of persons who are blind, and especially persons who are under 18. According to the American Community Survey results for the last two years, the population of persons under 18 in New Mexico increased by 37.8 percent in just one year. This constitutes a dramatically growing population of young persons who will require training at the Orientation Center in the coming years. This is likely due in significant part to the increasing population of persons with Optic Nerve hypoplasia and the increasing rate of children with Retinopathy of Prematurity. In addition, there is a significant one–year increase of 6.8 percent for persons aged 18 to 64. This 6.8 percent increase reflects a growing population of working–age persons who will require training at the Orientation Center. With the population of persons with diabetes growing dramatically, including for Hispanics who have nearly a 50 percent lifetime risk of diabetes, the orientation Center can expect to see increasing numbers of persons with diabetic retinopathy.

The interviews of consumers and key internal and external stakeholders resulted in the identification of a need for the apartment facility. The survey of consumers resulted in several individuals identifying the need to construct the apartment facility. These consumers are individuals who have an especially valuable perspective on the issue of the apartment facility as such an apartment might influence their own decisions, or might have influenced their own decisions.

The interviews of key internal and external stakeholders resulted in a strong showing of support for the apartments. All of the key internal stakeholders identified the need for the apartment facility, and a large portion of the external stakeholders identified a need for the facility. These are all individuals who have specific knowledge and expertise related to the needs of individuals who are blind or visually impaired...

Reasonableness and Effectiveness

In considering the need for apartment facilities, the results of the CSNA were considered with respect to other options for provision of such training. The proposed apartment facility was determined to be an especially effective and reasonable method of providing such training considering the cost of providing out–of–state training to an average of 1 to 2 persons per year who would otherwise decide to receive training at the Orientation Center if the proposed apartment facility is constructed. Because such training costs an average of approximately $4,000 per month, and because the training typically takes 6 to 9 months, and because such training also requires additional travel and associated costs, the proposed apartment facility is a more reasonable and

cost–effective method of providing such training when the long–term costs are considered. In addition, the proposed apartments will eliminate the need to rent a corresponding number of apartments in Alamogordo, saving up to $3,000 per month in rental expenses alone. The proposed apartments will also be designed and maintained in compliance with modern building codes and accessibility requirements, reducing the potential liability associated with placing students at older and less well–maintained private facilities. This is especially significant since the New Mexico Tort Claims Act has waived sovereign immunity for negligent maintenance, meaning that the Commission for the Blind would have significant liability if a student was injured while staying at a privately rented apartment. As mentioned in the introduction, the Commission currently rents apartments that are 1.5 miles away from the center, requiring additional expenditures for staff time when transporting students, as well as additional vehicle mileage. The proximity of the proposed apartment facility to the center will also translate to more prompt and reliable attendance, making for more efficient training. The proximity of the proposed apartment facility to the existing dormitory also allows for better peer mentoring and socialization amongst students, which is an important aspect of the training. Finally, the proposed apartment facility will allow for the Center to serve a greater number of students, increasing the overall effectiveness of the Center.

Strategies

The New Mexico Commission for the Blind is the only training center in the country that is certified by both the Commission on Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and the National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB).

The Orientation Center will continue to seek accreditation by CARF. Should the apartment facility be built, the CARF visit and accreditation process will include an examination of the apartment facility. CARF has a strong belief in the integration and competitive employment of persons with disabilities, and the apartment facility will help the Orientation Center to continue to be CARF accredited.

The Orientation Center will continue to seek certification from the NBPCB. Should the apartment facility be built, the NBPCB certification process will include an examination of the apartment facility. Because the NBPCB has an especially strong belief in the integration and competitive employment of persons who are blind or visually impaired, the apartment facility will help the Orientation Center to continue to be NBPCB certified as a greater number of students attending the Orientation center will have more opportunities to practice independent living skills.

The Orientation Center will explore new and innovative methods of using the apartment facility that will further the integration and competitive employment of persons who are blind, including using the apartment facility to house consumers during the summer who will receive refresher training or other short term instruction on concentrated areas of need, such as technology or orientation and mobility.

The Orientation Center will encourage students who have not lived on their own, or who have fears associated with living on their own, to transition into the apartment facility as a way of encouraging and fostering independence. Because such independent living is usually necessary for individuals who are attending a college or university, and since independent travel and lodging is a requirement of many professions, the use of the proposed apartments in this manner will further the integration and competitive employment of persons who are blind or visually impaired

The Orientation Center will engage in specific activities related to the apartment facility that will further the integration and competitive employment of persons who are blind or visually impaired, including using the apartment facility to better meet the individualized needs of persons with

disabilities in addition to blindness, including disabilities and medical conditions that might make it difficult for such persons to reside in the dormitory.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

The Commission has historically performed well on the standards and indicators that were utilized previously. The Commission's perspective on each of the new performance indicators is below.

a. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program

This indicator is similar to the previous indicator 1.2, which was one of the non–primary indicators and that captured data referred to as the rehabilitation rate. As was usually the case in states that place greater emphasis on the quality of employment outcomes, the Commission's performance on this indicator was in the bottom tier of performance. The Commission places a high priority on the consumer's right to exercise informed choice. While this has been important when measuring the quality of employment outcomes, it can result in a situation where the consumer may have a reduced likelihood of achieving a successful employment outcome. It was also a non–primary indicator, meaning that less emphasis was placed on it as a performance measure, whereas the quality of outcomes was a "primary" indicator. This result has also been due to the unique challenges of serving persons who are blind or visually impaired in a state with high levels of economic and social disadvantages, coupled with the considerable challenges associated with a geographically large and sparsely populated state. It is also due to the Commission's desire to serve all eligible blind individuals interested in employment, including providing vocational rehabilitation services to those eligible individuals who face the greatest barriers to achieving an employment outcome. This includes an unusually large percentage of consumers with secondary disabilities. The Commission welcomes and even solicit consumers with challenging situations, and does not discourage or deflect such individuals from the vocational rehabilitation program. The Commission will work to identify and address the barriers to employment in a way that will improve performance on this measure.

b. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program — This statutory language requires States to measure the employment rate of participants in the fourth quarter after exit from the program without regard to whether those participants were employed in the second quarter after exit from the program.

This indicator is also similar to the previous indicator 1.2, which was one of the non–primary indicators and that captured data referred to as the rehabilitation rate (See above). The Commission will work to identify and address the barriers to employment in a way that will improve performance on this measure.

c. The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit. — This indicator measures median earnings at the same time frame as the first indicator measures the employment rate of participants:

This indicator is similar to Indicator 1.5, which measured the starting wages of consumers. The Commission historically performed exceptionally well on the previous indicator 1.5, and expects to

perform well on this indicator. The Commission will work to identify and address the barriers to employment in a way that will improve performance on this measure.

d. Credential attainment rate; — Measures post–secondary credential attainment and high school completion of program participants during participation in the program or within 1 year after exit.

The Commission has historically encouraged pursuit of careers requiring post–secondary education, including graduate education, and expects to perform well on this indicator. The Commission will work to identify and address the barriers to employment in a way that will improve performance on this measure.

e. Measurable skill gain: — Measures the percentage of participants who, during a program year, are in education or training programs that lead to a recognized post–secondary credential or employment, and who are achieving measurable skill gains, which the Departments are defining as documented academic, technical, occupational or other forms of progress, toward the credential or employment.

The Commission has historically encouraged pursuit of careers requiring post–secondary vocational training and education, including graduate education, and expects to perform well on this indicator. The Commission will work to identify and address the barriers to employment in a way that will improve performance on this measure.

f. Effectiveness in serving employers:

The Commission is unsure how this indicator will be measured, so performance is difficult to project. However, the Commission has historically done well in helping employers to retain valuable employees. The Commission will work to identify and address the barriers to employment in a way that will improve performance on this measure.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

The Commission believes that the primary way it can assist other components of the statewide workforce development system to assist persons with disabilities is to make them aware of Commission programs through training and technical assistance, and to identify specific points of contact within the Commission. These points of contact, training, and technical assistance will enable workforce partners to refer prospective clients to the Commission when necessary, and for such referrals to be handled more efficiently and with less delay due to questions of eligibility.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

Input received by the State Rehabilitation Council and Commission staff, including the comprehensive needs assessment conducted during FY 2016, as well as a review of new performance indicators under WIOA, identified operational priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs:

a. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by partnering and working with community colleges and one-stop centers to more effectively utilize services available through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner-Peyser programs.

Agency Action: This is a new Priority. The agency will work cooperatively with the identified partner entities by designating specific liaisons and points of contact, by providing information, by entering into cooperative agreements where appropriate

b. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by working cooperatively with the New Mexico Department of Health so as to develop opportunities for competitive and integrated employment for persons who are blind or visually impaired, which will be accomplished by working in partnership with the Medical Assistance Division, the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, and the Behavioral Health Services Division.

Agency Action: This is a new Priority. The agency will work cooperatively with the Department of Health, with the Medical Assistance Division, with the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, and with the Behavioral Health Services Division. The agency will designate specific liaisons and points of contact for each of these entities, will provide information as appropriate, and will enter into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Health.

c. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by using the Orientation Center to provide employment preparation training for adults and transition students, including through the addition of an apartment training facility to be constructed adjacent to the Center. The proposed apartment facility will increase the capacity of the Orientation Center, will enable the Orientation Center to provide more realistic training, will eliminate the need to rent costly and less appropriate private apartments, and will reduce the number of instances in which costly out-of-state training will be necessary to meet the needs of consumers.

Agency Action: The agency is working actively to obtain necessary approvals to construct the proposed apartment facility. The agency has conducted preliminary planning discussions with the Facilities Management Division, and is hoping to begin construction sometime in the last half of 2016.

d. Increase the number of consumers served through enhanced Outreach Activities; including media outreach, use of paid advertising, through increased collaboration with ophthalmologists and optometrists, and through the use of the Technology for Children program to conduct outreach to school districts.

Agency Action: The agency will work to increase outreach to the identified groups using the recommended outreach methods. In 2014 and 2015, the agency had positive news coverage of its vocational rehabilitation program on the front pages of the Albuquerque Journal and the Las Cruces Daily Sun, and in the Alamogordo Daily News and the Santa Fe New Mexican. The agency also participated in radio broadcasts, and staffed a table at the annual meeting of the Academy of Ophthalmology. The agency also sponsored the 2015 Getting in Touch with Literacy conference which drew more than 125 educational professionals and teachers of the blind from throughout the state.

e. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes of transition consumers by providing enhanced Pre--Employment Transition Services, including assistive technology where appropriate

as a part of an Individualized Plan for employment, by providing assistive technology through the Technology for Children Program, by conducting increased outreach activities, by conducting educational activities to meet the specific needs of transition students, and by increasing proficient use of Braille and Braille math.

Agency Action: The agency will work to increase services and outreach to Pre-Employment Transition Students using the identified methods. . The agency already seeks to be involved in Individualized Education Plan meetings for transition clients starting at age 14, and the agency operates the Students in Transition to Employment Program in Albuquerque and Alamogordo. The agency has also sponsored trainings and certification exams for the National Certification in Literary Braille and the National Certification in Unified English Braille.

f. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes achieved by consumers by providing services in a way that genuinely honors the “informed choice” provisions of the Rehabilitation Act, enabling Commission consumers to have the opportunity to obtain employment at higher levels of compensation.

Agency Action: The agency continues to provide our services in a way that allow our clients to set and obtain high employment goals. This has historically been reflected by strong performance on previous Indicator 1.5, which measured the average starting salary of our clients against the average state wage. Even though this Indicator is no longer in place under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the agency will continue to provide services that will enable our clients to obtain high starting wages and earnings.

g. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes achieved by consumers by providing a quality and expanding Newsline system that gives consumers access to employment listings, business news, and other important information.

Agency Action: The agency is committed to providing a quality Newsline service. The agency updated the local Newsline software on September 2, 2014, and the agency will be able to add additional publications as a result of this upgrade, including the Alamogordo Daily News. The Agency will continue to sponsor NFB-Newsline in New Mexico Newsline.

h. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by creatively and innovatively using the Skills Center to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation consumers and potential vocational rehabilitation consumers, including using it for provision of services to transition students.

Agency Action: The agency is committed to using the Skills Center to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation clients. As a result, the agency used the Skills Center to provide training to Students in Transition to Employment Program in 2014 and 2015, and will continue this activity in 2016. The Skills Center was also used to provide support in the area of Braille and technology training, as well as to function as a meeting place for programs related to vocational rehabilitation.

i. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes through the provision of independent living training to vocational rehabilitation consumers, including through the proposed apartment training facility at the Orientation Center.

Agency Action: The agency continues to refer vocational rehabilitation clients to receive independent living services, recognizing the need for clients to be able to function independently to become employed. The agency recognizes the benefit of providing training at the Orientation Center that is

realistic and appropriate to the individual needs of clients, and is therefore actively seeking to build apartments that can be used to provide more realistic and appropriate training.

j. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes for consumers who are Deaf-Blind through collaboration and partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, with the Community Outreach Programs for the Deaf, and with the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, including through the delivery of assistive technology to consumers who are Deaf-Blind.

Agency Action: The Agency has identified a vocational rehabilitation counselor to take the lead on services related to clients who are Deaf-Blind. The agency also has a cooperative agreement with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and coordinates provision of services to persons who are Deaf-Blind. The agency works with a variety of other partners, including the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Community Outreach programs for the Deaf, the Helen Keller National Center, and the Deaf-Blind Task Force. The agency also participates in the annual Deaf-Blind Awareness Day at the Roundhouse.

k. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes through the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) by shortening the time required for vendors to complete the required training, including by using Randolph-Sheppard Act training offered by the Hadley School for the Blind.

Agency Action: The agency has adopted the Hadley course as the core training method for BEP vendors, and is working with New Mexico programs to create a local provider so that food preparation and cooking methods can be taught locally. It is anticipated that the agency will have this in place by the middle of 2016.

l. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by strengthening administrative services so as to timely and accurately submit federal reports, to assure compliance with all applicable fiscal regulations, and to comply with all applicable accounting standards.

Agency Action: The agency recognizes the need to have strong fiscal programs so as to maximize the receipt of federal funds, and to otherwise provide appropriate vocational rehabilitation services to our clients. To do this, the agency must have in place a sufficient number of qualified fiscal staff to comply with federal fiscal rules, and to appropriately respond to changing fiscal requirements and staffing levels. The agency has submitted its “Single Audit” on time for each of the last three years, and has only had one fiscal finding in those three years.

m. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by enhancing overall performance and productivity by engaging in activity designed to mitigate and ameliorate the impacts of blindness and visual impairment, and by engaging in outreach and other activities designed to identify additional potential consumers, and by making the public and medical community more aware of Commission services.

Agency Action: The agency is engaging in new and innovative approaches to provide services and engage in outreach. The agency has developed the iFidget app for the iPhone to help clients correct inappropriate rocking motions that a small portion of blind individuals develop. The agency also developed a typing program called Keystroke that helps blind persons learn how to type more efficiently, including persons who are Deaf-Blind. The agency has also improved its web page and the way in which notices of meetings are communicated, and has developed an entirely new web page that has a more modern appearance, and that will allow for referrals to be made by health care professionals through the web page.

n. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes for consumers by providing enhanced benefits counseling and guidance to reduce concerns related to the loss or reduction of benefits.

Agency Action: The agency continues to provide benefits counseling and guidance through a contract with the New Mexico Legal Aid Society. The agency also had staff from Legal Aid provide training on benefits to the vocational rehabilitation counselors. The agency has also provided seminars on benefits to clients.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

The agency supports the funding and program activities of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). The Agency assumes all costs incurred for all regularly scheduled meetings, subcommittees and special meetings. This includes expenses related to securing meeting facilities, members' travel and per diem expenses, interpreters, clerical support, office supplies, and materials. The Agency provides a staff person who prepares the agendas, minutes, and other materials as necessary for each scheduled meeting. The Agency provides a staff person to schedule and make all necessary arrangements for Public Hearings. The SRC is active in providing input into the Agency's State Plan, Manual of Operating Procedures, and other matters pertaining to the Agency's program of activities.

The Commission has sponsored NFB Newsline. This is an augment to our existing NEWSLINE for the Blind. NFB Newsline enables our consumers to read over 365 national newspapers, four of which are Spanish–language publications, plus New Mexico newspapers, enhancing their ability to access information that is essential for success in both the academic and professional environments, as well as improving the quality of employment outcomes.

The agency has also created the Skills Center, a training site to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation consumers and potential vocational rehabilitation consumers. The agency is scheduling a variety of activities in the Skills Center. These activities include meetings, workshops, seminars, and other training events such as the summer Students in Transition to Employment Program. The Commission has recently added staff to its Albuquerque Skills Center specifically for this purpose. The Skills Center will offer seminars and workshops for high school students, college students, adults, and parents. Training will be delivered throughout the year. To meet the particular needs of transition students, training will be scheduled during summers, school breaks, after school, and through distance delivery methods. Topics cover the landscape, including parent participation, MS Windows, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Outlook, mobile technology, computer operator maintenance, and assistive technology hardware and software; Braille, math, note–taking skills, college success, STEP prep, Hadley support days, job readiness, professional dress and appearance, resume writing, job search strategies, mock interviews, Newsline resources (newspapers, magazines, research capabilities, and job search functions); transportation options, and financial literacy.

The Commission has adopted a policy to support consumer attendance at the division/special interest group meetings held during national consumer organization conventions. In order to receive the support, the consumer's vocational goal must be directly related to the particular division/special interest group meeting. The Commission, with the support of the SRC, believes that attendance at related division/special interest group meetings can enhance the consumer's ability to achieve their vocational goal. Benefits would include learning about current developments in their field, meeting and networking with individuals who are successful in their fields, learning about the use and accessibility of career–specific technology, learning how blind and visually impaired individuals in the field use assistive technology successfully, and learning techniques that would enable them to

succeed in their vocational training/education program and ultimately in their chosen field. The Commission also supports annual attendance at the state conventions of both consumer organizations.

PY 2016 will mark the tenth year of a MOA with the Department of Health and the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The MOA administers an allocation from DOH of $80,000, designed to provide assistive technology that, for a disability other than blindness, would be considered durable medical equipment. This initiative serves blind children that are both transition–age and those not yet transition–age.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

The Commission has adopted policies that prohibit discrimination, including discrimination based on gender, race, national origin, color, disability, and age. The Commission Outreach efforts also comprise a major portion of overcoming identified barriers relating to equitable access in participation of programs and services.

Newsline is an important part of the Commission's activities that overcome barriers and has increased access to the printed word, including announcements of the meetings of the Commission and State Rehabilitation Council. Newsline also provides access to information required during university study, information related to particular professions or occupations, information of interest to the business community, and employment ads. NFB–Newsline has several Spanish publications as well as a job search utility. NFB–Newsline voices can also be customized to meet the needs of individuals who are hard of hearing, and NFB–Newsline offers the ability to download publications for reading on a Braille display. This feature enables individuals who are deaf–blind to access the entire selection of more than 365 national newspapers and magazines. New Mexico is mirroring the nation in experiencing a serious problem relating to a lack of appropriate Braille instruction for students who are blind or visually impaired. Due to the rural and economically disadvantaged nature of the state, this problem is even more serious in New Mexico. As a result, the agency is finding that an increasing number of blind children are entering the vocational rehabilitation program without adequate Braille or literacy skills. This problem constitutes a significant barrier for these children in terms of their ability to equitably participate in the Commission's vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs. This barrier is a new development that is largely related to the shift away from residential schools, and is therefore prevalent in the younger generation of blind persons. Accordingly, The Commission's Technology for Children program is an important part of the Commission's strategy to overcome this barrier. By providing assistive technology to blind and visually impaired children, these children are being given the tools necessary to acquire Braille and literacy skills. The Commission has also recently added staff to its Albuquerque Skills Center and will be delivering additional programming to address this need.

With regard to language barriers, approximately 40% of the Agency's staff is bi–lingual. This makes it possible in most cases for the agency to directly communicate with consumers in their own language. If an interpreter is needed, in either American Sign Language or other language, the agency secures the services of an appropriate interpreter. When human interpreters are not available on–site, the Commission utilizes a phone–based interpreter service with support for more than 150 languages. The Agency also regularly contracts with sign language interpreters whenever there is a need for a sign language interpreter. The agency has been experimenting with video

remote interpreting so as to more–effectively serve deaf–blind consumers who require sign language support. This is especially effective in rural areas where it is difficult to schedule on–site interpreters. The Commission has created a video describing the Orientation Center, which is available in both a captioned and Spanish language format.

The Agency is ADA compliant. All facilities of the Agency are wheelchair accessible and free of physical barriers for the mobility impaired. TDD and TTY devices are in place for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired. All Agency materials are available in accessible formats, or staff is available to assist individuals with completion of any necessary state forms. The Agency makes every effort to fully comply with whatever needs or desires the consumer may have. The Agency employs several reader–drivers for Agency staff who require this accommodation. Reader/drivers are also available to transport consumers to job interviews and other related appointments as necessary.

The Agency has identified a vocational rehabilitation counselor to take the lead on services related to clients who are Deaf-Blind. The agency also has a cooperative agreement with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and coordinates provision of services to persons who are Deaf-Blind. The agency works with a variety of other partners, including the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Community Outreach programs for the Deaf, the Helen Keller National Center, and the Deaf-Blind Task Force. The agency also participates in the annual Deaf-Blind Awareness Day at the Roundhouse.

The agency will work cooperatively with the Department of Health, with the Medical Assistance Division, with the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, and with the Behavioral Health Services Division. The agency will designate specific liaisons and points of contact for each of these entities, will provide information as appropriate, and will enter into a cooperative agreement with the Department of Health.

The agency is committed to using the Skills Center to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation clients. As a result, the agency used the Skills Center to provide training to Students in Transition to Employment Program in 2014 and 2015, and will continue this activity in 2016. Beginning in summer 2016, the Commission began offering its STEP One program. STEP one is designed to serve students who have significant disabilities in addition to blindness or visual impairment. This program is designed for consumers who might not be able to handle the rigorous STEP work and training schedule. The STEP One program will offer two half-days of training with a lower student to teacher ratio that will allow for more one-on-one training. It will also offer a work schedule that would meet the individual needs of each consumer. A job coach will be hired to support each of the students in the STEP One program as necessary.

The Skills Center was also used to provide support in the area of Braille and technology training, as well as to function as a meeting place for programs related to vocational rehabilitation.

The agency continues to refer vocational rehabilitation clients to receive independent living services, recognizing the need for clients to be able to function independently to become employed. The agency recognizes the benefit of providing training at the Orientation Center that is realistic and appropriate to the individual needs of clients, and is therefore actively seeking to build apartments that can be used to provide more realistic and appropriate training.

The agency is engaging in new and innovative approaches to provide services and engage in outreach. The agency has developed the iFidget app for the iPhone to help clients correct

inappropriate rocking motions that a small portion of blind individuals develop. The agency also developed a typing program called Keystroke that helps blind persons learn how to type more efficiently, including persons who are Deaf-Blind. The agency has also improved its web page and the way in which notices of meetings are communicated, and has developed an entirely new web page that has a more modern appearance, and that will allow for referrals to be made by health care professionals through the web page.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

The Commission for the Blind conducted a comprehensive series of strategic planning discussions, town forums, and public hearings in federal fiscal year 2016. This was done in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council. The Commission has identified areas of future need, and identified new and innovative approaches to the meeting of existing needs. Of prime concern is a projected dramatic increase in blindness due to the aging of the population, as well as the newer trend of significant increases in the number of blind children, and the need to serve this population through vocational rehabilitation services. ACCORDING TO THE 2013 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, THERE ARE 71,300 PERSONS IN NEW MEXICO WHO REPORT HAVING SERIOUS DIFFICULTY SEEING, EVEN WHEN WEARING GLASSES OR CONTACT LENSES. OF THAT NUMBER, 7,669 ARE UNDER 18, 34,572 are 18 to 64, and 29,059 are 65 and Older.

The increase in blind children is due to Optic Nerve Hypoplasia, which has increased 600% in the last 30 years. The Commission is actively preparing for an increase in the number of vocational rehabilitation consumers entering the program with Optic Nerve Hypoplasia (ONH). ONH is now the leading cause of blindness in children, and it often causes cognitive impairment and developmental delays in addition to blindness.

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The Commission has made the following progress with regard to meeting the goals and priorities identified in the FY 2015 State Plan:

a. Increase the number of consumers served through enhanced Outreach Activities; including Media outreach, collaboration with Eye Doctors, and the use of the Technology for Children program to conduct outreach to school districts.

The Commission regularly participates in the annual New Mexico Academy of Ophthalmology conference in Albuquerque. Counselors also visit ophthalmologists in their territories to ensure that the medical community is aware of the Commission and the services that are provided.

Another important outreach activity is the Technology for Children program, which is also a frequent point of first contact with the agency. The Technology for Children program provides information to the public, parents, and schools about the Commission's vocational rehabilitation program and services in a way that significantly enhances the agency transition services. It also provides technical assistance and support services that enhance the agency's ability to work cooperatively with school districts, including assisting in the establishment of cooperative agreements with the Commission. The agency has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department of Health and the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The MOA administers an annual allocation from DOH of $80,000, designed to provide assistive technology that, for a disability other than blindness, would be considered durable medical equipment. The Technology for Children program places a special emphasis on providing assistive technology to economically disadvantaged and rural school districts. The Coordinator of the Technology for Children program also speaks Spanish.

To further enhance the number of consumers and improve transition services, the Commission has signed 16 cooperative agreements with school districts. These school districts include Aztec, Bloomfield, Carlsbad, Cloudcroft, Clovis, Deming, Farmington, Gadsden, Las Cruces, Los Lunas, Portales, Roswell, Taos, Moriarty–Edgewood, Silver City, and the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The agreements were signed by the Executive Director in meetings with the Special Education Director of each school district. The Commission is now pursuing cooperative agreements with school districts in Gallup–McKinley County, Cuba, Albuquerque, Alamogordo, Santa Fe, Rio Rancho, Las Vegas, Tucumcari, and Santa Rosa.

b. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes of transition consumers by providing assistive technology where appropriate as a part of an Individualized Plan for employment, by providing assistive technology through the Technology for children program, and by conducting educational activities to increase awareness and use of Braille, including Braille math. As already mentioned, the Commission has entered into cooperative agreements with school districts throughout the state. The agreements will facilitate the participation of counselors in IEP meetings, enabling counselors to raise issues such as the use of Braille and Braille math.

The Commission has also expanded its menu of assistive technology training. Choices include walk–in instruction each Monday morning in our Albuquerque lab; distance education; and one–on–one training covering Microsoft Windows, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Internet Explorer; Mozilla Firefox; the Kurzweil and OpenBook OCR systems; Victor Reader Stream and BookSense portable book readers; PAC Mate, BrailleNote Apex, and BrailleSense electronic note–takers; and various magnification software and hardware. During FY2015, 144 consumers received dedicated one–on–one technology training and 547 callers received help desk support or technical information.

The Students in Transition to Employment Program (STEP) included 31 participants in FY 2015. STEP continues to be a valuable opportunity for young adults who are blind and have little or no experience in the working world. STEP provides a measure of self–confidence, life skills, and working skills that help students achieve their vocational rehabilitation goals.

Another important outreach activity is the Technology for Children program, which is also a frequent point of first contact with the agency. It provides information to the public, parents, and schools about the Commission's vocational rehabilitation program in a way that significantly enhances the agency's transition services. It also provides technical assistance and support services that enhance the agency's ability to work cooperatively with school districts. The agency has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department of Health and the New Mexico School for the Blind and

Visually Impaired. The MOA administered an allocation from DOH of $80,000 in FY 2015, designed to provide assistive technology that, for a disability other than blindness, would be considered durable medical equipment. The program served six children in FY 15. The Technology for Children program provided assistive technology support to economically disadvantaged and rural school districts. The Technology Specialist assigned to the Technology for Children program also speaks Spanish.

c. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes achieved by consumers by providing services in a way that genuinely honors the "informed choice" provisions of the Rehabilitation Act, enabling Commission consumers to have the opportunity to obtain employment at higher levels of compensation.

The Commission uses a number of tools to "inform" the career choice of consumers, including career assessments, the Career Choice Questionnaire, job shadowing, and on–the–job training experiences. The Career Choice Questionnaire guides consumers in researching careers that they have identified, helping them to ultimately select a career that is the best fit. The Commission encourages and supports careers requiring graduate education and careers in self–employment.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Standards and Indicators data, last issued for the 2014 federal fiscal year, New Mexico ranked first in the nation on two of the three primary indicators used to measure the performance of vocational rehabilitation programs, and in the top third on the third. .

Primary Indicator 1.3: The Commission ranked first for the percentage of consumers with employment outcomes who were competitively employed. According to the ranking, 100% of the Commission’s consumers earned at least minimum wage. No other agencies serving blind consumers achieved the 100% mark.

Primary Indicator 1.4: The Commission ranked first for the percent of Individuals with significant disabilities that had competitive employment outcomes, with 100% of individuals having significant disabilities. The Commission shared this distinction with ten other states.

Primary Indicator 1.5: The Commission ranked eighth for the average starting wage of consumers compared to the average state wage. Our consumers’ starting wage of $14.18 was 72.5% of the average New Mexico wage of $19.54.

Indicator 1.6: The Commission ranked first for the comparison of consumers who on exiting the program rely on their earnings as their primary source of income compared to those who relied on their earnings as their primary source of income when entering the program. The spread was 58.0. Though not a primary indicator, 1.6 measures the difference that Commission services make, and reflects the quality of employment outcomes achieved by Commission consumers. For comparison, Virginia was at 47.09 and Maine was at 47.06.

d. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes achieved by consumers by providing a quality Newsline system that gives consumers access to employment listings, news, and other important information.

The Commission has provided access to NFB–Newsline, including in coordination with the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons. NEWSLINE for the Blind continues to grow

yearly, relying on a staff of one and over 100 volunteers. The Agency incorporated NFB Newsline as a part of Newsline services in FY 2002, and intends to continue NFB Newsline in PY 2016.

Newsline is an important part of the Commission's outreach program to identify and serve most significantly disabled persons who are minorities, and individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation or supported employment program. Newsline provides access to state and national publications to individuals in all portions of New Mexico, including in the most rural portions of the state. Newsline started with 200 listeners in the Albuquerque area in 1991, and has grown to more than 5000 listeners. The local Newsline and NFB–Newsline have publications that include newspapers from Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Alamogordo, Farmington, Las Cruces, and Roswell. NEWSLINE also has a Spanish language news category. NFB–Newsline offers prompts in Spanish, and has several Spanish language publications. NFB–Newsline voices can also be customized to meet the needs of individuals who are hard of hearing, and NFB–Newsline offers the ability to download publications for reading on a Braille display. This feature enables individuals who are deaf–blind to access the entire selection of more than 365 national newspapers and magazines.

e. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by using the Skills Center to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation consumers, as well as potential vocational rehabilitation consumers, in a way that is creative and innovative.

The Skills Center was dedicated in April 2012 and has been used to host a number of events. The Student Transition to Employment Program (STEP is a summer employment and training program for youth between the ages of 14 and 21. STEP utilized the Skills Center during the summers 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015. The Skills Center also hosted a number of meetings and trainings for blind entrepreneurs for the Business Enterprise Program, including entrepreneur trainings, facility selection evaluations, Committee meetings, and the semi–annual meetings of BEP blind entrepreneurs. The facility was also used for vocational evaluations and testing as well as training of VR consumers. The Skills Center was also used as a meeting place for the State Rehabilitation Council and for various stakeholder organizations. Additional staff is being added during FY16 in order to expand trainings to be offered at the Skills Center.

During FY 13, the agency's executive director began discussions with the Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD), the administrator of the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP), to allocate NMTAP funds to the Commission for the Blind. The allocation of $75,000, was used to purchase a variety of Computers (including Macintosh), Pearl cameras, note–takers, Braille displays, Braille embossers, Braille translation software, screen readers, optical character recognition packages, and magnification hardware/software. The purpose of the technology acquisition was twofold: 1. to demonstrate options available to consumers when it comes to technology; and 2. to train consumers on the use of the chosen technology. The actual funding and acquisition took place in FY14.

f. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes by using and renovating the Adult Orientation Center to provide employment preparation training for both adults and transition students.

The Commission's Orientation Center generally serves blind adults from August through May and hosts a residential Student Transition to Employment Program (STEP), our summer employment and training program for individuals between the ages of 14 and 21, during June and July.

The Commission continues to use a model of "structured discovery" at the Orientation Center that incorporates use of sleep shades to provide training that will avoid the need for consumers to return for additional training should the consumer experience a decrease in vision. The Commission funds training at out–of–state facilities whenever a vocational rehabilitation consumer wishes to receive services that do not incorporate sleep shades.

The Commission has continued to enhance and develop an Individualized Plan of Instruction (IPI) that customizes training to the needs of each consumer, including those who choose to use a guide dog and those who have some residual vision. The IPI serves as a tool for center staff in making their initial assessment, developing an individualized training program, and assessing progress. Procedures have been developed to serve those consumers who use guide dogs so that they may gain maximum benefit from their training experience. Although center philosophy strongly emphasizes non–visual techniques, low vision devices are incorporated into the curriculum for those students who would benefit from a comparison, and who might take advantage of such devices once they leave the center. A total of 19 students attended Adult Orientation Center training during FY 2015.

The Commission made a variety of improvements to the Orientation Center physical plant during FY 2013. These improvements included the remodeling of restroom facilities in the men's dormitory, making them both attractive and accessible; creating an attractive and welcoming entrance from the main parking lot; creating an attractive and welcoming waiting area for center visitors; remodeling administrative office spaces; replacing 52 old leaky windows with modern energy–efficient windows; and replacing flooring throughout the training center. An initiative to build student apartments on donated land adjacent to the dormitory is expected through the next several years.

The Orientation Center is a residential training program for adults who are blind or visually impaired. Most of the Center's students are "newly blinded," having lost vision relatively recently. The Orientation Center is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The Center is also a "Structured Discovery" center that is certified by the National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB). The CARF accreditation and NBPCB certification help attract students to the Center, increasing the student population. The CARF accreditation is also a part of the Center's risk management process, and the Center would face increased liability without CARF accreditation... Fully staffed, the Center is able to serve up to 16 students effectively. In addition, graduates of a structured Discovery Center have earnings on average of $10,000 higher annually than those who graduate from a traditional center.

g. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes through the provision of independent living services to vocational rehabilitation consumers

VR consumers have options for receiving necessary independent living skills training: they can receive it in their home communities by rehab teachers assigned to each community, receive services at our residential training center in Alamogordo, or receive training at out–of–state training centers. The Skills Center in Albuquerque is also increasing capacity to deliver needed training. Technology training can also be delivered remotely. In these ways, VR consumers throughout New Mexico can receive the VR–related independent living skills training that they need.

In each case, counselors refer consumers to the rehab teachers, specifying the VR–related tasks that need to be completed so that the rehab teachers can develop lessons that will build the skills necessary to complete those tasks.

The Commission employs two individuals who possess O&M certification. The Rehab Teachers are the front line staff providing the initial instruction in Orientation & Mobility for vocational rehabilitation consumers. The Commission also contracts with private O&M instructors as necessary to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation consumers across the state. The Commission has also provided professional O&M training to the teachers at the Orientation Center.

h. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes for consumers who are Deaf–Blind through collaboration and partnership with Community Outreach Programs for the Deaf and with the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, including through the delivery of assistive technology to consumers who are Deaf–Blind.

The Commission maintains good working relationships with the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, as well as the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf (COPD). The goal is to support the needs of deaf–blind consumers in the state. An important part of the relationship is ICanConnect, which is a part of the National Deaf–Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP). The Commission entered into an agreement with COPD to administer the program in New Mexico.

Also, in 2006, the Commission entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired designed to further enhance transition services for students who are Deaf–Blind. The Commission also serves on the New Mexico Deaf–Blind Task Force, which brings together stakeholders to discuss ways to improve services to deaf–blind individuals in the state. During FY2015, the Commission utilized these MOUs to provide enhanced services to deaf–blind consumers. NFB Newsline will also provide deaf–blind persons with access to a variety of New Mexico newspapers, including those in Farmington, Las Cruces, Albuquerque, and Roswell.

i. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes through the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) by shortening the time required for vendors to complete the required training.

During FY 2015, the commission began evaluating a new online vendor training program available through the Hadley School for the Blind. The Hadley School for the Blind has historically served blind individuals via correspondence courses. As technology has increased, Hadley has also updated the way it delivers its courses. The new vendor training will enable vendor trainees from New Mexico and across the country to access the self–paced training program. The self–paced nature of the training will enable quick learners to progress more quickly through the curriculum, thereby enabling them to acquire their licenses more quickly, and ultimately enabling them to acquire a vending or food service facility more quickly as well.

j. Enhance overall performance and productivity by improving administrative services and increasing the accuracy and timeliness of the submission of Federal reports.

The Commission has hired additional staff, provided additional training to existing staff, and is improving its case management capacity for the VR Program and the BEP Program. This will include the purchase of new Social Security Reimbursement and BEP modules.

k. Enhance overall performance and productivity by engaging in activity designed to mitigate and ameliorate the impacts of blindness and visual impairment, and by engaging in outreach and other activities designed to identify additional potential consumers, and by making the public and medical establishment more aware of Commission services.

The agency has worked to improve training designed to minimize the impact of blindness and visual impairments on consumers. One initiative was designed to improve the effectiveness of IL teachers who work with VR consumers. Training at the residential training center was also improved in two ways: first by improving the physical plant to provide a more modern and pleasant learning environment; and second by improving the effectiveness of the training itself. The agency improved the ability of consumers to gain necessary technology skills by providing instructional materials to each consumer. The materials provide step–by–step instruction on the use of Microsoft Office applications paired with the specific access technology (screen reader or screen magnifier) used by the consumer. The instructional materials are also provided in Word, text, html, audio, and audio/visual formats, meaning that each consumer can access the instructional materials in a format that is most effective for them.

The agency continues to promote the Technology for Children program, which, in addition to providing needed assistive technology, often serves as an important first contact to the agency for blind and visually–impaired children and youth who will later become consumers of the agency.

The Commission regularly participates in the annual New Mexico Academy of Ophthalmology conference in Albuquerque. Counselors also visit ophthalmologists in their territories to ensure that the medical community is aware of the Commission and the services that are provided.

l. Enhance the number and quality of employment outcomes for consumers by providing enhanced benefits counseling and guidance, with the purpose being to reduce fears related to the loss or reduction of benefits.

Counselors received training during March 2013 designed to help them understand the myriad benefit programs. The training has increased the ability of each counselor to help consumers understand program requirements and thereby reduce the fear of losing benefits. In addition to the training, counselors also received a desk reference which contains valuable information regarding each program as well as sample letters that can be used to report earnings.

The agency continues to utilize a comparable benefits survey, designed to identify benefit program eligibility for eligible VR consumers.

m. Agency goals have been provided to the New Mexico Legislature as part of the Performance–Based Budgeting process. The goals/accomplishments for State FY 2015 are provided below. State fiscal year goals should be considered federal fiscal year goals as well.

1.) Number of quality employment outcomes for blind or visually impaired consumers: – SFY 2015 Goal was 25 – SFY 2015 Actual was 15 2.) Average hourly employment wage for blind or visually impaired consumers: – SFY 2015 Goal was $13.50 – SFY 2015 Actual was $22.07 3.) Percentage of clients who rely on their own earnings upon exiting from vocational rehabilitation services: – SFY 2015 Goal was 90% – SFY 2015 actual was Unknown since RSA did not release Standards and Indicators data for the most recent reporting period as a result of the implementation of WIOA. WIOA will be using different performance indicators than were used previously.

STRATEGIES

Effective strategies focus on meeting the needs of consumers, both in terms of State Plan Goals and Priorities and RSA Standards and Indicators. Establishing a firm and reassuring foundation of monthly income and medical insurance is important to the fundamental job–readiness of each

consumer, so the Commission contracted with New Mexico Legal Aid to provide assistance to consumers that needed help with guidance and counseling with respect to SSI and SSDI work incentives. A great deal of emphasis is placed on consumers possessing skills that will help them overcome their vision loss, and the Commission encourages attendance at the Orientation Center. All interested consumers are taken on a tour of the center by their counselor. Those who choose not to attend the center are provided training in their own communities by the Commission's Independent Living Teachers. Counselors spend a great deal of time and effort assisting the consumer to identify their own career goal, and counselors ask that consumers research identified career goals to determine whether a contemplated career is a good fit. The research also helps to solidify the path (vocational training, education, licenses, certifications, that are necessary to achieve the career goal. The Commission recognizes careers requiring graduate education, working hard to utilize comparable benefits where appropriate. For example, counselors make a particular effort to utilize the Free Application for Federal Student Aid to access Pell and other grant funding to cover costs for college undergraduates. Effective use of comparable benefits, especially school grants, means that more money is available for services with no comparable benefit options, such as assistive technology. Use of assistive technology is encouraged and resources are made available to purchase needed hardware and software tools and provide necessary training. On–the–job (OJT) placements of three–six months are used whenever appropriate, such as to help employers overcome any doubts they may have about employing a blind or visually–impaired individual.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Supported employment cases continue to be a high priority. During FY 2015, the Commission served 38 supported employment consumers but did not achieve any employment outcomes in integrated/competitive settings. The Commission continues to work closely with family members, community organizations, and other state agencies in an effort to provide the most comprehensive services possible. The Commission has worked closely and creatively with each of these groups to fund and deliver training services, transportation services, job development services, job coaching services, and a variety of other ongoing services.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Please see 1.A. above.

2. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

The FY 2015 State Plan identified the following goals: 1. At least three closures in integrated settings; 2. Closures averaging at least $7.50 per hour; 3. Closures averaging at least fifteen hours worked per week.

During FY 2015, the Commission served 38 supported employment consumers at some point during the year but did not achieve any employment outcomes in integrated/competitive settings. The

Commission continues to work closely with family members, community organizations, and other state agencies in an effort to provide the most comprehensive services possible. The Commission has worked closely and creatively with each of these groups to fund and deliver training services, transportation services, job development services, job coaching services, and a variety of other ongoing services.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

A number of factors impeded our ability to meet our goals in FY15, including the following: * Counselor staff shortages: The agency has had a significant turnover of counselors in the past vive years, having lost the four most-experienced counselors to retirement (three) and relocation (one). In addition to undertaking a significant training effort for new counselors, the agency has not been able to fill all of the positions as quickly as would be preferred. This has been due to new hiring procedures implemented by the state. As a result, existing staff have been required to cover larger caseloads and larger geographic areas, leading to less contact time for each consumer. This also means less time to conduct job development for job-ready consumers. * Ineffective job developers: The agency has found only limited success employing private job developers. Even job developers that have been successful in placing VR consumers of the general agency have had only limited success placing consumers of the Commission. Job development has thus fallen to Commission VR counselors, and, as noted above, current Commission counselors are by-and-large very inexperienced as a group and over-extended due to staffing shortages. * Consumers unable to work: During FY15, several consumers who had been coded supported employment while still in high school, were closed without an employment outcome as the result of work evaluations conducted by the Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Support Division (DDSD), the agency responsible for administering the DD Waiver program. DDSD has a requirement that clients must be able to work at least ten hours per week in order to include employment as a supported service, and the consumers in question were unable to do so. * Consumers no longer interested in work: Often, consumers that would otherwise require supported employment services say they are interested in work and a VR case is opened. Unfortunately, their interest is often the result of suggestions and pressure from family members or service providers. Despite offers of support in the process of transitioning to employment, their interest in employment sometimes wanes as they come to understand the changes that are forthcoming when employment becomes part of their regular schedule. * Many supported employment youth: Currently, the agency has 21 consumers coded supported employment, nine of whom are youth with the most significant disabilities and still in high school. A handful of youth with the most significant disabilities are scheduled to participate in our summer Students in Transition to Employment Program (STEP) as well as our STEP One program, specifically designed for youth that might require additional supports.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

Data in this section has not been collected but will be tracked in the future using the AWARE case management system from Alliance Enterprises.

* The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program * The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program * The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit. * Credential attainment rate * Measurable skill gain * Effectiveness in serving employers

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

The Commission has engaged in several innovation and expansion activities in Fiscal Year 2015. The funding of these activities exceeded the 1.5% of 110 dollars generally allocated to innovation and expansion efforts. These activities will continue in PY 2016. The agency supports the funding and program activities of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). The agency recognizes that the SRC is an integral and valuable partner in its efforts to provide services to vocational rehabilitation consumers. The Agency assumes all costs incurred for all regularly scheduled meetings, subcommittees and special meetings. This includes expenses related to securing meeting facilities, members' travel and per diem expenses, teleconference meetings, interpreters, clerical support, and office supplies and materials. The Agency provides a staff person who prepares the agendas, minutes, and other materials as necessary for each scheduled meeting. The Agency provides a staff person to schedule and make all necessary arrangements for Public Hearings and town forums. The SRC is an equal partner in the development of the State Plan, and actively provides input for the Manual of Operating Procedures, agency policies, Orientation Center, and other matters pertaining to the Agency's programs and activities.

The Commission sponsors NFB Newsline. This is an augment to the existing NEWSLINE for the Blind. NFB Newsline enables consumers to read over 365 national newspapers, four of which are Spanish–language publications, plus New Mexico newspapers, enhancing their ability to rapidly access information that is increasingly essential for success in both the academic and professional environments.

The Commission employs a Deputy Director for Independent Living/Building Management Programs. One of her responsibilities is to seek grant funding for new initiatives designed to enhance basic services. Her efforts were rewarded with a capital improvement appropriation of $750,000 from the New Mexico Legislature to support the initiative to transform the Employment Development Center into a skills training site to meet the needs of vocational rehabilitation consumers, as well as potential vocational rehabilitation consumers. The renovation is now complete and the agency is scheduling a variety of activities in the Skills Center. These activities include meetings, workshops, seminars, and other training events such as the summer Students in Transition to Employment Program.

The Commission has adopted a policy to support consumer attendance at the division/special interest group meetings held during national consumer organization conventions. In order to receive the support, the consumer's vocational goal must be directly related to the particular division/special interest group meeting. Our agency, with the support of our SRC, believes that attendance at related division/special interest group meetings can enhance the consumer's ability to achieve their vocational goal. Benefits would include learning about current developments in their field, meeting and networking with individuals who are successful in their fields, learning about the use and accessibility of career–specific technology, learning how blind and visually impaired individuals in the field use assistive technology successfully, and learning techniques that would enable them to succeed in their vocational training/education program and ultimately in their chosen field.

FY 2015 marked the eighth year of a MOA with the Department of Health and the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The MOA administers an allocation from DOH of $80,000, designed to provide assistive technology that, for a disability other than blindness, would be considered durable medical equipment. This initiative serves blind children that are both

transition–age and those not yet transition–age. A total of six children were served by this initiative in FY 2015.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

Supported employment services may include a comprehensive assessment as provided under the basic vocational rehabilitation program, job site assessment, and other evaluations to determine possible benefits from supported employment to consumers with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities. Additional supported employment services include job development, placement and intensive job skills training, social skills training, regular observation and supervision of the individual, and regular contact with the employer, consumer, parent, family members, guardians, advocates or other authorized representatives of the individual and other suitable professionals. The utilization of natural support systems as well as the provision of appropriate services under the basic vocational rehabilitation program is available to supported employment consumers.

Extent of Services: The adult services offered under Supported Employment are determined on an individual basis depending on the needs of the consumer. Supported employment services generally do not extend beyond a 24-month period of time, an increase of six months as a result of WIOA. However, in some unusual circumstances, Supported Employment Services may be extended if it is determined appropriate and agreed upon in the IPE. To be determined appropriate, there must be a reasonable basis to believe that ongoing supports can be obtained within a relatively brief period of time, and that a disruption or loss of employment would be avoided by the continued provision of Supported Employment Services for a short period of time. Transition to extended services (on-going support services and other appropriate services provided by another state agency, a private non-profit organization, an employer, etc., generally via waiver programs), may occur prior to reaching the 24 month limit if the individual has stabilized on the job. In the event that the consumer requires additional job development/placement services after a successful closure, support will be made available for additional training, work tools, and job development services through a post-employment services plan.

The Commission will initially pay for supported employment services with supported employment grant funds. However, if the supported employment funds are exhausted, the Commission is prepared to use regular VR funds to provide supported employment services. As the consumer approaches the 24-month limit for supported employment services, the Commission will assist in the transition to waiver funding and natural supports for the provision of extended services.

Like adult services, the youth services offered under Supported Employment are determined on an individual basis depending on the needs of the consumer. Services to youth with the most significant disabilities begin at age 14, and include representation by Commission counselors at IEP meetings, support in school-based transition programs for youth age 18-21, and summer job experiences. The Commission provides summer employment experiences for supported employment youth through its Students in Transition to Employment Program, which provides employment and training

experiences at its Alamogordo training center, its Albuquerque Skills Center, and community-based placements throughout New Mexico. Beginning in summer 2016, the Commission began offering its STEP One program. STEP one is designed to serve students who have significant disabilities in addition to blindness or visual impairment. This program is designed for consumers who might not be able to handle the rigorous work and training schedule of the regular STEP program. The STEP One program will offer two half-days of training with a lower student to teacher ratio that will allow for more one-on-one training. It will also offer a work schedule that would meet the individual needs of each consumer. A job coach will be hired to support each of the students in the STEP One program as necessary.

Another program that will serve youth with the most significant disabilities is the Commission's Technology for Children program, which is also a frequent point of first contact with the agency. The Technology for Children program is intended to help the Commission identify potentially eligible consumers, specifically youth with the most significant disabilities. The purpose is to provide assistive technology that will help lesson the significance of the disability or reduce any developmental delay that may be present.

The agency has a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department of Health and the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The MOA will administer an allocation from DOH of $80,000, designed to provide assistive technology that, for a disability other than blindness, would be considered durable medical equipment. Through the Technology for Children Program, youth with the most significant disabilities who are too young for regular VR services would be able to receive assistive technology which would otherwise not be provided by a school district since it is primarily purchased for use at home. The Technology Specialist who coordinates the Technology for Children program will continue to provide assistive technology support services to economically disadvantaged and rural school districts, enabling them to benefit from her extensive assistive technology experience and thereby benefiting all of the youth with the most significant disabilities in those school districts. The Technology Specialist assigned to the Technology for Children program also speaks Spanish.

The Commission is pleased with the opportunity to provide extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities following the closure of their VR case for a period of up to four years or until the individual turns age 25. The Commission believes this is a particularly beneficial improvement within WIOA. The Commission will initially use the 50% reserve for this purpose. If the 50% reserve is exhausted, the Commission is prepared to utilize regular supported employment funds for this purpose. Finally, if the supported employment funds are exhausted, the Commission is prepared to use regular VR funds to provide extended services. As the consumer approaches age 25, the Commission will assist in the transition to waiver funding and natural supports for the provision of extended services.

Results of Needs Assessment: The results of the Needs Assessment of rehabilitation and career needs of this population are discussed in description (j) Statewide Assessment.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

Please see 1. above.

CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **New Mexico Commission for the Blind -- DSU**

Name of designated State agency

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Greg Trapp**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Executive Director**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.** Yes

2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes

3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;** Yes

4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes

7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

FOOTNOTES

_____

Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CERTIFICATIONS FROM THE STATE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of

Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **New Mexico Commission for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Greg D. Trapp**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Executive Director**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **New Mexico Commission for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Greg D. Trapp**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Executive Director**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its

supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:**The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. SUBMISSION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EITHER A STATE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OR STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(21) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**

C. CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(16)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

D. THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION BY THE STATE, OR IF THE STATE SO ELECTS, BY THE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, TO PROVIDE THE AMOUNT OF THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF THE COST OF CARRYING OUT THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(3).

E. THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **No**

F. THE SHARED FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF JOINT PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **No**

G. STATEWIDENESS AND WAIVERS OF STATEWIDENESS REQUIREMENTS, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **No**

H. THE DESCRIPTIONS FOR COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(11) AND (24)(B); AND 606(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. ALL REQUIRED METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(6) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

J. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(7) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

K. THE COMPILATION AND SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSIONER OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS, ESTIMATES, STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, AND PROGRESS REPORTS, AS APPROPRIATE, AND AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(15), 105(C)(2), AND 606(B)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

L. THE RESERVATION AND USE OF A PORTION OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TO THE STATE UNDER SECTION 110 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO

EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, PARTICULARLY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

M. THE SUBMISSION OF REPORTS AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

A. COMPLY WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 101(A)(5)(D) AND (20) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. IMPOSE NO DURATION OF RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT AS PART OF DETERMINING AN INDIVIDUAL'S ELIGIBILITY FOR VR SERVICES OR THAT EXCLUDES FROM SERVICES UNDER THE PLAN ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PRESENT IN THE STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(12) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

C. PROVIDE THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES LISTED IN SECTION 103(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AS APPROPRIATE, TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above **Yes**

D. DETERMINE WHETHER COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

E. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

F. COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PROVISIONS OF INFORMED CHOICE FOR ALL APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

G. PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO AMERICAN INDIANS WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING IN THE STATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(13) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

H. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SEMIANNUAL OR ANNUAL REVIEWS, AS APPROPRIATE, FOR INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED EITHER IN

AN EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT SETTING IN A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 14(C) OF THE FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT OF 1938, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(14)OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTIONS 101(A)(17) AND 103(B)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT IF THE STATE ELECTS TO CONSTRUCT, UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

J. WITH RESPECT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THE STATE,

I. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT,

A. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENTS; AND

B. STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE, TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ON A STATEWIDE BASIS; AND

II. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (SECTIONS 101(A)(15) AND 101(A)(25)).

5. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT TITLE VI SUPPLEMENT:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT ASSURES THAT IT WILL INCLUDE IN THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN ALL INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 606 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL SUBMIT REPORTS IN SUCH FORM AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUCH PROCEDURES AS THE COMMISSIONER MAY REQUIRE AND COLLECTS THE INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT SEPARATELY FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE I AND INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

C. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL COORDINATE ACTIVITIES WITH ANY OTHER STATE AGENCY THAT IS FUNCTIONING AS AN EMPLOYMENT NETWORK UNDER THE TICKET TO WORK AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 1148 OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.

6. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL EXPEND NO MORE THAN 2.5 PERCENT OF THE STATE'S ALLOTMENT UNDER TITLE VI FOR ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF CARRYING OUT THIS PROGRAM; AND, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR AGENCIES WILL PROVIDE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE ENTITIES, NON-FEDERAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN AN AMOUNT THAT IS NOT LESS THAN 10 PERCENT OF THE COSTS OF CARRYING OUT SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES WITH THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR SUCH PURPOSE UNDER SECTION 603(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(G) AND (H) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL USE FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ONLY TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SUCH SERVICES; AND, THAT SUCH FUNDS ARE USED ONLY TO SUPPLEMENT AND NOT SUPPLANT THE FUNDS PROVIDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, WHEN PROVIDING SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SPECIFIED IN THE INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(B)(7)(A) AND (D), OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

7. PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

A. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT IT WILL PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AS DEFINED IN SECTION 7(39) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY ASSURES THAT:

I. THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 102(B)(1) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND FUNDED UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT INCLUDES CONSIDERATION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AS AN APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 606(B)(7)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT

II. AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT , WHICH IS DEVELOPED AND UPDATED WITH TITLE I FUNDS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 102(B)(3)(F) AND 606(B)(6)(C) AND (E) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE ASSURANCES FROM THE STATE

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program— and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program.* If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" in Sections II and III of that document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program (available on www.regulations.gov for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at http://www.regulations.gov by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.

---

* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

At minimum, in the SCSEP stand-alone submission and the SCSEP portion of the Combined State Plan, States should comprehensively cover the following elements.

(A) ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS AND IMPACT

States must:

1. DISCUSS LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS FOR JOBS IN INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN THE STATE THAT MAY PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER WORKERS. (20 CFR 641.302(D))(MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

In 2012 the top five industry sectors employing New Mexico's older workers, and the projected growth of these sectors were:

1. EDUCATION, HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES employed 25.8% of workers aged 40 or older. This sector has a projected growth rate of 24.3%, for a total of 56,312 new jobs by 2022.

2. PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC SERVICES claimed 11.8% of workers aged 40 or older with a relatively slow projected growth rate of 8.8%, comprising 4,620 new jobs.

3. ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, RECREATION, ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES was chosen by 11.5% of workers aged 40 or older, and is projected to grow by 19.3%, creating 18,265 jobs by 2022.

4. RETAIL positions account for 9.9% of workers 40 plus. Their projected growth rate is at the state average of 12.0%, which will result in 10,934 jobs.

5. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, a sector that doesn't make the top five on the older worker list in the nation as a whole, boasts 8.9% of New Mexican workers aged 40 or older, however, it is projected to lose 730 jobs by 2022, resulting a "growth" rate of -0.8%.

This data regarding sectors employing older workers is contained in a profile prepared by AARP based on the American Community Survey 2009-2011. When the 50+ and 65+ populations are examined in place of 40+, the data show slight variations in percentages of workers in each sector, however, the ranking of the top five sectors remains constant across all three demographics. Data regarding projected growth in each sector comes from a report by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, Economic Research and Analysis Bureau. Projections are for the ten years from 2012 through 2022.

2. DISCUSS HOW THE LONG-TERM JOB PROJECTIONS DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN RELATE TO THE TYPES OF UNSUBSIDIZED JOBS FOR WHICH SCSEP PARTICIPANTS WILL BE TRAINED AND THE TYPES OF SKILL TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED. (20 CFR 641.302(D))

Of the five industry sectors discussed above, EDUCATION, HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES is the sector in which most SCSEP host agencies are found, and where most SCSEP participants find employment. Training as teachers' aides, medical aides, community health workers, office support workers, receptionists, drivers and custodial or maintenance staff has been successful. In the sector of ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, RECREATION, ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES, food services is the most frequent area of training in SCSEP. Participants have received training in food safety and hygiene, while serving in Senior Centers. Some have gone on to positions in restaurants, or been hired by their host agencies. RETAIL is the third sector where some training takes place. Retail can be learned in non-profit thrift stores, food banks or commodity distribution sites. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION provides training for a few participants, mostly in clerical positions. PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC SERVICES is not a sector where SCSEP participants have found training or placement. Basic computer training and, where appropriate, Adult Basic Education are important for nearly all SCSEP participants. Some also benefit from English for Speakers of Other Languages. Assessment of participant skills and goals is key to successful training and placement. While in-demand jobs drive the economy and most SCSEP placement, occasionally a participant's unique dream can be realized to the satisfaction of all involved. One participant went on to become the Postmaster of her local post office!

3. DISCUSS CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE (SUCH AS BY PROVIDING INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER §15 OF THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT (29 U.S.C. 491-2) BY OCCUPATION), AND THE TYPES OF SKILLS POSSESSED BY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS. (20 CFR 641.325(C))

The top five major occupational groups for employment growth in New Mexico are FOOD PREPARATION AND SERVING-RELATED; PERSONAL CARE AND SERVICE; EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LIBRARY; OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT and SALES AND RELATED. These track closely with the areas where New Mexico plans to provide training for SCSEP participants as discussed above.

In general, SCSEP participants possess good work ethics, they are loyal to a fault, and are very willing to work hard. These traits serve SCSEP participants well in any field that does not require technical or specialized knowledge. The occupational groups that are projected to grow the fastest all have at least some positions that fit the traits of older workers.

Because eligible individuals are unique in the skills they bring, all individuals are assessed regarding their interests, abilities, and barriers. Upon assignment, Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) are developed with goals and timelines. They are reviewed and updated as goals are accomplished. Some SCSEP participants have obtained jobs that they didn't even conceive of when they started in the program. One older man wanted to be placed in janitorial work, and related so well to the students at his host agency, a school, that he is now training as a teacher's aide.

(B) SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

States must:

1. PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

This may alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of the strategic plan, but regardless of placement in document, must include:

(A) ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH WIOA TITLE I PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PLANS FOR USING THE WIOA ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ITS PARTNERS TO SERVE INDIVIDUALS AGED 55 AND OLDER. (20 CFR 641.302(G), 641.325(E))

Coordinating SCSEP with WIOA Title I Programs. The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) published a guide in 2014 exploring several key provisions in the new Work Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that create opportunities for workers with low incomes. Promising strategies for serving older adults with barriers to employment include a mix of employment, training, and support services (such as transportation, individual counseling, financial supports, and child care).

WIOA Title I programs that provide services to adults, dislocated workers, Native American Indians and seasonal farm workers may also serve SCSEP-eligible individuals. These programs are overseen by a system of state and regional workforce boards. The New Mexico SCSEP director serves on the state workforce board and the central workforce board, which covers a four-county area which includes the Albuquerque metropolitan area. Participation on these boards enables coordination of SCSEP activities with WIOA Title I programs.

(B) ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE STATE UNDER THE OTHER TITLES OF THE OAA. (20 CFR 641.302(H))

Coordinating SCSEP with other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). ALTSD is the designated State Unit on Aging under the Older Americans Act. As such, collaboration with area agencies on aging and their subcontractors is facilitated naturally. ALTSD places SCSEP participants in senior centers around the state to train as cooks' helpers, drivers delivering meals to the home bound, and receptionists. ALTSD requires senior center staff to assess SCSEP participants for benefit eligibility.

(C) ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO OLDER AMERICANS, SUCH AS COMMUNITY AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS, AND PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES. (20 CFR 641.302(I))

Coordinating SCSEP with private and public entities serving older Americans. ALTSD is engaged with a number of public and private organizations that serve older adults with low incomes. • In San Juan County, SCSEP providers collaborate with ECHO Food Bank, San Juan College, the ARC and Tres Rios Habitat for Humanity, as well as several senior and community centers. • In McKinley County, SCSEP providers collaborate with the Community Pantry, Adult Basic Education at UNM–Gallup North Campus, the Community Education and Workforce Development Division at UNM–Gallup, Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Services and several senior centers. • In Doña Ana County, SCSEP providers collaborate with the City of Las Cruces, Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity, St. Luke's Health Clinic, and the Long–Term Care Ombudsman Program. • In Bernalillo

County, SCSEP providers coordinate training and outreach with the New Mexico Direct Caregivers Coalition, the TenderLove Community Center and several senior centers in and around Albuquerque. • In Sandoval County SCSEP providers collaborate with the Loma Colorado Public Library, St. Felix Pantry, Zia Pueblo, and the Placitas, Meadowlark, and Corrales senior centers.

(D) ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))

Coordinating SCSEP with labor market and job training initiatives. The Department works with the UNM–Gallup Division of Community Education and Workforce Development, Adult Basic Education to provide SCSEP participants in McKinley County with adult basic education, computer literacy and customer service skills. The goal is to train older workers to match the needs of employers.

(E) ACTIONS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENSURE THAT SCSEP IS AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND THE STEPS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. (20 CFR 641.335)

SCSEP as an active partner in the one–stop system. Workforce Connection (One–Stop) offices in San Juan, McKinley, Sandoval, and Valencia Counties are current host agencies training SCSEP participants. All SCSEP participants are required, at enrollment, to register with the one–stop system as job–seekers. SCSEP staff routinely check with local Workforce Connection offices for appropriate job openings for SCSEP participants.

(F) EFFORTS THE STATE WILL MAKE TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.

The website for the New Mexico Economic Development Department lists over sixty partner organizations with whom it collaborates to promote economic development in New Mexico. Several of the organizations on this list are already partners in SCSEP as well. Some are host agencies, some have provided training for SCSEP participants, and some provide supportive services. The North Central New Mexico Economic Development District is a very important partner to SCSEP and is on this list. This organization operates the Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging (AAA), which oversees the provision of Older Americans Act services for all counties in New Mexico except Bernalillo. It also contracts with the ALTSD to provide Senior Employment Services, funded by state general funds.

At the next State SCSEP meeting, to be attended by the three providers of SCSEP services in New Mexico, this list of economic development partners will be on the agenda. The group will discuss those that are already partners, and which of these organizations we will reach out to for expanded collaboration.

New Mexico SCSEP is already involved with some economic development activity. On two occasions New Mexico SCSEP representatives have attended the Workforce Development Leadership Summit hosted by UNM-Gallup Community Education and Workforce Development. These summits bring all stakeholders in economic development into dialogue, and identify potential opportunities to build the rural workforce in western New Mexico in preparation for new or expanding industries in the area. Summit attendees also discuss local problems that impact rural communities.

This year, the focus was the impact of poverty and trauma on all generations: children, adults, and grandparents. Attendees sought collaborative action to address these concerns.

2. DESCRIBE THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF SCSEP PARTICIPANTS IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT. (20 CFR 641.302(E)) (ALTERNATELY, THE STATE MAY DISCUSS THIS IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN IF SUBMITTING A COMBINED PLAN.)

Engaging Employers Toward Employment of SCSEP Participants

Seeking input from private non–profit and public employers. Collaboration begins with listening. A primary responsibility of both SCSEP and 50+ Employment Connection staff is to listen closely to the requirements and concerns of potential employers. ALTSD seeks input from employers regarding their needs. As needs are expressed, careful listening reveals where older worker involvement can be an asset. The benefits of intentionally including older workers may include: • Access to new sources of job applicants; older workers are becoming more plentiful. • No recruiting costs for employers; ALTSD Employment Programs charge no fees to employers. • Higher retention rates compared to traditional hires; statistics bear this out. • Increased productivity; older workers take less sick time than younger workers on average. • An enhanced reputation within the community; older workers are well–connected and will often share their opinions freely. • Improved workforce effectiveness; older workers model excellent work habits and may mentor younger workers.

Training older workers in response to input from employers. Adherence to “business–driven” concepts and services is of paramount importance in building a network of employers pleased with the potential employees referred to them. Careful assessment and training of SCSEP participants and other older workers ensures that those referred for employment opportunities are job–ready and have the skills and customer–service attitudes attractive to employers.

Effective response to employers’ needs requires integrated strategies and cross–system collaboration involving workforce development agencies, human services organizations, educational institutions, and employment service agencies. To better align such disparate services, ALTSD enlisted the services of academic institutions (UNM–Gallup, San Juan College in Farmington), Workforce Connection offices (Albuquerque, Farmington, Gallup and Las Cruces) and Behavioral Health Services (Navajo Nation and Zuni Pueblo). These collaborations allow the NM SCSEP to prepare the most vulnerable older workers to meet the needs of the modern workforce.

3. DESCRIBE THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITIES UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (C))

Long–Term Strategy for Serving Minority Individuals

The final Quarterly Progress Report for ALTSD’s 2014 program year shows that the populations served were 64% white, 24% Native American Indian and 3% African American. Of those served, 28% were Hispanic.

Half of ALTSD’s authorized positions are in San Juan and McKinley Counties. Demographics indicate that San Juan County’s population is 57.0% White (40.6% White, non–Hispanic) and 38.8% Native American Indian, predominantly Navajo. Those of Hispanic ethnicity comprise 19.5%.

McKinley's population is 18.6% White (9.8% White, non–Hispanic) and 76.8% Native American Indian, majority Navajo. Fourteen percent are of Hispanic or Latino origin. To assist staff with serving the large Native American Indian population in these counties, ALTSD offers cultural competency training to department staff, including SCSEP personnel. Additionally the ALTSD liaison to the Navajo AAA assists with connecting SCSEP staff and leaders of the Navajo Aging Network to one another. ALTSD has initiated a training program in partnership with UNM–Gallup, specifically to train SCSEP participants in McKinley County.

To address service issues for the Hispanic population, SCSEP employees, who recruit new participants, have recruited host agencies looking for participants bilingual in English/Spanish. They give Hispanic adults tools to help themselves by promoting senior centers, legal resources, benefits counselling and other community resources.

4. LIST NEEDED COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE EXACT PLACES WHERE THESE SERVICES ARE MOST NEEDED. SPECIFICALLY, THE PLAN MUST ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND LOCATION(S) OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS MOST IN NEED OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE GROUPS WORKING TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. (20 CFR 641.330)

Need for community services in New Mexico is great. In 2013, 21.9% of New Mexicans had income below the federal poverty level. The need is widespread, thought certain areas bear a disproportionate amount of the burden. Two counties show poverty rates over 30 percent. Luna County's poverty rate was 30.2% in the 2014 five-year estimates from the American Community Survey. McKinley County's rate was even higher, 36.6%, according to the same report.

While the need is widespread, those working to meet the need also cover the state. The New Mexico Aging and Disability Resource Center maintains a database with over 3,700 national, state and local resources to assist those in need in New Mexico. Its Resource Directory lists 40 providers serving Deming, the main city in Luna County. These provide financial, care-giving, nutrition and health services. For Gallup, the major city in McKinley County, the database lists 102 service providers, offering an even broader array of services.

Specific services widely recognized in order to promote economic development in New Mexico's rural areas are transportation and broadband access. Broadband access is a priority for the New Mexico Department of Information Technology. It is collaborating with the Economic Development Department and many other national and state programs to increase broadband access statewide. Regarding transportation, dialogue is beginning to take place among organizations discussing the sharing of vehicles. Schools, senior centers, other care providers, and the like are conversing about maximizing the sharing of vehicles to offer transportation to those not normally afforded this service. Issues of insurance and liability must be overcome if this possibility is to be realized.

Due to the extreme poverty in McKinley County, the Workforce Development Summit held by the University of New Mexico Gallup Branch, had a track regarding the effects of poverty. Richard Kontz, Executive Director of the Gallup Housing Authority, noted that the ability to read and comprehend, the ability to write coherent thoughts in full sentences and the ability to plan for the future are all compromised due to the effects of trauma. The ongoing cycle of poverty and its accompanying trauma works against the development of a competent and capable workforce.

5. DESCRIBE THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SCSEP SERVICES, INCLUDING PLANNED LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE, AND PLANNED CHANGES IN THE USE OF SCSEP GRANTEES AND PROGRAM OPERATORS TO BETTER ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM. THIS MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AS APPROPRIATE. (20 CFR 641.302(K))

New Mexico's long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services includes: a) increased technical capability for confidentially storing and accessing all information and documentation on-line; b) increased use of targeted training for participants, enabling them to quickly experience new, applicable knowledge; and c) more frequent one-on-one contact by SCSEP program operators with host agencies and participants.

a) The current hard copy files and system used by ALTSD and other New Mexico providers of SCSEP services, ties staff to an office for many hours per week. Obtaining professional case management software, with the accompanying hardware to implement it, would enable more time to be spent with participants and host agencies, as well as improving oversight of case documentation.

b) Participants in New Mexico's SCSEP have received most of their training from on-the-job coaching received at the host agency. Quickly placing new trainees in classroom settings can expand their experiences and increase their perspectives on what they are learning. In classroom settings they may also discover gifts they have to offer, in ways that may never occur in a workplace. Such dual-track training may improve self-esteem and encourage participants to seek unsubsidized employment more quickly.

c) A side benefit of improved technology will be more field time for SCSEP program operators, allowing a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and successes of participants.

6. DESCRIBE A STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR SCSEP PARTICIPANTS' ENTRY INTO UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT, AND TO ACHIEVE, AT A MINIMUM, THE LEVELS SPECIFIED IN OAA SECTION 513(A)(2)(E)(II). (20 CFR 641.302(F))

Continuous Improvement in SCSEP Performance

New Mexico's SCSEP met and exceeded all performance levels specified in the Older Americans Act Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). The program works closely with the USDOL to monitor progress and serve older New Mexicans with excellence and care.

(C) LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

States must:

1. DESCRIBE THE LOCALITIES AND POPULATIONS FOR WHICH PROJECTS OF THE TYPE AUTHORIZED BY TITLE V ARE MOST NEEDED. (20 CFR 641.325 (D))

Locations and Populations Most Needing SCSEP The section titled “Locations of community service needs” in section 4 above addresses this topic.

2. LIST THE CITIES AND COUNTIES WHERE THE SCSEP PROJECT WILL TAKE PLACE. INCLUDE THE NUMBER OF SCSEP AUTHORIZED POSITIONS AND INDICATE IF AND WHERE THE POSITIONS CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.

County	Cities	NM State Auth. Pos.	Goodwill Auth. Pos.	NICOA Auth. Pos.	Total NM Auth. Pos.	Changes from PY14
Bernalillo	Albuquerque	5	45	12	62	none
Catron	Reserve	1	0	0	1	none
Chaves	Roswell	0	10	0	10	none
Cibola	Grants	0	4	4	8	none
Colfax	Raton	0	2	0	2	none
Curry	Clovis	0	5	0	5	none
DeBaca	Fort Sumner	0	1	0	1	none
Dona Ana	Las Cruces	6	17	0	23	none
Eddy	Carlsbad & Artesia	0	6	0	6	none
Grant	Silver City	0	3	0	3	none
Guadalupe	Santa Rosa	1	0	0	1	none
Harding	None	0	0	0	0	none
Hidalgo	Lordsburg	0	1	0	1	none
Lea	Lovington & Hobbs	0	6	0	6	none
Lincoln	Ruidoso & Carrizozo	0	2	0	2	none
Los Alamos	Los Alamos	0	0	0	0	none
Luna	Deming	5	0	0	5	none
McKinley	Gallup and Zuni	13	0	8	21	none
Mora	Mora	0	1	0	1	none
Otero	Alamogordo	0	8	0	8	none
Quay	Tucumcari	0	2	0	2	none
Rio Arriba	Espanola	0	7	6	13	none
Roosevelt	Portales	0	3	0	3	none
Sandoval	Rio Rancho	2	9	9	20	none
San Juan	Farmington & Aztec	12	0	10	22	none
San Miguel	Las Vegas	0	6	0	6	none
Santa Fe	Santa Fe	4	9	2	15	none
Sierra	Truth or Consequences	0	4	0	4	none
Socorro	Socorro	0	3	2	5	none
Taos	Taos	0	5	0	5	none
Union	Clayton	0	1	0	1	none
Valencia	Los Lunas & Belen	1	6	0	7	none
Totals		50	156	53	269	

3. DESCRIBE ANY CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.

Correction of Imbalances

Authorized SCSEP positions in New Mexico are not out of balance. Positions have been assigned by the US Department of Labor proportional to the number of eligible individuals in each county. Two counties are out of balance regarding actual service. Valencia County is over-served and Luna County is under-served. Service in Valencia County will be reduced by attrition. As participants exit from SCSEP in Valencia County, they will not be replaced until equitable distribution levels are reached. Development of new placements in Luna County is a challenge. Host agencies have been difficult to recruit, and those that have agreed to participate have not been successful. Continued steady work with local residents should build the program to the level of equitable distribution.

4. EXPLAIN THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:

A. MOVES POSITIONS FROM OVER-SERVED TO UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS WITHIN THE STATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH 20 CFR 641.365.

Strategy to Achieve Equitable Distribution.

SCSEP positions in New Mexico are currently distributed according to the distribution formula. No shifting of authorized positions is necessary. As participants in areas of over-service exit the program, these positions are moved to under-served areas.

B. EQUITABLY SERVES BOTH RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

New Mexico's population was 22.6% rural according to the 2010 census. The New Mexico State SCSEP served 60% rural clients in PY 2014. Overall, New Mexico SCSEP contractors served 25% rural clients in PY 2014, which is in line with the state's population.

C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

Group	ALTSD	NICOA	GII	New Mexico
75+	7% 5/75	9% 5/58	11% 30/281	10%40/414
Disabled	4% 3/75	14% 8/58	35% 97/281	26%108/414
Limited English/Low Literacy	9% 7/75	64% 37/58	41% 116/281	39%160/414
Rural	60% 45/75	50% 29/58	11% 31/281	25%105/414
Veteran/Spouse	13% 10/75	7% 4/58	27% 77/281	22%91/414
Low Employment Prospects	60% 45/75	93% 54/58	99% 278/281	91%377/414
No Success with WIA Title I	17% 13/75	9% 5/58	1% 4/278	5%22/414
Homeless or at Risk	37% 28/75	53% 31/58	65% 184/278	59%243/414
Greatest Economic Need	89% 67/75	93% 54/58	90% 252/278	90%373/414
Minority Individuals	56% 42/75	91% 53/58	67% 185/278	68%280/414
Greatest Social Need	100% 75/75	100% 58/58	100% 278/278	100%414/414

5. PROVIDE THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))

County	Ratio	County	Ratio	County	Ratio	County	Ratio	County	Ratio
Bernalillo	24.11%	Doña Ana	10.27%	Lincoln	0.89%	Rio Arriba	3.13%	Socorro	1.34%
Catron	0.45%	Eddy	2.68%	Los Alamos	0.00%	Roosevelt	1.34%	Taos	2.23%
Chaves	4.46%	Grant	1.34%	Luna	2.23%	San Juan	6.25%	Torrance	0.89%
Cibola	1.79%	Guadalupe	0.45%	McKinley	5.80%	San Miguel	2.68%	Union	0.45%
Colfax	0.89%	Harding	0.00%	Mora	0.45%	Sandoval	4.91%	Valencia	3.13%
Curry	2.23%	Hidalgo	0.45%	Otero	3.57%	Santa Fe	5.80%		
De Baca	0.45%	Lea	2.68%	Quay	0.89%	Sierra	1.79%		

6. PROVIDE THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

A. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

Of those New Mexicans 55 years old or older with incomes at or below the federal poverty level, 67.7% reside in urban areas, while 32.3% live in rural locations. It is reasonable to project that approximately two-thirds of all SCSEP eligible New Mexicans reside in urban areas. This statistic comes from the American Community Survey five-year estimates for 2010 through 2014.

B. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

According to the American Community Survey from 2010 to 2014, it is estimated that there are 102,279 individuals who are 55 years of age or older and at or below 125% of the federal poverty level in New Mexico. The same source estimates that 72,993 of these people are below the federal poverty level (a measure for greatest economic need). The percentage of eligible individuals who have the greatest economic need is 71.4%.

C. ARE MINORITIES

Data regarding minority status are only available from the US Census for those below or above poverty level. These data show that 63.2% of those individuals over 55 years old, with incomes below the federal poverty level, identify themselves as racial and/or ethnic minorities. The figure for the total New Mexico population is 60.2% minority. It is likely that the eligible SCSEP population has slightly fewer individuals of minority status than those below the poverty level, but more than the general population. A good estimate is that 63% of SCSEP-eligible individuals in New Mexico are of minority status.

D. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT.

In 2013 9.8% of New Mexicans over the age of five spoke English “less than very well”, according to the American Community Survey. This percentage is not broken out by age or by income, so it is not possible to get specifics for the SCSEP-eligible population. An estimate of 10% with limited English proficiency is a reasonable projection.

E. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

Despite about two-thirds of SCSEP-eligible New Mexicans living in “urban” areas, this statistic can be misleading. Twenty-six of New Mexico’s thirty-three counties are considered “frontier”, they have six or fewer people per square mile. While these counties may have an urban area, those living in such urban centers are still isolated from many services.

New Mexico is also a “majority minority” state, that is, over 60% of New Mexicans claim racial/ethnic minority status. While such groups may have strong family ties, they are also burdened with health disparities, lower incomes on average and limited access to quality services.

The interaction of these two dynamics in New Mexico contributes to a high percentage of those with greatest social need. While this is not quantifiable, with at least one-third of SCSEP-eligible individuals living in rural areas and over 60% claiming minority status, a majority of SCSEP-eligible New Mexicans appear to fit this category. Even those who live in urban areas in New Mexico may face isolation, so the category of greatest social need is likely much more frequent than the statistics might indicate.

7. DESCRIBE THE STEPS TAKEN TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS TO SERVICE FOR PARTICIPANTS TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WHEN POSITIONS ARE REDISTRIBUTED, AS PROVIDED IN 20 CFR 641.365; WHEN NEW CENSUS OR OTHER RELIABLE DATA BECOMES AVAILABLE; OR WHEN THERE IS OVER-ENROLLMENT FOR ANY OTHER REASON. (20 CFR 641.325(I), 641.302(B))

If the ALTSD loses SCSEP positions every effort will be made to address this within the parameters of attrition. If this is not possible, and some trainee positions must be eliminated, the following plan will be implemented:

(1) Participants will be notified in writing at least 30 days in advance of termination.

(2) If a participant’s position is being terminated, efforts will be made to place the individual in unsubsidized employment, or another training opportunity, such as with the Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion Programs. Local One-Stop Centers will be utilized, along with other local contacts and resources, to identify potential jobs or other programs for which any terminated participants may be eligible.

(3) From the time it is known that positions are to be eliminated, participants will be encouraged to use work time to seek employment or a new placement. The ALTSD will research the possibilities in each affected community and communicate the possibilities to participants who need assistance. Final payroll payments will be sent to participants by the normal method used, unless specific instructions to the contrary are received from a participant. The notification letter will include a request for such instructions.

SCSEP ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that where SCSEP is included in the Combined Workforce Plan, the State has established a written policy and procedure to obtain advice and recommendations on the State Plan from:

Representatives of the State and area agencies on aging; Yes

State and local boards under WIOA; Yes

Public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b); Yes

Social service organizations providing services to older individuals; Yes

Grantees under Title III of OAA; Yes

Affected Communities; Yes

Unemployed older individuals; Yes

Community-based organizations serving older individuals; Yes

Business organizations; and Yes

Labor organizations. Yes

STATE COMMENTS ON SCSEP ASSURANCES

New Mexico's State Plan Consultation Policy and Procedure is reproduced below.

STATE SCSEP PLAN; CONSULTATION POLICY: When required by federal law, and authorized by the Governor of the State of New Mexico, ALTSD shall develop a State SCSEP Plan. Advice and recommendation regarding this plan shall be solicited from those organizations listed in the Older Americans Act.

PURPOSE: To establish the procedure for soliciting advice and recommendations regarding the State SCSEP Plan from entities as required in the Older Americans Act.

APPLICABILITY: The Governor of New Mexico and/or the Governor's designated signatory for the SCSEP and any others identified by them to assist in developing the State SCSEP Plan.

CROSS–REFERENCE: The Older Americans Act, as amended in 2006, Sec. 503(a)(2); and 20 CFR Section 641.315 and 641.325(f).

PROCEDURE: Advice and recommendations on the State SCSEP Plan shall be solicited from representatives of the State and Area Agencies on Aging; State and Local Boards under WIOA; public and private non–profit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b); social service organizations providing services to older individuals; grantees under Title III of OAA, affected communities, unemployed older individuals, community–based organizations serving older individuals; business organizations; and labor organizations. When a draft of the State SCSEP Plan is completed it shall be distributed to all the entities listed above, either in advance of, or concurrent with, the public comment period for the plan.

A date at least 15 days after distribution shall be set for the receipt of advice and recommendations. All advice and recommendations received from this procedure shall be listed with public comments; where such input results in changes to the Plan, this shall be noted in the public comments section as well.

APPENDIX 1. PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

Include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

Instructions:Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each State submitting a Unified or Combined Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The State is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

TABLE 1. EMPLOYMENT (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	82.00	82.10	84.00	82.10
Dislocated Workers	79.00	74.40	81.00	74.40
Youth	63.00	58.80	62.00	58.80
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	62.00	55.30	64.00	55.30
Vocational Rehabilitation</	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 1

TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT (FOURTH QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	80.00	75.50	80.00	75.50
Dislocated Workers	76.00	70.90	77.00	70.90
Youth	63.00	61.70	62.00	61.70
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	53.00	58.40	61.00	58.40
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 2

TABLE 3. MEDIAN EARNINGS (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	8,036.00	8,208.00	7,874.00	8,208.00
Dislocated Workers	7,748.00	7,370.00	8,334.00	7,370.00
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	4,775.00	4,565.00	4,775.00	4,565.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 3

TABLE 4. CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT RATE

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	65.00	69.00	70.00	69.00
Dislocated Workers	56.00	56.70	56.00	56.70
Youth	41.00	47.60	41.00	47.60
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 4

TABLE 5. MEASUREABLE SKILL GAINS

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	32.00	34.00	33.00	35.00
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 5

TABLE 6. EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

Program	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 6

TABLE 7. COMBINED FEDERAL PARTNER MEASURES

Measure	PY 2016 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2016 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level	PY 2017 Proposed/ Expected Level	PY 2017 Negotiated/ Adjusted Level

User remarks on Table 7

APPENDIX 2. OTHER STATE ATTACHMENTS (OPTIONAL)