WIOA STATE PLAN FOR
THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

CONTENTS

WIOA State Plan for the State of Washington....1

Overview....4

Options for Submitting a State Plan....5

How State Plan Requirements Are Organized....7

I. WIOA State Plan Type....8

Combined Plan partner program(s)....9

II. Strategic Elements....10

a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis....11

b. State Strategic Vision and Goals....21

c. State Strategy....33

III. Operational Planning Elements....69

A. State Strategy Implementation....70

b. State Operating Systems and Policies....133

IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs....168

V. Common Assurances (for all core programs)....170

VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs....172

Program-Specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B....173

Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services)....191

Program-Specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs....212

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (General)....242

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (Blind)....331

VII. Program-Specific Requirements For Combined State Plan Partner Programs....418

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)....419

TANF Certifications....436

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))) 437

Work Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o)) 452

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) 457

Jobs for Veterans' State Grants 458

Unemployment Insurance (UI)....475

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) 506

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Employment and Training Activities 537

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) 538

Appendix 1. Performance Goals for the Core Programs 539

Table 1. Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) 540

Table 2. Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) 541

Table 3. Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) 542

Table 4. Credential Attainment Rate 543

Table 5. Measureable Skill Gains....544

Table 6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers....545

Table 7. Combined Federal Partner Measures 546

Appendix 2. Other State Attachments (Optional)....547

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.

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

I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

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.) Yes

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))) Yes

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

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.)) Yes

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

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

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 Yes

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.)) Yes

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.

(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

In 2014, 82 percent of Washington workers were working in the private sector compared to 18 percent in the public sector according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data. Within the private sector, education and health were the largest employers, accounting for about 13 percent of all jobs. Professional and business services provided about 12 percent of all jobs, followed by retail trade with 11 percent of jobs.

While public sector employment remained solid, it has lagged other sectors both in terms of job growth and average wages in recent years. The professional & business services led all sectors in job growth the last few years, adding 22,700 jobs between 2012 and 2014. The sector had an average wage of $81,893, higher than all except information ($135,304). Retail trade, and leisure and hospitality, had the second and third highest growth, but had relatively low wages. The average retail wage was $34,084, while those in the leisure and hospitality field, earned an average of $20,530. Transportation, warehousing, and utilities sector added the fewest jobs during the 2012–14 period. However, the average annual wage sat at $53,821—more than double what those in the growing leisure and hospitality field earned.

The occupation with the most current openings is carpenters, followed by software developers. Retail sales and construction laborers also had high numbers of current openings.

(ii) Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

Between 1992 and 2022, the education and health sectors are projected to have the fastest annual average growth at 2.4 percent, followed by the professional services with 2.3 percent according to

the Washington Employment Security Department. The slowest growing sector is goods producers (0.3 percent), followed by other industries (0.8 percent). In short, the forecast anticipates high–turnover, low–wage industries to grow enough to remain the largest in terms of employment, while professional services and education & health become increasingly more important economic drivers, primarily at the expense of goods–producers.

The expected continued growth in the construction and healthcare industries is mirrored on the occupation side with increased demand for carpenters, construction laborers, registered nurses, and personal care aides. Most of the rest of the growth occupations are service jobs which share the characteristic of not being easily outsourced.

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

Despite large numbers of jobseekers, companies still have difficulties finding workers with specific skills. To better measure the needs of industry, the Workforce Board periodically administers and publishes an Employer Needs and Practices Survey. The most recent survey, conducted in 2012, featured responses from 2,800 employers.

According to survey results, over half of firms hired new employees, but among those attempting to hire, about one–fifth experienced difficulties. Just over half of high–tech industries reported hiring difficulties, more than any other industry. Construction and agriculture also reported a high degree of hiring challenges.

Among mid–level training occupations, the "installation, maintenance, and repair" group faces the largest skills gap through 2020. Some key occupations in this group are HVAC repairers, welders, and machinists. For science and technology occupations the gap is small (in overall numbers), but when compared with the number of completers, is proportionately high. Healthcare is also facing a sizeable skill gap, with mid–level demand about twice the size of the supply.

The occupations with the most current openings is carpenters, followed by software developers. Retail sales and construction laborers also had high numbers of current openings. (Restated from page 4.)

On page 5 there is further discussion on demand occupations as well as skills and education gaps: "Despite large numbers of jobseekers, companies still have difficulties finding workers with specific skills. To better measure the needs of industry, the Workforce Board periodically administers and publishes an Employee Needs and Practices Survey. The most recent survey, conducted in 2012, featured responses from 2,800 employers. According to survey results, over half of firms hired new employees, but among those attempting to hire, about one-fifth experienced difficulties. Just over half of high-tech industries reported hiring difficulties, more than any other industry. Construction and agriculture also reported a high degree of hiring challenges.

Among mid-level training occupations, the "installation, maintenance, and repair" group faces the largest skills gap through 2020. Some key occupations in this group are HVAC repairers, welders, and machinists. For science and technology occupations the gap is small (in overall numbers), but when compared with the number of completers, is proportionately high. Healthcare is also facing a sizeable skill gap, with mid-level demand about twice the size of the supply."

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’.

(i) Employment and Unemployment. Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data and trends in the State.

Washington state employment levels are up – above the pre–recession levels and the unemployment rate was closing on 5.0 percent as 2015 drew to a close. However, the labor force participation rate fell below 63 percent and the unemployment rate (which includes discouraged workers and those unable to find full–time work) remained high.

Younger workers are among those left behind since the Great Recession. Labor force participation for 16–19 year olds fell by nearly 10 percentage points, from 45.8 to 36.1 percent from 2007 to 2014. For those aged 20–24, it fell by over 7 percentage points (79.6 to 72.5 percent) and for 25–34 year olds by 4.7 percentage points (from 84.8 to 80.1 percent). Workers aged 55 and older were the only ones to see an increase in labor force participation over this time period.

All racial and ethnic groups suffered during the Great Recession, and recovered slowly in the aftermath. However, the pace at which recovery happened differed by population group. Asians,

Blacks, Hispanics, and whites all saw decreasing labor force participation between 2007 and 2013, as well as higher unemployment rates. Hispanics had the strongest engagement with the workforce – over 70 percent participation – while the workforce engagement rate for African Americans, Asians, and whites was only in the lower 60 percent range. African Americans have had higher unemployment rates than other groups and Asians have consistently had the lowest unemployment rate, followed by whites.

People with disabilities faced significant labor market barriers. They were much less likely to be in the workforce (about 44 percent) than those without disabilities (about 77 percent) in 2013. This participation rate for disabled is down from nearly 46 percent in 2010, mirroring other subpopulations as well as the population in general.

In addition to low participation rates, the unemployment rates for people with disabilities have been nearly twice the rate for non–disabled workers. The rate for disabled people peaked at 19.4 percent in 2012 and has fallen moderately to 18.7 percent in 2013. The unemployment rate for non–disabled people followed a similar trend but peaked a year earlier in 2011 before dropping to 8.9 percent in 2013.

On average from 2011–2013, there were 922,128 immigrants (foreign–born) in Washington state. Of these the largest group came from Asia, followed by Latin America. More than a quarter of these immigrants had less than a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 10 percent for the entire population. Eighteen percent spoke English as a first language compared to 81 percent of the overall state population. Labor market outcomes overall were comparatively favorable for immigrants – a 67 percent labor force participation rate (63 percent for the entire population) and 6 percent unemployed (9 percent for overall population). However it should be noted that this is for the population we have data on, which no doubt misses large numbers of undocumented workers. Among the Limited English Proficiency Pathways participants (with the DSHS Office of Refugee & Immigration Assistance), 66.6 percent received employment services and 10.9 percent entered employment.

(ii) Labor Market Trends. Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

See (1) (A) (i) above.

(iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce. Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

Higher education levels strongly improve labor market outcomes—increasing both the participation rate in the labor force and reducing the unemployment rate. Among prime working–age Washingtonians, one in three who lacked a diploma were also absent from the labor force. Of those that did participate, 13.5 percent were unemployed. Meanwhile, those with some college or an associate's degree had a 77.3 percent labor force participation rate and an 8 percent unemployment rate. Those with a bachelor's degree or higher had a labor force participation rate of nearly 85 percent and an unemployment rate of 4.2 percent.

According to data published in 2014 by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Education (OSPI), 77.2 percent of the students who entered ninth grade four years earlier graduated on time. Females had a higher graduation rate (83.1 percent) than males (76.7 percent). Asians (87.6 percent) had the highest graduation rate among different racial and ethnic groups, while Native Americans had the

lowest graduation rate (58 percent). Low income students had a 69.7 percent graduation rate, homeless students 51.9 percent, and foster care students 42.5 percent.

According to the American Community Survey, 6 percent of Washington's labor force had less than an high school diploma. 18 percent of Washingtonians had a high school diploma or equivalent, 39 percent had some college or an Associate's degree, and 37 percent held a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Certainly some of the 18–24 year olds that don't yet have diplomas will graduate on time and many will also successfully pursue a high school diploma equivalent, but the low high school diploma attainment rate remains a concern (the 2014 adjustment cohort graduation rate for the Class of 2014 was 77.2 percent, according to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction). Young people who are neither employed, nor in school, pose an even bigger concern. These so–called "disconnected youth" can delay critical milestones, such as marriage and home ownership, miss chances to hone their work skills and advance careers, and may end up relying on public assistance, or in worse cases, enter the criminal justice system. Being disconnected at a young age can have a lasting impact as these years are a critical period of growth and independence. In 2013, nearly 15 percent, or approximately one in six youth in Washington, aged 16–24, were neither in school nor employed. This totaled nearly 119,000 young people.

Educational attainment in Washington also varies widely by race and ethnicity. One–quarter of Hispanics had less than a 9th grade education, a far higher percentage than any other group. For most other ethnic groups the most common education attainment level was either "a high school diploma" or some college, no degree." Asians were an exception to this with their highest share attaining a bachelor's degree and the second highest share with a graduate or professional degree.

Among the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker population that registered with WorkSource, 80 percent had less than a high school diploma or equivalent.

(iv) Describe apparent 'skill gaps'. Aligning the state's degree production with projected job openings can be difficult. Students begin education programs that can take several years to complete. In the meantime, demand for occupations can change from the time students begin their training. Assessing future demand against supply can help residents make good choices about what to study. It also assists education institutions in determining their program mix and where to develop new programming and curriculum to meet labor market needs.

To help match the output of degrees with future openings, three different education levels are given focus by the workforce system: 1) "mid–level" education that requires more than a year of post–high school training or education, but less than an associate's degree, 2) a bachelor's degree, and 3) a graduate degree. Although completions in middle–level training occupations is expected to be the highest out of the three education levels, the demand for mid–level skilled workers is also expected to see the greatest increase within the labor market. The number of projected mid–level openings is estimated at nearly 6,000 more per year than the number of completions, if they continue at their current rate. The skill gap for bachelor's degrees is anticipated to be even steeper—as much as 13,000 annually.

WIA ADULTS: There were 4,862 persons served and $12,863,899 in federal funds expended. Providers included WorkSource Centers and affiliate sites, contracted colleges, community-based organizations, and local government agencies.

WIA DISLOCATED WORKERS: There were 5,749 persons served and $14,805,344 in federal funds expended. Providers included WorkSource Centers and affiliate sites, contracted colleges, community-based organizations, and local government agencies.

WIOA YOUTH: There were 4,014 persons served and $15,021,680 in federal funds expended. Providers included community-based organizations, educational service districts, school districts, and city/county government through the Workforce Development Councils.

WAGNER-PEYSER LABOR EXCHANGE: There were 345,796 persons served and $15,220,047 in federal funds expended. Providers included the Employment Security Department and WorkSource centers statewide.

TRADE ACT - TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE: There were 2,391 persons served and $9,333,895 in federal funds expended. Providers included Washington's community and technical colleges, private career schools, and community-based organizations.

ADULT EDUCATION: There were 49,811 persons served and $9,009,572 in federal funds and $85,212,134 in state funds expended. Providers included Washington's community and technical colleges and community-based organizations.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES: There were 10,857 persons served and $46,800,000 in federal funds and $16,000,000 in state funds expended. Providers included local divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation units and contracted community partners.

DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND: There were 1,399 persons served and $1,755,106 in federal funds and $10,322,909 in state funds expended. Statewide services were provided through six offices located throughout the state.

TANF/WORKFIRST EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES: There were 8,660 persons served and $13,359,094 in federal funds expended. Providers included Washington's community and technical colleges, private career schools, and community-based organizations.

TANF/WORKFIRST COMMUNITY JOBS: There were 2,116 persons served and $12,041,705 in federal funds expended. Services were provided by 21 community-based organizations throughout the state.

TANF?CAREER JUMP: There were 1,575 persons served and $6,522,011 in federal funds expended. and Services were provided by 21 community-based organizations throughout the state.

TANF/WORKFIRST EMPLOYMENT SERVICES: There were 16,635 persons served and $16,073,750 in federal funds expended. Providers included WorkSource offices and some community services offices.

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.*

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* 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.

The following data and information on Washington state's Workforce Development System and activities are for the 12–month period that ran from July 1st 2013 to June 30th 2014.

WIA Adults: There were 4,862 persons served and $12,863,899 in federal funds expended. Providers included WorkSource Centers and affiliate sites, contracted colleges, community–based organizations, and local government agencies.

WIA Dislocated Workers: There were 5,749 persons served and $14,805,344 in federal funds expended. Providers included WorkSource Centers and affiliate sites, contracted colleges, community–based organizations, and local government agencies.

WIA Youth: There were 4,014 persons served and $15,021,680 in federal funds expended. Providers included community–based organizations, educational service districts, school districts, and city/county government through the Workforce Development Councils.

Wagner–Peyser Labor Exchange: There were 345,796 persons served and $15,220,047 in federal funds expended. Providers included the Employment Security Department and WorkSource Centers statewide.

Trade Act – Trade Adjustment Assistance: There were 2,391 persons served and $9,333,895 in federal funds expended. Providers included Washington's community and technical colleges, private career schools, and community–based organizations.

Adult Education: There were 49,811 persons served and $9,009,572 in federal funds and $85,212,134 in state funds expended. Providers included Washington's community and technical colleges and community–based organizations.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services: There were 10,857 persons served and $46,800,000 in federal funds and $16,000,000 in state funds expended. Providers included local divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation units and contracted community partners.

Department of Services for the Blind: There were 1,399 persons served and $1,755,106 in federal funds and $10,322,909 in state funds expended. Statewide services provided through six offices located throughout the state.

TANF/WorkFirst Education and Training Services: There were 8,660 persons served and $13,359,094 in federal funds expended. Providers included Washington's community and technical colleges, private career schools, and community–based organizations.

TANF/WorkFirst Community Jobs: There were 2,116 persons served and $12,041,705 in federal funds expended, provided by 21 community–based organizations throughout the state.

TANF/Career Jump: There were 1,575 persons served and $6,522,011 in federal funds expended , provided by 21 community–based organizations throughout the state.

TANF/WorkFirst Employment Services: There were 16,635 persons served and $16,073,750 in federal funds expended. Providers included WorkSource offices and some community services offices.

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.

Strengths: The workforce development system in Washington is a complex network of 55 programs, managed by 12 state agencies and multiple service providers. It serves hundreds of thousands of current and future jobseekers and employers at a cost of more than $1 billion a year in federal and state funds. Four state agencies manage or coordinate 84 percent of these funds.

A complex system, serving many needs: The system is complex because it serves a wide variety of people with vastly differing circumstances. It takes a coordinated effort among many program partners at state agencies, school districts, community and technical colleges, local Workforce Development Councils, and community–based organizations to develop a skilled workforce able to meet the diverse demands of business and industry in Washington. To succeed, the system must effectively prepare individuals for the job market by offering training for occupations in demand, as well as job preparation and support services to help individuals succeed. The system must be sufficiently flexible and comprehensive to accommodate the varying needs of participants and employers. Effective coordination of service delivery is essential to success, as is employer engagement, particularly at the local level.

Highly regarded, but still room for Improvement: Washington's approach to coordinated service delivery is highly regarded at the federal and state levels, and recent federal workforce development legislation includes components of Washington's system in its design. Workforce specialists in Washington acknowledge, however, that there is still room for improvement. This reflects the necessarily complex nature of the system, the accelerating changes taking place in the economy, and the diverse needs of workers and employers.

Strong local partnerships are critical: Strong local partnerships are critical to workforce development program success. Federal law requires that federally funded services be provided and in some cases, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), be managed at the local level because local government officials and businesses best understand local needs.

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) is the lead state agency responsible for coordinating system partners statewide. It works with them, as well as the Governor and Legislature, to develop the strategic vision and policies for workforce development in Washington.

Weaknesses: A recent study of the workforce development system undertaken by the Washington State Auditor's Office found that the overlap and duplication of effort found in the workforce system are largely justified, because risks are associated with coordination and service delivery. Entry to some programs is open to all, without restrictions or special requirements, but participation in other programs is restricted by specific eligibility criteria. The overlap and duplication we found was mostly in the programs that serve specialized populations. The report found fragmentation in the 10 TANF–related programs, but this was justified because the four agencies involved had very specific roles based on their expertise. The risks the report found in the system were related to the complexity of the system with its many moving parts, and assigning authority to the local level.

Although Washington is well respected at the federal and state levels for its coordinated, holistic approach to workforce development, the report identified four areas of potential risk within the system that may warrant further analysis:

• Variations in local service delivery;

• Inconsistent quality of counseling to help students transfer into training and employment;

• Variable degrees of engagement between employers and educators; and

• Federal restrictions on services particularly in TANF.

C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

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

See (A) above for details on capacity of programs.

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.

Washington's strategic vision is to: help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self–sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations; close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in–demand industry sectors and occupations, including through apprenticeships; and work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.

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.

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* 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.

Business Engagement Goals:

• Identify meaningful metrics to establish a baseline and increase the number of businesses utilizing the workforce system.

• Identify meaningful metrics to establish a baseline and increase the number of businesses reporting satisfaction with the services they receive via the workforce system by 5 percent each year.

• Have at least one sector partnership in development in each workforce region. Use the Sector Partnership Framework or a similar framework to show progress over time.

• Train at least 30 percent of the workforce system's staff on the implementation of sector partnerships.

• Increase resources for work–based learning opportunities, including on–the–job training and apprenticeship, internships, job shadows, but especially, incumbent worker training.

• Increase the amount of work–based training including incumbent worker training, on–the–job training and apprenticeship, job shadows, internships.

Integrated Service Delivery Goals:

• Increase the number of designated navigators available within the One–Stop system.

• Develop an intake process that eliminates redundant assessments and streamlines customer experience.

• Increase the number of participants, including those with barriers, who have defined career pathways and have gained portable skills, received industry–recognized credentials, and/or earned college credits.

Access and Technology Goals:

• Implement universal wireless Internet access in high–traffic areas of all comprehensive one–stop centers in Washington by 2020.

• Establish the state–level advisory committee on accessibility and barrier solutions and ensure the designation of local advisory committees during the first two years of the plan. By the fourth year of the plan, ensure that the state–level advisory committee has received multiple years of progress reports on barrier removal projects at the local level from each local area.

• Identify and encourage local pilot programs that use technology as a means of facilitating and improving an integrated service delivery for customers, including programs that are designed to improve access to the system.

Next–Generation Performance Accountability Goal:

• Develop a system to accurately measure the collective success of all WIOA partners in serving workforce populations.

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.)

See Appendix 1

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 established standard Core Measures of participant outcomes and has been applying them across a wide range of workforce programs for almost 20 years. In addition, periodic surveys of both participants and employers have been conducted over the same time span. Both the state Core Measures and the surveys will be reviewed for possible revisions to enhance their applicability and relevance to the WIOA framework and implementation.

The state has begun development of methods to measure the overall participation by individuals in the workforce system, including and beyond the WIOA core partners, and to measure the collective effect of that system on the employment and education outcomes of those individuals. Similarly, while awaiting development of national effectiveness measures for services to employers, the state is assessing the methods for measuring the extent to which the workforce system is interacting with the entire employer community.

Next–Generation Performance Accountability

To meet the combined challenges of a competitive economy and a changing labor force, and make the best use of limited resources, Washington's workforce system must achieve its objective outcomes and continuously improve its performance. While Washington's workforce system has been a national leader in performance accountability, new mandates from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) create the opportunity to improve performance measures to better support a more integrated and coordinated service delivery system. New measures will be developed to provide a system–level, cross–agency assessment of overall progress that provides a clear picture of customer progress (worker, employer, jobseeker and student) rather than individual program results.

Next Generation Performance Goal

The following goal will help move Washington's system forward: • Develop a system to accurately measure the collective success of all WIOA partners in serving workforce populations.

In addition, soon after the passage of WIOA, Governor Jay Inslee directed the Workforce Board to work with the system's stakeholders to shape Washington's strategic plan toward three goals to maximize the workforce system's impact:

1. Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self–sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.

2. Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in–demand industry sectors and occupations, including through apprenticeships.

3. Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.

These three goals will inform the larger system and guide any changes. Below are ways the system is evolving to better serve all populations through enhanced performance measures.

Federal and State Framework

WIOA combines six federal programs under a common performance measurement system. This updating of federal law brings with it new requirements, challenges, and opportunities. All but one of the six WIOA core programs (Title III – Wagner–Peyser) have been included in the performance measurement and evaluation framework previously developed by the Workforce Board under state law. This framework includes annual reporting of state Core Measures, including the employment and earnings of workforce program participants along with skill attainment, employer and participant satisfaction, and the return on investment to taxpayers and participants. State core performance measures cover several additional components of the workforce system not included in the WIOA performance system, such as apprenticeship, secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs, and licensed private career schools.

Overview of Washington's workforce development accountability system

Washington has made great progress in implementing a workforce development accountability system since the Legislature created the Workforce Board in 1991. Part of the Board's mandate was to establish standardized performance measures across multiple workforce education and training partners and programs. In consultation with workforce training and education agencies and providers, a comprehensive set of Core Measures and data collection methods were established to address the following questions:

- Did participants of workforce programs get the skills they needed?

- After leaving the program, were participants employed?

- How much did they earn?

- Were program participants and their employers satisfied?

- Did the participant and public get a good return on investment?

To achieve these goals, the Workforce Board developed a variety of measurement methods, including administrative records matching, surveys, and statistical evaluations. The last question, about return on investment, was answered through periodic "net impact" studies which compared the employment rates and earnings of program participants with those of a control group with similar demographic characteristics. The establishment of these core measures and data collection methods constituted one of the broadest and most sophisticated ongoing state workforce education and training assessment systems in the country.

Federal workforce programs also addressed performance accountability on a program–by–program basis. However, different performance measures were developed separately for many federal programs during this period.

The performance measures largely focused on participant outcomes in terms of employment, earnings, attainment of credentials or progress in education and customer satisfaction. The

Workforce Board was heavily involved in national efforts, starting in 2003, to bring interested states together to develop model measures for participant performance outcomes that could be applied across a wide range of programs. The resulting model measures were very similar to the ones adopted by Washington in 1996, and are known as the Integrated Performance Information measures.

Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) further progress was made toward service coordination and integration of federal programs. Although WIA emphasized closer service coordination across agencies and programs, there were no provisions for performance measures except for the Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and Title III (Wagner–Peyser employment services) programs. WIA did advance participant choice and consumer information provisions and Washington aggressively implemented a performance–based Eligible Training Provider List, requiring programs meet specific completion, employment and earnings thresholds in order to be eligible for federal training dollars.

Washington also uses this performance information to help individuals seeking training make informed choices, most notably through the Washington Career Bridge website, launched in 2009. Not only can job counselors see whether an education program led to living–wage jobs, but so can jobseekers, students, parents, educators, and anyone else interested in the outcomes of thousands of Washington education programs.

WIOA promises a better integrated, more coordinated system

It was against this backdrop that WIOA was enacted, the first federal reform of the workforce system in 15 years.

WIOA's overall goal is to serve customers at a variety of entry points and offer services as needed, rather than requiring customers to proceed on a specific pathway through increasingly "intensive" levels of assistance. If the intention of a high–functioning system is to enable customers to move into and across programs as needed, then the performance measurement system needs to be capable of accurately measuring results when many of the participants are served by multiple programs.

Many details of WIOA's performance accountability system are yet to be defined in regulation and federal guidance; however parts of the emerging picture are becoming clear. WIOA makes important changes in federal performance measurement requirements, including: Updated and standardized outcome measures applied across all six core programs. The majority of these measures are very similar to Washington's existing IPI/State Core measures, which have been used for all of the core programs except Wagner–Peyser.

Reporting procedures which recognize the relationship between participants' barriers and other characteristics and their outcomes, and that many participants may be served by more than one program.

Extending the types of training providers to be covered under performance–based Eligible Training Provider List processes.

Several of WIOA's key features move toward more consistent accountability for its component programs. In addition to the updated measures and reporting improvements mentioned above, final WIOA rules are likely to include a "common exit" rule under which the exit outcome period for a participant served by multiple programs will not start until the participant has exited from all of them.

However, WIOA does not focus on assessing the collective performance of the WIOA partners, instead focusing on participants served under each of the six separate federal funding streams. Reporting on performance measures is required for participants with specific barriers and by demographic groups within each of the six core programs, but not unduplicated reporting across all of the core programs. Recent regulatory drafts from the federal departments of Labor and Education reference an “average indicator score,” arrived at by averaging each performance measure across all six programs. This may be an initial step toward assessing system–level performance, but the average of performance at the program level will not be very effective in measuring the system–level performance of the WIOA partnership.

In contrast to the previous act (WIA), WIOA measures are proposed to exclude the outcomes of participants who rely solely on self–service, eliminating the performance of almost 40 percent of the state’s Title III (Wagner–Peyser) participants from the official performance measures. However, Washington will continue to include this growing segment of the state’s workforce customer base.

Washington’s Commitment to System–Level Performance Accountability

Washington’s Workforce Board is committed to developing a true “system” of workforce delivery, with service delivery coordinated and aligned across programs and agencies. In May 2015, the Workforce Board decided to pursue development of performance data appropriate to a coordinated and aligned system of service delivery by measuring how the components of that system collectively affect the outcomes of different types of clients, regardless of the mix of resources involved. That is, the system will be measured by how well the state is collectively serving populations—such as those with disabilities, or out–of–school youth—rather than how participants receiving services from Vocational Rehabilitation or from Title I Youth are faring. This will be in addition to—and developed more slowly than—the required calculation and reporting of federal measures at the program level.

Performance targets will be required for all six core WIOA programs using the new WIOA measures at the state level, with the state targets set in negotiations with the federal departments. Performance targets are required at the sub–state level only for the three Title I programs – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. These local targets are to be negotiated between the regional Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) and the Workforce Board. The current practice under WIA has been to consult with the WDCs in developing target levels to propose to the federal agencies as required for the negotiation process. Only the six core WIOA programs are required to use the WIOA performance measures. Participation of any other federal or state program in a WIOA “combined plan” or “unified plan” does not invoke WIOA accountability for any additional programs.

At a high level, the key outcomes identified nearly 20 years ago for the workforce system remain the focus of most performance measurement efforts. They are not static targets, but areas in which positive results should be achieved for all people, and by which improvement efforts should be focused.

• Employment.

• Earnings.

• Skills.

• Satisfaction of workforce program participants.

• Satisfaction of employers.

Washington will also strive for quality performance measures by emphasizing the following considerations for outcome measures:

• Quantify the results for customers rather than processes or the quantity of inputs.

• Promote behavior and results consistent with longer–term objectives – and does not incent actions with unintended consequences contrary to overall objectives of the workforce system.

• Comprehensible to a lay audience.

• Create a level playing field among programs and service strategies.

• Scalable and divisible such that they are applicable to local institutions, regional areas, and the state, and for subpopulations and service strategies.

• Not easily “gamed” or manipulated.

• Affordable and not a substantial diversion of resources from direct service to customers.

Washington’s Commitment to System–Level Performance Accountability

WIOA’s goal is to serve customers at a variety of entry points and offer services as needed rather than requiring customers to move through increasingly “intensive” levels of assistance. If the intention of a high–functioning system is to enable customers to move into and across programs as needed, then the performance measurement system should be appropriate to a system in which many of the participants are served by multiple programs. However, the formal WIOA performance assessment process does not focus on assessing the collective performance of the WIOA partners, instead focusing on each of the six separate federal funding streams.

Washington is committed to developing a true “system” of workforce education and training service delivery, including the integration of performance accountability.

To measure achievement of this plan’s objectives of Improving the Customer Experience for Current and Future Workers, Improving Accessibility and Technology, and Engaging Business for Better Results, the Workforce Board is committed to the development of a system–level or cross–agency assessment of overall progress. This is a commitment beyond the federal requirements in order to develop a performance approach that addresses how the WIOA partners are collectively serving all populations within the workforce system. This approach will provide aggregated data by population type, in unduplicated counts across all the core programs.

The development of performance data appropriate to an integrated system of service delivery is necessary to measure how the components of that system collectively affect the outcomes of different types of clients, regardless of the mix of resources involved. This systemic performance accountability effort will be in addition to, and developed more slowly than, the required federal measures computation and reporting at the program level.

Work to be Done (What we don’t know)

Many critical details have yet to be released. However, a substantial amount of policy, procedure, and technical development will be involved in implementing the performance accountability components of this far–reaching federal act. This work is likely to continue for at least the next two years. A partial list includes the following:

Implementing Federal Measures and Reports

The full scope of this task will not be determined until more federal instructions are released. However, almost all parts of the process of computing performance measures will require some modification. Some new data will have to be collected for the new education and training progress measure (5). Data collection and processing procedures must be modified or expanded to support new WIOA requirements for performance measurement, statistical adjustment of performance measures, and mandatory reporting. Data validation processes will need to be established for new data items, and may need to be modified for some items currently collected.

Performance Target Negotiation

Data will have to be assembled and analyzed so that performance can be monitored relative to agreed targets and timely requests can be made for target level adjustments in response to unforeseen developments. This will be particularly important during the initial years when federal statistical models for performance adjustment are not fully developed.

Sanctions and Incentives

The system of federal incentives under WIA was not retained under WIOA. New performance sanction procedures must be developed, and the option of state–designed incentives considered.

Combining WIOA and State Core Measures

Because all three of the current State Core Measures for participant outcomes are very similar (but not identical) to WIOA measures, the number of measures used for the programs involved in WIOA should be consolidated. Because the State Core Measures have been in use for almost 20 years and are applied to programs outside WIOA, careful evaluation is needed before consolidation.

Eligible Training Provider List Processes

WIOA requires the establishment of some new procedures for the existing processes for eligibility of education and training programs for Adult and Dislocated Worker participants. The existing criteria must also be re–evaluated and modified. Further, systems for performance assessment and minimum criteria for programs providing several additional types of services to Youth, Adults, and Dislocated Workers must be developed, including pre–apprenticeship and incumbent worker training. Additional program information identified as important in WIOA may need to be collected and disseminated, requiring modification of the Eligible Training Provider List and Career Bridge.wa.gov processes and systems. The WIOA draft regulations indicate that states have the flexibility of setting different standards for different types of providers. Significant time and effort will be required to determine how to define different types, and how to set standards for provider types for which there is limited experience and baseline data.

Measures for Combined Plan Programs and Other Partners

The separate federal performance measurement systems for all non–core programs will remain unaffected by WIOA, regardless of the extent to which their activities become formal or informal partners in One–Stop and WIOA. As part of developing a system accountability approach for Washington, it may be desirable to eventually include participants from these other partners in an overall accountability framework. However, this would be strictly a state option, and not subject to federal targets and sanctions.

The System–Level View

Going beyond the federal requirements to develop a system–level view will also require substantial work, and will proceed more slowly than development of required federal reporting. Phased implementation is expected, beginning with development of descriptive data about how many people from which populations are currently receiving what types of services across the partnering agencies. Fortunately, the Workforce Board has significant relevant experience and established methods for parts of this task.

Performance Accountability Summary and Goals

In conclusion, Washington's performance accountability system leads the nation, but there is clearly room for improvement. Determining how to make these adjustments will take time as the state waits for additional federal guidance and sorts through the many metrics involved in workforce performance. In general, the state is committed to developing a system to accurately measure the collective success of all WIOA partners in serving workforce populations. This approach will provide data aggregated by population type, in unduplicated counts across all the core programs.

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).

Historic Opportunity to Strengthen Washington's Workforce System

The businesswoman scratched her head. Her manufacturing company had doubled in size and was growing quickly. She needed skilled workers and she paid a living–wage, but her job openings went unfilled. She wondered, "How am I going to attract the skilled workforce I need to continue to grow my business?"

He entered the workforce straight out of high school and had worked at the mill for the last 25 years. Today, the mill announced it was closing. In the old days, you just responded to a classified ad in the local newspaper. For a job today there wasn't even a newspaper. He felt lost in today's world; where could he turn, what would he do to support his family?

While he was in school, he spent his summers looking for a job. Time after time, business after business and there were no interviews, no opportunities. How could he find a job? How could he, one day, afford a home and raise a family when all employers saw was his disability?

She just graduated from high school. Her grades weren't the greatest, and since she wasn't going to college, she wasn't sure what to do next. She needed someone to help her figure out her possibilities for working, how to get the right skills and how to find a job – things that hadn't been taught in school. She'd heard about WorkSource from a friend; could they help?

Workforce issues such as these play out every day in Washington among growing businesses, the newly graduated, those with disabilities, and those abruptly displaced from long–time careers.

These same issues drove the near unanimous, bipartisan passage of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), which calls upon states to "improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self–sufficiency, meet the skill requirements of businesses and enhance the productivity and competiveness of the Nation."

State Strategic Plan Aligns with New Federal Act

Washington's dual–customer focus on both workers and businesses is at the heart of the state's workforce system, and undergirds this report on the state's new strategic plan for workforce development. Even before WIOA, the state's rich web of programs and resources have long worked together to integrate services, improve outcomes, and evaluate results on behalf of these two key customers. Now, with this much anticipated revision to the federal workforce development act, Washington has the opportunity to bring greater alignment among federal, state, and local service and program delivery, allowing the system to build on its previous successes and overcome remaining obstacles.

Specifically, this new strategic plan outlines an approach that empowers individuals, communities, and employers to realize their full potential through a universally accessible workforce system that

continually improves and adapts to changing conditions and demands. This new plan comes with a new title – Talent and Prosperity for All.

A Coordinated Plan Aligned with Federal and State Mission and Goals

Soon after the passage of WIOA, Governor Jay Inslee directed the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) to work with the system's stakeholders to shape Washington's strategic plan toward three goals to maximize the workforce system's impact:

1. Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self–sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.

2. Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in–demand industry sectors and occupations, including through apprenticeships.

3. Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.

The Governor also directed the Workforce Board to initiate several new activities while developing the state's strategic workforce plan.

These activities (see below) were to be completed before the Governor would approve the plan and before it was submitted to the U. S. Department of Labor (DOL) in March 2016:

• Explore fully the benefits of a Combined Plan.

• Conduct an examination of integrating Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program into the workforce system, including recommendations for serving the most at–risk customers.

• Provide a data–driven evaluation and recommendation for planning regions in consultation with chief elected officials, local workforce boards, and stakeholders.

• Provide recommendations for elevating the strategic role of both state and local workforce boards to focus on system goals and changing the service delivery system in order to improve outcomes for jobseekers and employers.

These Governor–directed goals and initiatives have been part of the planning process and are reflected in this report.

Critical Steps to Successful Plan Implementation

Through multiple meetings among interested partners and stakeholders the following critical steps were identified in implementing the state's new strategic plan.

Continued Focus on the Governor's Direction: A culture of collaboration, with a laser–sharp focus on improving the outcomes for businesses and workers.

An Operational Plan Embraced by Partners: The ability to put the principles of this strategic plan into day–to–day program practices to better serve a combined range of customers.

Leadership and Sustained Commitment: Leadership at every level to stay the course when necessary and adjust the sails when needed and the ability to make the right choice driven by performance data and other valid evidence for fact–based decision–making.

Ongoing Communication: In order to successfully implement the key priorities within the strategic plan the plan partners and stakeholders will need to invest in building an ongoing communication system to support ongoing information sharing and rally partners to respond to challenges and opportunities.

Work on this Directive is Built on a Solid Foundation

Washington's many successes in workforce development are detailed in a 2015 report by the State Auditor's Office highlighting the overall effectiveness in coordinating services among 55 programs across 12 state agencies: "Washington's approach to coordinated service delivery is highly regarded at the federal and state level . . .The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) is the lead agency responsible for coordinating system partners statewide. It works with them, as well as the Governor and Legislature, to develop the strategic vision and policies for workforce development in Washington."

Washington's Choice of a Combined Plan

The many partners of Washington's workforce system chose to submit a robust Combined Plan to federal partners—one of two options under WIOA. This decision was made with a clear eye towards improving the breadth and depth of services to workers and businesses across the state. By submitting a "Combined Plan," partners are committing to working toward a seamless, customer–driven system that will not differentiate between programs and agencies whether local, state, or federal. The Combined Plan unites six core programs with any number of workforce services across the education and training system. Once included as "Combined Plan" partners, these programs will be aligned with the mission, goals, and priorities within the combined state plan submitted to federal agencies by March of 2016.

Sustaining Recovery by Unlocking Washington's Talent

Business Demand Rises for Highly Skilled Workers

The year 2014 was the best for job gains since 1999. Productivity has been rising in the United States, and as the economy recovers, gross domestic product for 2014 is estimated at $16 trillion–besting the pre–recession high of $14.9 trillion in 2007. Much of this job growth has occurred at the higher end of the skill and wage scale. A 2015 Seattle Times analysis of Washington State Employment Security Department data highlighted an uneven recovery with less skilled, lower paying jobs between $18 and $36 per hour declining during the recession, while jobs paying over $54 per hour grew during the same time period.

To fulfill this growing demand for highly skilled workers, Washington companies have turned to out–of–state and foreign workers to broaden their labor pool, tapping talent from across the world through the U.S. Department of Labor H–1B Foreign Worker Program. It's clear that this is a missed opportunity for Washington's workers, who would benefit from higher–skill, higher–wage jobs, especially in Washington's thriving tech industry. Skilling up Washington's workforce to meet the needs of businesses that import their talent requires greater collaboration and frank discussions among workforce professionals, education providers, and the business community. A more engaged

and invested business community would help fill existing skill gaps through targeted training opportunities and postsecondary education programs and help create a better skilled and educated, homegrown workforce. This would give Washington workers a clearer pathway to higher paying jobs, and businesses a more direct connection to their own backyard talent pipeline. Already, the state has secured two grants totaling $9.8 million through the U.S. Department of Labor for the American Apprenticeship Initiative, which include a focus on the technology industry. These grants will help reduce the number of imported workers. Registered Apprenticeship in Washington is growing. Since January 2014 the number of registered apprentices has grown by 25 percent to around 11,000 by the end of 2015.

Focus on Youth with Barriers to Employment

The Great Recession hit a generation of young workers hard and so far the recovery does not appear to be correcting the problem. Labor force participation for 16 to 19 year olds in Washington fell from 45.8 percent to 36.1 percent between 2007 and 2014. While all young people, across all education levels, are experiencing difficulties with the labor market, those who lack a high school diploma are more likely to be unemployed, or drop out of the labor force altogether, than high school graduates and those with higher education levels.

WIOA Designates Key Populations with Barriers

Youth aren't the only ones with employment challenges. Under WIOA, 14 populations were designated as those with barriers. These populations are as diverse as the state's workforce system and face significant challenges in obtaining living–wage jobs that lead to self–sufficiency and economic prosperity. The 14 populations designated as "populations with barriers" under WIOA include:

· Displaced Homemakers

· Youth in, or formerly in, Foster Care

· Low–Income Individuals

· English Language Learners

· Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Hawaiians

· Migrant/Seasonal Farmworkers

· Individuals with Disabilities

· Individuals within Two Years of Exhausted TANF Eligibility

· Older Individuals

· Single Parents/Pregnant Women

· Ex–Offenders

· Long–Term Unemployed

· Homeless Individuals

· Veterans

· "Other Groups" Designated by the Governor

Talent and Prosperity for All – Organized Around Four Strategic Priorities

After many months of collaboration and consultation among Washington's workforce development program leaders and their teams, including more than 70 meetings and engaging more than 500 people, the following key strategic priorities were adopted by the Workforce Board. These strategic priorities are the organizing principles around which Washington's workforce plan is structured:

1. Customers Receive Integrated Services that Lead to Employment and Careers: Customers need to be able to find and navigate the workforce development pathway that is best for them. This means Washington's richly complex system must help customers move beyond program–specific solutions to make informed choices that pull from the full menu of services. Services need to be designed and delivered with customers as the focal point. In addition to acquiring skills, education, and jobs that put them on the path to prosperity, customers should also understand they have continuous access to the workforce development system throughout their working lives. For sustained lifelong success, individuals will reengage in the workforce system throughout their career and lifelong learning journey. The system's promise is to combine all resources to help each individual learn how to find and keep the right job and receive continued support to advance their careers.

2. Increase Business Engagement with a Clearly Defined Workforce Value Stream: Only 8 percent of Washington businesses utilize the public workforce system. This stark fact underscores the limited interaction between businesses and workforce development service providers at all levels. Businesses need simple paths to the workforce system and a better understanding of the benefits, whether it's filling open positions with qualified applicants from WorkSource, shaping training programs to ensure workers have industry–specific skills, or partnering with higher education. In addition, once businesses and industries are engaged—be it through sector strategies or recruitment services—the workforce system must build and sustain these partnerships. The system's promise to partnering businesses is streamlined and integrated services that are a recognized value and easy for an employer to navigate.

3. Universal Accessibility to the System through Technology and Other Barrier Removal: This plan embraces barrier removal and universal accessibility of workforce development services—both physical and programmatic—as core priorities. The system's promise to those with barriers is to help employers realize their individual talents and to help all workers realize their full potential in the workplace. The use of technology to remove barriers for workers and enhance their access to services is a "game changer." Advances in telecommunications and technology potentially allow for seamless, universal, and remote access to education, training, and other workforce development services. While technology cannot fix all barrier access problems, in many cases it will free up staff to tackle more difficult access issues. This plan seeks to convert the best of these possibilities into a reality. The Workforce Board is establishing a permanent advisory committee to support the barrier removal work of local Workforce Development Councils.

4. A Next Generation Performance Accountability System That Shows Outcomes and Identifies Gaps: While Washington's workforce system has been a national leader in performance accountability, new federal legislation and its mandates create the opportunity to improve performance measures to better support a more integrated and coordinated service delivery system. Under WIOA's predecessor acts, Washington's annual workforce program evaluation "Workforce Training Results" has shown whether participants of the state's 12 largest workforce programs got jobs, how much they earned, the skills they obtained, and if they were satisfied with their program, among other measures. The Workforce Board's Career Bridge website, home of the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), also provides performance results for thousands of education programs. However, to get a clear picture of the system's effectiveness, the current performance accountability system will have to undergo significant changes. The new federal workforce law requires that customers be served at a variety of entry points. If the intention is to enable customers to move into and across programs as needed, then the performance measurement system needs to measure results when many of the participants are served by multiple programs. These measures will need to quantify the results for customers, create a level playing field among programs and service strategies and promote behavior and results consistent with longer–term objectives, among other changes.

Key Commitments Braided Throughout the Plan

Based on extensive stakeholder input, Governor Directives, and customer needs, the following values and commitments underpin Washington's Talent and Prosperity for All strategic plan:

All Means All

With the plan's heightened emphasis on program alignment, many agencies and their stakeholders voiced concern that this would result in reduced services for their clients. Each community urged that customers receive increased services, not less. These services need to be provided in a manner that reflects their unique needs, ranging from one–on–one services for new immigrants to early intervention for youth while still in middle and high school, to educational opportunities for individuals who need additional credentials. The plan consistently directs that priority populations receive the resources they require to be successful and that each community is included in the goal of prosperity and success for everyone. This is a "universal" plan.

Systemwide Partnerships

A culture of cooperation and partnership will be built to achieve positive results in a complex workforce system. Aligning goals, and measuring them in the same way, across all service and program providers and customers is essential in building this culture of partnership. Through shared goals and measures, Washington can achieve the seamless system envisioned in this plan.

These goals include:

• Deliver prosperity and success in a measurable way for the system's key customers: workers and businesses.

• Address strategically and efficiently the economic needs of workers and businesses.

• Ensure sustainable results.

Interdependency of Government and Non–Profit Agencies

The mandates outlined in WIOA, the reality of limited resources, and the volume of work to accomplish them all point toward strategic leveraging of all available resources. Members of the non–profit community will be engaged in even closer collaboration with government agencies, including tribes, and colleges and universities. Interagency collaboration will foster increased business involvement and reduce duplication of effort, saving valuable resources, while also reducing business and worker fatigue in using the system.

Career Pathways

The Career Pathways model will be utilized to offer an efficient and customer–centered approach to workforce development because this model structures intentional connections among workers, employers, and service and program providers. Aligning educational opportunities that lead to industry–recognized qualifications, skills, and academic credentials helps bring workers and employers into the training system on the front end. In turn, this transforms businesses from “customers” into “partners and co–investors” in the workforce system.

Continuous Improvement: Old Way of Doing Business is Not an Option

As the economy and population continue to change, Washington’s workforce system must be even more nimble to adapt to new demands and challenges. Timely, clear, and informative performance indicators will guide strategic course corrections and resource deployment. The Workforce Board, along with its partners, will continue to measure the impact of services to customers and will create an oversight system capable of responding as needed to ensure continued success and system improvements.

Professional Development

A highly skilled and talented staff has played a pivotal role in Washington’s workforce system success. The changes outlined in this plan will require continued investment in staff training and support across agencies and programs. To “manage the system to success,” front–line staff and managers will need to be equipped to respond to changing customers’ needs and support the four key strategies outlined in the plan. Team members will require a broader and deeper understanding of the services provided, not just by their own organization, but by other partners throughout the workforce system. Raising the bar on customer service will require thoughtful and coordinated outreach to businesses, and a tailored approach to providing education and training, and wraparound services for workers.

In addition to partner agencies, Washington will work with business and labor leaders to provide training and technical assistance to those who sit on state and local workforce boards. This assistance will include helping sponsor training on board duties. The state will strive to offer specific tools, including performance accountability.

Leveraging Existing Successes

Compelling stories of successful initiatives and programs are highlighted in this plan, bringing to life strategic objectives and system goals. These proven successes, and others, will be shared across the system. Too often, unique and successful pilot projects are abandoned due to lack of funding or

changes in administration. Encouraging information to be shared across the system, and regularly drawing attention to achievements, will help partners replicate and build on successes.

A Plan Embraced by All–Inclusive Process

A key objective in developing and writing this plan was to have every team member, and his or her stakeholders, endorse and embrace the plan. This process has required time and engagement with numerous committees, task forces, public forums, and an inclusive writing team. This plan strives to honor that participation.

Who is Involved?

WIOA requires Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) to lead strategic planning, business engagement and worker education and training efforts by developing a plan with other workforce partners that coordinates strategies and resources across the workforce system, in support of regional economies. WDCs recognize that in addition to their focus on regional and local needs, they are part of the statewide system which must be recognizable to businesses and workers, no matter their location.

While any workforce system partner may potentially lead a business or training solution, all are expected to support WDCs in the development and implementation of aligned and effective regional and area–wide strategies. In turn, WDCs are expected to work with their partners to identify the approach taken within a region or area. Workforce system partners at the state and regional level will collaborate on the chosen approach.

Workforce system partners in this approach include, but are not limited to:

· Apprenticeship (Department of Labor and Industries): A combination of on–the–job training (OJT) and related classroom instruction under the supervision of a journey–level craft person or trade professional in which workers learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly skilled occupation.

· Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act (Carl Perkins is included in Washington's workforce plan but is not a partner in the Combined WIOA plan): Aims to increase the quality of technical education at both the secondary and postsecondary levels and provide students with academic and technical skills for in–demand, living wage careers that advance the economy

· Community Development Block Grant (Department of Commerce): The state Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, administered by the state Department of Commerce, awards funds to rural local governments for locally–prioritized activities, such as economic development, construction, and public services activities. These funds are awarded based on a competitive grant process for eligible CDBG recipients. This funding is administered federally by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

· Community Services Block Grant (Department of Commerce): The state Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), administered by the Department of Commerce, awards funds to local community action agencies to provide services to low–income households at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (FPL). CSBG Grantees determine how funding will be used to support allowable CSBG activities, such as employment and training activities. This funding is administered federally by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

· Customized Training Program (State Board for Community and Technical Colleges): A training institution delivers dedicated customized employee training as requested by the business. The level of customization ranges from existing training curriculum delivered at the job site to fully customized training curriculum developed exclusively for the business.

· Higher Education (Community and Technical Colleges, Four–year Colleges and Universities, Private Career Schools): Education and training, customized training, incumbent worker training, certification, apprenticeship related supplemental instruction (RSI), education and career counseling, small business resources.

· Job Skills Program (State Board for Community and Technical Colleges): Prospective and current employees of a business receiving a Job Skills Program (JSP) grant are eligible for training. Eligible businesses and industries include private firms and institutions, groups, or associations concerned with commerce, trade, manufacturing, or service provisions. Public or nonprofit hospitals are also eligible.

· Title I Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs (Various state and local service providers): Workforce development workshops, assessment and career guidance, resources for worker training, on–the–job training, support services.

· Title II Adult Literacy (Community and Technical Colleges): Adult basic skills training, English as a Second Language training, GED

· Title III Wagner–Peyser (Employment Security Department): Jobseeker assessment, job matching, and other business services. Washington labor market information.

· Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Department of Service for the Blind): Training, retraining of individuals with disabilities, identification and support for the implementation of assistive technologies for jobseekers and businesses, job placement, job development, community rehabilitation providers.

· Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Department of Social and Health Services, Community and Technical Colleges, Community–Based Organizations, Employment Security Department, Department of Commerce, Department of Early Learning): Assessment, case management, job placement, education and training, work study, workfare, support services, and job development.

· Senior Community Service Employment (Department of Social and Health Services and Community–Based Organizations): Provide subsidized, part–time, community service work–based training for low–income people age 55 or older who have poor employment prospects. Through this program, older workers have access to the SCSEP services as well as other employment assistance available through WorkSource, the state’s one–stop career center system.

· SNAP, E&T (Department of Social and Health Services, Community and Technical Colleges, Community–Based Organizations): Food stamps, assessment, education and training, job search, job search skill development, and support services.

· Trade Adjustment Assistance (Employment Security Department): A federal program that helps workers who have lost jobs due to foreign trade to gain the skills, resources, and support they need to become reemployed.

· Training Benefits Program (Employment Security Department): Training benefits pay up to 52 times a participant's unemployment weekly benefit amount, minus any regular unemployment benefits received. These additional benefits are available to eligible dislocated workers in a full–time vocational training program approved by the unemployment insurance (UI) program.

· Veterans Employment and Training: Workforce development workshops, assessment and career guidance, resources for worker training, on–the–job training, support services for veterans.

· Worker Retraining Program (State Board for Community and Technical Colleges): Serves the unemployed or those facing imminent layoffs. Community and technical colleges provide training in basic skills and literacy, occupational skills, vocational education, and related or supplemental instruction for apprentices. Qualified students may receive financial assistance to help with tuition, other costs. Private career schools and colleges enroll a small number of students.

Improving the Customer Experience: Better Serving Current and Future Workers

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), envisions a streamlined, demand–driven, integrated, and business–informed system that can support the talent needs of business, and the education and training needs of a diverse population of current and future jobseekers and workers, including those most in need.

In many ways, streamlining and integrating the delivery system is the first step in helping all of the state's current and future workers gain a foothold in Washington's economy. Finding more efficient and successful ways to engage these individuals will create a sustainable talent pipeline. The diverse populations served by the state's workforce system include unemployed or underemployed people, those seeking additional education to advance their careers, highly skilled workers, and those facing barriers to employment. Some will pass through the system with minimal support, while others will require multiple resources. The state's economy benefits when the entire workforce is engaged in productive, meaningful employment, and the state's business community is more competitive and prosperous as a result.

Service delivery integration means current and future workers can access the state's workforce system, at any level throughout their lives, and are able to obtain the appropriate mix of services to put them on, or propel them along, a pathway to economic self–sufficiency. Current and future workers are able to connect to the system quickly and efficiently through a common intake process. They meet, or are connected technologically, to an individual navigator or team of navigators with a broad knowledge of available education, training, and support services. These navigators are trained to provide culturally competent services, ensuring that all current and future workers have a roadmap to achieve their goals. They ensure that all individuals can access and are enrolled in every program that can help meet their needs, in a way that is transparent to the customer.

Improving the Customer Experience Goals

The following goals will help move Washington's system forward:

• Increase the number of designated navigators available within the One–Stop system.

• Develop an intake process that eliminates redundant assessments and streamlines customer experience.

• Increase the number of participants, including those with barriers, who have defined career pathways and have gained portable skills, received industry recognized credentials, and/or earned college credits.

In addition, soon after the passage of WIOA, Governor Jay Inslee directed the Workforce Board to work with the system's stakeholders to shape Washington's strategic plan toward three goals to maximize the workforce system's impact:

1. Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self–sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.

2. Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in–demand industry sectors and occupations, including through apprenticeships.

3. Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.

These three goals will inform the larger system and guide any changes. Below are ways the system is evolving to better serve all populations through a more integrated system.

Greater Flexibility and Access to Services

In general, services are integrated to provide greater flexibility and a better fit for people who may need skill–specific training or other intensive services right from the start, rather than moving more deliberately through a predetermined, sequence of steps. Customers will be enrolled simultaneously in any service for which they are eligible and that can help them achieve their goal.

This streamlined integration requires all service providers to quickly identify needs, and then match resources to meet those needs. Increased collaboration and coordination among system partners ensures that the best of what the system has to offer comes forward with a minimum of duplication. Integration provides a flexible, interconnected set of services tailored to each customer. Customers receive a range of services via various providers and funding streams that may be braided together to meet their specific needs.

One key to service integration is a career pathway approach. This approach connects levels of education, training, counseling, support services, and credentials for specific occupations in a way that optimizes continuous progress toward the education, employment, and career goals of individuals of all ages, abilities, and needs. Career pathways fully engage businesses to help meet their workforce needs. In turn, customers are encouraged to choose among a full range of education and work–based learning opportunities that allows them to earn marketable credentials. Ultimately, the goal is to connect the customer to a career pathway that taps their talents and leads to long–term economic security.

Customer Choice and Asset–based Programming

Integration honors the assets and interests of customers at every stage of service delivery. This customer–centered approach recognizes that the needs and interests of customers may change as they engage in services, learn more about their abilities and aptitudes, and consider new career options. Customers help shape their individual pathways and plans to achieve desired outcomes, with periodic check–ins and adjustments to ensure their plans continue to be both appropriate and effective.

In addition to being program experts, staff must think holistically about customers, their goals, and their skill–sets when they enter the system, and be knowledgeable about the full array of services that an individual requires. This asset–based approach focuses first on the strengths and positive experiences each customer brings, and then builds on those assets by connecting individuals with an appropriate mix of services.

Intake

During initial customer contact, all necessary information will be collected to identify potential eligibility for all available services and provide the individual with a full menu of relevant options. The individual's initial intake responses will be available to all partners, helping eliminate multiple requests for the same information. Ideally, the first interview will: evaluate the individual's immediate needs and career interests; compile education and job history; identify any barriers to employment and ability to access education and training; and screen for eligibility for services, funding, and other resources. The intake process will also include working with the customer to identify potential effective learning modalities (learning styles, modes of instruction and training) or successful prior learning experiences for which they may obtain credit (such as competencies, military training experiences, foreign degrees and certifications, and skills).

Triage and Follow–up

Based on intake information, a navigator or navigation team will evaluate a customer's need for support services, readiness to pursue education, training, employment, or a combination, and make appropriate referrals. The navigator or navigation team will follow up with the customer to ensure smooth transition, or to redirect the customer if needed. Partners will work together beyond the points of program transition to braid funding and services across organizations for the benefit of the customer.

Assessment

Customers will enter career pathway programs at a level that makes sense for them, depending on their career readiness, while also taking advantage of multiple entry and exit points as they develop new skills. Assessment may vary, and can include standardized tests, criterion referencing, personal interviews, hands–on skill trials, and portfolios. Assessments should be tied to a credentialing process recognized by a targeted industry. A key piece of assessment is determining whether an individual faces barriers to employment, and then identifying the services needed to reduce or eliminate those barriers. The state approved basic skills assessment Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) is an example of effective assessment because it aligns with the state's community and technical college system and many other service providers, saving customers time and potential frustration that come with multiple tests. With CASAS, customers complete only one assessment before they begin basic skills training

Career and Education Exploration and Guidance

All customers, but especially those with little or no work experience, need sufficient information to make informed career decisions and education choices. By fully exploring their career and education options, customers are able to choose a career pathway based on their interests, needs, and capabilities. Career pathway exploration should include timely information about a wide range of occupations and whether they're in demand by industry, connections to apprenticeship and other work–and–learn programs, and encouragement to consider non–traditional occupations for both

women and men. Career guidance should also include a review of any foreign degrees and professional expertise held by educated, skilled refugees and immigrants experiencing unemployment or under–employment.

Customer Pathway and Outcome Plan

Every customer will work with staff to develop a plan with clear and measureable outcomes. Staff will facilitate conversations with customers to better understand their immediate needs, interests, passions, assets and current capabilities and experience, and career goals. Staff will then help customers develop education and career pathways and outcome plans, and provide necessary information and guidance, including labor market trends, wages, and training and education opportunities. These plans are considered “living documents,” subject to change as customers learn more about career and education options and discover new areas of interest and capacity.

Case Management

For individuals with barriers to employment, or any eligible customers who need more support, career counseling and case management will be provided as they move through each stage of a program. Career counselors not only help with career and life choices, they assist customers during tough transition points, increasing the likelihood of success. At a minimum, the career counselor/case manager provides stability and continuity, while offering encouragement and acknowledging successes. When necessary, career counselors/case managers will work as a team to streamline and expedite services. Career counselors/case managers with particular knowledge, skills and expertise in serving individuals with unique, multiple, or the most complex barriers to employment will be available to assist customers who need more specialized or intensive support.

Support Services

Support services help customers overcome employment barriers. For many customers, career pathway success is directly linked to their ability to overcome significant barriers. A variety of social, medical, behavioral, economic, and other support services can help individuals overcome employment obstacles. These services, in tandem with occupational skill development and other career pathway components, enable individuals with barriers to land a job, and keep a job.

Customer Pathway and Outcome Plan Options

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I–BEST)

Day–to–day living calls for literacy and numeracy skills, as do careers. Basic skills are needed across all occupations, both in landing a job and progressing within a career. Basic skills are also required for more advanced, career–specific education and training. Evidence shows that I–BEST education, pioneered by Washington’s community and technical college system, improves and accelerates the attainment of important learning outcomes and meaningful work credentials. This model, which blends basic skills training with high–demand occupational training, has been replicated and expanded in numerous states. Service integration and cross–training of national staff will increase the number of I–BEST participants who have access to these accelerated pathways to living–wage employment.

Contextualized English Language Acquisition

English proficiency, including speaking, reading and writing, along with math, listening, employability skills, and solving problems in technology–rich environments, is required to enter and progress within most occupations. Language acquisition is also a necessary ingredient for high–skill, foreign educated professionals to transition into the same or similar employment in the United States. Because evidence clearly indicates that contextualized English Language Acquisition improves and accelerates the attainment of desired learning outcomes, this is considered an optimal instruction method and is being expanded across the Title II system.

Work Readiness and Employability Skills Instruction

Work readiness is an individual's preparedness for getting a job and keeping a job. With work readiness training, customers learn about the structure and culture of the workplace, and about what makes a valuable employee—beyond job–specific skills. Topics typically include communication skills, decision–making and problem–solving, team building and teamwork, following instructions, healthy relationships with authority figures, leadership skills, personal growth, stress management, health and hygiene, and dealing with difficult people and situations. Customers should be able to show through their attitude and behavior that they understand these concepts, rather than simply scoring well on a standardized test. Work readiness is best taught when embedded in an education or training program, not as a stand–alone component.

Development of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for Job Entry

Skill development in this model refers not just to those skills needed to enter the field, but building skills that allow individuals to advance within the field. Wherever possible, skill development activities should be integrated with work. Models of work–integrated learning include: project–based learning in the classroom, online coursework, industry guest lecturers, or direct workplace experience, including job shadows, mentorships, internships (paid or unpaid), work study, clinicals, cooperative learning models, and apprenticeships. Paid work experience or earn–and–learn models are optimal, but understandably the most difficult to achieve and sustain. Where possible, industry credentials should be integrated into job–entry programs, demonstrating competencies and reducing hiring costs for business partners. Skill development activities should be appropriate to the learning styles, interests and capabilities of each customer. Early intake and assessments will help determine the appropriate pathway and point of entry for each customer.

Skills Upgrading for Occupational Advancement

Skills upgrading refers to development of skills beyond entry–level (first employment during program participation). Skills upgrading should be tied to an industry–recognized credential, whenever possible. Industry credentials should include college credits so customers can more readily add and build on their education to help them move up the career ladder.

Business Engagement, Job Development, and Placement

Successfully connecting customers with jobs requires working with businesses to determine which jobs are currently available, or projected to become available, along with the skill requirements for these jobs. Engaging businesses and sharing labor market data will better inform curriculum development, support work–integrated activities, enhance program offerings, and assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the program in meeting industry needs. Staff responsible for job development and placement, and faculty responsible for curriculum development and delivery, will need to work closely with industry representatives to ensure skill development curriculum and

materials are directly applicable to the workplace, and that participants are adequately prepared to meet the needs of business once on the job. This is an ongoing, fluid process. Curriculum may need to be modified or enhanced as new jobs become available or if participants are unable to perform effectively on the job.

Post–Job Placement Support for the Customer and Employer

Landing a job is often just the first step for customers, even if they have benefited from effective pre–placement services. Once on the job they may struggle with child or elder care, transportation, interpersonal issues, family difficulties, medical needs, basic skills development, and court involvement. Or an individual may require additional skill development in specific areas to improve job performance or to keep pace with industry changes. Support services for customers and the businesses who hire them may involve: periodic contact, information and referral for necessary services, and, when necessary, advocacy for the individual on the job.

System Training and Support

Professional Development

Integrated services require a system–wide emphasis on professional development and cross–training for both leadership and front–line staff. Professional development that cuts across all programs and strategies is a foundational element of system accessibility. Training includes: outreach; the intake and triage process; customer choice; coaching and navigation; asset–based programming; and broad and basic knowledge of workforce education and training programs. Key skills for frontline staff include cultural competency, technical fluency, and command of motivational interviewing techniques. These core skills will significantly improve outcomes by connecting customers to the workforce system. Training and cross–training will ensure staff is able to serve a diverse population who experience a wide range of barriers to employment and require an array of integrated services to be successful along their career pathways.

Implementation of Technology

This streamlined, integrated approach requires staff to use technology in new ways to simplify administrative processes, provide the customer with easy–to–use interfaces to access relevant information, connect to resources, and expand the options available for skill development certification, and portfolio management. New technologies will enable jobseekers to use their own devises to connect easily and effectively to public systems and take advantage of state–of–the–art communications, and networking and accessibility tools.

Replication of Promising Practices

Adopting streamlined customer service and service delivery integration does not mean that Washington must reinvent the wheel. In many instances, the state leads the nation in education and training programs, in performance accountability, and in service delivery.

The following programs and models, among many others, have proven results in their programmatic areas. They provide examples of “how–to’s” for the workforce system to employ:

Co–enrollment allows customers to access more resources and provides staff an easier way to serve all customers, regardless of their eligibility for services. Several Workforce Development Areas

across the state are working on a pilot to automate co–enrollment of future and current workers seeking new or better jobs. While current efforts focus entirely on the co–enrollment of customers in the WIOA Adult and WIOA Wagner–Peyser programs, the goal is to create a template that will support co–enrollment into additional programs.

Labor–Management Committees are formed during major closures and facilitate the coordination between labor and business representatives, the workforce system and community partners. These committees are often the platform for pursuing Trade Adjustment Assistance, National Emergency Grants or other forms of funding to assist transition.

Peer Outreach contracts place workers from an affected group, during closure, on–site in WorkSource offices to offer support and ease the transition to training, job search and/or relocation activities, as appropriate. These individuals offer the emotional and motivational support necessary to assist a community recovering from a major layoff.

Puget Sound Welcome Back Center builds bridges between the pool of internationally trained professionals living in Washington and the need for linguistically and culturally competent professional services. Its goal is to assist these professionals to make the best use of their professional skills through respectful, innovative, and individualized career counseling, and educational services.

Transition Centers offer a tailored space to serve large impacted workgroups. Based on individual circumstances, these centers may be implemented within a One–Stop office or nearby location. (An example is the Simpson Lumber Mill closure in Mason County in 2015. Through a Labor–Management Committee, the company was certified for Trade Adjustment Assistance and two Peer Outreach Workers were funded to staff a Transition Center, alongside workforce system partners, in the office space next door to the Shelton WorkSource Center.)

Bachelors in Applied Science (BAS) degrees create expanded opportunities for both students and businesses by providing upper–division coursework at community and technical colleges in an applied field. These degrees, many of them online and tailored to working adults, build upon professional–technical associate's degrees.

Bachelor and Graduate degrees create expanded opportunities for both students and businesses. Washington's public four–year colleges and universities, along with the state's community and technical colleges, provide opportunities for Washington residents to obtain a bachelor's degree to meet the state's growing need for an educated workforce. In addition to the four–year degree pathways at Washington's public colleges and universities, community and technical colleges offer applied bachelor's degree (BAS) programs. The state's two– and four–year institutions have also forged articulation agreements that help students transfer between institutions. In addition, Washington's public four–year institutions offer access to a range of quality graduate degree programs.

Centers of Excellence are flagship institutions located at Washington's community and technical colleges that focus on a targeted industry and are designed to provide fast, flexible, quality education and training programs. (A targeted industry is identified as one that is strategic to the economic growth of a region or state.) Centers are guided by industry representatives to lead collaborative and coordinated statewide education and training efforts.

Workforce and Education Program Advisory Boards are long standing, with private sector business and labor representatives serving as advisors to two– and four–year college programs, providing: advocacy, curriculum recommendations, and support for quality higher education programs.

HS 21+ allows students 21 and older to attain a competency–based high school diploma. The program awards credit for prior learning, military training, and work experience.

I–BEST Programs

Professional Technical I–BEST co–enrolls students in adult basic education and college credit–bearing career pathways that lead to living wage jobs. I–BEST accelerates students down their career pathway, by contextualizing and team teaching the language, math, and other foundational skills needed to succeed in their professional–technical program. I–BEST students are nine times more likely to earn a workforce credential than students in traditional basic education programs.

Professional Technical Expansion I–BEST allows students to move further and faster down their career pathway by putting English and math courses in context, as needed for longer–term certificate and degree programs. This allows students to skip developmental education and earn their college or terminal–level English and math credits through contextualization and team teaching.

Academic I–BEST co–enrolls students in adult basic education and Direct Transfer Agreement (DTA) courses for students intending to earn a transfer degree. Through Academic I–BEST, adult education students can accelerate their progress down a transfer career pathway and reduce or eliminate time spent in developmental education.

I–BEST at Work is based upon a partnership between a community college or community–based organization, and an employer, in which the college or organization provides a basic skills instructor who team–teaches with a representative from the employer. It is part of the comprehensive I–BEST Pathway, designed to accelerate the progress of basic skills students within the context of work.

I–DEA Integrated Digital English Acceleration is an on–ramp to I–BEST that, in collaboration with the Gates Foundation, provides the least English proficient ESL students with a laptop computer. Half of the instruction is delivered online, offering 24–7 accessibliity.

Industry DACUM incorporates the use of a business or industry focus group to capture the major duties and related tasks included in an occupation, as well as the necessary knowledge, skills, and traits, in a process facilitated by a Center of Excellence or community college. This cost–effective method provides a quick and thorough analysis of any job.

Industry showcases highlight how industry skills are put to use in the work world and serve as an example of how community and technical colleges are responsive to the changing needs of businesses.

Industry Skill Panels are public/private partnerships of business, labor, and education working together to improve the skills of workers in industries vital to Washington’s economy. Washington has worked with Industry Skill Panels since 2000.

Workforce Program Review is a community college review of a vocational education program’s intent and objectives. Industry representatives participate on evaluations teams that look at: program accomplishments, student performance standards compared to the needs of industry, facility

adequacy as a training site, quantity and quality of graduates, and job placements. This review team then makes recommendations for any identified program improvements or innovations.

Integrated Service Delivery Summary and Goals

In conclusion, a truly integrated service delivery system holds promise for Washington's workforce by helping people reach their goals no matter their barriers, their background, or where they entered the system. Doing this effectively calls for increasing the number of navigators in the state's WorkSource system, eliminating redundant assessments, and helping more customers define career pathways that help them achieve portable skills, higher education levels, industry credentials, and satisfying, living–wage careers.

Engaging Business for Better Results

When Washington's workforce system effectively engages with business, it's a win–win situation for workers, and for employers. By working closely with firms to determine their talent challenges and by implementing effective solutions, the workforce system helps both businesses and workers prosper.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) places a greater emphasis than its predecessor act on engaging business in the development of workforce solutions, identifying business as a primary customer of the workforce system. Yet for the system to realize the full potential of business engagement, it must go beyond thinking of employers as merely customers. Businesses must be partners in the system. After all, businesses know what they need, and the skills that they lack. They can help identify, create, and implement effective workforce solutions. By providing businesses with easier access to the workforce system and a clearer understanding of the benefits of working together, Washington will move business engagement to the next level.

Washington is already known as a leader in business engagement. The state piloted Industry Skill Panels, which bring together employers, educators, and community leaders to address common skill gaps and training needs. Skill Panels, in turn, were instrumental in establishing Centers of Excellence, which serve as statewide resources to address the needs of a specific industry sector—from aerospace to allied health. Housed within the state's community and technical college system, Centers of Excellence provide fast and flexible education and training programs that respond directly to the needs of industry.

Washington was also an early adopter and leader in the implementation of sector strategies, which build partnerships between businesses, training providers, community organizations and other key stakeholders, around specific industries to address their particular workforce needs. Washington has also invested in Skill Centers, which provide career–focused education to high school students and serve multiple school districts through inter–district cooperatives. These centers partner with local employers to give students the skills to be successful in the local job market and advance in their education and training.

In 2015, Governor Inslee appointed industry sector leads to better support the growth of strategic industry sectors in Washington: aerospace, agriculture, clean technology, forest products, information, communication technology, life sciences and global health, maritime, and military and defense. Moreover, the state Office of Economic Development and Competitiveness in the Department of Commerce works with critical industry leaders on recruiting new companies to Washington and grow key industry sectors statewide.

Today, Washington has the opportunity to take this work to the next level and to close skills gaps and help employers hire and further develop the talented workforce they need to grow and prosper.

Business Engagement Goals

Over the next two years, the following goals will help move Washington's system forward:

• Identify meaningful metrics to establish a baseline and increase the number of businesses utilizing the workforce system.

• Identify meaningful metrics to establish a baseline and increase the number of businesses reporting satisfaction with the services they receive via the workforce system by 5 percent each year.

• Have at least one sector partnership in development in each workforce region. Use the Sector Partnership Framework or a similar framework to show progress over time.

• Train at least 30 percent of the workforce system's staff on the implementation of sector partnerships.

• Increase resources for work–based learning opportunities, including on–the–job training and apprenticeship, internships, job shadows, but especially, incumbent worker training.

• Increase the amount of work–based training including incumbent worker training, on–the–job training and apprenticeship, job shadows, internships.

In addition, soon after the passage of WIOA, Governor Jay Inslee directed the Workforce Board to work with the system's stakeholders to shape Washington's strategic plan toward three goals to maximize the workforce system's impact:

1. Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self–sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.

2. Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in–demand industry sectors and occupations, including through apprenticeships.

3. Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.

These three goals will inform the larger system and guide any changes. Below are ways the system is evolving to better serve all populations through better engaging business.

What Better Engagement Means for Business

According to a 2014 Accenture report, employers cannot find the talent they need. In this report, just "18 percent of employers [nationally] reported sufficient access to needed skills." But despite this need for skilled workers, here in Washington, just 8 percent of businesses connected with the state's workforce system to find talent. And talent acquisition is only one challenge facing today's businesses. New articles and reports identify a variety of human resources challenges that the workforce system could help to address, including:

• Skilling up workers and jobseekers to keep pace with rapid changes in technology.

• Retaining talent.

• Planning for succession.

• Increasing workforce diversity.

• Dealing with the greater demand for flexibility within the workforce.

• Impacts of personal life on work.

There are areas where the public system and business share in the cost of developing an employee's skills, including work–based learning (on–the–job training, incumbent worker training, apprenticeship). Business partnerships with workforce development and human services programs can increase diversity in the hiring pool and support job retention in the workplace. If employers are willing to partner with the workforce system, expend energy, and, devote resources, they can leverage their investment to create sustainable solutions to their workforce challenges.

What Better Business Engagement Means for the Workforce System

An emphasis on business engagement creates a benchmark for more activity—more surveys, more meetings, more outreach—but not necessarily more engagement. While many businesses do not know about the many workforce system programs and services that could benefit them, more outreach does not necessarily lead to more employers partnering with the workforce system.

According to a recent National Governors Association (NGA) report, "The U.S. workforce system is often criticized as a sum of disconnected parts, with worker training poorly matched to industry demand, a lack of focus on industries that are the most important to local economies, and duplicative business outreach and workforce training services." Outreach alone will not fix these issues.

Successful business engagement is about better understanding the value proposition that the workforce system can offer business and delivering that value by:

• Aligning and coordinating "disconnected parts" across the system to provide workforce solutions that meet real business needs.

• Enlisting business as a partner in the identification, development, implementation of and investment in workforce solutions.

• Making services and products more transparent, accessible, and user–friendly, and supporting services with appropriate technologies for employers.

By finding more effective ways of working together, leveraging limited resources, and addressing long–term issues, the workforce system can help employers achieve stronger results, forging a sustainable and mutually beneficial alliance. Engaging business as a partner increases the diversity and number of resources available and builds a team that helps workers find, keep, and grow in good jobs.

Jobseekers enter the workforce system with varied skills and experiences, but the ultimate goal of the workforce system is to create pathways to prosperity for all. Business services strategies should seek to grow jobs with family–sustaining wages and benefits, encourage ongoing skill training and employee advancement, promote good working conditions, and adequate hours, while recognizing the right to join a union.

Washington will consider job quality when engaging with businesses to offer work–based learning, on–the–job training, incumbent worker training, and customized business services.

Aligning and Coordinating Across the Workforce System

Effective business engagement is a system function, rather than a programmatic one. Each system partner comes with specific resources to develop, support, educate, and train the workforce in the region, and a mandate to better engage business in doing so. When each program works in isolation to create businesses services, increase contact with businesses, or solicit business input, the end result is a patchwork approach where some businesses are asked the same questions over and over, and others are left completely out of the conversation. Creating an aligned and coordinated approach that conveys the full strength of the system increases its efficiency and the likelihood that employers will realize value from the system.

To achieve this innovation, Washington's workforce system must shift its focus when working with businesses from the promotion and administration of programs and management of services, to a more strategic role of building regional talent pipelines, addressing skill gaps, and creating meaningful education and career pathways for a range of workers in key industries.

Recently, a staff person at a WorkSource center described the transition as moving from inventory control to business solutions. In inventory control mode, staff thinks in terms of how many jobs a company has open and how many jobseekers the program has available or could quickly train to apply for these jobs. In the business solution model, staff move from focusing on this "inventory" of specific services and programs to helping businesses access system resources and services that will meet their specific needs. Put another way, the system must move from a "push" that works to match the jobseeker inventory on hand to a "pull" or a "demand–driven" system working in partnership with businesses to determine and develop the talent they actually need.

What better way to demonstrate value and responsiveness than to engage business as equal partners in the design and creation of the products and services they need? Sector partnerships and career pathways are proven mechanisms for forging these relationships.

Engaging Business through Sector Partnerships

Sector strategies are the most widely used approach to engage businesses throughout the U.S., according to the National Governors Association (NGA). Sector strategies are regional partnerships of employers within one industry that bring together government, education, training, economic development, labor, and community organizations to focus on the workforce and other needs of their industry. At the state level, sector strategies are policies and investments to support and align regional sector strategies. NGA finds that "a growing body of evidence demonstrates their effectiveness for employers and workers."

Washington's workforce system is a recognized leader in the implementation of sector strategies. The state needs to capitalize on this strength and move beyond sector strategies to sustainable

sector partnerships. Sector partnerships shift employers from being customers of the workforce system to active participants in the design and creation of workforce solutions—forming business–to–business partnerships within industry sectors that set the course for resolving industry–wide workforce needs.

In addressing industry sector workforce issues, system partners package their individual components to create customized solutions. This may include incumbent worker training that moves current workers into higher demand fields, paired with recruitment strategies to backfill the entry–level opportunities that open up as a result. Employer engagement may lead to more work–based learning opportunities where the company makes it easier for potential and existing workers to elevate their skills in workplace settings. Sector partners may also choose to focus on longer term solutions, including reaching within the K–12 system to prepare young people for future careers in the industry. The key is to leverage the investment and resources of all partners toward a common goal. Rather than competing for the attention of businesses, the workforce system strategically braids together the resources of the public, philanthropic, and private sectors to create new solutions to ever–changing business challenges.

A Sector Partnership Framework is included in the appendix of this chapter to support the transition to sector partnerships. The framework provides a common set of principles, definitions, processes and criteria and creates the expectation that regional and state sector leads will coordinate and leverage each other's work. The Framework creates a common language for implementing sector partnerships, sharing promising practices and lessons learned among regional level workforce development professionals from different agencies and different parts of the state.

The framework also provides a vehicle to identify the training needs of system partner staff to support sector partnerships. By using the framework to report on the status of sector activities, policy makers, business stakeholders, and workforce system partners will all have a better understanding of the impact of sector partnerships. Most importantly, the framework lays the groundwork for fully engaging business as a partner in workforce solutions.

Engaging Business through Career Pathways

Career Pathways form a transit system for careers, mapping out the various routes workers can take to achieve their career and life goals. Career Pathways serve as a recruitment and retention tool for industry sectors, clearly conveying the career pathways within the industry to current and potential employees. Businesses identify the career progression within and among the occupations critical for the industry to prosper. The education system, through ongoing consultation with businesses, organizes programs that enable current and future workers to access the necessary education and training to fulfill those job requirements and move up the career ladder throughout their lives.

Career pathways must be highly informed by businesses in a regional economy and supported by system partners. These pathways offer a mechanism for those with barriers to employment to move more efficiently into jobs. The workforce system partners identify and provide the support services for current and future workers to succeed in their education and training and enter careers. Business input helps the education system better tailor and update curriculum based on regional industry needs and trends, building a sustainable talent supply pipeline.

Making workforce services more transparent, accessible and user–friendly

Businesses often find it difficult to navigate the vast array of programs and services available within the workforce system, because individual programs often compete to be “the” solution. The program–by–program approach to developing business services has resulted in an abundance of program–specific solutions. If the workforce system is to better engage business, it must demystify, align, and simplify access to this array of resources and services. Businesses care little about the program and funding stream, and more about getting the talented workers they need. Several approaches will address this challenge.

Identify/invest in business navigators

The fact that navigators are needed to help businesses access services demonstrates the complexity of the workforce system. For example, a business wanting to support the growth of a young, inexperienced jobseeker may be offered on–the–job training support by one partner, an internship by another, a work experience, job shadow, or assistance setting up an apprenticeship program by others, and so on. The workforce “solution” may have more to do with which program is contacted first, rather than which approach fits best.

Business Navigators, the industry outreach teams assembled and led at the local level, must be sufficiently cross–trained in business programs and services to readily identify services useful to businesses, regardless of who provides them. Navigators will also help tailor and package services to meet specific business needs.

Speak the language of business

Even within the workforce system, programs have their own languages built around their authorizing legislation, regulations, and cultures. Translating workforce development products and services into a common language that resonates with business serves the dual purpose of creating a stronger partnership among workforce system partners while also improving the relationship with businesses. That language educates system partners on what business really wants, not what they presume business wants.

Create a common brand

The difference between on–the–job training, clinicals, internships, job shadows, cooperative training, work experiences, work study, apprenticeships, and other workforce activities revolves around who offers the programs and program–specific rules and regulations. All are approaches that allow jobseekers to actively build their knowledge and skills in a work–and–learn setting. But the names are confusing, leading to the conclusion that the system is fragmented. Creating a common brand and a clear, common plain–language menu of service options will make it more likely that businesses will use these services.

Increase work–and–learn opportunities

Work–and–learn opportunities are a win–win–win for the jobseeker/worker, the business, and the workforce system. Jobseekers collect a paycheck while in training and businesses are able to defray payroll costs, while helping a worker gain valuable skills. Work–and–learn solutions help ensure training provides tangible, relevant skills that lead to jobs for trainees. They give an employer the opportunity to get to know job candidates and build commitment between employers and jobseekers.

Train staff to support business engagement

Relatively few staff in the workforce system come to their roles with a strong business background. Therefore, staff often market programs and services without a full understanding of business needs. At the same time, many staff worry that a greater focus on business engagement diminishes support for the needs of jobseekers. The state must invest in professional development if the workforce system is to successfully connect with businesses, help identify and solve business problems, and retain the business community as true customers and partners.

Professional development should also help to show the connections between effective business engagement and better jobseeker outcomes, building a bridge between staff who serve businesses and those who serve jobseekers. This may include, adopting business assessment methods to better match potential workers with employers, and developing customized recruitments. A set of leading indicators will help staff know if they are on track in helping area businesses. These indicators must be part of staff professional development.

The role of Local Workforce Development Councils

Under WIOA, local Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) are responsible for assuring the workforce system meets the needs of businesses, workers, and jobseekers within economic regions and local areas. WIOA requires WDCs to lead business engagement by developing both a strategic plan and operating plan with other workforce partners that coordinate business engagement strategies and resources across the workforce system, in support of regional and local economies.

WDCs exercise their leadership responsibility in a variety of ways. At a minimum, WDCs serve as leaders for specific efforts, like sector partnerships. In addition, WDCs assess business engagement opportunities, (both in terms of quantity and quality); convene, organize, coordinate, facilitate, and support the efforts of workforce partners to create an aligned approach to business engagement; facilitate information sharing among workforce partners and businesses; and/or create partnerships with effective intermediaries who already have the trust of the business community. While any workforce system partner may potentially lead a business solution or provide services to businesses, all are expected to support Workforce Development Councils in the development and implementation of aligned and effective regional business engagement strategies. In turn, WDCs are expected to work with their partners to identify the approach taken within a region. Workforce system partners at the state and regional level will collaborate on the chosen approach.

Workforce Development Councils will unify the approach of all partners and establish a documented process for business engagement. WDCs and workforce system partners must work together to implement it. This includes organizing, targeting, and assigning representatives to the market, setting protocols for contact and services, identification and analysis of business workforce problems, adopting an integrated plan, maintaining a shared customer base, connecting jobseeker staff to the process, seeking alignment with business demand, and reporting and evaluating progress.

Business Engagement Summary and Goals

In conclusion, a system that better engages businesses will rely on a firm accountability framework that identifies meaningful metrics to establish a solid baseline on the number of businesses utilizing the workforce system, and builds business satisfaction with the system by 5 percent each year. The new goals also call for establishing at least one sector partnership in each workforce region and using the Sector Partnership Framework, or a similar framework, to show progress over time. The goals also call for establishing a baseline and increasing resources for work–based learning,

including on–the–job training, apprenticeship, internships, work experience, and especially, incumbent worker training in the next two years. With sector partnerships, employers within one industry within a regional labor market are able to come together with government, education, training, economic development, labor, and community organizations to focus on workforce (and possibly other) industry–identified needs.

Guiding Principles

Sector strategies are but one of many strategies for workforce and economic development.

Statewide and local sector partnerships and strategies can co–exist in mutually reinforcing and beneficial ways. They are not mutually exclusive of one another.

Critical factors for identifying sectors to be targeted for sector strategies include employment opportunities (including opportunities for those with barriers to employment), wage levels (including career and wage progression potential), and the economic impact of the industry.

Because policy objectives vary, workforce and economic development partners may work from different lists of targeted sectors. That being said, collaboration and coordination is imperative when economic and workforce strategies target the same sectors.

Nascent or emerging sectors, as well as mature or plateaued ones, have a role in workforce and economic development initiatives.

Both traded sectors and local services sectors have a role in workforce initiatives. Traded sectors generally include export or innovation–based industries – agriculture, manufacturing, scientific research and development. Local services sectors are population–based. Retail, health care, educational services, food services, public administration – tend to locate based on population and are prevalent in almost all communities. Targeted sector lists should be updated to keep pace with changing economic conditions.

As strategies are developed to serve the workforce needs of sector partnerships, there should be an emphasis on data–driven outcomes (such as employment placements) for businesses, jobseekers and workers, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Alignment between local and statewide sectors

Identified statewide sectors represent statewide priorities for sector work. When Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) identify regional and/or local sectors using the process and criteria in the Washington Sectors Partnership Framework, they will identify which statewide sectors are also of regional and/or local significance. Not all statewide sectors will be of significance to regional/local economies, nor will all regional sectors be significant at the state level.

When regional, locally identified sectors are also statewide priority sectors, WDCs are expected to connect with state sector leads to determine how best to align local activities with statewide sector goals. Statewide sector leads are expected to reach out to WDCs operating in regional and local economies where high concentrations of companies are part of identified statewide sectors, in order to identify opportunities to work to together/align work. Opportunities to align regional/local industry sectors that are part of the supply chain for statewide sectors should also be coordinated among state sector leads and WDCs.

Criteria for identifying and prioritizing target sectors

Criteria

The identified sector is important to the regional economy in terms of employment, economic impact, growth potential, and/or wages.

Process

Conduct quantitative data analysis: Identify core/driver industries and inter–industry linkages. Measure and rank criteria relating to industry concentration, employment, and opportunities for wage and career progression. Criteria should include, but not be limited to:

Industry concentration – Using employment location quotient for the local area relative to the nation. (Possible data sources: Employment Security Department's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics location quotient calculator at http://data.bls.gov/location_quotient/ControllerServlet) Recent and projected employment growth – Looking for positive projected growth potential. (Possible Data Source: ESD's employment projections for projected data and ESD's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages for recent employment data)

Opportunities for wage progression – As indicated by range between 25th and 75th percentiles in wages observed within a given occupation in the sector (Possible Data Source: ESD's Occupational Employment Survey wage data.)

Opportunities for career progression – As indicated by percent of occupations in the middle– and high– wage ranges and other indicators of occupational mobility within a given sector. (Possible Data Sources: ESD's occupational wage data and industry–occupation matrix.)

Conduct qualitative validation: Validate quantitative findings through conversations with industry (business and labor) and regional economists. Criteria may include but not be limited to: Quantitative factors such as employment projections relating to retirements and turnover; output; earnings per worker; commute patterns; change in establishments; change in wages; exports as percent of output; traded versus local services sectors. (Possible Data Sources: ESD's Employment projections, Bureau of Labor Statistics national replacement rates for occupations at http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_110.htm, comparisons between job openings and numbers of unemployed from sources like Help Wanted on Line at https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports–publications/occupational–reports/employer–demand–report, Washington Department of Revenue's Quarterly Business Income at http://dor.wa.gov/content/aboutus/statisticsandreports/TID/StatisticsReports.aspx?query=gbinaics, commuting patterns from the Census Bureau's county to county migration flows, change in establishments and changes in wages reported on ESD's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages; Occupational Employment Survey.)

Qualitative Factors such as industry–recognized certifications and related opportunities for career progression, policy/regulatory/legislated issues, resources at–hand, and factors of chance and special circumstances, as identified by companies within the sector.

Common definitions

Sector: A group of industries with similar business processes, products or services such as construction or health services; formerly categorized by the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system, now categorized by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Because of the qualitative and quantitative limitations of defining sectors only by NAICS codes, they need not be the single source of data.

Industry Cluster: A geographic concentration of interdependent competitive firms that do business with each other, including firms that sell inside and outside of the geographic region as well as support firms that supply new materials, components, and business services. (RCW 43.330.090)

Targeted Industries or Clusters: Industries and industry clusters that are identified based on a strategic economic development consideration or other public concerns.

High Employer Demand Program of Study: Postsecondary or Industry Recognized Certificate or degree program in which the number of students prepared for employment per year (from in–state institutions) is less than the number of projected job openings per year in that field—statewide, or in a region of the state.

High–Demand Occupation: An occupation with a substantial number of current or projected employment opportunities. High Student Demand Program of Study: Postsecondary or Industry Recognized Certificate or degree program in which student demand exceeds program capacity.

Tracking sector implementation and outcomes

The Workforce Board convened a work group to develop a rubric aligned to the Workforce Board's approved sectors framework in order to answer the question "how would we know if sector strategies make a difference?"

The intended outcomes for sector strategies are generally the same as for programs in the workforce system:

• Did people get and keep jobs?

• What did they earn?

• Were businesses retained or grown?

• Did the jobseeker and the business have a positive experience?

However, it is difficult to draw direct causal links between sector strategies and statewide performance improvements related to the outcomes listed above. Those implementing sector strategies can track specific factors, such as the numbers trained (if training was a goal of the project), the number of those recruited who were placed into jobs, the time required to fill job openings, etc. The specific results vary based on the sector project undertaken and the needs of employers. It was agreed that the primary goal for the implementation of sector strategies was to provide a strong and flexible tool to help WDCs meet their requirement to coordinate business engagement and fulfill the expectation that implementation of WIOA would support economic vitality of the communities they serve. In order to roll this information up to a statewide level, a common approach to sector strategies and reporting tool is needed. Local sector experts identified the lack of

consistency in the implementation of sector strategies as a challenge to learning across and even within local areas.

Therefore, a rubric was developed and incorporated in the state strategic plan to provide:

• Common definitions.

• Clarification of the steps needed to implement a sector strategy.

• Criteria that help a local area identify, track and map progress throughout a sector project.

• Sample outcome measures and a tool for tracking sector–specific outcomes.

Local areas/region will complete a rubric for each targeted sector identified as part of their strategic plans, and will update their progress every two years as part of local/regional plan reviews and board certification criteria. The rubric includes a template for tracking and reporting outcomes that will be compiled across regions/areas to give the Workforce Board, the locals, and partner agencies a better understanding of the results obtained and the strategies that are most effective. This approach also recognizes that the implementation of sectors is a learning opportunity. Locals should not be penalized for taking risks to address industry needs. Sector strategies are most effective as a way to gain more precise, actionable information to better fill the needs of employers and jobseekers. The Workforce Board will provide formal training for local practitioners on the implementation of sector strategies and the use of the rubric to increase consistency and develop local expertise.

Accessibility and Technology

A key priority for Washington's workforce system over the next 10 years is ensuring universal access to the entire array of education, training, and support services. Every Washington resident should have the opportunity to progress along a clearly defined and guided career pathway that leads to economic self–sufficiency.

Advances in technology offer one way to provide both remote and universal access to the state's workforce system. Tapping this technology will help more Washington residents, including those with barriers, access a wide range of services. While technology will tear down a number of barriers to workforce system access, advances in technology—or the way it is applied throughout the system—will not solve all accessibility issues. Executing universal accessibility to Washington's workforce system will require a concerted, long–term effort from all partners, and a willingness to adapt and refine service delivery strategies to meet customer needs. This collective commitment is essential if all Washington workers are to benefit from an improving economy.

Accessibility and Technology Goals

The following goals will help move Washington's system forward:

• Implement secure, wireless Internet access in public areas of all comprehensive One–Stop centers in Washington by 2020.

• Establish a state–level advisory committee on accessibility and barrier solutions and ensure the designation of local advisory committees during the first two years of the plan. By the fourth year of

the plan, ensure the state–level advisory committee has received annual progress reports on One–Stop centers' accessibility at the local level.

• Identify and encourage local pilot programs that use technology to facilitate and improve integrated service delivery for customers, including programs designed to improve access to the system.

In addition, soon after the passage of WIOA, Governor Jay Inslee directed the Workforce Board to work with the system's stakeholders to shape Washington's strategic plan toward three goals to maximize the workforce system's impact:

1. Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self–sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.

2. Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in–demand industry sectors and occupations, including through apprenticeships.

3. Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.

These three goals will inform the larger system and guide any changes. Below are ways the system is evolving to better serve all populations through enhanced accessibility.

Universal access across the workforce system

Fundamental to the Workforce Board's vision for the workforce system is the concept of universal accessibility. Washington's workforce system must be prepared and able to serve jobseekers from all kinds of backgrounds, who face a variety of barriers. Universal accessibility encompasses both physical accessibility of all facilities, as well as programmatic accessibility—taking into account the particular access needs of all customers. Integration of service delivery and better coordination among workforce system partners will allow services and delivery approaches to be customized to meet a wide range of needs.

Identifying and Removing Barriers to Workforce Services

WIOA has provided new energy across Washington's workforce system to address and remove barriers to access so that a greater number of Washingtonians can connect with a career pathway and a living–wage job. Through numerous WIOA planning meetings, public forums, and community town halls, an overarching theme has been that the system must provide high quality, customized services for all jobseekers with barriers.

The Workforce Board embraced the new federal workforce act as a chance to improve service delivery and remove barriers to access for all individuals with barriers to employment, not just those populations covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act. While developing recommendations related to accessibility, the Workforce Board engaged stakeholders, staff, and policy experts representing a wide range of the 14 populations designated as "populations with barriers" under WIOA:

· Displaced Homemakers

· Youth in, or formerly in, Foster Care

· Low–Income Individuals

· English Language Learners

· Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Hawaiians

· Migrant/Seasonal Farmworkers

· Individuals with Disabilities

· Individuals within Two Years of Exhausted TANF Eligibility

· Older Individuals

· Single Parents/Pregnant Women

· Ex–Offenders

· Long–Term Unemployed

· Homeless Individuals

· Veterans

· "Other Groups" Designated by the Governor

An initial look at how technology could be used to remove access barriers for individuals with disabilities quickly expanded in scope to consider all strategies to remove access barriers to all barrier populations. A System Barriers Map that outlines these is available at: http://wtb.wa.gov/Documents/WIOABARRIERPOPULATIONchart.pdf.

Some of the common barriers faced by vulnerable populations include:

• Lack of recent work experience.

• Difficulties with transportation, housing, or childcare.

• Lack of work–appropriate wardrobe or resources (tools, equipment, safety gear)

• Inability to access necessary language translation services or accessibility devices.

• Lack of financial and educational literacy.

• Inability to successfully utilize technology resources.

Technology is a Powerful Tool to Remove Barriers

Advances in personal computing and telecommunications technology have made the Internet and person–to–person connectivity a feature of many people's daily lives. WIOA acknowledges these improvements by opening the door to "virtual" service delivery—bringing services each participant needs to their doorstep, or kitchen table.

Recognizing that barrier removal is a project that requires sustained effort over time, the Workforce Board started work on establishing its first standing advisory committee to lead a statewide effort on removing barriers to access throughout the system. The standing advisory committee, described below, is expected to work with local advisory committees on accessibility issues, starting an ongoing conversation between local workforce system practitioners and state–level policymakers. In this way, the committee will be able to systematically identify and address access barriers.

The first three recommended strategies embrace technology to achieve a more accessible workforce system. The final recommendation is designed to address system barriers of any nature, including barriers that cannot be addressed solely through technology.

Strategies to Improve Access for All: Technology as a Barrier Removal Tool

Secure Wireless at Comprehensive One–Stops

Only a decade ago, access to the Internet was confined to a desktop–based personal computer at home, school, the office, or a library. Today, wireless Internet is available in restaurants, theaters, coffee shops and even at 30,000 feet in an airline seat. Smartphones are common, bringing Internet connectivity to the palms of our hands. However, not all of the workforce system's customers are connected—and many will require training on the baseline technological skills needed to use these tools and be competitive in today's labor market.

Expanding wireless Internet connectivity at one–stop centers could pay off particularly for the blind and low–vision community. One local area in Washington is piloting a "paperless" one–stop experience facilitated by secure wireless access at its WorkSource center. All education and training information, including pamphlets and documents, are digitized in a standard format and stored online. WorkSource center staff members receive regular training on how to digitize materials. People who are blind or low–vision who visit a one–stop center can navigate to those digitally archived materials using their own accessibility devices. Digitally archived materials are also accessible to jobseekers with mobility, transportation, and/or childcare responsibilities that may prevent them from accessing a WorkSource center.

Virtual Service Delivery

With WIOA, education and training services are no longer required to be administered in person. The availability of online, real–time, hybrid (blended online and face to face), and open source course materials warrants close system collaboration. Beyond simply providing access, the system must help customers gain the skills to effectively use these new technological tools. Some tools have become increasingly common in just a few short years. Video conferencing technology, for example, is widely available and less expensive than in years past. Reducing or eliminating the need for customers to travel and physically access a one–stop center will remove accessibility barriers for many Washingtonians. Services offered virtually via computer, tablet, or smartphone empower people with mobility challenges, or anyone preferring to access information remotely. These tools allow them to begin progressing down a career pathway on their terms and at a time and location more convenient to them. Virtual service delivery helps customers with childcare or transportation

barriers make progress toward a better future. A parent can hop online when the kids are asleep and gain access to services, or a family who lacks a car can avoid making several bus transfers to reach a one–stop center—if the center is reachable by bus at all. Many rural Washingtonians live hours away from the nearest comprehensive one–stop center. Accessing these services at home just makes sense. Even rural customers without reliable Internet connections still benefit from virtual service delivery—library systems statewide have expressed interest in partnering with the workforce system to create “remote connection sites” strategically located around Washington.

Promoting Open Education Resources

Washington’s 34 community and technical colleges provide a wide range of open education resources (OERs), online courses, and e–Learning strategies to workforce system customers. These resources allow working adults and place–bound customers who are far from a college or university campus to access education when it fits their work and life schedules. OERs are teaching and learning materials that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license. These resources may be used free of charge, distributed without restriction, and modified without permission. Often, OERs take the form of digital textbooks, video lectures, assessments, and new forms of “gamified” multimedia education experiences. Washington’s community and technical colleges are leaders in the OER movement, ready to share their expertise with the entire workforce system.

Promoting eLearning

Washington’s public higher education institutions also offer a wide array of e–Learning strategies that can be integrated into the workforce system where appropriate. E–Learning is high quality online instruction and assessment that allows students to study and learn on their own schedules. Customers with physical, sensory, behavioral health, or cognitive disabilities as well as rural populations and economically disadvantaged communities, can benefit from online instruction tailored to their needs.

Enhanced Delivery of Online Job–Matching Services

In early 2016, the state is expected to launch WorkSourceWA.com, a redesigned and enhanced online job–matching service for its WorkSource one–stop career center system. Powered by Monster Government Solutions, the new job–match website will give Washington’s workforce system customers access to all jobs and resumes posted on WorkSourceWA.com. This new database offers a far richer and deeper pool of possible resume matches than Go2Worksource.com provided. Another bonus: the proprietary job–matching algorithms programmed into the website are designed to match the skills and competencies of individual jobseekers with specific skills and competencies needed for each job. This promises better quality matches between businesses and jobseekers, and offers unsuccessful candidates a better sense of the specific education and training required for similar positions in the future.

As a result of the collaborative work sparked by the Accessibility and Technology Task Force, system partners identified a potential strategy to maximize the impact of the new job–matching website for people with disabilities. Federal government contractors are required by the U.S. Department of Labor to use one–stop centers to post job openings, and are expected to work toward a utilization goal of ensuring a minimum 7 percent of their workforce are employees with disabilities, across all job descriptions. Federal contractors have an incentive to work with this system to achieve this goal—and the new job–matching system will be configured to facilitate the match.

In early stages of the website's design, users with a disability could choose to have a "disability" label visible on their jobseeker profile. Federal contractors could use the system to identify any person with the label made visible. Under the earlier design, jobseekers with disabilities were forced to either disclose their disability status to all employers or turn the label off and not be identified as disabled to any employers—even though federal contractors were especially interested in seeking them out.

Many partners from the disability community raised concern about a perceived disadvantage in disclosing a disability in a job–search before speaking "face–to–face" with an employer. To avoid this complication but still allow federal contractors to be matched with individuals with disabilities, the task force proposed adding a feature to the job–matching system that would allow people with disabilities to disclose their status only to federal contractors. Federal contractors can search and filter for jobseekers that have self–disclosed a disability but non–identified employers will not be able to search or filter for jobseekers with disabilities.

Any public–facing service offered to workforce system participants must be accessible to all, including individuals who use a screen–reading device or other accessibility equipment. Ensuring that the state's new online job–matching site is accessible for all, the site's architects have agreed to go beyond the ADA's Section 508 accessibility standards and instead adopt the more stringent, internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0. When the new website is ready to launch, system partners will test the "public–facing" elements of the website with customers with barriers who have intermediate skill levels in accessing software and technologies. Any needed accessibility adjustments will be made before launch or immediately after.

Thinking Beyond Technology to Remove Barriers

Local and State Advisory Groups on Barrier Solutions

WIOA allows local area boards to establish standing committees to work on issues specifically faced by individuals with disabilities, including Section 188 and ADA compliance. Washington's workforce system has embraced a more expansive goal of improving access for populations with a wide variety of barriers to access, including economic barriers, geographic barriers, physical barriers, language and cultural barriers, low–level education and skills barriers, and behavioral health barriers. To build consensus on a coordinated and sustained effort to remove these access barriers, a standing Workforce Board committee on accessibility issues is being created.

The Workforce Board's advisory committee on barrier solutions will be informed by local advisory committees that evaluate accessibility issues at the community level and will help local boards prioritize projects and track progress toward improved customer service for those populations. The state standing committee will additionally serve as a forum for sharing best practices and strategies to improve access and advocate for resources and policy development that will improve services for all populations with barriers.

Local Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) will partner with the state advisory committee on barrier solutions to identify barrier removal projects and best practices that can be brought to scale statewide. Local WDCs have taken the lead for several years in convening their own advisory groups on system accessibility at the local level. Each WDC will designate either one of these existing advisory groups or create a new one to focus on barrier removal work, and will seek to recruit members from a broad spectrum of populations with barriers to employment, including, but not limited to: people with physical, sensory, behavioral health, or cognitive disabilities; economically

disadvantaged communities; low–skilled and under–educated individuals; English language acquisition or bilingual communities; disadvantaged youth; and the long–term unemployed. Local WDCs are encouraged to engage with real customers with barriers, including encouraging customers to be part of their local committees focused on barriers. These local advisory groups on barrier solutions will create an annual progress report to their local WDC outlining and discussing issues, accomplishments, and future deliverables related to the accessibility goals in local WDC strategic plans; concerns and challenges faced by populations with access barriers, as seen from the advisory groups' perspectives; a work–plan containing recommendations for improving accessibility in the coming year; and a progress report on previous work–plans for improving accessibility. The same report will be delivered each year to the state advisory group on barrier solutions, which will incorporate identified local best practices into statewide strategies. The state advisory group on barrier removal will also redirect resources toward barrier removal projects it prioritizes, and will help local advisory groups identify and broadly recruit representative members.

Accessibility and Technology Summary and Goals

In conclusion, a truly accessible workforce system that makes full use of technology, will implement secure, wireless Internet access in public areas of all comprehensive One–Stop centers in Washington by 2020. The system will also include state–level advisory committees during the first two years of the plan, with annual progress reports on One–Stop center accessibility at the local level. Finally, the local pilot programs that use technology to facilitate and improve integrated service delivery for all customers will be identified and encouraged.

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).

See section 1 Above.

ALIGNING STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVES:

The Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) is a committed partner to the state's workforce system and understands the role that housing services have in serving WIOA clients, particularly those with barriers to employment. The Department of Commerce is the one agency in Washington State that touches every aspect of community and economic development: planning, infrastructure, housing, energy, public facilities, public safety and crime victims, international trade, business services and more. Commerce works with local governments, businesses and civic leaders throughout the state to strengthen communities so all residents may thrive and prosper. The Director of Commerce holds a seat on the state Workforce board, bringing the Department's expertise in economic development, sector based outreach, and affordable housing policy to conversations about the state workforce system.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awards Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds throughout the state of Washington both through Commerce and directly to local governments in CDBG entitlement areas. Commerce administers the state CDBG funding to rural local governments or non-entitlement areas. Commerce has no administrative role over CDBG funds awarded directly to local governments by HUD, such as the Seattle Housing Authority.

Annually, non-entitlement local governments apply directly to Commerce for CDBG funds through a competitive procurement process. These entities apply for CDBG funding based on their own locally prioritized activities, which may include employment and training. The specific activities funded by the State CDBG program are unknown until the procurement process is complete and projects have been selected. The Department of Commerce primarily awards CDBG grants for infrastructure activities, but Commerce does set aside a portion of the funds to be used specifically for CDBG public services activities, which may include employment and training activities. When a rural local government applies for and receives CDBG public services funding for an employment or training activity through Commerce, then those activities are required to align with the State's WIOA strategies and be coordinated with the grantees' local WIOA partners.

The Department of Commerce has been a partner from the beginning of the WIOA planning and implementation process, providing staff expertise that shaped the goals in all four strategic priority areas of the state plan: business engagement, integrated service delivery, accessibility for all, and ensuring performance accountability. Staff from the Department of Commerce's Office of Economic and Competitiveness and Division of Community Services and Housing will continue to serve on implementation committees organized by the Workforce Board, in particular working to advance the state's business engagement goals and bring focus to aligning affordable housing initiatives administered by the Department of Commerce to the state's workforce development strategy.

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).

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a Governor-appointed partnership of nine voting members from business, labor, and government. Non-voting members also participate.

The Workforce Board:

•Advises the Governor and Legislature on workforce development policy.

•Ensures the state's workforce services and programs work together.

•Evaluates the performance of Washington's key workforce programs.

Why We Exist

In 1991, the Legislature set about eliminating the four state boards that supervised the state's tangled training system. The Workforce Board replaced these boards and created a coordinated and more accountable workforce system. Our strategic plan, High Skills, High Wages, details the state's opportunities and workforce objectives while our performance reports enforce strict accountability measures that go beyond federal requirements, ensuring the state's education and training programs receive an objective evaluation, meet Washington's high performance goals, and offer a return on investment for taxpayers.

•Business and Labor Guide the Board

Two-thirds of voting seats are held equally by business and labor representatives. Remaining seats are held by major service providers. This means customers have a direct, influential voice in all decision-making. With business and labor at the table, we get a real-world view of our challenges and opportunities--and take action on them.

•Workforce System Customers

Our workforce customers have a broad range of ages, abilities and backgrounds--from high school students who require relevant, applied learning to stay in school, to low-skilled working adults who need more education to earn a living wage, to the recently laid off retooling for new careers. We advocate for lifelong learning so all workers become better educated and better skilled--keeping our workforce, and our state, competitive.

•The System We Oversee

The Workforce Board oversees 16 workforce programs, administered by seven agencies. We measure the performance of 12 of the state's largest programs, which account for about 95 percent of federal and state dollars spent on our workforce system--or roughly $780 million per year.

•Our Staff

Researchers, policy analysts and managers prepare and analyze our detailed reports on everything from worker skill gaps to how effectively our state's programs train workers to fill jobs. Staff members have expertise in a wide range of disciplines but specialize in outreach and building partnerships.

The Workforce Board meets regularly to provide strategic direction to the workforce development system and issue guidance on performance measures. The Workforce Board will convene subcommittees of the Board led by business and labor members to develop ongoing policy guidance on implementing key features of WIOA, including professional development, removing barriers to access in one–stops, and defining and creating a seamless customer experience at one–stops. These oversight committees will include Board members, policy professionals, and appropriate stakeholders with subject–matter expertise.

From programs that target teens in danger of dropping out of high school to industry skill panels that help bridge the gap between high-demand jobs and the training workers need to succeed, the Workforce Board advocates for a better educated, better prepared Washington workforce.

Beginning in October 2014 when the Governor named the Workforce Board as the State's Workforce Board under WIOA, the board set forth its vision on planning and implementation. They adopted a committee structure, with a Steering Committee, and all subcommittees, co-chaired by business and labor. They also adopted the implementation timeline to ensure that the planning process was aligned with the projected timelines from the federal partners.

The Steering Committee's first opportunity to meet was in early January. They set their meeting schedule for the first half of 2015 and prioritized the critical work ahead. The Steering Committee voted to send a recommendation to the Workforce Board asking the Governor to provide Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) with initial designation for the 12 Workforce Development Areas. This enabled the Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) to begin local planning. At the January 29, 2015 Workforce Board meeting, the Board passed the Steering Committee's recommendation and also acted to recommend that the composition of WDCs be retained up to June 30, 2016.

Following the January meeting, all of the subcommittees met at least once, and then reported their progress at a February 17 Steering Committee meeting.

Because the work areas were diverse, and in some instances requires quick turnaround, committees had the option of assigning some work to a task force, recruited to focus on one or more details. This method enabled broad stakeholder participation, and allowed involvement by those who have limited time but valuable expertise to devote to the process. The task force would meet two or three times and then move a recommendation forward. The Steering Committee had task forces to work on three areas:

1. OneStop Certification and One Stop Assessment Criteria

2. Funding Distribution for WIOA Title I

3. Combined Plan vs. Unified Plan Guidance for WDCs and Local Partners

The Educational and Career Pathways through Integrated Service Delivery subcommittee had two task forces to address:

1. Adult Populations with Barriers to Employment

2. WIOA’s Youth Services Provisions

The Local Governance and Sector Strategies subcommittee designated three task forces:

Three task forces were created from this subcommittee, including:

1. Sector Strategies

2. Local Governance

3. Regions

The Accountability and ETPL Subcommittee assigned four task forces to help undertake their charge:

1.Reframing Current Performance Measures

2.ETPL Standards

3.Youth Provider Evaluation System

4.Co-enrollment Implications

The Board will undertake implementation of its strategic plan Goals and Strategies through a similar structure, with the Board leading as the Steering Committee and assigning Implementation Committees to address the key functions of the plan.

As each subcommittee’s work moved forward, recommendations were brought before the Steering Committee. Upon adoption of these recommendations, they were moved forward to the Board for discussion and approval.

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.

TITLE I: ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH SERVICES

Twelve local workforce development councils across the state lead efforts to implement WIOA and have direct responsibility for Title I (Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker) activities to execute the state's strategies around integrated/streamlined service delivery, technology and access, business engagement, and performance accountability include and are coordinated with the following partners:

Youth:

• Coordination with Wagner–Peyser for labor exchange service (targeted to Older out–of–school youth)

• Coordination with TANF/SNAP for public/food assistance as appropriate, including use of Washington Connection portal for eligibility assessment

Adult:

• Automatic co–enrollment between Wagner–Peyser and WIOA Adult in all local areas is a long–term goal

• Coordination with Wagner–Peyser for labor exchange services

• Coordination with TANF/SNAP on referrals to public/food assistance as appropriate; referrals of TANF/SNAP (also WorkFirst/BFET) clients to WIOA Adult program as priority of service (low–income) customers, as appropriate, and use of Washington Connection portal for eligibility assessment

• Coordination with UI for unemployment compensation as appropriate

• Coordination with businesses for work–based learning opportunities

• Monster–powered WorkSourceWA.com to afford access to clients of other programs

• Serving jobseekers with disabilities is emphasized by priority of service for the Adult program (access).

Dislocated Worker:

• Coordination with TAA and UI (partner programs) and CTCs to provide integrated service delivery in the form of DW support services and Trade Re–adjustment Assistance (additional UI benefits) and leverage between Worker Retraining funds, respectively; coordination with Commissioner Approved Training/Training Benefits.

• Coordination (via Rapid Response) with TAA during TAA–related Rapid Response events and with UI for general Rapid Response events and for Shared Work opportunities for employers as an alternative to layoffs.

Coordination with Wagner–Peyser for labor exchange services

• WorkSourceWA.com to afford access to clients of other programs

Title I (Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker) services to participants include the following:

Youth Program Elements (Youth Only):

• Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence–based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to a high school diploma or recognized equivalent or recognized post–secondary credential

• Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services, as appropriate

• Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education components (summer employment, pre–apprenticeship, internships, job shadowing, OJT)

• Occupational skills training with priority for those that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials aligned with in–demand sectors or occupations

• Education offered concurrently with or in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or cluster

• Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer–centered activities that promote responsibility and positive social and civic behaviors

• Supportive services

• Adult mentoring for the period of participation and for not less than 12 months following participation

• Follow–up services for not less than 12 months (includes all allowable youth services and activities)

• Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse and referral

• Financial literacy education

• Entrepreneurial skills training

• Labor market information on in–demand industries and occupations in the local area, including career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration

• Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

Basic Career Services (Adult and DW):

• Eligibility determinations

• Outreach, intake, and orientation to information and other services available through the workforce development system

• Initial assessment of skill levels (including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency), aptitudes, abilities (including skill gaps), and supportive service needs

• Labor exchange services (job search and placement, info on in–demand industries and occupations, info on non–traditional employment for current and future jobseekers; recruitment and other business services for employers)

• Referrals to coordination of activities with other programs and services within the workforce development system

• Provision of:

o Workforce and labor market information (job vacancies, job skills needed, demand occupations with earnings, skill requirements, and career pathways);

o Performance and cost information on eligible training programs under all WIOA titles;

o Information on local area performance or one–stop system performance

o Information on and/or referral to supportive services or assistance, including child care, child support, Medicaid, SNAP, EITC, TANF, etc.

o Information and assistance regarding filing UI claims

o Assistance in establishing financial aid eligibility for non–WIOA–funded employment and training programs

Individualized Career Services (Adult and DW):

• Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs, including diagnostic testing, in–depth interviewing, and evaluation to identify employment barriers and employment goals

• Development of individual employment plans (employment goals, achievement objectives, appropriate services, eligible training providers, career pathways)

• Group counseling

• Individual counseling

• Career planning

• Short–term prevocational services (learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, professional conduct) to prepare for unsubsidized employment or training

• Internships and work experience

• Workforce preparation activities

• Financial literacy services

• Out of area job search and relocation assistance

• English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs

Follow–up Services (Adult and DW):

• Counseling on the workplace for not less than 12 months for those placed in unsubsidized employment

• Customized follow–up services unique to the customer

Training Services (Adult and DW):

• Coordination with training partners and institutions (both public and private, non–governmental training providers)

• Occupational skills training

• On the job training

• Incumbent worker training

• Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction

• Skill upgrade and retraining

• Entrepreneurial training

• Transitional jobs

• Job readiness training provide in conjunction with anything above

• Adult education and literacy activities, including English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with services described above

• Customized training conducted with the commitment of the employer(s) to employ the participants upon successful completion of the training.

• Coordination with Adult Basic Education programs by integrating services for Adult and DW participants and facilitating enrollment.

Supportive Services:

• Assistance with clothing, counseling, family/health care, food, housing, tools, union dues, driver licenses, or car repairs to help participants become or stay independent while actively engaged in job search, work activities or training

• Goods in the form of transportation assistance to help participants become or stay independent while actively engaged in job search, work activities or training.

• Need related financial assistance (income support) to eligible adults, dislocated workers, and youth 18–24 in training to enable them to participate in training

Employer Services:

• Develop, convene, or implement industry or sector partnerships

• Customized screening and referral of qualified participants in training services to employers

• Customized services to employers, employer associations, or other such organizations, on employment–related issues

• Customized recruitment/hiring events, job fairs, workshops and related services for employers (e.g., targeted hiring, new business openings, seasonal hiring, and safety training)

• Marketing on–line with the support of ESD's Communications Office for occasions such as holiday hiring or major veterans hiring events

• Human resource consultation services (e.g., writing/reviewing job descriptions and employee handbooks; developing performance evaluation and personnel policies; creating orientation sessions for new workers; honing job interview techniques for efficiency and compliance; analyzing employee turnover; or explaining labor laws to help employers comply with wage/hour and safety/health regulations)

• Customized labor market information for specific employers, sectors, industries or clusters

• Increased coordination with WSATC, L&I, labor and business to support and develop pre–apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities and providing customized assistance or referral for assistance in the development of registered apprenticeships

• Job order listings and applicant referrals through WorkSourceWA.com, the Monster–based state job matching system to provide a deeper pool of talent for employers to recruit

• Employer Needs Assessment

• Unemployment Insurance Access

• Access to Facilities

• Translation Services

• Developing and delivering innovative workforce investment services and strategies for area employers, e.g., career pathways, skills upgrading, skill standard development and certification for recognized postsecondary credential or other employer use, apprenticeship, and other effective initiatives for meeting the workforce investment needs of area employers and workers

• Assistance in managing reductions in force in coordination with rapid response activities and with strategies for the aversion of layoffs, and the delivery of employment and training activities to address risk factors

• Assisting employers with accessing local, state, and federal tax credits, including Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) certification

• Local Veterans Employment Representatives outreach to businesses to veterans to employers interested in attracting qualified veterans

• Recruiting and initial screening for participation in WIOA special projects to train for demand occupations, OJTs or customized training

• Increasing rapid response and pursuing National Dislocated Worker Grant funding to serve dislocated workers

• Labor exchange services (job search and placement, info on in–demand industries and occupations, info on non–traditional employment for current and future jobseekers; recruitment and other business services for employers)

TITLE II: ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY (BASIC EDUCATION FOR ADULTS)

The shared vision, values, and principles of collaboration mutually established by Basic Education for Adults (BEdA), Washington Workforce Association (WWA), and all core partners reflect the partnership and integration of service delivery that BEdA and local Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) intend to carry out through implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA).

BEdA and the WDCs are partners in the development and operation of a WorkSource one–stop system that meets the needs of all customers, particularly those with significant barriers to education and employment. BEdA in collaboration with all core partners is dedicated to providing academic instruction and educational services to adults in order to provide them with the skills and resources needed to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and

economic self–sufficiency. The goal of this collaboration is to ensure that clients obtain the job skills training, education, and credentials needed to become full partners in their own educational development as well as the educational development of their children, which leads to sustainable improvement in the economic opportunities for their families. This includes attaining a secondary school diploma or its equivalency and transition to postsecondary education and training along a clearly defined, accelerated, and guided career pathway in order to be placed in a living wage job. The collaboration will engage employers and meet their workforce needs to help communities and the state strengthen their workforces and economies.

BEdA will demonstrate collaboration and service delivery integration with core partners to assure current and future jobseekers with basic skills deficiencies receive quality customer service within the WorkSource system, and will work jointly with employers to maximize the employment outcomes of jobseekers. BEdA commits to sharing resources in a manner that prioritizes the customer's experience and needs as well as acknowledges the responsibilities and expertise of each organization. Title II providers will:

• Participate in a locally driven, fully integrated WorkSource service delivery system;

• Provide staff training, technical assistance and consultation to WorkSource partners on service delivery to individuals with basic skills needs;

• Participate in annual reviews of WorkSource services and resources;

• Assign BEdA staff at designated co–located WorkSource locations when appropriate, and negotiate any occupancy costs (e.g., office space, equipment, utilities, etc.);

• Support integrated staff and co–located services whenever and wherever possible that move clients to living wage jobs;

• Contribute to the success of the one–stop system by participating in the orientation, referral and joint service delivery to individuals with educational needs;

• Participate in the development and implementation of the local WorkSource Business Plan and delivery of employer services aimed at the employment of current and future jobseekers with basic skills deficiencies;

• Contribute to the infrastructure of the WorkSource system costs financially and with in–kind support in proportion to the relative benefits received by BEdA customers and consistent with federal regulations under Title II;

• Refer and coordinate services for BEdA clients who are eligible and for whom funds are available so that they receive the Title I and Title II WorkSource and training services needed to achieve their employment goals. Services will be coordinated as described in the local Memorandum of Understanding and local WorkSource protocols; and

• Provide educational testing and placement services in collaboration with the WDCs to BEdA clients.

TITLE III: WAGNER–PEYSER ACT

Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD) is the State Workforce Agency (SWA) operating Wagner–Peyser (W–P) Act employment services and related merit–staffed programs in addition to WorkFirst (TANF–Job Search pathway) and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. ESD retains responsibilities carried forward into the WIOA era from longstanding executive order 99–02 as the state administrative lead for Title 1–B programs and the overall WorkSource one–stop service delivery system. Thus ESD provides leadership in the implementation of the State's strategies for Wagner–Peyser employment services, and shares leadership for WIOA Title 1–B with the local workforce development boards. These are the four of six designated WIOA core programs directly in its purview which are increasingly integrated. Accordingly, the department's motto is "Be The Bridge"; its vision: "The right job for each person, every time"; and its mission: "We partner to connect employers and jobseekers, supporting transitions to new jobs and empowering careers." These strategic statements are on a poster which depicts the system as a bridge displayed by ES managers in one stop centers. It encompasses both the business and job–seeker customer service and employment assistance scope of Wagner–Peyser, the support aspect of UI benefits during job transitions, and the career pathways and industry sector development orientation of Title 1–B through targeted education and training resources.

The Workforce and Career Development Division (WCDD) operates the Wagner–Peyser–funded labor exchange, Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker and agricultural employer outreach, re–employment and RE–employment Eligibility Assessment (REA/RESEA) grant activities serving UI claimants, Trade Act, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, Foreign Labor Certification, Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), WorkFirst, and Washington Service Corps. While the general charge to assist current and future jobseekers and employers remains the central thrust of the Wagner–Peyser labor exchange and ancillary programs, lean management principles required across all cabinet level departments in Washington State are working continuously to improve WorkSource processes and eliminate waste to deliver results for all one stop customers more efficiently and effectively. Wagner–Peyser is a locus for instilling lean WorkSource operations that yield benefits more widely in local areas.

Leaning is also evident at the state agency level. Employment System Administration and Policy (ESAP), a directorate under the UI Division, oversees DOL–funded core programs policy and administration for Title III Wagner–Peyser, WIOA Title 1–B and Rapid Response. ESAP works in consultation with the Washington Workforce Association representing local workforce development boards to administer WIOA Title 1–B fiscal, administrative and program policies, and provides technical assistance. It also shares the lead on WorkSource System policy with the state Workforce Board covering cross–program topics such as coordinated business services, dispute resolution, one–stop assessments, data element validation, common measures policy, Priority of Service for veterans/covered spouses, customer complaint resolution, data sharing and security administration, and more. The department will continue to lead a consortium of local workforce development boards working on more fully aligned and integrated policies and services to include the core programs—WIOA titles I–IV—through such means as functional teams and simultaneous enrollment/co–enrollment.

The essence of Wagner–Peyser is facilitating the public labor exchange. To improve operations the department is implementing a new job match website, WorkSourceWa.com, with the assistance of contractor Monster Government Solutions. WorkSourceWA.com will replace the aging Go2WorkSource.com by mid–PY15. The new system will allow for semantic–based job match technology benefitting employers and current and future jobseekers. In addition, it will provide integration across self–service and staff customer management platforms. The aging SKIES management information system (from which most performance information is derived for exits and subsequent Wagner–Peyser and other program and common measures reporting) is being replaced

at the same time with the Effort To Outcome (ETO) proprietary staff customer management information system. SKIES records have been transferred to the new system. When new self–service customers establish their account on WorkSourceWA.com, account creation will occur in ETO thereby expediting staff–assisted services.

TITLE IV: DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

The Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) is the designated state agency for Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation services in Washington State for residents who experience functional vision loss as a barrier to finding employment, keeping a current job, or promoting within a career. Eligible participants often have multiple co–occurring disabling conditions that are addressed by agency staff in tandem with issues of blindness/visual impairment in order to move the individual towards greater independence, inclusion, and economic vitality. The agency provides vocational services statewide with approximately 80 FTE staff in seven office locations. Vocational and blindness rehabilitation services are provided in participant home and work locations, and each eligible participant has access to the in–house staff services of an inter–disciplinary team including a vocational rehabilitation counselor; a rehabilitation teacher, low vision specialist and orientation & mobility specialist; an adaptive technology specialist; and a rehabilitation technician. If more intensive (daily) adaptive skills of blindness training are required by an individual, they can be available through the agency's residential training center. If vocational or training services are required beyond those provided by in–house staff, the agency collaborates with community resources and/or contracts with external vendor service providers. DSB activities are strongly aligned with implementation of the State's strategies.

DSB activities towards State Strategy

The DSB will leverage its existing success towards contributing to the State's strategy of Talent and Prosperity for All, and will create new pathways to greater self–sufficiency for DSB participants through deeper collaboration among core and partner programs.

The DSB will continue to provide the comprehensive, participant–centered, individualized vocational and blindness rehabilitation services that have consistently made the Rehabilitation Services Administration's rating of the agency's outcomes the strongest among all national vocational rehabilitation agencies – blind or general – in quality of employment achieved and wages earned. The DSB will continue to provide highly professional and informed counseling and guidance services to assist the participant through issues of adjustment to disability, vocational and skill gap–assessment, career matching, and integration into the workplace. The DSB will continue to make use of client–centered tools, such as deep practice of Motivational Interviewing, to assist the participant to identify the pathways of change that fit best for the individual. The DSB will continue to provide the services that assist an individual who has had a change in vision to keep the high paying job they are skilled at, and will continue to assist individuals require supports to expand and challenge their current work circumstances through promotional opportunities. The DSB will continue to develop, refine, and provide relevant job readiness and entrepreneurial exploration workshops for participants to refine their self–marketing skills and explore self–employment as an option. The DSB will continue to provide the highest quality blindness rehabilitation skills assessment and training which are essential to creating an equal footing among non–disabled peers and within the community and workplace. The DSB will continue to provide cutting–edge adaptive skills assessment, tools matching and training that are critical to developing the technical access, efficiencies and competencies that meet business workforce needs. The DSB will continue to provide vocational and academic training, work experience, and paid internship opportunities that

bring the participant the technical and professional skills needed by business, broaden the participant perspective on workplace culture and expectations, and help a workplace recognize the talent of the individual blind participant through active demonstration of value to the business. The DSB will continue to partner among DSB staff, the participant, and employer to provide on–site workplace evaluations for accessibility recommendations and tools. The DSB will continue to refine its message and outreach methods to inform potential eligible participants, business and partners of our comprehensive services. The DSB will continue to refine facilitation of services for historically underserved communities such as non–native–English speaking communities, co–occurring disabilities such as mental & behavioral health, and youth.

Under the Combined State Plan, the DSB expects the new relationship among core group and partner programs to genuinely address the development of pathways for access that allow blind, low vision and deaf blind individuals to also engage in the workforce activities that enhance and increase their opportunities towards the State's strategy of High Skills/High Wages. This access to workforce activities is currently aspirational, as our agency blind participants have been largely denied access to the benefits of the greater workforce system since the 1998 WIA implementation. Future success of equal participation in these workforce activities will depend on the WIOA partners' active awareness and belief that individuals who are blind are viable participants within the workforce, and that the DSB is a valuable collaborator among workforce partners. Access and navigation issues must be addressed with highest priority among all partner programs.

The DSB expects blind, low vision and deaf blind participants to become fully engaged in the greater array of workforce services. The DSB expects our counseling staff to be active and equal partners among the regional and local Business Service Teams, where the talents of agency participants can be more effectively matched with business needs through sharing of sector strategy and real time labor market information. The DSB expects staff will enter agency participant information into the shared profile mechanism that is developed among the core and partner programs, schedule appointments to meet with agency participants at One–Stop centers, and connect agency participants to the array of wrap–around services they are eligible for. The DSB expects partner programs to identify shared core–participant job readiness skill needs, and to work with all partners to develop common–need trainings – and share presentation efforts where applicable – to strengthen the skill sets of our agency participants through access to all. The DSB expects that the new partnership will make our staff and agency participants more informed beneficiaries of relevant targeted workforce vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities towards gaining higher skills that match an individual's aptitude despite visual disability, and thereby securing higher wages and greater self–sufficiencies. The DSB expects to explore bridges among the partner Department of Labor Youth programs to fully engage blind youth in integrated and competitive work experience opportunities that fit individual need.

DSB activities towards State Strategy: Business Engagement

The DSB will work towards the State's strategy of increased Business Engagement by developing the agency's array of services that businesses may require or desire of us, thereby facilitating the employment of qualified individuals who are blind, low vision or deaf blind. The agency will deepen collaboration with core and partner programs in order to better connect our blind participants' aptitudes to the skills training and business connection pathways that work best for business needs.

A DSB–offered array of services for business includes many components. One component is to increase awareness among business of the agency's range of services, in order to provide an easy pathway for business to retain a talented employee whose work performance may be impacted due

to a change in vision. Another aspect is the ability to fulfill business recruitment needs through connecting the business with the talents of job–ready and skilled agency participants, and to offer the ability to create individualized and low–risk opportunities for the business so that a participant might best showcase their ability and potential value to the workplace. The DSB will provide guidance on issues of disability in the workplace, including education around the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act; information on how to benefit from federal and local incentives for hiring of individuals with disabilities, and offer supports to the business for successfully meeting required mandates for hiring of individuals with disabilities. The DSB will offer workplace accommodation recommendations and supports, and education and guidance on making the workplace a disability–friendly and inclusive environment. The DSB will connect business to disability–related resources, training and/or education available in the community at large. The DSB will engage business in identifying supply chain needs, and will assist in establishing entrepreneurs and small businesses that might best fulfill that supply chain need.

Due to the small size of the DSB customer base and agency staffing in comparison to other workforce partner programs, the agency and its eligible participants will benefit from the broader infrastructure that state plan partners develop and nurture towards increased business engagement. The DSB alone cannot fully provide the amount of skilled talent business requires, and the DSB as a separate entity cannot efficiently engage business statewide. The DSB will rely on active inclusion of its staff in the One–Stop Business Services Teams, and depend on the accessibility of workforce programs for agency participants, in order to meet the broader engagement of business in a manner that works best for business – through a seamless single point of contact. DSB counselors develop relationships with local business partners, and will guide those relationships (as applicable) into the greater workforce system in order to best fulfill the business needs.

DSB activities towards State Strategy: Access and Technology

The DSB views the State's strategy for Access and Technology as the highest priority for the success of our agency participants to connect to and benefit from core group and partner program services which prepare and provide a pathway to them meeting the workforce needs of business.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act makes accessibility a more prominent expectation for workforce partners, and the DSB will gladly champion universal accessibility among the core group and partner programs, in particular for potential beneficiaries of the workforce system array of services and programs who are blind, low vision or deaf blind.

The DSB has helped workforce partners to broaden their understanding of what universal accessibility means beyond basic architectural access, and DSB has assisted the workforce partners in codifying universal access as an element in the One–Stop certification process. The DSB will continue to remind partner programs of the potential costs of not providing accessible electronic and programmatic services, and will continue to provide technical assistance and referral for procurement, testing and maintenance of electronic data systems and processes that are accessible and usable by adaptive technology users.

The DSB will be active in assisting with the recruitment of local and state advisory boards for access and technology in order to provide useful guidance to state and local workforce systems on developing and refining greater universal accessibility to communities with barriers to employment.

DSB activities towards State Strategy: Youth Opportunities

The DSB will leverage existing success towards contributing to the State's strategy of Youth Opportunities, and will create new pathways for youth to gain essential experience and pathways towards the world of work.

The DSB will continue to provide its array of workshops, programs and paid work experience to students and youth with visual disability. The DSB will continue to provide short–term summer workshops in Seattle and Spokane that provide pre–employment transition services to students with visual disability, and will expand those group services to more locations around the state and more frequently throughout the year. The DSB will fund the two–week summer program that provides individual eligible students vocational assessments and experience exploring the world of work through informational interviews and job–shadowing. The DSB will continue to organize and manage the summer six–week paid work experience program for eligible students age 16+, and will expand the program and staffing to provide more paid work experience and pre–employment transition service opportunities in a year. The DSB will continue to nurture the relationships with business that support these work opportunities for blind youth. The DSB will continue to organize and manage the summer university transition program to prepare students for the self–advocacy skills needed for the adult world of higher education. The DSB will continue to support fifth year students who require intensive adaptive skills training through the Washington School for the Blind before transitioning into adult pathways of higher education or work. The DSB will continue to build relationship and participate in IEP meetings with school districts, teachers of the visually impaired, students and families throughout the state. The DSB will continue to present at events such as the Pacific Northwest Association of Educators of Rehabilitation (PNWAER) to inform families and educators who work with students who might be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

The DSB will explore methods for supporting work experience for students with visual disability more locally across the state and more broadly throughout the year other than summer. The DSB is in discussion with the Washington School for the Blind and other partners to assist in more consistently identifying and enrolling students with 504 plans who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. The DSB is working with the Washington State School for the Blind to co–fund a new Business Specialist position housed at the school which will be responsible for securing and supporting work experience for students both at the school and through the agency. The DSB is in discussion with the Washington State School for the Blind on how to best promote work experience for students while simultaneously acknowledging competing pressures and tight timelines of academic requirements. The DSB is exploring with other partners new methods for providing pre–employment transition services to students with visual disability, focusing in particular upon the adaptive and soft skills necessary to succeed in an adult workplace culture.

DSB activities towards State Strategy: Performance and Accountability

The DSB will work with core and partner programs to develop systems that enhance the State's strategy of Performance and Accountability. The DSB is working towards inter–agency agreements that will allow the agency to provide second and fourth quarter employment and wage data. The DSB will need to develop systems among partner programs to track training achievements of agency participants after exit from program. The DSB will collaborate with core and partner programs to track and share performance data around business engagement activity.

TITLE IV: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES – DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS/DVR) is committed as a core program to integrating VR services within the one–stop system by implementing a model of integrated service delivery that is comprised of the following components:

Intake. Individuals who experience disabilities will be welcomed in to the one–stop system beginning with their initial contact. An interview will identify their immediate needs and career interests; compile education and job history; gather information on barriers to employment and ability to access education and training, and screen for eligibility for services, funding and other resources. DHS/DVR will take an active role in helping all one–stop partners welcome individuals with disabilities in to the system.

Triage and Follow–up. Based on intake information, a brief evaluation will be conducted to determine the individual's interest and need for services from DSHS/DVR as well as other one–stop partners. This will provide the gateway for an individual's enrollment in to DSHS/DVR as a single program or co–enrollment in to multiple programs.

Assessment. Individuals may enter a career pathway at whatever stage that makes sense for them, depending on their career readiness, while also taking advantage of multiple entry and exit points as they develop new skills. Those eligible for DSHS/DVR services will assess their needs for specific VR services as well as services provides by other partner programs. Assessment of their needs will be individualized and may include standardized tests, criterion referencing, personal interviews, hands–on skill trials, and portfolios. Assessments will be tied to a credentialing process recognized by a targeted industry. The state approved basic skills assessment Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) aligns with the state's community and technical college system and many other service providers. A key piece of this assessment is determining the disability barriers to employment experienced by an individual, and then identifying the VR and other one–stop services needed to reduce or eliminate those barriers.

Career and Education Exploration and Guidance. All DSHS/DVR customers, but especially those with little or no work experience, need sufficient information to make informed career decisions and education choices. By fully exploring their career and education options available through the one–stop system, customers are able to choose a career pathway based on their interests, needs, and capabilities. Career pathway exploration includes timely information about a wide range of occupations and whether they are in demand by local industry, connections to apprenticeship programs, and encouragement to consider non–traditional occupations for both women and men.

Customer Pathway and Individualized Plan for Employment. Career exploration will enable DSHS/DVR customers to select in–demand employment goals and develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) taking them along a career pathway that results in competitive, integrated employment. The IPE will identify VR and other one–stop services that an individual requires to achieve their employment goal.

Customer Navigation & Case Management. DSHS/DVR assist customers in successfully navigating the one–stop system, providing guidance and mentoring to help customers who are often unfamiliar with the overall workforce system.

Support Services. DSHS/DVR will enable customers to overcome disability–barriers to employment by connecting them with needed support services from other one–stop partners and community resources. For many individuals, career pathway success is directly linked to their ability to overcome significant barriers not related to their disabilities. A variety of social, economic, and other

support services can help individuals overcome employment obstacles. These services, in tandem with VR services and other career pathway components, will enable individuals realize their employment goals.

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I–BEST). Day–to–day living calls for literacy and numeracy skills, as do careers. Many DSHS/DVR customers lack basic skills that are needed across all occupations, both in landing a job and progressing within a career. Basic skills are also required for more advanced career–specific education and training. Evidence shows that I–BEST education, pioneered by Washington's community and technical college system, improves and accelerates the attainment of important learning outcomes. This model, which blends basic skills training with occupational training, has been replicated and expanded in several other states. DSHS/DVR will forge an enhanced working relationship with I–BEST that integrates VR service delivery for joint customers.

Work Readiness Instruction and Assessment. Work readiness measures an individual's preparedness for getting a job and keeping a job. With work readiness training, customers learn about the structure and culture of the workplace, and about what makes a valuable employee—beyond job–specific skills. Topics typically include communication skills, decision–making and problem–solving, team building and teamwork, following instructions, healthy relationships with authority figures, leadership skills, personal growth, stress management, health and hygiene, and dealing with difficult people and situations. DSHS/DVR has developed a work readiness assessment and training curriculum tailored to the needs of individuals with significant disabilities; this will be shared with all one–stop partners.

Development of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for Job Entry. Skill development in this integrated service delivery model refers not just to those skills needed to enter the field, but building skills that allow individuals to advance within the field. Wherever possible, DSHS/DVR will integrate its customer skill development services with other one–stop partners to include project–based learning in the classroom, online coursework, industry guest lecturers, or direct workplace experience, including job shadows, mentorships, internships (paid or unpaid), clinicals, cooperative learning models, and apprenticeships.

Skills Upgrading for Occupational Advancement. DSHS/DVR will team with one–stop partners to assure opportunities exist for individuals with the most significant disabilities to upgrade their skills and advance in their careers. Skills upgrading refers to development of skills beyond entry–level (first employment during program participation). Skills upgrading will be tied to an industry–recognized credential, whenever possible. Industry credentials include college credits so individuals can more readily add and build on their education to help them move up the career ladder.

Business Engagement, Job Development, and Placement. Successfully connecting individuals with jobs requires working with businesses to determine which jobs are currently available, or projected to become available, along with the skill requirements for these jobs. Engaging businesses and sharing labor market data will better inform curriculum development, support work–integrated activities, enhance program offerings, and assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the program in meeting industry need. DSHS/DVR business services staff will work hand–in–hand with other one–stop staff responsible for job development and placement, and faculty responsible for curriculum development and delivery, will work closely with industry representatives to ensure skill development curriculum and materials are directly applicable to the workplace, and that participants are adequately prepared to meet the needs of business once on the job.

Post–Job Placement Support for the Individual and Employer. Landing a job is often just the first step for individuals, even if they have benefited from effective pre–placement services. Once on the job they may struggle with child or elder care, transportation, interpersonal issues, family difficulties, medical needs, basic skills development, and court involvement. Or, an individual may require additional skill development in specific areas to improve job performance or to keep pace with industry changes. Support services for program participants and the businesses who hire them may involve: periodic contact, information and referral for necessary services, and, when necessary, advocacy for the individual on the job. DSHS/DVR will integrate its delivery of VR Post–Employment Services to eligible individuals within the one–stop system.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Use state employment and local offices to orient UI claimants to the services offered across all programs. Ensure all those that administer programs that can touch a UI claimant have the basic understanding of eligibility requirements including being able and available for all suitable work and making an active search for work. Work closer with training programs, community and technical colleges, Labor and Industries (apprenticeships and other back to work programs), Human Services (WorkFirst and DVR), The Washington Labor Council, along with various other programs and co–enrolling where a good fit is determined. This can be done by reaching out to claimants and assessing their needs.

JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS (JVSG)

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP):

1. Provide intensive services and facilitate placements to meet the employment needs of veterans, transitioning service members (TSMs) and eligible spouses

2. Case manage veterans, TSMs and eligible spouses to help overcome significant barriers to employment (SBEs) and place in living wage career positions

3. Outreach to community events, activities and organizations to locate and assist veterans with SBEs

4. Prioritize services to veterans in accordance with 38 USC Chapter 41

5. Manage and document caseload activities

Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER):

1. Conduct outreach to employers to assist veterans in gaining employment, including employer seminars, and job search workshops/groups

2. Facilitate employment, training and placement services furnished to veterans under the local service delivery model

3. Coordinate with unions, apprenticeship programs and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans

4. Inform Federal contractors on process to recruit and retain veterans

5. Coordinate and participate with partner agencies and entities, internal and external, on business outreach

6. Coordinate, plan and orchestrate hiring events to promote the hiring of veterans

TRADE ACT

Trade Act funding is restricted to participants who are dislocated from their jobs due to foreign trade affecting their employer. Those employers must be granted petition certification by the DOL in order for their employees to be eligible for Trade benefits. Trade Act benefits can include tuition, books, tools, and transportation/subsistence needs that a participant in classroom training might have. Additionally, Trade can assist in covering a portion of long distance job search costs and most of the cost of relocation for a new job outside the commuting area. Trade also offers on–the–job training and for workers over 50 there is a program that provides “income support”. Participants in training are usually eligible for unemployment based income support while they are in training and maintaining satisfactory progress. These benefits for Trade Act participants can help ease the potential strain these dislocated workers might put on other programs who provide similar services, such as Worker Retraining at the colleges and the Dislocated Worker program.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT/COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

Block Grant (CSBG), administered by the Department of Commerce, awards funds to local community action agencies to provide services to low–income households at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (FPL). CSBG Grantees determine how funding will be used to support allowable CSBG activities, such as employment and training activities. This funding is administered federally by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The state Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, administered by the state Department of Commerce, awards HUD funds to rural local governments for locally–prioritized activities, such as economic development, construction, and public services activities. These funds are awarded based on a competitive grant process for eligible CDBG recipients. This funding is administered federally by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) is a committed partner to the state’s workforce system and understands the role that housing services have in serving WIOA clients, particularly those with barriers to employment. The Department of Commerce is the one agency in Washington State that touches every aspect of community and economic development: planning, infrastructure, housing, energy, public facilities, public safety and crime victims, international trade, business services and more. Commerce works with local governments, businesses and civic leaders throughout the state to strengthen communities so all residents may thrive and prosper. The Director of Commerce holds a seat on the state Workforce board, bringing the Department’s expertise in economic development, sector based outreach, and affordable housing policy to conversations about the state workforce system.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awards Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds throughout the state of Washington both through Commerce and directly to local governments in CDBG entitlement areas. Commerce administers the state CDBG funding to

rural local governments or non-entitlement areas. Commerce has no administrative role over CDBG funds awarded directly to local governments by HUD, such as the Seattle Housing Authority.

Annually, non-entitlement local governments apply directly to Commerce for CDBG funds through a competitive procurement process. These entities apply for CDBG funding based on their own locally prioritized activities, which may include employment and training. The specific activities funded by the State CDBG program are unknown until the procurement process is complete and projects have been selected. The Department of Commerce primarily awards CDBG grants for infrastructure activities, but Commerce does set aside a portion of the funds to be used specifically for CDBG public services activities, which may include employment and training activities. When a rural local government applies for and receives CDBG public services funding for an employment or training activity through Commerce, then those activities are required to align with the State's WIOA strategies and be coordinated with the grantees' local WIOA partners.

The Department of Commerce has been a partner from the beginning of the WIOA planning and implementation process, providing staff expertise that shaped the goals in all four strategic priority areas of the state plan: business engagement, integrated service delivery, accessibility for all, and ensuring performance accountability. Staff from the Department of Commerce's Office of Economic and Competitiveness and Division of Community Services and Housing will continue to serve on implementation committees organized by the Workforce Board, in particular working to advance the state's business engagement goals and bring focus to aligning affordable housing initiatives administered by the Department of Commerce to the state's workforce development strategy.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

The Title V Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) is a job training and employment placement support program: defined in the Older Americans Act as amended in 2006 which provides the following definition, and outlines the SCSEP eligibility criteria:

As defined under the Older Americans Act Title V, Section 502(a) (1) "…unemployed low income person who are age 55 or older, particular persons who have poor employment prospects.

Eligible candidates for the program are:

• individuals 55 years year and older

• unemployed

• have a total family income of less than 125 percent of the Federal poverty level

• Have low employment prospects

• Are unable to find employment through the WOIA workforce system

• Homeless or at Risk of Homelessness

• Veterans and qualified spouses

• Have Limited English proficiency

• Have low literacy skills

• Have a Disability

SCSEP is:

Authorized by Congress in Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 to provide subsidized, part–time, community service work based training for low–income persons (125% of federal poverty level) age 55 or older who have poor employment prospects. Poor employment prospects means unemployed at the time of application to SCSEP, and not job ready, in other words, have a need for training in order to become more marketable to employers in the community.

During the enrollment process the individual applicant works with the Employment Coordinator, and/or Participant Coordinator in developing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) based upon the individual's preferences for future employment. During this process the individual is provided with job market opportunities (both present and future trends) which are made available through the State Economic Services Division, the local WorkSource offices, via internet information. Based upon the individuals plan the individual wherein the participant is placed in a part time subsidized job training position at a site (Host Agency) in the community that is a 501(c) 3 or a governmental entity for the purposes of gaining work experience. These subsidized positions are intended to be temporary job training placements wherein the individual can develop, acquire, re–acquire the skills and abilities through which an individual can become successfully employed.

During the time an individual is engaged in the work training positions being offered by the SCSEP programs. Historically the jog training positions focused on community service positions at senior centers, and social service entities. Though these types of training positions are still available to those that choose that employment path many of the positions now are focusing on such marketable training positions as Participant Co–Coordinators/Employment Coordinators, Administrative Assistant with IT and computer skills; IT and data base support staff positions and recently SCSEP providers have supported individuals becoming certified to provide in home health, and Certified Nursing Aid positions. Individuals are encouraged to be engaged in additional education and training opportunities available through the WIOA Core Programs, and other continuing education opportunities available in the community. Historically the program has focus on community service types of positions and placements within community service organizations.

In recent years there has been a shift to develop training and education opportunities beyond the community services field. As technology continues to have a greater influence the job market and life in general there has been an increased effort for SCSEP providers to support the aging worker in gaining these skills and knowledge. Hence the efforts and expectations for individuals to be co–enrolled with appropriate WIOA Core Partner programs; increased training opportunities beyond the basic computer classes to include hands on IT and Data base computer training positions; administrative assistants training via the Microsoft academy and Workforce Development/WorkSource trainings, engaging with local community colleges towards certifications in the Home Health and Certified Nursing Aid programs.

Grantees or local projects will collaborate with local workforce development and economic development councils in both urban and rural areas in order to provide professional development and training on the exceptional qualities that older adults bring to the workplace, to learn about potential employment growth opportunities, to discuss where older workers could add value to growth areas, and to increase job opportunities.

Grantees will facilitate enrollee skill and professional development that matches the needs of industries and occupations critical to regional economic success.

Enrollees will be encouraged to pursue certifications and sub–grantees will facilitate on–the–job employment (OJE) opportunities that place them within view of and consideration by these industries and occupations. This can include internships; apprenticeships and registered apprenticeship opportunities based upon the individual's personal preferences and IEP.

Grantees or local projects will review regional employment data to identify employment opportunities with established career ladders and that have annual vacancies suggesting that they can benefit from an ongoing relationship with the SCSEP program.

Grantees or local projects will pursue partnerships with these entities in conjunction with other partnership development activities and learn what their needs are and how the SCSEP program can serve them.

Enrollees will be encouraged to consider these industries in their IEPs, training, and job search activities via supportive counseling and facilitated access to supportive services.

It has been proposed that in the coming years that job training sites will be able to be developed in the for profit sector. This reflects what we have been witnessing in terms of the trends of candidates applying for the SCSEP program. An increasing number of candidates have enrolled in the program with higher education and work/career experiences. As such we are witnessing an increasing demand for training opportunities that extend beyond the traditional community services placements.

It also is being proposed by DOL that new performance measures be developed to include continuing education expectations, and levels of engagement in certification/credentialing training programs that lead to career pathway outcomes for the individual participant.

The Washington State DSHS/ Aging and Long Term Support Administration's Employment Program Manager designated by the Governor of Washington to be the responsible party for the SCSEP planning and implementation process in the State. In addition to the eleven (11) Sub–grantees contracted by DSHS/ALTSA there are also Four (4) other National Grantees operating within Washington State. These are AARP, Goodwill Industries, and the National Asian Pacific Council on Aging and the National Indian Council on Aging. Currently there are in effect Five (5) different SCSEP. The State Manager is working closely with the National Grantees in creating unified and streamlined efforts towards increasing collaboration and partnerships with the WIOA Core Service Partners.

During the forthcoming years the strategy will entail seeking to develop more formal partnerships between the SCSEP programs to share a new cooperative strategy to better connect the SCSEP Program, the WIA Title I–B Employment and Training Programs, Wagner–Peyser labor exchange services and entail the following systems.

• DSHS Aging & Long Term Support Administration (the state SCSEP grant administrator)

• National SCSEP contractors operating within the state, currently

• AARP Foundation (a current national SCSEP contractor)

• Tacoma Goodwill (national SCSEP contractor)

• Washington Workforce Association

• Workforce Development Councils

• Employment Security Department (Employment and Career Development Division)

• Employment Security Department (Workforce Standards and Integration Division)

• Workforce Boards (State and Local)

• Other interested workforce development system stakeholders

• Such as the employment Pipeline Program developed by Economic Services Administration

• Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

• DSHS partner agencies (Developmental Disabilities Administration, Behavioral Health Services Integration Administration, Economic Services Administration, Health Care Authority, Rehabilitation Administration)

• State Program Manager is a member of the WIOA Combined State Plan workgroup, and the DSHS WIOA and Employment Services Steering Committee.

A component of the strategy will be to insure that each of the SCSEP Grantees operating within a local Workforce Development Council area will be signatories of the local plan. Additionally it will be highly encouraged that at least one SCSEP staff will be available to be on site at the local One–stops in order to provide information and resources on the program; support the local WorkSource staff team, and provide information and technical assistance on working with the aging workforce.

Grantees will access Washington State Employment Security Department data and relevant regional/local analyses from Washington Workforce Explorer at Washington State Workforce Explorer. This data can assist grantees and local projects in targeting employers as potential partners and support participants in understanding how to use the data in considering occupation opportunities.

Grantees will also meet with local workforce and economic development councils and WorkSource Centers to learn their perspective on regional employment opportunities, how best to serve local employers, and potential partnership and program leveraging opportunities with industries and occupations that are critical to the success of the regional economy.

Grantees will be expected to continue to refer SCSEP participants to all WIOA programs that the individual may be eligible to engage in. Additionally the SCSEP grantees have an approach of sharing information cross programs whether it be accepting all WIOA program assessments and/or providing any relevant information to the partner programs in order to foster streamlining of services and minimizing duplication of efforts. Co–enrollment continues to be encouraged to maximize and leverage the trainings, workshop, resume preparation and employer referrals available through the WIOA programs. Grantees within the state will be encouraged to participate regularly in WDC

partnership meetings. During the past year, the SCSEP State Manager has been fostering collaboration efforts both locally and at the state level in terms of partnership with DVR.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE for NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) – WorkFirst

DSHS administers Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which will be included in the Washington State WIOA Combined Plan as an optional, Combined Plan partner and as a "mandatory partner" within the one–stop delivery system. The State of Washington provides cash assistance to financially needy families through the federal TANF program. WorkFirst is the Washington State's welfare–to–work component of TANF. In addition to the TANF cash grant, WorkFirst provides a range of services that address barriers to work and move families towards economic self–sufficiency.

The Department of Social and Health Services(DSHS) partners with several state agencies to provide WorkFirst services: the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) provides basic and vocational education, and work–based learning; the Employment Security Department (ESD) provides job search services through its WorkSource offices; the Department of Commerce, through its contractors, provides subsidized employment and work experience for individuals with barriers to employment; DSHS's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance provides services to limited English proficient individuals; and the Department of Early Learning (DEL) provides subsidized childcare.SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT AND TRANING (SNAP E&T) – BASIC FOOD AND EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAM (BFET) DSHS administers the Basic Food Employment and Training program (BFET), which will be included in the Washington State WIOA Combined Plan as an option, Combined Plan partner program. BFET joins the plan to articulate the programs' role in aligning with, leveraging, and supporting workforce development efforts in Washington State, but not as a partner within the one–stop delivery system due to the 50/50 match and reimbursement structure of the program. Through a 50% reimbursement program with 29 community–based organizations (CBOs), 34 community and technical colleges, and DSHS's Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA), the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) administers the BFET program. The program provides job search, job search training, self–directed job search, educational services, skills training, help with development of self–employment microenterprises, post–employment support services, and other employment and self–employment opportunities to Basic Food recipients not participating in the state's TANF program.

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.

TITLE I: ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH SERVICES

Registered Apprenticeship and Pre–Apprenticeship:

• Locally, LWDBs and their Title I youth, adult and dislocated worker programs partner and coordinate with labor, business, public community and technical colleges, apprenticeship training

centers to develop pre–apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship opportunities for Title I participants.

• At the state level, the State Workforce Development Board (WTECB), State Workforce Agency (ESD), and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges are ex–officio members of the Washington State Apprenticeship & Training Council (WSATC), which also includes ties to the state Department of Labor and Industries' Office of Apprenticeships

• Mutual goals of fostering the apprenticeship training system in the state by developing and monitoring registered apprenticeship programs, promoting apprenticeships as a skills development system for employers as well as a postsecondary training choice for individuals with the goal of expanding apprenticeship training opportunities and recruitment of employers who hire apprentices for traditional and non–traditional programs.

• The Governor and Legislature seek yearly General–Fund state appropriations to support the Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Workforce Education (State Board for Community and Technical Colleges):

• Definite coordination between the Title I Dislocated Worker program and the state's Worker Retraining Program

• Probable coordination between Title I local workforce boards and various Centers of Excellence depending on the connection to key industry sectors and/or industry skill panels.

• Possible coordination between Title I and the state's Job Skills Program and Customized Training Program

• At the state level, WTECB and ESD are ex–officio members of the SBTC Workforce Training Customer Advisory Committee (CAC)

Entrepreneurship and Self–Employment:

• RCW 50.60.030 requires local boards to establish a plan for expending WIOA adult and/or dislocated worker funds on self–employment training at a rate commensurate with either customer demand or the rate of self–employment in the WDA. This is captured in state WIOA Title I Policy 5608 (Self–Employment Training).

• RCW 50.20.250 established the Self Employment Assistance Program that allows UI claimants profiled as likely to exhaust their UI benefits to participate in an approved entrepreneurial or self–employment training program without a work search requirement so long as the individual makes satisfactory progress.

• Some local boards have been involved in the Ice House entrepreneurial training project.

Local non–profit workforce development activities:

• Local workforce boards and their Title I programs have coordinated with a myriad of local non–profit organizations to leverage resources and funding to help at–risk youth, low–income adults

(especially veterans) and dislocated workers acquire the skills and training needed to obtain and keep nonsubsidized employment.

Public Libraries and other Possible Connection Sites:

• Increasing partnership between Title I local workforce boards and public libraries as the latter have “brick and mortar” sites and electronic accessibility to host one–stop connection sites.

• The State Library has been an active planning partner and has expressed interest in building a stronger partnership with the workforce development system for better strategic coordination of services.

• Coordination among workforce development system partners can yield new possibilities for WorkSource connection sites statewide, such as at housing authorities, food banks, etc.

Business Groups:

• Local board directors frequently sit on the boards of local economic development councils, chambers of commerce, and county/city economic development advisory bodies.

Career and Technical Education:

• Coordination with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)/K–12 (Perkins Act Programs) for YouthWorks and Title I services to In–School Youth, as well as collaborating to serve out–of–school youth through the Open Doors program.

TITLE II: ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY (BASIC EDUCATION FOR ADULTS)

Basic Education for Adults (BEdA) will demonstrate alignment with activities outside of the plan in the same way that alignment will occur with core programs, which is designed to assure that current and future jobseekers with basic skills deficiencies receive quality customer service within the WorkSource system. BEdA will also work jointly with employers to maximize the employment outcomes of jobseekers.

TITLE III: WAGNER–PEYSER ACT

ESAP and WCDD continually look to align with activities beyond the elements which directly address program services under the Wagner–Peyser Act and WIOA amendments to realize strategic opportunities benefitting employers and workers and the overall quality of life in Washington State. The department envisions closer collaboration and utilization of Registered Apprenticeships as job–driven strategy, enhanced adult education and literacy program partnerships, transitioning service members to civilian life, offender re–entry support in terms of bonding and employment services, continued linkages with homeless prevention and rapid rehousing, and similar collaboration that can bridge dislocated or disadvantaged current and future jobseekers to higher skills, employment and support resources.

Employment Security reports on registered apprenticeship activities quarterly to the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council staffed by the Labor and Industries Department—the State Apprenticeship Agency. Promotion of registered apprenticeship openings or preparation such as through the King County partner program Apprenticeship and Non–Traditional Employment for Women (ANEW) is a regular part of making career services more accessible and increasing middle–income employment.

A statewide initiative is underway to increase awareness of one stop job prep and job search assistance for the thousands of vocational program graduates of the state's 34 community and technical colleges each year. Through at least PY16, the Employment Security Department is investing in a cadre of 12 Career Pathway Navigators to support pathways and placement for workers upskilling to pursue mid–level careers. Coordinated activities between the college workforce education departments and these Wagner–Peyser staff encompass local college career and technical education students preparing to enter targeted growth industries and industry sector opportunities identified by local Workforce Development Councils (WDCs).

Another area where Wagner–Peyser assets will continue to be leveraged is in partnering more with diverse community based organizations. Referring to or, in some cases, partnering with organizations providing food banks, English Language Learning, housing and energy assistance, financial counseling, and specialized job search such as for military families, offender families, ex–offenders, homeless individuals and families, and recent immigrants expands the value of WorkSource to communities. Under WIOA there is a new emphasis in Washington State for core programs including Wagner–Peyser to conduct outreach to engage these community service providers. Washington State AmeriCorps technology volunteers, Goodwill, libraries and some CBOs respond to WorkSource invitations to bring technology workshops and individual assistance to current and future jobseekers who need to acquire computer basics and intermediate skills.

Increasingly regional library systems carry on joint activities with one–stops. Individuals who frequent libraries and who may not be aware of one stops fall into several categories that can benefit from services. Among underserved groups that can be reached at libraries are women who want to return to the workforce with children entering school; discouraged workers who have given up on actively looking for work, but who would like to work; drop outs or students of working age; incumbent workers who want a different career, different job or different work shift; workers who have voluntarily left the workforce, but who are considering re–entry; or individuals with various barriers to employment such as homeless youth and adults. Wagner–Peyser staff have joined with WIOA Title 1–B staff and CBOs to provide outreach at community discovery days in alignment with library efforts to better serve the needs of customers. Staff provide not just program connections and basic information but put a friendly face on the system.

In many aspects ES operations is well–positioned to expand its partnership with the Department of Labor and Industries injured worker Return–to–Work efforts. A pilot project at WorkSource Everett, one of the state's busiest one–stops, has been very successful in helping injured and recovered workers find suitable employment.

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services received a 3–year $22 million federal grant from the Department of Agriculture to help elevate Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to self–reliance. Resources to Initiate Successful Employment (RISE) will involve many community–based organizations and colleges who will serve SNAP recipients who are homeless, veterans, those with limited English proficiency, the long–term unemployed and non–custodial parents with access to skill building and job search assistance. ES RISE project staff will

receive referrals to provide Strategies for Success workshops for many of the 7,000 people in King, Pierce, Spokane and Yakima counties who are selected for RISE. These workshops are designed to prepared participants to successfully enter and progress along a career pathway.

TITLE IV: DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

The DSB engages in activities with the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB), school districts, teachers of the visually impaired, and families of students with a visual disability. If the student has a co–occurring disability, we advise co–enrollment with our partner agency the DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). DSB, DVR and the Office of Superintendent of Instruction (OSPI) have a memorandum of understanding of how all parties support transition youth services.

The DSB engages with the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS). The CCTS is a Washington State Needs Project funded annually by federal resources from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The goal of CCTS is to improve post–school outcomes for students with disabilities in the state. CCTS has provided transition services training, resources and technical support to DSB staff in support of the agency's transition youth services.

The DSB engages with the Blind Youth Consortium, a quarterly meeting of partner agencies (DSB; Washington State School for the Blind; Washington Sensory Disability Services; Lighthouse for the Blind; Washington Talking Book and Braille Library; OSPI Educational School Districts; the Department of Early Learning; the Department of Health; Seattle Children's Hospital; University of Washington) to collaborate and share resources on blind youth issues within Washington State. The group worked to refine coordination of Birth – 3 vision services statewide, and have collaborated in the need to identify and provide services for individuals with either ocular and/or cortical visual impairment at the earliest point.

The DSB engages actively with Public Institutions of Higher Education. DSB and DVR have entered into a formal agreement with the Public Institutions of Higher Education in Washington. This agreement facilitates collaboration for our participants with disabilities who are attending Higher Education schools in Washington State. One of the primary components in the agreement concerns cost sharing for certain high cost accommodations.

The DSB engages with the Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP) to broaden access and services to adaptive technology for the agency participants. The DSB and WATAP have an interagency agreement to facilitate equipment loans, technology assessment services and trainings. The DSB informs agency participants of funding mechanisms for adaptive technology through the Washington Access Technology Fund, and works with the Deaf Blind Equipment Program to coordinate technology assessment and training.

The DSB engages in activities with tribal vocational rehabilitation programs, meeting quarterly in each region of the state with the eight partner tribal programs and the DVR, and all partners meet annually to refine the memorandum of understanding on how we will partner on service delivery.

The DSB engages with the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program through the Veteran's Administration (VA), and the agency has entered into a memorandum of understanding

among the DVR and the VA on how all will partner to provide services among potentially shared customer base.

The DSB engages with the Washington Sensory Disability Services (WSDS). DSB staff partner with WSDS in providing referrals and services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired, or deaf–blind, by providing training and other support to families and service providers. They are a strong partner within the Blind Youth Consortium.

The DSB engages with the Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (ODHH). ODHH is a state agency that provides resources for our Deaf Blind participants, including telecommunication–related services, reasonable accommodations to access DSHS services and human services via regional service centers of the deaf and hard of hearing. ODHH manages the funds for the Deaf Blind Service Center, which provides information, referral and Support Service Providers for environmental interpretation.

The DSB engages with the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC). The Helen Keller National Center is a resource for DSB on Deaf–Blind resources and can provide contracted services to DSB participants as well as trainings for DSB staff for working effectively with DSB Deaf Blind participants.

TITLE IV: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES – DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The vocational rehabilitation portion of the Combined State Plan describes in detail how the DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS/DVR), as a core program, aligns its activities and services with mandatory and optional one–stop partners as well as an array of other programs outside the one–stop system to jointly serve eligible individuals with disabilities. These activities are identified through cooperative agreements and tailored to the needs of an individual through the Individualized Plan for Employment developed by each DSHS/DVR customer. That plan specifically identifies all of the services required by an individual to achieve their chosen employment goal, including which one–stop partner or other provider will jointly serve the individual to assist them in reaching their goal.

PARTNER PROGRAMS UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Align with the *Reemployment Service and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program provided by ESD merit system staff who will provide a comprehensive assessment on employment and UI eligibility. These staff should be given cross training into various other program requirements to ensure each claimant has recommendations that are individualized to meet his/her specific needs and ensure strong well balanced performance across the programs and broad range of UI activities with the flexibility to incorporate program integrity. Those with specific UI issues will have access to speak with the claims center which will involve having direct line chat feature available to those claimants who utilize the WorkSource offices and are in need of assistance on their claims. Each claimant will be given an orientation to WorkSource services, followed by a one–on–one interview to complete an individualized employment plan which includes a provision of labor market information, a comprehensive assessment of the claimants skills and abilities related to employment needs and

unemployment eligibility, each claimant will be given specific reemployment/career service referrals. This could be enhanced further by up to two additional interviews. Activities are monitored for compliance, and reported as necessary.

* RESEA is our UI reemployment orientation which are those connected to the federal requirement to profile workers to identify those most likely to exhaust and need reemployment services (WPRS) and our Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) program rolled up into 1 activity instead of two separate groups as we have customarily done in the past.

JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS

DVOPs routinely co–enroll case managed clients with other programs to provide the widest possible range of eligible services. These programs include: WIOA, Trade Adjustment Act, WorkFirst, and Labor Exchange. They also partner with local community organizations that provide services to veterans.

LVERs partner with other WorkSource programs, as listed above, to locate veterans with employment needs that may be participating in such programs, as LVERs address employment needs of all veterans, regardless of whether they have SBEs. LVERs partner extensively with business services staff, chambers of commerce, and other employer–related organizations. The also work extensively with apprenticeship programs to secure opportunities for veterans.

TRADE ACT

When co–enrolling participants with other programs, Trade Act counselors coordinate with program partners in the community to ensure there is no duplication of services. Trade Act can provide retraining after extensive assessment and research to ensure the participant is suitable for that training and the training is in demand. Trade Act counselors encourage co–enrollment in programs which will assist the participant to be successful in getting back to work.

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

The state Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), administered by the Department of Commerce, awards funds to local community action agencies to provide services to low–income households at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (FPL). CSBG Grantees determine how funding will be used to support allowable CSBG activities, such as employment and training activities. These funds may be used to provide actual services to individuals, or they may be used to support the administration of allowable services and activities funded thru a different source. When the CSBG grantee elects to use CSBG funding to provide workforce development employment and training services to individuals, those services will be required to align with the States WIOA strategies and be coordinated with the local one–stop center.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

If a rural local government applies for and receives CDBG funding for a job creation activity, the business will be required to coordinate job recruitment and hiring with the regional WorkSource/one–stop center. If a local government applies for and receives CDBG funding for job training services, the training program (in most cases a community action program) will align with the State's WIOA strategies. Any CDBG funded construction activities must comply with the Davis Bacon Act, including registration with the federal Department of Labor or DOL–recognized State Apprenticeship Council when apprentices are employed. CDBG funded contracts must comply with Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The transition from WIA to WIOA has the potential for the SCSEP Grantees to have significant impacts on a variety of levels. One of the most significant changes is that the SCSEP Grantees are moving towards taking on a more unified voice at both the state and the local levels. One of the key strategies includes shifting the SCSCEP Four Year State plan from a stand–alone state plan to that of being a part of the Four Year WIOA Combined State Plan. This promotes SCSEP being of more of a member partner of the workforce community throughout the state. Being involved with the combined state plan includes the commitment to better support the workforce development systems and being with and in alignment with the services, increased streamlining of information and data sharing, co–enrollment with partner programs, and sharing of resources (employment, education , social services, and supportive services).

The SCSEP State Manager's role with SCSEP, and concurrent role as the Employment Program Manager for the DSHS Aging and Long Term Support Administration allows for that position to have not an increased presence at the state planning level, but also in promoting additional opportunities for SCSEP grantees and the state workforce development council in providing resources beyond employment and education for individuals enrolled in employment and education programs. This can also prove beneficial for employers striving to hire disadvantaged and individuals with disabilities.

There are significant changes to federal and state legislation as to the focus on enhancing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to become not just employable, but towards increased access and opportunities for career paths and beyond living wage jobs. Some of these changes have been addressed with the revisions to the Rehabilitation Services Act, changes with the Center for Medicaid Services criteria for services which increases the opportunities for individuals receiving Medicaid services to include supported employment. In Washington State the Governor has engaged the Committee/TaskForce on improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities; and for the hiring of individuals with disabilities in state government positions.

Starting in October of 2013 ALTSA has engaged with employment service staff and partners from the DSHS family of agencies to explore collaboration and partnership opportunities to expand employment service opportunities for Washington State. The DSHS agencies represented from the Developmental Disabilities Administration; Behavioral Health Services Integration Administration, Juvenile Justice Rehabilitation Administration; Employment Security, Healthcare Authority.

The aforementioned DSHS partners have also initiated discussion with the Washington State Centers for Independent Living Council; Washington State Rehabilitation Council; and Traumatic

Brain Injury Council and Veterans Administration to explore options for enhancing opportunities for the SCSEP program and other employment and education providers and interested stakeholders.

We will continue to develop Overviews of the SCSEP program on a minimum of an annual basis and provide to the aforementioned and required organizations; as well as making this available to other community stakeholders and potential partners. (Such as the Washington Business Leadership Network; the Community Employment Alliance; Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation; WISe (Washington Institute for Supported Employment).

These are elements critical to developing additional partners and other sources of income towards sustaining and enhancing the opportunities for the program.

We are in the process of developing an increased presence in the WorkSource system by engaging with Aging Forums in a number of counties around the State; providing presentations on issues facing the Aging Workforce, to individuals receiving services through the WorkSource systems in an effort to both market SCSEP and also in regards to providing additional opportunities for collaboration between the organizations and systems.

In fulfilling the obligations of the Older American's Act (OAA) six of the SCSEP state sub grantees are Area Agencies on Aging. Area agencies on Aging have a long history of collaborating with different entities to facilitate comprehensive service support systems for older adults. Their public planning processes include analyses of local trends and needs. In Washington State, this facilitation extends to adults with disabilities, family caregivers of persons of all ages, including children with developmental disabilities and in–home care agencies for persons with developmental disabilities. Washington's AAAs are both providers of direct services and funders of community service providers. They maintain close relationships with their partnering subcontracted providers to ensure that services are provided in conformance with their area plans, state and federal requirements, and consumers' individual choices. The non–AAA SCSEP sub grantees coordinate closely with the AAAs for understanding community service needs and facilitating cross–referrals.

The AARP Foundation and Goodwill Industries also coordinates with the local Area Agencies on Aging to understand available services and assist participants to link up with services for which they may be eligible. These relationships also assist individuals determined ineligible for SCSEP, but in need of help to navigate the aging & disability network. The AARP Foundation has been a long–time national partner with the Administration on Aging for improved services for older adults, including family caregivers and older workers.

The Area Agencies on Aging are continually working via government to government relationships with tribes located in their planning and service areas (PSAs), including those that receive funding under Title VI of the OAA. This is a work in progress with ongoing improvement and refinement.

With the advent of the Affordable Care Act during the past year many more it will be important to be aware of and engage in discussions as to options for potential service opportunities (healthcare, and employment) that may now be available to participants.

The Social Security and entitlements (Federal, State and Veterans) can be very complex and difficult to understand and navigate. Many individuals decide not to work or work fewer hours based upon the misperceptions that they will lose their benefits (medical and financial) if they go to work. As such we are in the process of developing partnership efforts with the Washington State Benefits Planner Networks, The Maximus Ticket to Work WIPA program, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and

others in an effort to provide individuals with access to these resources. This is in addition to the Affordable Care Act and the Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities (HWD) or Medicaid Buy In program.

The SCSEP providers that are Area Agency providers have established relationships with organizations providing services to older adults and persons with disabilities. These include, but are not limited to, aging information & referral/assistance (I&R/A), transportation, family caregiver support, kinship caregiver support, nutrition, legal services, and in–home care. All but a few of the AAAs provide aging I&R/A directly. As the I&R/As transform over the next few years into Aging and Disability Centers (ADRCs) their knowledge and collaborative efforts will expand via relationship–building with disability–related service systems, including independent living centers, Labor and Industries, and Ticket–to–Work programs. The SCSEP programs will be natural partners with the ADRCs as one ADRC goal is to connect consumers with workforce options.

Local 2–1–1 development and implementation has also provided impetus for relationship–building and coordination. In the arena of private employers, AAAs have established relationships with healthcare organizations and business–related services. Because of these established and emerging relationships, AAAs are well–positioned to coordinate within their communities to build strategic alliances on behalf of older workers. The combination of AAA and workforce–related entities among the state's sub grantees results in a dynamic opportunity for creative and successful private/public partnerships.

SCSEP providers use other public and private agencies as part of their community outreach. Recruiters visit public places older people frequent such as senior centers, faith–based centers, senior apartments, job fairs, food stamp and Social Security offices. Project directors will leverage relationships with Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans Affairs, disease groups and March of Dimes to help with physical barriers to employment.

NAPCA seeks partnership and information resources in local ethnic communities which can help AAPI older jobseekers with special needs or disabilities. The partnership with local ethnic organizations is very important due to many participants' limited language capacity.

TANF (WorkFirst) /SNAP E&T (BFET) Programs

WorkFirst and BFET activities are already structured to be provided in partnership with core and mandatory one–stop partners. Alignment within the comprehensive one–stops varies in local regions and per contractors situated in the respective regions. There may be some duplication in services between the partner programs; however, that is primarily due to each program having its own eligibility criteria which must be met by the participants. In addition, WorkFirst includes 28 Local Planning Areas (LPAs) that help coordinate and plan for WorkFirst implementation and use of resources locally.

For BFET specifically, there may be local contractors that provide BFET services as well as WIOA funded services. These contractors may or may not be located within the one–stop. In this case, contractors determine which program(s) the client may be served by and how a comprehensive suite of services can be provided to support the individual along the pathway to goal completion.

Services are provided through the WorkFirst and BFET partnerships, and program data is tracked using the Electronic Jobs Automated System (eJAS). The eJAS tracks participation by service component code with starting and ending dates. The partners who provide the services are also identified in eJAS using distinct contractor codes, allowing the program to track multiple services by different partners. The system is able to track participation by participant, by contractor and by service component. Historical data for the program from eJAS is stored in the DSHS data warehouse. This allows partners to be aware of services the participant is actively enrolled in as well as where there may be opportunities for additional support and potential co–enrollment in WIOA funded services.

As a mandatory partner within the comprehensive one–stop in each workforce development region, DSHS will continue to partner to analyze methodologies to streamline intake, share information, and jointly serve WorkFirst and BFET eligible participants.

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.

All partners in Washington's combined plan have agreed to meet periodically to explore opportunities to align service delivery to improve outcomes for all workforce development participants, in particular populations with barriers to employment. All participants are committed to the goals outlined in the Integrated Service Delivery and Access and Technology chapters of the state combined plan and will monitor their implementation through the planning cycle, meeting periodically to assess where additionally coordination among partners is needed to accomplish a particular goal. In particular, system partners are committed to meeting regularly in the early part of the plan cycle to discuss appropriate professional development for frontline and managerial one–stop staff that aligns to the Navigational model discussed in the Integrated Service Delivery chapter of the plan.

Overall, the system's goal is to ensure that every customer has the education, employability skills, work experience, and credentials needed to move into sustained employment and economic self–sufficiency, and receives the wraparound services needed to pursue his or her career pathway. The three goals the system has committed itself to are:

• Increasing the number of designated navigators available within the One–Stop system.

• Developing an intake process that eliminates redundant assessments and streamlines customer experience.

• Increasing the number of participants, including those with barriers, who have defined career pathways and have gained portable skills, received industry recognized credentials, and/or earned college credits.

Ensuring universal access to workforce development services has been a bedrock principle in Washington's planning process. Every Washington resident needs universal, barrier–free access to our state's workforce system. Technology is a powerful tool that can reduce obstacles to access. However, it's clear that technology will not solve all accessibility issues. Tailored approaches to different populations are required. To that end, Washington has developed the following goals geared towards improving access to services for populations with barriers to employment.

Implement secure, wireless Internet access in public areas of all comprehensive One–Stop centers in Washington by 2020.

Establish a state–level advisory committee on accessibility and barrier solutions and ensure the designation of local advisory committees during the first two years of the plan. By the fourth year of the plan, ensure the state–level advisory committee has received annual progress reports on one–stop centers' accessibility at the local level.

Identify and encourage local pilot programs that use technology to facilitate and improve an integrated service delivery for customers, including programs designed to improve access to the system.

CORE PROGRAMS

TITLE I: ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH SERVICES

System–wide referral of veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) to the Employment Security Department's Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP). Line staff in all of the core and partner programs under Washington's Combined State Plan will be educated as to the definition of SBE in order to more readily identify such veterans when they present themselves and those line staff will also be availed of contact information and directions for the nearest WorkSource (one–stop) center(s) to facilitate a front–end assessment and staff referral to DVOP.

An on–line Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) assessment tool has been built into WorkSourceWA.com so that WorkSource (one–stop) customers who disclose a disability can determine if they are potentially eligible for DVR services. If the on–line survey indicates such, a follow up contact with a DVR representative is initiated to facilitate a formal eligibility determination.

Washington issued state WIOA Title I Policy 5602 (Supportive Services and Need Related Payments).

TITLE II: ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY (BASIC EDUCATION FOR ADULTS)

Washington State's Adult Education Advisory Committee provides guidance in the development of system one–stop operations to provide the following core services:

• Use of CASAS as the state–wide assessment for Educational Functioning Level (EFL and educational gain)

• Adult Education and ELA instruction to clients in need of retraining

• High school equivalency or HSC preparation for clients in need of retraining

• All educational services for WorkFirst clients

• Navigational and support services to adult education students

In collaboration with the local Workforce Development Councils (WDC), local providers work together to provide literacy services to adult learners, parents, and their children. Staff from one–stop centers and/or partnering agencies, along with community college and community based organization providers, have been cross–trained in CASAS assessment and data collection to provide targeted support for Washington's college and career readiness pathways.

Programs across the state, in collaboration with local WDCs and the SBCTC Workforce Division, are piloting the Start Next Quarter initiative to connect current and potential students with services and programs in Washington State. This is a free online eligibility screener for employment and training programs at participating agencies and community colleges. Eligible students may then apply for funding and learn the steps to start a training program.

In partnership with the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) and Washington Workforce Association (WWA), SBCTC collaborated to create the I BEST Program Information website. This interactive online tool provides partners from the workforce development system, including WorkSource, Labor and Industry, WorkFirst and others with accurate I BEST program information that can be accessed quickly and easily. This allows all agencies and systems to work together more effectively to create education/employment plans for shared clients and to coordinate resources that result in the skilled workers that Washington employers need. At the same time, the site addresses the needs of college and CBO staff such as advisors, faculty, volunteers, program directors, SBCTC staff, and students in locating I BEST programs being offered across the state.

This tool provides real–time information about what types of I BEST programs are being offered on each college campus and provides a contact name, phone number and email for further inquiries. It also indicates when a student can enroll in an I BEST program and links directly to the college's Web page. Students and agency partners can search for I BEST programs by institution, career pathway, program name, county, or quarter the program will be offered.

This tool leverages power from two perspectives:

1. Within the system – Provides the ability to engage potential students, advisors, instructors, etc. in order to guide students into the programs that address their needs and goals, keep programs vital, and fulfill the college's role to meet the dual demands of employers and soon–to–be skilled workers.

2. Outside the system – Provides partners from the Workforce Development System, the WorkSource System, Labor and Industry, WorkFirst and others with accurate information that can be accessed quickly and easily and allows them both to create specific education/employment plans for their clients and to access the required funding that allows clients to become I BEST participants and skilled workers.

TITLE III: WAGNER–PEYSER ACT

In accordance with section 8(b) in the Wagner–Peyser Act, local comprehensive centers and affiliates have assigned disability specialists. The ES staff serving in this role receive training on serving individuals with disabilities and on accessible computer work stations. Also, they are often involved in local efforts to enhance employment and training access for individuals with disabilities. When there are special grants such as the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), core program staff will be equipped to direct referrals for assessment and program services.

In cooperation with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Services for the Blind, ESD will support ongoing efforts to expand accessibility for blind individuals who, as a population, infrequently use one stops. One stops and the WorkSourceWA.com website will be ADA section 508/Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compatible. Local one stops will accommodate blind, deaf and other individuals with disabilities. Such strategies as having a sign language interpreter scheduled to come in for accommodating those who are deaf will continue. Blind individuals can be served in any of the large variety of one stop workshops by staff offering to go over written handouts on an individual basis, or simply offering to email materials that could be made accessible by the individual's own text–to–voice software.

Some centers have co–located vocational rehabilitation counselors with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in the Department of Social and Health Services. Co–location of VR staff increases referrals from Wagner–Peyser and other co–located staff and vice versa. Coordination between core and other programs is better so that persons with disabilities can get more help to compete for and enjoy high quality employment through acquiring the necessary skills while receiving any necessary supports. Under WIOA Title IV, VR staff outreach to disabled youth graduating from the K–12 system will encourage more young people to pursue assistance from WorkSource to begin career pathways toward self–support through viable avenues. Many ES–staffed one stops have taken the initiative to invite high school teachers of students on IEPs to make field trips fostering a sense of comfort in approaching WorkSource.

Wagner–Peyser staff are on the front lines and have skills to triage customers. When learning deficits are indicated, staff may refer to specialized program services, but always attempt to first include customers in group services and one–on–one services. Staff often deploy the career safety net by strongly recommending ESL, GED preparation, high school completion, or I–BEST programming through contracted education providers or the local college even if their previous jobs didn't require any basic level of educational attainment.

Individuals participating in TANF WorkFirst program pathways are often jointly served by two or more partner providers. For instance, parents participating in community jobs work experience can receive job search preparation assistance at the local WorkSource. Some offices even serve as work experience sites. Likewise, TANF mandated work participation rates are increased by involvement across multiple partners whenever possible. Case staffing for particular individuals on TANF who are struggling, or in some locations, Department of Social and Health Services staff engagement with parents at one stops has improved TANF participation performance and outcomes.

Alignment and coordination across federal, state and local programs for veteran employment and training is mandated by the Jobs for Veterans Act and regulated by 20 CFR 1010, as well as joint DOL VETS and ETA formally issued guidance and WorkSource system policy. Locally operated DOL programs, including Wagner–Peyser and TAA under the direct oversight of ES management, and other programs identified in the regulation must provide Priority of Service to covered persons as mandated. Qualified disabled veterans may receive a referral to a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist if they meet at least one of the DOL VETS disability or disadvantaged

veteran criteria. Some areas have many more options for veterans and their families such as opportunities available through The Serve Center in Everett, Washington. The Serve Center is located with WorkSource Snohomish County at Everett Station. Co–located veteran program partners include the VA, Veteran Employment Services Office; Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program; Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) and DVOP specialists; Volunteers of America, Catholic Family Services, and others serving transitioning military members, veterans and their families.

TITLE IV: DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

The DSB will champion the State's strategy of Access and Technology, which has the express intent of identifying potential barriers to services for the communities identified within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and developing ways for addressing those barriers. The success of this strategy will be critical for the ability of blind, low vision and deaf blind individuals to access the workforce array of services and opportunities. If the State's Access and Technology strategy is successful, the DSB will be able to offer a wider array of vocational trainings and opportunities to agency participants, providing stronger and more effective pathways to employment that both meets participant aptitude and business need. The DSB will continue to be a resource to partner programs for technical assistance in creating service delivery systems, processes and tools that are disability–friendly, inclusive, and accessible. The DSB will continue to advocate among partner programs that universal accessibility elements often provide benefit for the general public and will often result in more streamlined, usable services for all.

The DSB as a Title IV Rehabilitation Program has a long history of participant–centered service provision with client–focused concepts such as "informed choice" and "comprehensive and individualized services" incorporated since 1998 into the fabric of our work and services, and the DSB can and will provide technical assistance and unique perspectives among our Combined State Plan partners towards improved customer service provision.

The DSB will work to increase awareness among partner agency staff of the array of services offered through the DSB, and which their customers may also benefit from. The DSB will assist in the education of its own agency staff to the array of services available through our workforce partners that our agency participants might also benefit from.

The DSB expects the State's Workforce Board to fulfill its mandate to provide representation on the agency's State Rehabilitation Council. The State Rehabilitation Council's purpose is described within the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (as amended) to provide informed advisement toward the agency's successful implementation of the intent of the Rehab Act, and representation on the Council of a member of the State Workforce Board is a legal requirement as defined in the Rehab Act. Without the input from the State's Workforce Board, the agency's Council lacks the critical workforce perspective that would allow them to fully meet their congressional–defined role. Workforce representation on the agency's Council would aid the agency in meeting the new WIOA mandates for business engagement.

TITLE IV: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES – DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The vocational rehabilitation portion of the Combined State Plan describes in detail an extensive array of cooperative agreements that the DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS/DVR), as a core program, develops with mandatory and optional one–stop partners as well as other programs outside the one–stop system to jointly serve eligible individuals with disabilities. Each of these cooperative agreements includes provisions for co–enrollment and joint service delivery to individuals who require services from multiple programs to achieve their employment goal.

PARTNER PROGRAMS

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Depending on the individuals assessment provide specific reemployment services that could include, co–enrollment into training programs, referrals to other reemployment activities, suitable job matches, provisions of labor market information with one data base so that each person who interacts with an individual will readily see what actions have been taken and what next steps will benefit the claimant. All claimants will be registered in WorkSource.WA.com to ensure businesses have access to the full inventory of skilled workers in our state and aid in their rapid re–employment.

We may have the capability to partner closer in areas connected to training opportunities such as:

Training Benefits (TB) program, waives work search requirement while eligible claimants train for careers in high–demand fields. Claimants may be eligible to extend the length of time they receive unemployment benefits.

Commissioner Approved Training (CAT), waives work search requirement while eligible claimants train for careers in high–demand fields. Will not extend unemployment benefits.

Self–Employment Assistance Program (SEAP), waives work search requirement while eligible claimants can enter into self–employment entrepreneurial training and receive business counseling while collecting unemployment benefits.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) helps trade affected workers who become unemployed as a result of increased imports from or shift in production to foreign countries return to suitable employment as quickly as possible. This could include Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), Occupational skills training, income support, reemployment services, relocation, job search allowances and Alternative or Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA/RTAA).

JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS

System–wide referral of veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) to the Employment Security Department’s Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP). Line staff in all of the core and partner programs under Washington’s Combined State Plan will be educated as to the definition of SBE in order to more readily identify such veterans when they present themselves and those line staff will also be availed of contact information and directions for the nearest WorkSource (one–stop) center(s) to facilitate a front–end assessment and staff referral to DVOP.

TRADE ACT

Because Trade Act doesn't cover supportive services, Trade Act participants are usually also enrolled in the Dislocated Worker and Veteran programs. Often, workers with families are also enrolled in TANF. Worker Retraining and Dislocated Worker programs at the colleges frequently provide funds for the first quarter of training while the participant is being enrolled in Trade Act and doing training research.

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

The state Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), administered by the Department of Commerce, awards funds to local community action agencies to provide services to low–income households at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (FPL). CSBG Grantees determine how funding will be used to support allowable CSBG activities, such as employment and training activities. These funds may be used to provide actual services to individuals, or they may be used to support the administration of allowable services and activities funded thru a different source. When the CSBG grantee elects to use CSBG funding to provide workforce development employment and training services to individuals, those services will be required to align with the States WIOA strategies and be coordinated with the local one–stop center.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awards Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds throughout the state of Washington both through Commerce and directly to local governments in CDBG entitlement areas. Commerce administers the state CDBG funding to rural local governments or non-entitlement areas. Commerce has no administrative role over CDBG funds awarded directly to local governments by HUD, such as the Seattle Housing Authority.

Annually, non-entitlement local governments apply directly to Commerce for CDBG funds through a competitive procurement process. These entities apply for CDBG funding based on their own locally prioritized activities, which may include employment and training. The specific activities funded by the State CDBG program are unknown until the procurement process is complete and projects have been selected. The Department of Commerce primarily awards CDBG grants for infrastructure activities, but Commerce does set aside a portion of the funds to be used specifically for CDBG public services activities, which may include employment and training activities. When a rural local government applies for and receives CDBG public services funding for an employment or training activity through Commerce, then those activities are required to align with the State's WIOA strategies and be coordinated with the grantees' local WIOA partners.

The Department of Commerce has been a partner from the beginning of the WIOA planning and implementation process, providing staff expertise that shaped the goals in all four strategic priority areas of the state plan: business engagement, integrated service delivery, accessibility for all, and ensuring performance accountability. Staff from the Department of Commerce's Office of Economic and Competitiveness and Division of Community Services and Housing will continue to serve on

implementation committees organized by the Workforce Board, in particular working to advance the state's business engagement goals and bring focus to aligning affordable housing initiatives administered by the Department of Commerce to the state's workforce development strategy.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

SCSEP has very specific guideline and enrollment criteria that provide for a niche target population within the overall spectrum of WIOA Core Services in Washington State.

Eligible candidates for the SCSEP program are:

• individuals 55 years year and older

• unemployed

• have a total family income of less than 125 percent of the Federal poverty level

• Have low employment prospects

• Are unable to find employment through the WOIA workforce system

• Homeless or at Risk of Homelessness

• Veterans and qualified spouses

• Have Limited English proficiency

• Have low literacy skills

• Have a Disability

In reviewing the data from DOL it becomes apparent that there are a significant number of individuals enrolled in the program that could most likely benefit from services through a DSHS medical, behavioral health or other entitlement driven service. As SCSEP staff provides this information to potential participants a secondary gain will be the training and education of WorkSource staff as to the social service programs and resources available to enrollees of all WIOA Core Service partners.

The federal guidelines for WIOA list of "individuals with a barrier to employment" and the eligibility criteria for the SCSEP program are virtually identical. Additionally there are SCSEP providers in the Central Washington area that have provided services for migrant and seasonal farm workers (or members of their family), Ex–offenders, individuals who have been on TANF, Single parents and there are two Tribal Nation AAA and the National Indian Council on Aging who serve primarily Native Americans, and the National Asian Pacific Council on Aging and other SCSEP providers that have enrolled Native Hawaiians.

To ensure equitable participation by individuals who meet the federal guidelines for the SCSEP most–in need criteria the SCSEP provider organizations will continue to cultivate cross–referral coordination and recruitment partnerships with local entities serving prioritized individuals are fostered by the state and national grantees and achieved by local projects. Some of these partners include, but will not be limited to:

• Local organizations serving minorities and/or individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), including local translation/interpreter services

• Indian tribes

• Centers for Independent Living, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other disability–related organizations, including those serving individuals with physical, learning, developmental, mental and sensory disabilities

• Home and community–based long–term care social service organizations and providers

• DSHS partner agencies; Community Service Offices; DVR; Area Agencies on Aging; Behavioral Health Care agencies;

• Congregate meal sites and other places were older adults congregate for publicly–funded services

• Information and Referral/Assistance (I&R/A) programs, including 2–1–1, aging I&R/A, Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), Family Caregiver Support, Military Family Support Centers, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren programs and Kinship Navigators, Child Resource and Referral, etc.

• Housing and Homeless programs

• Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) local offices, where staff determine and authorize Medicaid, food–stamps, general assistance and other public programs for low–income individuals

• Faith–based organizations

• Other Employment and Training Programs, including WorkSource employment centers, community and technical colleges, Ticket – to Work programs, and national SCSEP sponsors

• Local and regional Veterans' contacts and entities, including the State Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran medical centers, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

• In addition, employment newsletters, local newspapers and electronic bulletin boards/Internet job listings, where available, may be utilized to recruit most–in–need enrollees.

Recruitment goals for targeted, priority participants will continue to be met primarily by using the Application for SCSEP services. This application will be used to determine and document participant income eligibility according to revised income definitions, inclusions and exclusions. Once an inquiry has been made to a SCSEP office, staff/participant staff will determine who is eligible and, if there is a waiting list, the priority that will be given to each applicant.

It is the policy and procedure of Aging & Long Term Support Administration (ALTSA) for all SCSEP grantees to serve minorities in at least the same proportion to a service area's population. Grantees will work jointly to provide enhanced emphasis on training and technical assistance to assist subprojects to improve targeted outreach, recruitment, and identification for persons who meet eligibility and most–in–need criteria.

TANF (WorkFirst)/SNAP E&T (BFET) Programs

DSHS will continue to partner with core, mandatory, and other one–stop partner programs to coordinate activities and use of resources to provide comprehensive, high–quality, customer–centered services, including supportive services to TANF and BFET eligible individuals, including those populations identified in section II (a) (1) (B).

DSHS is currently in the process of developing a "Principles of Collaboration" agreement with the Workforce Development Councils to help formalize how we will engage and interact with each other. In addition, the department is working to enhance the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) regarding the co–enrollment and joint service provision to individuals eligible for both DVR and TANF services.

DSHS is also co–convening an ad–hoc committee made up of workforce development partners, including all core program administering agencies at the state level to examine the possibility of developing a joint eligibility process for clients entering the workforce development system. This will potentially result in less duplicative efforts regarding screening for eligibility for multiple programs as well as co–enrollment and supportive services strategies.

As one of the TANF/WorkFirst and BFET partners, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) has also provided a response DSHS would like to include with our response regarding SBCTC collaborative efforts with DSHS around these programs specifically:

WorkFirst – SBCTC WorkFirst providers include community and technical colleges, private career schools and community–based organizations that provide access to education and training. SBCTC providers contribute basic skills and college placement assessments and one–on–one academic planning to establish appropriate education and training pathways for individuals. They provide ongoing academic advising in collaboration with other WIOA partners to develop a career pathway for each individual and provide ongoing barrier resolution. SBCTC providers work closely with partners to appropriately co–enroll participants in education, training, work–based and barrier removal activities to best meet the employability skill needs of the individual and move them toward self–sufficiency. SBCTC providers also offer Work Study and internship opportunities.

Basic Food Employment & Training (BFET) – SBCTC BFET providers include all 34 community and technical colleges within the state. College BFET providers are available to assist individuals with accessing SNAP assistance through the Washington Connection portal and/or by evaluating their eligibility and submitting requests to DSHS for final verification. Colleges provide basic skills and college placement assessments and one–on–one academic planning to establish appropriate education and training pathways for individuals. Colleges offer barrier removal services to individuals and collaborate with WIOA partners to access additional needed services. A one–on–one, client–centered approach to career pathway development is utilized by college staff. Colleges provide funding for tuition, education and training fees, testing fees, books, transportation, tools, and

emergency services. They also provide assistance in acquiring other resources and support services from other partners when needed. This includes co–enrollment with community–based organizations for work–based learning and employment services, ESD for employment services, and other college programs for access to additional support services and funding.

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.

WIOA is an opportunity to reinvent and re–energize business engagement. By serving jobseekers and businesses, the workforce development system will be a catalyst for creating a strong and vibrant future workforce.

Local workforce development councils will play a lead role in business engagement. The state's workforce development partners have collaborated on a set of resources local councils can leverage to improve business engagement. Additionally, state partners have set the following goals to improve business services. These goals will be monitored by state partners regularly during the planning cycle.

• Establish a baseline and increase the number of businesses utilizing the workforce system.

• Establish a baseline and increase the number and percentage of businesses reporting satisfaction with the services they receive via the workforce system by 5 percent each year.

• Have at least one sector partnership in development in each workforce region. Use the Sector Partnership Framework to show progress over time.

• Train at least 30 percent of the workforce system on the implementation of sector partnerships.

• Increase resources for work–and–learn opportunities, including on–the–job training and apprenticeship, internships, job shadows, but especially, incumbent worker training.

• Increase the amount of work–based training, including incumbent worker training, on–the–job training and apprenticeship, job shadows, internships.

CORE PROGRAMS TITLE I: ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH SERVICES

The Title I program will continue to use funds to expand both engagement and participation of employers in the State's workforce investment system through, but not limited to, the following business services:

• Develop, convene, or implement industry or sector partnerships

• Customized screening and referral of qualified participants in training services to employers

• Customized services to employers, employer associations, or other such organizations, on employment–related issues

• Customized recruitment/hiring events, job fairs, workshops and related services for employers (e.g., targeted hiring, new business openings, seasonal hiring, and safety training)

• Marketing on–line with the support of ESD's Communications Office for occasions such as holiday hiring or major veterans hiring events

• Human resource consultation services (e.g., writing/reviewing job descriptions and employee handbooks; developing performance evaluation and personnel policies; creating orientation sessions for new workers; honing job interview techniques for efficiency and compliance; analyzing employee turnover; or explaining labor laws to help employers comply with wage/hour and safety/health regulations)

• Customized labor market information for specific employers, sectors, industries or clusters

• Increased coordination with WSATC, L&I, labor and business to support and develop pre–apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities and providing customized assistance or referral for assistance in the development of registered apprenticeships

• Job order listings and applicant referrals through WorkSourceWA.com, the Monster–based state job matching system to provide a deeper pool of talent for employers to recruit

• Employer Needs Assessment

• Unemployment Insurance Access

• Access to Facilities

• Translation Services

• Developing and delivering innovative workforce investment services and strategies for area employers, e.g., career pathways, skills upgrading, skill standard development and certification for recognized postsecondary credentials or other employer use, apprenticeship, and other effective initiatives for meeting the workforce investment needs of area employers and workers

• Assistance in managing reductions in force in coordination with rapid response activities and with strategies for the aversion of layoffs, and the delivery of employment and training activities to address risk factors

• Assisting employers with accessing local, state, and federal tax credits, including Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) certification

• Local Veterans Employment Representatives outreach to businesses to veterans to employers interested in attracting qualified veterans

• Recruiting and initial screening for participation in WIOA special projects to train for demand occupations, OJTs or customized training

• Increasing rapid response and pursuing National Dislocated Worker Grant funding to serve dislocated workers

First and foremost, Local Workforce Development Boards are, by law, business led, which by definition provides an effective and enduring focus on the needs of local businesses.

WorkSource partnerships of program providers have become a network of support for business customers in league with our critical secondary and higher education partners. Our operations are retraining seasoned workers and preparing the next generation of skilled workers. We are succeeding in large part because of business, labor and government participation toward full employment for the state's diverse communities. Connecting business and industry representatives so that they have a voice in directing WorkSource resources at the local board level contributes to a prepared, skilled workforce for employers and has the ultimate goal of creating jobs and careers for workers and a stronger economy.

Local boards, while adapted to varying local economic structures and conditions, commonly assign staff to conduct outreach to businesses. Their focus is to represent the local workforce development system and its resources before employers and to inquire about and respond to immediate employment needs that the WorkSource system might be able to fill. Local boards and business outreach staff in one–stop centers strive to build relationships with businesses, and groups of businesses within industry sectors, to assess skill requirements and find ways to quickly respond to labor shortages. WorkSource partners are cognizant of the need to coordinate business outreach within the system at the staff level. At the local board level, the effort continues to coordinate education, economic development, community organizations and agencies to meet workforce needs. ESD state administrative staff provides tools, information, and resources to assist state workforce agency area directors, workforce development councils, and business services specialists to conduct effective labor exchange and affect workforce development.

Linked through the state's WorkSource comprehensive web site are a vast array of local, state and federal workforce development and related resources for businesses and current and future jobseekers. Labor market information (LMI) is a particularly rich resource for employers needing workforce information and analysis. The Labor Market and Performance Analysis (LMPA) division of ESD conducts ongoing research and posts regular reports on employment showing which industries and occupations are high–growth and high–demand. Hiring trends, job vacancy rates, career opportunities within the occupations, and other demographic information are readily accessible and used widely.

Washington is committed to helping employers have easy access to workforce information and resources. Businesses, as well as current and future jobseekers, have access to the 24/7 self–service WorkSourceWA.com website. The Monster–powered website is a comprehensive, on–line job exchange system that guides employers through the process of posting current job openings, reviewing resumes, and contacting qualified jobseeker applicants and scheduling hiring events.

TITLE II: ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY (BASIC EDUCATION FOR ADULTS)

In collaboration with the community and technical college workforce programs, Basic Education for Adults works with their advisory boards in the development of I–BEST pathways and programming. Employers provide guidance on program development, implementation, and assessment. In addition, all colleges are required to work with employers on the development of all professional technical I–BEST pathways in order to have them approved by SBCTC for implementation.

SBCTC's ten Centers of Excellence are flagship institutions that build and sustain Washington's competitive advantage through statewide leadership. Each Center focuses on a targeted industry that drives the state's economy and is built upon a reputation for faxt, flexible, quality education and training programs. A targeted industry is identified as one that is strategic to the economic growth of a region or state and all community and technical college programming has access to the research and business and employer information, data, and connections.

Centers are guided by industry representatives to lead collaborative and coordinated statewide education and training efforts to build a competitive workforce in a global economy.

Key roles of the Centers include:

• Maintain an institutional reputation for innovation and responsive education and training delivery to their targeted industry.

• Act as a broker of information and resources related to their targeted industry for industry representatives, community–based organizations, economic development organizations, community and technical colleges, secondary education institutions, and four–year colleges and universities.

• Translate industry research into best practices.

• Provide system coordination, coaching, and mentoring to assist in building seamless educational and work–related systems.

• Build a competitive workforce for driver industries in Washington State

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Basic Education for Adults and the Washington State Center of Excellence for Careers in Education have collaborated over the past five years to provide professional development and training for basic skills, On–Ramp to I–BEST, and I–BEST teaching teams in order to support integrated, co–enrolled workforce and basic skills training programs that accelerate transition to post–secondary certificates and degrees and employment in high demand jobs. In 2015 over 350 faculty were trained in the implementation of innovative teaching strategies that incorporate the development of employability skills required by employers.

Coordination, alignment, and provision of services to employers are further aligned through I–BEST at Work Programming, I–BEST at Work, is based upon a partnership between a community college or community–based organization and an employer, in which the college or organization provides a basic skills instructor who team–teaches with a representative from the employer. It is part of the comprehensive I–BEST Pathway, designed to accelerate basic skills within the contest of work for incumbent workers.

TITLE III: WAGNER–PEYSER ACT

Title 1–B programs staff annually serve more than 20,000 businesses. Thousands more have been served through ES business service desks helping to post blind job orders, screen applicants and arrange hiring events to fill job openings. Yet the estimate is that 8 percent of Washington businesses connect with WorkSource services. Washington State will establish a baseline and increase the number of businesses utilizing the workforce system. However, with the implementation of the new WorkSourceWA.com public labor exchange system, staff will assist employers to fill openings, provide labor market information etc, but the department has discontinued the suppressed job order screening process. The new system will score applicants based on applicants' resumes and other documents voluntarily uploaded for view by employers.

Services to agricultural employers are primarily organized in season by, or in coordination with, ES Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) staff. Coordination with section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program staff is discussed in the Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) included in this combined plan.

Coordinated Business Services is well–established WorkSource system policy inclusive of Wagner–Peyser (including ES–operated affiliated programs) and Title 1–B core programs (Policy 1014 rev. 1). The purpose is to ensure Washington's WorkSource System provides business services that connect employers to WorkSource resources with the goal of strengthening and growing businesses, creating jobs and meeting the hiring needs of employers. Workforce Development Councils in Washington are responsible under this policy for the development and oversight of a locally–coordinated, focused and cost–effective business services strategy that aligns with state strategies. Underlying the need for coordination is simply the expectation businesses have that representatives who approach them under the WorkSource brand should be on the same page. Of course, because the WorkSource system is vast and control decentralized, this expectation is quite difficult to achieve with first impressions.

Given different programs operated by MOU partners, different management, and different grants and contracts to conduct various business service activities, coordination is easier required than accomplished. Increasingly businesses are also recruited to participate in employer/industry sector panels, career fairs or hiring events sponsored externally by agencies, colleges and universities, CBOs, private enterprises and industry associations that intersect with WorkSource business services. In most areas, however, WorkSource business services staffed by ES are being carried out with improved communication between partners, co–branded marketing and shared program staff. In the coming years, providing additional relevant and high quality business services may be easier to achieve than establishing statewide functional supervision of business outreach staff from multiple programs and entities. Coordination will continue with the Wagner–Peyser labor exchange helping to anchor job–driven business services efforts.

State strategies under WIOA potentially enlarge the system of service providers to employers and departs further from the more limited, traditional Wagner–Peyser job order and hiring fair approaches. Innovative linkages by local boards in some workforce development areas such as facilitating employer panels that bring together industry sector employers and current and future jobseekers to discuss particular employer needs and hiring practices are very successful at generating interest in career pathways and employment outcomes and are anticipated to engage more local Wagner–Peyser and education partners. Wagner–Peyser will broaden approaches to identify and develop new pools of labor that may not be using the American job center network—older youth, new immigrants, incumbent workers, discouraged workers, dislocated homemakers etc.

This strategy is particularly necessary in areas of low unemployment and tight labor markets where employers are struggling to find job ready workers. The department will be focusing on industry sector relationship strategies just as Workforce Development Councils have been establishing for a number of years. Together core programs will seek to lead and coordinate employment and training assets not only at the local level but across economic regions of the state where career opportunities are growing with the clustering of industry sectors.

TITLE IV: DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

As stated in response 2(A) above, the DSB will work towards the State's strategy of increased Business Engagement by developing the agency's array of services that businesses may require or desire of us, thereby facilitating the employment of qualified individuals who are blind, low vision or deaf blind. The agency will deepen collaboration with core and partner programs in order to better connect our blind participants' aptitudes to the skills training and business connection pathways that work best for business needs.

A DSB–offered array of services for business includes many components. One component is to increase awareness among business of the agency's range of services, in order to provide an easy pathway for business to retain a talented employee whose work performance may be impacted due to a change in vision. Another aspect is the ability to fulfill business recruitment needs through connecting the business with the talents of job–ready and skilled agency participants, and to offer the ability to create individualized and low–risk opportunities for the business so that a participant might best showcase their ability and potential value to the workplace. The DSB will provide guidance on issues of disability in the workplace, including education around the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act; information on how to benefit from federal and local incentives for hiring of individuals with disabilities, and offer supports to the business for successfully meeting required mandates for hiring of individuals with disabilities. The DSB will offer workplace accommodation recommendations and supports, and education and guidance on making the workplace a disability–friendly and inclusive environment. The DSB will connect business to disability–related resources, training and/or education available in the community at large. The DSB will engage business in identifying supply chain needs, and will assist in establishing entrepreneurs and small businesses that might best fulfill that supply chain need.

Due to the small size of the DSB customer base and agency staffing in comparison to other workforce partner programs, the agency and its eligible participants will benefit from the broader infrastructure that state plan partners develop and nurture towards increased business engagement. The DSB alone cannot fully provide the amount of skilled talent business requires, and the DSB as a separate entity cannot efficiently engage business statewide. The DSB will rely on active inclusion of its staff in the One–Stop Business Services Teams, and depend on the accessibility of workforce programs for agency participants, in order to meet the broader engagement of business in a manner that works best for business – through a seamless single point of contact. DSB counselors develop relationships with local business partners, and will guide those relationships (as applicable) into the greater workforce system in order to best fulfill the business needs.

TITLE IV: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES – DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The vocational rehabilitation portion of the Combined State Plan describes in detail services to employers that the DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS/DVR), as a core program, provides in conjunction with mandatory and optional one–stop partners. The activities conducted by DSHS/DVR focus on services to employers that assist in the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of qualified individuals with disabilities, including employment and work–based learning opportunities for students and youth with disabilities.

PARTNER PROGRAMS UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Staff working with claimants and employers will have a basic understanding of UI eligibility requirements and will follow through to make sure only those meeting the qualifications the employer is looking for and is a good match will be referred. Follow up from the employers and claimants will be necessary to ensure those that are not following through as directed are referred to the claims center for adjudication of any issues that arise maintaining program integrity and a high–quality service to the employers. This can also include identifying employers in high wage high demand occupations and connecting them with claimants needing retraining with a cost break to employers willing to enter into these partnerships. Claimants receiving benefits will also be in a pool for random selection to review their job search activities involved in meeting the statutory requirements of RCW 50.20.240. Other programs/activities that could benefit employers and claimants alike:

• Shared Work: offers employers alternatives to laying off workers when facing a temporary decline in business allowing individuals to collect partial unemployment benefits to replace a portion of their lost wages.

• Senior Community Service Employment Programs: community service and work–based job training program for older individuals at least 55 years of age and a family income of no more than 125% of the poverty level.

• Work Opportunity Tax Credit:

o Employers can reduce their federal business taxes by up to $2,400 for more eligible hires. Up to $9,000 over two years for each qualifying welfare recipient; $5,600 for most military veterans and up to $9,600 for hiring veterans who have a service–related disability.

o Eligible workers, people who are on or who received public assistance within 18 months of being hired; needy or disabled veterans; felons hired within a year after leaving prison and those participating in work release; people in state or federal vocational rehabilitation programs that have an employment plan for employment within two years of being hired; adults under 40 who receive food stamps in the six months before being hired; anyone who received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for any month in the 60 days before being hired.

• Bonding services: any person who has a barrier that could lead employers to question their reliability or honesty and deny them a job. This could be persons with a criminal background, WorkFirst participants, dishonorably discharged veterans, recovering substance abusers (alcohol & drugs), individuals with a poor credit history or economically disadvantaged persons who lack a work history. In general, anybody who needs bonding and can’t get bonded through a commercial bonding company would qualify for the fidelity bond as long as they are not self–employed.

• Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA): wage supplement program that covers half the difference between their wages and the wages earned at the time they were laid off. ATAA is for workers 50 and older earning a lesser wage in their new job than they were in their pre–layoff job. New wages cannot exceed $50,000 per year and can get a maximum of $10,000 for up to a two year period.

• On the Job Training Programs (OJT) can help reduce employers cost with OJT that helps employers find qualified workers and pays part of their wages during the training period

• H2A (Foreign certification for agricultural jobs) and H2B (Foreign certification for non–agricultural jobs) programs help employers to actively recruit available US workers employed in similar jobs.

Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers staff coordinate farmworkers between farms to meet growers needs:

• Employers are contacted about their needs and to recruit workers

• Workers are contacted where they gather or live to conduct outreach to recruit and refer qualified individuals

Rapid response:

• Employers get confidential assistance with planning transition needs for their workers

• Workers get customized services to meet their specific needs about being laid off including information about unemployment benefits.

JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS

LVERs work directly with employers and business groups to meet specific employer needs. They assist employers in interpreting qualifications of veterans, TSMs, and eligible spouses, as they apply to the employer's requirements. LVERs coordinate job development activities for veterans, TSMs and eligible spouses to meet business needs. They also conduct workshops and employer functions to assist employers in understanding the advantage of hiring veterans in their workforce. Lastly LVERs plan, coordinate and implement hiring events of all sizes, to assist employers in finding veterans, TSMs and eligible spouses to meet their needs.

TRADE ACT

Often, Trade Act counselors work closely with employers who are certified for a Trade Act petition. This can include writing the petition request, holding employee orientations on–site and assisting the employer in determining how best to proceed with layoff process.

Trade Act offers on–the–job training programs where the employer, counselor and participant work closely together to create a training program that will meet both the employer's and participant's needs. This benefit offers participants the chance to obtain a job they might not have been eligible

for. The employer has the opportunity to train the employee for a set period of time while receiving reimbursement for a portion of the participant's wages.

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT

CSBG activities support services to eligible individuals and households at or below or below 125% of FPL. These services are not directly applicable to employers.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

These services are not directly applicable to employers. The state Community Development Block Grant program administered by the state Department of Commerce awards funds to rural local governments for locally–prioritized activities. If a rural local government applies for and receives CDBG funding for a job creation activity, the business will be required to coordinate job recruitment and hiring with the regional WorkSource/one–stop center.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Grantees or their representatives will meet and strategize with local workforce development and economic development councils, in coordination with local WorkSource Centers to participate in building a unified regional approach to developing and maintaining successful employer partnerships and ensure performance–based successful placements that meet community needs. In addition, grantees will also ensure support for the SCSEP follow–up and satisfaction survey process. Consistent and ongoing communication and follow–up with partners will provide sub–grantees with feedback and understanding on how to better serve both participants and community partners. Participation in a regional approach will provide increased opportunities for recognition and participation in future activities thereby establishing more long–term relationships.

TANF (WorkFirst)/SNAP E&T (BFET) Programs

DSHS will collaborate with workforce development partners to help ensure a coordinated, intentional effort to engage businesses and provide services is developed and executed. To best serve employers and current and future jobseekers, partner agencies must work to streamline communication and relationship building efforts with business and provide support, technical assistance, and a supply of job–ready and qualified workers without alienating employers through a haphazard or redundant approach which is often the result of each workforce development partner in a given region conducting individual as opposed to collaborative job development and relationship building. Employment placement services will require working with employers to determine which jobs are currently available, which jobs are projected to become available, and what the skill requirements are for available jobs. Engaging employers and sharing labor market trend data will better inform curriculum development, support work–integrated activities, enhance program

offerings, and assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the program in meeting industry need. In addition, the workforce system must work to inform both industry and postsecondary education about labor market trends, wage expectations, incumbent worker training opportunities, and retention strategies. Staff must be able to engage business as equal partners in the service delivery process.

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).

The state's strategies were developed in close partnership with education and training providers statewide, in particular Washington's system of community and technical colleges. The state Workforce Board also serves as the Washington state administrator for the Carl Perkins Act, and the executive director of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges is a voting member of the Board.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) is an active, collaborative member in the WIOA workgroups, keeping a focus on students, workers, employers, and industry driven priorities around education leading to job entry, job and wage progression, and retention. DSHS also contracts with the SBCTC to provide education, employment, and training services to eligible TANF and BFET eligible recipients. DSHS supports state level coordination of educational policy, practice, data, and evaluation for TANF and BFET participants with SBCTC by providing agency funded staff at the organization that are specifically focused on these programs. In addition, there is coordination through a tiered, collaborative, leadership model that begins with the Legislature with the Legislative Executive Task Force, includes a group of high level agency leaders focused on policy, and a group of mid–level leadership focused on implementation of services.

BEdA adult education and literacy activities are integrated with other education, training, and employment programs at the state and local levels. At the state level, the governor–appointed Adult Education Advisory Council (AEAC) is charged with improving partnerships, collaboration and coordination at every level. Membership in the AEAC includes representatives from the Basic Education for Adults division of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), higher education, adult education, community based organizations, private sector employers, business, private literacy organizations, economic development councils, library programs, labor programs, corrections education, and the general public.

The council membership meets once each quarter at one of the colleges and, in collaboration with representatives of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, organized labor and the Association of Washington Businesses, explores and develops initiatives to improve access to workforce training, to boost local economic development and to expand the services for dislocated workers in the state.

The Workforce Education Council (WEC) consists of the chief workforce education officer from each of the 34 community and technical colleges in Washington State. The WEC is a subsidiary of the Instruction Commission (IC) and the Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges (WACTC) and works collaboratively with BEdA in the development, implementation, and expansion of Washington's nationally recognized and replicated Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training

(I–BEST) initiative to accelerate basic education client's transition into professional–technical, college–level certificate and degree programs in high demand industries.

The Washington State Instruction Commission for Community and Technical Colleges (IC) exists to enhance instruction and library/media services within the community and technical colleges of the State. The Instruction Commission is directly responsible to the Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges presidents (WACTC) through a liaison appointed by the president of WACTC. The liaison serves as the primary communication link between the Commission and WACTC. The IC also forms a communication link between the following councils, all of which send representatives to the IC: the Council for Basic Skills, the Articulation and Transfer Council, the Continuing Education Council, the eLearning Council, the Library Media Directors Council, and the Workforce Education Council. The Instructional Commission and Student Services Council are also critical partners in the expansion of and educational support services to students in I BEST programming.

OSPI and BEdA have partnered to create a seamless pathway for Out of School Youth and adults lacking a high school diploma or its equivalent. The Open Doors re–engagement program administered through OSPI and the competency–based High School 21+ programs implemented across the community and technical college system provide students with a seamless pathway to high school completion. As students age out of Open Doors all credits and competencies earned count towards a high school diploma in the HS 21+ competency based diploma program in Washington's community and technical colleges.

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.

Under WIOA, the Board will continue to consult with training providers when making substantial changes to the ETPL system. The workgroup for WIOA implementation of ETPL includes representation from the community and technical college system, and from the licensed private career schools, as well as other stakeholders, including local area boards.

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).

Washington's guided pathway for BEdA clients allows students in levels 1–3 Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English Language Acquisition (ELA) to participate in On–ramps to I BEST at a $25 dollar per quarter fee, which is waived for students unable to pay. BEdA's five on–ramp program options include:

• A competency–based high school completion on–ramp. HS 21+ awards credit for prior learning and military and work experience;

• An I BEST at work on–ramp which works with incumbent workers in the workplace. The teaching team is comprised of a basic skills instructor and a trainer from the company;

• An ELA on–ramp, Integrated Digital English Acceleration (I–DEA) targets the lowest 3 levels of ELA and provides students with 50% of the instruction online, a computer, and 24/7 Internet access to learning;

• On–ramps contextualized in employability skills and college readiness; and

• Career specific on–ramps that are contextualized to a specific career pathway like healthcare or welding.

When students are ready, most often at Level 4 ABE and Level 5 ESL, they can move into quarter one of I BEST with tuition funded by the Washington State Opportunity Grant, Washington's State Need Grant, or partnering agency funds if eligible. This allows students without a high school diploma or an equivalency to earn the six college–level credits required to transition onto Ability to Benefit and federal financial aid in their second quarter of I BEST.

Beginning in their second quarter in I–BEST, students move on to federal financial aid under the Ability to Benefit option if eligible. Upon receiving a 2–year degree in Washington, students without a high school diploma or GED® can check a box and receive their high school diploma.

They then can then use those same funding sources (with the exception of Opportunity Grant) to transition into a CTC applied baccalaureate program or transfer to a 4 year university.

TANF/WorkFirst: DSHS promotes educational access and leverages TANF funds through funding of tuition, fees and supportive services for TANF (WorkFirst) eligible participants to engage in Basic Education for Adults (BEdA), enabling them to obtain credentials such as a Washington state high school diploma, GED or high school equivalency, as well as the Limited English Proficiency Pathway education to increase the literacy and numeracy skills required to earn college level vocational education credits and credentials. The SBCTC's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I–BEST) program, which has approved vocational education career pathway programs at all 34 community and technical colleges, is also an allowable, funded, activity under TANF/WorkFirst. I–BEST allows participants either without a high school diploma or equivalency and/or testing below college level in English and/or math to be immediately enrolled within a college–level vocational education career pathway program while concurrently boosting basic skills in literacy and numeracy, expediting the acquisition of college level credits and credential leading to living wage jobs.

BFET: The BFET program is comprised of a 50/50 reimbursement program with contracted providers. These BFET partner agencies, which include all 34 community and technical colleges, put forward the cost of program operations, BFET activity, and participant reimbursement. The funds used by the BFET partner agency cannot be from a federal source. DSHS subsequently reimburses the partner 50% of allowable BFET expenses. This partnership and funding model increases access to education and educational attainment, and enables Washington State to leverage state, county, city, local, and private funds by matching these funds with Federal funds.

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.

Washington's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program (I–BEST) quickly teaches students literacy, work, and college–readiness skills so they can earn postsecondary credentials and degrees and move through school and into living wage jobs faster.

Pioneered by Washington's community and technical colleges, I–BEST uses a team–teaching approach to combine college–readiness classes with regular, credit–bearing academic or job training classes. I–BEST challenges the traditional notion that students must move through a set sequence of basic education or pre–college (remedial) courses before they can start working on certificates or degrees. The combined teaching method allows students to work on college–level studies right away, clearing multiple levels with one leap.

I–BEST was named a Bright Idea by Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government in 2011 and has been designated by the U.S. Department of Education as one of the most significant, national innovations. I–BEST is being replicated and implemented across the country.

Research conducted separately by the Community College Research Center and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board found that I–BEST students outperform similar students enrolled in traditional basic skills programs. I–BEST students are:

• Three times more likely to earn college credits.

• Nine times more likely to earn a workforce credential.

• Employed at double the hours per week (35 hours versus 15 hours).

• Earning an average of $2,310 more per year than similar adults who did not receive basic skills training. According to a December 2012 report by the Community College Research Center, I–BEST benefits are well worth the costs.

DSHS TANF (WorkFirst) and SNAP Employment and Training (Basic Food Employment and Training–BFET) strategies support access to post–secondary credentials through contracting and partnering with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. This partnership includes all 34 community and technical colleges.

TANF: Through TANF (WorkFirst), participants have access to a continuum of educational opportunities to include Basic Education for Adults and Vocational education. Washington's innovative post–secondary educational opportunities are structured around career pathways with stackable certificates allowing students to earn college credits leading to industry recognized certifications and degrees. DSHS supports participant access to these programs through referral, tuition payment, coordinated case management, supportive services, and childcare. In addition, the TANF/WorkFirst program actively supports and promotes the use of the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I–BEST) program, allowing low skilled (literacy and numeracy) adults or those without a high school diploma or equivalent to enter a college–level, credit bearing, career pathways program and bolster basic skills through team–taught, integrated instruction contextualized to the vocational education career pathway. In addition, DSHS has developed linkages with Labor and Industries Apprenticeship programs and is participating in collaborative cross–agency workgroups

designed to maximize opportunities and referrals for work–based learning to help ensure TANF participants are considered for Registered Apprenticeship opportunities.

BFET: Vocational education is available to BFET participants when they have education or training needs that are necessary to enhance employability or as part of a job placement program that requires industry specific training. SBCTC's "Tipping Point Research" shows that it takes at least one year of college level credits and a credential for individuals to receive the "economic bump" in wage earning potential that will increase the likelihood of earning a living wage. All 34 of Washington's community and technical colleges provide vocational training education as part of the BFET strategy for meeting the demand for a skilled workforce. This effort is supported and coordinated by SBCTC in partnership with DSHS.

Some of the supports that remove barriers to educational access under the BFET program include: transportation, books, tuition, clothing, dependent care, tutoring services, and equipment necessary for degree completion. Along with funding, BFET partner agencies provide career navigation and academic advising to assist BFET participants to succeed in their academic endeavors.

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.

CORE PROGRAMS TITLE I: ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH SERVICES

Title I engages at both the state and local levels with the state Department of Commerce's Office of Economic Development and Competitiveness, which encompasses a number of key sectors: aerospace, clean technology, information and communication technology, life science and global health, maritime, military and defense, and forest products. At the state level, the State Workforce Development Board (WTECB) and State Workforce Agency (ESD) coordinate with partners at the state Department of Commerce in sector strategy projects. Locally, Local Workforce Development Boards engage economic development, business, labor, and education partners around key sector strategies, industry skill panels, and two–year training–curriculum focused Centers of Excellence.

The Employment Security Department (ESD) is an ex–officio member of the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB), which provides funding to local governments and federally–recognized tribes for public infrastructure (e.g., domestic and industrial water, storm water, wastewater, public buildings, telecommunications and port facilities) that supports private business growth and expansion. One provision in CERB guidelines is that employers that benefit from CERB investments must use WorkSource for recruitment, screening, and hiring for the new jobs created. Local Title I boards are kept abreast of CERB developments so as to be aware of workforce needs of CERB–related employers.

Local Workforce Development Boards continue to be involved in local economic development strategies and often have seats on economic development councils and chambers of commerce. Conversely, economic development council, public port, and chamber of commerce directors often hold economic development seats on Local Workforce Development Boards. The objective is to increasingly recognize that the availability of a skilled and educated workforce is critical to economic development.

In the recent past, the Governor's WIA 10% discretionary funds have been used to leverage the training and education needs of private sector employers targeted through state–supported economic development projects. It is anticipated that the Governor's WIOA 10% discretionary funds will be used, to some extent, in a similar fashion.

TITLE II: ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY (BASIC EDUCATION FOR ADULTS)

Title II local programs across the state are working with local Workforce Boards to align their comprehensive guided college and career pathways and training and program meta–majors to the needs of the key industry sectors identified in each planning region. This will target the needs of business in each region. BEdA's elements of the WIOA State Operational Plan were developed with guidance from the Governor's appointed Adult Education Advisory Council (AEAC) in support of Governor Jay Inslee's Results Washington initiative, the Higher Education Coordinating Board's Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' System Direction and Mission Study and Policy Focus and Dashboard, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's High Skills High Wages plan.

In addition, Washington's Community and Technical College system plays a critical role in the development of a well–educated citizenry essential to a growing knowledge based economy. Community and technical colleges are expanding capacity consistent with the state's strategic industries to:

• Increase and retool workforce education programs, especially for anchor occupations, high demand occupations and strategic industries. • Develop new mechanisms for business and industry partnerships and expand customized training. • Use Centers of Excellence to strengthen programs, share best practices, and develop transitions and pathways for working people. • Increase participation in and contribution to state and local economic development strategies, focused on providing skilled and knowledge workers for the economy. • Leverage resources and coordinate initiatives with local and regional economic development efforts. • Leverage resources and coordinate initiatives with state level economic development plans. • Serve more adults by identifying and mitigating access barriers for adults, especially for underserved populations such as people of color, people with disabilities, children leaving foster care, low wage workers and other working adults. • Offer educational and career building blocks with multiple entry, re–entry, and exit points. • Ensure all courses lead to diplomas, certificates and degrees, and all associate degrees lead to bachelor's degrees, including Tech Prep–like pathways that transition students into certificate programs and applied bachelor's degrees. • Expand integrated instruction models. Increase I BEST and develop more models for integrating basic and professional/technical skills. Expand models that integrate college level academic and professional/technical education. • Provide a system for recognizing prior learning credit (e.g., for competencies, military training experiences, foreign degrees or certifications, and skills) gained from professional development and continuing education courses. • Enhance student success through retention and transition strategies aimed at targeted groups of students, including working adults, low–income adults, first generation college students, people without high school diplomas, and adults with limited English fluency. • Integrate instruction and student services efforts that increase flexibility for students to customize their education. • Make courses, programs and services more accessible for working people. Distance learning, evening/weekend classes, on–site business and industry classes, and new funds for Opportunity Grants and customized training provide venues to try new approaches.

TITLE III: WAGNER–PEYSER ACT

The Washington State Department of Commerce is the lead for Governor Jay Inslee's economic development agenda focusing on keeping Washington a great place to grow a business and the best place to live and work. The State's sector–based economic development strategy identifies the importance of ensuring career readiness and expanding workforce training. In the big picture this is particularly vital for skills in science, technology, engineering and math to maintain comparative advantages in sectors like advanced manufacturing (exemplified by the sizeable aerospace industry in the region), information technology/online retail, biotech and healthcare sectors. The opportunity under WIOA is to reinvent how the state supports workforce development so that every Washingtonian will have a chance to earn a living wage, and every employer will have access to enough skilled workers. To ensure statewide progress on coordinating education and training with workforce and economic development for job–driven expansion of opportunity, the state board has set a goal to have at least one sector partnership in development in each workforce region.

The flexibility under Wagner–Peyser allows ES to support career readiness through triage and initial assessment of skill gaps for referral to a range of suggested learning and training options. Training options may range from registered apprenticeship to formal online or classroom coursework offered by eligible education and training providers. Thus ES front line staff market economic opportunities. They work with one stop partners and other in identifying candidates to fill immediate job openings and to get established on pathways to jobs in growth industries. A number of ES managers participate on college CTE advisory committees and some work closely with economic development councils, chambers of commerce, and their local boards. ES staff serve all employers, but with limited resources the department is willing to devote more resources for supporting recruitment efforts when the jobseeker inventory matches, when targeted jobseekers can get a step up to self–supporting wages, and when small and medium businesses can get the recruitment support they depend on. Reinventing workforce development will include further integrating Wagner–Peyser assets to support economic development projects and programs such as Work Start. This strategic reserve funding coordinated through WDCs and often with colleges provides workforce training tailored to the specific needs of the eligible, target industry employers. Wagner–Peyser staff help recruit for such projects. Having access to the large pool of UI claimants is an advantage in identifying and outreaching to potential applicants.

TITLE IV: DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

The DSB activities should be well–aligned with Washington's economic development strategies, if agency participants have access to core group and partner services and programs.

Blind, low vision and deaf blind users of the workforce system have typically been left unserved in the good work of the state's sector industry strategies. In addressing the business needs for identifying and developing targeted training to fill workforce gap needs in the key sector industries, Washington State's workforce system has a stellar reputation, but those with visual disability have not typically benefited from the programs, apprenticeships and opportunities. With the new partnership through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the DSB expects the needs of its blind and low vision customer base to also be served in the workforce programs supporting key

sectors of aerospace, agriculture, information and communications technology, clean energy, rural economic development, and life sciences.

The DSB and its Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act partners are the key players in Washington State economic strategy for workforce development, and the DSB encourages and supports science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) employment goals and vocational and academic training for all eligible participants who have aptitude and interest, and look to collaborate with the Washington School for the Blind and other partners to develop workshops and programs that will encourage interest in STEM activities at a young age.

The DSB will continue to identify eligible participants with aptitude for entrepreneurialism, and continue to support start–up opportunities of small business as an important means for blind, low vision and/or deaf blind individuals to join in on the key Washington State economic development strategy of encouraging small business. Blind business owners often become employers themselves, helping drive the state's workforce engine.

TITLE IV: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES – DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS/DVR), as a core program, will engage actively with mandatory and optional one–stop partners to coordinate and contribute to economic development strategies across the state. Specifically, DSHS/DVR will: * Increase the number of DSHS/DVR customers who attain credentials in STEM and other in–demand occupations so they can contribute to filling the skills gap that Washington businesses face today. * Encourage a larger segment of DSHS/DVR customers to pursue and achieve self–employment goals to launch new businesses that contribute to the vitality of local economies. * Assist newly located and start–up businesses in successfully recruiting and hiring qualified employees with disabilities, particularly businesses that are federal contractors or subcontractors and have a contractual obligation to employ individuals with disabilities.

PARTNER PROGRAMS UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Currently, there is little integration between UI programs and a larger economic development strategy. As a workforce development system partner, UI will coordinate with other partner programs to align to economic development strategies, where appropriate.

JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS

DVOP and LVER activities are integrated into local service delivery models, ensuring that they directly support respective Workforce Development Councils and Economic Development Councils in their areas. LVERs partner closely with business entities, which are a representation of the local economic growth team. They routinely attend chamber of commerce meetings and other functions that promote local economy development efforts.

Trade Act does not directly coordinate with Economic Development Strategies. Trade Act could be in dialog with economic development entities to help develop strategies to steer dislocated workers in the direction of strong employer needs and provide training in those areas.

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

The Washington State Department of Commerce (Commerce) is a committed partner to the state's workforce system and understands the role that housing services have in serving WIOA clients, particularly those with barriers to employment. The Department of Commerce is the one agency in Washington State that touches every aspect of community and economic development: planning, infrastructure, housing, energy, public facilities, public safety and crime victims, international trade, business services and more. Commerce works with local governments, businesses and civic leaders throughout the state to strengthen communities so all residents may thrive and prosper. The Director of Commerce holds a seat on the state Workforce board, bringing the Department's expertise in economic development, sector based outreach, and affordable housing policy to conversations about the state workforce system.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awards Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds throughout the state of Washington both through Commerce and directly to local governments in CDBG entitlement areas. Commerce administers the state CDBG funding to rural local governments or non-entitlement areas. Commerce has no administrative role over CDBG funds awarded directly to local governments by HUD, such as the Seattle Housing Authority.

Annually, non-entitlement local governments apply directly to Commerce for CDBG funds through a competitive procurement process. These entities apply for CDBG funding based on their own locally prioritized activities, which may include employment and training. The specific activities funded by the State CDBG program are unknown until the procurement process is complete and projects have been selected. The Department of Commerce primarily awards CDBG grants for infrastructure activities, but Commerce does set aside a portion of the funds to be used specifically for CDBG public services activities, which may include employment and training activities. When a rural local government applies for and receives CDBG public services funding for an employment or training activity through Commerce, then those activities are required to align with the State's WIOA strategies and be coordinated with the grantees' local WIOA partners.

The Department of Commerce has been a partner from the beginning of the WIOA planning and implementation process, providing staff expertise that shaped the goals in all four strategic priority areas of the state plan: business engagement, integrated service delivery, accessibility for all, and ensuring performance accountability. Staff from the Department of Commerce's Office of Economic and Competitiveness and Division of Community Services and Housing will continue to serve on implementation committees organized by the Workforce Board, in particular working to advance the state's business engagement goals and bring focus to aligning affordable housing initiatives administered by the Department of Commerce to the state's workforce development strategy.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

During the coming year(s) the SCSEP Grantees (State and Nationals) will continue to move towards a cohesive and collaborative partnership. The efforts have taken on a new sense of urgency with the implementation of WIOA. Additionally the efforts have been taken on with a greater sense of opportunity to provide a more effective integrated and holistic approach through the fostering of increased levels of partnership across the continuum of employment; education and the social services. The process will enhance the existing collaborative efforts both between both the State and National Grantees as well as in conjunction with the Workforce Development Councils, and State and local economic development entities.

The goal is to develop more formal agreements between the State and National Grantees in order to expand upon the strengths, capabilities and resources of the individual grantees. These formal partnerships and working agreements will be of benefit not just to the SCSEP provider organizations, but also for the benefit of the spectrum of Workforce employment and education programs.

The State Program Manager has approached DOL about implementing changes to the Grantee contracting to process in order to achieve greater collaboration and cohesion for the SCSEP program within the State of Washington. Beyond the DOL contracting process the state manager is exploring the development of MOUs between the State and the National grantees in order to create cohesion of the program; develop formal agreements with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; potentially data sharing agreements with State entities; accessing the DSHS and or WDC Ticket to Work EN network for reimbursement for the services provided by the grantees (with the exception of Goodwill Industries which already is a EN).

Some of these agreements would prove beneficial on many levels in terms of; minimizing the current confusing aspects of 2 or more SCSEP Grantees operating within the same county, and/or the same local Workforce Development Council area; streamlining engagement for information and referral supports; involvement of all SCSEP grantees in local WDC partnerships and for inclusion in all development and problem solving aspects involved for the system.

Additionally the SCSEP grantee staff and participants can bring perspective, and training resources to the Workforce system regarding the Aging workforce.

In order to develop strategies for overall grantee success in serving participants and the community, local projects will work with their grantees within local economic regions to systematically help participants become well matched with their community's high–growth industry recruitment criteria.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES/BASIC FOOD EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM

DSHS will join in the collaborative process of identifying priorities and strategies regarding economic development at the state, regional, and local levels in order to better ensure a coordinated and supported process and reduce the likelihood of fragmented or duplicative efforts for both TANF and BFET.

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.).

Title I and III will be using a new data system designed by Monster Government Solutions, WorkSourceWA.com, which combines the prior Wagner–Peyser job matching system with Monster.com's resume and job–matching database and the prior Case Management/MIS system (SKIES). Title IV agencies use STARS as their Case Management/MIS. The Title II Case Management/MIS system is WABERS.

Is the state phone system still called SCAN? And do WDAs use it? Of these Case Management/MIS systems, only SKIES is under revision in response to specific WIOA requirements. There are several web–based applications that can be made available more widely among the WIOA partners.

For Job–matching, the new WorkSourceWA.com job–matching system.

For Career Planning, consumer information and training options, the Workforce Board maintains the extensive CareerBridge.wa.gov website which allows for searches for training programs, by occupation and area, with outcome results and ETPL status indicators.

For identifying training options, the State Board for Community Colleges has developed Start College Now, a system for identifying Integrated Basic Skills and technical training options (I–BEST). SBCTC has also been awarded a grant from College Spark to develop an application for guiding students in course selection for efficient completion of short–term programs of study.

For cross program eligibility pre–screening, there is an existing web–based tool for prescreening for referrals to Title IV programs. In addition, the Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS) has a system (Washington Connections) for eligibility screening for several programs included in WIOA. This system will be evaluated for deployment across the WIOA partners and for expansion to include more of the partner programs. The system used in Oregon will also be evaluated for possible use in intake for co–enrollment between Title I Adults and Title III in those local workforce development councils implementing a co–enrollment model.

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

For five of the six core programs, there is an annual process by which the Workforce Board collects records for cohorts of exiting participants, matches them to administrative records of employment and education outcomes, and reports standardized outcomes metrics that are similar to some of the WIOA measures. Some of the non–core WIOA partners have also been included in that annual process. In addition, some of the participant records for workforce systems and administrative records of employment and education outcomes are collected, unduplicated, and matched in the state's p–20 Workforce longitudinal research data base, which is operated by the Education Research and Data Center (ERDC). However, neither of these systems is designed to provide

support to multi–agency operations in real–time. ERDC processes are also designed for long–term research, rather than quarterly reporting. So while some of the ERDC processes can be utilized for WIOA analysis and reporting purposes, and the Workforce Board currently performs similar annual and quarterly reporting, there is no existing system that can provide comprehensive WIOA data reporting without significant modification. A comprehensive system for cross agency case management for all the WIOA partners would be years and millions of dollars in the future.

* 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.

A critical goal of integrated service delivery is to provide customers a streamlined intake process that quickly connects them to relevant services and subsequent wrap–around support, customized to their specific needs. This requires staff to move beyond being experts in the programs they administer to thinking holistically about customers, their goals, and their skill–sets when they enter the system. The approach to the customer should be asset–based, focusing first on the strengths and positive experiences that the customer brings, and helping the individual build on those assets and move along a career pathway of their own design.

Streamlining customer intake means taking targeted information from a participant on day one to place them in a program, or mixture of programs, that will—at a minimum—meet their immediate needs. New participants, particularly individuals with barriers to employment, should experience connection and the feeling of momentum or forward movement beginning on the first day. Finding the right program fit can occur in subsequent visits, but the customer should not be bombarded with duplicative requests for information or skills assessments. Staff must be "Navigators" who help people design individual career pathways and then assist them in finding an economically self–sustaining route forward. Partners will need to work together differently, including at points of transition (hand–offs) between organizations, the points of co–servicing (participant receiving multiple services from multiple organizations at the same time), and in the way they manage funding and services braided across organizations.

Guidelines for Partner Contributions to One–Stops

The state Workforce Board is convening a workgroup of system partners to design a model Memorandum of Understanding to guide partner contributions to one–stops. The workgroup will supervise the development of a State–level MOU – an agreement among the four state agencies representing Titles II, III, IV and TANF – that clearly defines the parameters of the respective resource commitments for each agency. These will provide a consistent basis for local representatives and WDCs to negotiate MOUs and Resource Sharing Agreements (RSAs) in their individual one–stop systems.

Elements of the state–level MOU will include:

• a description of the state of Washington's one–stop system that represents the shared vision, values, and principles of collaboration between the state agencies and local partners

• a comprehensive list of the agreed–upon shared services and costs of operating the local one–stop system

• the types of funds that each partner may use to fund infrastructure costs in accordance with relevant authorizing statutes and regulations, including in–kind contributions

• the methodology for calculating proportionate use or benefit to each partner program, and

• a timeframe for re–calculating proportional use by each partner program – on at least an annual basis – and adjusting the amount of infrastructure funding accordingly

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.

The state Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board has created a comprehensive matrix of workforce development services available statewide, including the organizational structure of the workforce development system in Washington. The matrix may be accessed at: http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/WorkforceMatrix2015.pdf.

B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a Governor–appointed partnership of nine voting members from business, labor, and government. Non–voting members also participate.

The Workforce Board:

• Advises the Governor and Legislature on workforce development policy.

• Ensures the state's workforce services and programs work together.

• Evaluates the performance of Washington's key workforce programs.

Two–thirds of voting seats are held equally by business and labor representatives. Remaining seats are held by major service providers. This means customers have a direct, influential voice in all decision–making. With business and labor at the table, we get a real–world view of our challenges and opportunities—and take action on them.

Our workforce customers have a broad range of ages, abilities and backgrounds—from high school students who require relevant, applied learning to stay in school, to low–skilled working adults who need more education to earn a living wage, to the recently laid off retooling for new careers. We advocate for lifelong learning so all workers become better educated and better skilled—keeping our workforce, and our state, competitive.

The Workforce Board coordinates 16 workforce programs (Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV WIOA Programs; Postsecondary Professional Technical Education, Worker Retraining Program, Job Skills Program, Customized Training Program, Secondary Career and Technical Education Programs, Training Benefits Program, Apprenticeships, Perkins Act programs, and the Private Vocational Schools Act), administered by seven agencies. We measure the performance of programs accounting for about 95 percent of federal and state dollars spent on our workforce system—or roughly $780 million per year.

Researchers, policy analysts and managers prepare and analyze our detailed reports on everything from worker skill gaps to how effectively our state's programs train workers to fill jobs. Staff members have expertise in a wide range of disciplines but specialize in outreach and building partnerships.

1. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

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

Voting Members:

· Perry England, Chair – Vice President of Building Performance, MacDonald–Miller Facility Solutions (Representing Business)

· Jeff Johnson – President, Washington State Labor Council (Representing Labor)

· Lee Newgent – Executive Secretary, Seattle Building Trades Council (Representing Labor)

· Beth Thew – Secretary–Treasurer, Spokane Regional Labor Council (Representing Labor)

· Creigh H. Agnew – President, Slade Gorton International Policy Center (Representing Business)

· Gary Chandler – Vice President of Government Affairs, Association of Washington Business (Representing Business)

· Lee Anne Caylor – Chief of Staff, Microsoft Learning eXperiences (Representing Business)

· Randy Dorn – Superintendent of Public Instruction, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Representing Workforce Agency Partners)

· Marty Brown – Executive Director, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (Representing Workforce Agency Partners)

· Dale Peinecke – Commissioner, Employment Security Department (Representing Workforce Agency Partners)

Non–Voting Members:

· Chris Alejano – Director of Education, Technology Access Foundation (Representing Barrier Populations)

· Patricia Lashway – Interim Secretary, Department of Social and Health Services (Representing Workforce Agency Partners)

· Mark Mattke – Chief Executive Officer, Spokane Area Workforce Development Council (Representing Chief Local Elected Officials)

· Brian Bonlender – Director, Department of Commerce (Representing Workforce Agency Partners)

2. BOARD ACTIVITIES

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

Washington state law provides an explicit list of the Board's functions at RCW 28C.18.060. The board, in cooperation with the operating agencies of the state training system and private career schools and colleges, shall:

• Concentrate its major efforts on planning, coordination evaluation, policy analysis, and recommending improvements to the state's training system;

• Advocate for the state training system and for meeting the needs of employers and the workforce for workforce education and training;

• Establish and maintain an inventory of the programs of the state training system, and related state programs, and perform a biennial assessment of the vocational education, training, and adult basic education and literacy needs of the state; identify ongoing and strategic education needs; and assess the extent to which employment, training, vocational and basic education, rehabilitation services, and public assistance services represent a consistent, integrated approach to meet such needs;

• Develop and maintain a state comprehensive plan for workforce training and education, including but not limited to, goals, objectives, and priorities for the state training system, and review the state training system for consistency with the state comprehensive plan. In developing the state comprehensive plan for workforce training and education, the board shall use, but shall not be limited to: Economic, labor market, and populations trends reports in office of financial management forecasts; joint office of financial management and employment security department labor force, industry employment, and occupational forecasts; the results of scientifically based outcome, net–impact and cost–benefit evaluations; the needs of employers as evidenced in formal employer surveys and other employer input; and the needs of program participants and workers as evidenced in formal surveys and other input from program participants and the labor community;

• In consultation with the student achievement council, review and make recommendations to the office of financial management and the legislature on operating and capital facilities budget requests for operating agencies of the state training system for purposes of consistency with the state comprehensive plan for workforce training and education;

• Provide for coordination among the different operating agencies and components of the state training system at the state level and at the regional level;

• Develop a consistent and reliable database on vocational education enrollments, costs, program activities, and job placements from publicly funded vocational education programs in this state;

o Establish standards for data collection and maintenance for the operating agencies of the state training system in a format that is accessible to use by the board. The board shall require a minimum of common core data to be collected by each operating agency of the state training system;

• Develop requirements for minimum common core data in consultation with the office of financial management and the operating agencies of the training system;

• Establish minimum standards for program evaluation for the operating agencies of the state training system, including, but not limited to, the use of common survey instruments and procedures for measuring perceptions of program participants and employers of program participants, and monitor such program evaluation;

• Every two years administer scientifically based outcome evaluations of the state training system, including, but not limited to, surveys of program participants, surveys of employers of program participants, and matches with employment security department payroll and wage files. Every five years administer scientifically based net–impact and cost–benefit evaluations of the state training system;

• In cooperation with the employment security department, provide for the improvement and maintenance of quality and utility in occupational information and forecasts for use in training system planning and evaluation. Improvements shall include, but not be limited to, development of state–based occupational change factors involving input by employers and employees, and delineation of skill and training requirements by education level associated with current and forecasted occupations;

• Provide for the development of common course description formats, common reporting requirements, and common definitions for operating agencies of the training system;

• Provide for effectiveness and efficiency reviews of the state training system;

• In cooperation with the student achievement council, facilitate transfer of credit policies and agreements between institutions of the state training system, and encourage articulation agreements for programs encompassing two years of secondary workforce education and two years of postsecondary workforce education;

• In cooperation with the student achievement council, facilitate transfer of credit policies and agreements between private training institutions and institutions of the state training system;

• Develop policy objectives for the workforce investment act, P.L. 105–220, or its successor; develop coordination criteria for activities under the act with related programs and services provided by state and local education and training agencies; and ensure that entrepreneurial training opportunities are available through programs of each local workforce investment board in the state;

• Make recommendations to the commission of student assessment, the state board of education, and the superintendent of public instruction, concerning basic skill competencies and essential core competencies for K–12 education. Basic skills for this purpose shall be reading, writing, computation, speaking, and critical thinking, essential core competencies for this purpose shall be English, math, science/technology, history, geography, and critical thinking. The board shall monitor the development of and provide advice concerning secondary curriculum which integrates vocational and academic education;

• Establish and administer programs for marketing and outreach to businesses and potential program participants;

• Facilitate the location of support services, including but not limited to, child care, financial aid, career counseling, and job placement services, for students and trainees at institutions in the state training system, and advocate for support services for trainees and students in the state training system;

• Facilitate private sector assistance for the state training system, including but not limited to: Financial assistance, rotation of private and public personnel, and vocational counseling;

• Facilitate the development of programs for school–to–work transition that combine classroom education and on–the–job training, including entrepreneurial education and training, in industries and occupations without a significant number of apprenticeship programs;

• Include in the planning requirements for local workforce investment boards a requirement that the local workforce investment boards specify how entrepreneurial training is to be offered through the one–stop system required under the workforce investment act, P.L. 105–220, or its successor;

• Encourage and assess progress for the equitable representation of racial and ethnic minorities, women, and people with disabilities among the students, teachers, and administrators of the state training system. Equitable, for this purpose, shall mean substantially proportional to their percentage of the state population in the geographic area served. This function of the board shall in no way lessen more stringent state or federal requirements for representation of racial and ethnic minorities, women, and people with disabilities;

• Participate in the planning and policy development of governor set–aside grants under P.L. 97–300, as amended;

• Administer veterans' programs, licensure of private vocational schools, the job skills program, and the Washington award for vocational excellence;

• Allocate funding from the state job training trust fund;

• Work with the director of commerce to ensure coordination among workforce training priorities and economic development and entrepreneurial development efforts, including but not limited to assistance to industry clusters;

• Conduct research into workforce development programs designed to reduce the high unemployment rate among young people between approximately eighteen and twenty–four years of age. In consultation with the operating agencies, the board shall advise the governor and legislature on policies and programs to alleviate the high unemployment rate among young people. The research shall include disaggregated demographic information and, to the extent possible, income data for adult youth. The research shall also include a comparison of the effectiveness of programs examined as a part of the research conducted in this subsection in relation to the public investment made in these programs in reducing unemployment of young adults. The board shall report to the appropriate committees of the legislature by November 15, 2008, and every two years thereafter. Where possible, the data reported to the legislative committees should be reported in numbers and in percentages;

• Adopt rules as necessary to implement this chapter.

The board may delegate to the director any of these functions.

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.

OVERVIEW

Under Washington state law, the Workforce Board conducts a substantial program of assessment, research and evaluation activities that have historically included most of the core WIOA programs (Titles I, II, IV plus TANF/Workfirst), as well as additional workforce programs. This program has included an annual participant outcome evaluation using State Core Measures (very similar to WIOA measures), periodic surveys of participants, and periodic net impact studies using statistically adjusted comparison group methodology. All of these activities are conducted or contracted by Workforce Board staff, with the cooperation of program agencies and support of other state sources of participant data including Unemployment Insurance wage data, and K12 participant data from the state's P-20 system agency, the Education Research and Data Center.

In addition to the requirements of WIOA, the Workforce Board responded to WIOA by committing to the development of a comprehensive assessment methodology designed to measure the collective output and effectiveness of the overall workforce system in the state both in general and in serving target populations.

The existing methodologies for annual assessments and periodic surveys and net impact studies will have to be reviewed and modified in response to WIOA and to the specifics of the state's implementation, such as generalized co-enrollment of Title I participants in Title III. A Committee on Performance Accountability and Data Sharing of agency and stakeholder representatives has been created to address these and other related issues in data and assessment. That committee will develop and recommend to the Board priorities and measures to revise existing projects and conduct new ones to meet the requirements and achieve the purposes of WIOA, State Law, and the Board and Governor's directives to develop broad assessment capability. This work will take substantial time to complete.

Washington will evaluate performance by provider and by area (as required for Title I programs) using the current methods of database compilation and calculating the WIOA measures for these programs. The annual state Workforce Training Results reporting process (http://wtb.wa.gov/WorkforceTrainingResults.asp) will also continue to assess the performance of eleven public workforce programs, using measures of employment, employment and/or further training, earnings, credentials, industry of employment, hours worked, and hourly wage. Methods will be developed to calculate these measures for sub-state areas for all WIOA core programs. For training providers, the state annually updates performance data on over four thousand public and private training programs for its Eligible Training Program List for use by Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, and for some state programs. The measures used include: completion rate, employment rate, and median earnings. This information is also used for the "consumer report" function of the award-winning career information website, CareerBridge.wa.gov.

The State has continued a program of active development of performance adjustment statistical modeling for Title 1 programs since the implementation of WIA. This experience can be extended to other WIOA programs under Titles II, III and IV, should that be an appropriate priority under the new performance targets-setting system. Before the next Net Impact Study is conducted, options for modification will be developed and evaluated, based the evolving implementation of WIOA, along with information on the evaluation agendas of the federal Departments of Labor and Education.

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.

One-Stop partner programs not required to use the WIOA performance measures will initially continue to use the prior federal and/or Washington State Core Measures frameworks for performance assessment. Discussion of those existing measures and assessments for non-mandatory core programs which are not converted to the Section 116 measure by WIOA can be found in the separate program plan chapters. See the TANF chapter for example, which discusses the Work Participation Rate measure.

As the new WIOA measures are fully defined and implemented, methodology for regional assessment of performance data on the shared participant population will be developed, with appropriate corrective action policies.

The Workforce Board staff will continue to conduct data compilation, analysis, reporting and research in support of the Board's role as workforce system accountability agency, as described in previous section.

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.

Washington State has for several years used State Core Measures which include third quarter median income and third quarter employment, as well as taking advantage of the availability of hours worked in Washington and Oregon UI records to compute additional statistics on full–time employment rates and hourly wage rates. For outcomes for 2013 and 2014, see at http://wtb.wa.gov/WIOA_previousassessmentresults.asp.

2015 outcomes will be posted as update to "Workforce Training Results" under "Results" at http://wtb.wa.gov/Pubs_Publications.asp.

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.

State evaluation efforts for workforce programs have been coordinated through the Workforce Board since implementation of the 1991 legislation which created the Board. The workforce program agencies and the LEOs of local boards have representation before the Board. The Board will also perform the federal coordination functions with the national evaluation agenda(s) of the Labor and Education, when those have been announced.

(See "Overview" from Section III.b.4.A above.)

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),

Local Area WIOA Title I Formula Allotment Methodology for Youth

After the state's Youth program allotment is divided into state administration, state set-a-side, and local funds in accordance with the appropriate Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL), local area allotments are determined by three county-level factors:

1. The average number of unemployed individuals for Areas of Substantial Unemployment for the 12-month period ending June 30 (33.3% of the allocation)

2. The number of excess unemployed individuals for the 12-month period ending June 30 (33.3% of the allocation)

3. Share of economically-disadvantaged youth (American Community Survey 2006-2010) (33.3% of the allocation)

If a county qualifies for any one of the factors, its percentage of the whole is calculated for that factor. If a county does not qualify for any one factor, its client data will be excluded from the calculation for that factor. Once that has been completed for all three factors, the average percentage of the three factors is calculated at the local area level. If, for example, Olympic WDA's average is 4 percent, 4 percent of the Youth funding would go to Olympic WDA.

Once the total amount of Youth funds have been divided amongst local areas within the state based on their county data, ESD ensures that no local area receives an amount of funding less than its hold-harmless level.

The hold-harmless amount is determined for each local area by calculating 90 percent of the average allotment share for the two prior program years and multiplying that share by the total local Youth allotment.

If a local area's initial award is below its hold-harmless level, funding adjustments are necessary. Funds will be given to local areas whose pre-hold-harmless amounts are less than the calculated hold-harmless amount in order to raise their total Youth allotment to match their calculated hold-harmless level. The offsetting reduction to the balance of local areas (those at or above hold-harmless) is based on their percentage of the total pre-hold-harmless amount less the amount surrendered to local areas that were funded below the hold-harmless level.

After all adjustments are made, a final award is issued to each local area, 10 percent of which is local administrative funding and 90 percent of which is local program funding.

b. Revising the Methodologies. The process for revising the State's methodologies for determining local area WIOA Title I formula allotments for the youth, adult, and/or dislocated worker programs is as follows:

i. The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) will consult with Employment Security Department and the 12 local workforce boards, through the Washington Workforce Association on the alignment of fund distribution with the state's strategic priorities. Final guidance on the distribution formula, if warranted, will be determined at the Fall meeting of the Workforce Board each year.

ii. Requests to explore changes to any of the WIOA Title I formula allotment methodologies (youth, adult, and/or dislocated worker) must be communicated, in writing, to the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) by July 31 preceding a program year (e.g., by October 31, 2016 for PY16/FY17 allotments covering April 1, 2017-June 30, 2018).

iii. The request must detail the alternate variable(s) proposed and program (youth, adult, and/or dislocated worker) methodology to which the variable(s) would be applied; the existing alternate variable(s) proposed for elimination and program (youth, adult, and/or dislocated worker) methodology from which the variable(s) would be eliminated; or both.

iv. Pursuant to a request, the SWDB will, having delegated operational development of local formula methodologies to the State Workforce Agency (SWA), direct the SWA to convene a state-local work group comprised of SWA and Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) representatives between November 1 and January 1 to research and develop local area allotment scenarios based on the alternate variables proposed to be added or eliminated. Based on the information, the work group may recommend that one, two, all, or none of WIOA Title I formula allotment methodologies be revised.

v. If the work group recommends revising program methodologies, a recommendation will be prepared as an agenda item for the regularly-scheduled February meeting (or special meeting, if necessary) of the SWDB for consideration and action.

vi. The SWDB, in acting on the work group recommendation, represents the Governor.

vii. Changes to any WIOA Title I formula allotment methodology will be communicated to the SWA for the purpose of aligning allotment calculation worksheets and this state policy.

viii. Formula calculation worksheets reflecting approved methodologies will be provided by the SWA to LWDBs after issuance of this policy and future revisions of this policy so local areas are able to research impacts of prospective methodological changes and inform decisions on whether or not to request changes.

ix. Formula calculation worksheets reflecting local area allotments for the coming program year will be provided by the SWA to LWDBs at least five business days before the SWA issues local formula grant packages.

x. If the SWDB does not receive a written request to explore changes to the formula allotment methodologies by October 31 preceding a program year, the methodologies referenced under Section 3.a of this policy will remain in effect and be applied to that program year

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

Local Area WIOA Title I Formula Allotment Methodology for Adult After the state's Adult program allotment is divided into state administration, state set-a-side, and local funds in accordance with the appropriate Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL), local area allotments are determined by three county-level factors:

1. The average number of unemployed individuals for Areas of Substantial Unemployment for the 12-month period ending June 30 (33.3% of the allocation)

2. The average number of excess unemployed individuals for the 12-month period ending June 30 (33.3% of the allocation)

3. Share of economically disadvantaged adults (American Community Survey 2006-2010) (33.3% of the allocation) If a county qualifies for any one of the factors, its percentage of the whole is calculated for that factor. If a county does not qualify for any one factor, its data will be excluded from the calculation for that factor. Once that has been completed for all three factors, the average percentage of the three factors is calculated at the local area level. If, for example, Olympic WDA's average is 4 percent, 4 percent of the Adult funding would go to Olympic WDA. Once the total amount of Adult funds has been divided amongst local areas within the state based on their county data, ESD ensures that no local area receives an amount of funding less than its hold-harmless level. The hold-harmless amount is determined for each local area by calculating 90 percent of the average allotment share for the two prior program years and multiplying that share by the total local Adult allotment. If a local area's initial award is below its hold-harmless level, funding adjustments are necessary. Funds will be given to local areas whose pre-hold-harmless amount are less than the calculated hold-harmless amount in order to raise their total Adult allotment to match their calculated hold-harmless level. The offsetting reduction to the balance of local areas (those at or above hold-harmless) is based on their percentage of the total pre-hold-harmless amount less the amount surrendered to local areas that were funded below the hold-harmless level. After all adjustments are made, a final award is issued to each local area, 10 percent of which is local administrative funding and 90 percent of which is program funding.

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

Local Area WIOA Title I Formula Allotment Methodology for Dislocated Workers After the state's Dislocated Worker (DW) program allotment is divided into state administration, state set-a-side, statewide rapid response, and local funds in accordance with the appropriate Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL), local area DW allotments are determined by three county-level factors that have been assigned certain weights: 1. The average number of unemployed individuals for the 12-month period ending September 30 (weight of 1 = approximately 28.5% of the allocation). 2. The number of excess unemployed individuals for the 12-month period ending September 30 (weight of 1.5 = approximately 43.0% of the allocation). 3. The average share of long term unemployed (Unemployment Insurance claimants with 15+ weeks of benefits for the 12-month

period ending September 30) (weight of 1 = approximately 28.5% of the allocation). After the funding has been divided between the factors, it is spread amongst the counties based on the percentage of individuals that reside in that county per that factor. For example, if 4 percent of the state's long term unemployed participants live in Clallam County, 4 percent of the long-term unemployed funding would go to Clallam County. If a county does not qualify for any one factor, its data is excluded from calculation for that factor. Once the total amount of DW funds has been divided amongst local areas within the state based on their county data, ESD ensures that no local area receives an amount of funding that is less than its hold-harmless level or greater than its stop-gain level. The hold-harmless amount is determined for each local area by calculating 90 percent of the average allotment share for the two prior program years and multiplying that share by the total local DW allotment. The stop-gain amount is determined for each local area by calculating 130 percent of the allocation percentage of the prior program year and multiplying that share by the total local DW allotment. If a local area's initial award is below its hold-harmless level or above its stop-gain level, funding adjustments are necessary. Funds will be given to local areas whose pre-hold-harmless amounts are less than the calculated hold-harmless amount in order to raise their total DW allotment to match their calculated hold-harmless level. The offsetting reduction to the balance of local areas (those at or above hold-harmless) is based on their percentage of the total pre-hold-harmless amount less the amount surrendered to local areas that were funded below the hold-harmless level. The same process is used to determine the stop-gain amount for each local area. After all adjustments are made, a final award is issued to each local area, 10 percent of which is local administrative funding and 90 percent of which is program funding.

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.

Eligible Providers The following are eligible providers for grant funding: 1.Local education agency with demonstrated effectiveness 2. Community-based organization with demonstrated effectiveness 3. Volunteer literacy organization with demonstrated effectiveness 4. Institution of higher education with demonstrated effectiveness 5. Public or private nonprofit agency with demonstrated effectiveness 6. Library with demonstrated effectiveness 7. Public housing authority with demonstrated effectiveness 8. Nonprofit institution that is not described in (1) through (7) and has the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families with demonstrated effectiveness 9. Consortia of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in 1 through 8 with demonstrated effectiveness. Notice of Availability SBCTC will announce the availability of funds through the internet via the SBCTC website. Process Those interested in applying for SBCTC Adult Basic Education Funding will be required to: 1. Submit a letter of intent by February 24, 2017 2. Access the SBCTC Online Grant Management System (OGMS) and develop a formal response to each section of the application (available March 5, 2017) 3. Submit fully completed applications electronically to the SBCTC through (OGMS) by April 15, 2017 4. Evaluation of Applications 5. Proposals will be reviewed by a team of experts from SBCTC and/or other organizations Review of applications will be based on the completion of the requested information in the narrative as well as completion of required forms and comprehensive implementation of all WIOA requirements both state and federal. Criteria for scoring proposals will be based on the following AEFLA requirements: 1. The degree to which the eligible provider will establish measurable goals; 2. The degree to which the eligible provider has the ability to place and navigate all students along a clearly defined,

comprehensive, guided college and career pathway; 3. The past effectiveness of an eligible provider in improving the literacy skills of adults and families and, after the 1-year period beginning with the adoption of an eligible agency's performance measures under Sec. 161 WIOA, the success of an eligible provider receiving funding under this subtitle in meeting or exceeding such performance measures, especially with respect to those adults with lower levels of literacy; 4. The commitment of the eligible provider to serve individuals in the community most in need of literacy services, including individuals who are low-income or have minimal literacy skills and those individuals with barriers to employment, access to opportunities for employment, education, training and support services they need to succeed in the labor market; 5. Whether or not the program is of sufficient intensity and duration for participants to achieve substantial learning gains and uses research-based instructional practices, such as phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading strategies and comprehension, numeracy, solving problems in technology rich environments, and employability skills; 6. Whether the activities are built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice; 7. Whether the activities effectively employ advances in technology, as appropriate, including the use of computers and blended learning resources; 8. Whether the activities provide learning in real life, college and career contexts to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; 9. Whether the activities are staffed by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators; 10. Whether the activities coordinate with other available resources in the community, such as establishing strong links with elementary and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies; 11. Whether the activities offer flexible schedules and support services (such as child care and transportation) as needed to enable all students, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs; 12. Whether the activities maintain a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report participant outcomes and to monitor program performance against the eligible agency performance measures; and 13. Whether the local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English literacy programs. In addition, to ensure that providers meet the WIOA requirements, proposals will be evaluated by teams from SBCTC on their ability to: • Implement and scale effective college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth • Guide and support transformational instructional practices that accelerate student completion to diplomas, high school equivalency, certificates, the Tipping Point, and AA/BA degrees leading to family wage jobs. Plans must include: o Implementing the CCR Standards in all programming; o Integrating employability skills training and instruction in all courses at all levels; o Beginning implementation of integrated employment and training activities such as I BEST into all EL Civics instruction to be fully implemented by July 1, 2016; o Expanding the teaching of speaking and listening into all levels of both ABE and ELA programming; and o Integrating problem solving in technology rich environments at all levels of instruction. • Support one-stop centers through in-kind services/funding • Support alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development • Improve labor market relevance • Improve the structure of service delivery • Increase prosperity; employment, retention, earnings, and the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials Teams comprised of two adult education and workforce leaders and one SBCTC policy associate/program administrator will rate applications. The applications will be reviewed and independently rated by each member of the team to determine an average score. In order to be considered for BEdA Master Grant funding, BEdA Master Grant applications must receive a minimum average score of 102 or higher. In order to be considered for IEL/Civics funding, EL Civic Grant applications must receive a minimum average score of 17 or higher. Final recommendations for approval will be determined based on ratings ensuring support for ABE services is available across the state. PURPOSE and Methodology for Distribution of Federal ABE/IEL/Civics Funds The FY17-22 Federal ABE/IEL/Civics funding formula aligns with Washington's Adult Education and Family Literacy five-year State Plan, guidance from the Governor's Adult Education Advisory Council (AEAC), the Governor's Results Washington initiative, the Higher Education Coordinating Board's

Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' System Direction and Mission Study, and Policy Focus and Dashboard, and the Workforce Education and Training Board's WIOA State Strategic Plan. The intent is to serve more students and serve them more efficiently in order to transition them as quickly as possible to postsecondary education and family sustaining jobs. The FY17-FY22 funding methodology shifts the funding formula from a regional needs based demographic methodology (based solely on census data) to a service and performance based formula giving equal weight to service/access and to performance. The current state plan and federal funding formula did not recognize providers that expanded service to serve more students, nor did it include any metrics on performance. The FY17-FY22 formula shifts funding from regional demographics towards providers enrolling more students and increasing the numeracy, literacy and college and career readiness skills of participants. This service and performance based formula is focused on increasing the number of students being served and the quality of that service. FUNDING PRINCIPLES The following funding principles were developed as a result of comprehensive input from all stakeholders through statewide forums, online surveys, and provider groups in FY13 and FY14. • Funding needs to be transparent and credible • Formula should be based on objective criteria (not local negotiations or regional need) • Formula should incent transitions to postsecondary education • Formula should be data-driven, focused on increased access (FTEs) and increased success for students (Student Achievement Points - SAI). Both total points and points per student should be considered • Institutions must have capacity to spend allotted performance money effectively METHODOLOGY* Distribute funds based on a prorata share among providers for the following (3-yr avg. of data): • 50% Performance based o 10% Transitions o 20% Total Student Achievement Points o 20% SAI points per student • 50% FTE Enrollment *Providers seeking funding for the first time will be awarded base funding calculated only on the proposed number of students to be served (enrollment). In years 2-5 funding will be awarded based on both performance and enrollment. Special Rule If SBCTC implements any rule or policy relating to the administration or operation of a program that imposes a requirement not demanded by Federal law, SBCTC shall identify the rule or policy as being imposed by SBCTC. Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA) • Adult education; • Literacy; • Workplace adult education and literacy activities; • Family literacy activities; • English language acquisition activities; • Integrated English literacy and civics education; • Workforce preparation activities; or • Integrated education and training that— 1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and 2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement. All services provided under Title II of this plan accelerate the progress of adults along well-defined pathways to college and career readiness that lead to postsecondary certificates/degrees and life-sustaining jobs and support vital families, communities, and economies across Washington. Description of Allowable Activities Overview Washington's adult basic education programs address the needs of adult learners as they strengthen local communities and businesses. Adults who lack the skills and knowledge to fully participate in, contribute to, and benefit from Washington's postsecondary education system and economy are eligible to access adult education services in a variety of settings across the state. Core services are offered at all locations to adult learners who meet the federal eligibility requirements for enrollment. These learners: • Have attained 16 years of age; • Are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; • Lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to function effectively in society; • Do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or have not achieved an equivalent level of education; and/or • Are unable to speak, read, or write the English language. Beginning in July 2015 under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), adult education and literacy activities were expanded to include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training. Comprehensive interventions are designed to address skill and knowledge deficits across the levels defined in Title II

of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. Vision and leadership for this system of services comes from the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). SBCTC is advised about issues related to students' career pathway goals by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB). SBCTC is also advised and supported by the Washington State Adult Education Advisory Council (AEAC), which meets four times each year. This body was created by the legislature in 1991, and its members are appointed by the state governor to represent agencies, partners and sectors. Represented entities include: Adult Basic Education providers, community-based organizations, employers, libraries, unions, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Corrections, Community and Technical Colleges, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Employment Security Department, the Governor, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Washington Workforce Association (WIBs), and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (state WIB). The AEAC was the first officially certified state advisory council when it was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in March of 1997. Building on policies and initiatives created through this comprehensive system of advising, coordination and support, providers leverage success using innovative processes that have gained recognition in formal research among colleagues and funders across the nation as well as from the President of the United States. These processes unify and inform the delivery of Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, and high school credential programs. Following are examples of research-based innovative practices that support the implementation and scaling of college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth.

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.

Eligible Providers The following are eligible providers for grant funding: 1.Local education agency with demonstrated effectiveness 2. Community-based organization with demonstrated effectiveness 3. Volunteer literacy organization with demonstrated effectiveness 4. Institution of higher education with demonstrated effectiveness 5. Public or private nonprofit agency with demonstrated effectiveness 6. Library with demonstrated effectiveness 7. Public housing authority with demonstrated effectiveness 8. Nonprofit institution that is not described in (1) through (7) and has the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families with demonstrated effectiveness 9. Consortia of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in 1 through 8 with demonstrated effectiveness. Notice of Availability SBCTC will announce the availability of funds through the internet via the SBCTC website. Any eligible provider interested in applying for grant funding may obtain the application from the SBCTC website.

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.

Introduction This section describes how DSHS/DVR contracts with private vocational rehabilitation (VR) service providers, Washington's Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), as well as the services these partners provide. CRP Contract & Services DSHS/DVR contracts with CRPs to provide assessment, placement, retention, and training services. The majority of CRPs are private nonprofit providers. However, in some instances, the CRP contract is with a government organization or private, for-profit businesses. The State of Washington requires contracts, in lieu of cooperative agreements, for the purpose of procuring goods and services. These contracts meet requirements specified within CFR 361.31. DSHS/DVR's CRP contract is procured through an open Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process and is renewed every two years. The RFQ defines the services, expected outcomes of service delivery, payment systems, uniform fees, and the qualifications prospective contractors must meet to be granted a CRP contract. DSHS/DVR does not currently limit the number of contractors who may respond to the RFQ and contractors choose which of the contracted services they provide. Currently, approximately 110 organizations have a CRP contract with DSHS/DVR. The following service are defined, and provided to DSHS/DVR customers through, the CRP contract: • Vocational Evaluation Customers participate in one or more types of standardized vocational tests used to obtain objective information requested by a DSHS/DVR counselor regarding work-related strengths and limitations. • Trial Work Experience Customers' ability to benefit from DSHS/DVR services is assessed in a real work setting(s) arranged by the contractor. Results are used to determine eligibility based on clear and convincing evidence whether the individual's disability is too significant to benefit from services. • Community Based Assessment Customers' work interests, abilities, and employment barriers are assessed in realistic work settings arranged by the contractor. These assessments collect information and help identify the nature and extent of supports or accommodations needed for the customer to obtain and maintain competitive employment. • Job Placement Customers are placed into paid and integrated employment, arranged by the contractor, through mutual agreement between the DSHS/DVR counselor, customer, and contractor. • Intensive Training (Supported Employment) Customers attain job stabilization with job supports, meet their employers' expected levels of work productivity, and transition to long-term Extended Services provided by an entity other than DSHS/DVR through one-on-one job skills training and support provided at the supported employment job site by the contractor. • Job Retention Customers learn the essential functions of a job, meet the employer's expected level of performance, and retain employment for ninety calendar days after placement through individualized training and support services provided by the contractor. • Off-Site Psycho-Social Job Support Services Customers who have not disclosed their disabilities to their employers or customers whose employers prohibit access to the worksite receive regular therapeutic interaction. Off-Site Psycho-Social Job Support Services enables customers to maintain satisfactory job performance and successful interactions with others at the workplace. • Pre-employment Transition Services Students with disabilities participate in individualized and group services coordinated with their schools. These services include: 1) job exploration; 2) information regarding post-secondary opportunities at institutions of higher education; 3) self-advocacy instruction; 4) work readiness training; and 5) work-based learning. Trial Work Experience, Community Based Assessment, Job Placement, Intensive Training, and Job Retention are available at three levels of intensity. Customers' universal and unique barriers determine which intensity level, and commensurate support level, is needed. All contracted service payments are outcome based; delivery of the expected result or outcome is required to receive payment. The expected outcome is specific to the service as indicated in the definition with a report detailing the activities associated with the provision of service and outcomes attained. Bonus payment incentives for employment outcomes under certain circumstances (e.g. employment which offers health insurance) are included in the contract. Collaborative Activities DSHS/DVR will establish a workgroup of DSHS/DVR and CRP staff. This workgroup will collaborate of a series of initiatives which will improve service quality, promote better outcomes, and improve DSHS/DVR and CRP partnerships. Workgroup Initiatives: 1. Review the current contract model to determine needed improvements or modifications. 2. Develop an evaluation tool to assess CRP

performance and service quality. 3. Complete, publish, and disseminate the CRP Cost Study, collaborative research conducted by the University of Washington Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER) and DSHS/DVR, and use results to inform future contracts and fee structures. 4. Develop and provide training for DSHS/DVR and CRP staff to promote effective collaboration, CRP staff retention, and shared best practice service methodologies. 5. Disseminate best practice guidance to DSHS/DVR staff regarding communication and collaboration with local CRPs. In the FFY 2015 DSHS/DVR State Plan, DSHS/DVR targeted quarterly local-level meetings between CRPs and office-level DSHS/DVR staff. These quarterly meetings were implemented statewide and both DSHS/DVR and CRP staff report that these meetings have strengthened partnerships and improved service coordination. Therefore, DSHS/DVR will continue to conduct these mandatory quarterly meetings and will continue to foster strengthening local-level partnerships. DSHS/DVR has elected to combine three distinct state plan attachments required by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (i.e. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services, Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Funds, and Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services) into this one section. The intent is for authorities and stakeholders to comprehensively evaluate the Supported Employment Program in one complete narrative. The cooperative agreements, program goals, funding distribution, and supported employment services described in this section represent the coordinated efforts of DSHS/DVR, its State collaborators, and its service delivery partners to ensure that all Washingtonians with disabilities can obtain and maintain employment, maximize independence, and experience improved quality of life. Supported Employment Partners & Agreements DSHS/DVR primarily provides supported employment services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and individuals with mental health disabilities. Of these two customer groups, individuals with developmental disabilities represent the majority of supported employment outcomes. DSHS/DVR's success in serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is based on a long-standing relationship with the DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration (DSHS/DDA). DSHS/DDA is committed to funding extended services for all of its clients who achieve a supported employment outcome through DSHS/DVR. Substantial resource reductions within the DSHS Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery - Mental Health (DBHR-MH), DSHS/DVR's supported employment partner for customers with mental health disabilities, has limited State capacity to provide extended services to this population. Diligent efforts continue to address these reductions. DSHS/DVR continues its collaboration with DBHR-MR, the Mental Health Employment Consortium, and the Washington Community Mental Health Council to expand the availability of extended services through alternative resources and innovative approaches. These efforts intend to establish cooperative agreements with all Behavioral Health Organizations (BHOs) responsible for county-level delivery of community mental health services. DSHS/DVR continues to promote the use of Ticket to Work as a potential income source for developmental disability, mental health, and traumatic brain injury service providers to build their capacity for providing extended support services. During the 2017 - 2020 planning cycle, DSHS/DVR will collaborate with DBHR-MH to leverage the strong state-level partnership to facilitate local-level agreement development. In addition, DSHS/DVR will collaborate with the DSHS Aging and Long Term Support Administration to explore funding of extended services to be provided for individuals with traumatic brain injuries and other significant disabilities who require supported employment. Many individuals with disabilities would benefit from supported employment, yet do not have access to a long term funding source for extended services. In response, DSHS/DVR has encouraged supported employment providers to focus on developing natural supports within customers' workplaces. DSHS/DVR strategies for expanding the availability of supported employment services: • Participate in an interagency service committee which supports initiatives and increased employment outcomes for persons living with developmental disabilities, mental health disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and traumatic brain injuries. • Train staff and partners on Social Security Work Incentives, Plan to Achieve Self Sufficiency, and other work incentives to identify optional funding sources. • Provide technical

assistance on the use of natural supports in the workplace. • Coordinate cross-program training opportunities on innovative supported employment strategies. Supported Employment Goals & Title VI Funds For 2017 - 2020, DSHS/DVR estimates the Title VI Supported Employment Grant will fund between 1,450 and 1,600 customers who receive supported employment services through Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), resulting in 300 - 400 supported employment outcomes per year. At these levels, DSHS/DVR estimates serving approximately 6,100 supported employment IPEs and producing 1,400 supporting employment outcomes during the four-year period of this plan. DSHS/DVR also will use the Title I Vocational Rehabilitation Services Grant to fund supported employment for additional customers when Title VI funds have been expended. The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, allows DSHS/DVR to determine the length of time for which youth with the most significant disabilities can receive extended services from DSHS/DVR. DSHS/DVR has selected a 24-month timeframe for these services. Supported Employment Services DSHS/DVR provides supported employment services primarily to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DSHS/DVR and its partners continue to pursue innovative strategies to expand these services to other populations, as resources are often comparatively scarce. The State of Washington has applied for a Medicaid 1115(c) Waiver that is pending approval. If approved, the waiver will fund supported employment as a Medicaid service, expanding the availability of extended services to individuals who experience a wide array of significant disabilities. Through continued collaboration, innovative approaches, and the use of natural supports, DSHS/DVR and its partners will be able DSHS/DVR will expand the availability, quality, and scope of extended services for all individuals who require supported employment.

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 state has up to twenty years of experience integrating program data from five of the six core programs (and some other partners and potential partners as well) with unemployment insurance data on employment outcomes and education system data on further education and training outcomes for reporting, evaluation and assessment purposes. Modest modifications to accommodate new WIOA requirements are planned, with substantial progress expected by the time the first WIOA reports are due. Integration of these data at the operational level of Case management or MIS systems in near real–time is far less developed, outside of some programs operate by the same agency and organizations (e.g. Title I and Title III). Integration within operational systems is a much more complicated and expensive task, requiring formal design and cost analysis, with resulting substantial lead time before implementation.

Interoperability across the MIS's of WIOA Combined plan partners would be a very complicated project, not to be undertaken without thorough assessment of feasibility and schedule – nor without realistic expectations about the availability of funds and expertise. The existing MIS's vary greatly in technology, vintage, complexity, confidentiality and security rules and interaction with other systems. Outside of the Title 1 & 3 programs, almost every other program operates under a completely different MIS. As there have been no potential sources identified for either federal or state funding of the magnitude required for a major interoperability project, the state's initial efforts will be concentrated on more affordable strategies to provide a small number of key data across system partners on a near "real–time" basis. The approach is derived from the Client Registry operated across the ten divisions of DSHS. The basic approach is to identify a very limited set of key data elements, to be updated frequently on a new central database, and made available over an appropriate interface within each of the component systems. In the case of WIOA, the key information identified so far are the information necessary to unduplicate a person known to more than one MIS, and the current service status of that person. It is not clear whether funds will be available for even this limited type of automated operational data exchange. Cost estimates for this or more ambitious approaches to operational data sharing or interoperability compete with other WIOA and non–WIOA demands on a limited number of agency staff with the requisite knowledge – and may be premature until final federal data specifications are available. Some additional modifications can improve WIOA objectives and compliance at relatively modest costs, such as achieving adaptations and availability across partners of existing applications and resources, and the required modifications and expansions of the ETPL and consumer report functions.

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.

Streamlined intake and service delivery across the MIS's of WIOA Combined plan partners would be a very complicated project, not to be undertaken without thorough assessment of feasibility and schedule – nor without realistic expectations about the availability of funds and expertise. The existing MIS's vary greatly in technology, vintage, complexity, confidentiality and security rules and interaction with other systems. Outside of the Title 1 & 3 programs, almost every other program operates under a completely different MIS.

As there have been no potential sources identified for either federal or state funding of the magnitude required for a major common intake and service delivery project, the state's initial efforts will be concentrated on more affordable strategies to provide a small number of key data across system partners on a near "real–time" basis. The approach is derived from the Client Registry operated across the ten divisions of DSHS. The basic approach is to identify a very limited set of key data elements, to be updated frequently on a new central database, and made available over an appropriate interface within each of the component systems. In the case of WIOA, the key information identified so far are the information necessary to unduplicate a person known to more than one MIS, which programs the person is known to, and the current service status of that person. It is not clear whether funds will be available for even this limited type of automated operational data exchange. Cost estimates for this or more ambitious approaches to operational data sharing or interoperability compete with other WIOA and non–WIOA demands on a limited number of agency staff with the requisite knowledge – and may be premature until final federal data specifications are available.

Retrospective tracking of services across programs for reporting and program assessment purposes is already conducted on an annual basis by the Workforce Board or many of the proposed Combined Plan partners, and will be continued and modified under WIOA. This is much less complicated and expensive than operational implementation of common intake and service delivery systems across different MIS's.

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.

The State board will advise the governor of the quarter desirability of aligning technology and data systems across one–stop partner programs to facilitate common intake, collection of federally required or otherwise key date in order to improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals, while balancing the desirability and cost of such improvements against other requirements and improvements that implement or enhance the effectiveness of WIOA, including staff curriculum and training, training services, modifications of facilities, assistive technology, required public information dissemination, self–service enhancements, collection of new data elements, new data validation procedures, and expanded and modified reporting systems.

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

Barring unforeseen developments in the final regulations, for the first four of the new WIOA measures, the state expects to be able to deliver both aggregated performance data and participant–level records for all six of the core programs for the first quarter of PY 16 on schedule – that is, by December of 2016. Procedures for generating such reports for Titles I and III are deliverables for the upgrade to the relevant MIS that is currently underway. Annual processes currently in use for the Workforce Board's annual assessments of Titles II and IV programs will require significant revision or replacement, but based on current expertise, should be achievable.

However, while the first year of quarterly reports will include calculation of four new performance measures, they will be incomplete in other ways. Since all of the exits to be covered in that first report for PY 16 Q1, any data not collected under the pre–WIOA system will not be present in the program MIS's. For some variables, especially in Titles II and IV, it will be some time before those systems are modified to collect the new elements. Similarly, if the "common exit" approach is adopted in the final rule, depending on the final rule, it may not be possible to implement it, even retroactively for reporting, in time for the first quarterly report.

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.

Currently the state assesses eleven public workforce programs – including five of the six core EIOA programs – on first–year measures of employment, employment and/or further training, earnings, credentials, industry of employment, hours worked, and hourly wage. Longer term follow–up will be available through the Education Research and Data Centers P–20 Workforce longitudinal data system (SLDS). Decisions about selection, deletion or modification of additional indicators will depend on final definitions of the WIOA measures and the rules relating thereunto. The state also conducts periodic net impact and cost benefit econometric comparison group studies of many workforce system. These studies are conducted about every four years per state statute, and the next cycle will be modified to improve its applicability to assessing WOA implementation.

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.)

UI wage data has been used by the workforce Board for annual or biennial assessments of participant outcomes from a range of workforce programs for nearly twenty years, utilizing both Washington UI records and those from neighboring states under reciprocal agreements.

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.

Washington's Workforce Board is statutorily authorized as both a workforce agency and an education agency. It has a statutory state mandate to evaluate both education and workforce programs, and is a designated PACIA under WIA. With twenty years of experience in program evaluation and assessment using education and employment records, the agency has routinely and securely handled substantial volumes of personal information. The agency is familiar with, and keeps up to date on, data security issues, non–disclosure requirements (FERPA, WRIS, and FEDES, NSC), and aggregation procedures to avoid disclosure in reporting. While it is hoped that WIOA results in some simplification of these requirements, the state is fully prepared for the situation in which the Workforce Board uses outcome records in aggregate program assessment that cannot be disclosed to the agencies managing the programs – as when WRIS records cannot be disclosed to education agencies, or when education records go beyond registry information and cannot be disclosed to workforce agencies.

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.

After consulting with the other agencies administering workforce development programs Washington, the Employment Security Department has drafted and released for public comment WorkSource System Policy 1022. This policy communicates a system-wide policy and procedure for core and partner programs included in the WIOA state plan for identifying and referring veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP).

DVOP, which is operated by the Employment Security Department (ESD), provides intensive case management and services, job referrals, and job readiness activities to disabled veterans and other veterans with significant barriers to employment.

Common Assurance No. 11 in WIOA Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements directs states to provide assurances to the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education that "(s)ervice providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate."

Title I-B Assurance No. 2 similarly directs states to provide assurances to the U.S. Department of Labor that they have "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 specialists."

All staff of programs under the WIOA State Plan who work directly with customers must familiarize themselves with the criteria for veterans with significant barriers to employment. If, through formal or informal means (e.g., intake processes, general discussion) WIOA State Plan core and partner program staff identify veterans with a significant barrier to employment, they must offer those individuals a referral to the DVOP in the nearest WorkSource (one-stop) center. Whether or not to accept or follow through on a referral is up to the customer.

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.

System–wide Commitment to Improving Accessibility for All Participants

Fundamental to the Workforce Board's vision for the workforce system is the concept of universal accessibility: Washington's workforce system must be prepared and able to serve jobseekers from all kinds of backgrounds, who face a variety of barriers. Universal accessibility encompasses both physical accessibility of all facilities, as well as programmatic accessibility—taking into account customers' particular access needs. Integration of service delivery and better coordination among workforce system partners will allow services and delivery approaches to be customized to particular access needs.

WIOA has provided new energy across Washington's workforce system to address and remove barriers to access so that a greater number of Washingtonians will be able to connect with a career pathway and a living–wage job. Advances in personal computing and telecommunications technology have made the Internet and person–to–person connectivity a feature of many people's daily lives. WIOA acknowledges these improvements by opening the door to "virtual" service delivery—bringing services each participant needs to their doorstep, or kitchen table.

Recognizing that barrier removal is a project that requires sustained effort over time, the Workforce Board started work on establishing its first standing advisory committee to lead a statewide effort on removing barriers to access throughout the system. The standing advisory committee, described below, is expected to work with local advisory committees on accessibility issues, starting an ongoing conversation between local workforce system practitioners and state–level policymakers. In this way, the committee will be able to systematically identify and address access barriers.

The Workforce Board's advisory committee on barrier solutions will be informed by local advisory committees that assess accessibility issues at the community–level and will help local boards prioritize projects and track progress toward improved customer service for those populations. The state standing committee will additionally serve as a forum for sharing best practices and strategies to improve access and advocate for resources and policy development that will improve services for all populations with barriers.

Local workforce development boards will partner with the state advisory committee on barrier solutions to identify barrier removal projects and best practices that can be brought to scale statewide. Local workforce development boards have taken the lead for several years in convening their own advisory groups on system accessibility at the local level. Each local workforce development board will designate either one of these existing advisory groups or create a new one to focus on barrier removal work, and will seek to recruit members from a broad spectrum of populations with barriers to employment, including: people with physical, sensory, behavioral health, or cognitive disabilities; economically disadvantaged communities; low–skilled and under–educated

individuals; English language acquisition or bilingual communities; disadvantaged youth; and the long–term unemployed. Local workforce development boards are encouraged to engage with real customers with barriers, including encouraging customers to be part of their local committees focused on barriers.

These local advisory groups on barrier solutions will create an annual progress report to their local board outlining and discussing issues, accomplishments, and future deliverables related to the accessibility goals in local board strategic plans; concerns and challenges faced by populations with access barriers, as seen from the advisory groups' perspectives; a work–plan containing recommendations for improving accessibility in the coming year; and a progress report on previous work–plans for improving accessibility. The same report will be delivered each year to the state advisory group on barrier solutions, which will incorporate identified local best practices into statewide strategies. The state advisory group on barrier removal will also redirect resources toward barrier removal projects it prioritizes, and will help local advisory groups identify and broadly recruit representative members.

One–Stop Certification and Ensuring Accessibility

All one–stops ("WorkSource" centers in Washington) must be certified pursuant to WIOA Title I Policy 5612 on One–Stop Evaluation and Certification, promulgated by Washington's Employment Security Department. Local workforce development boards are required to use an Application for WorkSource Certification approved by the state Workforce Board during the WIOA implementation planning process.

The SWDB, in consultation with local Chief Elected Officials and LWDBs, must review and update the one–stop certification criteria embodied by Attachment A every two years as part of the review and modification of the WIOA State Plan.

LWDBs can establish additional criteria and set higher standards for service coordination than those set by the State. If they do, they must also review and update those additional criteria and standards every two years as part of the WIOA Local Plan update process. Additional criteria must be clearly identified in addenda to the Application for WorkSource Certification.

One–stop sites will be evaluated and certified no less than once every three years. LWDBs (or the SWDB in those cases where LWDBs are the one–stop operator) may direct "for–cause" site evaluation and certification as determined appropriate and warranted. In support of the goal of continuous improvement, each certified site will provide an annual report to the LWDB detailing the progress toward reaching higher standards set forth in the certification criteria.

One–stop certification teams will be established by LWDBs (or the SWDB in those cases where LWDBs are the one–stop operator) and are responsible for conducting independent and objective evaluations of one–stop sites and making certification recommendations to LWDBs (or the SWDB in those cases where LWDBs are the one–stop operator). One–stop certifications teams are comprised of LWDB members and staff and individuals who represent local partners with specific expertise serving populations with barriers. Certification team members should be free of conflicts of interest. Per proposed 20 CFR 678.800(a)(3), the SWDB, rather than local one–stop certification teams, must certify one–stop sites if LWDBs are the one–stop operator.

One–stop certification teams will render written determinations within 30 days of conducting one–stop site evaluations. There are three possible determinations: (1) certification, (2) provisional

certification with a requirement that one–stop operators provide action plans and timelines for meeting certification standards, and (3) not certified or decertified.

Provisional certifications must be accompanied by detailed description of the issues/concerns identified so one–stop operators have sufficient information around which to develop required action plans and timelines. A determination to not certify a one–stop site must be accompanied by a detailed description of the deficiencies, including an explanation as to why the certification team believed the deficiencies could not be addressed or resolved provisionally.

Operators of one–stop sites that are not certified have 10 business days, if they choose, to appeal those determinations, in writing, to the LWDB (or SWDB in those cases where LWDBs are the one–stop operator) using the Appeal of WorkSource Certification Determination form developed by the Employment Security Department. For each deficiency identified, the appellant must specify why and how it believes the deficiency could have been resolved. The appeal form must be accompanied by a copy of the one–stop certification team's written determination.

The LWDB (or SWDB in those cases where LWDBs are the one–stop operator) have 10 business days to issue, in writing, a final, binding determination.

If a one–stop site is ultimately not certified following a standard or "for–cause" evaluation, the LWDB must have a plan to ensure continuity of service between the time a site is not certified and a new one–stop operator is procured.

The success and accountability of Washington's one–stop delivery system – WorkSource – depends on the values that local Workforce Development Boards and their partners use to guide their planning and operations:

• Integrated – Think and act as an integrated system of partners that share common goals with services delivered by various organizations with the best capabilities for a seamless customer experience.

• Accountable – Committed to high quality customer services with regular program performance review based on shared data and actions that enhance outcomes.

• Universal Access – Meet the needs of customers by ensuring universal access to programs, services, and activities for all eligible individuals.

• Continuous Improvement – Create a delivery system that utilizes feedback from employers and current and future jobseekers to challenge the status quo and innovates to drive measurable improvements

• Partnership – Align goals, resources, and initiatives with economic development, business, labor and education partners.

• Regional Strategy – Work with counterparts to address broader workforce needs of the regional economy and leverage resources to provide a higher quality and level of services.

WIOA requires that there must be at least one physical one–stop career center in each local area. Additional locations may also provide access to workforce system services and may include

specialized centers serving targeted populations, such as youth, dislocated workers, or basic skills deficient individuals, English language learners, or industry–specific centers. To achieve the goal of increased access, Washington state recognizes three levels of sites that can be certified within the one–stop service delivery system.

Comprehensive

• Accessible to the general public during regular business days, as well as physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities

• Portal site for electronic access

• Provider of basic and individualized career services, educational services, and training services

• Provider of business services

• Representation of five mandated partners (WIOA Titles I–IV, TANF)

• Additional related employment and training resources Affiliated

• Accessible to the general public and physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities

• Portal site for electronic access

• Provider of basic career services

• Representation of one or more mandated partners

• Additional related employment, education, and training resources

• Established working relationship as part of an integrated system of WorkSource sites Connection

• Accessible to the general public

• Portal site for electronic access

• Provider of basic career services

• Additional related employment and training resources

• Established working relationship as part of an integrated system of WorkSource sites

Sites seeking certification as a Comprehensive Center, Affiliated, or Connection Site are required to submit an application and receive a site visit from the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) Certification Team. Staff will answer questions about their site and how it functions to add value and provide customers with quality services as a part of the WorkSource system. This team is comprised of LWDB members and staff as well as other community partners who have specific expertise in serving populations with barriers.

Following the site visit, interviews, and final responses to any follow up questions, the Evaluation Team will provide a written response within 30 days indicating one of three outcomes:

1. Certification granted

2. Provisional Certification with plan and timeline for meeting standards

3. Not Certified

In support of the goals of continuous improvement of the one–stop delivery system, on at least an annual basis each certified site will provide a report detailing the progress toward reaching higher standards set out in the certification criteria and this information will be provided to the Local Workforce Development Board.

Improved availability, a welcoming atmosphere, inclusive settings, and high quality customer service benefit all customers. WorkSource extends services and outreach not just to individuals who walk in the door, but also to those who have become disengaged in the labor force. Integrated, quality services are provided to all customers within the center and via technology through online or phone access. Principles of universal design are considered which designs inclusive space and materials to be available to individuals regardless of their range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, intelligence, or educational level. During certification, each one–stop site must:

• Describe how the site works cooperatively with WIOA core partners to provide quality services to all customers. Describe your outreach to populations with barriers in the community and relationship with core program and community partners to effectively serve them.

• Provide evidence that basic ADA requirements have been met.

• Describe initiatives or strategies in developing universal access and provide tangible evidence of implementation or solution driven plan development, and address the following four specific areas of access:

o Physical: Architectural or building

o Information: all paper, printed or posted materials

o Digital: software, web–based programs and alternatives to print

o Communication: verbal, non–verbal access for services, phone and other

• Describe their wireless internet infrastructure.

• Address how the needs of populations with barriers are met through staff–assistance and other means.

• List any best practices to highlight and share for continuous improvement.

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 delivery of high quality services to individuals with limited English proficiency by Washington's One–Stop Delivery System is ensured in the following manner:

1. Customers with Limited English Proficiency Receive Integrated Services that Lead to Employment and Careers:

Limited English proficient jobseekers will be assisted by a culturally competent navigator that helps guide them to the workforce development pathway that is best for them. This means Washington's richly complex system will help these customers move beyond program specific solutions to make informed choices that pull from a full menu of services. These services will be designed and delivered with the worker being the focal point. The system is promising to combine all resources to help each individual learn how to find and keep the right job and receive continued support to advance careers.

2. Agencies Providing Direct Services to Individuals with limited English Proficiency in One–Stops:

A number of system partners provided general services to individuals with limited English proficiency across Washington. However the addition of Department of Social and Health Services DSHS (contains the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Assistance), as a One–Stop partner significantly increases the resources that are available across the workforce system. Added to this resource is the participation of our Adult Basic Education services team located within our Community College system, which also has a strong history of supporting individuals with limited English proficiency. As a result job seekers with limited English will more effectively connect with the wrap–around services of the plan from I–Best Training and on–the–job work experiences to training funds, food stamps and housing assistance. In addition there will be an enhanced ability to communicate effectively through a wide array of media from written to online information.

3. State Advisory Committee on Barriers – Partnering with Local Committees:

The plan requires the establishment of the Workforce Board's first ongoing state–level advisory committee that will be focused on Accessibility and Barrier Solutions, along with the designation of local advisory committees. By the fourth year of the plan the state advisory committee will be receiving annual progress reports on One–Stop centers' to ensure accessibility at the local level and across the system.

4. Professional Training with Focus on Cultural Competency:

Throughout the Plan the importance of professional development is emphasized in order to equip our Field Staff with the support they need to make the system successful. A key component of Professional Development is training on "Cultural Competency" and creating a safe and welcoming

environment for all sectors of our community in particular those facing the barrier of limited English proficiency.

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.

Washington State's plan is the culmination of countless meetings, endless hours discussing the potential impacts from changes to policies and procedures, and the input and efforts of more than 1,000 stakeholders and interested Washingtonians.

Beginning with a committee structure in October 2014, the Workforce Board adopted a planning process that convened a Steering Committee, co–chaired by business and labor. Membership included representatives from each of the four core programs, as well as LWBDs, CLEOs, key stakeholders and partners, and interested parties. There were three additional subcommittees that mirrored the business/labor co–chair structure, with broad stakeholder membership. Additionally there were 14 task forces that undertook development of recommendations, and provided input throughout the planning process.

In fall 2015, 8 public forums across the state provided opportunities to gather input on the plan strategies and goals. More than 450 people participated in this process. At this same time, the Workforce Board staff participated in six breakout discussion sessions during a regional DVR training conference.

Concurrently with the forums, staff convened a writing team of 35 stakeholders to undertake development of the strategic plan component. Over the course of four months, this team met weekly to ensure that each of the plan's priority chapters reflected the vision and strategies that will enable the state's workforce development system to accomplish the goals over the next four years.

The strategic planning process paralleled the operational planning process. This work was accomplished with another group of more than 30 dedicated stakeholders. This section of the plan outlines the combined work that the state's partners will need to accomplish to actualize the state plan goals.

The state broadly invited the public to provide comment on both the strategic and operational sections of the plan in January. There were 14 commenters who provided 75 comments and suggestions for change. A review team of partner programs met over the course of two–days to review the comments and to incorporate changes to the plan where appropriate. (All commenters received individualized letters of response.)

All of this effort resulted in Washington State's plan for workforce development, Talent and Prosperity for All, which brings together all of the following programs under both WIOA and state statute:

Core Programs: Adult (Title I), Youth (Title I), Dislocated Worker (Title I), Basic Education for Adults (Title II), Wagner–Peyser (Title III), Vocational Rehabilitation & Services for the Blind (Title IV)

Non–Core Programs: TANF/WorkFirst, Trade Act, Unemployment Insurance Services, Basic Food Stamp Employment and Training, Senior Community Services Employment, Community Development Block Grant, Community Services Block Grant, Second Chance Act

Additional Programs under the State's Workforce Development Plan: Secondary and Postsecondary Career and Technical Education, Job Skills Program, Customized Training Program, Worker Retraining Program, Training Benefits Program, Apprenticeship, Private Vocational Schools

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.

Washington's Governor designated 12 local workforce development areas for WIOA as follows:

- WDA 1 - Olympic
- WDA 2 - Pacific Mountain
- WDA 3 - Northwest
- WDA 4 - Snohomish County
- WDA 5 - Seattle-King County
- WDA 6 - Tacoma-Pierce County
- WDA 7 - Southwest
- WDA 8 - North Central
- WDA 9 - South Central
- WDA 10 - Eastern Washington
- WDA 11 - Benton-Franklin
- WDA 12 - Spokane Area

The Governor further designated each of the 12 local workforce development areas as individual regions under WIOA:

- Olympic Region
- Pacific Mountain Region
- Northwest Region
- Snohomish County Region
- Seattle-King County Region
- Tacoma-Pierce County Region
- Southwest Region
- North Central Region
- South Central Region
- Eastern Washington Region
- Benton-Franklin Region
- Spokane Area Region

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.

Endeavoring to proactively and aggressively implement WIOA at the state and local levels in Washington, on April 10, 2015, Governor Jay Inslee granted initial designation to 12 local workforce

development areas for WIOA. Five days later, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration issued Training and Employment Guidance Letter 27-14 (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Transition Authority for Immediate Implementation of Governance Provisions), which provided substantive guidance on local area designation.

Washington enshrined the process and procedures, including appeals, for initial and subsequent designation of local workforce development areas in state WIOA Title I Policy 5609https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WIOA-Title-I-Policy-5609 (Local Workforce Development Area Designation), which was issued on July 1, 2015. The policy included an application through which local chief elected officials were to request either initial or subsequent designation of existing or new local workforce development areas. For the purpose of initial designation, the application/request was due to the State Workforce Development Board (Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board) by July 31, 2015. The State Workforce Development Board reviewed data and information associated with both "performed successfully" and "sustained fiscal integrity" as consistent with the definitions provided in the Act, proposed rules, and federal guidance.

Consult this http://www.wa.gov/esd/1stop/policies/documents/wioa_title1/GovernorsInitialDesignationLetter.pdf to view a copy of the Governor's designation letter.

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

The appeals process used by Washington as it relates to designation of local areas is captured in Section 3.h of state WIOA Title I Policy 5609https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WIOA-Title-I-Policy-5609 (Designation of Local Workforce Development Areas). That provision holds that a local Chief Elected Official who requests and is denied initial and/or subsequent designation has 10 business days to submit a formal appeal to the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) by communicating, in writing, the reason(s) for appealing the Governor's decision and providing evidence or information supporting appeal. Upon receipt of a formal appeal, the SWDB has 10 business days to render a decision on that appeal. If a decision is not rendered within that time frame or if the appeal is similarly denied, the local Chief Elected Official may request review by the U.S. Secretary of Labor pursuant to proposed 20 CFR 683.640. The Secretary may subsequently order local workforce development area designation if the Secretary determines that the entity was not accorded procedural rights under the state's appeals process or finds that the area meets the initial and/or subsequent designation requirements at WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or 106(b)(3) and proposed 20 CFR 679.250.

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

Any disputes and resulting appeals of one-stop infrastructure funding determinations will be addressed first through processes/procedures outlined in local dispute resolution and appeals policies developed by Local Workforce Development Boards per state WIOA Title I Policy 5410 https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WIOA-Title-I-(Dispute Resolution and Appeals). For one-stop infrastructure disputes, local dispute resolution is the sole avenue of appeal. If the dispute cannot be resolved locally, the Governor's state criteria and methodology for one-stop infrastructure funding will be

imposed as a default as per WIOA Title I Policy 5618 (One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Cost Sharing).

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.

Washington is in the process of developing state WIOA Title I Policy 5617 (Use of Governor's Discretionary Funds for WIOA Title I Statewide Activities), which articulates the process for identifying, assessing and securing the Governor's approval for use of the WIOA 10% discretionary set-aside funding. Until such time as that policy is issued, the current approach allows the Governor unilateral decision-making authority over state funds for workforce investment activities, though the Governor's senior policy advisor for workforce issues does solicit proposals from workforce development stakeholders.

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

The Governor has identified investments for PY15/FY16 WIOA Governor's discretionary funds:

- $2.5 million will provide support for another competitive grant opportunity for YouthWorks programs. The program will remain focused on providing eligible youth with career pathway guidance, work-based learning experiences, business mentorship and internships.
- $250,000 is set aside to prioritize Behavioral Health Workforce recommendations that will address the multifaceted issues facing this workforce.
- $150,000 will be used to support a Life Sciences Skill Panel to convene a statewide alliance of business, labor and education experts in the field of life sciences.

Washington utilizes state Rapid Response set-aside funds in the form of Rapid Response Additional Assistance grants made to local boards that are dealing with extraordinary layoff events that would strain the formula Dislocated Worker program funds if those funds had to be brought to bear. This activity is bounded by WIOA Title I Policy 5604https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WIOA-Title-I-Policy-5604 (Rapid Response Additional Assistance). Washington is also prepared to continue using Rapid Response Additional Assistance funds to keep specifically serving long-term unemployed individuals as warranted.

Washington continues to explore with its business and labor partners the use of Rapid Response funds for layoff aversion strategies and activities. An existing layoff aversion strategy that will continue in Washington under WIOA is coordination with the state's Shared Work Program, which is codified at Washington Administrative Code 192-250. http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=192-250 Shared Work is a voluntary, flexible Unemployment Insurance (UI) program that offers public and private sector employers in Washington an alternative to laying off skilled employees during periods of general economic

downturn by allowing them to reduce an employee's usual weekly hours of work from 10%-50% while the employee receives the same percentage of unemployment benefits to replace a portion of lost wages for a period of up to 52 weeks. Beyond retaining skilled workers, it helps employers avoid costs of recruiting, hiring, and training new employees when business improves.

To further enhance layoff aversion strategies through Rapid Response, discussions will ensue between state and local partners to improve communication and better align coordination between Rapid Response staff and business engagement/services staff. It is generally recognized that the latter, due to their regular and frequent contact with employers, is often aware of employer circumstances that could lead to layoffs before decisions are made or actions taken and that that represents an opportunity for layoff aversion if that business intelligence is shared with state or local Rapid Response staff so they can initiate, for example, discussions around Shared Work.

Washington will also continue to provide Rapid Response Additional Assistance funds, when appropriate, for layoff aversion assistance as consistent with state WIOA Title I Policy 5604https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WIOA-Title-I-Policy-5604 (Rapid Response Additional Assistance). The assistance could encompass any and all of the layoff aversion strategies reflected in TEGL 03-15http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL_03-15_Acc.pdf and TEN 09-12, http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEN/TEN_9_12_Acc.pdf to include incumbent worker, customized training, feasibility studies, etc.

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.

Washington has a proven track record of sponsoring Rapid Response events and providing state aside funds in the form of Rapid Response Additional Assistance in response to natural disasters. Rapid Response events and Rapid Response Additional Assistance funds are coordinated with the efforts and resources of local, state, and federal emergency management entities by Local Workforce Development Boards. The provision of Rapid Response funding is accompanied by State outreach to and coordination with local workforce development boards to determine interest in and feasibility of pursuing disaster-related National Dislocated Worker Grants, which Washington did in response to several disasters through National Emergency Grants under WIA.

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.

Washington's local boards routinely activate the rapid response teams when a TAA petition is filed. That approach is directed by state WIOA Title I Policy 5603https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WIOA-Title-I-Policy-5603(Rapid Response for WIOA and TAA). Washington's State Employment Security Department (the State Workforce Agency) also engages local boards after TAA petitions are filed to determine if "gap" funding in the form of Rapid Response Additional Assistance is needed to serve dislocated workers attached to events for which TAA petitions have been filed between the time those event occur and such time as the events are certified by the U.S. Department of Labor. This approach is enshrined in WIOA Title I Policy 5604https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WIOA-Title-I-Policy-5604 (Rapid Response Additional Assistance).

When a petition for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is filed, the company identified in the petition receives the same rapid response services as any other job separation. Rapid response teams meet with the affected workers and offer services. At a minimum, the affected workers receive information about:

- Unemployment Insurance
- Training Benefits Program
- Commissioner Approved Training
- WorkSource labor exchange services
- WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker services
- Community and technical college resources
- Local WorkSource and partner contact information

The workers are told that the petition has been filed, but are encouraged to promptly begin pursuing currently available services because TAA certification is not guaranteed and the approval process at DOL can take a while. Affected workers are told that if the petition is certified, they will be invited to another orientation that covers all TAA timelines and services available and that they can move their services to TAA if or when the petition is certified. The workers are told that the petition has been filed, but are encouraged to promptly begin pursuing currently available services because TAA certification is not guaranteed and the approval process at DOL can take a while. Affected workers are told that if the petition is certified, they will be invited to another orientation that covers all TAA timelines and services available and that they can move their services to TAA if or when the petition is certified.

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.

Washington is pursuing alternative, work-based training models in the form of on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, customized training, and apprenticeship training, as well as the nationally recognized I-BEST program, which is developing enhanced work-based learning opportunities. To that end, the state has issued policies governing on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, and customized training. Transitional jobs will also be pursued, though the State continues to seek guidance as to the fine distinction between transitional jobs as a training service and work experience as an individualized career services as both are defined as time-limited, paid/unpaid work experience. Additionally, Washington will endeavor to connect alternative training models, where appropriate, to key state and local sectors.

The State and local areas will ensure that these work-based training are of high quality through an assortment of vetting actions. As noted, the State has already issued policies related to on-the-job, incumbent worker, and customized training to establish statewide quality and commitment baselines for employers and sectors that benefit from such training investments. At the local level where work-based training is developed and contracted, local workforce development boards and their program sub-recipients will continue to carry out the kind of vetting that ensures that training providers and employers, as the case may be, are qualified and committed. Local areas will thoroughly engage a multitude of experienced local partners (community and technical colleges, economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, secondary career and technical education programs, local business services teams, and employer and labor representatives) in the course of developing work-based training opportunities. For example, training that is developed to align with industry needs is vetted by industry representatives before, during, and after the training. Local areas will consult the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) for consumer report information and attempt to add quality training providers that are not on the ETPL. Training providers that do not want to be on the ETPL or are unable to stay listed will not be used. Local teams will are in close contact with employers and are aware of the content of OJT, work experiences, and internships. Local teams will prepare clear training plans and contracts for OJT, work experiences, and internships that include specific deliverables and will routinely check on employer sponsors to ensure that plans are being carried out and outcomes being attained. Local teams will meet regularly to discuss training activities and investments. Apprenticeship training programs must be on the ETPL, approved by the state's Apprenticeship Training Council, and registered with the State's Office of Apprenticeship.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL INCORPORATE REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP INTO ITS STRATEGY AND SERVICES.

A key role of workforce system partners is their relationship with registered apprenticeship and how they align across workforce development programs. It is the core business of the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council (WSATC) and state Department of Labor and Industries' Office of Apprenticeship (OA) to bolster the apprenticeship training system by developing and monitoring registered apprenticeship programs and promoting apprenticeship as a skill development system for employers as well as a post–secondary training option for workers. Accordingly, OA partner with

public community and technical colleges, WorkSource offices, and Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to promote registered apprenticeship. WSATC is expanding apprenticeship training opportunities and recruitment of employers who hire apprentices for traditional and non–traditional programs. The Governor and Legislature annually seek General–Fund state appropriations to support registered apprenticeship.

Locally, part of the state strategy to continue to better coordinate and align registered apprenticeship with the WorkSource (one–stop) system is to take full advantage of the workforce–affiliated apprenticeship member requirement on LWDBs under WIOA. Local apprenticeship training councils were already represented on many local boards under WIA, but the visibility has increased under WIOA and LWDBs will use the increased profile to ensure there is a voice for registered apprenticeship as a work–based learning opportunity for customers.

Additionally, the WorkSource System is represented on the Washington State Apprenticeship Training Council (WSATC) through non–voting seats held by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (state workforce development board), Employment Security Department (state administrative entity for WIOA Title I), and the State Board for Community and Technical Education (state administrative entity for WIOA Title II). Each quarter, the three state agencies report to WSATC on local apprenticeship and pre–apprenticeship activity lead or supported by Washington's WorkSource (one–stop) system. Concurrently, the three state agencies hear about state policy, research, and activities that are communicated to local WorkSource operators and service providers across the state. For more information on apprenticeship in Washington, including the WSATC, see the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries' apprenticeship sitehttp://www.lni.wa.gov/TradesLicensing/Apprenticeship/Become/.

Of note, two Washington applicants were among those recently awarded American Apprenticeship Grants by the U.S. Department of Labor. The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries received $5 million to partner with Washington Technology Industry Association (WTIA), the Construction Center of Excellence at Bates Technical College, and the Spokane Area Workforce Development Council to establish an information technology apprenticeship program and diversify participation among existing apprenticeship programs in the central and south Puget Sound regions and Spokane County. South Seattle College received $4.8 million to partner with Renton Technical College, Clover Park Technical College, Seattle Central College, Edmonds College, Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee (AJAC), Apprenticeship and Non–Traditional Employment for Women (ANEW), the Manufacturing Industry Council, Center of Excellence for Aerospace and Advanced Manufacturing, and workforce development councils in Seattle–King County, Tacoma–Pierce County, and Snohomish County to establish three new programs and expand 12 existing programs in advanced manufacturing and maritime apprenticeship in central Puget Sound and Spokane County.

3. PROVIDE THE PROCEDURE, ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA, AND INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR DETERMINING TRAINING PROVIDER INITIAL AND CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY, INCLUDING REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS (WIOA SECTION 122).

Washington has a comprehensive policy and procedures for determining training provider eligibility as articulated in state WIOA Title I Policy 5611, Revision 1https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WIOA-Title-I-Policy-5611-Revision-1 (Governor's Procedures for Determining Training Program Eligibility). The state's Eligible Training Provider List is managed by the State Workforce Development Board and is widely employed by the state and federally-funded training programs in Washington as a consumer

report tool. In addition to WIOA Title I, other programs that have policies requiring the use of the state's Eligible Training Provider List to identify qualified training providers includes the state's Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, Unemployment Insurance-related Training Benefits program, and Worker Retraining, Job Skills, and Customized Training programs under the public community and technical college system.

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 selection is established for and local areas must target certain populations in accordance with WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E) and proposed 20 CFR 680.600 and 20 CFR 680.640. These targeted populations must first meet the eligibility requirements for the adult program.

The matrix below describes the order and rationale for prioritization based on the requirements in WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E), proposed 20 CFR 680.600, proposed 20 CFR 680.640, and TEGL 10–09. http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2816 For purposes of this section, the term "covered person(s)" refers to veterans and eligible spouses per priority of service for veterans.

Priority requirements for the WIOA Title I adult program are as follows:

Priority	Mandatory Priority Group	Explanation
First	Covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses) who are low–income (may include unemployed individuals), recipients of public assistance, or basic skills deficient.	Guidelines for serving covered persons (WorkSource System Policy 1009 Revision 2 – Priority of Service) https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WorkSource–System–Policy–1009–Revision–2 apply within the mandatory priority criteria of low–income / public assistance recipient.
Second	Individuals (non–covered persons) who are low–income (may include unemployed individuals), recipients of public assistance, or basic skills deficient.	The mandatory priority criteria (low–income / public assistance) have preference over covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses) who do not meet the mandatory priority criteria.
Third	Covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses) who arenot low– income and arenot recipients of public assistance and not basic skills deficient.	Guidelines for serving covered persons (WorkSource System Policy 1009 Rev. 2 – Priority of Service) https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WorkSource–System–Policy–1009–Revision–2 apply in the third category (individuals who are not low–income / public assistance recipients).
Fourth (optional)	LWDBs (in consultation with CLEOs) may establish additional priority groups for subsequent priority for services (WorkSource Policy 1019, Revision 1https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WorkSource–System–Policy–1019–Revision–2 – Section 3.d – Local Responsibilities).	The mandatory priorities (if funding is limited) established by DOLETA do not prohibit WIOA adult services to only the recipients of public assistance and other low income individuals. Local WDBs and the Governor may establish a process that gives priority for services to other individuals meeting eligibility criteria, as long as the mandatory priority groups are given priority.

NOTE: An adult with a disability can be considered a family of one for low–income determinations (refer to Section 5.6.2).

According to proposed 20 CFR 680.120, 680.130, and 680.210, the above priority requirements do not necessarily mean that only the recipients of public assistance and other low–income individuals can receive WIOA adult funded career and training services. LWDBs may serve other eligible individuals who are not recipients of public assistance, other low–income, or basic skills deficient after first serving eligible individuals who meet the established priority selection criteria. Unemployed individuals may be considered low–income individuals (refer to Section 5.6.1).

Priority Selection for Career Services and Training Services Funded with WIOA Statewide (10%) Discretionary Grants/Contracts

For purposes of WIOA statewide (10%) discretionary funds, the Governor has determined that these funds will be prioritized as follows:

1. Eligible veterans and spouses;

2. Unemployed individuals;

3. Low–income individuals;

4. Other Washington job seekers.

As indicated by the first priority, recipients of WIOA 10% discretionary grants and contracts will continue to provide priority selection of veterans for career and training services as required under P.L. 107– 288 “Jobs for Veterans Act” and in alignment with state system policy. In applying this policy to 10% funded projects, veterans who are unemployed and/or low–income, have priority over all other individuals served under these projects.

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

WIOA allows Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), with approval from the Governor, to transfer up to 100 percent of formula funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

The SWDB adopted a motion at its May 28, 2015 meeting to table action on a 100 percent fund transfer policy in order to gather further stakeholder input on the proposed policy. Until such time that a 100 percent fund transfer policy is adopted, the SWDB directed that criteria for the WIA Title I–B policy governing fund transfers of up to 30 percent between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs be applied under WIOA.

LWDBs may transfer up to and including 30 percent of a program year base allocation (see “Definitions”) for the adult program to the dislocated worker program or up to and including 30 percent of a base allocation for the dislocated worker program to the adult program.

Before effecting transfers, LWDBs must first obtain written approval from the Employment Security Department (ESD), which has been delegated authority to act on behalf of the Governor. Transferring funds from the dislocated worker program prevents a LWDB from accessing state Rapid Response Additional Assistance funds for six months following fund transfers. ESD may waive this condition based on extreme or unforeseen local circumstances.

Transfer Request Procedure:

LWDBs must submit requests to transfer adult or dislocated worker funds to ESD's WIOA Grants and Contracts Administration Unit (WIAGrants@esd.wa.gov). Requests must include the following:

1. The transfer fund source (i.e., from adult to dislocated worker or dislocated worker to adult);

2. The dollar amount of the transfer request, including the percentage share of the base allocation represented by that dollar amount;

3. The reason(s) for the transfer;

4. Signed approval from the full local board or local advisory board (e.g., Executive Committee, Finance Committee, etc.) requesting the transfer;

5. Revised "Participant Planning Forms" for both the adult and dislocated worker programs to accompany a program impact analysis. The program impact analysis must include:

a. Proposed services and number of participants originally planned to be served by the base allocation compared to the services and number of participants planned to be served after funds are transferred;

b. Justification that the transfer of funds will not adversely impact the provision of services to participants and that necessary services and client–planned activities will be maintained in the program from which funds are transferred;

c. A discussion of the LWDB's past history of transfer requests, including how previous transfers impacted participants and funds; and

d. An assessment of any potential layoffs or closures of which the LWDB is aware and how these events will be addressed using existing funds if funds are transferred from the dislocated worker program.

LWDBs may request fund transfers at any time during the program year. However, LWDBs must confirm that transfers will not lower the obligation rate of the fund source to which the funds are transferred to a degree that jeopardizes their ability to achieve the required 80 percent obligation rate for either the adult or dislocated worker fund source by the end of the first program year.

ESD's WIOA Grants and Contracts Administration Unit will make recommendations to the division director for approval based on a review and assessment of the requests and accompanying documentation. As part of the review, ESD may request additional information from LWDBs or ESD's Labor Market and Performance Analysis (LMPA) branch. ESD may alternatively deny the request or authorize a partial transfer of funds. Following approval of a fund transfer, ESD will notify LWDBs by e–mail, which will also include the appropriate grant modification packages for LWDBs to complete and sign.

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)

Washington is in the process of developing state criteria for use by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities via the Youth Services Task Force convened by the State Workforce Development Board as part of its WIOA implementation activities.

Local boards are directed to establish local policies and procedures to assess the ability of providers to meet performance accountability measures based on the primary indicators of performance for the youth program in Section 3.b.ii.E of WIOA Title I Policy 5404 (Procurement and Selection of One-Stop Operators and Service Providers).

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.

A key strategy the State will use to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth is its YouthWorks program, which will leverage WIOA Governor's discretionary funds, Carl Perkins funds, and funding from local education and private sources to re-engage school dropouts and increase the number of youth in Washington that have business mentors, graduation coaches, on-site 90-hour employer internships, other work-based learning, successful graduation, and successful career entry. This state-local partnership includes, at the state level, Employment Security, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Department of Commerce and, at the local level, local workforce development boards, schools districts, non-profit dropout reengagement programs, homeless youth service providers, skill centers, employers, and others to coordinate funding and efforts to permanently increase outcomes for out-of-school youth, in particular, across the state.

Local workforce development boards and their network of partners and service providers will also focus their efforts on that particular youth cohort by partnering through the state dropout reengagement program authorized under RCW 28A.175.100http://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.175.100 (commonly referred to as "1418" programs per the legislative bill that created the program), which provide educational opportunities and access to services to older youth age 16 to 21 who have dropped out of high school or are not accumulating sufficient credits to reasonably complete a high school diploma in a

public school before the age of 21 and are unlikely to re-engage in education by re-enrolling in a traditional or even alternative high school.

Beyond the YouthWorks and “1418” programs, local workforce development boards and their service providers, per the 75% out-of-school youth expenditure requirement under WIOA, will engage out-of-school youth who are not affiliated with either of those programs through the use of traditional referral networks that include partners in the one-stop, school districts, youth-focused organizations, homelessness/housing organizations, and others that will direct out-of-school youth to WIOA youth service providers.

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)

WIOA Title I funds that are formula-allocated by the State to Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) for youth services will be sub-contracted by LWDBs to local service providers who partner with WorkSource, employers, organized labor, school districts, community-based organizations, and other local partners to leverage and coordinate WIOA youth funds and activities, respectively, and ensure that the 14 required program elements available to all enrolled youth. As a condition of receiving these funds, LWDBs must describe in their local strategic and operational plans how they will partner to identify and deliver services to youth.

The major components of the WIOA youth program serve as guiding principles to ensure that the needs of youth participants are met. The target population of the WIOA youth program includes those both out-of-school and in-school, so services provided reflect the priorities need of each of these unique populations.

Service strategies, developed by workforce providers, prepare youth for employment and/or post-secondary education through strong linkages between academic and occupational learning. The most important aspect is to focus on meeting the training, education and employment needs of youth as well as the needs of businesses for skilled workers. Washington’s education reform is linking academic learning to the world of work through partnerships with local school districts, business, and community partners that prepare youth for careers, while addressing local employment shortages and growing talent locally for current and future needs.

To ensure the youth formula program addresses services to targeted most in need youth, the state established WorkSource System Policy 1019 Revision 2 https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WorkSource-System-Policy-1019-Revision-2, which requires LWDBs to serve in-school (14-21) and out-of-school (16-24) youth who meet eligibility criteria.

The same state policy includes a requirement that LWDBs maintain local policies that define “individuals who require additional assistance.” In addition to state policy, ESD will use a variety of operational approaches to ensure that comprehensive, integrated services are provided throughout the state to eligible youth, including those most in need.

Youth can access WorkSource basic career services that provide them with a wide range of information to help make informed decisions about training opportunities including opportunities for non-traditional employment. Maximum local flexibility is afforded LWDBs in developing a design

framework for local youth programs. The State requires that local WIOA plans include a service design framework for youth describing how:

- All 14 required service elements will be available to the youth in the service area.
- All youth will receive an objective assessment and an individual service strategy (ISS) that meets the requirements of WIOA Sec.129(c)(1)(B), including multiple pathways for careers and a consideration of the assessment results for each youth.

Paid and unpaid summer internships include an educational component requiring students to spend equal time in an educational environment to strengthen basic reading, writing, and math skills. To help young people succeed academically and in work, innovative programs are funded that utilize mentors, tutorial programs, and student portfolios.

The State provides technical assistance to local areas at risk of failing to meet youth performance indicators. Each quarter an assessment of each local area's performance is conducted and technical assistance is tailored to meet specific needs of interpreting, managing, and measuring local area performance in serving youth.

A prominent state example of a strategy to engage and retain youth is Youth Works. Youth Works leveraged Governor's discretionary funds and federal Carl Perkins career and technical education funds with the goal of securing work-based learning opportunities and mentorships for WIOA eligible in-school youth.

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).

Section 3.e.ii of Washington's WorkSource System Policy 1019, https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/WorkSource-System-Policy-1019-Revision-2 Revision 1 (Eligibility Guidelines and Documentation Requirements) requires local workforce development boards to define local parameters and policy for "Requires Additional Assistance" under Category 7 for In-School Youth and Category 8 for Out-of-School Youth.

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.

Washington statutes do not define either "not attending school" or "attending school."

6. IF NOT USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE SPECIFIC STATE DEFINITION.

Washington defines “basic skills” in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 131-47-050http://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=131-47-050 as “the ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.” By extension, to be “basic skills deficient” is to be deficient in the ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential.

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).)

Washington is not a single-area state and therefore considers the elements under Section (a)(2)(e) as not applicable.

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;

Washington has not, at this time, identified any waivers that it intends to pursue and therefore considers the elements under Section (a)(2)(f) as not applicable.

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 for ES staff is Washington State Employment Security Department executive leadership's first priority for the 2015-2016 agency strategic plan called the "A3". The first agency goal—to engage and empower staff through focusing on professional development—encompasses technical skills and thorough program and system knowledge. There is also new flexibility to have regular work time for skill building related to the staff's current career pathway, or to sample broader one-stop program experience. Wagner-Peyser (WP) field staff will continue to learn and develop skills, often coordinated with system partners, in order to provide comprehensive basic and individualized career services that best meet the needs of general customers in the fast changing labor market as well as the special needs of customers with barriers to employment. ES designated disability specialists in each one stop will learn and coordinate with co-located or nearby vocational rehabilitation counselors to ensure high quality services are accessible to persons with disabilities.

With few exceptions Washington State WP staff have for years been co-located with Title 1-B programs contractors and other partner programs in local WorkSource centers. Co-location has allowed for daily interaction, expanded knowledge of how to refer customers, professional development through increased learning opportunities, shared group services, and various levels of functional integration for more seamless services. Under WIOA, including amendments to Wagner-Peyser, staff professional development activities will not only focus within the immediate service areas of one stop offices but extend to the larger communities and regions. For example, in significant MSFW-designated offices, outreach staff spend the majority of their time visiting places where MSFWs gather and closely coordinate with other providers to the farmworker population so that high quality services are equitable and proportionate. As a community of practice, MSFW staff learn and increase their professional development within and across Washington's vital agricultural regions through regular program training coordinated through online conferences and with the state monitor advocate. Starting with PY15, the state monitor advocate will be based in Yakima—the epicenter of agricultural for eastern Washington—instead of at the previous duty station by the state capital in Olympia thereby enhancing communication, support and learning. Furthermore, with seasonal employment most staff will continue to play a critical role in providing meaningful claims assistance in the field along with facilitating reemployment and training connections for MSFWs, especially outside the growing season. Since MSFW staff are often away from the one stop office during the day, supporting them through cross regional work team engagement will continue. Also, reinvigorating the tri-state Pacific Northwest Farmworkers Conference with Idaho and Oregon will be carefully considered. Similar communities of practice will be strengthened through frequent teleconferencing and online learning opportunities to engage both ES and one stop partner staff.

By June 30, 2016, the SWA will establish a state-local level task team to begin addressing necessary professional development activities within available resources. Components of this initiative will include—

1. Review of standardized ES field staff position descriptions in the class series: WorkSource Specialist for identification of knowledge, skills abilities, essential duties and core competencies.

2. Assessment of desirable modifications or enhancements to the class series in light of WIOA purposes and career services activities.

3. Review of existing online and in-person coursework relative to service delivery in WorkSource one stops.

4. By March 31, 2017 establish statewide professional development milestones to address current and future gaps that would deter from staffs' ability to provide high quality services in a dynamic WIOA one-stop environment.

5. A training plan stating training and competency expectations for ES staff within available resources for onboarding and refresher coursework on the SWA online Learning Management System, and on parallel WDC-hosted systems and through in-person training. (EO nondiscrimination, data security, and procedures using the Management Information System are already mandatory recurrent trainings. EO and data security also require refresher training bi-annually and annually, respectively.)

6. Develop system-overview coursework emphasizing WIOA and State and department governance, strategic plan goals, core program goals and indicators of eligibility to facilitate better referrals.

7. Restart ES UI Liaison ongoing training to establish well-trained staff in providing UI claims filing services and capable of clearly communicating claimant responsibilities while simultaneously assisting with meaningful job search assistance.

8. Develop UI eligibility issue awareness among partners in one stops and necessary action steps.

9. Follow through with the ES WorkSource field division setting the expectation that merit staff will have 2 hours per week on average to pursue required and optional professional development.

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.

In PY14 Washington State Employment Security Department took a major step in reorganizing divisions and responsibilities as the state's administrative entity for WIA programs. Formerly siloed WIA policy functions were reassigned and placed in the UI Division to form the new Employment System Policy and Integrity Operations directorate including Employment Systems Administration and Policy). This bold change is providing new mutual learning and leadership opportunities across both the UI division and the Workforce Career Development Division (WCDD) operating Wagner-Peyser, UI Reemployment and RESEA, TAA and WorkFirst (TANF Job Search) at the state level. Embedding WIOA policy administration within the UI division well-positions the State for a more coordinated policy nexus around Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Title 1-B, inclusive of UI benefits and reemployment functions.

The outlook for greater awareness of responsibilities for UI benefits and reemployment services system-wide will precipitate concrete actions to institute more meaningful technology access and services to UI claimants under WIOA amendments to Wagner-Peyser. Scheduled to be completed in

2016 is the new Unemployment Tax and Benefits System (UTAB). Already the new generation UI IT system has created customer value through a Secure Access Washington web portal that allows unemployment insurance claimants to view their account information along with benefit and wage records on personal computers and mobile devices.

Local MOUs will determine whether WIOA Title 1-B programs staff will be trained to directly provide UI claims assistance, but the expectation is that all Wagner-Peyser and Title 1-B co-located staff would be trained in referring UI customers to limited but meaningful claims services in the local one stop. WDCs would need to have rationale favoring the investment in training and system communications beyond ES UI liaison staff for WIOA Title 1-B staff to be ready to provide enhanced access or troubleshooting for claims services.

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.

One stops will provide claims filing, benefits compliance and reemployment services to UI claimants, especially Limited English Proficient customers, individuals wanting to file a claim and who have apparent disabilities, and some, often older claimants who experience frustration and confusion with online filing, phone and fax technology. Assistance provided in filing claims is beyond the usual self-help options online or through the UI Telecenter main phone line. Often bi-lingual staff are available to serve customers seeking UI benefits claims assistance who speak limited English. When that is not the case in the one stop office, staff will access the AT&T Language Line for real-time interpretive services. The department will consider the feasibility of establishing a separate priority direct line to the UI Telecenter for walk-in, one-stop customers. Currently the department is implementing a chat option only available from designated work stations at one stop locations. UI Telecenter staff will be assigned to respond to claimants using the chat feature.

Meaningful assistance in filing claims in Washington State will be a departure from any characterization of hurried, standalone UI services at WorkSource offices. UI claims assistance draws a significant percentage of walk-in traffic making this a key touch point for introduction to other career services. While offering substantive UI claims assistance, staff are trained to engage customers whenever possible by personally inviting their participation in the spectrum of career services including training options.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

Reemployment assistance to UI claimants is predicated on the earliest return to suitable and full employment. The State's strategy is to assist claimants with timely, accurate benefits to support work search or, when eligible—retraining. ES staff promote participation in a relevant and robust menu of local job search preparation workshops applicable to the individual's needs. They help customers engage with the systems' effective job matching tools and many times provide individualized staff assistance. Claimants whose occupations are not in demand or those who have skill gaps are introduced to possible retraining options and federal funding options such as through PELL grants or the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. All claimants potentially eligible and seriously interested in training are offered assistance in formally requesting the continuation of their UI benefits while in approved training referred to in Washington State as Training Benefits (TB). For some, Registered Apprenticeship (RA)—earn-while-learning—careers may be the best opportunity. Some WorkSource offices hold apprenticeship orientations in collaboration with labor organizations or employers to promote opportunities in particular RA trades and offer guidance on preparing for the application process.

Other unemployed, lower-skilled individuals seeking training who may not qualify for weekly UI benefits might qualify for WIOA Adult services or state retraining resources such as Worker Retraining funds, federal training funds tied to Department of Agriculture BFET programs, or special grants such as HHS Healthcare Careers for All. Although these other programs do not provide weekly subsistence benefits they can provide for training costs and some support services such as transportation etc.

In pursuit of the goal of more seamless and fully-integrated career, training and follow up services to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals, a number of WDCs in the state have voluntarily convened with the Employment Security Department and state Workforce Board to explore Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) models. All areas envision greater collaboration and coordination while local conditions may favor piloting a substantially integrated and simultaneous enrollment model in other areas encompassing all programs customers are eligible for such as Title 1, Title III, Trade Act and targeted population programs. One hallmark of ISD, as envisioned by the ISD consortium, is building upon functional teams. Function as the primary organizing principle—in contrast to focusing on separate programs and partner organizations—indicates major components of the one-stops such as business services; front-end activities like Resource Room, triage, and workshops; community outreach and marketing; Rapid Response; job training etc. ISD also promises to better leverage staff and administrative resources for leaner, more productive one-stop field operations. Functional teams will continually examine changing customer needs, fill gaps and enhance services, and address apparent and unnecessary duplication of services and processes. Another aspect of ISD in Washington State is extending co-enrollment or possibly simultaneous enrollment for current and future jobseekers accessing WorkSource Services. As envisioned in Washington State co/simultaneous enrollment into multiple programs is the braiding or directing of program resources to provide appropriate services when needed as efficiently as possible. ISD partners will continue working through the technical issues around ISD mainly for WIOA Title 1 Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act, Jobs for Veterans State Grant, and WorkFirst (TANF Job Search).

Staff trained in triage techniques using open-ended questions and/or assessment tools connect unemployed individuals first to the most likely resources of highest potential value based on

indicators they have shared about their personal background, situation and interests. Unemployed individuals entering the system via self-service through WorkSourceWA.com (replacing Go2WorkSource.com in early 2016) will be encouraged to come in to their nearest one stop center to attend an orientation to system resources and services. Triggered by WARN notices, Rapid Response (RR) teams throughout the state reach groups of affected dislocated workers face to face in most cases. Occasionally layoff aversion assistance may be possible. In major layoffs this will be in coordination with the Governor's office and state Department of Commerce providing economic development support. The RR teams assist with UI claims information and a broad overview of employment and training resources. TAA events trigger specialized follow up orientations to ensure affected workers understand their rights, critical timelines and how to best access TAA and Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA) benefits and other critical resources.

WorkSource customers have no wrong door. Although they may first encounter system entities in different ways, the system partners agree formally through WIOA mandated MOUs to connect customers through referrals. When connected to the local one-stop center, customers are routinely encouraged to attend a system orientation. (UI claimants will get this information in various mandatory UI-customized orientations.) Individuals may choose to receive career assessment and guidance and ask for assistance on any of several topics related to job search or training options. In the first 5 weeks of receiving benefits, UI claimants may be called in for mandatory reemployment services. Individuals who may be unemployed and not aware of services, or those who have abandoned searching for work, are also sought out through regular staff outreach or public service announcements. The online marketing of job fairs, employer hiring events and free workshops through websites and social media is also motivating customers to participate in services.

Proportionate and equitable services are targeted for Washington State's sizeable migrant or seasonal farm worker population through outreach. Another under-represented population is newly trained entrants into the workforce— especially those with recently acquired vocational skills from the state's 34 community and technical colleges. The ES Career Pathway Navigators project funded through PY16, in many workforce development areas, is focused on reaching out and engaging unemployed adults completing Career and Technical Education programs. CPN was underway by the beginning of PY15 and is helping to bridge transition to mid-level career path jobs through counseling, job search prep, internships, hiring events or direct placement.

All eligible veterans receive Priority of Service from WorkSource in accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act and 20 CFR 1010. Core DOL programs ensure that, upon entry, covered persons are aware of reemployment services, program eligibility, and veterans' Priority of Service in employment and training programs funded by the Department of Labor and operated by ES and WorkSource partners.

The department's overall strategy for providing reemployment services to UI and other unemployed individuals encompasses a number of mandatory and optional program partnerships. Under WIA, partnerships evolved and are expected to expand even more with WIOA with an expectation of more seamless service delivery. More integrated service delivery should ideally result in developing an intake process that eliminates redundant assessments and streamlines the customer experience. ESD is leading with local Workforce Development Councils. Other entities with specialized programs serving parents on TANF, Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs), MSFWs, homeless, ex-offenders, veterans, dislocated workers, persons with disabilities, and the long-term unemployed when included should increase the number of participants who have defined career pathways and who gain portable skills. All will be better informed and served as Integrated Service Delivery advances.

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;

Washington State Wagner-Peyser 7(a) funds are mainly used to support roughly 550 Reemployment and Labor Exchange-focused Employment Service (ES) merit system staff in approximately 36 WorkSource centers, affiliates, and college co-location sites. Centers and Affiliates have UI kiosks, including direct phone and fax connections to the UI Telecenters in Spokane and Lacey. Field staff not assigned to separately funded programs such as TAA or WorkFirst (TANF Job Search) assist claimants daily with general questions about UI claims. Assistance is by phone or one-to-one with walk-in claimants. Some locations have, or will have, staff trained in UI benefits to provide meaningful UI assistance. To address the need to moderate Telecenter (call) wait times further, the state is piloting on-line chat systems. Initial claimant feedback has been very positive. A robust platform for conducting multiple chat sessions with Telecenter staff will be needed to bring this new field option for UI service to scale. A vendor has been contracted to develop a platform for field staff that uses 15 licenses statewide to chat on WorkSourceWA.com and that platform may be expanded to help customers file their claims.

Upon establishing a claim, all claimants are strongly encouraged to visit a local WorkSource center without delay and to visit WorkSourceWA.com on-line. Reemployment and the earliest return to suitable work—preferably along the customer's chosen career path—is always the goal of every interaction with UI claimants at WorkSource, even if they come in with a simple question about their claim. Assistance with connectivity to the UI Telecenter often progresses to an invitation to attend a WorkSource orientation, workshops, or to immediately engage with reemployment or program staff who may be indicated as an appropriate referral through initial triage questions. All customers have the opportunity at various orientations to services and programs to learn about training programs and financial support. All WorkSource locations provide referrals or direct access to training, apprenticeships, adult education, rehabilitations services and many local services through community-based organizations.

Most new claimants who do not already have customer accounts in the WorkSource management information system have a basic record automatically created for them through the new claims filing process. This greatly assists ES and partner WorkSource staff in recording services that are subsequently provided.

All claimants are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the diverse menu of basic career services such as job clubs, hiring events, and employment workshops. These are marketed on the WorkSourceWA web site under Workshops and Hiring Events. The new job match web site went "live" May 3, 2016 and offers an immediate opportunity for claimants and other job seekers to self-register. After creating an account, customers can use the system to draft resumes and cover letters and upload application materials. Powered by Monster, Inc., the WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) system, which is comprised of WorkSourceWA.com and the state's integrated WorkSource management information system, called ETO, enable staff to look up customer accounts and record services.

Washington transitioned the Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (REA) services study to the new Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. All WorkSource offices are

participating in some facet through REA/RESEA treatment designs, including UI eligibility assessment, in-person orientation to WorkSource services, personalized labor market information, reemployment planning and directives appropriate for action to prepare for or apply for employment. Selections of various REA/RESEA treatment levels and a control group guide mandatory staff interactions with claimants. However, all claimants can freely pursue any self-service, facilitated self-help, or staff-assisted services supported by Wagner-Peyser funds or any career services supported by WIOA Title I Adult or Dislocated Worker funds for which they may be eligible.

RESEA features three treatment groups. One fully engages claimants with the highest worker profiling scores (those likely to exhaust their claims). Claimants in that pool receive small group RESEA orientations followed by staff prepared, individually-targeted labor market information, an eligibility assessment, at least one targeted job referral and two follow up calls. The second, RESEA single, is similar without the follow up calls. In the third group, claimants with lowest likelihood of exhausting their claims may be called in for RESEA Lite. Those claimants participate in a group orientation that provides extensive information on WorkSource services and reviews UI work search requirements. By Fiscal Year 2016, the department will devote the majority of its resources under the grant to providing individualized career services to claimants facing a likelihood of longer spells of unemployment due to economic factors and other barriers to employment.

Communication between the ES field division known as the Employment Connections Division (ECD) and the UI Division is extensive due to REA/RESEA. Because treatment groups vary, staff do not actively offer individualized assistance to RESEA Lite claimants during transition from the REA study design. However, there is a lot of peripheral marketing of services and programs in the one-stop environment that may attract all claimants who walk in the door or search WorkSourceWA.com online.

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

Washington Administrative Code WAC 192–180–005 requires UI claimants to register for work with WorkSource. The claim filing process does this automatically. There are exceptions to this rule such as claimants on standby, partially unemployed individuals, or members of a union participating in a union referral program. Occasionally domestic violence issues may exempt claimants worried about the security of their whereabouts and personal data. Also, claimants approved for training are usually registered for work in the WorkSource system, but it is not a state requirement for everybody in this category.

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

Reemployment and Labor Exchange field staff are well versed in reiterating the basic qualifications for receiving UI weekly benefits: *able, available and actively seeking work*. To that end, WorkSource offices abound in job finding resources and staff-assistance for placement. ES coordinates with local WIOA Title I funded business services assets throughout the varied labor market areas of the state to provide information to claimants about jobs in demand locally and how best to apply.

Employment Service (ES) regularly provides employer of the day events to connect claimants and other prepared job seekers to employers with current job openings in addition to hosting career fairs.

Often local collaboration among partners and employers is enabling industry-focused job and career fairs so that claimants and other job seekers can readily meet face to face with recruiters where there are growing career opportunities. To an increasing extent opportunities in apprenticeship are also marketed since this is a particularly appropriate model combining immediate employment with a career progression OJT enabling some claimants to get back to work while embarking on a plan to gain skills simultaneously.

ES field staff are supported by ES W-P statewide reemployment subject matter experts with technical training in identifying and submitting Report of Potential Issues (RPI) to UI adjudicators. Claimants assigned to REA/RESEA receive a single directive that is followed up by staff for compliance. Whenever the directive is not followed, and the reason is not acceptable (acceptable, for instance, would be if the individual returned to work), staff submit a RPI through the UI GUIDE system.

4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

All UI and WorkSource orientations in one–stops with co–located ES staff regularly promote awareness of training for career pathways in demand and the spectrum of training support programs at the federal, state, and local level. Most sites provide regular UI workshops for Commissioner Approved Training (CAT) and state Training Benefits (TB) (extends benefits while in approved training with state funding up to 26 additional weeks). ES, WIOA Title 1–B or local community and technical college workforce education staff provide information, referrals, guidance and application assistance.

Some college workforce education departments have staff co–located or scheduled to assist customers at one stops with information on ETPL–approved education and training programs, entrance requirements, and application procedures. WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program staff often help assess and refer potentially eligible individuals for training and assist with the application process. WIOA Title 1–B staff commonly acknowledge ES staff as a valuable source of referrals for training.

A few ES staff have co–location assignments at their nearby community and technical college. ES Career Pathway Navigators (one is assigned to each workforce development area) are enhancing communications about employment assistance available from WorkSource partners for those completing training. This investment ensures that training is not the only focus but a means to attaining the goal of training–related employment.

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.

(See field E.1.a.)

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.

Washington remains one of the top states in terms of average annual agriculture employment with 106,620 agricultural production and support jobs, an increase of 12.5 percent over the seven-year period between 2007 and 2013. Seasonal agricultural employment grew from an annual average of 31,843 jobs in 2007 to an annual average of 42,454 in 2013, an increase of 33.3 percent. The agricultural industry's significance to Washington's economy is far reaching, with production valued at $10.2 billion in 2013. Ensuring the adequate supply of labor to the agricultural industry while helping MSFWs transition to permanent employment continues to be a focus for the Employment Security Department (ESD) as it continues vigorous outreach to growers and Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs) for PY 2015 and beyond.

Farm labor is concentrated in the arid and sunny central and eastern regions of the state. Abundant irrigated acreage continues to develop around the Bureau of Reclamation's massive Columbia Basin Project, which allows for the production of high value and labor-intensive fruit crops. The cool lowlands on the western side of the state, mainly in Skagit County, have also seen modest growth in berries and nearly 90 other crops that merit outreach to ensure labor and farm worker needs are met.

One important issue for WorkSource and the agriculture industry is the availability of seasonal farm workers in Washington. Several studies have produced varying estimates of seasonal farm workers in Washington, strengthening the notion that a precise measurement of the number of MSFWs is difficult to obtain. The most current enumeration study based on a *demand for labor model* done for Migrant Health Centers in 2000 arrived at an estimate of 176,044 MSFWs. Meanwhile, the Northwest Regional Primary Care Association published a 2011 Farmworker Population Profile showing about a 30-70 split between 71,860 migrant and 157,400 seasonal farm workers in Washington for a total of 229,260 MSFWs. While these studies are noteworthy, the most accurate

information available is the 2012 U.S. Census, which indicates that there were 199,649 migrant and seasonal farm workers (workers hired for a term of less than 150 workdays) in Washington.

Workgroups regularly form in both the central office and the field to address strategic and operational concerns impacting both growers and farm workers. In the coming years, a group made up of field and central office staff will work toward continuous improvement in the operation and delivery of services through the use of Lean methodologies. During CY 2013, such groups successfully developed MSFW program and H-2A program handbooks intended to ensure statewide consistency in the provision of services that benefit both agricultural employers and MSFWs. In CY 2015, these handbooks were updated based on staff and stakeholder feedback. ESD is currently in the process of updating these materials to reflect changes resulting from the WIOA. These handbooks serve as foundational documents maintained and updated as additional processes are standardized and improved. The handbooks may be located at http://www.wa.gov/esd/1stop/policies/laborexchange.htm.

The availability of farm labor raised concerns in 2015 and will likely continue in the coming years. Over the past few years, there has been much discussion on the availability of farm labor in Washington. As a result, Washington has seen a spike in use of the H-2A program by apple, pear, and cherry and berry growers.

While each season brings its challenges, Washington's agricultural industry also continues to grow in importance. One reason is Washington's increasing importance as a key agricultural exporter to expanding populations and economies in the Pacific Rim and beyond. Expanding business relationships to market and sell Washington produce, in large part, drive international initiatives to implement sustainable farming practices. One such standards group is Global G.A.P., which sets standards and issues certifications for farm producers worldwide. Common concerns across the world to ensure food quality, safety and environmental protection will have no small impact on farm worker skills needed to carry out high quality farming practices.

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.

MSFWs are essential for a large part of Washington agricultural production and are especially needed during the critical peak months of July and September. On a human level, MSFWs bring us the fruit of their hard labor —fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry and other sustenance. However, many continue to face barriers including language, lack of steady work, poor housing conditions, low literacy levels, health care risks, and a lack of benefits. We therefore continue to partner with organizations serving MSFWs, including WorkSource offices, to provide outreach and assistance to MSFWs and their families. For all service providers, including WorkSource, an ongoing challenge is

adequately enumerating the service population of MSFWs. This has been particularly challenging for health care providers trying to establish baseline resources for community farmworker clinics.

MSFWs are recognized as a population that is difficult to serve due to barriers such as limited English proficiency and low educational attainment. In recognition of these barriers and in light of a reduced budget, ESD will continue to leverage key partnerships. These partnerships will play a critical role in ensuring that MSFWs continue to access more stable employment opportunities.

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:

A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES.

Designated knowledgeable and resourceful MSFW outreach staff stationed in WorkSource one-stop centers and affiliate sites strengthen customer service in federally-designated significant agricultural locations. The table below provides a list of MSFW outreach positions and the areas they serve.

Table 1: PY 2015 MSFW Positions by WorkSource Office

WorkSource Office (City)	Serving Significant Agricultural Counties	MSFW Staff FTE
WS Skagit (Mount Vernon)	Skagit, Whatcom	1.0
WS Central Basin (Moses Lake)	Grant, Adams	1.0
WS Okanogan County (Omak)	Okanogan/North Douglas	1.0
WS Wenatchee Affiliate	Chelan/South Douglas	1.0
WS Yakima	Yakima, Kittitas	1.0
WS Sunnyside	Yakima	1.0
WS Columbia Gorge (White Salmon)	Klickitat	1.0
WS Columbia Basin (Kennewick)	Benton/Franklin	1.0
WS Walla Walla	Walla Walla	1.0
Total	9.0	

WorkSource MSFW outreach staff, in collaboration with the WIOA 167 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker partner agencies, continue to provide services to agricultural employers and MSFWs that are consistent with ESD's mission to help Washington's workers and employers succeed in the global economy by delivering quality services. As required by 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.101, WorkSource ensures that MSFWs are offered the same range of employment services, benefits and protections, including counseling, testing and job training referral services, as provided to non-MSFWs. To ensure statewide compliance, ESD makes every effort to achieve the federal requirements for "qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate services" to MSFWs. Washington's full-time State Monitor Advocate (SMA) is based in Eastern Washington where the majority of farm labor is located in our state. The SMA works to ensure that MSFWs are provided with equitable services offered by the WorkSource System through formal on-site visits to WorkSource office locations and monthly review of outreach data. Furthermore, the SMA is also charged with performing random and unannounced Field Checks of agricultural worksites where workers have been placed on Clearance Orders.

As a form of engaging MSFWs at WorkSource centers, MSFW outreach staff report on a quarterly basis to the State Monitor Advocate on their efforts to contact, inform, and educate MSFWs. These outreach efforts include, but are not be limited to, contacts with local public Spanish and English media such as television, radio, newspapers, classroom training sessions, community service agencies and religious organizations, and places where MSFWs live, work or gather. MSFW outreach staff also visit labor camps, employer sites, public housing, businesses and educational institutions in order to locate and provide services to farmworkers that traditionally do not visit WorkSource offices.

The majority of MSFWs are not reached through normal office intake activities. Therefore, resources are allocated through ESD's budget for specialized staff dedicated to outreach activities to MSFWs on a year-round basis in significant agricultural offices. WorkSource planned outreach contacts for PY 2015 are shown below on Table 2. Planned outreach is considered to be vigorous and outreach will continue as per this plan for PY 2016 through PY 2020 based on current staffing levels.

ESD supports outreach efforts by coordinating and/or conducting monthly radio shows hosted by the Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs and aired throughout different areas of the state. During the shows, information about unemployment insurance benefits and WorkSource programs and services is shared.

ESD's Spanish Outreach Manager coordinates an average of 14 outreach events with the Mexican and Peruvian Consulates, the Workforce Development Council directors, and local MSFW staff. Each event is conducted in significant agricultural areas, drawing an average of 300 people per day.

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.

ESD's Agricultural Services Unit (ASU) conducts an annual two-day training for all agricultural services staff. Topics covered include, but are not limited to, an intensive review of the following: Services provided to MSFWs by ESD, Roles and Responsibilities of ESD employees serving MSFWs, federal law creating monitor advocate system, agricultural trends, identifying MSFWs, conducting outreach, farmworker rights, managing, logging and/or referring MSFW complaints, orientation of services and service providers available to MSFWs, job order creation, referrals to job orders, and monthly reporting. Written materials with information presented are distributed to outreach workers for future reference. The annual training also includes opportunities to ask questions, provide feedback regarding current policies, and network with other Outreach workers to share challenges and best practices.

Aside from the annual two-day training, Outreach Worker Staff also have access to:

1. Shared Database: to access job order information, unemployment insurance recipients in their respective areas and to upload monthly complaint and outreach logs;

2. Access to Subject-Matter Expert ESD Employees including: the Agriculture Services Director, State Monitor Advocate and Foreign Labor Certification Coordinator. Outreach Worker questions are usually addressed within one business day;

3. Membership in ListServs for federal and state agency updates regarding workforce trends and changes;

4. Monthly Agricultural Services Unit Conference Call. The objective of this call is to brief Outreach Staff with regard to changes in federal and state regulations, labor market updates, and changes in policy. Each outreach worker is charged with sharing labor market trends, potential new organization partnerships, and community resources in their respective areas.

Additional information and updates are shared via e-mail.

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 need for inter-office communications and cross training is crucial. ESD headquarters, which has been affected by reductions, encourages decentralized training by available subject matter experts in the field. Strategic and operational partnerships will become even more important in PY 2016. Partnerships will be fostered through statewide and local meetings to integrate services across organizations and facilitate hiring events or local MSFW resource fairs. Communication and collaboration among state agencies has also intensified, so that resources are leveraged when serving agricultural stakeholders in a manner valued by all.

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.

In addition to the training and resources outlined in Sec. B. above, all ESD staff must attend annual LEAN Management training wherein employees receive training on Lean management principles aimed at developing better ways to service customers and engage staff.

E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS.

Concurrent enrollments with partner agencies and colleges are assessed for individuals who may benefit. A key partner in these efforts is the WIOA 167 National Farmworker Job Program (NFJP) grantee, which is currently the OIC of Washington. Their offices are located in key locations where agricultural activity is greatest, including some co-locations in One-Stop Career Centers. The training pathway for ESL, high school equivalency certificates, and career and technical education (vocational training) is primarily through partnering with the WIOA 167 grantee and community colleges. Community colleges in some agricultural areas continue to provide Integrated Basic Education Skills Training (I-BEST) for higher level ESL adults. The I-BEST model has dual

instructors for language and vocational skills leading directly to a variety of certificates (e.g., CDL, welding, office technology) and agricultural or non-agricultural jobs. Acknowledging the value of ESD and ABE classes, UI allows claimants to count ESD, ABE, or GED classes as documented in-person job search activities if approved by WorkSource as part of the reemployment plan. Claimant progress is monitored by WorkSource.

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.

i.ESD maintains a statewide Agricultural Services Unit (ASU) under the direction of the Director of Agricultural Services. The ASU consists of the State Monitor Advocate, a State Program Coordinator who guides service delivery, and a staff person to assist the Program Coordinator. This team provides guidance, in part, through regularly scheduled monthly statewide conference calls, and more often, as needed, during the agricultural harvest season. These conference calls allow MSFW staff to share information with one another and the ASU on crop and labor activity, for the ASU to provide technical assistance and training, and for MSFW staff and the ASU to discuss ways to continually improve services to growers and farm workers. The ASU, in collaboration with field operations, also facilitates an annual training session for all MSFW supervisors and staff in advance of the agricultural season.

All MSFWs who visit a WorkSource site will be informed of the various types of employment and training services and social services available in their community and in other parts of the state. MSFWs will be given a menu of various training options offered through the state-formula WIOA programs, adult and youth, community colleges, and state agency programs.

Outreach proves most effective as WorkSource and its partners maintain and improve the menu of services that MSFWs value. WorkSource direct employment assessment and placement is primarily tailored to MSFW’s needs through the expertise of MSFW staff in the nine significant agricultural offices serving the state. MSFW staff also work flexible schedules during key harvest periods to meet the demand for services. Active and ongoing outreach focuses on employment but also shifts to include intensive counseling to assist MSFW’s in pursuit of long-term planning to ensure growth in skills, education, and abilities, based on personal interest, desire and industry/economic trends.

Concurrent enrollments with partner agencies and colleges are assessed for individuals who may benefit. A key partner in these efforts is the WIOA 167 grantee, the National Farmworker Job Program (NFJP), which is currently the OIC of Washington. Their offices are located in key locations where agricultural activity is greatest, including some co-locations in One Stop Career Centers. The

training pathway for ESL, high school equivalency certificates, and career and technical education (vocational training) is primarily through partnering with the WIOA 167 grantee and community colleges. Community colleges in some agricultural areas continue to provide Integrated Basic Education Skills Training (I-BEST) for higher level ESL adults. The I-BEST model has dual instructors for language and vocational skills leading directly to a variety of certificates (e.g., CDL, welding, office technology) and agricultural or non-agricultural jobs. In acknowledgement of the value of ESD and ABE classes, UI allows claimants to count ESD, ABE, or GED classes as documented in-person job search activities if approved by WorkSource as part of the reemployment plan, and their progress is monitored by WorkSource.

To fill skill gaps, ESD has invested in statewide licenses for on-line work skills improvement using KeyTrain and SkillSoft training modules for access to the Microsoft e-learning library. Nearly all significant MSFW offices also offer Spanish computer literacy classes, which have seen higher participation rates every year during the off-season. This experience has introduced MSFWs to digital media and a new world of information - some for the first time in their lives. The computer classes have helped digitally-illiterate customers use computers and gain much needed keyboarding skills. Some have progressed to Microsoft Word and Outlook. Students are encouraged to attend Job Hunter workshops offered in Spanish. The plan is to continue the computer workshops in significant offices like Kennewick, Omak, Wenatchee, Yakima, and Sunnyside and integrate flexible work skills learning with other more traditional WorkSource services. In support of technological advances, ESD soft launched an all-Spanish Facebook/EmpleosWashington page to share information for job seekers and employers. The number of followers is steadily growing with even greater number of daily viewers.

Services are also enhanced by bi-lingual/bi-cultural labor exchange staffs in significant agricultural offices. This is particularly crucial because MSFW staff spend the majority of their time, especially during the six months of the growing season between April and October, in the field providing outreach to MSFWs and agricultural employers.

ii.Local ESD staff members have close working relationships with agricultural employers. These relationships are especially beneficial for communicating the need for workers day by day during key harvest periods. In addition, members of the Washington State Farm Bureau, Washington Tree Fruit Association, and Washington Growers League are in contact with ESD in Olympia where issues and concerns that have a statewide impact are addressed.

Agricultural employers may list a local, seasonal job order in the online self-service system at www.WorkSourceWA.com. However, employers also have the option to place staff-assisted job orders, which allow ESD outreach staff to recognize employer needs and respond promptly in order to facilitate the orderly movement of farm workers and is thus considered the most effective means of active recruitment.

Additionally, as an ongoing response to Governor Inslee’s call for more responsive and efficient state government, ESD continues to collaborate with other state agencies in order to enhance coordination and increase communication with key agricultural stakeholders. A state agency work group assembled in July 2013. As a result, the Department of Agriculture reinstituted state-led quarterly conference calls with key agricultural stakeholders. Ongoing planning has also continued among state agencies in an effort to leverage outreach efforts and update outreach materials.

(B) MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS.

The ES Complaint System is a valuable tool that is often used by ESD staff to achieve a resolution that is acceptable to the worker without the need to escalate the complaint to an enforcement agency which could have an adverse effect on the worker-employer relationship and/or the work environment for all employees.

ESD has been most successful in educating MSFW and farmworker advocacy groups through the vigorous outreach efforts of MSFW Outreach Staff. The availability of the ES Complaint System is shared with employees during field visits vis-a-vis trust relationships built between Outreach Workers and MSFWs and through community partner organizations that pass along contact information for Outreach Workers and the State Monitor Advocate. In the context of a field visit, Outreach Workers explain the Complaint System resource and provide workers with their business cards. Outreach Workers encourage workers to follow up with them if they have a concern or complaint or if they know someone who does. The State Monitor Advocate, the designated MSFW Complaint Specialist within the ES Complaint System, also uses this technique and encourages workers to call her in the evening after they return home from work and are able to speak without the anxiety of being overheard by an employer.

MSFW Outreach Workers, the State Monitor Advocate and the Agricultural Service Director are active in farmworker advocacy group and committee meetings wherein fellow community organization members are informed about available ES services and encouraged to pass along the information. Complaint System services are emphasized during these presentations. Information about this service is also provided to those MSFWs who visit Job Service office locations.

(C) MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

The availability of farm labor raised concerns in 2015 and will likely continue in the coming years. Over the past few years, there has been much discussion on the availability of farm labor in Washington. As a result, Washington has seen a spike in use of the H-2A program by apple, pear, and cherry and berry growers.

More growers are choosing to use the H-2A program in Washington. Under H-2A, ESD places an interstate clearance order and actively recruits U.S. workers interested in working under contract for the season. H-2A employers must hire all willing, able, qualified, and available U.S. workers who apply through 50 percent of the contract period. It is anticipated that more growers will choose to use H-2A, despite the added costs and guarantees it requires for farm workers, to provide them with a stable, legal workforce. In CY 2015, Washington growers requested over 12,000 workers as of December 2, 2015, surpassing the previous high of 9,000 workers during CY 2014. ESD will continue to support employers by processing job orders in a timely manner, providing technical assistance to agricultural employers and by updating labor exchange processes so that we can strive to achieve our agency vision - the right job for each person, every time.Bottom of Form

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).

As per 20 CFR 653.108(l), the Washington State Monitor Advocate (SMA) must establish Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) with NFJP grantees, specifically to facilitate the referral and resolution of MSFW complaints. In anticipation of this requirement, the State Monitor Advocate has initiated the process of creating an MOU with Washington State's NFJP grantee, the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) of Washington. The MOU will identify shared objectives, detail how MSFW data will be shared, and set forth the commitments made by each agency in delivering services to MSFWs. The shared process of drafting the bilateral agreement will strengthen an already robust relationship between the agencies. The drafting of the MOU will commence once the guidance referenced in the Final Rule is issued by the U.S. Department of Labor. A final draft of the MOU between ESD and OIC is expected before December 31, 2016.

With regard to non-NFJP grantee partners, per 653.108(l), MOUs are permissible, but not required. Washington's SWA (Employment Security Department or "ESD") works collaboratively with MSFW service providers and partner agencies to provide employment, training, and educational services and resources to MSFWs. Providers and agencies include: government providers, agricultural labor associations, community advocates, legal advocates and community health and wellness organizations, among others. Vigorous outreach is conducted by ESD MSFW Outreach Workers to inform MSFWs of services offered by these providers during visits to the field and to the working, living and gathering areas of MSFWs. To date, collaboration agreements are non-contractual and cooperation is derived from the shared objective of increasing MSFW accessibility to services unique to the MSFW population. These partnerships will continue to operate without an MOU, unless the parties indicate interest in a written MOU.

New partnerships are sought by ESD and usually develop from staff outreach and penetration into the MSFW community. For example, MSFW Outreach Staff and/or the State Monitor Advocate regularly attend MSFW community council and/or committee meetings where information regarding the unique issues involving MSFWs is discussed and shared.

(B) REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT.

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer

organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

The SWA sent out a link to the Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) portion of the Statewide WIOA plan on January 15, 2016 for wide review. The AOP was sent to a distribution list of over 50 stakeholders, including the NFJP grantee, MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested stakeholders. All recipients were encouraged to comment on the plan, and the SWA received two comments during the 30 day comment period. Comments were received from an agricultural employer organization, and an individual representing the farmworker rights community. All comments were reviewed and taken into consideration when finalizing the plan. Some suggested edits were incorporated into the plan, and commenters were provided the opportunity to see the results of their comments in the final plan.

The State Plan, Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP) included the AOP plan. The state plan was broadly distributed for a public comment period which concluded on January 9th. All public comments we summarized in a matrix, reviewed by program staff from various agencies, and appropriately responded to or edited into the final plan. The final TAP Plan and the comment summary matrix were presented and approved by the Workforce Education and Training Coordinating Board (WETCB) on February 24th.

(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.

Washington State Agricultural Outreach Plan https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/PY-2016-20-Washington-State-Agricultural-Outreach-Plan

(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.

Washington State Agricultural Outreach Plan https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/PY-2016-20-Washington-State-Agricultural-Outreach-Plan

(E) STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

Washington State Agricultural Outreach Plan https://esd.wa.gov/WIOA/PY-2016-20-Washington-State-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)).

Transition efforts for Title II, Basic Education for Adults in Washington began to fully implement the requirements of WIOA with the move to the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). As a result of the move to the CCR Standards additional innovations are in place to support accelerated progression and completion. In October 2014, Washington State officially adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for all Basic Education for Adults programming funded under WIOA. The implementation of the CCR Standards provides clear expectations for students and the guidance needed to improve curriculum and instruction. It also identifies the professional development required to help staff develop expertise to implement the standards. The CCR Standards strategically link basic education for adults, postsecondary education, and the world of work. The standards require the implementation of the critical skills and knowledge expected by employers and required for success in workforce training, postsecondary education, and employment in the 21st Century.

Under the transition plan every provider was required to submit a grant extension transition plan that details how the provider is implementing WIOA activities in 2015-16. The plan must include as a minimum the scope, content, organization of the local activities listed below and provide assurance of alignment with local Workforce Development Councils' regional plan and goals.

Implement and scale effective college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth;

Guide and support transformational instructional practices that accelerate student completion to diplomas, high school equivalency, certificates, the Tipping Point, and AA/BA degrees leading to family wage jobs;

Plans must include: Implementing the CCR Standards in all programming; Integrating employability skills training and instruction in all courses at all levels; Beginning implementation of integrated employment and training activities such as I-BEST into all IEL/Civics instruction to be fully implemented by July 1, 2016; Integrated reading strategies instruction at all levels in all courses; Expanding the teaching of speaking and listening into all levels of both ABE and ELA programming; and Integrating problem solving in technology-rich environments at all levels of instruction;

Support one-stop centers through in-kind services/funding; Support alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development; Improve labor market relevance; Improve the structure of service delivery; Increase prosperity; employment, retention, earnings, and the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.

To support implementation of local transition plans, all providers have access to system-wide professional development. They also provide a plan to engage faculty and staff in system-wide program and professional development leadership activities that provide guidance for critical implementation of the requirements of WIOA over the three transitional years.

The following professional and program development activities are in place: 2014-2017 Team Teacher Training for all programming (ABE, ESL, HS 21+, On-Ramp to I-BEST, and I-BEST) to

support integrated employment and training activities; Contextualized instruction training centered on the CCR Standards, integrated employability skills, and reading strategies; Technology in flipped classroom instruction to integrate technology and employability skills development at all levels; LINCS Adult Numeracy Training; Innovation in IEL/Civics supporting the development of co-enrolled integrated employment and training activities (I-BEST) as well as math at all levels; Reading Apprenticeship training to prepare students for college-level instruction; and Contextualized integrated employability skills training.

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.

The SBCTC will release an extension application for 2016-2017 Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title II for Adult Basic Education and Literacy Services to current providers on February 11, 2016 and run an open competition on March 5, 2017 to identify providers for the 2017-2022 grant period.

Each eligible organization desiring an extension in 2016 shall submit an extension application containing information and assurances such as the SBCTC may require, including: A description of how funds awarded under AEFLA will be spent to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities: including programs that provide such activities concurrently with workforce training and employability skills; A description of cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with local one-stops and other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities; and a Transition Plan detailing the implementation of the required WIOA Activities in 2015-16 as listed in section 4.1 SBCTC will spend no less that 95 percent of the funds for carrying out adult education and literacy activities, and the remaining amount will be used for planning, administration, personnel development and interagency coordination.

The SBCTC will also release a Request for Application (RFA) for 2017-2022 Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title II for Adult Basic Education and Literacy Services on March 5, 2017. Each eligible organization desiring a grant shall submit an application containing information and assurances such as the SBCTC may require, including: A description of how funds awarded under AEFLA will be spent; and a description of cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities and support of one-stop infrastructure.

SBCTC will spend no less that 95 percent of the fund for carrying out adult education and literacy activities, and the remaining amount will be used for planning, administration, personnel development and interagency coordination.

ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

The following are eligible providers for grant funding:

Local education agency with demonstrated effectiveness

- Community-based organization with demonstrated effectiveness

- Volunteer literacy organization with demonstrated effectiveness

- Institution of higher education with demonstrated effectiveness

- Public or private nonprofit agency with demonstrated effectiveness

- Library with demonstrated effectiveness

- Public housing authority with demonstrated effectiveness

- Nonprofit institution that is not described in (1) through (7) and has the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families with demonstrated effectiveness

- Consortia of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in 1 through 8 with demonstrated effectiveness.

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

SBCTC will announce the availability of funds through the internet via the SBCTC website. Those interested in applying for SBCTC Adult Basic Education Funding will be required to: Submit a letter of intent by February 24, 2017; Access the SBCTC Online Grant Management System (OGMS) and develop a formal response to each section of the application (available March 5, 2017); Submit fully completed applications electronically to the SBCTC through (OGMS) by April 15, 2017; Evaluation of Applications; and Proposals will be reviewed by a team of experts from SBCTC and/or other organizations.

Review of applications will be based on the completion of the requested information in the narrative as well as completion of required forms and comprehensive implementation of all WIOA requirements both state and federal.

CRITERIA FOR SCORING PROPOSALS WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING AEFLA REQUIREMENTS

- The degree to which the eligible provider will establish measurable goals;

- The degree to which the eligible provider has the ability to place and navigate all students along a clearly defined, comprehensive, guided college and career pathway;

- The past effectiveness of an eligible provider in improving the literacy skills of adults and families and, after the 1-year period beginning with the adoption of an eligible agency's performance measures under Sec. 161 WIOA, the success of an eligible provider receiving funding under this subtitle in meeting or exceeding such performance measures, especially with respect to those adults with lower levels of literacy;

- The commitment of the eligible provider to serve individuals in the community most in need of literacy services, including individuals who are low-income or have minimal literacy skills and those individuals with barriers to employment, access to opportunities for employment, education, training and support services they need to succeed in the labor market;

- Whether or not the program is of sufficient intensity and duration for participants to achieve substantial learning gains and uses research-based instructional practices, such as phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading strategies and comprehension, numeracy, solving problems in technology rich environments, and employability skills;

- Whether the activities are built on a strong foundation of research and effective educational practice;

- Whether the activities effectively employ advances in technology, as appropriate, including the use of computers and blended learning resources;

- Whether the activities provide learning in real life, college and career contexts to ensure that an individual has the skills needed to compete in the workplace and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;

- Whether the activities are staffed by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators;

- Whether the activities coordinate with other available resources in the community, such as establishing strong links with elementary and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies;

- Whether the activities offer flexible schedules and support services (such as child care and transportation) as needed to enable all students, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;

- Whether the activities maintain a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report participant outcomes and to monitor program performance against the eligible agency performance measures; and

- Whether the local communities have a demonstrated need for additional English literacy programs.

In addition, to ensure that providers meet the WIOA requirements, proposals will be evaluated by teams from SBCTC on their ability to:

- Implement and scale effective college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth;

- Guide and support transformational instructional practices that accelerate student completion to diplomas, high school equivalency, certificates, the Tipping Point, and AA/BA degrees leading to family wage jobs. Plans must include:

-Implementing the CCR Standards in all programming;

- Integrating employability skills training and instruction in all courses at all levels;

-Beginning implementation of integrated employment and training activities such as I-BEST into all IEL/Civics instruction to be fully implemented by July 1, 2016; Expanding the teaching of speaking and listening into all levels of both ABE and ELA programming; and Integrating problem solving in technology rich environments at all levels of instruction.

- Support one-stop centers through in-kind services/funding;

- Support alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development;

- Improve labor market relevance;

- Improve the structure of service delivery; and

- Increase prosperity; employment, retention, earnings, and the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.

Teams comprised of two adult education and workforce leaders and one SBCTC policy associate/program administrator will rate applications. The applications will be reviewed and independently rated by each member of the team to determine an average score. In order to be considered for BEdA Master Grant funding, BEdA Master Grant applications must receive a minimum average score of 102 or higher. In order to be considered for IEL/Civics funding, IEL/Civic Grant applications must receive a minimum average score of 17 or higher. Final recommendations for approval will be determined based on ratings ensuring support for ABE services are available across the state.

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY FOR DISTRIBUTION OF FEDERAL ABE/IEL/CIVICS FUNDS

The FY17-22 Federal ABE/IEL Civics funding formula aligns with Washington's Adult Education and Family Literacy five-year State Plan, guidance from the Governor's Adult Education Advisory Council (AEAC), the Governor's Results Washington initiative, the Higher Education Coordinating Board's Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' System Direction and Mission Study, and Policy Focus and Dashboard, and the Workforce Education and Training Board's WIOA State Strategic Plan. The intent is to serve more students and serve them more efficiently in order to transition them as quickly as possible to postsecondary education and family sustaining jobs.

The FY17-FY22 funding methodology shifts the funding formula from a regional needs based demographic methodology (based solely on census data) to a service and performance based formula giving equal weight to service/access and to performance. The current state plan and federal funding formula did not recognize providers that expanded service to serve more students, nor did it include any metrics on performance. The FY17-FY22 formula shifts funding from regional demographics towards providers enrolling more students and increasing the numeracy, literacy and college and career readiness skills of participants. This service and performance based formula is focused on increasing the number of students being served and the quality of that service.

FUNDING PRINCIPLES

The following funding principles were developed as a result of comprehensive input from all stakeholders through statewide forums, online surveys, and provider groups in FY13 and FY14. The results were that funding needs to be transparent and credible; Formula should be based on objective criteria (not local negotiations or regional need); Formula should incent transitions to postsecondary education; Formula should be data-driven, focused on increased access (FTEs) and increased success for students (Student Achievement Points - SAI). Both total points and points per student should be considered; and Institutions must have capacity to spend allotted performance money effectively.

METHODOLOGY*

Distribute funds based on a prorata share among providers for the following (3-yr avg. of data):

- 50% Performance based; 10% Transitions; 20% Total Student Achievement Points; and 20% SAI points per student

- 50% FTE Enrollment

***Providers seeking funding for the first time will be awarded base funding calculated only on the proposed number of students to be served (enrollment). In years 2-5 funding will be awarded based on both performance and enrollment.**

SPECIAL RULE

If SBCTC implements any rule or policy relating to the administration or operation of a program that imposes a requirement not demanded by Federal law, SBCTC shall identify the rule or policy as being imposed by SBCTC. Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA) Adult education; Literacy; Workplace adult education and literacy activities; Family literacy activities; English language acquisition activities; Integrated English literacy and civics education; Workforce preparation activities; or Integrated education and training that — 1) Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster; and 2) Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

All services provided under Title II of this plan accelerate the progress of adults along well-defined pathways to college and career readiness that lead to postsecondary

certificates/degrees and life-sustaining jobs and support vital families, communities, and economies across Washington.

DESCRIPTION OF ALLOWABLE ACTIVITIES OVERVIEW

Washington's adult basic education programs address the needs of adult learners as they strengthen local communities and businesses. Adults who lack the skills and knowledge to fully participate in, contribute to, and benefit from Washington's postsecondary education system and economy are eligible to access adult education services in a variety of settings across the state. Core services are offered at all locations to adult learners who meet the federal eligibility requirements for enrollment.

These learners: Have attained 16 years of age; Are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; Lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to function effectively in society; Do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or have not achieved an equivalent level of education; and/or, Are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

Beginning in July 2015 under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), adult education and literacy activities were expanded to include adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy activities, family literacy activities, English language acquisition activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training.

Comprehensive interventions are designed to address skill and knowledge deficits across the levels defined in Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

Vision and leadership for this system of services comes from the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC). SBCTC is advised about issues related to students' career pathway goals by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB).

SBCTC is also advised and supported by the Washington State Adult Education Advisory Council (AEAC), which meets four times each year. This body was created by the legislature in 1991, and its members are appointed by the state governor to represent agencies, partners and sectors. Represented entities include: Adult Basic Education providers, community-based organizations, employers, libraries, unions, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Corrections, Community and Technical Colleges, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Employment Security Department, the Governor, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Washington Workforce Association (WIBs), and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (state WIB). The AEAC was the first officially certified state advisory council when it was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in March of 1997.

Building on policies and initiatives created through this comprehensive system of advising, coordination and support, providers leverage success using innovative processes that have gained recognition in formal research among colleagues and funders across the nation as well as from the President of the United States. These processes unify and inform the delivery of Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses, English Language Acquisition (ELA) instruction, and high school credential programs. Following are examples of research-based

innovative practices that support the implementation and scaling of college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth.

THE COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATED BASIC EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING (I-BEST) PATHWAY

Professional/technical and academic programs at all 34 colleges provide adults with skills, knowledge and certificates/degrees through innovative education and career pathways that lead to employment, additional education and success in their workplaces, families, and communities.- all contributing to a stronger workforce and society.

I-BEST - FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING AT EVERY LEVEL

Washington's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program (I-BEST) is a nationally recognized model that quickly boosts students' literacy and work and college readiness skills so students earn credentials, get living wage jobs, and put their talents to work for Washington's employers. This innovation successfully challenges the traditional notion that students must complete basic education before starting to earn credits in a job-training or academic program.

I-BEST pairs two instructors in the classroom - one to teach professional and technical or credit-bearing academic content and the other to teach basic skills in areas of reading, math, writing or English language. I-BEST programs develop skills in the contexts of specific jobs and college programs, enabling students to move through college, earn credentials and get jobs faster.

This research-based program was named a Bright Idea by Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government in 2011 and has been designated by the U.S. Department of Education as the most significant innovation in the last 20 years. According to a December, 2012 report by the Community College Research Center, I-BEST programs provide benefits that justify additional costs.

Research conducted separately by the Community College Research Center and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board found that I-BEST students outperform similar students enrolled in traditional basic skills programs. I-BEST students are: 3 times more likely to earn college credits; 9 times more likely to earn a workforce credential; Employed at double the hours per week (35 hours versus 15 hours); Earning an average of $2,310 more per year than similar adults who did not receive basic skills training; and more than 3,000 Washington students are enrolled in I-BEST programs annually.

I-BEST is being replicated and implemented across the country. Washington's community and technical college system has provided information and assistance to 33 other states seeking to adopt I-BEST and similar programs. These include: Minnesota, Indiana, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, Alabama, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island and Texas.

ON RAMPS TO I-BEST - INCREASING TRANSITIONS FROM LEVELS 1, 2 AND 3

Funded providers use key elements of I-BEST programs, e.g. contextualization, team teaching, enhanced students services, and articulated college and career pathways, to increase the speed at which students master basic and ELA skills at federal levels 1, 2 and 3. On Ramp options include, but are not limited to: programs focused on career clusters; partnership efforts between colleges and community-based organizations and local workforce development councils (WIBs); I-BEST at Work projects that partner providers, employers and WIBs; Project I-DEA (Integrated Digital English Acceleration), a three-year pilot program with support from the Gates Foundation that will transform ELA instruction using a flipped classroom model and 50% online instruction.

In 1-3 quarters, On Ramp students acquire the skills needed to transition to basic skills education classes at federal levels 4-6 and/or Professional/Technical or Academic I-BEST pathways.

PROFESSIONAL/TECHNICAL I-BEST

Professional/Technical I-BEST, moving students from Levels 4, 5 and 6 to postsecondary success in Professional/Technical Programs. Students who function primarily at federal levels 4 - 6 can be served in Professional/Technical I-BEST programs that result in recognized certificates leading to progression along a defined educational and career pathway. These programs are available at every Washington community and technical colleges, often in partnership with local community based organization and increasingly as part of the education services at state correctional facilities.

EXPANDED PROFESSIONAL TECHNICAL AND ACADEMIC I-BEST PROGRAMS

Expanded Professional Technical and Academic I-BEST Programs; moving students from Levels 4, 5, and 6 to postsecondary success. Expanded Professional Technical I-BEST and Academic I-BEST programs employ the same strategies as professional technical I-BEST. They apply these strategies to credit-bearing classes along 2-year degree pathways and ensure accelerated student progress through higher levels of adult education and precollege education and transition into 2-year degree programs.

EXPANDING OPTIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL CREDENTIALS

Certificates and Diplomas In light of changes to options for acquiring high school credentials made by the federal government and the growing importance of these certificates and high school diplomas, Washington state has expanded the options available to adults. Our goal is to ensure that adult learners acquire the necessary credentials by gaining the knowledge and skills demanded in the workforce and required for postsecondary success.

Toward that end, Washington will continue to award state certificates linked to the recognized high school equivalency state exam. In addition, the state will continue to support two pathways to diplomas awarded by colleges that address different populations and have been in place for many years. Adults can earn a diploma through a high school completion program or request a diploma at the time they are awarded an associate degree or two-year professional/technical certificate.

To ensure that adults have access to a rigorous, affordable high school diploma program that reflects the knowledge, skills, and experience of adults, Washington is launching a new option, High School 21+ (HS 21+). HS 21+ expands the pathways offered by community and technical colleges and community based organizations with a comprehensive, competency-based approach tailored to adult learning styles. HS 21+ is for adult learners (21 and older) who do not have a recognized high school certificate or diploma. It is designed to move adults into I-BEST programs or other postsecondary training and education and to provide the skills needed to support lifelong learning. The program awards credit for prior learning, military training, and work experience. Because it's competency-based, students can move quickly as outcomes are met, saving both time and money.

Programs are encouraged to pilot and implement additional evidence and research-based strategies for college and career pathways that meet the goals of this plan.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) implementation offers the opportunity to create the workforce development system that will serve Washington's employers and current and future jobseekers for decades to come. WIOA further defines and expands targeted services that accelerate the progress of adults along well-defined pathways to college and career readiness that lead to postsecondary certificates/degrees and family-wage jobs and support vital families, communities, and economies across Washington. All Basic Education for Adults providers were required to develop a 2015-2016 transition plan to fully implement WIOA.

To guide this work, Basic Education for Adults is partnering with the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) established by the Governor as the guiding body for the development of a unified/combined state plan and implementation of WIOA across the four core programs. This work will be led by the State Workforce Board (WTECB) at the state level and the regional Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) at the local level with representation from all core programs. Business and labor will co-chair the state's implementation committees consisting of a steering committee, Sector Strategies to Close Skill Gaps in the Workplace Committee, the Performance Accountability Committee, and the Education and Career Pathways through Integrated Service Delivery Models Committee.

In addition to guiding the implementation of WIOA, committees and agencies are committed to ensuring that the implementation fully supports Governor Inslee's three fundamental goals: 1) Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations. 2) Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations. 3) Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.

Under their guidance, transition efforts for Title II, Basic Education for Adults in Washington has already begun to fully implement the requirements of WIOA. In October 2014, Washington State officially adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCR) for all Basic Education for Adults programming funded under WIOA. The implementation of the CCR Standards provides clear expectations for students and the guidance needed to improve curriculum and instruction. It also identifies the professional development required to help staff develop expertise to implement the standards. The CCR Standards strategically link basic education for adults, postsecondary education, and the world of work. The standards require the implementation of the critical skills and knowledge expected by employers and

required for success in workforce training, postsecondary education, and employment in the 21st Century.

Under the transition plan every provider is required to submit a grant extension transition plan that details how the provider will fully implement WIOA activities in 2015-16. The plan is required to include as a minimum the scope, content, organization of the local activities listed below and provide assurance of alignment with local Workforce Development Councils' regional plan and goals. Implement and scale effective college and career pathways that accelerate student completion and foster economic growth; and Guide and support transformational instructional practices that accelerate student completion to diplomas, high school equivalency, certificates, the Tipping Point, and AA/BA degrees leading to family wage jobs.

Plans must include: Implementing the CCR Standards in all programming; Integrating employability skills training and instruction in all courses at all levels; Beginning implementation of integrated employment and training activities such as I-BEST into all IEL/Civics instruction to be fully implemented by July 1, 2017; Integrated reading strategies instruction at all levels in all courses; Expanding the teaching of speaking and listening into all levels of both ABE and ELA programming; and Integrating problem solving in technology-rich environments at all levels of instruction.

Support one-stop centers through in-kind services/funding; Support alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development; Improve labor market relevance; Improve the structure of service delivery; Increase prosperity; employment, retention, earnings, and the attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials.

To support implementation of local WIOA Transition plans, all providers have access to system-wide professional development. They have also been and will continue to be provided with a plan to engage faculty and staff in system-wide program and professional development leadership activities that provide guidance for critical implementation of the requirements of WIOA over the two years.

The following professional and program development activities are in place: 2015-2017 Team Teacher Training for all programming (ABE, ESL, HS 21+, On-Ramp to I-BEST, and I-BEST) to support integrated employment and training activities: Contextualized instruction training centered on the CCR Standards, integrated employability skills, and reading strategies; Technology in flipped classroom instruction to integrate technology and employability skills development at all levels; LINCS Adult Numeracy Training; Innovation in IEL/Civics supporting the development of co-enrolled integrated employment and training activities (I-BEST) as well as math at all levels; Reading Apprenticeship training to prepare students for college-level instruction; and Contextualized integrated employability skills training.

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.

In Washington State, the Department of Corrections contracts with the Washington Community and Technical Colleges to provide basic skills and job training at each of the state's 12 adult prisons, with the goal of making inmates more likely to obtain viable jobs and thus less likely to return to prison. Title II funds are awarded to AEFLA providers to provide services in jails following the same procedures under part B on page 191 but that Title II funds are not used to operate programs under section 225 of WIOA for corrections education in prisons.

The average offender entering a Washington state prison scores at an eighth–grade level or lower in basic literacy skills. Roughly half are unemployed, and nearly a quarter lack a verified high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate. In order to meet the educational and employment needs of offenders, the Department of Corrections contracts with the Washington Community and Technical Colleges to provide basic skills and job training at each of the state's 12 adult prisons, with the goal of making inmates more likely to obtain viable jobs and thus less likely to return to prison. During this past year, nearly 9,500 incarcerated offenders participated in educational opportunities offered by Washington state community and technical colleges.

Students in correctional education programs have access to the same quality programs as offered on our community college campuses. In 2011–12, the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I–BEST) model was piloted in the Specialty Baking program at Clallam Bay Corrections Center. Currently four I–BEST programs are up and running in correctional facilities. In addition to I–BEST, Washington's correction education programs offer the same programming as traditional Basic Education for Adults and workforce training programs in the community and technical college system. Washington state currently has two two–year degree programs operating on private funds at two institutions. Programming in correctional facilities include: Adult Basic Education; Vocational programming; English Language Acquisition; High school diploma and equivalency; Limited AA degree programs; Offender Change programs; and Re–entry services.

On average, inmates who participate in correction education programs have 43% lower odds of returning prison than inmates who do not, according to a 2013 study by the RAND Corporation.

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.

Beginning July 1, 2017, WIOA Section 243 funds will only be allocated to providers with a clear description of how funding and civics instruction will be used in combination with Integrated Education and Training as defined in WIOA Section 203(11): "'Integrated Education and Training'.—The term integrated education and training means a service approach that provides adult education and training 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." IEL Civics Programs that meet the requirements of Section 243 funds have been established, piloted, and implemented across the system. Full implementation of integrated employment and training activities include: state-approved I–BEST programs that co-enroll ELA students in college-level, career technical certificate and degree programs in high demand career fields; I–BEST at Work programming which enroll ELA incumbent workers in career specific coursework to upskill students in basic, employability, civic, and workplace skills in order for them to advance in their place of employment. In the I-BEST at Work model, the teaching team is made up of a basic skills instructor and a trainer from the worksite and classes are held at the place of employment; on-ramps to I-BEST programs where all instruction is contextualized and delivered concurrently with training in a specific occupation or occupational cluster like allied health; and staffing to provide navigational support specifically to IEL Civics students enrolled in IEL Civics eligible programs described above. These integrated education and training models of instruction are required in order to be awarded IEL Civics funding. Training and/or technical support are made available to all providers on an on-going basis for each of these integrated instructional models.

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.

In addition to the extension application for the BEdA Master Grant, the SBCTC will release an extension application for 2016–2017 and an open competition in 2017–2018 under the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title II for Adult Basic Education and Literacy Services for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education to current providers on February 11, 2016 and March 5, 2017. Each eligible organization desiring an extension in 2016, and those selected under the open competition in 2017, shall submit an application containing information and assurances such as the SBCTC may require, including: A description of how Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education funds awarded under AEFLA will be spent; a description of cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with local one–stops and other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities; and a transition plan detailing the implementation of the required Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education WIOA Activities to be fully implemented as of July 1, 2016. WIOA Section 243 funds will only be allocated to providers with a clear description of how funding and civics instruction will be used in combination with Integrated Education and Training as defined in WIOA Section 203(11). All applications are scored by an external and SBCTC evaluation team using the Washington State Adult Education

Grant Application Criteria and scoring rubric. Programs scoring as weak or not meeting the definition of a IEL Civics program are not funded.

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.

Washington state's combined plan will address the activities that will be undertaken to meet the requirements of Section 233 of WIOA to promote transitions from adult education to postsecondary education and training through career pathways. Under the new combined plan, all Basic Education for Adults providers will use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for the adult education and literacy required WIOA activities including the four new required national leadership activities to develop or enhance the adult education system across the state. All funded providers will be required to detail the process that will be used to collaborate with all stakeholders and align Basic Education for Adults programming in their 2015-2016 extension and 2017-2022 competitive grant plans with all partners named in the combined state plan. Eligible providers will provide services in alignment with local plans detailing how they will promote concurrent enrollment with Title I programs and activities in order to meet the state adjusted levels of performance and collect data to report on performance indicators. In addition, all providers will describe how they will fulfill one-stop responsibilities in their region. As members of local Workforce Development Boards, local providers will participate in ongoing plan development and implementation of WIOA. The following transition activities are underway in Washington to meet the four newly required state leadership activities requirements of WIOA: following activities have been completed or are underway in support: • The Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) has established a highly inclusive committee structure to identify key areas of work and implementation planning. Basic Education for Adults is represented on each of the committees with local providers being engaged as needed. The committees are: o Steering Committee: members include WTECB, Business, Labor, all core programs, Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO), TANF, and the SBCTC. This committee's work includes creating the WIOA vision and goals, state and local plan development, state policies and guidance to facilitate integrated services development, funding formula guidance, One Stop certification and evaluation criteria, oversight of work plans and timelines, facilitation of communication state-to-state, local-to-state, local-to-local, and among WIOA implementation committees, and state legislative issues. o Committee for Sector Strategies to Close Skill Gaps in the Workplace: members include WTECB, Educational Service Districts (ESD), Business, Labor, all core programs, Washington Workforce Association (WWA), Commerce, CLEO, SBCTC, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).This committee's work includes regional designation and governance, data analysis, local workforce development council designations, local board configuration, and sector strategy and industry engagement. o Committee for Performance Accountability and Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Committee: members include WTECB, BEdA, DVR, Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), WWA, business, labor, and all core programs. This committee's work includes alignment of current systems to WIOA for all core programs, establishment of procedures for WIOA performance target setting, alignment of ETPL with WIOA, and the development of performance criteria for Youth and On the Job Training (OJT) programming. o Committee for Education and Career Pathways through Integrated Service Delivery Models: members include WTECB, business, labor, all core programs, all relevant DSHS divisions, Commerce, NASCAP, OSPI, SBCTC, L&I/Apprenticeship, WWA, local and state stakeholders, and other industry partnerships. In addition to Washington's WIOA committee structure, the following activities are completed or underway to meet the alignment requirement. These activities include: • BEdA system wide, three-day training on developing college and career pathways. This was developed to support WIOA and the state plan requirement to implement college and career readiness pathways for all basic skills students. • Ongoing WIOA face-to-face meetings and Collaborate sessions to update providers on all planning, development, and

implementation requirements, strategies, and trainings. These sessions include guest presenters from all core programs. The first of these sessions provided an overview by the WFB, local WDCs, and SBCTC. Providers were given a listing of contacts in their local regions to begin alignment planning and discussions. • SBCTC facilitated work sessions with regional core program partners. Four regional sessions have been completed to date. • WDC facilitated work session on WIOA collaboration at the summer and fall 2015 Council of Basic Skills (CBS) meetings. • Washington's Governor appointed Adult Basic Education Advisory Council (AEAC) work to identify, develop, and expand the establishment of local shared navigational support systems to students. Washington state implements quality programs and professional development to support all strategically targeted BEdA state initiatives through various means. Professional development needs are strategically determined, developed, and delivered by experts in the content area to meet the WIOA, AEFLA and individual program needs. The BEdA office works closely with the Council for Basic Skills (CBS) to determine areas in which programs need professional development in curriculum and instruction, policy and procedures, and implementation of new programming including reading strategies, IEL Civics program implementation, College and Career Readiness Standards, employability skills, and comprehensive guided pathways. The SBCTC agency also works across the various departments (WorkForce, Developmental Education, Research, Academic Transfer, Student Services, and eLearning) to determine and develop various professional development opportunities that are implemented to move targeted WIOA statewide initiatives forward. During the assessment of individual trainings participants are identify areas of further professional development needs. Once the need has been determined, SBCTC employs a variety of resources to develop and deliver the trainings. National organization such as LINCs and College and Career Readiness and Success Center at American Institute for Research (AIR); CLASP; and SBCTC's Assessment, Teaching and Learning (ATL) Unit; Student Success Center, Guided Career Pathways Initiative , and eLearning departments. All State Leadership activities align with the required and permissible activities in SEC. 223.a.1 and 2 of WIOA. Federal leadership dollars are granted to providers in support of professional and program development initiatives that include: • Team teacher training for all programming (ABE, ELA, HS 21+, On-Ramp to I-BEST, IEL Civics, and I-BEST) to support career pathways integrated employment and training activities; • Contextualized instruction training centered on the CCR Standards, integrated employability skills, and reading strategies; • Technology in flipped classroom instruction to integrate technology and employability skills development at all levels; • LINCS Adult Numeracy Training to integrate math instruction into ELA pathways and to increase numeracy instructional skills of faculty in order to meet the College and Career Readiness Standard, the new NRS Level descriptors, and to increase outcomes across the system in mathematics; • Innovation in IEL Civics supporting the development of co-enrolled integrated employment and training activities (I-BEST) as well as math at all levels; • Reading Apprenticeship Training to prepare students for college-level instruction; and • Contextualized integrated employability skills training.

2. The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funds under this title, include: a) 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. Current initiatives include: o Washington's adoption in October of 2014 of the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards as the basis for all instruction. 2014-17 will focus on training to transition from the Washington State Adult Learning Standards to CCR Standards with full implementation in 2017 with system wide professional development provided. o Integrated Digital English Acceleration (I-DEA), which is a hybrid instructional model based on the flipped classroom, providing problem solving activities in technology rich environments. Each student is provided with a laptop computer and 24/7 access to learning. Curriculum including language acquisition, rights and responsibilities of citizens and workforce training is thus available around the

clock for ELA levels 1-3. Unlike traditional approaches in which students must learn English before pursuing job-training, I-DEA teaches English in tandem with college and career skills. This program has a highly intensive, quarterly staff training and implementation component in addition to on-going program support from SBCTC. I-DEA will be fully implemented in all programs by June 2016. o Reading Apprenticeship training and implementation, which will continue in Washington State as a strategic instructional model throughout Adult Basic Education and college programming, incorporating the essential components of reading specific to adult learners' needs. o LINCS Adult Numeracy Training, which will be conducted throughout 2014-15 in support of mathematics instruction for increased rigor of programing in order to prepare students for college and career pathways. o Technology and the flipped classroom model training which will begin in 2015 to enhance faculty skills in the use of instructional technology for distance education and student skill development in solving problems in technology rich environments.

b) Assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies o To enhance system efficiencies, Washington conducts trainings through the Blackboard Collaborate system and also offers training to assist staff in the use of Collaborate. o SBCTC also offers training in the online management system, CANVAS for faculty and staff wanting to enhance instruction with technology in the classroom. o A major focus in the next two years is on increasing instruction in problem solving in technology rich environments. Initiatives currently under way that support this work include: o Project I-DEA (Integrated Digital English Acceleration), a three-year pilot program with support from the Gates Foundation that will transform ELA instruction using a flipped classroom model and 50% online instruction o System-wide training on implementing the flipped classroom model significantly increasing access to online learning opportunities

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE.

Washington state's combined plan will address the activities that will be undertaken to meet the requirements of Section 233 of WIOA to promote transitions from adult education to postsecondary education and training through career pathways. Under the new combined plan, all Basic Education for Adults providers will use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for the adult education and literacy required WIOA activities including the four new required national leadership activities to develop or enhance the adult education system across the state. All funded providers will be required to detail the process that will be used to collaborate with all stakeholders and align Basic Education for Adults programming in their 2015-2016 extension and 2017-2022 competitive grant plans with all partners named in the combined state plan. Eligible providers will provide services in alignment with local plans detailing how they will promote concurrent enrollment with Title I programs and activities in order to meet the state adjusted levels of performance and collect data to report on performance indicators. In addition, all providers will describe how they will fulfill one-stop responsibilities in their region. As members of local Workforce Development Boards, local providers will participate in ongoing plan development and implementation of WIOA. The following transition activities are underway in Washington to meet the four newly required state leadership activities requirements of WIOA: following activities have been completed or are underway in support: • The Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) has established a highly inclusive committee structure to identify key areas of work and implementation planning. Basic Education for Adults is represented on each of the committees with local providers being engaged as needed. The committees are: o Steering Committee: members include WTECB, Business, Labor, all core programs, Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEO), TANF, and the SBCTC.

This committee's work includes creating the WIOA vision and goals, state and local plan development, state policies and guidance to facilitate integrated services development, funding formula guidance, One Stop certification and evaluation criteria, oversight of work plans and timelines, facilitation of communication state-to-state, local-to-state, local-to-local, and among WIOA implementation committees, and state legislative issues. o Committee for Sector Strategies to Close Skill Gaps in the Workplace: members include WTECB, Educational Service Districts (ESD), Business, Labor, all core programs, Washington Workforce Association (WWA), Commerce, CLEO, SBCTC, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).This committee's work includes regional designation and governance, data analysis, local workforce development council designations, local board configuration, and sector strategy and industry engagement. o Committee for Performance Accountability and Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Committee: members include WTECB, BEdA, DVR, Department of Services for the Blind (DSB), WWA, business, labor, and all core programs. This committee's work includes alignment of current systems to WIOA for all core programs, establishment of procedures for WIOA performance target setting, alignment of ETPL with WIOA, and the development of performance criteria for Youth and On the Job Training (OJT) programming. o Committee for Education and Career Pathways through Integrated Service Delivery Models: members include WTECB, business, labor, all core programs, all relevant DSHS divisions, Commerce, NASCAP, OSPI, SBCTC, L&I/Apprenticeship, WWA, local and state stakeholders, and other industry partnerships. In addition to Washington's WIOA committee structure, the following activities are completed or underway to meet the alignment requirement. These activities include: • BEdA system wide, three-day training on developing college and career pathways. This was developed to support WIOA and the state plan requirement to implement college and career readiness pathways for all basic skills students. • Ongoing WIOA face-to-face meetings and Collaborate sessions to update providers on all planning, development, and implementation requirements, strategies, and trainings. These sessions include guest presenters from all core programs. The first of these sessions provided an overview by the WFB, local WDCs, and SBCTC. Providers were given a listing of contacts in their local regions to begin alignment planning and discussions. • SBCTC facilitated work sessions with regional core program partners. Four regional sessions have been completed to date. • WDC facilitated work session on WIOA collaboration at the summer and fall 2015 Council of Basic Skills (CBS) meetings. • Washington's Governor appointed Adult Basic Education Advisory Council (AEAC) work to identify, develop, and expand the establishment of local shared navigational support systems to students. Washington state implements quality programs and professional development to support all strategically targeted BEdA state initiatives through various means. Professional development needs are strategically determined, developed, and delivered by experts in the content area to meet the WIOA, AEFLA and individual program needs. The BEdA office works closely with the Council for Basic Skills (CBS) to determine areas in which programs need professional development in curriculum and instruction, policy and procedures, and implementation of new programming including reading strategies, IEL Civics program implementation, College and Career Readiness Standards, employability skills, and comprehensive guided pathways. The SBCTC agency also works across the various departments (WorkForce, Developmental Education, Research, Academic Transfer, Student Services, and eLearning) to determine and develop various professional development opportunities that are implemented to move targeted WIOA statewide initiatives forward. During the assessment of individual trainings participants are identify areas of further professional development needs. Once the need has been determined, SBCTC employs a variety of resources to develop and deliver the trainings. National organization such as LINCs and College and Career Readiness and Success Center at American Institute for Research (AIR); CLASP; and SBCTC's Assessment, Teaching and Learning (ATL) Unit; Student Success Center, Guided Career Pathways Initiative , and eLearning departments. All State Leadership activities align with the required and permissible activities in SEC. 223.a.1 and 2 of WIOA. Federal leadership dollars are granted to providers in support of professional and program development initiatives that include: • Team teacher training for all

programming (ABE, ELA, HS 21+, On-Ramp to I-BEST, IEL Civics, and I-BEST) to support career pathways integrated employment and training activities; • Contextualized instruction training centered on the CCR Standards, integrated employability skills, and reading strategies; • Technology in flipped classroom instruction to integrate technology and employability skills development at all levels; • LINCS Adult Numeracy Training to integrate math instruction into ELA pathways and to increase numeracy instructional skills of faculty in order to meet the College and Career Readiness Standard, the new NRS Level descriptors, and to increase outcomes across the system in mathematics; • Innovation in IEL Civics supporting the development of co-enrolled integrated employment and training activities (I-BEST) as well as math at all levels; • Reading Apprenticeship Training to prepare students for college-level instruction; and • Contextualized integrated employability skills training.

2. The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities receiving funds under this title, include: a) 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. Current initiatives include: o Washington's adoption in October of 2014 of the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards as the basis for all instruction. 2014-17 will focus on training to transition from the Washington State Adult Learning Standards to CCR Standards with full implementation in 2017 with system wide professional development provided. o Integrated Digital English Acceleration (I-DEA), which is a hybrid instructional model based on the flipped classroom, providing problem solving activities in technology rich environments. Each student is provided with a laptop computer and 24/7 access to learning. Curriculum including language acquisition, rights and responsibilities of citizens and workforce training is thus available around the clock for ELA levels 1-3. Unlike traditional approaches in which students must learn English before pursuing job-training, I-DEA teaches English in tandem with college and career skills. This program has a highly intensive, quarterly staff training and implementation component in addition to on-going program support from SBCTC. I-DEA will be fully implemented in all programs by June 2016. o Reading Apprenticeship training and implementation, which will continue in Washington State as a strategic instructional model throughout Adult Basic Education and college programming, incorporating the essential components of reading specific to adult learners' needs. o LINCS Adult Numeracy Training, which will be conducted throughout 2014-15 in support of mathematics instruction for increased rigor of programing in order to prepare students for college and career pathways. o Technology and the flipped classroom model training which will begin in 2015 to enhance faculty skills in the use of instructional technology for distance education and student skill development in solving problems in technology rich environments.

b) Assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies o To enhance system efficiencies, Washington conducts trainings through the Blackboard Collaborate system and also offers training to assist staff in the use of Collaborate. o SBCTC also offers training in the online management system, CANVAS for faculty and staff wanting to enhance instruction with technology in the classroom. o A major focus in the next two years is on increasing instruction in problem solving in technology rich environments. Initiatives currently under way that support this work include: o Project I-DEA (Integrated Digital English Acceleration), a three-year pilot program with support from the Gates Foundation that will transform ELA instruction using a flipped classroom model and 50% online instruction o System-wide training on implementing the flipped classroom model significantly increasing access to online learning opportunities.

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.

Assessing the Quality of Providers In addition to the WIOA Common Performance Measures, the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and improvement in, adult education and literacy activities and the dissemination of information about models and proven or promising practices within the state include the following current efforts in Washington: • Quarterly desk monitoring by SBCTC to identify coding issues, system reporting accuracy and progress toward meeting program targets and outcomes. Providers are contacted immediately if any compliance issues are found. A virtual desk review is then scheduled so that appropriate technical assistance can be provided. Follow up continues until issues are resolved. • Bi-annual Data for Program Improvement (DPI) projects by each provider with the results being shared at various venues, e.g. Council for Basic Skills, committee meetings, trainings etc. Annually, providers will be required to include local WDC and one-stop partners in DPI research. • SBCTC conducts program review and technical assistance on-site visits for each provider every four years. Technical assistance is offered during a visit to the extent time allows. Providers receive a detailed letter noting commendations, recommendations, and any findings noted during the visit. Follow up on findings can include another visit by the review team, regular desk audit reviews with the program dean or director, and/or connecting a program to other staff with special program knowledge. • SBCTC provides ongoing technical assistance through the WABERS+ Helpdesk, site visits not related to monitoring, and frequent contact over phone and email. In addition, SBCTC provides several listservs and online collaborative spaces to engage communities of practice and reinforce program quality. SBCTC publishes and maintains thorough documentation of federal, state, and local requirements through its website (www.sbctc.edu) and its applications (e.g. WABERS+). • SBCTC conducts regular fiscal and risk assessment reviews for all funded programs and issues are addressed in a corrective action plan as necessary. • Washington State has established a nationally recognized, comprehensive Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) and performance accountability system comprised of measures to assess the effectiveness of all eligible agencies in achieving continuous improvement in adult education and literacy activities. The Student Achievement Initiative measures levels of performance against the core indicators in the Workforce Investment Act and builds upon the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board Performance Management for Continuous Improvement (PMCI) system. At the conclusion of a review process, any findings require the provider to create a corrective action plan (CAP). Providers submit a CAP for all areas out of compliance and SBCTC will follow up to ensure appropriate resolution. BEdA also encourages providers to consider and adapt program improvement recommendations included in Program Review and Technical Assistance letters.

Finally, prior to awarding funds each federal grant sub-recipient's risk is assessed for compliance with Federal statutes and regulations. SBCTC may take the following steps with a provider that is considered a higher risk to fund: • Add program and fiscal requirements • Schedule more frequent Program Review and Technical Assistance visits • Withhold grant funds until compliance issue(s) resolved • Reduce the grant award • Completely defund a provider

Eligible Agency Performance Measures The primary core indicator for measuring the effectiveness of adult education programs is performance in increasing the basic skills and college and career readiness of participants during each program year. Federal student functioning level criteria are defined in the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). These describe what the basic skills adult learners need to know and be able to do at each Adult Education and English Language

Acquisition (ELA) level. Basic skills providers and WIOA partners use CASAS as the instrument to standardize protocols for accurately and consistently measuring substantive gain within and completion of Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs). Performance measures consist of the core performance indicators that at a minimum measure the following: • Demonstrated improvement in or completion of EFLs in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills. • Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement. • Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

Data is collected and reported through the Washington Adult Basic Education Reporting System (WABERS+). This provides valid, reliable, and consistent data for evaluating performance by all providers. Upon entry into adult education and literacy programs, all basic skills adults participate in orientation and goal-setting and are screened with the CASAS appraisal exam. Students' assessed entry levels are rarely the same for each discrete content area. For reporting purposes, each student's entry competency level is her or his lowest EFL. Local providers document initial placement, substantive gains, achievements, and completions of basic skills EFLs using mandated standard assessment protocols defined in the Washington State Adult Basic Education Assessment Policy. Data on Follow-up Measures (SPLs, HSD/HSE, entered postsecondary education/training, entered employment, and retained employment) as well as wage progression are obtained through data matching and will be available one year or more after an individual student's actual participation in adult education and literacy programs. The Washington State Legislature requires basic skills providers to calculate and report on a quarterly basis "significant and substantive gains" in basic skills EFLs demonstrated by all participants. Significant gains for each program year are defined as either a 5-point score gain for students starting with an initial CASAS assessment score of 210 or below or a 3-point score gain for students starting at a CASAS assessment score of 211 or above. Substantive gains are defined as completion of an EFL, completion of a contextualized learning project, and/or the attainment of skills associated with a subject area within an EFL.

Assessing the Effectiveness of Professional Development The effectiveness of Washington States professional develop activities are comprehensively assessed. The results of the implementation of instructional and curricular actions implemented as a result of trainings are assessed through the monitoring process described above. The trainings themselves are assessed at the: • Local level with individual training assessment tools that record participants' feedback and additional training need. Assessments are then scanned and stored electronically to guide future training needs and improvements; • Program level through in-depth monitoring and TA visits that assess student progression and completion and the implementation of data flow processes and program and curriculum development that support the required and permissible activities; • Program and system levels through the required Data for Program Improvement research projects (DPI) that are developed, executed, and final analysis submitted for every program annually. These are reviewed and technical assistance provided as needed by SBCTC. The DPI requirement ensures that providers assess their programs on an on-going basis and address the needs that arise through the extensive data collection to inform program design and increased student success; • The state level through the required annual, yearend federal reports summited by providers that outline the positive and negative results of the implementation of professional development initiative implemented with leadership funding at the local program level. These reports are reviewed and assessed for quality of programming and data collection and inform the monitoring process; and • The state level, professional development is evaluated and assessed by monitoring the implementation, growth and success of new programming as well as student progression, completion, and transition. SBCTC data and research departments play a critical role in collecting system wide data for assessment and planning.

Optional – Additional Indicators Moving students up in the world – Washington's nationally renowned Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) rewards colleges and approved community-based organization (CBO) providers for moving all students further and faster in college and increasing student success. Providers earn a portion of their funding based on results, not just enrollments. Providers earn points and funding when students reach key academic momentum points, such as significant basic skills gains, attaining a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, finishing college-level math, completing the first year of college, or earning a degree or certificate. The goal is to propel students to and through the "tipping point" – the level of education that means the difference between struggling in a low-wage job and having a viable career. Moving students past basic skills and into college – The new approach recognizes that students who have below high school level math, reading and English language skills have a more challenging educational journey. Under this approach, basic skills students who reach academic milestones will be awarded one point more than other students who reach the same levels. How will momentum points be calculated? Starting in the 2013-2014 school year, points will be awarded each time a college student reaches one of the following momentum points. Financial awards will be distributed in October of 2014. *If the student reaching this momentum point started in basic skills, an additional point will be awarded.

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 **Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Marty Brown**

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 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;

INTRODUCTION

This section has been jointly developed by the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) and Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DSHS/DVR). Included herein are the input and recommendations of the WSRC, provided to DSHS/DVR during FFY 2015, as well as DSHS/DVR's formal responses to each item.

THE WASHINGTON STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

The WSRC met on a quarterly basis during the reporting period. Customer forums were held at each WSRC meeting to obtain direct customer input at the local level. Local DSHS/DVR staff and the DSHS/DVR Director joined each quarterly meeting. The WSRC continues to advise DSHS/DVR on a variety of issues.

SUMMARY OF INPUT & RECOMMENDATIONS

WSRC ITEM ONE

Follow and complete all findings in the 2013 Section 107 Review conducted by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. DVR continues to break federal law with its current placement within the Department of Social and Health Services.

WSRC ITEM TWO

Create an action plan to reduce the Federal carry forward, and report on it to the WSRC at each quarterly meeting.

WSRC ITEM THREE

Increase the role of the WSRC in the State Plan process.

WSRC ITEM FOUR

Create a comprehensive plan for serving all students and youth with disabilities.

WSRC ITEM FIVE

Include the WSRC and Washington Client Assistance Program (CAP) on the upcoming Washington Administrative Code updates.

WSRC ITEM SIX

Have a representative from the WSRC be part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) implementation team.

WSRC ITEM SEVEN

Ensure that customers with behavioral health disabilities have adequate access to supported employment services.

WSRC ITEM EIGHT

Increase WSRC Resource Plan for the part time Executive Assistant position to be a full time staff position.

ADDITIONAL INPUT & RECOMMENDATIONS PROVIDED TO THE DSHS/DVR DIRECTOR

ADDITIONAL INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ITEM A

The WSRC recommends that the intent of WIOA is replicated throughout Washington's workforce development system. The intent of WIOA is to promote long lasting labor market engagement for all. Repeatedly, within WIOA, its draft regulations, and communications from the Departments of Education and Labor, individuals with disabilities are identified as a priority population. The WSRC exhorts DVR and all workforce development partners to mirror the letter and intent of WIOA by addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities and taking actions to improve their employment outcomes.

ADDITIONAL INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ITEM B

The WSRC recommends that DVR revamp their internal training and focus on counseling skills training for counselors, clinical supervision for supervisors, and customer service training for support staff.

ADDITIONAL INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ITEM C

The WSRC recommends that DVR address the need for additional resources for benefits planning and assistive technology services required in WIOA. Within WIOA, benefits planning and assistive technology services are emphasized. The agency needs to create a plan to address these required services.

ADDITIONAL INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ITEM D

DSHS/DVR's case management software and IT platform continue to lag behind other states. In order to better serve customers and provide an efficient and useful platform for staff, DSHS/DVR needs to overhaul its technology and business infrastructure.

SUMMARY OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION

WSRC SUMMARY

The WSRC and DSHS/DVR leadership both value learning from and using customers' experiences to shape decision making. The WSRC has decided to enhance its gathering of consumer satisfaction information by transforming how it will conduct its Customer Satisfaction Survey. This process will change from a survey conducted once every three years to an ongoing monthly survey of customers in all stages of DSHS/DVR services.

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE

DSHS/DVR appreciates the WSRC's focus on customer satisfaction and strongly supports their decision to conduct customer surveys on a monthly basis. This will provide useful and substantial information on which to base more timely service delivery improvements.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

DSHS/DVR RESPONSES TO INPUT & RECOMMENDATIONS

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE TO WSRC ITEM ONE

DSHS/DVR responded to all findings in the 2013 Section 107 Review conducted by RSA and received notice in January 2015 from RSA that all of our required corrective action plans had been completed and approved, including DSHS/DVR's current organizational placement within the Department of Social and Health Services. RSA will be monitoring the corrective action plans to see if they address and resolve the audit findings.

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE TO WSRC ITEM TWO

DSHS/DVR did not implement this recommendation. In light of projected state budget forecasts for the 2017-2019 biennium which predict a decline in state revenues, the decision was made to retain federal carry forward funds to offset any potential reduction in DSHS/DVR's state match.

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE TO WSRC ITEM THREE

DSHS/DVR implemented this recommendation. The WSRC Executive Director has been actively involved in development of the 2017-2020 VR State Plan goals, priorities and strategies, as well as development of the WIOA Combined State Plan. DSHS/DVR is committed to keeping the WSRC fully engaged in all facets of the WIOA Combined State Plan and its VR portion. The WSRC is an active co-sponsor with DSHS/DVR in collect statewide public comment on the draft VR State Plan.

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE TO WSRC ITEM FOUR

DSHS/DVR is developing a comprehensive plan for serving students and youth with disabilities, including the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities, that will be included in the 2017-2020 VR State Plan.

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE TO WSRC ITEM FIVE

DSHS/DVR has and will continue keeping the WSRC and CAP well informed of proposed revisions to WAC 388-891, Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Individuals with Disabilities. DSHS/DVR will continue meeting with WSRC and CAP to review and edit proposed revisions before they are finalized for public comment.

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE TO WSRC ITEM SIX

DSHS/DVR invited the WSRC Executive Director to be a member of our Rehabilitation Act Steering Committee that is developing overall recommendations for WIOA implementation; the Executive Director played an active and significant role on the committee. In addition, DSHS/DVR facilitated the WSRC Executive Director's appointment to the statewide writing team that is composing the Combined State Plan.

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE TO WSRC ITEM SEVEN

DSHS/DVR strongly supports this recommendation and is working toward this goal. However, it is beyond the scope of DSHS/DVR's role to ensure that customers with behavioral health disabilities have adequate access to supported employment services, as DSHS/DVR does not control the availability of extended services for this population. It is within the domain of the DSHS Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DSHS/DBHR) and Regional Support Networks (RSNs) to ensure that adequate resources are available to fund extended services for individuals with behavioral health disabilities who require supported employment. DSHS/DBHR, together with the DSHS Adult and Long Term Services Administration and the state Medicaid Agency, have requested a Medicaid waiver to fund supported employment extended services. If approve, this waiver will significantly increase the availability of extended services for DSHS/DVR customers. DSHS/DVR was involved in the development of this waiver request and strongly supports its approval.

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE TO WSRC ITEM EIGHT

DSHS/DVR implemented this recommendation.

DSHS/DVR RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL INPUT & RECOMMENDATIONS

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE TO ITEM A

DSHS/DVR strongly supports this input and has taken a leadership role in statewide development of the WIOA Combined State Plan to assure the needs of individuals with disabilities are given substantive and meaningful attention. DSHS/DVR facilitated inclusion of the WSRC Executive Director as a member of the WIOA Combined State Plan writing team so that a strong advocate voice for individuals with disabilities will be heard.

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE TO ITEM B

DSHS/DVR is implementing this recommendation, as described in the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development section of this plan.

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE TO ITEM C

DSHS/DVR will be implementing this recommendation and will announce its plan in early calendar year 2016.

DSHS/DVR RESPONSE TO ITEM D

DSHS/DVR will take this input under consideration in evaluating the efficiency and usefulness of existing case management software during the coming year.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

DSHS/DVR has taken substantive action on all recommendations and input provided by the WSRC. Of the items presented by the WSRC in this State Plan, WSRC Item Two was not implemented by DSHS/DVR due to predicted state revenue declines identified in budget forecasts for the 2017 - 2019 state biennium.

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;

DSHS/DVR is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

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;

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (WDVA)

DSHS/DVR and WDVA have procedures for referring DSHS/DVR customers with military service to WDVA to determine eligibility for any state or federal Veterans' benefits. This collaboration has increased the use of Veterans' benefits as comparable services for DSHS/DVR customers who are veterans with disabilities.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (USDVA)

DSHS/DVR has a cooperative agreement with the regional USDVA Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) and its regional offices to facilitate improved service delivery for customers receiving USDVA benefits by formalizing referral procedures, designating local referral liaisons, and coordinating services that contribute to the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL & HEALTH SERVICES

DSHS administers a wide range of programs which include, but are not limited to, Medicaid services, substance abuse recovery, long term care and disability services, children's services, economic assistance services, and juvenile justice services. DSHS/DVR continues close collaboration throughout DSHS.

DSHS COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION (CSD)

CSD administers the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program, Aged, Blind, Disabled (ABD) Program (formerly known as the General Assistance - Unemployable (GAU) Program), Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) Program, and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) Program. These programs provide time-limited income assistance and other support services to low-income families and individuals. Washington DSHS/DVR continues to have an interagency agreement with the CSD that defines mutual roles and practices for serving joint customers.

DSHS DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY (DBHR)

DBHR combines the former Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, referred to as DBHR - Chemical Dependency (DBHR-CD), with the Mental Health Division, referred to as DBHR - Mental Health (DBHR-MH). DBHR-CD contracts with counties to deliver outpatient chemical dependency treatment and directly contracts for residential treatment services. DBHR-MH contracts with regional entities for the delivery of community mental health services and directly operates two state psychiatric hospitals.

- DSHS/DVR maintains active referral relationships with treatment providers at the local level that are funded through DBHR-CD contracts with each county.
- DSHS/DVR and DBHR-MH have signed a memorandum of collaboration that establishes methods for Medicaid outpatient behavioral health services to be provided as extended services for joint DSHS/DVR supported employment customers.
- DBHR-MH has become a Ticket-to-Work (TTW) Employment Network and is establishing a Partnership Plus Agreement with DSHS/DVR to build a revenue stream from the TTW Program that will fund extended services for those mental health customers who require a supported employment model.
- DSHS/DVR is participating with DBHR-MH in conducting a pilot project at two locations that is designed to integrate the Individual Placement Support (IPS) model of supported employment with DSHS/DVR supported employment services.
- DSHS/DVR has assigned liaison counselors that work itinerantly from several Mental Health agencies across the state. The counselor works from the mental health center approximately one day per week, facilitating access to DSHS/DVR services for mental health consumers.

DSHS DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION (DDA)

DDA is the primary agency that funds extended services for individuals with developmental disabilities who require supported employment. DDA contracts for these services with Washington counties, and counties sub-contract with employment service providers to provide extended services to DSHS/DVR customers.

- DSHS/DVR and DDA leadership meet on a regular basis, and are co-sponsoring several initiatives aimed at improving employment outcomes for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities and advancing the skills of employment service providers and community rehabilitation programs that serve joint DSHS/DVR and DDA customers.
- DSHS/DVR is represented as a member of the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council.

DSHS AGING AND LONG TERM SUPPORT ADMINISTRATION (ALTSA)

ALTSA provides long-term care through personal care attendant services, Kinship Care, Roads to Community Living, “money follows the person” policies, New Freedom Services, the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Council, and the Title V Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP). DSHS/DVR and ALTSA will develop a cooperative agreement for serving joint customers.

DSHS JUVENILE REHABILITATION (JR)

JR provides rehabilitative services to justice-involved youth. DSHS/DVR and JR have a cooperative agreement to jointly serve JR youth who are eligible for Pre-employment Transition Services and other DSHS/DVR services. Through coordinated services, JR youth with disabilities will receive services supporting community re-entry along career pathways.

DSHS OFFICE OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING (ODHH)

ODHH coordinates with DSHS/DVR’s Statewide Deaf Services Coordinator on multiple projects including accessibility and accommodations for DSHS/DVR customers. ODHH manages the Sign Language Interpreter Contract and values feedback from all sources to improve the quality of

interpreter services. ODHH is the managing agency for DSHS/DVR's contract for Video Relay System (VRS) and Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) technologies. DSHS/DVR is represented on the ODHH Advisory Committee.

STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGES

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) oversees the operation of thirty-nine Community and Technical Colleges across the state. DSHS/DVR will develop cooperative agreements with SBCTC programs authorized, and not authorized, by WIOA to jointly serve students with disabilities who require VR services to achieve competitive employment outcomes.

HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

The Health Care Authority (HCA) administers Medicaid services to all DSHS/DVR customer recipients. DSHS/DVR and HCA closely coordinate to assure that individuals receive medical and behavioral health services necessary to achieve their employment goals. In addition, DSHS/DVR is working to develop a cooperative agreement with HCA, DBHR, and DDA that describes how Title 19 services under the State Medicaid Plan, including community-based waiver programs, will be utilized to develop and support integrated, community-based employment opportunities for customers.

HCA also administers Health Care for Workers with Disabilities (HWD), a Medicaid buy-in program. DSHS/DVR coordinates with HWD to assist qualified individuals in continuing to receive medical benefits after they become employed.

TRIBAL PROGRAMS

DSHS/DVR and the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) have a joint memorandum of understanding with Washington's eight Tribal 121 programs. This joint memorandum outlines how all partners will ensure effective communication, collaboration, coordination, and cooperation in serving individuals with disabilities who are tribal members in Washington. The agreement, updated on an annual basis, outlines procedures for referrals, joint cases, financial responsibility, shared training opportunities, information sharing, and communication. Tribal 121 directors meet annually with DSHS/DVR and DSB directors in a government-to-government collaboration to promote partnership, maximize resources, and ensure high service quality.

Through DSHS, DSHS/DVR continues its cooperative working relationships and service delivery commitments with all federally recognized tribes in Washington, including those that do not operate federally funded Tribal VR programs. DSHS/DVR participates as a member on the DSHS Indian Policy Advisory Committee. This includes annual and quarterly meetings to review our partnership and identify service delivery improvements for individuals with disabilities who are members of federally recognized tribes as well as those who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native.

GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ISSUES AND EMPLOYMENT (GCDE)

The DSHS/DVR Director participates as a member of the GCDE and partners with committee members on initiatives.

CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

DSHS/DVR currently contracts Title VII, Part B funds to four independent living centers statewide. These centers use Part B funds to enhance and expand core independent living services with a focus on youth with significant disabilities. In addition to core services, independent living centers have been focusing on outreach to increase services in unserved or underserved geographic areas. Additional outreach efforts include targeted disability groups, minority groups, and urban or rural populations with the focus on youth with significant disabilities and 504 plans. The goal is to create a safe environment for youth with disabilities in which youth feel comfortable and confident when talking to allies. This goal will be accomplished by enhancing youth understanding of independent living philosophy, successful self-advocacy, and how engage with legislators about disability issues.

WASHINGTON WORKFORCE ASSOCIATION

The Washington Workforce Association (WWA) is a nonprofit, non-partisan membership organization comprised of Washington's twelve LWDBs. The WWA partners with state, regional, and national organizations advocating for a coordinated and fully funded workforce development system focused on the needs of job seekers and businesses. To coordinate and align workforce development services at the local level, DSHS/DVR and the WWA have created and signed a *Shared Vision, Values, & Principles of Collaboration* document which outlines how DSHS/DVR and LWDBs will provide integrated services to individuals with disabilities in Washington's One-Stop Centers.

ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES - DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The Association of County Human Services - Developmental Disabilities (ACHS-DD) is a nonprofit, non-partisan membership organization of the thirty nine County Developmental Disabilities (CDD) Coordinators across the state who contract with DSHS/DDA to deliver residential, employment and other services to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. DSHS/DVR will collaborate with ACHS-DD to initiate cooperative agreements for the provision of supported employment extended services with each CDD program.

WASHINGTON STATE BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK (WSBLN)

The WSBLN is a network of employers who educate and support businesses to hire, retain, and improve customer service for people with disabilities.

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT ALLIANCE

The Community Employment Alliance is a membership organization comprised of CRPs. DSHS/DVR participates in meetings to share information, hear concerns and collaborate on issues affecting employment services.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ADVISORY COUNCIL

In the late 1990s, DSHS/DVR was the primary sponsor of a demonstration grant to identify gaps in providing services to individuals who sustained a traumatic brain injury (TBI). DSHS/DVR continues to be a represented member of the TBI Strategic Partnership Advisory Council. This group discusses TBI-related policy issues, system development, and the need for services to meet the needs of TBI

survivors, family members, prospective employers, and community members. The TBI Strategic Partnership Advisory Council has identified gaps in housing, a lack of resources, and a need for support group facilitator training. This Council has successfully encouraged the Washington State Legislature to pass legislation that adds fees to specific traffic violations (e.g. negligent driving and speeding) which correlate with increased risk of injury accidents and TBIs. These collected fees are used to help fund TBI-related programs and resources. DSHS/DVR continues to be an active partner in addressing the needs of individuals who have been, or will be affected by, traumatic brain injuries.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Since 2006, DSHS/DVR and the University of Washington Rehabilitation Medicine Unit have collaborated to maintain an on-site Rehabilitation Medicine-DSHS/DVR liaison role. This mutually beneficial relationship improves inpatient and outpatient care at the University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) by providing UWMC patients with direct access to DSHS/DVR services during their hospital treatment. The UWMC is designated as the only regional rehabilitation medicine center in the Pacific Northwest for the treatment of spinal cord injuries and other severe disabling medical conditions. Early introduction in the medical setting provides DSHS/DVR with comprehensive insight into patient needs and makes the referral process more efficient. This relationship provides UWMC patients with additional resources for education, support, and funding. The DSHS/DVR liaison works to coordinate DSHS/DVR orientation and intake procedures for individuals referred from UW Rehab Medicine; determines eligibility for DSHS/DVR services; provides information and referral; participates in UWMC team staffing to coordinate DSHS/DVR services with the interdisciplinary team treatment; upon release from the hospital, assists with transitioning the individual to a VR Counselor near their home; learns about extensive medical and other resources available through the UW Medical School; and shares resources with other DSHS/DVR counselors.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

DSHS/DVR does not have a formal written agreement with the Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP), the state program carrying out activities under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. However, DSHS/DVR does maintain a close collaborative relationship with WATAP, which includes DSHS/DVR representation on WATAP's Advisory Council.

DSHS/DVR customers will continue to have access to assistive technology devices, services, and consultations. DSHS/DVR counselors will assess whether assistive technology (AT) services or devices are needed to address all customers' barriers to employment as part of DSHS/DVR's standardized vocational assessment process. Three full-time Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioners (ATAPs) will continue to provide customers with specialized AT assessments, consult with staff and customers regarding a full spectrum of AT services and products, coordinate service delivery with AT vendors, and disseminate information and resources about advancements in AT devices.

To ensure that DSHS/DVR staff are informed of ongoing developments in the AT field, assistive and rehabilitative technology will continue to be a core focus of the redesigned DSHS/DVR Rehabilitation Academy curriculum.

DSHS/DVR will monitor AT service delivery in compliance with new WIOA requirements. In addition, DSHS/DVR will renew its commitment to being an organizational role model in effective utilization of

AT as accommodations for individuals with disabilities including, but not limited to, individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing and individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

DSHS/DVR has not entered into agreements with programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

DSHS/DVR has not entered into cooperative agreements with noneducational entities not carrying out activities under the state workforce development system who serve out-of-school youth.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

DSHS/DVR has not entered into state use contracts agreements.

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.

INTRODUCTION

The 2014 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 profoundly enhance expectations for coordination between DSHS/DVR and education officials to provide early job exploration and work-based learning opportunities for secondary students with disabilities.

DSHS/DVR has developed a long-range plan to develop and strengthen the education-vocational rehabilitation infrastructure for the coming four years.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

With the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) mandate that state vocational rehabilitation programs allocate 15% of federal funds to provide five required Pre-employment Transition Services (PETS) to all students with disabilities, it is imperative that DSHS/DVR develops a strategic, thoughtful, and intentional plan to meet the needs of secondary students with disabilities statewide. These five required activities include 1) job exploration; 2) information regarding post-secondary opportunities at institutions of higher education; 3) self-advocacy instruction; 4) work readiness training; and 5) work-based learning.

The draft Codes of Federal Regulations (CFRs) have expanded the population of students who receive services from DSHS/DVR. Secondary students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans who receive PETS may be either eligible for DSHS/DVR services or potentially eligible for services. PETS are provided as generalized services to groups of eligible or potentially eligible students with disabilities, or as individualized and intensive services for students with higher support needs.

Previously, DSHS/DVR has recommended that students engage services in their second-to-last or last year of high school. WIOA draft CFRs specifically note that services may begin as early as age 14, if students have transition IEPs. While not all students receiving PETS will apply for DSHS/DVR services, early engagement is expected and encouraged.

Students with higher support needs may apply for DSHS/DVR services and receive PETS on an individualized basis. These students are able to receive PETS in services to groups while concurrently receiving individualized services from DSHS/DVR. Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) for students and youth with disabilities may include projected or generally described employment goals.

COORDINATED SERVICES FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH: GOALS & OBJECTIVES

STRENGTHEN AND ENHANCE THE DSHS/DVR AND EDUCATION AGENCY PARTNERSHIP AT STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS SO THAT STUDENTS RECEIVE A SEAMLESS CONTINUUM OF TRANSITION SERVICES.

- Work with the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to include guidelines and expectations for coordinating the provision of PETS and other transition services.
- Update DSHS/DVR's Memorandum of Understanding with OSPI to include definitive federal guidance regarding the provision of PETS and required coordination with education entities.
- Develop memoranda of understanding for transition services with local education agencies, through Washington's nine Educational Service Districts, which includes delineation of respective roles and responsibilities, including the financial responsibilities, of each entity.
- Provide vocational rehabilitation training and technical assistance to local education agency teachers and staff regarding post-school transition planning.

Partnership with the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS) will strengthen DSHS/DVR's partnerships with education agencies. DSHS/DVR-CCTS partnership activities include:

- Establish interagency transition councils in each Educational Service District that include local DSHS/DVR and educational staff and community partners.
- Develop pilot transition projects in each Educational Service District.
- Develop and provide individual online education portfolios that provide updated educational and employment progress for students.
- Provide training and technical assistance to DSHS/DVR staff, teachers, and community partners.
- Provide gap analysis and outcome data regarding coordinated services between DSHS/DVR and local education agencies.
- Partner with education and community partners to present a yearly statewide transition conference, beginning in 2017, that is focused on services to all students with disabilities.

INCREASE STUDENT ACCESS TO GROUP AND INDIVIDUALIZED TRANSITION SERVICES FROM DSHS/DVR.

- Assign DSHS/DVR counselors and staff as liaisons to individual schools, and provide training and technical assistance to staff in building and maintaining established presence in schools.
- Provide DSHS/DVR Student and Youth Transition Handbooks to students, families, teachers, and community partners.
- Develop interagency agreements and service contracts with organizations to provide group-based PETS.
- Develop statewide PETS provision agreements with higher education, including building PETS programs in partnerships with trades and technical schools, community colleges, and four-year universities.
- Develop and maintain a DSHS/DVR student transition website that provides information for students and their families, DSHS/DVR staff, and school personnel.
- Provide ongoing transition best practices guidance, training and technical assistance to DVR supervisors, counselors, and staff. Guidance will include policy regarding ensuring that

student access to individualized services is provided in a simple and engaging manner, that students may be served earlier than the second to last or last year of high school in order for them to more adequately prepare for post-secondary employment, and that summer work-based learning experiences are provided for students as part of PETS.

- Increase outreach to students in traditionally unserved and underserved disability populations, including those with 504 plans, those with emotional-behavioral challenges, students who are deaf or hearing, those who have specific learning disabilities, as well as other disability populations who often do not receive services. Outreach activities include media, opportunities for participation in group-based PETS activities, individual outreach at schools, DVR relationship building and coordination with education officials, presentations and career fairs for students, youth, families, schools, and community partners.
- Increase outreach to students in traditionally unserved and underserved populations that include tribal youth, justice-involved youth, homeless youth, and students and youth receiving foster care. Outreach activities include media, opportunities for participation in group-based PETS activities, individual outreach at schools, DSHS/DVR relationship building and coordination with education officials, presentations and career fairs for students, youth, families, schools, and community partners.
- Solicit proposals for Project Search development, and became a funding partner with current Project Search programs in Washington State that serve students with disabilities.
- Strengthen DSHS/DVR participation in current School-to-Work programs statewide by providing increased training and technical assistance for School-to-Work partners, including earlier DVR input into assessment and employment planning for students.
- Contract with Centers for Independent Living to enhance and expand core independent living services, focusing on youth with significant disabilities. In addition to core services, Centers for Independent Living have been focusing on outreach to increase services in unserved or underserved geographic areas. Additional outreach efforts include targeted disability groups, minority groups, and urban or rural populations with the focus on youth with significant disabilities and 504 plans. The goal is to create a safe environment in which youth feel comfortable and confident when talking to allies. This goal will be accomplished by enhancing youth understanding of the Independent Living philosophy, successful self-advocacy, and how engage with legislators about disability issues.

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;

CONSULTATION WITH EDUCATION

As part of the current formal interagency agreement between DSHS/DVR and OSPI, DSHS/DVR consults with and provides technical assistance to staff at secondary schools and local educational agencies in transition planning for students with disabilities from school to post-school activities.

DSHS/DVR is currently partnering with the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS) to both revise the existing DSHS/DVR-OSPI agreement and develop new memoranda of understanding with local education agencies. These agreements will define partners' roles in pre-employment transition

services, collaborative training activities, and consultation and technical assistance which supports educational agencies in transition planning for students with disabilities.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

DSHS/DVR AND INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS

DSHS/DVR has designated counselor liaisons which work closely with local education agencies statewide; every high school in Washington has a designated DSHS/DVR counselor liaison, including tribally operated secondary schools. DSHS/DVR liaisons maintain close collaborative relationships with students, families, educators, and stakeholders. Their activities include, but are not limited to:

- Ongoing consultation in the development of transition IEPs
- Coordination of IPE and IEP services for students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services
- Training and outreach events with students, families, and other stakeholders
- Dissemination of informational materials, such as the DVR Transition Handbook

Develop memoranda of understanding with local education agencies which define the roles and responsibilities of both parties jointly serving students and youth with disabilities. These agreements will include steps to improve referral linkages for IEP and 504 students, guidelines concerning the provision of pre-employment transition services, and the roles of DSHS/DVR staff in the development of IEPs.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND PERSONNEL

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

DSHS/DVR provides any financial resources and services needed to establish eligibility for students and youth with disabilities. In addition, funds are made available for students' activities primarily related to employment and pre-employment transition services. Activities primarily related to education are funded by educational agencies.

PERSONNEL

DSHS/DVR, OSPI, and local education agencies maintain lists of DSHS/DVR liaisons on public-facing web sites. DSHS/DVR liaison counselors conduct outreach and ongoing consultation to teachers, students, families, and stakeholders.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

OUTREACH AND IDENTIFICATION ACTIVITIES

The current agreement between DSHS/DVR and OSPI identifies outreach activities to increase the number of students with disabilities who engage in DSHS/DVR services. In addition, this agreement specifies that DSHS/DVR services should be available to all students with transition IEPs well before students prepare to exit secondary education.

Outreach and engagement activities include:

- An OSPI representative is a member of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council
- DSHS/DVR counselors are assigned as liaisons to each high school in the state
- DSHS/DVR and OSPI share training and information materials for cross–program professional development
- DSHS/DVR provides outreach and education about DSHS/DVR services to underserved populations, including students with disabilities

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.

INTRODUCTION

This section describes how DSHS/DVR contracts with private vocational rehabilitation (VR) service providers, Washington's Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), as well as the services these partners provide.

CRP CONTRACT & SERVICES

DSHS/DVR contracts with CRPs to provide assessment, placement, retention, and training services. The majority of CRPs are private nonprofit providers. However, in some instances, the CRP contract is with a government organization or private, for-profit businesses.

The State of Washington requires contracts, in lieu of cooperative agreements, for the purpose of procuring goods and services. These contracts meet requirements specified within CFR 361.31. DSHS/DVR's CRP contract is procured through an open Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process and is renewed every two years. The RFQ defines the services, expected outcomes of service delivery, payment systems, uniform fees, and the qualifications prospective contractors must meet to be granted a CRP contract. DSHS/DVR does not currently limit the number of contractors who may respond to the RFQ and contractors choose which of the contracted services they provide. Currently, approximately 110 organizations have a CRP contract with DSHS/DVR.

The following service are defined, and provided to DSHS/DVR customers through, the CRP contract:

- Vocational Evaluation: Customers participate in one or more types of standardized vocational tests used to obtain objective information requested by a DSHS/DVR counselor regarding work-related strengths and limitations.
- Trial Work Experience: Customers' ability to benefit from DSHS/DVR services is assessed in a real work setting(s) arranged by the contractor. Results are used to determine eligibility based on clear and convincing evidence whether the individual's disability is too significant to benefit from services.
- Community Based Assessment: Customers' work interests, abilities, and employment barriers are assessed in realistic work settings arranged by the contractor. These assessments collect information and help identify the nature and extent of supports or accommodations needed for the customer to obtain and maintain competitive employment.
- Job Placement: Customers are placed into paid and integrated employment, arranged by the contractor, through mutual agreement between the DSHS/DVR counselor, customer, and contractor.
- Intensive Training (Supported Employment): Customers attain job stabilization with job supports, meet their employers' expected levels of work productivity, and transition to long-term Extended Services provided by an entity other than DSHS/DVR through one-on-one job skills training and support provided at the supported employment job site by the contractor.
- Job Retention: Customers learn the essential functions of a job, meet the employer's expected level of performance, and retain employment for ninety calendar days after placement through individualized training and support services provided by the contractor.

- Off-Site Psycho-Social Job Support Services: Customers who have not disclosed their disabilities to their employers or customers whose employers prohibit access to the worksite receive regular therapeutic interaction. Off-Site Psycho-Social Job Support Services enables customers to maintain satisfactory job performance and successful interactions with others at the workplace.
- Pre-employment Transition Services: Students with disabilities participate in individualized and group services coordinated with their schools. These services include 1) job exploration; 2) information regarding post-secondary opportunities at institutions of higher education; 3) self-advocacy instruction; 4) work readiness training; and 5) work-based learning.

Trial Work Experience, Community Based Assessment, Job Placement, Intensive Training, and Job Retention are available at three levels of intensity. Customers' universal and unique barriers determine which intensity level, and commensurate support level, is needed.

All contracted service payments are outcome based; delivery of the expected result or outcome is required to receive payment. The expected outcome is specific to the service as indicated in the definition with a report detailing the activities associated with the provision of service and outcomes attained. Bonus payment incentives for employment outcomes under certain circumstances (e.g. employment which offers health insurance) are included in the contract.

COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

DSHS/DVR will establish a workgroup of DSHS/DVR and CRP staff. This workgroup will collaborate of a series of initiatives which will improve service quality, promote better outcomes, and improve DSHS/DVR and CRP partnerships.

Workgroup Initiatives:

1. Review the current contract model to determine needed improvements or modifications.

2. Develop an evaluation tool to assess CRP performance and service quality.

3. Complete, publish, and disseminate the CRP Cost Study, collaborative research conducted by the University of Washington Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER) and DSHS/DVR, and use results to inform future contracts and fee structures.

4. Develop and provide training for DSHS/DVR and CRP staff to promote effective collaboration, CRP staff retention, and shared best practice service methodologies.

5. Disseminate best practice guidance to DSHS/DVR staff regarding communication and collaboration with local CRPs.

In the FFY 2015 DSHS/DVR State Plan, DSHS/DVR targeted quarterly local-level meetings between CRPs and office-level DSHS/DVR staff. These quarterly meetings were implemented statewide and both DSHS/DVR and CRP staff report that these meetings have strengthened partnerships and improved service coordination. Therefore, DSHS/DVR will continue to conduct these mandatory quarterly meetings and will continue to foster strengthening local-level partnerships.

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.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PARTNERS & AGREEMENTS

DSHS/DVR primarily provides supported employment services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and individuals with mental health disabilities. Of these two customer groups, individuals with developmental disabilities represent the majority of supported employment outcomes.

DSHS/DVR's success in serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is based on a long-standing relationship with the DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration (DSHS/DDA). DSHS/DDA is committed to funding extended services for all of its clients who achieve a supported employment outcome through DSHS/DVR.

Substantial resource reductions within the DSHS Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery - Mental Health (DBHR-MH), DSHS/DVR's supported employment partner for customers with mental health disabilities, has limited State capacity to provide extended services to this population. Diligent efforts continue to address these reductions. DSHS/DVR continues its collaboration with DBHR-MR, the Mental Health Employment Consortium, and the Washington Community Mental Health Council to expand the availability of extended services through alternative resources and innovative approaches. These efforts intend to establish cooperative agreements with all Behavioral Health Organizations (BHOs) responsible for county-level delivery of community mental health services.

DSHS/DVR continues to promote the use of Ticket to Work as a potential income source for developmental disability, mental health, and traumatic brain injury service providers to build their capacity for providing extended support services.

During the 2017 - 2020 planning cycle, DSHS/DVR will collaborate with DBHR-MH to leverage the strong state-level partnership to facilitate local-level agreement development. In addition, DSHS/DVR will collaborate with the DSHS Aging and Long Term Support Administration to explore funding of extended services to be provided for individuals with traumatic brain injuries and other significant disabilities who require supported employment.

Many individuals with disabilities would benefit from supported employment, yet do not have access to a long term funding source for extended services. In response, DSHS/DVR has encouraged supported employment providers to focus on developing natural supports within customers' workplaces.

DSHS/DVR strategies for expanding the availability of supported employment services:

- Participate in an interagency service committee which supports initiatives and increased employment outcomes for persons living with developmental disabilities, mental health disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and traumatic brain injuries.
- Train staff and partners on Social Security Work Incentives, Plan to Achieve Self Sufficiency, and other work incentives to identify optional funding sources.
- Provide technical assistance on the use of natural supports in the workplace.
- Coordinate cross-program training opportunities on innovative supported employment strategies.

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

INTRODUCTION

This section describes DSHS/DVR's contributions to coordinated business engagement activities. DSHS/DVR and its workforce development partners will embrace a dual–customer model, serving both Washington's businesses and Washingtonians living with disabilities.

Businesses will have unprecedented access to talented and highly skilled job seekers with disabilities, while enjoying DSHS/DVR's training and technical assistance supports. Concurrently, DSHS/DVR and its partners will provide Washingtonians living with disabilities with the full breadth of state–of–the–art rehabilitation, training, and employment services needed to thrive in Washington's workplaces and communities.

This dual–customer model will close skill gaps for businesses, promote the economic self–sufficiency of Washingtonians living with disabilities, and contribute to a more prosperous Washington.

BUSINESSES & VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

In coordination with workforce development partners at the state and local level, DSHS/DVR establishes the following business engagement objectives for 2017 – 2020:

- Engage in the development and implementation of coordinated business engagement, industry sector strategies, and career pathways programs.
- Utilize DSHS/DVR Business Specialists to assist with the recruitment and referral of qualified job seekers with disabilities to meet businesses' demands.
- Lead coordinated LWDB engagement of federal contractors and subcontractors, linking these contractors to skilled job seekers with disabilities.
- Increase visibility through a methodical outreach and marketing plan which includes participation in local boards of commerce, membership in professional organizations, representation at career and recruitment fairs, and the provision of training services.
- Support and expand innovative partnerships, such as Microsoft's Specialisterne Project, which partners DSHS/DVR and Washington's businesses to promote the hiring of individuals with disabilities in high–skill and high–demand occupations.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

BUSINESSES & TRANSITION SERVICES

Pre-employment transition services provide value to both students and businesses. In the dual-customer model, pre-employment transition services will engage Washington's businesses in

actively molding the future workforce. By exposing students with disabilities to hands-on and realistic work experiences, these students will enter the workforce well-prepared to meet business' skill needs and expectations. As a result, business will experience higher productivity, better engagement, and reduced turnover.

DSHS/DVR will collaborate with its workforce development, education, and community partners to:

- Build relationships with businesses who will work with students and youth by developing internships and on-the-job training programs.
- Develop business training and outreach materials which address hiring youth and students with disabilities.
- Promote the development and expansion of on-site job exploration and internship programs, such as Project Search, statewide.
- Partner with businesses, leveraging pre-employment experiences to prepare youth for the realities and expectations of the 21st Century workplace.

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;

HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

The Health Care Authority (HCA) administers Medicaid services to all DSHS/DVR customer recipients. DSHS/DVR and HCA closely coordinate to assure that individuals receive medical and behavioral health services necessary to achieve their employment goals. In addition, DSHS/DVR is working to develop a cooperative agreement with HCA, DBHR, and DDA that describes how Title 19 services under the State Medicaid Plan, including community-based waiver programs, will be utilized to develop and support integrated, community-based employment opportunities for customers.

HCA also administers Health Care for Workers with Disabilities (HWD), a Medicaid buy-in program. DSHS/DVR coordinates with HWD to assist qualified individuals in continuing to receive medical benefits after they become employed.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

DSHS DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADMINISTRATION (DDA)

DDA is the primary agency that funds extended services for individuals with developmental disabilities who require supported employment. DDA contracts for these services with Washington counties, and counties sub-contract with employment service providers to provide extended services to DSHS/DVR customers.

- DSHS/DVR and DDA leadership meet on a regular basis, and are co-sponsoring several initiatives aimed at improving employment outcomes for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities and advancing the skills of employment service providers and community rehabilitation programs that serve joint DSHS/DVR and DDA customers.
- DSHS/DVR is represented as a member of the Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

DSHS DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND RECOVERY (DBHR)

DBHR combines the former Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, referred to as DBHR - Chemical Dependency (DBHR-CD), with the Mental Health Division, referred to as DBHR - Mental Health (DBHR-MH). DBHR-CD contracts with counties to deliver outpatient chemical dependency treatment and directly contracts for residential treatment services. DBHR-MH contracts with regional entities for the delivery of community mental health services and directly operates two state psychiatric hospitals.

- DSHS/DVR maintains active referral relationships with treatment providers at the local level that are funded through DBHR-CD contracts with each county.
- DSHS/DVR and DBHR-MH have signed a memorandum of collaboration that establishes methods for Medicaid outpatient behavioral health services to be provided as extended services for joint DSHS/DVR supported employment customers.
- DBHR-MH has become a Ticket-to-Work (TTW) Employment Network and is establishing a Partnership Plus Agreement with DSHS/DVR to build a revenue stream from the TTW Program that will fund extended services for those mental health customers who require a supported employment model.
- DSHS/DVR is participating with DBHR-MH in conducting a pilot project at two locations that is designed to integrate the Individual Placement Support (IPS) model of supported employment with DSHS/DVR supported employment services.
- DSHS/DVR has assigned liaison counselors that work itinerantly from several Mental Health agencies across the state. The counselor works from the mental health center approximately one day per week, facilitating access to DSHS/DVR services for mental health consumers.

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;

PERSONNEL DATA

DSHS/DVR employs a total of 253 field service personnel to serve approximately 20,000 individuals per year. Personnel providing direct services to customers are employed in eight distinct classifications. DSHS/DVR's direct service personnel are chiefly comprised of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) and Rehabilitation Technicians (RTs), representing DSHS/DVR's professional and paraprofessional personnel, respectively.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

PERSONNEL DATA & VACANCIES

DSHS/DVR Personnel Levels and Vacancies by Classification, December 1, 2015

Classification	Personnel	Vacancies
VRC 1	14	7
VRC 2	48	7
VRC 3	56	2
VRC 4	5	0
RT 1	75	3
RT 2 (18 Business Specialists)	21	3
Supervisor	23	1
Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioner	2	1

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.

PERSONNEL DATA & 2016 – 2020 PROJECTIONS

DSHS/DVR Projected New Staff Needs by Personnel Classification, 2016 – 2020

Personnel Classification	Projected New Staff, 2016 – 2020
VRC 1	6
VRC 2	23
VRC 3	28
VRC 4	3
RT 1	33
RT 2	10
Supervisor	11
Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioner	1

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;

HIGHER EDUCATION VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

Western Washington University (WWU) offers the only graduate program in Washington that directly prepares vocational rehabilitation professionals. Currently 37 students are enrolled in the Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling program. In FFY 2015, 19 graduates completed this program and attained the credentials for certification as a rehabilitation counselor.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

WWU Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling Participants and Sponsorships, FFY 2015

Students Enrolled	37
DSHS/DVR Sponsored	0
RSA Sponsored	3
Graduates	19
DSHS/DVR Sponsored	0
RSA Sponsored	9

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.

WWU Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling Participants and Sponsorships, FFY 2015

Students Enrolled	37

Students Enrolled	37
DSHS/DVR Sponsored	0
RSA Sponsored	3
Graduates	19
DSHS/DVR Sponsored	0
RSA Sponsored	9

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.

RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION, & RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

DSHS/DVR's FTE allotment remains capped at 318.5 FTEs until June 30, 2017. The division is able to recruit all field service vacancies as they occur but may not exceed this FTE cap. Approval by the DSHS Secretary is required to fill any newly established exempt or program management positions, as part of ongoing budget savings policies.

QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT & PREPARATION STRATEGIES

DSHS/DVR will maintain recruitment linkages and concentrated efforts with regional higher education institutions offering rehabilitation counseling programs. These include:

- Western Washington University
- University of Idaho
- Portland State University
- Western Oregon University
- San Diego State University
- Fresno State University
- Utah State University

DSHS/DVR will also continue to send recruitment announcements to higher education institutions offering rehabilitation counseling programs nationwide.

Recruiting qualified candidates in sufficient numbers to fill VRC positions is a continuing challenge. The national shortage of qualified VRC applicants has significantly affected DSHS/DVR's ability to fill vacancies in a timely manner, especially in rural locations. In response, DSHS/DVR has broadened its list of qualifying master's degrees to include psychology, counseling, or a field related to vocational rehabilitation (i.e. fields which promote the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well-being of individuals with disabilities). While the list of qualifying master's degrees has broadened, the required competencies that a VRC candidate must demonstrate have remained unchanged.

Per Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) revisions to Rehabilitation Act CSPD requirements, DSHS/DVR will incorporate new VRC Bachelor's level education qualifications in to

the VRC classification series. It is anticipated that this will result in a broader recruitment pool and more timely appointments to vacant positions.

A particular focus of recruitment continues to be attracting candidates who identify as African-American, Latino, and American Indian, as these individuals are presently under-represented among DSHS/DVR personnel. Targeted recruitment will continue in collaboration with Latino community based organizations, American Indian VR Programs and other Tribal organizations, as well as African-American community based organizations.

RETENTION & ADVANCEMENT

To ensure new employees start successfully, DSHS/DVR continues to use a comprehensive employee onboarding program. Used by supervisors when new employees are hired, this program ensures that individuals receive adequate orientation and training to perform their roles and responsibilities.

DSHS/DVR continues to offer staff advancement opportunities and will adopt a formal succession plan by October 1, 2017. This plan will include a number of elements that encourage staff to prepare and compete for future leadership training, introductory courses on supervision, mentoring and networking activities, and other advancement opportunities.

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

PERSONNEL STANDARDS

In accordance with 101(a)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act, DSHS/DVR maintains consistent standards for all rehabilitation personnel. These standards include prior education and experience requirements as well as specific core competencies. All current DSHS/DVR counseling personnel (Field Services Administrator, Area Managers, VR Supervisors, and VRCs) hold credentials that are consistent with either the state–based VRC registration requirements or the national certification standards of the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC).

DSHS/DVR will continue to apply educational qualifications for new hires into VRC 2, VRC 3, VRC 4, and VR Supervisor classifications that require the following credentials:

- A master’s degree in rehabilitation counseling, psychology, counseling, or a field related to vocational rehabilitation (i.e. fields which promote the physical, psychosocial, or vocational well–being of individuals with disabilities; or
- CRCC Certification; or

- A master's degree in a closely related field, plus 18–quarter (12–semester) credit hours in specified rehabilitation counseling courses at the graduate level.

DSHS/DVR will propose revised education qualifications at the Bachelor's level as an entry–point in to the VRC classification series, while higher level positions within the series will continue to require a Master's degree or CRCC certification. A proposal for this revision will be submitted to the Office of Financial Management State Human Resources for approval and will be subject to collective bargaining prior to implementation.

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.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT - 21ST CENTURY EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

DSHS/DVR completes an annual Performance and Development Plan (PDP) with each employee that covers the period October 1 to September 30. The PDP is a standard State of Washington tool used to evaluate job performance and emphasize individualized staff development needs. Specific development needs identified for each employee are to be addressed in the following year. In addition to determining individual training needs, DSHS/DVR compiles results to plan overall training and developmental priorities conducted staff-wide. While specific priorities evolve year-to-year, DSHS/DVR consistently addresses assessment, counseling and guidance, vocational planning, job placement, as well as assistive and rehabilitation technology. New and ongoing training and continuous improvement activities specifically target the development of staff competencies using labor market and industry sector data.

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

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DSHS/DVR requires all VRCs to participate in comprehensive in-service trainings on an ongoing basis which address assessment, counseling and guidance, vocational planning, job placement, as well as assistive and rehabilitation technology. The Rehabilitation Academy, DSHS/DVR's in-service training platform, features standard training modules. The Basic Curriculum must be completed by all VRCs within 12 months of appointment.

Rehabilitation Academy: Basic Curriculum

1. Vocational Rehabilitation Process

2. Special Programs

3. Employment Outcomes

4. Benefits Planning

5. Rehabilitation Law Review

6. Motivational Interviewing

7. Medical Aspects of Disability

The ongoing redesign of all in-service training curricula to be competency-based, focused on contemporary case management practices, and available using web-based and other distance-learning methods has demonstrated initial success. Statewide WIOA implementation training, designed and conducted by DSHS/DVR's Rehabilitation Act Steering Committee, successfully leveraged in-person and web-based platforms to educate staff on competencies and best practices which support initial WIOA implementation. This success prompted numerous stakeholders to request in-person and web-based WIOA trainings, which DSHS/DVR provided. Stakeholder training participants included Tribal VR directors, workforce development professionals, DSHS staff, and Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) staff.

DSHS/DVR continues to provide training via video conferencing equipment at 21 office locations statewide. This technology permits larger numbers of staff to receive more timely training while reducing travel costs.

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.

DSHS/DVR has not developed standard procedures for the dissemination of significant knowledge assets throughout the organization. Designing and implementing such procedures is included in DSHS/DVR's planned redesign of its training platform and curricula.

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.

PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

DSHS/DVR continues to assure full communication access for all individuals with limited English proficiency. In addition to bi-lingual DSHS/DVR staff, contracted interpreter and translation services

are available. DSHS/DVR forms and publications are available in Cambodian, Chinese, Korean, Laotian, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese and translations to other languages are provided as needed.

Individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing may communicate with DSHS/DVR staff at all locations via video phone, video relay, voice relay, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, real-time captioning, augmentative listening devices, and Ubi-Duo devices. DSHS/DVR's Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCDs) provide effective and culturally competent services for customers who are Deaf.

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.

COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

DSHS/DVR has worked closely with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to coordinate personnel development activities and has an interagency agreement with OSPI to address mutual issues. The DSHS/DVR-OSPI agreement will be amended and expanded to all regional and local education authorities. This expansion will facilitate the required coordination with education and provision of Pre-employment Transition Services, as required under WIOA. In addition, these agreements will identify necessary training for DSHS/DVR and education staff regarding new services, new coordination, and best practices in serving students with disabilities.

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;

INTRODUCTION

US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) estimates, DSHS/DVR case service data, DSHS/DVR customer survey responses, 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) findings, Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) special education enrollment statistics, WorkSource participation data (Washington's One-Stop Centers), and Social Security Administration (SSA) data are presented to evaluate the vocational rehabilitation service needs of Washingtonians living with disabilities. This report is not intended to be exhaustive; these data represent many of the social, economic, and customer service factors which affect DSHS/DVR and the individuals it serves.

WASHINGTONIANS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

(Source: American Community Survey, *ACS_14_1YR_S1810*)

907,417 individuals with disabilities reside in Washington, representing 13% of the statewide population. Disability affects gender proportionally; 13.12% of men and 12.98% of women report living with a disability.

Estimates of disability prevalence across selected racial or ethnic identities in Washington indicate the highest prevalence of disability among individuals who identify as Native American or Alaska Native alone, 16.6%; followed in descending order by individuals who identify as White alone, 13.9%; individuals who identify as Black or African American alone, 13%; individuals who identify with two or more racial identities, 11.2%; individuals who identify as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, 10.7%; and individuals who identify as Asian alone, 8.3%. 7.7% of individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race report living with a disability. An additional 18,838 (7.7%) of Washingtonians who do not identify with any aforementioned racial or ethnic identity report living with a disability.

Of the 488,620 working age Washingtonians with disabilities aged 18 to 64, estimates allowing for individuals to report multiple disabilities indicate that 118,268 individuals live with hearing difficulties, 84,526 live with vision difficulties, 219,260 live with cognitive difficulties, 215,083 live with ambulatory difficulties, 77,319 live with self-care difficulties, and 157,666 live with independent living difficulties.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

(Source: *ACS_14_1YR_B18120*)

488,620 (11.1%) working age individuals (ages 18 to 64) in Washington report living with a disability. These working age individuals with disabilities represent the primary segment of the state population who may qualify for vocational rehabilitation services.

ACS estimates 184,137 working age individuals with disabilities are currently employed, 37.69% of this population. An additional 30,743 individuals with disabilities are engaged in the labor force but are currently unemployed. The estimated 214,880 individuals with disabilities engaged in the labor force (both employed and unemployed) represent 6.40% of Washington's 3,359,714 labor force participants.

273,740 working age individuals with disabilities do not participate in the labor force, representing 56.02% of this population. By contrast, 19.23% of working age Washingtonians without disabilities do not participate in the labor force.

ACS data indicate that the labor force participation of Washingtonians living with disabilities continues to exceed nationwide estimates. 37.69% of working age Washingtonians with disabilities are employed, compared to 34.36% nationwide; 43.97% of working age Washingtonians with disabilities participate in the labor force, compared to 40.62% nationwide; and 56.02% of working age Washingtonians with disabilities do not participate in the labor force, compared with 59.37% nationwide.

184,137 (37.69%) of working age Washingtonians with disabilities are employed while 3,143,204 (75.99%) of working age Washingtonians without disabilities are employed. To close this employment gap, an additional 187,182 individuals with disabilities would need to obtain employment. DSHS/DVR served 20,089 cases in FFY 2014 and 19,707 cases in FFY 2015.

DISABILITY AND POVERTY

(Source: American Community Survey, *ACS_14_1YR_B23024*)

Consistent with nationwide data, Washingtonians with disabilities are disproportionally affected by poverty. ACS annual income estimates of Washingtonians aged 20-64 years indicate that 25.95% of Washingtonians with disabilities have income below poverty level, compared to 10.59% of Washingtonians without disabilities. Individuals with disabilities comprise 23.67% of the total population of Washingtonians with income below poverty level while only comprising 9.49% of Washingtonians with income at or above poverty level.

COMPARING DSHS/DVR FFY 2015 CASE SERVICE DATA TO EXTERNAL SOURCES

In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR closed 9,371 cases for which eligibility was determined. DSHS/DVR's footprint, and the rehabilitation needs of Washingtonians with disabilities, can be approximated by comparing these case data to ACS 2014 estimates.

COMPARISONS BY GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS

(Source: American Community Survey, *ACS_14_1YR_B18120*)

ACS 1-year estimates require a minimum population of 60,000 to accurately estimate in a given geographic area, allowing for accurate estimates in 19 of Washington's 39 counties. These 19

counties account for 93.04% of Washington's working age population and 90.86% of working age individuals with disabilities. In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR closed 92.30% of its cases where eligibility was determined in these counties. Comparing county-level distribution of working age individuals with disabilities to case closure data indicates DSHS/DVR's service coverage, including potential gaps, across regions.

ACS_14_1YR_B18120 Estimates and DSHS/DVR FFY 2015 Closures, by County

County	DSHS/DVR Location(s)	Number of Working Age Individuals with Disabilities	Percent of Working Age Individuals with Disabilities	Number of DSHS/DVR FFY 2015 Case Closures	Percent of DSHS/DVR FFY 2015 Case Closures
Statewide	(All)	488,620	N/A	9,443	N/A
Benton	Kennewick	12,862	2.63%	315	3.34%
Chelan	Wenatchee	3,959	.81%	104	1.10%
Clallam	Port Angeles	6,869	1.41%	161	1.70%
Clark	Vancouver	30,843	6.31%	398	4.21%
Cowlitz	Kelso	13,041	2.67%	164	1.74%
Franklin*	Kennewick	4,147	0.85%	78	0.83%
Grant	Moses Lake	4,960	1.02%	114	1.21%
Grays Harbor	Aberdeen	8,162	1.67%	97	1.03%
Island*	Mt. Vernon	5,092	1.04%	72	0.76%
King	Kent, Bellevue, Redmond, SeaTac, Seattle Mercer, Seattle North	110,444	22.60%	2,488	26.35%
Kitsap	Silverdale	21,956	4.49%	462	4.89%
Lewis	Centralia	9,144	1.87%	114	1.21%
Pierce	Puyallup, Tacoma	62,977	12.89%	838	8.87%
Skagit	Mt. Vernon	10,074	2.06%	185	1.96%
Snohomish	Arlington, Everett, Lynnwood	47,034	9.63%	946	10.02%
Spokane	Spokane	43,503	8.90%	742	7.86%
Thurston	Tumwater	16,773	3.43%	507	5.37%
Whatcom	Bellingham, Whatcom	16,209	3.32%	482	5.10%
Yakima	Yakima, Sunnyside, Wapato	15,914	3.26%	463	4.90%
All Other	Clarkston, Colville, Omak, Port Townsend, Shelton, Walla Walla	44,657	9.14%	713	7.55%

**Denotes counties served by offices in adjacent counties*

Of the counties compared, three key findings affecting DSHS/DVR service delivery emerged:

1. Service delivery capacity is disproportionally low in rural and remote regions.

2. Service delivery capacity is disproportionally low throughout Southwestern Washington, including Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, and Lewis counties.

3. The largest disparity between the working age disability population and DSHS/DVR service delivery occurs in Pierce County (-3.95%). With over 62,977 working age individuals with disabilities, Pierce County is the second largest county by disability population in Washington.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(Source: DSHS/DVR Case Service Data, STARS Database)

For 2017 - 2020, DSHS/DVR estimates the Title VI Supported Employment Grant will fund between 1,450 and 1,600 customers who receive supported employment services through Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), resulting in 300 - 400 supported employment outcomes per year. At these levels, DSHS/DVR estimates serving approximately 6,100 supported employment IPEs and producing 1,400 supporting employment outcomes during the four-year period of this plan. DSHS/DVR also will use the Title I Vocational Rehabilitation Services Grant to fund supported employment for additional customers when Title VI funds have been expended.

The Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, allows designated state units to determine the length of time for which youth with the most significant disabilities can receive extended services up to 48 months. DSHS/DVR has selected a 24-month timeframe for these services. However, this selected timeframe will be revised if regulatory requirements establish a mandatory 48-month timeframe.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFICIARIES

(Sources: Social Security Administration, *SSI Recipients by State and County, 2014*; Social Security Administration, *Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program, 2014*; American Community Survey, *ACS_14_1YR_B18120*)

Comparing Social Security Administration (SSA) Social Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) recipient data for individuals aged 18 to 64 years, ACS labor force participation estimates, and DSHS/DVR case service data allows for a comparative evaluation of DSHS/DVR's services to SSI and SSDI recipients.

SSI RECIPIENTS

98,797 working age individuals, approximately 20% of working age individuals with disabilities receive SSI. In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR served 4,594 eligible individuals receiving SSI (23.68%).

SSDI RECIPIENTS

168,298 workers in Washington receive SSDI, 34.4% of the statewide population of working age individuals with disabilities. In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR served 4,632 eligible individuals receiving SSDI (23.88%).

DSHS/DVR MONTHLY CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Monthly surveys are mailed to all customers closed-rehabilitated or closed-other-after-plan. The survey measures agreement with a list of statements, using a five-point Likert scale. Respondents complete the survey by hand and mail responses to DSHS/DVR. Random tracking numbers are

assigned to each survey, ensuring confidentiality during data entry while allowing results to be linked to case management records. This summary includes standard format aggregate results by survey type.

CLOSED REHABILITATED SURVEY RESPONSES

A majority of closed rehabilitated respondents answered with strong agreement or agreement to all satisfaction survey responses.

Over 90.0% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with:

- DVR treated me with courtesy and respect. (93.94%)
- Overall, DVR helped me. (91.50%)
- I was given enough information to understand how DVR could help me with employment. (91.09%)
- I chose where to get services in my DVR plan. (90.91%)
- DVR answered my questions. (90.63%)
- DVR explained what services were available to help me. (90.35%)
- DVR listened to me. (90.20%)

80.0% - 90.0% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with:

- DVR does good work. (89.76%)
- I chose my own job goal. (88.26%)
- I like the work I do. (88.07%)
- I use my skills and abilities that are most important to me in my job. (86.0%)
- DVR understood my problems the problems I faced in getting and keeping a job. (84.11%)
- Overall, I am satisfied with my job. (83.77%)
- I received services in my DVR employment plan quickly enough. (81.77%)
- DVR returned my phone calls quickly. (80.50%)

50.0% - 80.0% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with:

- DVR gave me information about other programs that could help me. (74.45%)
- If I had complaints or concerns about services, I was satisfied with how DVR responded. (71.81%)
- My pay is enough for my basic needs. (68.95%)
- I am satisfied with my benefits (medical, dental, etc.). (59.87%)

CLOSED-OTHER-AFTER-PLAN SURVEY RESPONSES

As with the closed-rehabilitated survey, a majority of closed-other-after-plan respondents answered with strong agreement or agreement to all satisfaction survey responses. However, overall percentages scores are lower, indicating closed-other customers provided less favorable responses. Special consideration has been given to areas of most common disagreement, as these respondents did not achieve successful closures.

70.0% - 80.0% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with:

- DVR treated me with courtesy and respect. (80.0%)
- DVR returned my phone calls. (77.44%)
- I chose where to get services in my DVR plan. (74.75%)
- I was given enough information to understand how DVR could help me with employment. (74.57%)
- I chose my own job goal. (72.84%)
- DVR answered my questions. (72.22%)
- DVR listened to me. (70.33%)

Fewer than 60.0% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with:

- DVR understood my problems the problems I faced in getting and keeping a job. (58.47%)
- I received services in my DVR employment plan quickly enough. (57.8%)
- DVR gave me information about other programs that could help me. (52.15%)
- If I had complaints or concerns about services, I was satisfied with how DVR responded. (52.13%)
- Respondents most commonly strongly disagreed or disagreed with:
- I received services in my DVR employment plan quickly enough. (32.48%)
- DVR understood my problems the problems I faced in getting and keeping a job. (29.66%)
- If I had complaints or concerns about services, I was satisfied with how DVR responded. (29.48%)
- DVR gave me information about other programs that could help me. (29.31%)

Respondents were asked to select the main reason why they chose to stop receiving services before achieving an employment outcome. The following lists the percentage of responses by each reason offered.

- My health condition worsened. (28.64%)
- It took too long to get the services I needed. (17.27%)
- I was not satisfied with the services I received. (16.82%)
- DVR did not have services to meet my needs. (15.0%)
- I decided not to get a job. (10.91%)

Respondents that indicated they were not satisfied with services were requested to select the reason for their dissatisfaction. The following lists the percentage of responses by each reason offered.

- It took too long to get services. (32.33%)
- The services were not helpful. (27.07%)
- The available services were not what I needed. (24.06%)
- I did not get along with DVR staff. (10.53%)
- The location of the DVR Office was not convenient. (6.02%)

2014 COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS

DSHS/DVR's most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA), conducted in partnership with the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) and the University of Washington Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER), was published in FFY 2014.

Between September 2013 and February 2014, CCER sent online needs assessment surveys to DSHS/DVR customers, staff, and service providers. A CSNA Steering Committee comprised of DSHS/DVR, WSRC, and CCER staff developed the survey questions. All questions were the same for each survey group. The following summarizes key results.

CSNA CUSTOMER SURVEY

The online survey was distributed to 10,774 current and recently closed DSHS/DVR customers. A total of 1,552 individuals responded for a response rate of approximately 15.0%. This included responses from 1,047 current customers and 505 recently closed customers.

Customers identified the DSHS/DVR services they most frequently require:

- Placement in to a job (56.0%)
- Assistance searching for a job (53.0%)
- Community college or other vocational training (41.0%)
- Job coaching at work (39.0%)
- Customers identified the most frequent challenges to receiving DSHS/DVR services:
- Need more time with the VR Counselor (36.0%)
- Wait a long time for services to begin (30.0%)
- Do not understand all the services that are available (30.0%)
- Difficulty developing an Individualized Plan for Employment (30.0%)

CSNA STAFF SURVEY

The online survey was distributed to 247 DSHS/DVR staff. 147 individuals responded for a response rate of approximately 60.0%.

- Respondents most frequently identified services that customers require from DSHS/DVR:
- Vocational counseling and guidance (86.0%)
- Mental health counseling and treatment (78.0%)
- Placement in to a job (77.0%)
- Assistance searching for a job (66.0%)
- Transportation (61.0%)
- Job coaching at work (58.0%)
- Social Security benefits planning (51.0%)
- Respondents identified customers' most frequent challenges receiving services from DSHS/DVR:
- Customer health issues prevent customer from regularly meeting with VR Counselor (58.0%)
- Customer does not understand all the services that are available (50.0%)
- Customer disagrees with VR services required to achieve employment goal (25.0%)
- Getting to DSHS/DVR office using public transportation (23.0%)

CSNA SERVICE PROVIDER SURVEY

The online survey was distributed to organizations and agencies which jointly serve DSHS/DVR customers. 355 respondents completed the survey. A response rate could not be calculated as the survey was distributed to organizations, not individual participants. Service provider responses came

from WorkSource staff, Community Rehabilitation Programs, developmental disabilities programs, and mental health providers.

Respondents identified the DSHS/DVR services that customers most frequently require:

- Placement in to a job (74.0%)
- Job coaching at work (69.0%)
- Assistance searching for a job (66.0%)
- General work attitude and behavior (57.0%)
- Vocational counseling and guidance (56.0%)
- Respondents identified customers' most frequent challenges receiving DSHS/DVR services:
- Customer does not understand all the services that are available (63.0%)
- Customers wait a long time for services to begin (31.0%)
- Customer disagrees with what VR services are required to achieve their employment goal (24.0%)
- Need more time with the VR Counselor (24.0%)

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

REHABILITATION SERVICE NEEDS BY GENDER, RACE, & ETHNICITY

COMPARISONS BY GENDER

Males continue to be overrepresented in Washington's disability populations. This overrepresentation exceeds national estimates. ACS estimates indicate that of individuals with disabilities 18 years of age or younger, 63.1% are male and 36.8% are female (nationwide, 62.2% are male, 37.7% are female). Of working age individuals with disabilities, aged 18 to 64, 51.5% are male and 48.4% are female (nationwide, 49.7% are male and 50.2% are female). Of individuals with disabilities aged 65 and older, males account for 45.1% while females account for 54.8%. Males are overrepresented in the 65 years of age and older population when compared to national estimates (nationwide, 43.4% are male and 56.5% are female).

Women continue to be underrepresented in DSHS/DVR's customer population. Data on the 9,371 cases closed by DSHS/DVR during FFY 2015 for which eligibility was determined shows that 5,174 (55.2%) of these were male, while 4,197 (44.7%) of these customers were female. When compared to the gender distribution of working age Washingtonians with disabilities (i.e. 51.5% male, 48.4% female), DSHS/DVR case data indicate inequitable access for women living with disabilities.

It should be noted that addressing this gender gap may be a substantial challenge as DSHS/DVR increases outreach and services to greater numbers of students with disabilities. In Washington and nationwide, men are significantly overrepresented among individuals with disabilities aged 18 years or younger; this overrepresentation extends to special education enrollment and, therefore, students with disabilities.

COMPARISONS BY RACE AND ETHNICITY

ACS estimates of disability distribution across selected racial or ethnic identities indicate that the majority of Washingtonians with disabilities identify as White alone, 82.59%; followed in descending order by individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race, 7.13%; individuals who identify as

Asian alone, 5.02%; individuals who identify with two or more racial identities, 4.63%; individuals who identify as Black or African American alone, 3.46%; individuals who identify as a racial identity not listed herein, 2.08%; individuals who identify as American Indian and Alaska Native alone, 1.71%; and individuals who identify as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, 0.52%.

DSHS/DVR has historically tracked a more specific and diverse range of racial and ethnic identities than federal or state reporting requires. Driven by the needs of Washington's diverse communities, this is best exemplified by the nine unique ethnic categories which roughly equate to the federal definition of Asian alone and the four distinct ethnicities which, in sum, form the federal category Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone.

DSHS/DVR case service data indicate that of eligible customers closed in FFY 2015, 69.65% identify as White (compared to 82.59% statewide); followed in descending order by individuals who identify as two or more racial identities, 9.02% (4.63% statewide); individuals who identify as Black or African American, 8.83% (3.46% statewide); individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race, 5.71% (7.13% statewide); individuals who identify as Asian alone, 2.96% (5.02% statewide); individuals who identify as American Indian and Alaska Native alone, 2.05% (1.71% statewide); individuals who identify as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, 0.93% (0.52% statewide); and individuals who chose not to disclose their racial or ethnic identity to DSHS/DVR, 0.86%.

Comparing these data indicates that five of the seven identified racial and ethnic minority populations are represented within DSHS/DVR's customer population at rates which exceed the statewide disability population. Individuals who identify as two or more racial identities, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander are proportionally better represented at DSHS/DVR. However, Washington's two largest racial or ethnic minority groups, individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino and individuals who identify as Asian, are disproportionally underrepresented in the DSHS/DVR customer population.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM; UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

Comparing DSHS/DVR case service data to ACS estimates, publicly available data published by OSPI, and CSNA findings provides strong indications of Washington's unserved and underserved populations. The key points included below draw upon analyses described in greater depth elsewhere in this section.

Unserved and Underserved Populations

- Women living with disabilities: ACS estimates indicate that women represent 48.4% of working age individuals with disabilities. By contrast, 44.7% of eligible DSHS/DVR customers served during FFY 2015 identified as female.
- Individuals living with disabilities who identify as Hispanic or Latino: ACS estimates indicate that 7.13% of Washingtonians with disabilities identify as Hispanic or Latino. By contrast, DSHS/DVR customers who identify as Hispanic or Latino represented 5.71% of eligible individuals served in FFY 2015.
- Individuals with disabilities residing in Pierce County: ACS estimates indicate that Pierce County is the second largest county by disability population in Washington, representing

12.89% of the statewide population. By contrast, 8.87% of eligible DSHS/DVR customers were served in Pierce County, the largest disparity by geographic region in the state.

- Students with disabilities: Publicly available OSPI data indicate that 48,307 students aged 14 to 21 received special education services during the 2012 - 2013 school year. During FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR served 1,396 eligible students with disabilities. Additional analyses indicate that, for an 18-month period (July 2014 through December 2015), 802 eligible students with disabilities served by DSHS/DVR graduated or completed secondary education. Of these 802 students, 250 received IPE services prior to completing IEP services. In sum, these data indicate substantial service gaps for eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities.
- Individuals with mental health disabilities, veterans with disabilities, high-functioning adults living with an autism spectrum disorder, and aging individuals with disabilities: Key informant interviews, conducted as part of the 2014 CSNA, identified four populations unserved or underserved by DSHS/DVR. These structured interviews also identified recommendations and opportunities to expand services to these populations. Based on these recommendations, DSHS/DVR launched collaborative endeavors described elsewhere in this Combined State Plan (e.g. Microsoft's Specialisterne Project and expanded collaborations with mental health service providers).

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

DSHS/DVR CUSTOMERS AND THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

At the drafting of this Combined State Plan, DSHS/DVR does not maintain record–level data sharing agreements with Washington's workforce education providers (i.e. OSPI and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges). As a result, DSHS/DVR cannot currently provide verified participation data of DSHS/DVR customers in workforce education programs. However, DSHS/DVR does maintain data sharing protocols with the state workforce agency, the Employment Security Department, which report verified DSHS/DVR customer participation data in workforce development services authorized under WIOA Titles IB and III.

Analysis of DSHS/DVR customer participation in WorkSource services (Washington's One–Stop centers) indicates regional variation in service and outcome volumes.

DSHS/DVR Eligible Customers' WorkSource Participation, October – December 2015

DSHS/DVR Administrative Area	Area Description	Number of Customers Served by DSHS/DVR	Number of DSHS/DVR Customers Served by WorkSource	Percent of DSHS/DVR Customers Served by WorkSource
Area 1	Largest geographic region, serving Eastern Washington; includes the cities of Spokane, Yakima, and Kennewick	2,533	112	4.42%
Area 2	Largest region by general population, serving the North Puget Sound region; includes the cities of Seattle, Bellevue, Everett, and Bellingham	3,408	214	6.27%

DSHS/DVR Administrative Area	Area Description	Number of Customers Served by DSHS/DVR	Number of DSHS/DVR Customers Served by WorkSource	Percent of DSHS/DVR Customers Served by WorkSource
Area 3	Diverse geographic region, serving the South Puget Sound region, the Olympic Peninsula, and Southwestern Washington; includes the cities of Tacoma, Olympia, Bremerton, and Vancouver	3,710	165	4.44%
Statewide	Includes all areas	9,651	491	5.08%

DSHS/DVR Closed Rehabilitated Customers and WorkSource Participation, October – December 2015

DSHS/DVR Administrative Area	Workforce Development Areas	Number of DSHS/DVR Closed Rehabilitated Customers	Number of DSHS/DVR Closed Rehabilitated Customers Served by WorkSource	Percent of DSHS/DVR Closed Rehabilitated Customers Served by WorkSource
Area 1	Benton–Franklin WDC, Eastern Washington Partnership WDC, North Central Washington WDC, South Central Washington WDC, Spokane Area WDC	140	44	31.42%
Area 2	Northwest WDC, Snohomish County WDC, Seattle–King County WDC	333	63	18.91%
Area 3	Olympic Consortium WDC, Pacific Mountain WDC, Seattle–King County WDC, Southwest Washington WDC	282	55	19.50%
Statewide	Includes all workforce development areas	755	162	21.45%

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

WASHINGTONIANS WHO ARE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

(Source: OSPI K-12 Data and Reports, *Students Served in Special Education - Special Education*)

Current publicly available data published by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) reports special education enrollment by Educational Service District and primary disability for the 2012-2013 school year. These enrollment figures indicate the Pre-employment Transition Services target population.

For students aged 14-21, OSPI data indicate steady increases in special education enrollment, from 37,726 during the 2004-2005 school year to 48,307 in the 2012-2013 school year. Students living with an autism spectrum disorder are the largest growing special education population, growing more than four-fold from 2004-2005 to 2012-2013, 850 students to 3,673, respectively. In FFY 2015,

DSHS/DVR served 1,396 students with disabilities who were determined eligible for services. Based on available data, it is reasonable to estimate that DSHS/DVR currently serves less than three percent of potentially eligible students with disabilities statewide.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

DSHS/DVR has not established or developed CRP programs. Information on collaborative research, service delivery improvement, and training activities is described in detail in the Cooperative Agreements with Nonprofit Organization section of this State Plan.

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 .

DSHS/DVR evaluated the service needs of transition youth with disabilities as part of the 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, which was conducted prior to the passage of WIOA. An evaluation of the needs of students and youth with disabilities, including the projected need for pre-employment transition services statewide, is being conducted in partnership with the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS). This CCTS partnership is also being leveraged to develop memoranda of understanding with local education agencies which will identify the extent to which pre-employment transition services are coordinated with services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

INTRODUCTION

This section identifies the number of customers DSHS/DVR expects to serve and projected service costs, beginning in Program Year 2017. As the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires state vocational rehabilitation programs to shift from a federal year (FFY) to a program year (PY) reporting cycle, FFY data is including along with PY 17 projections.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES

It is difficult to project the effect of WIOA's new programmatic requirements on services and associated costs; integrated workforce development service delivery and Pre–employment Transition Services will likely increase both the number of customers served and DSHS/DVR's overall service expenditures.

APPLICATIONS

While WIOA effects are unknown, DSHS/DVR projects that targeted outreach activities will result in increased applications in PY 2017.

DSHS/DVR Applications: FFY 2011 – FFY 2015

FFY	Applications	Percent Change from Prior Year
2011	11,198	–10.4%
2012	10,217	–8.8%
2013	9,734	–4.7%
2014	9,728	>–1%
2015	9,450	–2.9%

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

For PY 2017, DSHS/DVR is on target to determine eligibility for approximately 8,800 individuals. This is a slight increase from FFY 2015.

DSHS/DVR Eligibility Determinations: FFY 2011 – FFY 2015

FFY	Eligibility Determinations	Percent Change from Prior Year
2011	9,753	11.0%
2012	9,007	–7.7%
2013	8,667	–3.8%
2014	8,685	>1%
2015	8,616	>–1%

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS

For PY 2017, DSHS/DVR is on target to determine eligibility for approximately 8,800 individuals. This is a slight increase from FFY 2015.

DSHS/DVR Eligibility Determinations: FFY 2011 – FFY 2015

FFY	Eligibility Determinations	Percent Change from Prior Year
2011	9,753	11.0%
2012	9,007	–7.7%
2013	8,667	–3.8%
2014	8,685	>1%
2015	8,616	>–1%

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATES

For 2017 - 2020, DSHS/DVR estimates the Title VI Supported Employment Grant will fund between 1,450 and 1,600 customers who receive supported employment services through Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), resulting in 300 - 400 supported employment outcomes per year. At these levels, DSHS/DVR estimates serving approximately 6,100 supported employment IPEs and producing 1,400 supporting employment outcomes during the four-year period of this plan. DSHS/DVR also will use the Title I Vocational Rehabilitation Services Grant to fund supported employment for additional customers when Title VI funds have been expended.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

DSHS/DVR is not under an order of selection.

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

DSHS/DVR is not under an order of selection.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

AVAILABLE FUNDS AND CASE SERVICE COSTS

Adequate funds are available to serve all 3,025 individuals currently eligible for services and the 6,098 Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) being served. DSHS/DVR has adequate funds to cover the costs of all projected eligibility determinations and post–employment services.

CASE SERVICE COSTS: CLOSED–REHABILITATED AND IN–PLAN

DSHS/DVR Average Closed–Rehabilitated Case Costs: FFY 2011 – FFY 2015

FFY	Average Closed–Rehabilitated Case Costs	Percent Change from Prior Year
2011	$5,727	6.1%
2012	$6,101	6.5%
2013	$6,775	11.1%
2014	$6,698	–1.1%
2015	$6,910	3.2%

While overall service volumes decreased, service costs increased. The average cost of a rehabilitation closure increased from FFY 2014 to FFY 2015, the fourth such increase in the last five years. The steady increase in average rehabilitation costs over the last five years is significant, a $ 1,183 increase from FFY 2011 to FFY 2015. Said differently, the average FFY 2015 rehabilitation costs DSHS/DVR 120.65% of FFY 2011 costs.

DSHS/DVR estimates the average cost to support a closed–rehabilitated customer during PY 2017 will remain consistent with FFY 2015 levels. This average cost figure includes all case service costs (i.e. costs of services provided from application to case closure) for cases closed–rehabilitated during the timeframe.

6,211 IPEs were being served at the start FFY 2015. This carry–over from the prior year was 7.0% decrease.

DSHS/DVR Yearly IPE Carry–over: FFY 2011 – FFY 2015

FFY	IPEs Carried–over from Prior Year	Percent Change from Prior Year
2011	7,870	–3.6%
2012	7,580	–3.7%
2013	7,175	–5.3%
2014	6,670	–7.0%
2015	6,211	–6.9%

DSHS/DVR estimates that 5,675 new IPEs will be developed in PY 2017. With an average expenditure per IPE per year of approximately $2,053, costs for new IPEs will total an estimated $11,651,000. This will leave DSHS/DVR with sufficient funds to pay for current IPEs, pre–plan, and post–plan services. To achieve 5,675 new IPEs, DSHS/DVR will continue to increase caseload size and align this increase with commensurate financial and staff resources.

RISK TO AVAILABLE RESOURCES

As WIOA mandates that DSHS/DVR allocate 15% of its federal grant funds to provide Pre–employment Transition Services for students with disabilities, DSHS/DVR estimates that the remaining 85% of grant funds may be inadequate to meet the projected needs of adult customers. DSHS/DVR will continually monitor expenditures and caseload movement to ensure resources are available to effectively serve all eligible individuals.

PY 2017 COST ESTIMATES

Priority Category	Title	Estimated Finds	Estimated Cases	Average Case Service Cost
Not applicable	Title I	$ 28,000,000	20,550	$ 1,362
Not applicable	Title VI	$ 440,000	1,450	$ 304
Totals	$ 28,440,000	22,000	$ 1,666	

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 established in this State Plan reflect DSHS/DVR's ongoing commitments to customer service, successful outcomes, staff development, organizational system improvement, strong partnerships, and business engagement. These goals and priorities were collaboratively developed by DSHS/DVR and leadership of the Washington State Rehabilitation Council.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

INTRODUCTION

This section identifies the goals and priorities that DSHS/DVR intends to achieve throughout the 2017 - 2020 planning cycle. Activities described herein align with Washington's strategic plan for workforce development as well as the operational components of this Combined State Plan. This alignment is intended to realize the letter and intent of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), to implement a coordinated service delivery system which supports the long-term labor market engagement of individuals with disabilities and improves services to businesses.

These goals and priorities also reflect analyses of DSHS/DVR's performance as well as the needs of individuals with disabilities in Washington. In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR successfully passed six of the seven Standards and Indicators, failing one by a slim margin. However, DSHS/DVR has demonstrated consistent, measurable improvement over the last four federal years across all Standards and Indicators. Preliminary analysis indicates that DSHS/DVR's performance will remain strong under WIOA Performance Accountability.

GOALS & PRIORITIES

GOAL ONE: IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Goal one reflects DSHS/DVR's focus on providing high-quality services that result in high-quality employment outcomes. Based on 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) findings and stakeholder input, these priorities emphasize the importance of supporting customers in high-quality employment which offers the pay and benefits that support financial independence.

<u>To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities:</u>

1. Strengthen vocational assessment practices as the foundation for comprehensive services which meet customer needs, identify and address barriers to employment, and maximize outcomes.

Conduct outreach to key populations, including students and out-of-school youth with disabilities, to ensure that all Washingtonians with disabilities have access to services and supports needed to prepare for and obtain employment.

2. Increase business engagement to improve employment for individuals with disabilities in collaboration with Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs).
3. Develop and implement integrated service delivery models in collaboration with WIOA core programs.

GOAL TWO: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

Goal two priorities reflect CSNA results and stakeholder input which challenge DSHS/DVR to provide better information on available services, improve service quality and timeliness, and increase the time customers spend with their counselors.

To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities:

1. Incentivize timely service delivery by implementing new performance measures for counselors which ensure that 90% of eligibility determinations will be completed within 60 days of customers' application dates and that 90% of Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs) are developed within 90 days of customers' eligibility determination dates.
2. Provide high-quality training and support, ensuring staff have the knowledge and skills needed to deliver high-quality vocational rehabilitation services.
3. Through statewide case file reviews, build an organizational culture of quality to strengthen substantial counseling and guidance.

GOAL THREE: ESTABLISH DSHS/DVR'S ROLE IN THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Goal three priorities will improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities served by Washington's workforce development system. As a core program, DSHS/DVR will contribute its value, expertise, and strengths to maximize outcomes for individuals with disabilities. These priorities align with the strategic and operational elements of this Combined State Plan and reflect the needs of individuals with disabilities served system-wide.

To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities:

1. Work with partners, at front-line and state levels, to ensure the workforce development system is both accessible and beneficial for all individuals with disabilities.
2. Lead cross-program staff training in areas such as accessibility, disability culture and awareness, and vocational rehabilitation services.
3. Ensure DSHS/DVR customers get optimal benefit from the workforce development system by educating customers about other workforce development programs.

GOAL FOUR: IMPROVE DSHS/DVR'S SYSTEMS AND PERFORMANCE

Goal four reflects DSHS/DVR's commitment to improving the systems and practices which support DSHS/DVR staff and, in turn, affect customer service.

To achieve this goal, DSHS/DVR establishes the following priorities:

1. Develop and implement a communication plan to provide consistent internal standards for professional communication within DSHS/DVR.
2. Redesign data management systems and output reports to support WIOA implementation, leverage federated workforce development data, and strengthen data-driven decision making.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

DSHS/DVR's goals and priorities are based on ongoing analyses of program performance, the results of the 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the feedback of customers and the Washington State Rehabilitation Council, findings of research activities, and preliminary evaluations of DSHS/DVR's performance under WIOA Section 116.

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

The results of the 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) and subsequent updates contained in the Statewide Assessment description of this State Plan guided the collaborative development of DSHS/DVR's goals and priorities. DSHS/DVR's emphases on timely service delivery, high-quality employment outcomes, and targeted outreach to unserved and underserved populations are directly based on CSNA findings.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

DSHS/DVR's goals and priorities align with the strategic vision and the operational elements of this Combined State Plan. These goals and priorities promote improved employment retention, increased earnings, and strengthened educational progress for Washingtonians living with disabilities. The role of DSHS/DVR staff in coordinated business engagement and industry sector strategies is woven throughout this plan. By pursuing these goals and priorities, DSHS/DVR will deliver high performance on the performance accountability standards identified in Section 116.

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.

These goals and priorities were established based on the full range of DSHS/DVR's evaluation and research activities. The activities include ongoing internal monitoring, program performance reporting conducted by the Department of Social and Health Services, evaluation studies coordinated by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, ad hoc research and program evaluation activities, and customer forums conducted by the Washington State Rehabilitation Council.

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.

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.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS & TITLE VI FUNDS

For 2017 - 2020, DSHS/DVR estimates the Title VI Supported Employment Grant will fund between 1,450 and 1,600 customers who receive supported employment services through Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), resulting in 300 - 400 supported employment outcomes per year. At these levels, DSHS/DVR estimates serving approximately 6,100 supported employment IPEs and producing 1,400 supporting employment outcomes during the four-year period of this plan. DSHS/DVR also will use the Title I Vocational Rehabilitation Services Grant to fund supported employment for additional customers when Title VI funds have been expended.

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 Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, allows designated state units to determine the length of time for which youth with the most significant disabilities can receive extended services up to 48 months. DSHS/DVR has selected a 24-month timeframe for these services. However, this will be revised if regulatory requirements establish a mandatory 48-month timeframe.

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.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

DSHS/DVR provides supported employment services primarily to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DSHS/DVR and its partners continue to pursue innovative strategies to expand these services to other populations, as resources are often comparatively scarce.

The State of Washington has applied for a Medicaid 1115(c) Waiver that is pending approval. If approved, the waiver will fund supported employment as a Medicaid service, expanding the availability of extended services to individuals who experience a wide array of significant disabilities.

Through continued collaboration, innovative approaches, and the use of natural supports, DSHS/DVR and its partners will be able DSHS/DVR will expand the availability, quality, and scope of extended services for all individuals who require supported employment.

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.

INTRODUCTION

DSHS/DVR has established four goals to assure that high-quality services are provided to both job seekers with disabilities and to Washington's businesses. The methods by which these services will be provided, and maximized within available resources, are described in this section. Specific consideration is given to the innovation and expansion activities which seek to enhance the scope of services available to individuals with disabilities.

These strategies reflect in-depth analyses of DSHS/DVR customer service data, statewide demographic data, Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) findings, research conducted by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB), and the ongoing input and recommendations from the Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC).

Duplication of activities, strategies, and methods in the sections which follow is intentional; the coordinated efforts of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core programs to improve services to job seekers with disabilities and Washington's business community are not mutually exclusive. As an active core partner, DSHS/DVR will fully leverage all available resources to maximize the labor market engagement, self-sufficiency, and independence of all Washingtonians with disabilities.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOALS & PRIORITIES

GOAL ONE: IMPROVE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

GOAL ONE, PRIORITY ONE

Strengthen vocational assessment practices as the foundation for comprehensive services which meet customer needs, identify and address barriers to employment, and maximize outcomes.

Goal One, Priority One: Strategies

- Utilize the new vocational assessment screen and process to improve service quality and to implement new WIOA requirements.
- Expand knowledge and use of labor market information to support industry sector strategies.
- Promote customer participation in training and career pathway programs, preparing them for high demand careers and helping businesses fill skill gaps.
- Refine vocational assessment practices and provide ongoing staff training on how to use new tools and resources.

- Evaluate customers' Assistive Technology (AT) needs and leverage Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioners (ATAP) to provide assessment, consultation, and support statewide.
- Utilize assessment results to identify self-directed job search customers and appropriate DSHS/DVR Business Specialist support services (e.g. assistance with résumé development, interviewing skills, and submitting applications).

Goal One, Priority Two

Conduct outreach to key populations, including students and out-of-school youth with disabilities, to ensure that all Washingtonians with disabilities have access to services and supports needed to prepare for and obtain employment.

Goal One, Priority Two: Strategies

- Provide Pre-employment Transition Services designed to facilitate job exploration and other services such as counseling and self-advocacy training in the early stages of the school to work transition.
- Broaden the population of individuals with disabilities served by DSHS/DVR through outreach which increases the representation of underserved or unserved populations, specifically emphasizing outreach to Washington's Hispanic and Latino communities.
- Target outreach, education, and marketing to individuals with disabilities who are currently employed to retain or advance, previous customers who may be unemployed and are seeking employment, students nearing completion of academic programs, individuals who have exhausted Unemployment Insurance benefits, and other underserved populations.
- Utilize contracted translation and interpreter services, including American Sign Language services, to improve accessible and quality services to customers with limited English proficiency or who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

GOAL ONE, PRIORITY THREE

Increase business engagement to improve employment for individuals with disabilities in collaboration with Local Workforce Development Boards.

Goal One, Priority Three: Strategies

- Leverage affiliations, memberships, and strategic partnerships to promote the success of job seekers with disabilities (e.g. Society for Human Resource Management, Microsoft's Specialisterne Project, and local chambers of commerce).
- Increase visibility in Washington's business community through methodical outreach and marketing.
- Develop and implement tools to quantify business engagement outcomes.
- Engage Business Specialists in the development and implementation of local-level industry sector strategies, and cross-program business engagement activities.
- Collaborate with LWDBs to target business services for federal contractors and subcontractors.
- Utilize Business Specialists to provide training for businesses on how to recruit, hire, retain, and advance skilled workers with disabilities.

GOAL ONE, PRIORITY FOUR

Develop and implement integrated service delivery models in collaboration with WIOA core programs.

Goal One, Priority Four: Strategies

- Integrate DSHS/DVR services across workforce development programs, promoting quality customer services offered in-person and online.
- Invest resources to create workforce development system navigators, who provide culturally competent services which match job seekers to the programs that best meet their needs.

GOAL TWO: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

GOAL TWO, PRIORITY ONE

Incentivize timely service delivery by implementing new performance measures for counselors which ensure that 90% of eligibility determinations will be completed within 60 days of customers' application dates and that 90% of Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs) are developed within 90 days of customers' eligibility determination dates.

Goal Two, Priority One: Strategies

- Implement case management system improvements which streamline the eligibility determination, vocational assessment, and plan development processes.
- Evaluate staff performance on new measures and provide targeted training and support as needed.

GOAL TWO, PRIORITY TWO

Provide high-quality training and support, ensuring staff have the knowledge and skills needed to deliver high-quality vocational rehabilitation services.

Goal Two, Priority Two: Strategies

- Implement staff training focused on customer service, cultural sensitivity, and best practices to identify and address barriers employment.
- Modernize DSHS/DVR's training program to fully leverage new communication platforms and evidence-based practices.

GOAL TWO, PRIORITY THREE

Build an organizational culture of quality to strengthen substantial counseling and guidance.

Goal Two, Priority Three: Strategies

- Utilize case file review results to determine where additional guidance and training are required and emphasize specific areas of need in the Advanced Best Practices curriculum.
- Implement staff recognition and appreciation throughout DSHS/DVR.

- Provide supervisors with the tools needed to deliver effective and ongoing coaching to their staff, using structured monthly coaching and reports to DSHS/DVR Area Managers.

GOAL THREE: ESTABLISH DSHS/DVR'S ROLE IN THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

GOAL THREE, PRIORITY ONE

Work with partners, at front-line and state levels, to ensure the workforce development system is both accessible and beneficial for all individuals with disabilities.

Goal Three, Priority One: Strategies

- Target necessary improvements to the workforce development system's physical and digital infrastructure, based on customer feedback, customer outcomes, and annual One-Stop center accessibility review findings.
- Commit staff and resources to each workforce development region to ensure that DSHS/DVR is represented and that services are accessible system-wide.

GOAL THREE, PRIORITY TWO

Lead cross-program staff training in areas such as accessibility, disability culture and awareness, and vocational rehabilitation services.

Goal Three, Priority Two: Strategies

- Develop and distribute informational materials for workforce development professionals which identify best practices in serving individuals with disabilities, including DSHS/DVR customers.
- Provide specific training for workforce development staff, based on customer feedback and annual One-Stop center accessibility review findings.

GOAL THREE, PRIORITY THREE

Ensure DSHS/DVR customers get optimal benefit from the workforce development system by educating customers about other workforce development programs.

Goal Three, Priority Three: Strategies

- Develop and distribute informational materials to DSHS/DVR staff and customers which describe workforce development programs, highlighting services and eligibility criteria.

GOAL FOUR: IMPROVE DSHS/DVR'S SYSTEMS & PERFORMANCE

GOAL FOUR, PRIORITY ONE

Develop and implement a communication plan to provide consistent internal standards for professional communication within DSHS/DVR.

Goal Four, Priority One: Strategies

- Establish a workgroup to develop an internal communication protocol which addresses the Who, What, Where, When and Why of all communication, including accountability, timelines, and follow-up.
- Increase capacity and use of communication technology (e.g. video conferencing, video phones, and distance learning programs).

GOAL FOUR, PRIORITY TWO

Redesign data management systems and output reports to support WIOA implementation, leverage federated workforce development data, and strengthen data-driven decision making.

Goal Four, Priority Two: Strategies

- Implement new reports and tracking systems which align with WIOA performance measures and are designed for staff use.
- Provide training on the data reports, performance measures, and tracking systems underpinning WIOA implementation.
- Enhance data analysis capacity and tools to support data-driven decision making.

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.

Throughout the rehabilitation process, DSHS/DVR counselors assess whether assistive technology (AT) services or devices are needed to address customers' barriers to employment. DSHS/DVR brochures and Customer Service Handbook provide in-depth information on AT services and devices. Full-time Assistive Technology Assessment Practitioners (ATAPs) provide specialized AT assessment, consult with staff and customers, coordinate with AT vendors, and disseminate information and resources.

DSHS/DVR will monitor AT service delivery in compliance with new WIOA requirements. In addition, DSHS/DVR will renew its commitment to being an organizational role model in effective utilization of AT as accommodations for individuals with disabilities including, but not limited to, individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing and individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

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.

DSHS/DVR continues to maintain active organizational relationships with a wide range of agencies and community groups that serve minority populations, and has formal liaison relationships to assure an ongoing referral stream of individuals with disabilities who identify as racial or ethnic minorities. Individuals with disabilities who identify as racial or ethnic minorities are consistently represented within the DSHS/DVR population at rates well above respective representation within the statewide population of individuals with disabilities. An in-depth analysis of this representation is provided in the Statewide Assessment section of this plan.

Individuals who identify as Hispanic or Latino are, by contrast, underrepresented in the DSHS/DVR customer population. To better engage Washington's Latino communities, DSHS/DVR has taken steps including, but not limited to, appointing bilingual staff statewide, Spanish-language radio Public Service Announcements, a Spanish-language phone line, and Spanish-language printed and promotional materials. These efforts have resulted in increased Hispanic and Latino customers served.

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).

DSHS/DVR will develop and implement Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Washington's regional and local education agencies to coordinate the provision of Pre–employment Transition Services. These new services will provide a continuum of services between school and adult life, providing students with disabilities the services and experiences necessary to enjoy meaningful employment, independence, and quality of life. Policy and guidance revisions, as well as new staff training, will support these services. An in–depth description of the significant changes to DSHS/DVR's services to students with disabilities is described in the Coordination with Education section of this plan.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

DSHS/DVR will establish a workgroup of DSHS/DVR staff and Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) representatives to focus on improving service delivery partnerships. Emphasis will be placed on strengthening communication and coordination between local DSHS/DVR offices and CRPs and developing strategies to inform CRPs of changes or updates in DSHS/DVR policies and procedures which affect service delivery. A full description of DSHS/DVR's plans to improve its CRP partnerships is included in the Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations section of this plan.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

DSHS/DVR will employ strategies to improve customers' employment retention, long–term labor market engagement, earned wages, education credential attainment, and vocational skill progress. Additional strategies will target improved services to businesses, as DSHS/DVR implements a dual–customer model, serving Washington's businesses as well as job seekers with disabilities.

<u>DSHS/DVR will implement the following strategies to improve performance under WIOA Performance Accountability:</u>

- Support customers in developing vocational goals and training objectives which align with labor market demand as well as customers' skills, abilities, interests, and informed choice.

- Leverage the labor market exchange, labor market research tools, and industry sector strategies to ensure that customers' vocational goals are aligned with in–demand occupations to the greatest extent possible.
- Integrate and align DSHS/DVR services and career pathways programs.
- Increase use of Post–Employment Services to support customers in maintaining, regaining, or advancing in employment through better communicating these services and their benefits.
- Provide training and technical assistance to businesses on best practices for recruiting and retaining employees with disabilities.
- Support apprenticeships, paid internships, and on–the–job training opportunities to enhance customers' employability, in partnership with LWDBs and the business community.
- Utilize the results of the new comprehensive vocational assessment to evaluate customers' skills, abilities, interests, as well as potential barriers to successful participation in, or completion of, training programs.
- Complete required meetings at the end of every post–secondary term to review grades, progress, and support needs of customers participating in associate's, baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral programs.

DSHS/DVR will utilize the following strategies to improve its services to businesses:

- Engage Business Specialists in the development and implementation of LWDB industry sector strategies and cross–program business engagement activities.
- Lead coordinated engagement of federal contractors and subcontractors, linking these contractors to the skilled job seekers with disabilities they seek.

Increase visibility in Washington's business community through a methodical outreach and marketing plan which includes participation in local boards of commerce, membership in professional organizations (e.g. the Society for Human Resource Management), representation at career and recruitment fairs, and the provision of business training (e.g. Americans with Disabilities Act and reasonable accommodation trainings).

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

DSHS/DVR plays significant roles on the state Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and LWDBs which contribute to strategies and activities that assist partners in serving individuals with disabilities. These roles will strengthen under WIOA. To coordinate and align workforce development services at the local level, DSHS/DVR and the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) have created and signed a Shared Vision, Values, & Principles of Collaboration document which outlines how DSHS/DVR and LWDBs will provide integrated services to individuals with disabilities.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

The goals, priorities, and strategies outlined in this Combined State Plan align with both the findings of the 2014 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) and the strategic vision of

Washington's workforce development system. Within the description of each goal, and the priorities and strategies which support it, is a description of supporting CSNA findings.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

DSHS/DVR will continue to fund the following innovation and expansion activities:

- Washington State Rehabilitation Council (WSRC) and Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) operations.
- High school transition programs established with six county developmental disabilities programs. Under this model, DSHS/DVR contracts with county-level developmental disabilities programs to place supported employment transition customers with developmental disabilities in permanent employment upon high school completion. The county program pays CRP subcontractors a monthly fee to provide community based assessment, job placement, and job coaching services. When the customer is placed into employment and begins extended services, DSHS/DVR pays the county program an outcome fee of $8,670.00. As all county subcontractors are CRPs, these subcontractors receive a monthly service delivery fee from the county that is not outcome-based; these monthly fees differ from DSHS/DVR's milestone contract system, which provides payment only when outcomes are achieved.
- Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE) comprehensive series of web-based on-demand training modules for CRP Supported Employment Specialists. CRP staff attrition is very high and frequently new Supported Employment specialists are hired with little or no experience. This significantly slows service delivery and often reduces successful outcomes. This training partnership, which includes the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER), DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration, DSHS Behavioral Health and Service Integration Administration, and other supported employment partners, provides a suite of on-demand training modules which supports CRPs in retaining highly-trained staff.
- Soft skills assessment and training curricula sharing with workforce development programs, community partners, and Tribal VR programs.
- Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss Center outreach activities which identify and connect students who are Deaf or hard of hearing with DSHS/DVR services.

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.

DSHS/DVR has identified Goal One, Priority Two strategies and activities to specifically target equitable access for unserved and underserved populations. The activities include, but are not limited to: enhanced outreach to students with disabilities in partnership with OSPI, the Center for Change in Transition Services, and local education agencies; targeted outreach to Washingtonians with disabilities who identify as Hispanic or Latino; and new business partnerships which provide career pathways for highly skilled adults living with an autism spectrum disorder in Washington's technology industry. When served, these populations will experience equitable access to services and resources, including Supported Employment services, needed to achieve competitive employment outcomes within integrated settings.

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.

INTRODUCTION

This section provides an evaluation of DSHS/DVR's implementation of the goals and priorities established in the previous state plan, the FFY 2015 DSHS/DVR State Plan. This evaluation includes data analysis, performance and activity summaries, and descriptions of performance challenges and their effects on DSHS/DVR progress. Special consideration is given to Supported Employment services. Lastly, a description of funded innovation and expansion activities is included.

FFY 2015 EVALUATION: GOALS, STRATEGIES, & BARRIERS

DSHS/DVR rehabilitated 3,191 customers in FFY 2015, supporting these individuals with disabilities in achieving gainful employment. This was an increase in closed-rehabilitated outcomes of 386 (12.0%) from the previous year.

In FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR accepted 9,450 applications, a decrease of 284 (3.0%) from applications accepted during FFY 2014; 8,616 individuals were determined eligible for services, a decrease of 51 (1.0%); and 4,947 new Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) were developed, a decrease of 432 (9.0%) from this prior year.

The continued reduction in applications and eligible individuals during FFY 2015 occurred at a slower pace than in FFY 2014 due to increased outreach in select locales. DSHS/DVR's concern regarding reduced applications prompted statewide outreach initiatives. Preliminary analysis indicates these outreach activities have been moderately successful.

While overall vocational rehabilitation (VR) service volumes decreased, service costs increased. The average cost of a rehabilitation closure increased from FFY 2014 to FFY 2015, the fourth such increase in the last five years. The steady increase in average rehabilitation costs over the last five years is significant, a $ 1,183 increase from FFY 2011 to FFY 2015. Said differently, the average FFY 2015 rehabilitation costs DSHS/DVR 120.65% of FFY 2011 costs.

DSHS/DVR continues to closely monitor its fiscal resources to assure maximum case service capacity is maintained.

DSHS/DVR Average Closed-Rehabilitated Case Costs: FFY 2011 - FFY 2015

FFY	Average Closed-Rehabilitated Case Costs	Percent Change from Prior Year
2011	$5,727	6.1%
2012	$6,101	6.5%
2013	$6,775	11.1%
2014	$6,698	-1.1%
2015	$6,910	3.2%

GOAL ONE: PROVIDE TIMELY, INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES TO DSHS/DVR CUSTOMERS THAT RESULT IN EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES THAT MEET THE CUSTOMER'S NEEDS.

PRIORITIES & EVALUATION

Goal One Priority

Outreach, education, and marketing efforts will be targeted to individuals with disabilities who are: already working to retain or progress in employment, previous DSHS/DVR customers who may have lost employment and want to become reemployed, college students nearing completion of their academic programs, individuals who have exhausted their Unemployment Insurance benefits, and other groups who are identified as underserved.

- Evaluation: Outreach plans were developed and implemented by local DSHS/DVR offices to reach these targeted populations. Overall, the success of these plans was mixed and continued emphasis is being placed on reaching these underserved populations. Efforts to coordinate outreach with the Employment Security Department and LWDBs proved to be more challenging than anticipated and will be a focus of improvement throughout development and implementation of this Combined State Plan.

Goal One Priority

Strengthen efforts to assist customers in learning lifelong job seeking skills so they know how to get and keep jobs when DSHS/DVR is no longer in their lives, including how to be an effective self-advocate to obtain needed reasonable accommodations on the job.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR hired and deployed 18 Business Specialists across the state to assist customers in successfully conducting a self-directed job search. These specialists assist customers in learning lifelong job seeking skills (e.g. how to find job openings and submit successful applications, resume development, how to prepare for and effectively respond to interview questions, and how to request a reasonable accommodation).

Goal One Priority

Improve communication and the continuity of communication with customers while they are developing and implementing IPEs, so that individuals better understand what services are available, where they are in the process, and whether they are making progress towards their employment goal.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR published a Customer Handbook that contains extensive information designed to inform and guide individuals through each step of the VR process. The handbook is given to every customer and reviewed periodically during counseling and guidance sessions so the individual understands where they are in the VR process and whether they are making progress towards their employment goal.

Goal One Priority

Place greater emphasis and reinforce the customer's active role in the VR process, including better assistance to customers who require job search and placement services, especially those who conduct a self-directed job search.

- Evaluation: Use of the Customer Handbook as a counseling and guidance tool reinforces the customer's involvement throughout the VR process. In addition, the Business Specialists that have been hired are specifically providing intensified support for customers who require assistance with job search and placement.

Goal One Priority

Increase DSHS/DVR's ability to assist customers to achieve higher wage jobs with health benefits.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR conducted Lean A3 events to identify ways to encourage more customers to pursue higher wage jobs with benefits. This produced specific recommendations that have been incorporated in to DSHS/DVR Counselor practices (e.g. assisting customers to conduct more substantive labor market research before choosing an employment goal, encouraging customers to consider employment goals beyond the entry-level, and providing customers with better information about training opportunities that lead to higher wage jobs).

Goal One Priority

Improve the statewide consistency of timely, individualized services to customers who have a broad range of needs and capabilities.

- Evaluation: Use of the new Customer Handbook is designed to improve the statewide consistency of services by assuring that customers fully understand the VR process and scope of services that are available to them. Closer monitoring of case movement and various management reports has improved the timeliness of service delivery.

Goal One Priority

Improve the organizational culture to focus even more on customer service, cultural sensitivity, and addressing each individual's barriers to employment throughout the VR process.

- Evaluation: Use of the new Customer Handbook as counseling and guidance tool is designed to foster more emphasis on customer service. In addition, DSHS/DVR has operationalized expanded and improved elements of a comprehensive vocational assessment that include cultural elements and more complete identification of an individual's barriers to employment throughout the VR process.

Goal One Priority

Use the Lean process to identify ways that DSHS/DVR counselors can provide more counseling and guidance to customers.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR did not conduct a Lean process to identify ways that DSHS/DVR counselors can provide more counseling and guidance to customers.

Goal One Priority

Continue serving a racially and ethnically diverse customer population that reflects the demographics of the state.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR continued to serve a mix of customers that fully reflects the diversity of the state. Identified gaps in key demographic populations were addressed through targeted outreach.

Goal One Priority

More fully utilize Independent Living (IL) and Assistive Technology (AT) services to assist customers in reducing or eliminating their disability barriers to employment. Assure that DSHS/DVR effectively utilizes AT within its offices to accommodate individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR revised and strengthened procedures to assure that IL and AT services are fully utilized to assist customers in reducing or eliminating their disability barriers to employment. In addition, DSHS/DVR as installed AT devices in all of its offices to accommodate individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing, and provided training to staff on use of these devices.

Goal One Priority

Keep customers better informed of where they are in the VR process as they progress towards their employment goal.

- Evaluation: Use of the new Customer handbook as a counseling and guidance tool assures that customers are kept informed of where they are in the VR process as they progress towards their employment goal.

Goal One Priority

Provide more timely and thorough Benefits Planning to customers who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) so they can make better informed choices about the types of jobs they seek and amount of hours they will work.

- Evaluation: All DSHS/DVR counselors have been trained to provide Benefits Planning to their customers who receive SSI. In addition, four DSHS/DVR Benefits Specialists provide Benefits Planning to customers who receive SSDI or both SSDI/SSI. Plans are underway to hire 12 Benefits Technicians who will provide additional Benefits Planning capacity statewide.

Goal One Priority

Improve and expand services to enhance earnings, employee benefits and career advancement for customers, including individuals served through supported employment.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR conducted Lean A3 events to identify ways to encourage more customers to pursue higher wage jobs with benefits. This produced specific recommendations that have been incorporated in to DSHS/DVR counselor practices (e.g. assisting customers to conduct more substantive labor market research before choosing an employment goal, encouraging customers to consider employment goals beyond the entry-level, and providing customers with better information about training opportunities that lead to higher wage jobs).

Goal One Priority

Conduct annual statewide case record reviews of case service practices to determine consistency and adherence with Federal/state requirements.

- Evaluation: FFY 2014 Statewide Case Review findings (conducted in FFY 2015 using FFY 2014 closures) were compiled in an extensive report and distributed to staff statewide. These findings have influenced WIOA implementation, case management software upgrades, and new staff trainings.

Goal One Priority

Use case review results to identify and implement improvements in quality and consistency of services.

- Evaluation: FFY 2014 Statewide Case Review findings (conducted in FFY 2015 using FFY 2014 closures) were compiled in an extensive report and distributed to staff statewide. These findings have influenced WIOA implementation, case management software upgrades, and new staff trainings.

Goal One Priority

In light of the limited and highly competitive job market, make more use of available labor market and post-secondary training information to improve vocational assessments and assist customers in better selecting employment goals that match the availability of real jobs.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR conducted Lean A3 events to identify ways to encourage more customers to pursue higher wage jobs with benefits. This produced specific recommendations that have been incorporated in to DSHS/DVR counselor practices (e.g. assisting customers to conduct more substantive labor market research before choosing an employment goal, encouraging customers to consider employment goals beyond the entry-level, and providing customers with better information about training opportunities that lead to higher wage jobs).

Goal One Priority

Increase collaboration within the WorkSource, Washington's One-Stop centers, to improve services to unemployed workers with disabilities who are eligible for DSHS/DVR services by better leveraging DSHS/DVR services with Workforce Investment Act and other workforce development programs.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR jointly developed principles of collaboration with the Washington Workforce Association (WWA) that is comprised of the LWDB directors across the state. These principles lay the foundation for collaboration within the One-Stop system to improve services to unemployed workers with disabilities who are eligible for DSHS/DVR services, and are the basis for LWDB memoranda of understanding with DSHS/DVR that operationalize integrated service delivery.

Goal One Priority

Increase collaboration with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to improve coordination of DSHS/DVR services with SBCTC workforce programs and Adult Basic Education programs.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR did not increase collaboration with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) to improve coordination of DSHS/DVR services with SBCTC workforce programs and Adult Basic Education programs. However, this continues to be a priority and DSHS/DVR will develop a cooperative agreement with the SBCTC to improve coordination.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

- Filling 18 Business Specialists positions to provide direct job placement support to DSHS/DVR customers who conduct self-directed job searches, including assistance with resume' development, interviewing skills, finding job leads, and submitting employment applications.

GOAL TWO: STRENGTHEN DSHS/DVR'S WORKFORCE AND IMPROVE ITS OVERALL ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS.

PRIORITIES & EVALUATION

Goal Two Priority

Redesign the overall in-service training program to assure that DSHS/DVR staff receives timely and accurate training and skill development as a foundation for consistent service delivery practices.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR continues to redesign the in-service training program, leveraging all staff WIOA trainings to develop new curricula and platforms. DSHS/DVR developed and implemented an initial phase of WIOA implementation trainings to all staff statewide. These trainings addressed WIOA Performance Accountability, Pre-employment Transition Services, the aforementioned Customer Handbook, and DSHS/DVR's new vocational assessment platform. In addition, DSHS/DVR conducted numerous digital follow-up sessions, using WebEx, to ensure staff issues were address and that implementation remained consistent

statewide. In addition to WIOA trainings, DSHS/DVR collaborated with the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER) to conduct a three-day In-Service Training for all staff. The training curriculum covered all aspects of service delivery and the event itself included a staff appreciation event in which each DSHS/DVR staff member was recognized.

Goal Two Priority

In accordance with the DSHS/DVR Cultural Competency Plan, appoint a total of four individuals to VRC positions from minority groups: one each who is African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic. Appoint one individual to a VRC position who is a Disabled Veteran and one who is an individual with a disability.

- Evaluation: Of the targeted groups, DSHS/DVR appointed all to VRC positions except for a Disabled Veteran.

Goal Two Priority

Develop and implement an action plan that responds to key areas of concern identified through the 2013 DSHS/DVR Employee Survey.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR implemented an action plan that responded to key areas of concern identified through the 2013 DSHS/DVR Employee Survey, focusing on better and more timely communication of key organizational changes and staff recognition.

Goal Two Priority

Develop and implement a DSHS/DVR succession plan that addresses long range attrition at all levels of the organization.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR did not develop a succession plan during FFY 2015. Instead, efforts focused on WIOA implementation.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

- Significant staff and resource investments in training, by the DSHS/DVR Rehabilitation Act Steering Committee and by DSHS/DVR in partnership with CCER.
- Continued to support supervisors to promote accountability by providing intensive coaching and direction to staff who need to develop or improve counseling skills to achieve qualitative case measures or productivity standards.

GOAL THREE: DISTINGUISH DSHS/DVR'S ROLE IN THE DISABILITY AND EMPLOYER COMMUNITIES AND LEVERAGE PARTNERSHIPS TO MAXIMIZE RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR DSHS/DVR CUSTOMERS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

PRIORITIES & EVALUATION

Goal Three Priority

Enhance and build partnerships that advance opportunities for individuals with disabilities to rapidly obtain employment, including supported employment.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR hired and deployed 18 Business Specialists statewide to assist customers in successfully conducting self-directed job searches. These specialists work closely with WorkSource Business Teams to identify job opportunities for DSHS/DVR customers. In addition, they assist DSHS/DVR customers in submitting timely employment applications, preparing for interviews, and requesting reasonable accommodations. In addition, DSHS/DVR has been actively involved with the Microsoft Corporation to fill 200 supported employment positions on its main campus in Redmond, Washington; virtually all of these positions will be filled by DSHS/DVR customers. A similar relationship has been forged between DSHS/DVR and web-based retailer Amazon to fill non-supported employment positions with DSHS/DVR customers at its distribution center in Kent, Washington.

Goal Three Priority

Develop relationships with employers to create opportunities for customers to gain work experience through internships and obtain regular jobs that pay well with benefits.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR hired and deployed 18 Business Specialists statewide who do extensive outreach and marketing to local businesses, and work closely with WorkSource Business Teams.

Goal Three Priority

Market DSHS/DVR to employers by categorizing the similar employment goals of customers and strategically targeting employers in corresponding occupations.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR hired and deployed 18 Business Specialists statewide who do extensive outreach and marketing to local businesses, utilizing reports that group customer employment goals by category as a basis for targeting outreach to businesses in corresponding occupations.

Goal Three Priority

Increase understanding and awareness of DSHS/DVR services in local communities.

- Evaluation: Outreach plans were developed and implemented by local DSHS/DVR offices to serve a broader array of underserved populations and promote increased awareness of available VR services.

Goal Three Priority

Maximize DSHS/DVR local-level knowledge of community programs and services that could benefit DSHS/DVR customers.

- Evaluation: Local DSHS/DVR Supervisors used unit meetings to broaden their staff's knowledge of community resources to benefit customers.

Goal Three Priority

Collaborate with disability and employment partners to sponsor events that focus on disability recruitment, hiring and retention issues such as mentoring, disability awareness, reasonable accommodation, customized employment, transportation, independent living, benefits issues, etc.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR collaborated with the Community Networks Program (a statewide consortium of local organizations) to fund over 50 local projects and events focusing on disability recruitment, hiring and retention, including events focusing on the employment of students and youth with disabilities.

Goal Three Priority

Bring together employers, DSHS/DVR staff and other workforce partners on a regular basis at the local level to update trends in the job market and maintain a good understanding of employer needs, so that customers are given useful guidance and current information.

- Evaluation: This activity occurred sporadically in some locales but was not implemented on a statewide basis due to staff turnover in the statewide DSHS/DVR Business Services Manager position. The position was responsible for facilitating this priority and became vacant during FFY 2015. It took time to recruit and hire a new incumbent; during this period it was not possible to fully implement this priority.

Goal Three Priority

Support the DSHS/DVR Business Services Team in developing ongoing employer relationships and providing job placement assistance to customers, including participation in the nationwide employer network sponsored by the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation.

- Evaluation: The statewide DSHS/DVR Business Services Manager position became vacant and was re-hired during FFY 2015. The new Business Services Manager is reinvigorating the team and providing extensive support to develop ongoing business relationships.

Goal Three Priority

Serve on local WorkSource Business Service Teams to market DSHS/DVR job seekers to employers.

- Evaluation: This activity occurred sporadically in some locales but was not implemented on a statewide basis due to staff turnover in the statewide DSHS/DVR Business Services Manager position. The position was responsible for facilitating this priority and became

vacant during FFY 2015. It took time to recruit and hire a new incumbent; during this period it was not possible to fully implement this priority.

Goal Three Priority

Conduct regular meetings and information sharing with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) at the local level to improve communication and better support service delivery coordination.

- Evaluation: Every local DSHS/DVR unit conducted information sharing meetings with CRPs on a quarterly basis.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

- Filled 18 Business Specialists positions to conduct employer outreach and serve on WorkSource Business Teams.
- DSHS/DVR continues to expand its knowledge and use of labor market information as well as its education and training capacity to ensure the number of customers trained in an industry matches the number of expected job openings.

FFY 2015 GOAL FOUR: INCREASE OUTREACH TO IMPROVE AND STRENGTHEN DSHS/DVR'S CONNECTION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH EMPLOYERS.

PRIORITIES & EVALUATION

Goal Four Priority

Increase DSHS/DVR's visibility with and connection to Washington employers. Continue to expand the network capabilities of DSHS/DVR's Employment Services Team.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR hired and deployed 18 Business Specialists statewide that have significantly increased DSHS/DVR's visibility with and connection to local businesses, actively engaging to promote employment opportunities for DSHS/DVR customers.

Goal Four Priority

Actively participate in the national employer relations model sponsored by the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and integrate these activities into state-level initiatives. Implement the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP).

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR worked closely with CSAVR to implement TAP and train all DSHS/DVR Counselors to assist customers in using the portal as an element of their job search activities.

Goal Four Priority

Increase the number of customers who participate in internships that lead to competitive employment.

- Evaluation: The number of DSHS/DVR customers participating in internships decreased in FFY 2015. The reasons for this decline will be studied and renewed efforts made to increase customer internships, particularly for students and youth with disabilities.

Goal Four Priority

Actively use the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation NET system for developing employer relationships and increasing employment opportunities.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR actively participated in the NET throughout FFY 2015 and used it to make contact with national employers doing business in Washington.

Goal Four Priority

Market DSHS/DVR to employers by attending local employment expos, job fairs, employer association meetings, and employment events or conferences.

- Evaluation: Business Specialists regularly market DSHS/DVR to local employers statewide by attending employment expos, job fairs, employer association meetings, and employment events or conferences.

Goal Four Priority

Increase the number of DSHS/DVR customers placed into state or Federal government jobs and with private employers that are Federal contractors.

- Evaluation: DSHS/DVR was designated by the state Human Resources Office to coordinate the Supported Employment in State Government (SESG) Program, which enables state agencies to establish and hire supported employment positions without the position counting towards their FTE allotments. Primary recruitment to fill SESG position is aimed at DSHS/DVR customers. In addition, DSHS/DVR has worked with the Department of Services for the Blind and Employment Security Department to add a feature on WorkSource website that will permit job matching between applicants with disabilities and employers that are Federal contractors or sub-contractors who must meet Section 503 hiring requirements.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

- Filled 18 Business Specialists statewide to conduct employer outreach and serve on WorkSource Business Teams.
- DSHS/DVR continues to implement outreach strategies targeting mid-sized and smaller businesses on an ongoing basis.

PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

GOAL ONE PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

DSHS/DVR staff capacity for program improvement projects has been overtaxed by WIOA implementation. As a result, many priorities established in the FFY 2015 State Plan were reprioritized to accommodate WIOA implementation (e.g. efforts to coordinate outreach and increase

collaboration with ESD and SBCTC were reprioritized, as WIOA administrative responsibilities have occupied respective program staff). This Combined State Plan refocuses these collaborative efforts beginning in 2016.

GOAL TWO PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

DSHS/DVR must improve and refine its recruitment practices to attract candidates from targeted groups; it has proven challenging to recruit individuals for counselor positions who are African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or a Disabled Veteran.

DSHS/DVR staff capacity has been overtaxed by WIOA implementation. As a result, priorities established in the FFY 2015 State Plan were reprioritized (e.g. development of a DSHS/DVR succession plan). Such priorities will be reassessed during the 2017 - 2020 planning cycle, as staff capacity allows.

GOAL THREE PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

While local Business Specialists provided valuable services to customers and businesses statewide, key priorities were not accomplished due to the vacant Business Services Manager position. With the recent hire of a new Business Services Manager, DSHS/DVR has set ambitious goals for its coordinated business engagement platform in this Combined State Plan.

GOAL FOUR PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

DSHS/DVR did not experience significant performance barriers in achieving priorities outlined under goal four.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

GOAL ONE PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

DSHS/DVR staff capacity for program improvement projects has been diverted to focus on WIOA implementation. As a result, many priorities established in the FFY 2015 State Plan were reprioritized to accommodate WIOA implementation (e.g. efforts to coordinate outreach and increase collaboration with ESD and SBCTC were reprioritized, as WIOA administrative responsibilities have occupied respective program staff). This Combined State Plan refocuses these collaborative efforts beginning in 2016.

GOAL TWO PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

DSHS/DVR must improve and refine its recruitment practices to attract candidates from targeted groups; it has proven challenging to recruit individuals for counselor positions who are African American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or a Disabled Veteran.

DSHS/DVR staff capacity has been diverted to focus on WIOA implementation. As a result, priorities established in the FFY 2015 State Plan were reprioritized (e.g. development of a DSHS/DVR

succession plan). Such priorities will be reassessed during the 2017 - 2020 planning cycle, as staff capacity allows.

GOAL THREE PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

While local Business Specialists provided valuable services to customers and businesses statewide, key priorities were not accomplished due to the vacant Business Services Manager position. With the recent hire of a new Business Services Manager, DSHS/DVR has set ambitious goals for its coordinated business engagement platform in this Combined State Plan.

GOAL FOUR PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

DSHS/DVR did not experience significant performance barriers in achieving priorities outlined under goal four.

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.

FFY 2015 SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT EVALUATION: GOALS, STRATEGIES, & BARRIERS

PRIORITIES & EVALUATION

DSHS/DVR’s goal in FFY 2015 was to serve approximately 1445 customers in supported employment and to achieve approximately 254 successful rehabilitations. This goal was exceeded by achieving 362 supported employment rehabilitations in FFY 2015.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

- Continued use of a model of service delivery in partnership with county developmental disability programs and community rehabilitation programs
- Continued active marketing of customers to local businesses

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

PERFORMANCE BARRIERS

DSHS/DVR did not experience significant performance barriers in achieving these goals and priorities.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

DSHS/DVR PERFORMANCE ON WIOA INDICATORS

To establish performance targets for program years 2017 and 2018, DSHS/DVR analyzed customers' quarterly earnings and job retention outcomes. Washington's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board supported this process by analyzing education outcomes and provided DSHS/DVR with aggregate results. These data resources have been utilized to report DSHS/DVR performance on the Performance Accountability indicators established in WIOA Section 116.

DSHS/DVR Performance on WIOA Section 116 Performance Accountability Indicators

WIOA Measure	PY 2012	PY 2013	PY 2014	PY 2015*
Employment Two Quarters after Exit	unavailable	49.56%	46.81%	52.44%*
Employment Four Quarters after Exit	unavailable	43.91%	45.23%	53.06%*
Median Wage Two Quarters after Exit	unavailable	$ 3,060.50	$ 3,072.00	$ 3,077.00*
Credential Attainment	54.68%**	55.39%**	58.20%**	unavailable
Skill Gains	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable
Business Engagement	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable

*Based on partial year data, including two quarters

**Based on averages of quarterly outcome aggregates, does not reflect yearly actuals

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

FFY 2015 FUNDED INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES

During FFY 2015, DSHS/DVR reserved funds for the Washington State Rehabilitation Council and Washington State Independent Living Council. Additional funded innovation and expansion activities are listed.

- Continued implementation of high school transition programs established with six county developmental disabilities programs to place supported employment transition customers with developmental disabilities in permanent employment upon high school completion. The county program pays CRP subcontractors a monthly fee to provide community based assessment, job placement, and job coaching services. When the customer is placed into employment and begins extended services, DSHS/DVR pays the county program an outcome fee of $8,670.00. As all county subcontractors are CRPs, these subcontractors receive a monthly service delivery fee from the county that is not outcome-based; these monthly fees differ from DSHS/DVR's milestone contract system, which provides payment only when outcomes are achieved.
- Investment in the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (WISE) comprehensive series of web-based on-demand training modules for CRP Supported Employment Specialists to support CRP staff development. CRP staff attrition is very high and frequently new Supported Employment specialists are hired with little or no experience. This

significantly slows service delivery and often reduces successful outcomes. This training partnership, which includes the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER), DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration, DSHS Behavioral Health and Service Integration Administration, and other supported employment partners, provides a suite of on-demand training modules which supports CRPs in retaining highly-trained staff.

- Development and launch of an assessment tool and training curriculum that will provide DSHS/DVR customers with training to build their Soft Skills, including an assessment tool for VR counselors to determine if an individual requires training to build their skills or some type of mental health or other clinical treatment.
- Expanded availability of the WorkStrides Career Exploration Workshop to customers on a statewide basis. It is presently available at select DSHS/DVR locations and continues to be expanded statewide.

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 PARTNERS & AGREEMENTS

DSHS/DVR primarily provides supported employment services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and individuals with mental health disabilities. Of these two customer groups, individuals with developmental disabilities represent the majority of supported employment outcomes.

DSHS/DVR's success in serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is based on a long-standing relationship with the DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration (DSHS/DDA). DSHS/DDA is committed to funding extended services for all of its clients who achieve a supported employment outcome through DSHS/DVR.

Substantial resource reductions within the DSHS Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery - Mental Health (DBHR-MH), DSHS/DVR's supported employment partner for customers with mental health disabilities, has limited State capacity to provide extended services to this population. Diligent efforts continue to address these reductions. DSHS/DVR continues its collaboration with DBHR-MR, the Mental Health Employment Consortium, and the Washington Community Mental Health Council to expand the availability of extended services through alternative resources and innovative approaches. These efforts intend to establish cooperative agreements with all Behavioral Health Organizations (BHOs) responsible for county-level delivery of community mental health services.

DSHS/DVR continues to promote the use of Ticket to Work as a potential income source for developmental disability, mental health, and traumatic brain injury service providers to build their capacity for providing extended support services.

During the 2017 - 2020 planning cycle, DSHS/DVR will collaborate with DBHR-MH to leverage the strong state-level partnership to facilitate local-level agreement development. In addition, DSHS/DVR will collaborate with the DSHS Aging and Long Term Support Administration to explore funding of extended services to be provided for individuals with traumatic brain injuries and other significant disabilities who require supported employment.

Many individuals with disabilities would benefit from supported employment, yet do not have access to a long term funding source for extended services. In response, DSHS/DVR has encouraged supported employment providers to focus on developing natural supports within customers' workplaces.

DSHS/DVR strategies for expanding the availability of supported employment services:

- Participate in an interagency service committee which supports initiatives and increased employment outcomes for persons living with developmental disabilities, mental health disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and traumatic brain injuries.

- Train staff and partners on Social Security Work Incentives, Plan to Achieve Self Sufficiency, and other work incentives to identify optional funding sources.
- Provide technical assistance on the use of natural supports in the workplace.
- Coordinate cross-program training opportunities on innovative supported employment strategies.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS & TITLE VI FUNDS

For 2017 - 2020, DSHS/DVR estimates the Title VI Supported Employment Grant will fund between 1,450 and 1,600 customers who receive supported employment services through Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs), resulting in 300 - 400 supported employment outcomes per year. At these levels, DSHS/DVR estimates serving approximately 6,100 supported employment IPEs and producing 1,400 supporting employment outcomes during the four-year period of this plan. DSHS/DVR also will use the Title I Vocational Rehabilitation Services Grant to fund supported employment for additional customers when Title VI funds have been expended.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

DSHS/DVR provides supported employment services primarily to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DSHS/DVR and its partners continue to pursue innovative strategies to expand these services to other populations, as resources are often comparatively scarce.

The State of Washington has applied for a Medicaid 1115(c) Waiver that is pending approval. If approved, the waiver will fund supported employment as a Medicaid service, expanding the availability of extended services to individuals who experience a wide array of significant disabilities.

Through continued collaboration, innovative approaches, and the use of natural supports, DSHS/DVR and its partners will be able DSHS/DVR will expand the availability, quality, and scope of extended services for all individuals who require supported employment.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

DSHS/DVR customers receiving Supported Employment services transition from ongoing support services to extended services when stable, satisfactory job performance is achieved. The timeframe for this transition is within 24 months of customers beginning employment, unless a longer timeframe has been specified in the IPE. While WIOA amends the Rehabilitation Act to permit DSHS/DVR to fund extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities for a period not to exceed four years, DSHS/DVR has chosen not to fund extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities.

CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

Name of designated State agency **Department of Social and Health Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Andres Aguirre**

Title of Authorized Representative: **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

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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 **DSHS/DVR**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Andres Aguirre**

Title of Authorized Representative: **DVR 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.

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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 **DSHS/DVR**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Andres Aguirre**

Title of Authorized Representative: **DVR 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

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;

SRC Response (a): The Washington State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for the Blind is mandated by the federal Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act and is authorized in Washington RCW 74.18.070–74.18.100.

Mission: The major purpose of the Council is to develop, analyze, and make recommendations to state strategic plan goals, the state vocational rehabilitation plan, state policies, and Department activities to insure that persons who are blind in the state of Washington receive the most effective and efficient vocational rehabilitation services possible. In fulfilling its duties, the council:

• Provides direct guidance to the Director of the DSB on behalf of the public and consumers;

• Where appropriate, advises or reports to the Governor or makes recommendations to the State Legislature to promote efficient and effective services; and

• Enhances the services, opportunities, and rights of Washingtonians who are blind by working closely with other state councils, state agencies and state organizations whose programs may impact such services.

In addition, where appropriate, this Council provides guidance and makes recommendations about other programs and services provided by the Department including the Independent Living Program services provided to children and adults, the Older Blind Independent Living Program, and the Business Enterprise Program.

The SRC for the Blind meets 4 times each year. Members provide feedback to the Director in the areas of planning, policy, performance, cost savings–meeting the challenges of continuing budget impacts, information accessibility in state government, and other areas as appropriate. Each meeting includes time for public comment allowing individuals and stakeholders from across the state to give input to the SRC in person or by toll free conference call.

The SRC for the Blind prepared extensive comments on the proposed regulations for the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act and actively participated in preliminary development of the agency's 5–year strategic plan and the new Workforce Combined State Plan.

The SRC also conducts the Customer Satisfaction survey for all closed cases as one means of determining effectiveness of VR program services.

The SRC for the Blind is proud of the relationship we have with the Director and staff of DSB, and the partnerships we have with key stakeholder groups.

WIOA NPRM Comments: The SRC for the Blind developed extensive comments on proposed rules for the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act. Comments included discussion of the definition of competitive integrated employment and the potential impact on employees at the Lighthouse for the Blind employed in highly competitive positions; new transition expenditure requirements serving students and whether such requirements could force agencies into Order of Selection; and how services would be obtained for those who had been formerly served as homemakers given that there have been no increases in IL funding over the years.

DSB Strategic Plan: SRC members participated in the department's strategic planning initiative with a stated goal of determining the agency focus for the next five years. This included completing online surveys, participating in a two–day staff event, and working on various subgroups for specific initiatives. This is the first time the SRC was actively involved in agency wide strategic planning.

SRC Customer Satisfaction Survey: The University of Washington Center on Technology and Disability Studies conducts an anonymous satisfaction survey, on behalf of the SRC for the Blind, for VR customers who were closed in the federal fiscal year. This year, the survey was conducted in November 2015. Surveys were completed online or by phone. Following the completion of the 2014 survey, the SRC for the Blind made clarity revisions to the wording of the questions, then reviewed and approved them during a quarterly meeting. The questions are aligned to Governor Inslee's Results Washington initiatives. Questions were designed to address the three categories that the Results Washington initiatives focus on, including Accuracy, Timeliness, and Respectfulness. Two additional categories were reviewed for satisfaction, including Training.

53% of the customers surveyed responded. Of those responding, 61% of the customers experienced successful employment outcomes at the time of closure. Satisfaction results for the agency increased in all survey categories in 2015 from the previous year by two to seven percentage points.

SRC Input on Combined State Plan: The SRC for the Blind has taken initiative to learn about and understand the new requirements of WIOA and how they will impact the VR program at DSB. The SRC convened a work group to develop comments on DSB's portion of the Combined State Plan which are included below. Additionally, the SRC and the agency jointly conducted a statewide public forum via toll free teleconference and solicited email comments on the Plan via the DSB web site.

SRC Comments on the DSB portion of the Combined State Plan:

Transition Services (d): The SRC for the Blind commends DSB for its innovative planning to include students from age 9 in meaningful VR transition activities that will truly enhance later employment opportunities and skills for these students.

The SRC also encourages DSB to implement greater collaboration with organizations of blind consumers who offer mentorship and other programs for blind and low vision students. Having a positive relationship with blind and low vision adults helps to foster positive attitudes and high expectations for blind students. The SRC believes this collaboration should be a key element of the Transition services offered by DSB.

[Agency response to SRC Comment on Transition Services (d): The Agency appreciates the support from the SRC on our vision for meaningful pre–employment transition services. The Agency is in full

agreement that the organizations of blind consumers will play a key role in our successful implementation of the new requirements for pre–employment transition services in providing critical peer supports, mentorship and guidance, and we will be looking to discovering innovative opportunities for partnering as we move forward. DSB plans to formally solicit proposals from the blind consumer groups, and other collaborators, for Transition projects to expand Pre–ETS services as outlined in WIOA.].

Coordination with Employers (g): The SRC has strong concerns about engagement and partnership with Workforce partners and particular with respect to One Stop Career Centers. The SRC was concerned that this section expressed a strong vision without clear strategies. DSB does not identify strong relationships in this section as in others to make this achievable and realistic. The SRC will closely follow implementation of this section.

[Agency response to SRC Comment on Coordination with Employers (g): The Agency understands the caution and concerns expressed by the SRC regarding the Agency developing its core partner role with other WIOA partner agencies and business. The Agency had been left out of the loop since 1998 WIA and the task ahead of us is to build relationships from scratch to develop a partnership of equals and mutual beneficence. The Agency has high expectations of the new WIOA partnerships, and knows there is much work ahead to bring our participant base equally into the array of services (as needed) that are available through the One–Stop system. This issue is a focus of one of the agency's three Strategic Initiatives.]

Interagency Cooperation (h): The SRC is pleased that DSB will develop cooperative agreements and a stronger working relationship with agencies responsible for Medicaid, developmental disabilities services and mental health services. These programs serve or should serve significant numbers of DSB participants in providing employment supports and services. This is an important, long overdue and positive change.

[Agency response to SRC Comment on Interagency Cooperation (h): The Agency appreciates the support from the SRC towards securing these critical agreements. DSB continues to work with partner agencies in an effort to bring about these changes.]

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (i): The SRC did not reach consensus on all aspects of this comment. Some representatives strongly support DSB's current staff qualifications matrix believing that VR professionals have unique job requirements that can best be met through high education and experience requirements. Other representatives felt that more entry level opportunities should be fostered that would encourage employment of blind or low vision individuals who had strong skills related to blindness services and employment, but not a formal degree in a VR profession.

The SRC expressed strong consensus that DSB should do more to recruit and retain VRC's who are blind or low vision, noting that only two counselors have vision loss despite 28% of staff reporting a disability. They also noted that DSB has more deaf counselors than blind counselors.

The SRC expressed consensus that DSB should place emphasis on involving consumer organizations in providing training and mentorship for VR staff particularly since most VR staff are not blind or low vision. Representatives appreciated that staff are encouraged to attend state conventions of the consumer organizations but believe that the training relationship should be more ongoing and focused on particular adjustment aspects of vision loss.

[Agency response to SRC Comment on Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (i): The Agency shares the SRC's desire for greater representation of blind and low vision counseling staff. We have listed as one of our strategic initiatives to "…target recruitment of qualified blind staff to increase representation across all levels of the agency". We reserve the intensive labor of supervising an internship opportunity for Rehab Counseling graduates that have vision impairment, and scout for opportunities among the caseload to develop vendor or other opportunities to increase peer representation. We alert consumer organizations to all external recruitments. Another strategic initiative is to foster "...on–going blindness awareness and experience for all DSB staff and service providers", and we will be looking for opportunities to deepen the expertise of staff in the field of blindness. At the same time, DSB highly values agency staff who are blind and currently serve in other capacities key to the success of our VR and other programs, including: as a member of the Executive Team, in management of the Older Blind program, in support of the SRC; in providing assistive technology services, alternative skills training in our residential center and in the field, English as a second language training, child and family consultation, rehabilitation technician support, entrepreneurial training, and business and external partner relations.]

Statewide Assessment (j): The SRC commends DSB for conducting good demographic data analysis under this section. The SRC also suggests that DSB consider conducting analysis of individuals who are blind with co–occurring disabilities compared with the general population. This would emphasize the extent to which services that meet the needs of these specific populations are needed in order for these individuals to achieve employment outcomes and related benefits at the same rate as other VR participants and as the general population.

[Agency response to SRC Comment on Statewide Assessment (j): The Agency will consider the suggestion for additional data analysis for future planning, and will look to engage in deeper dialogue with the SRC for ascertaining effective and meaningful data collection methods towards this end.]

Order of Selection (m): The SRC is concerned that based on the agency's proposed Order of Selection, there will not really be a determination of who has the most significant disabilities and instead it will be first come first served after the priorities for job retention and students are met. The SRC believes that DSB needs to consider a definition for most significantly disabled that categorically ranks customers.

[Agency response to SRC Comment on Order of Selection (m): The Agency will be working closely with the SRC in developing a new Washington Administrative Code around order of selection once the federal regulations are finalized. The Agency wants to ensure that our federal partners understand our intent to include those individuals who require immediate equipment or services in order to retain current employment, and those youth we started to engage through pre–employment transition services, in the prioritization if an order of selection is required. The Agency will look to input by the SRC to develop a Washington Administrative Code that best meets agency participant needs.]

State Strategies (o): The SRC is concerned that the strategies listed here are very desirable but may be unrealistic given the previous history and lack of partnership. The SRC has identified this as a focus area for ongoing monitoring.

[Agency response to SRC Comment on State Strategies (o): The Agency agrees that the new efforts for collaboration among the WIOA partners, and efforts to bring about true accessibility so agency participants can make use of and benefit from the One–Stop Centers, will be challenging to accomplish. The Agency agrees that these efforts will need to be the focus of on–going monitoring

and strategic discussion among the SRC and the Agency, and the Agency welcomes the insights and efforts of the SRC towards success in this endeavor. Blind Washington residents need equal access to the range of services, and the Agency is committed to the long–term and consistent championing of this basic requirement as a core partner. The implementation of WIOA in Washington State is providing a pivotal opportunity for DSB to impact the issue of access in our Workforce system. And we are experiencing some positive movement at the state policy level and in the Combined State Plan.]

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

Interspersed among SRC input and recommendations, see above.

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;

Agency response (b): The Washington State Department of Services for the Blind does not request a waiver of statewide services, as we do provide vocational rehabilitation services statewide.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

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;

Agency response (c):

Federal, State, and local agencies and programs The Washington State Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) believes that collaboration with stakeholders is essential to assisting people with disabilities to successfully become employed. Such an ongoing effort maximizes resources and addresses the quality of life issues that can enhance the ability of a person with a disability to obtain and maintain employment. We have active collaboration with the following organizations and agencies (and formal memorandums of understanding (MOUs) where noted).

The DSB engages in activities with the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB), school districts, teachers of the visually impaired, and families of students with a visual disability. If the student has a co–occurring disability, we advise co–enrollment with our partner agency the DSHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). DSB, DVR and the Office of Superintendent of Instruction (OSPI) have a memorandum of understanding of how all parties support transition youth services.

The DSB engages with the Center for Change in Transition Services (CCTS). The CCTS is a Washington State Needs Project funded annually by federal resources from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The goal of CCTS is to improve post–school outcomes for students with disabilities in the state. CCTS has provided transition services training, resources and technical support to DSB staff in support of the agency's transition youth services.

The DSB engages actively with Public Institutions of Higher Education. DSB and DVR have entered into a formal agreement with the Public Institutions of Higher Education in Washington. This agreement facilitates collaboration for our participants with disabilities who are attending Higher Education schools in Washington State. One of the primary components in the agreement concerns cost sharing for certain high cost accommodations.

The DSB engages in activities with tribal vocational rehabilitation programs, meeting quarterly in each region of the state with the eight partner tribal programs and the DVR, and all partners meet annually to refine the memorandum of understanding on how we will partner on service delivery.

The DSB engages with the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program through the Veteran's Administration (VA), and the agency has entered into a memorandum of understanding among the DVR and the VA on how all will partner to provide services among potentially shared customer base.

The DSB engages with the Washington Sensory Disability Services (WSDS). DSB staff partner with the WSDS in providing referrals and services to children who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or

visually impaired, or deaf–blind, and provides training and other supports to families and service providers. The WSDS is a strong partner within the Blind Youth Consortium.

The DSB engages with the Office of the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (ODHH). ODHH is a state agency that provides resources for our Deaf Blind participants, including telecommunication–related services, reasonable accommodations to access DSHS services and human services via regional service centers of the deaf and hard of hearing. ODHH manages the funds for the Deaf Blind Service Center, which provides information, referral and Support Service Providers for environmental interpretation.

The DSB engages with the Helen Keller National Center (HKNC). The Helen Keller National Center is a resource for DSB on Deaf–Blind resources and can provide contracted services to DSB participants as well as trainings for DSB staff for working effectively with DSB Deaf Blind participants.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

The DSB engages with the Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP) to broaden access and services to adaptive technology for the agency participants. The DSB and WATAP have an interagency agreement to facilitate equipment loans, technology assessment services and trainings. The DSB informs agency participants of funding mechanisms for adaptive technology through the Washington Access Technology Fund, and works with the Deaf Blind Equipment Program to coordinate technology assessment and training.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

None

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

The DSB engages with the Blind Youth Consortium, a quarterly meeting of partner agencies (DSB; Washington State School for the Blind; Washington Sensory Disability Services; Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.; Washington Talking Book and Braille Library; OSPI Educational School Districts; the Department of Early Learning; the Department of Health; Seattle Children's Hospital; University of Washington) to collaborate and share resources on blind youth issues within Washington State. The group worked to refine coordination of Birth – 3 vision services statewide, and have collaborated in the need to identify and provide services for individuals with either ocular and/or cortical visual impairment at the earliest point.

The DSB has been engaging with core partner Title I youth programs to discuss how we might collaborate under the new combined state plan, with their focus on out–of–school youth, and Title IV focus on in–school youth.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

None

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.

Agency response (d): DSB collaborates with a number of partners to coordinate statewide needs assessment and strategic planning activities for youth with visual impairment in Washington State.

The DSB Executive Director serves as a member of the Washington State Special Education Advisory Council which assists the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to set policy, and oversee performance regarding implementation of IDEA for students with disabilities throughout the state. The DSB Director brings to the Council a special emphasis on pre–employment services for school–age youth, as a part of professional training and IEP implementation.

There is active information sharing and strategic coordinated planning among the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB), the Washington Sensory Disability Services (WSDS), local educational districts and partner education, service and health care organizations in a formalized Blindness Youth Consortium, which meets throughout the year. Partners plan joint outreach efforts, coordinate referral of potential VR eligible youth, and implement process improvements for assessment & training services statewide in the areas of daily living skills, orientation and mobility, communication skills, access to technology, vocational aptitudes, interpersonal and social skills, and academic preparation for transition–age youth. A focus for this group has been to highlight and integrate early identification and services around cortical visual impairment as well as optical visual impairment.

Coordination with Early Intervention Services Ages Birth – 3

The Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) is signatory to a Memorandum of Understanding in coordination of early intervention services along with the following agencies:

• Department of Early Learning

• Department of Social and Health Services

• Department of Health

• Health Care Authority

• Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

DSB is represented on a governor–appointed board to oversee early intervention and learning services. DSB helps coordinate and provide services for families with children ages 0–3 who have visual impairments through non–VR dollars. The children are referred through outreach efforts among community partners such as local children’s hospitals and eye care physicians. DSB staff

provide families with advocacy, referral & information, and training services. DSB partners with service providers to provide training and family support workshops, group trainings and other family–focused events.

Coordination with K–12

The DSB Executive Director is an acting member on the state's Special Education Board. Agency counselors and staff develop relationships with local Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Special Ed Coordinators in order to facilitate the identification and referral of VR–eligible students.

Ages 3 – 8

DSB's Youth Services specialists provide on–going supports through non–VR dollars for children with visual impairment and their families through age 8, as needed. They provide children and their families with advocacy, referral & information, and training services, and assist in IEP and 504 planning.

Ages 9–13

Washington State interpretation of the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) allows for transition services as young as necessary, and DSB recognizes that providing pre–employment transition services as early as possible for blind youth is critical for success in their later transition to the adult world of work. DSB Youth Services specialists facilitate and manage pre–employment transition group service workshops for youth ages 9 – 13. The workshops provide an opportunity to introduce the skills to join in family labor, to gain exposure to the world of work, and to learn adapted methods for interacting within the community at large. These workshops are available statewide for customers. The agency plans to expand the scope and location of these workshops to better meet local pre–employment transition needs. The agency collaborates closely with local teachers of the visually impaired and the statewide educational service districts to identify and serve youth in these pre–employment transition group services. DSB Youth Services specialists also coordinate with statewide consumer, family and school organizations to facilitate youth adaptive skill and self–advocacy activities as services to groups.

Ages 14 – 24

DSB's Vocational Rehabilitation policy, WAC 67–25–399 – Vocational Rehabilitation Services – Transition Services for Students, allows individual application for vocational rehabilitation services at age 14, and requires the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for all students within 90 days of eligibility, which matches the timeline for adult services.

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;

DSB is signatory to an August 2014 interagency agreement among the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). The memorandum of understanding clarifies responsibility and coordination of roles in providing services and programs for those students who are both eligible for special education services under IDEA, and who are also eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. The current agreement remains in effect until August 31, 2017, but may require amendments after federal regulations are finalized.

The agreement outlines each agency's overall role and responsibilities relating to the provision of transition services to high school students with disabilities. This agreement provides for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment (IPE) before each student determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting.

Under this agreement, DSB routinely consults with and provides technical assistance to high schools and educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post–school vocational rehabilitation activities. DSB's agreement with OSPI also states that we will coordinate services with students' Individualized Education Plans (IEP). The Interagency Agreement lays the groundwork for each agency's roles and responsibilities.

DSB's primary services while a student is in high school are outreach, assessment, information & referral, counseling & guidance, and pre–employment transition services in order to prepare for successful transition into post–secondary higher education and career activities.

DSB authorizes and pays for any services needed to establish a transition student's eligibility for DSB services, and funds services outside the scope of the school district's FAPE (free appropriate public education) responsibility. The DSB collaborates with educational staff and families to ensure blind youth have early and deep exposure to pre–employment transition services such as career exploration, job shadowing and paid work experience, and extra–curricular opportunities to more fully develop self–advocacy and independence skills.

The DSB/DVR/OSPI agreement lists several procedures that are to be used to increase the number of students identified as needing transition services as well as ensuring that the services are provided as soon as possible. Some specific procedures include:

• An OSPI representative is a member of the State's Rehabilitation Council.

• Developing a system to exchange and disseminate data and information.

• Working with county/community councils to provide training and technical assistance relating to transition services.

• Providing outreach to increase education about Vocational Rehabilitation services to underserved populations and students with disabilities.

• OSPI lists DSB transition contact information on the OSPI website.

• DSB youth and transition specialists conduct outreach and ongoing consultation statewide to teachers of the visually impaired, students, families and others in the education community.

At age 14, blind, deaf blind, and visually impaired students become eligible to apply for individualized vocational rehabilitation services. Case management activities are coordinated among the Youth Services specialists and agency VR Counselors to provide pre–employment transition services and to facilitate the move into adult VR services. DSB also coordinates closely with local school districts, district Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs), and the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) to identify blind and visually impaired children who are eligible for VR services.

DSB is able to develop early relationships with blind children and parents, providing a vocational context within IEP and 504 Planning & Implementation Team discussions and ensuring an important link to identifying the individualized skills needed to be addressed in order for the youth to be prepared for adult life after graduation.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

DSB Youth Services specialists organize a sequential set of youth programs to aid in preparation for post–high school life. Blind and low vision individuals who have early exposure to adaptive skills training, vocational exploration and active socialization have a head start to becoming functional, employed and fully integrated adults.

The Department of Services for the Blind knows not all learning can be accomplished in the classroom, and offers the following progression of workshops to complement the learning that is available through the public education system. These pre–employment transition programs serve to give each participant a safe environment to discover their vocational aptitude, to develop confidence in adaptive skills and encourage self–advocacy and independence. The pre–employment transition programs are a key to the agency's success in quality of employment outcomes for students with visual disabilities.

Pre–Employment Transition Group Services Workshops

Eligible Ages: 9 – 13 In day–camp and workshop format, pre–employment training and activities are offered for age–appropriate independent skills development, integration into family labor, and career exposure. Workshops can include hands–on exposure to activities such as household chores, making food, preparing shopping lists and going shopping, where participants learn that they are capable of joining family responsibilities like their sighted peers and siblings, and parents learn that they need to provide equal opportunities to their blind child to allow him/her appropriate developmental experiences. Exposure to career options and the idea of work and workplace can happen in this age bracket through collaboration with business partners such as Jack Straw Studios, where students learn to use audio recording and engineering equipment to interview elder blind mentors, create and record songs and stories around issues of disability, and gain exposure to workplace culture and expectations. DSB will track the spending for these pre–employment group

activities, but will not track individual personal information of the attendees who are not agency participants and are not yet made eligible with an active individualized vocational rehabilitation plan.

Youth Employment Solutions 1 (YES1)

Eligible Ages: 14 to 15 The two–week program offers pre–employment career exploration activities that include career interest and aptitude assessments, worksite visitations, guest speakers, mock applications, interviews, resume development, recreational & daily living experiences, and job shadowing.

Youth Employment Solutions 2 (YES2)

Eligible Ages: 16 to High–School Graduation The six–week program offers paid employment experience based on student interests, experience and ability. The residential living component of the program provides students the opportunity to refine their daily living skills often for their first time away from home and parental supports: students plan, purchase and prepare their meals; manage money and time–management needs; and maintain a tidy household. Traveling daily to work hones independent travel skills and navigation by public transportation. Community speakers and student–planned activities encourage deeper integration into the greater community and tools for self–advocacy.

Bridge

Eligible Ages: College–bound Youth, Junior and Senior years The five–week summer program is held on campus at Eastern Washington University (EWU). It prepares students for college in a real way: they attend a five–credit university course, get oriented to the Disability Student Services, learn to advocate for accommodation needs, get experience living independently away from home, and practice their travel and self–management skills. Participants get a hands–on exposure to the adult pace and performance expectations within the college setting.

Additional Pre–employment Transition Activities

Agency staff are collaborating with partners and families to develop other ways to identify and address the pre–employment transition needs of students with a visual disability. The focus is to provide more job–readiness, peer mentorship, and hands–on work experience opportunities more locally and throughout the year.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

Visual impairment is a low–incidence disability among youth; only 5.5% of all individuals identified with visual difficulty in Washington State are among the American Community Survey age group most aligned with students, ages 5 – 18. Alternatively, 93% of the blind and low vision population are adults ages 19 and older.

While the DSB has had a long history of providing strong vocational counseling & guidance and progressive core pre–employment transition services and activities for students with a visual

disability, the costs for these activities as they exist won't come close to meeting the required 15% set aside of the federal grant. Our goal is to both expand upon the existing pre–employment workshops and work experience programs by increasing capacity for the existing summer programs, and also by developing new opportunities for pre–employment workshops, peer mentorship, and career and work experiences year–round, in local communities throughout the state. Our challenges will include identifying appropriate service providers and educational partners that will be able to serve locally a small, low–incidence population with the specialized needs they require. We will seek to identify and implement appropriate curricula and activities that meet the required five pre–employment transition services. We will be in discussion with educational staff and families to explore the benefits of a five–year high school plan in order to allow time for successful completion of rigorous academic requirements, practice of essential adaptive skills, and beneficial work experiences within the school academic fourth and fifth years. The agency will spend a portion of its required set–aside Pre–Employment Transition Service dollars on activities described as nine optional activities in order to build capacity.

DSB has a formal agreement with the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) WSSB to clarify referral procedures, expectations and costs for the fifth–year life and vocational skills "Learning Independence for Today & Tomorrow" (LIFTT) residential program held on the WSSB campus. The LIFTT program provides fifth–year 504–plan students a learning environment for daily intensive adaptive skills of Blindness in an age–appropriate setting. Participants in the LIFTT program are able to enroll in Clark College courses if they are college–bound, and/or are able to participate in work experience sites within the community while learning the intensive skills of Blindness.

DSB and WSSB are in negotiations to co–fund a WSSB staff position that will manage the identification and on–going supports for work experience sites for students at the school throughout the school year.

DSB coordinates with the WSSB in developing the school's annual Career Fair, and helps support attendance at the school's various pre–vocational events.

DSB currently maintains an office on the campus of the Washington State School for the Blind which fosters frequent collaboration in support of pre–vocational services for students who are blind, low vision or deaf blind. This arrangement also provides easy access for school personnel who are collaborating with the VR staff in the planning and provision of career exploration and work experience opportunities for these students. A DSB staff member is also on the WSSB's Board of Trustees.

DSB will be actively seeking the support and involvement from the organizations of blind consumers to provide peer mentorship and other programs for blind and low vision students.

DSB actively supports blind youth interested in leadership and self–advocacy to attend the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) and DSB has an active role in organizing the YLF summer program as agency representatives on the Governor's Committee on Disability and Employment.

DSB has collaborated with community partners such as the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) and the Lighthouse, Inc. to provide pre–employment transition services, and will continue to explore and develop partnerships that expand blind student exposure to meaningful pre–vocational experiences.

Through active partnering, DSB connects with local school districts and employers to provide community–based work experiences; develop career fairs, transition workshops and special intensive adaptive skills–training workshops around the state.

DSB has had active membership in the statewide Deaf Blind Advisory Committee, facilitated by the Washington Sensory Disability Services (WSDS) and joined by partners such as the Washington School for the Blind, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and parents of deaf blind kids.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

See above sections

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.

Agency response (e):

Lilac for the Blind, Sight Connections, Vision for Independence Center (VIC), & Edith Bishel – DSB works closely with these private, non–profit blind and low vision agencies. These agencies often refer clients to DSB, provide meeting space for DSB staff and participants, and offer support programs to agency participants.

Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc. (LHB) – DSB partners with this private, for–profit blind and low vision organization for referral of participants, collaboration in shared community issues of blindness, and coordination of services. They are a strong partner within the Blind Youth Consortium.

Lions Low Vision Clinics – DSB works with Lions Low Vision Clinics around the state. DSB staff has been presenters at several Lions Low Vision Fairs and sit on some Lions Boards. The Lions organizations refer potentially eligible individuals to our agency and provide services to participants.

National Federation of the Blind of Washington (NFBW) & Washington Council of the Blind (WCB) – The agency collaborates and shares information with Blindness consumer groups in Washington State to promote opportunities for our participants, collaborate in shared issues of blindness, and to solicit input for consumer priorities and expectations in service provision. The agency actively encourages and supports agency participants who are new to blindness and staff in attending state consumer conventions in order to broaden exposure to issues of blindness and consumer perspective.

Goodwill Industries of Tacoma – DSB has formed a long–term partnership with Goodwill in Tacoma. Goodwill provides a training center and CRP services.

Washington State Business Leadership Network (WSBLN), the National Employment Team (NET), and Puget Sound Diversity Employment Network (PSDEN) – DSB has an active relationship and partnership in the activities of the WSBLN, the NET and the PSDEN, providing our specialized expertise as a resource to businesses locally, and connecting agency participant talent to businesses that understand the importance of inclusion of people with disabilities into their workforce. Yakima Special Needs Coalition – This group is a gathering of many community programs working on issues of transportation for individuals with disabilities. The lead agency for the coalition is People for People, a primary regional transportation provider for individuals that cannot access the public transit.

Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) and Ogden Resource Center (ORC) – The WTBBL and ORC are community partners in providing alternative access to print materials. They are both strong partners within the Blind Youth Consortium.

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.

Agency response (f):

Washington DSB provides Supported Employment services to individuals with disabilities co–occurring with visual impairment that make long–term supports necessary for the individual's success in maintaining integrated and competitive employment, including developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury (TBI) and disabilities due to mental health.

DSB and Washington State have long believed that all individuals are capable of integrated and competitive work with the right supports in place, and the state has over the years reduced options for sub–minimum wage employment. The new regulations requiring the agency to provide pre–employment transition services for youth with disability before certification for sub–minimum wage work is expected to have little impact on the agency, as this is the direction the state has been moving towards for years.

A major employer of blind and deaf blind individuals in the state, the Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc., may not meet the RSA eventual definition for integrated workplace, but has met the definition for competitive work among all job classes, with zero sub–minimum wage jobs offered there.

A challenge for supported employment is that the comparable benefit resources available in Washington State to provide extended long–term support services are limited. DSB, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Development Disabilities Administration (DDA, an umbrella agency of the Department of Social and Health Services) collaborate on cases that have co–occurring disabling conditions that make long–term supports necessary. The DDA prioritizes the provision of long–term support services for qualified individuals who become employed through VR services. Local area DDA staff and regional administrators are made aware of the availability of the Department of Services for the Blind's VR services through active collaboration of agency staff.

Diligent efforts by DSB staff have facilitated long–term services through state benefits, natural supports, employers and self–pay. DSB continues to promote the use of Ticket to Work as a potential income source for developmental disability (DD), mental health (MH), and traumatic brain injury (TBI) service providers to provide long–term support services to our customers after exit from the VR program. The DSB continues to work with employers and other natural supports to identify funding for long–term support services.

DSB works closely with the Region X Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER) – which has continued as a regional technical assistance support organization through the University of Washington with new funding sources after the 2014 WIOA re–authorization of the Rehab Act.

The CCER–UW sponsors and promotes Supported Employment training activities throughout the state and region. Participation and attendance to these events by DSB staff offers opportunities for

VR personnel to network with other entities who are actively involved in Supported Employment placement efforts.

DSB staff also network with a variety of resource and service providers through their attendance at various statewide Supported Employment conferences that are sponsored by local organizations. These events draw registrants from public and private agencies to promote and provide services to people with the most significant disabilities.

DSB will negotiate formal agreements with the Department of Social and Health Services divisions of Developmental Disabilities Administration and Behavioral Health and Recovery, and Washington State's Health Care Authority in order to formalize collaboration, coordination of services, and mutual understanding of scope and role of each agency in promoting success for individuals who require long–term employment supports.

Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) DSB employs a milestone service–based fee structure with private, for– and not–for–profit vocational rehabilitation service providers for general and supported employment services. The most commonly purchased CRP services include: vocational evaluation, trial work experience, job placement, intensive training, job retention, and transitional employment. Community Rehabilitation Program providers are qualified through an in–house vendor qualification process, which qualifies individual CRP staff rather than the organization as a whole. All vendor staff must pass a federal background check.

DSB has also established a qualification process for vendors who provide pre–employment services such as Rehabilitation Teaching, Orientation & Mobility and Assistive Technology training. Prior to permitting direct–unsupervised access with agency participants, including supported employment participants, all vendors/providers of services are required to complete and pass background checks through an FBI fingerprinting process. In requiring both the technical qualification process and the criminal background check of providers, DSB has taken the necessary steps to ensure that when agency participants choose to utilize community providers, they are afforded the utmost safety and the highest quality services that are available

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

Agency response (g):

DSB will work in coordination with a broad base of employer connections to continue to build working and collaborative relationships, initiatives and coordinated WIOA partner strategies.

DSB has strong connections to business diversity and inclusion initiatives and will continue to leverage these initiatives to include DSB agency participants and job seekers with disabilities. DSB will utilize these connections to expand strategies to include pre–employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

DSB will continue to be a strong and active partner with WIOA Business Engagement strategies and initiatives to leverage our expertise and knowledge to support inclusion of job seekers and transition youth, with disabilities, in full participation with all WIOA programs and services.

DSB is positioned to provide direct and high value services to 503 Federal Contractors with utilization goals of 7% of their workforce, employees with disabilities. The 503 contractors represent 25% of the national workforce and are mandated to use the One–Stop system for job postings.

DSB Value–added Services to Business

DSB will continue to offer value–added services to the business community, including:

• Workplace disability and competency's training

• Technology assessments and web presence reviews

• Job site assessments for accommodations

• Customer service training for business interaction with individuals with disabilities

• Pipeline and succession strategies

DSB will engage in a multi–prong approach and will include the following strategies:

• Leverage the VR National Employment Team structure to connect job seekers and transition youth with business

• Work in strong partnership with One Stop business services teams throughout the state to ensure DSB expertise and individuals with disabilities are included in WIOA and One Stop business engagement efforts

• DSB will facilitate a coordinated effort to engage Business Leadership Network (BLN) businesses with our collaborative efforts on behalf of the WIOA system, job seekers and transition youth to support mutual success and benefits

• DSB will develop appropriate internal business engagement strategies that will assist the agency in scaling to the statewide and local business engagement efforts

• DSB will leverage existing and underutilized employer connections from our current and past employment outcome data and develop an intentional engagement strategy for establishing stronger relationships and working toward continued employment support as well as engaging in transition youth initiatives

• DSB will work with business to establish rich experiences for career exploration and work experiences and develop collaborative working relationships with Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) and other community partners to engage youth throughout the state

• DSB will consider working with our WIOA partners to establish an advisory group primarily consisting of business to develop transition youth career exploration and youth employment programs to be implemented in collaboration with DSB and our community partners

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

See 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;

Agency response (h):

DSB has active collaboration with the Developmental Disabilities Administration and Division of Behavioral Health, but as DSB is not part of the Department of Social and Health Services family of agencies, we do not yet have a formalized agreement with either agency. We will work towards that goal as part of this state plan.

DSB has been in conversation with the state's Health Care Authority around possible inclusion of non–VR blindness services funding, particularly for providing improved access to early intervention services for blind infants ages birth to three. We do not have a formalized agreement yet with the Health Care Authority, and we will attempt to develop a formal agreement as part of this state plan. This level of agreement will attempt to include provisions for long–term employment supports not covered through the Developmental Disability Administration, and provide provisions for funding of vocational–related services for Medicaid–eligible individuals in case the agency is unable to serve them during an Order of Selection scenario.

State Medicaid Plan

DSB will negotiate an agreement with the Washington State's Health Care Authority in order to formalize collaboration, coordination of services, and mutual understanding of scope and role of Medicaid in promoting success for individuals who require long–term employment supports and provide options for vocational services under an Order of Selection scenario.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

Division of Developmental Disabilities

DSB will negotiate an agreement with the Department of Social and Health Services division of the Developmental Disabilities Administration in order to formalize prioritization for securing long–term supports for employed and DDA–eligible individuals, and for detailing means for collaboration, coordination of services, and mutual understanding of scope and role of each agency in promoting success for individuals who require long–term employment supports.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

Mental Health Services

DSB will negotiate an agreement with the Department of Social and Health Services Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery in order to formalize collaboration, coordination of services, and

mutual understanding of scope and role of each agency in promoting success for individuals who require long–term employment supports.

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;

Agency response (i):

Qualified Personnel Needs & Personnel Development

Overview of Personnel Structure

The Department of Services for the Blind has a vision for teaming which values and encourages a workplace culture of teamwork, respect, accountability, innovation, and nurturing, and encourages demonstration of these qualities among all levels of the organization. The systematic agency support of multi–disciplinary teams was designed to increase collaboration, ownership and accountability among all staff, resulting in customer–centered, higher quality service provision, and greater independence and quality employment outcomes for DSB customers.

The Employment and Blindness Services Program is organizationally divided into three Regional Teams statewide — North, South and East. There is also a residential training center component of the agency’s VR program, called the Orientation and Training Center. The three Regional Area Managers each supervise 15, 18 and 11 direct–service staff respectively. The training center Program Manager supervises nine direct service staff. In addition to monitoring and supporting the daily activities of staff, the three Regional Area Managers and OTC Program Manager take a proactive role to provide consistent, timely coaching, mentoring, and training. Regional Area Managers also conduct monthly case reviews which help to assure compliance and adherence to agency procedures, timelines and high quality customer service standards.

Within each regional team, there are cross–functional team roles:

• Rehab Technicians

• Orientation & Mobility and Low Vision Specialists

• Adaptive Skills of Blindness Rehab Teachers

• Adaptive Technology Specialists/Technician

• Youth Services Specialists

• Independent Living Part B (ages 14 – 55 non–vocational) Specialists

• Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

Benefits of Multi–disciplinary Teaming for Customers and Staff –

• Participant needs are better met and are better prepared to enter the contemporary workforce as a result of the collaboration of the multi–disciplinary work teams

• Participants benefit from more timely responses to service needs. In the event of staff vacancies, services are not interrupted

• Participants with co–occurring disabilities and complex, specialized needs have access to broader array of staff expertise

• Participants are supported by an array of staff in the decision–making process, and are able to more actively participate in developing the direction of their vocational rehabilitation

• DSB team members gain valuable feedback from team interactions

• DSB team members share accountability for success of participant

• Multi–disciplinary teams increase equity of service delivery across the state through resource sharing.

• People working in silos duplicate limited labor & resources and complicate processes for agency participants. By working together, we refine our communications and maximize our skills, abilities, and available resources, providing the participant a more seamless, higher quality experience.

This multi–disciplinary team structure also maximizes existing staff skills and opportunities for professional growth and creativity.

• The counselor is not a lone ranger scrambling for appropriate resources for a customer's needs, but works in concert with a skilled and specialized team to collaborate and address participant needs thoroughly and swiftly

• In–house adaptive skills and technology assessments conducted directly after eligibility provide the participant with a rich set of information in which to make choices and move forward vocationally and in life.

• The agency places high emphasis on technology – the internal Assistive Technology staff address technology needs early and in concert with the team; the high–quality jobs our customers achieve can be seen as a result of the agency's emphasis on technology.

FFY2015 Personnel data

Washington State Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) actively employs sixty–five (65) RSA–defined direct service personnel to serve approximately 1,400 Vocational Rehabilitation and 200 Independent Living Part B participants per year:

• Fifteen (15) Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

• Eleven (11) Rehabilitation Technicians

• Nine (9) Adaptive Technology Specialist/Technicians

• Eleven (11) Low Vision/Orientation & Mobility Specialists

• Seven (7) Rehabilitation Teachers

• Three (3) Youth Services Specialists

• One (1) Employment Program & Partnership Development Specialist

• Three (3) Regional Area Managers

• One (1) Orientation and Training Center Program Manager

• One (1) Procurement and Supply Specialist

• One (1) Vendor and Program Contracts Manager

• One (1) VR Programs Manager

• One (1) Deputy Director who acts as Chief of Field Services

The DSB also actively employs sixteen (17) RSA–defined non–direct service staff:

• One (1) Executive Director

• One (1) Assistant Director for Operations

• Six (6) Fiscal staff: One (1) Chief Financial Officer, one (1) Business Manager, and three (3) Fiscal Analysts, and one (1) Data Management Analyst

• Four (4) Information and Technology staff: One (1) IT Manager and three (3) IT Specialists

• One (1) Human Resources Technician

• One (1) Communications Specialist

• Three (3) Business Enterprise Program staff: one (1) BEP Manager and two (2) BEP Specialists

• The agency also hires readers/drivers as accommodation for Blind staff, with sixteen (16) part–time, on–call staff currently available to provide reader/driver services as needed

• Services to the state's Older Blind program continue to be managed through a contract with the University of Washington and provided by community vendors statewide

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

In the past year, the agency has recruited to fill a total of seven (7) direct service staff vacancies, and four (4) non–direct service vacancies. Six of the 11 vacancies were due to retirements.

• Four (4) Rehabilitation Teacher / Orientation & Mobility Specialist positions

• One (1) Rehabilitation Technician position

• One (1) Orientation and Training Center Program Manager

• One (1) Youth Services Specialist

• One (1) Business Enterprise Program Manager

• Two (2) Fiscal & Management Analysts

• One (1) IT Specialist

Many positions in the last year were filled before they were vacated, as retirement planning has allowed recruitment efforts to be completed before the retiring staff leaves the agency. This concurrent staffing assisted in the training and development of several new staff, including program managers. The only positions that were vacant for an extended period have been the four Rehabilitation Teacher/ Orientation and Mobility Specialist positions. We continue to have one lingering vacancy; Orientation & Mobility Specialists are a scarce resource in this state, with competition among school districts and the Veteran's Administration and no training programs located in the state. Internal training & development is actively considered through the performance evaluation process among Regional Area Managers and staff to fill hard–to–recruit positions where feasible, and is supported by management.

The DSB actively supports supervision of vocational rehabilitation counseling students in internship opportunities if the individual him/herself has a visual impairment, in order to promote more skilled pool of peer counselors.

In the past year, the Executive Team management made significant organizational adjustments: shrinking the Executive Management by one position; adding capacity to the Fiscal team; adding responsibilities and re–allocations to the Regional Area Managers and OTC Program Manager; adding a promotional track for Rehabilitation Teachers / Orientation & Mobility Specialists; and adding a leadership development track in each of the regional teams and the Orientation and Training Center. Through this re–organization, the agency wanted to especially address retention and workload issues for Orientation & Mobility Specialists, and create a system for leadership development and succession planning within the work teams. A new FTE for Youth Specialist has

been allocated from a retired Rehabilitation Teacher position to better meet the deeper Youth Services mandate through WIOA.

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.

Estimated Vacancy Rates

Given the average 5–year employee turnover rate of 20% multiplied by the 65 total number of the Vocational Rehabilitation staff, it is likely that 13 vacancies could be anticipated over the next 5 years. The number of VR personnel expected to retire in the next five years is nine (9), and may include Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Rehabilitation Teaching staff, and a Regional Area Manager.

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;

Staff Development & Plan for recruitment Western Washington University (WWU) is the only graduate program in the state of Washington that directly prepares vocational rehabilitation professionals.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

Western Washington University currently enrolls 37 students in the Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling program. Nineteen of the 37 students identify as having a disability. Of the total 19 first year students enrolled, seven are currently employed in a field related to Rehabilitation Counseling, three of whom are employed by the Washington General agency.

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.

In FFY 2015, Western Washington University's Rehabilitation Counseling program graduated 12 students. Nine of last year's graduates are employed, and three are in active job search. One of those WWU Masters in Vocational Rehabilitation program graduates will conduct a VR Counseling internship supervised by DSB staff.

DSB as an agency is making deliberate efforts to develop future counseling talent with visual impairment as part of agency succession planning; we currently have two VR Counselors on staff who are blind or has a visual impairment, and one of the two is likely to retire in the next five years.

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.

Regional Training Programs

The Department actively coordinates with Washington and regional colleges/universities offering studies towards degrees in vocational rehabilitation for recruitment of talent, including Western Washington University, the University of Idaho, Western Oregon University, San Diego State University, Fresno State University, Arizona State University, and Utah State University.

The Department maintains a broad recruitment mailing and website posting list, which we use to advertise vacant vocational rehabilitation positions. Recruitment information is also posted on the agency web site and on several other web sites that support rehabilitation professionals, including LinkedIn.

The Washington State Small Agency Human Resources (SAHR) agency is our state–mandated centralized HR resource, and they have provided DSB with supports in recruitment and screening of applications since July 2011.

Institutions:

Western Washington University

Students enrolled: 37

Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 3 (RSA)

Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA: 9 (RSA)

Graduates from the previous year: 12

Recruitment Challenges

The agency promotes a healthy positive atmosphere, and makes effort to provide staff with clear and consistent communications regarding performance expectations, agency decisions and agency initiatives. We are consistently rated among the highest of state agencies for staff satisfaction. Recruitment of a diverse staff is important for the agency – we want our staff to be representative of the customer base and communities we serve. We are proud to acknowledge that over 28% of DSB staff report a documented disability, and many of those are provided with reasonable accommodations. Six of our staff receive assignment pay for ASL, including four VR Counseling staff who are able to directly communicate with deaf blind participants.

The agency's biggest recruitment challenge stems from the fact that Washington State lacks local training programs for both Rehabilitation Teachers/Orientation & Mobility Specialists and ASL Interpreters for Deaf and Deaf Blind individuals. Without local training avenues, recruitment of Rehab Teaching staff is challenging, and the agency relies primarily on recruitment of out–of–state training program graduates to move into the state. The challenge is the high cost of living, especially in the Puget Sound Region, which frequently dissuades a prospect from accepting a position in Washington State. It is a challenge to be able to establish a new home in the cost–prohibitive Puget Sound region at the salary we are able to offer our Rehab Teaching staff.

While the agency was able to secure a promotional opportunity for that job class through the recent re–organization, the increase in pay is still well below national standards and that of our main competition (the Veterans Administration and K–12 system) for hire of these positions. The lack of a local Rehab Teaching training facility also results in a lack of qualified teachers of the visually impaired to provide early adaptive skills training through the local school districts, resulting in diminished skill sets for blind K–12 students.

We have options for development of our own Rehab Teacher /Orientation & Mobility staff through an internal staff training & development plan, and have done so in the past. The agency has had a history of promoting professional development efforts especially among our Rehab Technician staff. We have supported Rehab Techs in their educational and professional development to become vocational rehabilitation counselors, AT Specialists, Low Vision Specialists, and Rehabilitation Teacher/O&M Specialists. The agency hasn't had recent success in motivating staff to add a Master's level program of study onto their current workload.

The lack of a local ASL Interpreter Training Program has resulted in a shrinking resource of qualified interpreters for community Deaf Blind events and needs such as the bi–weekly community Deaf Blind classes and Support Service Providers (SSPs) for independent interaction with the community.

Staff Training & Development

The Department's Training Plan for Rehabilitation describes how the agency assesses and prioritizes ongoing training needs through input from the following sources:

1. Staff training needs assessment: A formal comprehensive Performance and Development Plan (PDP) is completed and discussed with each employee on an annual basis, with an emphasis on individualized staff development needs. Specific development and/or training needs are identified for each employee, by the employee and supervisor, and should be addressed during the following or year to come.

2. External factors: Results of audits, evaluations, state and federal compliance reviews, and agency case reviews identify critical areas that need to be addressed through staff training and provide the basis for our annual VR Program Training Plan.

3. Changes to work: Implementation of new policies or procedures; new work tools implemented, changes the agency effects on the work provide new needs for training.

4. Planned change: Strategic Plan priorities and objectives requiring training as part of implementation.

5. Meeting diversity requirements: Is the agency meeting goals in the Department's Affirmative Action Plan? If not, training may be required.

The Regional Area Management Team plans the agency's annual training agenda and prioritizes the training needs of Department employees. Comprehensive training plans are developed and implemented for all direct service delivery positions during the first 6 – 12 months of hire. Training is conducted by the Regional Area Manager, a peer mentor/coach, and/or various members of the cross functional teams.

A week of intensive adaptive skills training through the Orientation & Training Center helps new staff better understand the participant experience and the context of blindness in the work we do, whether the staff person is working directly with a participant or indirectly in an business administration setting.

With the multi–disciplinary teams, job shadowing of each job class is useful for new staff to understand how all the parts fit together.

Orientation & Training Center and Business Administration staff are assigned as liaisons to a regional team, and join the quarterly regional team meetings in order to better integrate the work of the agency across programs.

Specific training needs of counseling staff and other VR professionals are primarily being met through the utilization of training resources within the region with occasional support being secured through national workshops and conferences.

As a small Department, the agency does not conduct regular credit earning workshops in rehabilitation. To remedy that, we continue to rely on our coordination with the Region X Technical Assistance Center through the University of Washington to identify educational opportunities as well as develop new resources for earning credit through in–service training and other alternative approaches. The agency's involvement with the Region X Technical Assistance Center through the University of Washington continues as the region's VR agencies have developed a membership dues system in order to continue to enhance staff and management development through their training services. DSB will continue to utilize regional training resources including: CCER at the University of Washington, the City University in Spokane, the Center for Change in Transition Services (Seattle University), the Washington State Department of Personnel's Human Resources Development Division, and private organizations and agencies for various rehabilitation related topics.

Department of Services for the Blind has also partnered with Tribal VR agencies of Washington State by attending and participating in events such as the 2013 Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation annual conference. Members from the eight confederated tribal VR programs in Washington State, as well as from throughout the country, were in attendance. The conference was a learning opportunity for our staff as Tribal members presented information about cultural sensitivity and the cultural differences which are present when serving Native Americans within the VR program. Our on–going partnership with each of these Tribal VR Programs – via staff attendance at quarterly regional meetings and active partnership in shared VR cases – continues to enhance our working relationships with Native American customers who are blind and receiving VR services from our agency.

DSB has a designated staff person to facilitate securing staff CEUs for various internal and/or external trainings.

Training Needs

In FFY15, specific training needs of our counseling staff and other VR professionals were primarily met through the utilization of training resources within the region and working closely with the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER). In support of the professional development of our staff, the last year of the RSA In–service Training Grant was fully utilized to strengthen staff ability to provide quality services to participants with significant disabilities. The ending of the In–Service Training Grant will make staff training less prolific. The agency is aware of the Job Driven VR Technical Assistance and National Transition Technical Assistance grant opportunities, and the agency has made use of the universal technical assistance opportunities through the webinars. We hope in future to apply for more intensive technical assistance in order to help cover staff development needs with the ending of the In–Service Training Grant.

Staff attend out–of–state trainings and conferences, such as the annual California State University at Northridge Adaptive Technology (CSUN) Conference, International American Education & Rehabilitation (AER) Conference, Helen Keller Technology Training, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) & National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB), and Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation Conference (CANAR).

DSB supports Rehabilitation Teacher/Orientation & Mobility staff in securing the required continuing education CEUs to maintain their certification. We have supported staff in developing and securing formalized training in areas of Low Vision assessment, updated Orientation & Mobility concepts, and ethics. The agency Rehab Teachers meet quarterly to provide peer training and share resources.

While currently there are no credential requirements for the agency's Adaptive Technology Specialists, it is an agency responsibility to ensure staff maintain up–to–date training and competence in assessment and training of adaptive tools as technology rapidly changes. The agency has provided annual attendance for AT Specialists to an out–of–state technology conference (usually CSUN), and provide staff time quarterly for vendors to demonstrate new products and staff to provide peer training on devices. AT staff are committed to reading technology and industry journals and reporting new information on adaptive technology devices to their peers. The team presents formal peer trainings quarterly, and regularly invites AT vendors to demonstrate and loan updated technologies.

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

Personnel Standards All of our current counseling staff meets the agency's CSPD standards as they have all either earned a Master's Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling or possess a valid Certified Rehabilitation Counselor credential. DSB plans to continue to hire only qualified Masters in Rehab Counseling or CRC certified VR counselors in these positions, as the agency has adopted this level of education as a minimum requirement. We recognize that the lower standards through WIOA may impact the agency's ability to meet the internal CSPD standards, and will continue to monitor availability and continued quality of candidates with that certification. We are hopeful we can maintain the high caliber of professionalism that the CRC and Masters level training provides our counseling staff. Currently, all 15 VR counselor positions meet that standard and there are no future plans to modify these criteria for the VR counselor positions.

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.

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provide quality services to participants with significant disabilities. The ending of the In–Service Training Grant will make staff training less prolific. The agency is aware of the Job Driven VR Technical Assistance and National Transition Technical Assistance grant opportunities, and the agency has made use of the universal technical assistance opportunities through the webinars. We hope in future to apply for more intensive technical assistance in order to help cover staff development needs with the ending of the In–Service Training Grant.

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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

See above section

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.

See above section

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.

Personnel to address individual communication needs

Department policies, procedures and community resources ensure that applicants and recipients of program services who have limited English speaking ability are provided with the appropriate mode of communication to fully benefit from public VR services.

Several of our staff members speak diverse languages such as Spanish, German, French, Japanese, American Sign Language, Tagalog, Bisayan, Cambodian and Korean. Where it makes sense to do so, staff are able to communicate directly with customers and community members in their native or preferred language.

We currently provide nine staff with 5% extra assignment pay for language skills: five staff for ASL and four for Spanish.

We have one staff who is a certified English as a Second Language instructor, and who develops non–visual ESL lessons to meet the agency participant needs.

Where it does not make sense to rely on staff language skills, or where we do not have access to those skills, agency staff access community resources to communicate with diverse populations. Individuals who are Deaf–Blind or Hard–of–Hearing/Blind may communicate with staff via voice relay service. American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters are utilized when needed for in–person meetings, trainings or events.

The Department continues to employ personnel who are familiar and confident in the use of an array of communication modes to fully benefit the recipients of the program based on the preferred method of communication of the customer. To address the needs of our customers who have limited English speaking ability and want to speak English more fluently, we have contracted with an English–as–a–Second–Language (ESL) provider housed in our Orientation and Training Center. We are able to serve both residential and commuting students in providing literacy coursework accessible to individuals with vision impairment.

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.

Coordination of professional development under IDEA

DSB coordinates with special education programs through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and through collaborative projects with the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB).

Agency staff who work with transition–age youth coordinate transition activities and conduct in–service training activities throughout the state to teachers of the visually impaired and other Special Education personnel. In addition to providing in–service training, they work with school district staff and DSB counselors to ensure customers receive services and information necessary to facilitate a smooth transition from school to adult services.

Agency staff attend and present at the annual conference of the region's Teachers of the Visually Impaired, families, and educators of rehabilitation (Pacific Northwest Association of Educators of Rehabilitation or PNWAER) in order to alert partners of collaboration opportunities through the agency's transition services.

Based on assessments and training provided by the Department, DSB staff provide recommendations and information to school districts, WSSB, parents and students about vocational rehabilitation services including availability, referral, and eligibility requirements that support a coordinated transition plan from school to post–school services.

Consultation is also provided as early as necessary to special education staff regarding IEP planning and development. DVR, DSB and OSPI staff shares data and reports relevant to program development and planning.

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;

Agency response (j):

Sources of Data

The Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) utilized data derived from comprehensive needs assessment efforts conducted from October 2014 through January 2015, and has built upon that assessment data through meetings, audits, reviews, surveys and public forums with DSB agency participants, employees, partners, service providers, Rehabilitation Council members, the Client Assistance Program (CAP), tribal program representatives, school representatives and other community members.

The State Rehabilitation Council co–sponsored four public forums in the past year, where a call–in phone line allowed for statewide input from Washington State residents and agency participants. DSB staff met with the State Rehabilitation Council In December 2015 to solicit discussion, engagement and feedback on the content of the combined state plan and the agency's VR supplemental attachments.

A strategic planning process in 2014–2015 provided outside perspective in confirming our high performance as a VR agency, and outlined strategic initiatives for the next five years. Analysis of customer satisfaction surveys, performance data and RSA statistics show that DSB provides very high quality services and outcomes.

The RSA r–911 data provides strong evidence that DSB places emphasis on careers that provide living wages and benefits, within a competitive and integrated context. The agency wants to maintain and build on this excellence in quality of services and outcomes.

Demographic data compiled from the agency and compared to general Washington state demographics through tools such as the American Community Survey highlights underserved communities for agency programs.

State audits conducted in 2014 and 2015 have provided data that the agency is consistently following policy & procedure, and has addressed any identified areas of concern.

Meetings with Community Rehabilitation Providers in 2014 and 2015 have elicited discussion about how to be more successful with serving the agency's participants.

Meetings with community partner agencies around statewide Deaf–Blind issues and needs occurred in 2014 and 2015. Community partners convened in 2014 and 2015 on ways to streamline and improve services to youth with visual impairments within Washington State

Assessment Data Results:

DSB has been able to provide the full range of VR services to all eligible individuals, including those experiencing the most significant disabilities, as DSB has not required an order of selection to date.

The agency has worked to increase numbers of customer participation in vocational rehabilitation services; numbers served has increased steadily over the past ten years, and the corresponding agency spending on direct client services has increased steadily, while administrative costs have remained flat.

The agency has identified communities that appear to be underserved by our agency based on general population demographics, and analyzed performance data and customer/staff feedback to identify regions where agency resources are thin and can be bolstered.

Demographic Profile

Working age individuals (ages 18 – 64) represent the primary segment of the state's population with visual disabilities (52%) who may qualify for the agency's vocational rehabilitation services. Approximately 41% of those in the state with visual disability are age 64 and older. Youth with a visual disability, age birth to 18, represent approximately 7% of the state population. A large segment of the agency vocational rehabilitation participants (23%) are beyond age 55, representing a shift in traditional notions of working and retirement age. In FFY2015, in fact, two individuals who were age 84 exited the program with employment outcomes. The segment eligible for pre–employment transition services (Pre–ETS) represent about 5% of the state's population with visual disability.

The American Community Survey results closely echo earlier ACS and 2010 US Census data. We have made use primarily of ACS 2014 1–year and 2013 5–year compilation data for the statistics below.

There are an estimated total of nearly 7 million Washington State residents, per the 2014 ACS estimates.

Approximately 820,000 residents of all ages, or 12.2% of all individuals who reside in Washington State, identify as having a disability.

Disability is slightly more prevalent for men of traditional working ages 18 – 64 (226,792 or 10.6%) than for women age in the same age group (215,755 or 10.0%).

When considering the range 18 – 74 as an expanded notion of working age, the gap continues: men with disability at 291,427, or 12.4%, of males in that age range; women with disability at 277,450, or 11.5%, of females in that age range.

The gap of prevalence of disability per gender closes when considering all ages (Men: 407,322 or 12.2%; Women: 411,929 or 12.1%), primarily due to the higher number of women over age 75 with a disability (Men over 75: 77,544 or 51.8%; Women over 75: 111,513 or 52.5%)

Visual disability impacts approximately 66,464 Washington residents of ages 18–64, or 1.6% of that traditional working age demographic.

The prevalence of visual disability associated with race or ethnicity in Washington State among working age residents indicate the highest prevalence of disability in the Native American or Alaskan Native population with approximately 5.0% of that demographic; followed in descending order by Other race identified, 2.5%; Black/African American, 2.4%; Hispanic, 1.7%; White, 1.3%, and Asian, 0.9%.

Washingtonians with a visual disability age 16 – 64 are employed at lower rates than the total population, but at higher rates than the demographic group for all disabilities. The employment rate for all Washington residents age 16 – 64 is 70.0%; for all individuals with a disability in that age group 40.7%; and for all individuals with a visual disability 51.5%.

In order to close the employment gap between those with a visual disability and population as a whole in Washington and to match the 70.0% employment rate, an additional 12,861 blind, low vision or deaf blind individuals would need to become employed. We serve approximately 10% of the potential need in any given year.

DSB Participants served

99.3% of DSB active participant cases during FFY2015 were identified as having either a most significant disability (MSD) or a significant disability (SD).

Almost all, 98.25% of those individuals exiting DSB's VR program with employment, earned greater than or equal to the state minimum wage.

All eligible DSB participants have a visual disability. Many participants also have multiple disabilities. For example, of the 365 cases exited with employment outcomes for the two year period of FFY2014 & 2015, 155 (42.5%) of those participants had additional disability barriers, including 71 individuals with mobility & general physical conditions (19.5%), 29 individuals with cognitive impairment (7.9%), 25 individuals with hearing impairment (6.8%), and 22 individuals with additional mental health barriers (5.5%).

Twenty–six of the 365 cases with employment outcomes, or 7.1% of all employment outcomes, were integrated employment outcomes requiring long term supports.

Where other disability expertise is needed, we readily collaborate with partner agencies such as Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Office of Deaf & Hard of Hearing, and Division of Developmental Disabilities.

When an applicant presents no functional visual disability and therefore does not meet eligibility for DSB services, information & referral to Workforce Development Partners is provided as appropriate.

For those participants who exited the program with employment outcomes in FFY2015, the average participant age at closure was 45 years old. The eldest participant with an employment outcome in that time period was age 84 (two individuals: one an Electrical Engineering job retention and the other a Piano Technician job retention) and the youngest age 21 (three individuals).

Of all employment outcomes in 2015, 4.7% were transition–age individuals.

For the year 2014, Social Security Administration estimates for Social Security disability recipients in Washington State show that approximately 16.3% of all residents with a disability receive SSI/SSDI benefits.

For FFY2015, 20.4% of all participants served through the agency's VR program were recipients of Social Security benefits.

Of those individuals who exited with an employment outcome and had listed public assistance as their primary support at application, 75% instead were able to list earnings from their work as primary support at exit. We serve a higher proportion of individuals on SSI/SSDI, and fewer DSB participants require those benefits upon exiting the program.

What we know about DSB from the Comprehensive Needs Assessment data:

RSA and performance data:

• DSB customer base is predominantly made up of individuals who have either significant or most significant disabilities

• Strengths of the agency can be seen in quality of employment outcomes – high percentage competitive and integrated; high average hourly and weekly wages; high number hours worked per week; high number of participants meeting Substantial Gainful Activity; diversity of career outcomes and individualized vocational goals; strong supports for higher education and adaptive technology within the vocational plan.

• Challenges can be seen in quantity of outcomes and numbers served and accessibility of electronic information and data systems at participant job sites.

• DSB VR participant base overall strongly matches population distribution of individuals with vision difficulty among the state's counties (per 2013 ACS 3 year estimates).

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

The prevalence of visual disability associated with race or ethnicity in Washington State among working age residents indicate the highest prevalence of disability in the Native American or Alaskan Native population with approximately 5.0% of that demographic; followed in descending order by Other race identified, 2.5%; Black/African American, 2.4%; Hispanic, 1.7%; White, 1.3%, and Asian, 0.9%.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Statewide, the Asian community continues to be under–represented among our customer base. Targeted areas for outreach for increasing Asian participation in DSB services include these counties: King, Snohomish, Kitsap, Thurston, and Pierce; and the following linguistic communities: Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Korean.

The Hispanic/Latino community had also been under–represented two years ago, but outreach and service provision efforts have brought parity of the percentage of the DSB Hispanic participant base and the state's Hispanic/Latino demographic data. Targeted areas of outreach for increasing Hispanic participation have included the following counties: King, Snohomish, Franklin, Grant, Skagit, Kitsap, Whatcom, and Walla Walla.

All other races and ethnicities are represented in the agency participant base in equal or higher ratios as the general Washington State demographics.

All counties in the state are served.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

See above

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

Repeated from above section: The segment eligible for pre–employment transition services (Pre–ETS) represent about 5% of the state's population with visual disability. This represents about 3,300 youth in total. We currently serve about 250 in school students with a disability.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

Agency response (n):

DSB has identified and qualified Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) providers in local areas across the state to provide specialized Supported Employment services (assessment, skill building, job development, job coaching and retention services). Much of the Title VI Part B funding is utilized for performance–based job development & coaching services provided by CRPs to support individuals who require long–term supports in able to work in integrated and competitive settings. DSB provides training and technical assistance related to issues of blindness to all CRPs who express an interest in working with individuals who have the potential to achieve an employment outcome.

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 .

Existing summer programs meet part of the new mandated need; expansion of those programs will be useful.

Summertime is crowded for additional programs.

Hands–on Work Experience and workplace job readiness soft skills are a critical need for students with a visual disability, with expansion in more local environments and throughout the school year.

Suggestion of fifth year plan as addition to IEP to allow for rigorous academic requirements as well as sufficient career exploration and work experience during school.

Collaboration with family network will assist supporting independence, high expectations and adult success for students with a visual disability.

Peer–mentorship and opportunities to interact with other students who have a visual disability.

Self–advocacy skills to move from K–12 entitlement environment to higher ed and adult world of self–advocacy.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(b)). Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

Agency response (k):

The American Community Survey (ACS) provides reliable estimated data for the number of individuals in the state who experience visual function limitations.

The ACS five year estimates (2009–2013) show an estimated 131,000 Washington state citizens of all ages who experience a visual difficulty, or almost 2% of the entire population.

The estimated number of individuals of traditional working age in Washington State who experience visual difficulty (ages 18 – 64) is estimated in the five year ACS at around 65,000; the 2010 census data corroborates the ACS estimated data with a count of 62,697 individuals in that age range reporting a visual difficulty.

ACS 5 year 2009–2013 Data Tables show the below information:

Prevalence of individuals with a disability among general population (US: 12.1%; WA: 12.2%)

Employment status ages 18 – 64:

• All residents: 71.7%

• With any disability: 35.7%

• With visual impairment: 40.7%

Unemployed status ages 18 – 64:

• All residents: 5.1%

• With any disability: 8.2%

• With visual impairment: 7.8%

Not in labor force ages 18 – 64:

• All residents: 23.3%

• With any disability: 56%

• With visual impairment: 51.5%

The ACS 5–year survey shows an estimated 8,184 residents ages 5 – 17 experience a visual difficulty; many from this age group would qualify for and benefit from VR pre–employment transition services. One hundred and seventy–six (176) of the 1341 VR customers served in FFY2015 (or 13.4%) were ages 21 and younger.

The ACS 5–year survey shows an estimated 54,000 citizens ages 65 and older experience a visual difficulty; some of this age group might also qualify for VR services, as the traditional working age expands beyond age 65, and retirees look to supplement fixed incomes with part–time work. The oldest VR customers served in the agency in FY2015 were two participants age 85 (one was a part–time electrical engineer; the other a part–time equipment installer). Two hundred and thirty–eight (238) of the 1341 VR customers served in FFY2015 (or 17.7%) were age 55 and over.

The agency is not under order of selection at this time. There is some anticipation that the 15% set–aside might cause a lack of resource to fully meet our adult services, and are monitoring spending and systems in order to be prepared in the case that DSB will need to enact an order of selection and restrict service delivery in the near future. The agency has updated its priority listing for Order of Selection to align with new allowances in WIOA, including serving as priority those new applicants who have a significant disability and require immediate services or equipment in order to keep a current job.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

General Grant Title I Estimated Funds: $ 8,535,000

Estimated Number to be served: 1,350

Average Cost of Services: $6,322

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

Supported Employment Title VI Estimated Funds: $ 58,000

Estimated Number to be served: 35

Average Cost of Services: $1,657

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

Not applicable

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

Not applicable

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.

N/A

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.

Agency response (l):

The agency's goals and priorities have been identified and discussed in collaboration with the agency's State Rehabilitation Council.

The goals and priorities were developed in two distinct processes: through both interactions among WIOA core partner programs toward implementation of the new partnerships and legislation through WIOA; and also through the agency's extensive Strategic Planning process that took place in 2015.

The first set of goals and priorities for the agency to be accomplished in the next four year scope of this state plan is the successful implementation of systems, processes and relationships that bring the agency and state towards meeting the intent of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The second set of goals and priorities developed through the Strategic planning process echo and align with many elements towards implementation of the WIOA concepts, and concentrate on increasing the agency's effective reach into the community, refining processes that sharpen the agency's expertise, and a deepening of the vocational aspects of this vocational and rehabilitation agency.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

Goal 1: Successfully implement intent of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act into agency work and processes

Sub–goal 1.1: Continue to emphasize the State's Strategy of High Skills/High Wages focus for agency participants

Sub–goal 1.2: Ensure equal access for blind, low vision and deaf blind individuals to be able to benefit from the array of services available through the state's workforce system

Sub–goal 1.3: Engage with state and local community businesses in ways that best work for business, and better prepare agency participants for success by ensuring they have the skills that meet business needs.

Sub–goal 1.4: Implement creative and meaningful changes to agency processes and services in order to best meet intent of WIOA around services to youth.

Goal 2: Increase agency outreach and effectiveness of services to individuals and communities that would benefit from vocational rehabilitation services

Sub–goal 2.1: Increase effectiveness and cultural relevance of agency story

Goal 3: Enhance and maintain DSB capacity & expertise in serving blind Washington residents

Sub–goal 3.1: Enhance awareness among all staff of context, issues, and skills of blindness

Sub–goal 3.2: Improve systems for universal accessibility, both internally within the agency and externally among partners

Sub–goal 3.3: Refine and maintain systems for knowledge transfer and leadership development

Goal 4: Enhance the vocational aspects of vocational rehabilitation within agency processes

Sub–goal 4.1: Integrate employment into a unified customer experience at all phases of the vocational rehabilitation process

Sub–goal 4.2: Build employer–desired core soft skills (critical thinking, decision making, etc.) throughout skill development process

Sub–goal 4.3: Build and deepen systems for regional business expertise

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;

Yes.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

Yes.

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.

Yes.

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.

Agency response (m): N/A, not in order of selection at this time.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

see above

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

see above

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

See above

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

See above

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.

Yes, we will be electing to serve eligible individuals who require services or tools to maintain employment, regardless of any established order of selection.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

All of our Vocational Rehabilitation staff are well versed in the provision of supported employment services and understand the issues related to eligibility, vocational assessment, and creating vocational plans that address the need for on–going long–term support services.

In FFY2015, fifteen (15) working–aged individuals with co–occurring disabilities of Cognitive Impairments were successfully employed in integrated and competitive jobs with average hourly wages for the group of $15.43.

For FFY2016

• DSB will serve 35 Supported Employment (SE) customers

• More than ten (10) SE customers will achieve competitive & integrated employment outcomes

DSB will spend over $59,000 on SE services.

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 agency will work to secure long–term supports as swiftly and naturally as possible when employment is a result for a participant. Where more time is needed to identify those natural or other long–term supports, the agency understands we may fund services for up to four years after placement for a youth with a disability who requires long–term supports to be successful in the workplace.

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.

Supported Employment Partners & Agreements

DSB primarily provides supported employment services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and individuals with mental health disabilities. Of these two participant groups, individuals with developmental disabilities represent the majority of supported employment outcomes.

DSB's success in serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities is based on a long–standing relationship with the DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration (DSHS/DDA) and the general VR agency DVR partners joint cases. DSHS/DDA is committed to funding extended services for all of its clients who achieve a supported employment outcome through vocational rehabilitation.

DSB continues to promote the use of Ticket to Work as a potential income source for developmental disability, mental health, and traumatic brain injury service providers to build their capacity for providing extended support services.

We also train staff and partners on Social Security Work Incentives, Plan to Achieve Self Sufficiency, and other work incentives to identify optional funding sources, and provide technical assistance on the use of natural supports in the workplace.

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.

Agency response (o):

The DSB has developed the following strategies for accomplishing the agency goals as identified through interaction with WIOA core partners, the State Rehabilitation Council, staff, agency participants and community stakeholders.

Goal 1: Successfully implement intent of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act into agency work and processes

Sub–goal 1.1: Continue to emphasize the State's Strategy of High Skills/High Wages focus for agency participants

Strategy 1.1: The DSB will leverage its existing success towards contributing to the State's strategy of High skills/High wages, and will create new pathways to greater self–sufficiency for DSB participants through deeper collaboration among core and partner programs.

The DSB will continue to provide the comprehensive, participant–centered, individualized vocational and blindness rehabilitation services that have consistently made the Rehabilitation Services Administration's rating of the agency's outcomes the strongest among all national vocational rehabilitation agencies – blind or general – in quality of employment achieved and wages earned.

The DSB will continue to provide highly professional and informed counseling and guidance services to assist the participant through issues of adjustment to disability, vocational and skill gap–assessment, career matching, and integration into the workplace.

The DSB will continue to make use of client–centered tools, such as deep practice of Motivational Interviewing, to assist the participant to identify the pathways of change that fit best for the individual.

The DSB will continue to provide the services that assist an individual who has had a change in vision to keep the high paying job they are skilled at, and will continue to assist individuals require supports to expand and challenge their current work circumstances through promotional opportunities.

The DSB will continue to develop, refine, and provide relevant job readiness and entrepreneurial exploration workshops for participants to refine their self–marketing skills and explore self–employment as an option.

The DSB will continue to provide the highest quality blindness rehabilitation skills assessment and training which are essential to creating an equal footing among non–disabled peers and within the community and workplace.

The DSB will continue to provide cutting–edge adaptive skills assessment, tools matching and training that are critical to developing the technical access, efficiencies and competencies that meet business workforce needs.

The DSB will continue to provide vocational and academic training, work experience, and paid internship opportunities that bring the participant the technical and professional skills needed by business, broaden the participant perspective on workplace culture and expectations, and help a workplace recognize the talent of the individual blind participant through active demonstration of value to the business.

The DSB will continue to partner among DSB staff, the participant, and employer to provide on–site workplace evaluations for accessibility recommendations and tools.

The DSB will continue to refine its message and outreach methods to inform potential eligible participants, business and partners of our comprehensive services.

The DSB will continue to refine facilitation of services for historically underserved communities such as non–native–English speaking communities, co–occurring disabilities such as mental & behavioral health, and youth.

Under the Combined State Plan, the DSB expects the new relationship among core group and partner programs to genuinely address the development of pathways for access that allow blind, low vision and deaf blind individuals to also engage in the workforce activities that enhance and increase their opportunities towards the State's strategy of High Skills/High Wages. This access to workforce activities is currently aspirational, as our agency blind participants have been largely denied access to the benefits of the greater workforce system since the 1998 WIA implementation. Future success of equal participation in these workforce activities will depend on the WIOA partners' active awareness and belief that individuals who are blind are viable participants within the workforce, and that the DSB is a valuable collaborator among workforce partners. Access and navigation issues must be addressed with highest priority among all partner programs.

The DSB expects blind, low vision and deaf blind participants to become fully engaged in the greater array of workforce services.

The DSB expects our counseling staff to be active and equal partners among the regional and local Business Service Teams, where the talents of agency participants can be more effectively matched with business needs through sharing of sector strategy and real time labor market information.

The DSB expects staff will enter agency participant information into the shared profile mechanism that is developed among the core and partner programs, schedule appointments to meet with agency participants at One–Stop centers, and connect agency participants to the array of wrap–around services they are eligible for.

The DSB expects partner programs to identify shared core–participant job readiness skill needs, and to work with all partners to develop common–need trainings – and share presentation efforts where applicable – to strengthen the skill sets of our agency participants through access to all. The DSB

expects that the new partnership will make our staff and agency participants more informed beneficiaries of relevant targeted workforce vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities towards gaining higher skills that match an individual's aptitude despite visual disability, and thereby securing higher wages and greater self–sufficiency.

The DSB expects to explore bridges among the partner Department of Labor Youth programs to fully engage blind youth in integrated and competitive work experience opportunities that fit individual need.

Sub–goal 1.2: Ensure equal access for blind, low vision and deaf blind individuals to be able to benefit from the array of services available through the state's workforce system

Strategy 1.2: The DSB views the State's strategy for Access and Technology as the highest priority for the success of our agency participants to connect to and benefit from core group and partner program services which prepare and provide a pathway to them meeting the workforce needs of business. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act makes accessibility a more prominent expectation for workforce partners, and the DSB will gladly champion universal accessibility among the core group and partner programs, in particular for potential beneficiaries of the workforce system array of services and programs who are blind, low vision or deaf blind. The DSB has helped workforce partners to broaden their understanding of what universal accessibility means beyond basic architectural access, and DSB has assisted the workforce partners in codifying universal access as an element in the One–Stop certification process.

The DSB will continue to remind partner programs of the potential costs of not providing accessible electronic and programmatic services, and will continue to provide technical assistance and referral for procurement, testing and maintenance of electronic data systems and processes that are accessible and usable by adaptive technology users.

The DSB will be active in assisting with the recruitment of local and state advisory boards for access and technology in order to provide useful guidance to state and local workforce systems on developing and refining greater universal accessibility to communities with barriers to employment.

Sub–goal 1.3: Engage with state and local community businesses in ways that best work for business, and better prepare agency participants for success by ensuring they have the skills that meet business needs.

Strategy 1.3: The DSB will work towards the State's strategy of increased Business Engagement by developing the agency's array of services that businesses may require or desire of us, thereby facilitating the employment of qualified individuals who are blind, low vision or deaf blind. The agency will deepen collaboration with core and partner programs in order to better connect our blind participants' aptitudes to the skills training and business connection pathways that work best for business needs.

A DSB–offered array of services for business includes many components. One component is to increase awareness among business of the agency's range of services, in order to provide an easy pathway for business to retain a talented employee whose work performance may be impacted due to a change in vision. Another aspect is the ability to fulfill business recruitment needs through connecting the business with the talents of job–ready and skilled agency participants, and to offer the ability to create individualized and low–risk opportunities for the business so that a participant might best showcase their ability and potential value to the workplace.

The DSB will provide guidance on issues of disability in the workplace, including education around the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act; information on how to benefit from federal and local incentives for hiring of individuals with disabilities, and offer supports to the business for successfully meeting required mandates for hiring of individuals with disabilities.

The DSB will offer workplace accommodation recommendations and supports, and education and guidance on making the workplace a disability–friendly and inclusive environment.

The DSB will connect business to disability–related resources, training and/or education available in the community at large.

The DSB will engage business in identifying supply chain needs, and will assist in establishing entrepreneurs and small businesses that might best fulfill that supply chain need.

Due to the small size of the DSB customer base and agency staffing in comparison to other workforce partner programs, the agency and its eligible participants will benefit from the broader infrastructure that state plan partners develop and nurture towards increased business engagement. The DSB alone cannot fully provide the amount of skilled talent business requires, and the DSB as a separate entity cannot efficiently engage business statewide.

The DSB will rely on active inclusion of its staff in the One–Stop Business Services Teams, and depend on the accessibility of workforce programs for agency participants, in order to meet the broader engagement of business in a manner that works best for business – through a seamless single point of contact. DSB counselors develop relationships with local business partners, and will guide those relationships (as applicable) into the greater workforce system in order to best fulfill the business needs.

Sub–goal 1.4: Implement creative and meaningful changes to agency processes and services in order to best meet intent of WIOA around services to youth.

Strategy 1.4: The DSB will leverage existing success towards contributing to the State's strategy of Youth Opportunities, and will create new pathways for youth to gain essential experience and pathways towards the world of work.

The DSB will continue to provide its array of workshops, programs and paid work experience to students and youth with visual disability.

The DSB will continue to provide short–term summer workshops in Seattle and Spokane that provide pre–employment transition services to students with visual disability, and will expand those group services to more locations around the state and more frequently throughout the year.

The DSB will fund the two–week summer program that provides individual eligible students vocational assessments and experience exploring the world of work through informational interviews and job–shadowing.

The DSB will continue to organize and manage the summer six–week paid work experience program for eligible students age 16+, and will expand the program and staffing to provide more paid work experience and pre–employment transition service opportunities in a year.

The DSB will continue to nurture the relationships with business that support these work opportunities for blind youth.

The DSB will continue to organize and manage the summer university transition program to prepare students for the self–advocacy skills needed for the adult world of higher education.

The DSB will continue to support fifth year students who require intensive adaptive skills training through the Washington School for the Blind before transitioning into adult pathways of higher education or work.

The DSB will continue to build relationship and participate in IEP meetings with school districts, teachers of the visually impaired, students and families throughout the state.

The DSB will continue to present at events such as the Pacific Northwest Association of Educators of Rehabilitation (PNWAER) to inform families and educators who work with students who might be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

The DSB will explore methods for supporting work experience for students with visual disability more locally across the state and more broadly throughout the year other than summer.

The DSB is in discussion with the Washington School for the Blind and other partners to assist in more consistently identifying and enrolling students with 504 plans who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

The DSB is working with the Washington State School for the Blind to co–fund a new Business Specialist position housed at the school which will be responsible for securing and supporting work experience for students both at the school and through the agency.

The DSB is in discussion with the Washington State School for the Blind on how to best promote work experience for students while simultaneously acknowledging competing pressures and tight timelines of academic requirements.

The DSB is exploring with other partners new methods for providing pre–employment transition services to students with visual disability, focusing in particular upon the adaptive and soft skills necessary to succeed in an adult workplace culture.

Goal 2: Increase agency outreach and effectiveness of services to individuals and communities that would benefit from vocational rehabilitation services

Sub–goal 2.1: Increase effectiveness and cultural relevance of agency story

Strategy 2.1: This strategy is to address the agency's need to better address the needs of underserved populations, and to address the community feedback that the agency needs to have a stronger presence within the community.

The agency wants to ensure all levels of internal staff understand and can speak publicly to all aspects of the agency, whether in a quick elevator–type speech or more formally, in order to allow any moment as an opportunity for outreach.

The agency is analyzing its current tools for outreach for how well the message reads to intended audience – does language describe programs in silos and ways that internal staff might understand, or does it speak more to the services we offer that a potential applicant or business person will find relevant to their needs? Are there concepts that are culturally more relevant and that should be highlighted, whether conveying the message in English or a second language? How best to reach a younger generation of potential VR participants, what messages will motivate the fullest participation? Are there methods for outreach that are more effective? What aspects of social media should the agency expand its presence?

Goal 3: Enhance and maintain DSB capacity & expertise in serving blind Washington residents

Sub–goal 3.1: Enhance awareness among all staff of context, issues, and skills of blindness

Strategy 3.1: This strategy is to ensure that all layers of the agency meets the level of skill and expertise that best serves blind, low vision and deaf blind residents of Washington State.

Supporting a participant to effectively navigate through to the adjustment to blindness, self–advocacy and independence necessary to achieve and maintain a vocational goal requires absolute belief and knowledge that a blind individual, with the right tools, training and aptitude, can do whatever work fits for them. All agency staff must understand fully that success in integrated, competitive employment is achievable for each and every participant who becomes eligible for services. That level of knowledge and belief requires experience and awareness of the blindness community, interaction with an array of role models, and confidence in adaptive techniques of blindness for independence. Not all new hires to the agency have a background in blindness services, but all staff – no matter their role – will have the organizational expectation and support for deep, on–going interaction and active listening of arenas & issues important to the blindness community.

One of DSB's identified strengths is its specialized skill and expertise. An important aspect of blindness adaptive skills is the use of technology as aids; the pace of change in technology requires special attention and diligence of agency staff in order to provide relevant training and services to participants. The specialized skills of blindness need to be adaptable to an array of participant needs. Broad experience and consistent practice of skill sets without relying on vision are critical elements for practitioners to best assist a participant in finding the methods that are most effective for the individual. The agency supports peer training opportunities among staff to share broadly new methods, ideas and tools and hone expertise. Awareness and addressing potential co–occurring disabilities are critical to the success of the agency participant in the workplace. Agency staff need to be trained and confident in identifying other obstacles, and be experienced with the community to be able to identify and connect with an appropriate partner and collaborator to address the obstacles.

Sub–goal 3.2: Improve systems for universal accessibility, both internally within the agency and externally among partners

Strategy 3.2: This strategy addresses the primary issue that keeps agency participants from fully engaging in the workforce partner systems, employment, and the greater community: accessibility of electronic data. It also acknowledges the unique and pivotal role that DSB as an agency can play in enacting change towards a broader understanding and implementation of programmatic and systems accessibility.

Internally, the DSB will be analyzing its own systems for continued accessibility and usability.

The DSB will ensure methods of access to agency data for those new to vision loss and who do not yet have the adapted tools to read print or electronic data.

The DSB will continue to identify and resolve internal access issues with highest priority, and will develop systems of internal supports to better manage access issues.

The DSB will continue to make accessibility a requirement in all agency electronic software and hardware procurements, and to ensure the manufacturer is fully responsible for a fix if access or usability fails at any point in the life of the product.

Externally, the DSB will champion full programmatic and information accessibility for individuals who are blind, low vision and deaf blind among all core WIOA, business and community partners.

The DSB will consistently offer information as to the benefits of making access an organizational essential priority, and provide supports to get partner organizations and businesses on the path towards accessibility.

The DSB will continue to demand access for its agency participants to the full array of services through the workforce system, and view the most critical change through implementation of WIOA to be the focus and achievement of greater accessibility to WIOA partner programs and services.

The DSB will continue to provide referral and tech supports to other state agencies and programs around improving accessibility. Information and supports around issues of access are a prime service the agency offers to businesses.

The DSB will continue to provide excellent skills training to agency participants so they have the skills to troubleshoot access issues as they arise in a workplace, and are able to effectively self–advocate for their needs.

The DSB will partner with other officials, agencies, consumer groups, organizations and individuals wherever possible to promote greater access in the workplace and community for blind, low vision and deaf blind individuals.

Sub–goal 3.3: Refine and maintain systems for knowledge transfer and leadership development

Strategy 3.3: This strategy addresses the need to systematize processes to ensure the smoothest transition of staff, in order to have the least interruption of services to the agency's participants and community partners. The agency wants to ensure the smoothest operations possible despite changes in the workforce.

The DSB will identify positions that are at highest risk if systems for transfer of knowledge are not in place, and will be more thoroughly documenting required task processes, timelines and expectations for those positions.

Development of staff through sharing of knowledge, job shadowing and cross–training will be emphasized for targeted positions.

The agency will continue to double–fill positions where a vacancy is planned in order to allow the incumbent to provide the new hire with their specialized training and experience.

The DSB has initiated through reorganization a new team structure that provides greater paths for leadership experience throughout the agency, and the agency will work to build a bigger pool of internal, prepared candidates in which to fill future leadership vacancies.

The DSB will continue to support training and development for leadership at all levels.

Goal 4: Enhance the vocational aspects of vocational rehabilitation within agency processes

Sub–goal 4.1: Integrate employment into a unified customer experience at all phases of the vocational rehabilitation process

Strategy 4.1: This strategy addresses the need to better balance both aspects of the agency's mandate in providing vocational rehabilitation services, and to enhance the vocational aspects of the agency's services.

The agency will continue its strong comprehensive and individualized vocational work, and will enhance those efforts by nurturing an agency culture where vocational activity is possible, supported and encouraged at any and every stage of the vocational rehabilitation process. Vocational–related concepts can be integrated into all agency processes, from the moment a potential participant enters the door to the day he/she exits.

The agency recognizes that it has had to duplicate many pre–vocational services that have been provided to the general public by the One–Stop Job Development Centers simply because none of the One–Stop programs or data systems have been accessible for blind, low vision or deaf blind individuals. If access issues are successfully addressed by the WIOA partners, there will be many programs, services and workshops that our agency participant base could make use of more naturally through the One–Stop systems, and get better connected to the array of businesses and job opportunities that are available to the general public. If the agency can successfully shift some current processes to the greater workforce system – contingent on successful accessibility changes within the One–Stops – the agency can focus on serving great numbers with better services. The agency staff will be more involved in the Business Service Teams through the One–Stops, and will build the relationships that help get their participants connected to the best opportunity.

Sub–goal 4.2: Build employer–desired core soft skills (critical thinking, decision making, etc.) throughout skill development process

Strategy 4.2: This strategy is to address the business–identified skill gaps in the workforce, and to better prepare our agency participants in improving their marketability and value for business.

The agency recognizes both that businesses have identified soft skills (problem–solving, critical thinking, decision–making, communication; appropriate workplace behavior) as the biggest barrier to employment, and that acquiring these skills as an adult likely requires a difficult path of behavioral change. There is impetus for the agency to address these skills as early as possible, as consistently as possible, and as seamlessly as possible in all the interactions with participants. Youth workshops and activities will always have some component of soft skills training included. Counseling and services will emphasize supporting self–determination though informed choice. Curriculum that emphasizes or folds in soft skills training and feedback will be identified, implemented and refined. An assessment of soft skills will be developed and refined in order to assist in determining "job readiness".

Sub–goal 4.3: Build and deepen systems for regional business expertise

Strategy 4.3: This strategy is strongly aligned with strategy 1.3 above, where greater successful collaboration with the One–Stop partners will greatly expand the agency's regional business expertise.

Due to the small size of the DSB customer base and agency staffing in comparison to other workforce partner programs, the agency and its eligible participants will benefit from the broader infrastructure that state plan partners develop and nurture towards increased business engagement. The DSB alone cannot fully provide the amount of skilled talent business requires, and the DSB as a separate entity cannot efficiently engage business statewide. The DSB will rely on active inclusion of its staff in the One–Stop Business Services Teams, and depend on the accessibility of workforce programs for agency participants, in order to meet the broader engagement of business in a manner that works best for business – through a seamless single point of contact. DSB counselors develop relationships with local business partners, and will guide those relationships (as applicable) into the greater workforce system in order to best fulfill the business needs.

Internally, the agency will analyze streamlined ways to connect with businesses and prepare staff to meet the needs of business. The agency will refine internal systems for identifying, assessing and training towards job readiness standards that match what businesses require, so that agency participants are best prepared to compete within the job market. The agency will refine systems for informing participants and businesses of potential strong matches for job openings.

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.

Examples of typical AT devices or accommodations for someone who is blind or has low vision are:

–Software to magnify a computer–screen view or to have what appears on the computer screen voiced or Brailed

–Handheld or desktop electronic magnifiers to see small print

–Devices to scan and voice a printed document, flier, or book

–Changes in lighting to reduce glare or increase visibility

–Adjustments to a workstation layout to improve workflow & ergonomics

The Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) help participants find the right combination of AT devices and accommodations to help keep or get a job.

AT Specialists:

–Conduct comprehensive job site evaluations to identify how an employee who is blind or has low vision will do their job.

–Recommend adaptive technologies and reasonable accommodations that might be required for the employee to do their job efficiently and effectively.

–Serve as a resource for choosing and purchasing devices.

–Train employees on how to use their devices.

In PY2015, agency in–house AT Specialists provided:

–Adaptive technology services to an unduplicated count of 868 agency participants

–535 technical assistance services to agency participants

–Adaptive technology and low vision aids assessments to 444 unduplicated agency participants

–Extensive adaptive technology training to 204 unduplicated participants

–In–house staff provided 4820 hours of direct adaptive technology services to agency participants.

–Rehab Technology services were the highest single VR case service expense provided to agency 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.

Objective: Increase Customer Referrals from Underserved Communities

Strategy: Provide information about DSB services to underserved communities.

Tactics:

• Public relations activities to media outlets serving selected communities.

• Public relations activities to vision professionals serving selected communities.

• Personal outreach to community services providers.

• Appearances and presentations at community and professional events (health fairs, community events, professional conferences, etc.).

Supporting Projects:

• Create community specific promotional materials, brochures, etc. (Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese)

• Develop schedule of communications and promotion activities.

• Create articles/press releases.

• Develop distribution/mailing lists.

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 DSB engages with the Blind Youth Consortium, a quarterly meeting of partner agencies (DSB; Washington State School for the Blind; Washington Sensory Disability Services; Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.; Washington Talking Book and Braille Library; OSPI Educational School Districts; the Department of Early Learning; the Department of Health; Seattle Children's Hospital; University of Washington) to collaborate and share resources on blind youth issues within Washington State. The group worked to refine coordination of Birth – 3 vision services statewide, and have collaborated in the need to identify and provide services for individuals with either ocular and/or cortical visual impairment at the earliest point.

The DSB has been engaging with core partner Title I youth programs to discuss how we might collaborate under the new combined state plan, with their focus on out–of–school youth, and Title IV focus on in–school youth.

The agency collaborates closely with local teachers of the visually impaired and the statewide educational service districts to identify and serve youth in pre–employment transition group and individualized services. DSB Youth Services specialists also coordinate with statewide consumer, family and school organizations to facilitate youth adaptive skill and self–advocacy activities as services to groups.

Ages 9–13 Washington State interpretation of the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) allows for transition services as young as necessary, and DSB recognizes that providing pre–employment transition services as early as possible for blind youth is critical for success in their later transition to the adult world of work.

DSB Youth Services specialists facilitate and manage pre–employment transition group service workshops for youth ages 9 – 13. The workshops provide opportunity to introduce the skills to join in family labor, to gain exposure to the world of work, and to learn adapted methods for interacting within the community at large, and develop self–advocacy and job–readiness skills. These workshops are available statewide for customers. The agency plans to expand the scope and location of these workshops to better meet local pre–employment transition needs.

Ages 14 – 24 DSB's Vocational Rehabilitation policy, WAC 67–25–399 – Vocational Rehabilitation Services – Transition Services for Students, allows individual application for vocational rehabilitation services at age 14, and requires the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for all students within 90 days of eligibility, which matches the timeline for adult services.

DSB Youth Services specialists organize a sequential set of youth programs to aid in preparation for post–high school life. Blind and low vision individuals who have early exposure to adaptive skills

training, vocational exploration and active socialization have a head start to becoming functional, employed and fully integrated adults. The Department of Services for the Blind knows not all learning can be accomplished in the classroom, and offers the following progression of workshops to complement the learning that is available through the public education system. These pre–employment transition programs serve to give each participant a safe environment to discover their vocational aptitude, to develop confidence in adaptive skills and encourage self–advocacy and independence. The pre–employment transition programs are a key to the agency's success in quality of employment outcomes for students with visual disabilities.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

The DSB provides on–going blindness awareness trainings for CRPs, helping CRP staff be more confident and effective in marketing our agency participants' talents to business. Attendees have reported a stronger understanding of adaptive technologies and the DSB processes that can help support a job placement.

The DSB tracks CRP performance, and interviews top performing CRPs in order to understand how we are best collaborating towards the success for the agency participant.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

Develop data–sharing agreements to receive timely and detailed wage data for agency participants who have exited the program.

Refine agency methods for assessing job–readiness, and align with workforce & business expectations, with WIOA partners as a bridge.

Request technical assistance from federal partners to consider self–employment income as part of the performance results, as entrepreneurship is an important means for self–sufficiency for participants with a visual disability.

Request technical assistance from federal partners to collect wage data for participants who exit in out–of–state or federal jobs.

Collaborate with WIOA and business partners to reinforce the vocational side of our vocational rehabilitation services.

Promote more hands–on work experience for youth with a disability, and provide paid internship opportunities for adults who need to demonstrate their value to reluctant employers.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Repeated from section O:

Goal 1: Successfully implement intent of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act into agency work and processes

Sub–goal 1.1: Continue to emphasize the State's Strategy of High Skills/High Wages focus for agency participants

Strategy 1.1: The DSB will leverage its existing success towards contributing to the State's strategy of High skills/High wages, and will create new pathways to greater self–sufficiency for DSB participants through deeper collaboration among core and partner programs.

The DSB will continue to provide the comprehensive, participant–centered, individualized vocational and blindness rehabilitation services that have consistently made the Rehabilitation Services Administration's rating of the agency's outcomes the strongest among all national vocational rehabilitation agencies – blind or general – in quality of employment achieved and wages earned.

The DSB will continue to provide highly professional and informed counseling and guidance services to assist the participant through issues of adjustment to disability, vocational and skill gap–assessment, career matching, and integration into the workplace.

The DSB will continue to make use of client–centered tools, such as deep practice of Motivational Interviewing, to assist the participant to identify the pathways of change that fit best for the individual.

The DSB will continue to provide the services that assist an individual who has had a change in vision to keep the high paying job they are skilled at, and will continue to assist individuals require supports to expand and challenge their current work circumstances through promotional opportunities.

The DSB will continue to develop, refine, and provide relevant job readiness and entrepreneurial exploration workshops for participants to refine their self–marketing skills and explore self–employment as an option.

The DSB will continue to provide the highest quality blindness rehabilitation skills assessment and training which are essential to creating an equal footing among non–disabled peers and within the community and workplace.

The DSB will continue to provide cutting–edge adaptive skills assessment, tools matching and training that are critical to developing the technical access, efficiencies and competencies that meet business workforce needs.

The DSB will continue to provide vocational and academic training, work experience, and paid internship opportunities that bring the participant the technical and professional skills needed by business, broaden the participant perspective on workplace culture and expectations, and help a workplace recognize the talent of the individual blind participant through active demonstration of value to the business.

The DSB will continue to partner among DSB staff, the participant, and employer to provide on–site workplace evaluations for accessibility recommendations and tools.

The DSB will continue to refine its message and outreach methods to inform potential eligible participants, business and partners of our comprehensive services.

The DSB will continue to refine facilitation of services for historically underserved communities such as non–native–English speaking communities, co–occurring disabilities such as mental & behavioral health, and youth.

Under the Combined State Plan, the DSB expects the new relationship among core group and partner programs to genuinely address the development of pathways for access that allow blind, low vision and deaf blind individuals to also engage in the workforce activities that enhance and increase their opportunities towards the State's strategy of High Skills/High Wages. This access to workforce activities is currently aspirational, as our agency blind participants have been largely denied access to the benefits of the greater workforce system since the 1998 WIA implementation. Future success of equal participation in these workforce activities will depend on the WIOA partners' active awareness and belief that individuals who are blind are viable participants within the workforce, and that the DSB is a valuable collaborator among workforce partners. Access and navigation issues must be addressed with highest priority among all partner programs.

The DSB expects blind, low vision and deaf blind participants to become fully engaged in the greater array of workforce services.

The DSB expects our counseling staff to be active and equal partners among the regional and local Business Service Teams, where the talents of agency participants can be more effectively matched with business needs through sharing of sector strategy and real time labor market information.

The DSB expects staff will enter agency participant information into the shared profile mechanism that is developed among the core and partner programs, schedule appointments to meet with agency participants at One–Stop centers, and connect agency participants to the array of wrap–around services they are eligible for.

The DSB expects partner programs to identify shared core–participant job readiness skill needs, and to work with all partners to develop common–need trainings – and share presentation efforts where applicable – to strengthen the skill sets of our agency participants through access to all. The DSB expects that the new partnership will make our staff and agency participants more informed beneficiaries of relevant targeted workforce vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities towards gaining higher skills that match an individual's aptitude despite visual disability, and thereby securing higher wages and greater self–sufficiency.

The DSB expects to explore bridges among the partner Department of Labor Youth programs to fully engage blind youth in integrated and competitive work experience opportunities that fit individual need.

Sub–goal 1.2: Ensure equal access for blind, low vision and deaf blind individuals to be able to benefit from the array of services available through the state's workforce system

Strategy 1.2: The DSB views the State's strategy for Access and Technology as the highest priority for the success of our agency participants to connect to and benefit from core group and partner program services which prepare and provide a pathway to them meeting the workforce needs of business. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act makes accessibility a more prominent expectation for workforce partners, and the DSB will gladly champion universal accessibility among

the core group and partner programs, in particular for potential beneficiaries of the workforce system array of services and programs who are blind, low vision or deaf blind. The DSB has helped workforce partners to broaden their understanding of what universal accessibility means beyond basic architectural access, and DSB has assisted the workforce partners in codifying universal access as an element in the One–Stop certification process.

The DSB will continue to remind partner programs of the potential costs of not providing accessible electronic and programmatic services, and will continue to provide technical assistance and referral for procurement, testing and maintenance of electronic data systems and processes that are accessible and usable by adaptive technology users.

The DSB will be active in assisting with the recruitment of local and state advisory boards for access and technology in order to provide useful guidance to state and local workforce systems on developing and refining greater universal accessibility to communities with barriers to employment.

Sub–goal 1.3: Engage with state and local community businesses in ways that best work for business, and better prepare agency participants for success by ensuring they have the skills that meet business needs.

Strategy 1.3: The DSB will work towards the State's strategy of increased Business Engagement by developing the agency's array of services that businesses may require or desire of us, thereby facilitating the employment of qualified individuals who are blind, low vision or deaf blind. The agency will deepen collaboration with core and partner programs in order to better connect our blind participants' aptitudes to the skills training and business connection pathways that work best for business needs.

A DSB–offered array of services for business includes many components. One component is to increase awareness among business of the agency's range of services, in order to provide an easy pathway for business to retain a talented employee whose work performance may be impacted due to a change in vision. Another aspect is the ability to fulfill business recruitment needs through connecting the business with the talents of job–ready and skilled agency participants, and to offer the ability to create individualized and low–risk opportunities for the business so that a participant might best showcase their ability and potential value to the workplace.

The DSB will provide guidance on issues of disability in the workplace, including education around the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act; information on how to benefit from federal and local incentives for hiring of individuals with disabilities, and offer supports to the business for successfully meeting required mandates for hiring of individuals with disabilities.

The DSB will offer workplace accommodation recommendations and supports, and education and guidance on making the workplace a disability–friendly and inclusive environment.

The DSB will connect business to disability–related resources, training and/or education available in the community at large.

The DSB will engage business in identifying supply chain needs, and will assist in establishing entrepreneurs and small businesses that might best fulfill that supply chain need.

Due to the small size of the DSB customer base and agency staffing in comparison to other workforce partner programs, the agency and its eligible participants will benefit from the broader

infrastructure that state plan partners develop and nurture towards increased business engagement. The DSB alone cannot fully provide the amount of skilled talent business requires, and the DSB as a separate entity cannot efficiently engage business statewide.

The DSB will rely on active inclusion of its staff in the One–Stop Business Services Teams, and depend on the accessibility of workforce programs for agency participants, in order to meet the broader engagement of business in a manner that works best for business – through a seamless single point of contact. DSB counselors develop relationships with local business partners, and will guide those relationships (as applicable) into the greater workforce system in order to best fulfill the business needs.

Sub–goal 1.4: Implement creative and meaningful changes to agency processes and services in order to best meet intent of WIOA around services to youth.

Strategy 1.4: The DSB will leverage existing success towards contributing to the State's strategy of Youth Opportunities, and will create new pathways for youth to gain essential experience and pathways towards the world of work.

The DSB will continue to provide its array of workshops, programs and paid work experience to students and youth with visual disability.

The DSB will continue to provide short–term summer workshops in Seattle and Spokane that provide pre–employment transition services to students with visual disability, and will expand those group services to more locations around the state and more frequently throughout the year.

The DSB will fund the two–week summer program that provides individual eligible students vocational assessments and experience exploring the world of work through informational interviews and job–shadowing.

The DSB will continue to organize and manage the summer six–week paid work experience program for eligible students age 16+, and will expand the program and staffing to provide more paid work experience and pre–employment transition service opportunities in a year.

The DSB will continue to nurture the relationships with business that support these work opportunities for blind youth.

The DSB will continue to organize and manage the summer university transition program to prepare students for the self–advocacy skills needed for the adult world of higher education.

The DSB will continue to support fifth year students who require intensive adaptive skills training through the Washington School for the Blind before transitioning into adult pathways of higher education or work.

The DSB will continue to build relationship and participate in IEP meetings with school districts, teachers of the visually impaired, students and families throughout the state.

The DSB will continue to present at events such as the Pacific Northwest Association of Educators of Rehabilitation (PNWAER) to inform families and educators who work with students who might be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

The DSB will explore methods for supporting work experience for students with visual disability more locally across the state and more broadly throughout the year other than summer.

The DSB is in discussion with the Washington School for the Blind and other partners to assist in more consistently identifying and enrolling students with 504 plans who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

The DSB is working with the Washington State School for the Blind to co–fund a new Business Specialist position housed at the school which will be responsible for securing and supporting work experience for students both at the school and through the agency.

The DSB is in discussion with the Washington State School for the Blind on how to best promote work experience for students while simultaneously acknowledging competing pressures and tight timelines of academic requirements.

The DSB is exploring with other partners new methods for providing pre–employment transition services to students with visual disability, focusing in particular upon the adaptive and soft skills necessary to succeed in an adult workplace culture.

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 state’s combined plan strategies among all WIOA partners are reflected in the agency’s goals and strategies, particularly Goal and Strategy 1. See Section O.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

Youth services offers opportunity for innovation and expansion activities, and the agency will be exploring options over the next four years.

The need for accessibility of electronic documents in the workplace and among the WIOA partner system may offer opportunity for innovation and expansion.

Job–readiness and methods for measurement of job–readiness may offer opportunity for innovation and expansion.

Sector strategy workplace training and apprenticeships may offer opportunity for innovation and expansion.

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.

Continued culturally–relevant outreach to Asian and Hispanic communities.

Champion electronic accessibility among business and WIOA partners.

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.

Agency response (p):

Strategic Plan survey

In a broadly disseminated survey, agency participants, families, and business & community partners provided feedback on the agency's strengths, quality of outcomes, barriers, risks, opportunities and high value services. The survey also collected inputs about what DSB should stop doing, and what DSB should do differently in order to maximize vocational success and goal achievement by 2020.

The top strengths of DSB were cited as the skilled staff and array of specialized services offered by the agency, the solutions–focus and customer–centric responsiveness, and the leadership and collaboration the agency provides in the community.

When asked what was considered barriers to achieving agency goals of competitive employment, public acceptance of the blind and visually impaired, lack of community & employer outreach, access to data, staffing capacity, and funding concerns were the top responses cited.

Top ranked among opportunities to achieve the agency mission was to provide increased visibility of the agency among businesses, more outreach in the community, and increase resources for technology and youth services.

When asked what DSB should quit doing, responses included relying on outdated communications methods and "remaining quiet" on agency services and achievements.

Identified DSB strengths:

Participant (former and current) perspective:

Vocational, blindness and youth services; experienced caring staff and executive director; flexible, resourceful, supportive attitudes; respect for partnering

Business perspective: excellent, committed, responsive staff; range of services; solutions–focused agency; knowledgeable, resourceful, and good follow through

Community Partner perspective:

Skilled, open and diverse staff, teaming; flexibility; range of blindness and vocational services; leadership and vision; technology

Family/Friends of participant perspective:

Range of adaptive technology, daily living and advocacy services; knowledgeable staff working to increase access; one–on–one supports and collaborative relationships

Identified DSB Barriers:

Participant perspective:

Funding; outreach –agency services not broadly known; loss of experienced staff; adequate staffing capacity; presence of blind role models on staff; staff knowledge of issues of blindness/deaf blindness

Business perspective:

Adequate staff and financial resource to meet need; external factors – public acceptance of blindness, labor market; length of time for services

Community Partner perspective:

Funding; appropriate priorities for services; consistency through state

Family/Friends of participants perspective:

Adequate resources; too heavy workload; too many silos in agency; outdated models

Identified DSB risks:

Participant perspective:

Funding; economy; decreased quality or quality assurance of services; merger into umbrella department; not keeping up with technology and techniques; losing consumer organization support

Business perspective:

Funding; economy; technology changes

Community Partner perspective:

Funding; economy; loss of good staff; unnecessary processes; leadership satisfaction with status quo; consolidation into larger agency

Family/Friends of participants perspective:

Funding; need for more organized training for parents; getting information about agency services out to community

Identified DSB opportunities:

Participant perspective:

Partnerships with other organizations, business; increase number of qualified blind individuals in higher skill jobs; self–employment; family education/support; improved training curriculum

Business perspective:

Increased visibility; new types of jobs; technology and access; reaching a larger population

Community Partner perspective:

Collaboration external partners; technology and access; increase self–employment; increase service to outlying areas

Family/Friends of participants perspective:

Children and youth services, camps; technology training for youth; more access to physical education for blind youth; Identified

DSB high value services:

Participant perspective:

Technology training and equipment for jobs; independent travel training; agency outreach; increase services to older blind; peer–mentorship; confidence building and problem–solving skills; connecting with employers; youth services

Business perspective:

Education and outreach; job site assessment services and assist with accommodation process; technology training and tools;

Community Partner perspective:

Center training; technology; family program services

Family/Friends of participants perspective:

Advocacy; mobility and technology training; more training opportunities

Agency Participant Satisfaction Survey

The University of Washington Center on Technology and Disability Studies conducts an anonymous satisfaction survey, on behalf of the SRC for the Blind, for VR customers who were closed in the federal fiscal year. This year, the survey was conducted in November 2015. Surveys were completed online or by phone

Following the completion of the 2014 survey, the SRC for the Blind made clarity revisions to the wording of the questions, then reviewed and approved them during a quarterly meeting. The questions are aligned to the Results Washington initiatives. Questions were designed to address the three categories that the Results Washington initiatives focus on, including Accuracy, Timeliness, and Respectfulness. Two additional categories were reviewed for satisfaction, including Training.

Of the 310 agency participants contacted, 165 (or 53%) responded.

Of those responding, 61% participants experienced successful employment outcomes at the time of closure.

Questions were rated on a scale of 1 to 6, with 6 as very satisfied. The DSB prefers the highest standard in performance measurements, and does not include ratings of “somewhat satisfied (4)” among the “percent satisfied” compilation: scores of 5 and 6 are considered “percent satisfied”, while scores of 4 (somewhat satisfied) and lower are considered “percent not satisfied”.

Table 1. Overall Satisfaction by Region and Office.

Data based on, “Overall, how satisfied were you with the services you received from DSB?”

Regions and Offices / Overall Satisfaction

East Region: Spokane 94%

East Region: Yakima 90.5%

North Region: Seattle 83%

South Region: Lacey 87%

South Region: Tacoma 100%

South Region: Vancouver 78%

Table 2. Customer Satisfaction by Category [Elements that have an asterisk indicate that responses to multiple questions were combined to best meet satisfaction element]

Customer Satisfaction Element / Number satisfied / Number not satisfied / 2015 Satisfaction Percentage / % change from 2014

Overall* (process and services) / 263 / 67 / 80% / +7% Training offered /132 /33 /80% /+2%

Accuracy of staff* (knowledge; options and clarity of written materials; range of services; and community resources) / 698 / 127 / 85% / +4%

Timeliness of staff* (internal staff; external providers) / 258 / 72 / 78% / +6%

Respectfulness of staff / 138 / 27 / 84% / +5%

The majority in all categories of “percent not satisfied” were those respondents who noted they were “somewhat satisfied (4)”. The agency understands one of its challenges is to bring a segment of participants from intermittent satisfaction to full and consistent satisfaction. Survey respondents were given the opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions at the end of the survey. The majority of comments simply expressed their gratitude for the services they received, either from the Department or from specific people and counselors at the DSB.

Overall customer satisfaction with agency’s service provision is 80 percent positive satisfaction for cases that were closed in FFY2015.

The DSB’s successes and challenges in meeting the goals defined in the 2015 State Plan are described below

Goal 1: Improve and Expand Customer Services Statistics demonstrate the agency’s success in expanding customer services. In the five years from FFY2010 to FFY2015, the agency has experienced consistent increase in participants served, new applications, eligibilities, and plans, and number and quality of outcomes. The agency had been able to add four direct service staff in 2012 and 2013 which has assisted the capacity for serving more participants.

Table 3 numbers of Participants

Activity / Number in FFY2010 / Number in FFY2015 / Percent change

Total served / 1280 / 1341 / +4.8%

New Applications / 389 / 410 / +5.3%

New Eligibilities / 344 / 363 / +5.5%

New Plans / 257 / 340 / +32%

Timelines have shortened for participants, assisting the participant in more active and relevant services.

Table 4. Timelines

Activity / FFY2013 / FFY2015 / Percent change

Average time to Eligibility / 31 days / 28 days / –10%

Average time to Plan – all / 182 days / 118 days / –54%

Average time to plan – students / 419 days / 105 days / –300%

There has also been a noticeable Increase in number of referrals of the targeted underserved Hispanic/Latino communities. The gap in percent of customers served who identify as Hispanic/Latino compared to general Washington State demographics has been virtually closed. The gap of Asian participants compared to general state demographics continues to be present, however. The agency has focused on alternative outreach efforts to reach these communities, such

as a presence on Spanish– and Korean–language radio talk shows and providing outreach to community and culturally–relevant events, with outreach materials printed in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.

Table 5. Underserved community

Percent of general Washington State population / Percent of agency participants / FFY2012 / Percent of agency participants FFY2015 / Change in gap

Hispanic/Latino / 11.6% / 8.6% / 11.2% / Narrowed from 3.0% to 0.4%

Asian / 7.5% / 5.7% / 5.4% / Widened from 1.8% to 2.1%

Goal 2: Improve the economic vitality of residents who have visual disabilities through high quality employment outcomes, wages and benefits.

The DSB has a long history of high skill/high wage outcomes for its agency participants. The agency is proud of the improvement that has occurred over the past five years in increase of number of employment outcomes, increase in hourly wages, increase in number of job retention cases, increase in attendees of agency–sponsored entrepreneurial trainings, and increase in number of participants who exit the program by starting up and maintaining a new small business. The data table below highlights the changes for these elements over the past five years.

Table 6. Employment outcomes

Activity / Number in FFY2010 / Number in FFY2015 / Percent change

2 year exit with employment / 279 (FFY2009–10) / 357 (FFY2014–15) / +28%

Average hourly wage / $16.61 / $20.34 / +22%

Job Retention cases / 58 / 72 / +24%

Number attend entrepreneurial trainings / 0 / 15 / +100%

Number exit with new small businesses / 4 / 10 / +150%

Goal 3: Be a resource of quality expertise on issues of vision impairment and employment

The Agency continues to partner with agencies and organizations in the community around blindness, low vision and deaf–blind issues, and provides staff expertise as resource for state & local projects and workplace trainings around disability and employment.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

See above section

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.

Agency response (q):

In FFY2015, fifteen (15) working–aged individuals with co–occurring disabilities of Cognitive Impairments were successfully employed in integrated and competitive jobs with average hourly wages for the group of $15.43.

Where the individual was eligible, the agency partnered with the Developmental Disabilities Administration to ensure long-term supports were in place and stable before case closure. Where the individual was not eligible for DDA services, the agency worked to locate and stabilize natural supports through family, PASS plan and other means to allow for the long-term support needs of the individual.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Accessibility of workplace data and office equipment systems

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

DSB Performance on WIOA Indicators

To establish performance targets for program years 2017 and 2018, DSB analyzed participants' quarterly earnings and job retention outcomes. Washington's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board supported this process by analyzing education outcomes and provided DSB with aggregate results. These data resources have been utilized to report DSB performance on the Performance Accountability indicators established in WIOA Section 116.

Table 1. DSB Performance on WIOA Section 116 Performance

Accountability Indicators WIOA Measure / PY 2012 / PY 2013 /PY 2014

Employment Two Quarters after Exit / 40.5% / 46.5% / 44.5%

Employment Four Quarters after Exit / 38.4% / 41.5% / 38.2%

Median Wage Two Quarters after Exit / $5306 / $ 6012 / $ 5590

Credential Attainment / 50%** / 54%** / 53%**

Skill Gains / unavailable / unavailable / unavailable

Business Engagement / unavailable / unavailable / unavailable

**Based on averages of quarterly outcome aggregates, does not reflect yearly actuals

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

Entrepreneur Exploration Workshops

Job–Readiness Boot Camp Workshops

Paid Internship opportunities

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.

DSB provides supported employment services primarily to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DSB and its partners continue to pursue innovative strategies to expand these services to other populations, as resources are often comparatively scarce.

The State of Washington has applied for a Medicaid 1115(c) Waiver that is pending approval. If approved, the waiver will fund supported employment as a Medicaid service, expanding the availability of extended services to individuals who experience a wide array of significant disabilities.

Through continued collaboration, innovative approaches, and the use of natural supports, DSB and its partners will be able to expand the availability, quality, and scope of extended services for all individuals who require supported employment.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

DSB participants who receive Supported Employment services transition from ongoing support services to extended services when stable, satisfactory job performance is achieved. The timeframe for this transition is as soon as can be secured, and within 24 months of customers beginning employment, unless a longer timeframe has been specified in the IPE. While WIOA amends the Rehabilitation Act to permit DSB to fund extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities for a period not to exceed four years, DSB has chosen not to fund extended services for youth with the most significant disabilities unless as a necessary exception.

CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **Washington State Department of Services for the Blind**

Name of designated State agency **Washington State Department of Services for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Lou Oma Durand**

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

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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 **The Washington State Department of Services for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Lou Oma Durand**

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 **The Washington State Department of Services for the Blind**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Lou Oma Durand**

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.

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* 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.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

(A) CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SERVE ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN THE STATE (NOT NECESSARILY IN A UNIFORM MANNER) THAT PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES WITH (OR EXPECTING) CHILDREN AND PROVIDES PARENTS WITH JOB PREPARATION, WORK, AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM, SPECIFICALLY CASH ASSISTANCE, AND BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT).

On November 1, 1997, Washington's WorkFirst Program became operational statewide. The program design was to move families on welfare into employment as quickly as possible through upfront job search, work experience activities, and short–term education and training. (TANF State Plan Introduction I [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

The State has instituted, by rule, uniform program policies in all political subdivisions, including uniform TANF cash benefit standards. (TANF State Plan V B 2 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

Washington State provides cash benefits to all needy families who meet the eligibility criteria established by rules of the Department of Social and Health Services and in accordance with this State Plan. WorkFirst will be the major cash assistance program providing cash benefits and services for low–income families with (or expecting) children in Washington State. (TANF State Plan I A 1 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

The WorkFirst program offers services and activities to help people in low–income families find jobs, keep their jobs, find better jobs, and become self–sufficient. Low–income families are those with income below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. The program links families to a variety of state, federal, and community resources to meet this goal. Examples include:

(1) Child support collection

(2) Food assistance

(3) Subsidized child care

(4) Medical assistance

(5) Tuition assistance at community and technical colleges

(6) WorkFirst support services (TANF State Plan I A 1 e [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

WorkFirst support services include assistance with work clothing, work tools, car repair, and transportation. Job preparation services also include education and training tuition assistance, books, test fees and subsidized work experience. These services are designed to help individuals keep their jobs or get better jobs. (TANF State Plan II G 1 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

The WorkFirst Program is focused on obtaining paid, unsubsidized employment for all recipients. In addition, WorkFirst is dedicated to assisting families up and out of poverty once they become employed by providing employment retention and wage progression services. In operating the

WorkFirst Program, the State will: provide up–front employability screening for participants prior to job search; require WorkFirst clients to participate in initial job search as one method to determine employability and refer for further assessment if he or she fails to find a job; reassign participants who do not find work to additional job search activities for a short length of time or to paid work experience or subsidized employment or other work–like activities; provide post–employment services to assist clients in remaining employed and to progress in skills and wages; provide educational opportunities in the context of learning while working, both in classroom settings and on the work–site; and encourage a new alliance of state, local, and tribal government, business, churches, nonprofit organizations, and individuals, who dedicate themselves to helping families in poverty overcome barriers. (TANF State Plan II A 1 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

As the WorkFirst program has evolved, more emphasis has been placed on overcoming barriers to employment, job retention, and reducing the re–cycling that characterizes a significant part of the TANF population.

(B) REQUIRE A PARENT OR CARETAKER RECEIVING ASSISTANCE TO ENGAGE IN WORK (DEFINED BY THE STATE) ONCE THE STATE DETERMINES THE PARENT OR CARETAKER IS READY TO ENGAGE IN WORK, OR ONCE HE OR SHE HAS RECEIVED 24 MONTHS OF ASSISTANCE, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER, CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD CARE EXCEPTION AT 407(E)(2) (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The State includes the following activities in its definition of work: unsubsidized paid employment, subsidized paid employment, work experience, on–the–job training, job search and job readiness assistance, community service, vocational education, job skills training related to employment, education related to employment for a parent who has not completed high school or equivalent, providing childcare for an individual engaged in community service, internships, practicums, participation in other programs by persons needing special assistance to become employable to the extent federally countable, and participation in post–employment activities to the extent federally countable. (TANF State Plan II B 1 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

What criteria will Washington State use to determine whether a parent or caretaker relative is ready to engage in work before 24 months? The State requires all nonexempt WorkFirst clients to be screened upon application and then enter into an initial work search or take whatever actions necessary in order to engage in the initial work search. (TANF State Plan II C 1 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

What criteria has the State established relative to a single custodial parent's "demonstrated inability" to obtain needed child care? The State recognizes that informed choice is consistent with individual responsibility and that parents should be given a range of options for available child care while participating in the WorkFirst Program. Criteria established for "demonstrated inability" to obtain needed child care include: is not affordable (costs more that the co–payment would be under the Working Connections Childcare Program); is not appropriate (not licensed, certified or approved under federal, state, or tribal law and regulations for the type of care used or there is no appropriate relative or in–home provider available); or Is not within a reasonable distance (within reach without traveling farther than is normally expected in the community). (TANF State Plan II C 5 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

(C) ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE ENGAGE IN WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 407 (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

In operating the WorkFirst program, the State uses the work participation rates specified in federal welfare reform legislation (P. L. 104–193) as its work participation goal. However, the state, to the extent possible, will use the work participation rates as a minimum standard and will work toward exceeding these goals. Washington has established program goals around reduced caseloads and wage progression efforts with the expectation that low–income families will be lifted up and out of poverty through employment, and WorkFirst is designed to meet that expectation. To the degree possible, all low–income families will have access to services that will help them gain in work skills and earn enough to become financially stable. (TANF State Plan II A 3 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

The State used various welfare–to–work models, including models focused on moving job ready individuals into work as rapidly as possible, and providing employment–related training that is expected to lead directly to work for those lacking work skills. (TANF State Plan II A 2 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

While the Department of Social and Health Services is the single State agency responsible for administering the TANF program, six core state agencies are designated to work together to manage the WorkFirst program. These agencies include the Office of Financial Management, Department of Commerce, the Employment Security Department, the Department of Social and Health Services, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Department of Early Learning. (TANF State Plan IV B 1 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

More specifically, the Employment Security Department provides labor exchange (Wagner–Peyser) services for WorkFirst clients, the community and technical colleges provide various kinds of vocational education and subsidized work experience, and the Department of Commerce provides subsidized jobs and unpaid work experience opportunities for clients with barriers to employment. In addition, the Department of Early Learning has a subsidized child care program for low–income working (including TANF) parents and also manages a home visiting program for low–income at–risk pregnant or parenting (including TANF) parents. The WorkFirst Leadership Team and the Legislative–Executive WorkFirst Oversight Task Force provide oversight.

Within the Department of Social and Health Services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation serves TANF/WorkFirst clients who qualify under its rules.

Post–TANF parents may be eligible for services through the Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) program up to its 200% FPL level of eligibility.

In the TANF program, the education and training options for parents are circumscribed by various process rules (Work Participation Rates or WPR) which don’t apply to the WIOA core programs. Examples include: the 12–month limit on stand–alone vocational education and the 30% cap on how much of the TANF caseload can be participating in vocational education at any one time, that can be counted by the State towards the State’s WPR. On the other hand, TANF/WorkFirst can provide tuition assistance and childcare for parents engaged in approved education and training activities.

Historically, the one–stop workforce development system in Washington State has not focused on providing services to clients with the range of barriers to employment identified in WIOA, who can be

found in disproportionate numbers on the TANF caseload. With the expanded number of partners represented in this Combined State Plan, and the efficiencies that go with improved coordination, Washington State seeks to improve its capacity to serve these disadvantaged populations.

(D) TAKE SUCH REASONABLE STEPS AS THE STATE DEEMS NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PROGRAM ATTRIBUTABLE TO FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(IV) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The State has established confidentiality rules and procedures within the guidelines provided under state (RCW 74.04.060 and RCW 74.04.062) and federal law. The following changes have been made in response to state and federal welfare reform legislation:

The State has revised confidentiality provisions that expand access to client records by law enforcement officials. Specifically, in accordance with state welfare reform legislation, the Department of Social and Health Services will disclose the current address and location of a WorkFirst recipient to an officer of the law or a person identified as a United States immigration official if the department is given the recipient's name and social security account number and the officer/official satisfactorily demonstrates that the recipient is a fugitive, that the location or apprehension of the recipient is within the officer's/official's duties, and that the request is made in the proper exercise of those duties. In addition, if the department becomes aware that a WorkFirst recipient is the subject of an outstanding warrant, the department may contact the appropriate law enforcement agency and, if the warrant is valid, provide the law enforcement agency with the location of the recipient.

The State will comply with federal Immigration and Naturalization Services reporting requirements, as specified in federal has (P. L. 104–193).

The Department of Social and Health Services will provide the Employment Security Department with the names and social security numbers of all recipients in the WorkFirst program (or any successor state welfare program). This information will be used for the purposes of statistical analysis and evaluation of the WorkFirst (or any successor state welfare) program only. (TANF State Plan V C 1 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

Attachment A [of the TANF State Plan [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp]] is written certification by Governor Jay Inslee that during the fiscal year the State will: Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure that the State will screen for and identify WorkFirst clients with a history of family violence as defined under P. L. 104–193 (while maintaining confidentiality), refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services and waive some requirements, such as time limit, work participation, and child support cooperation, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for clients to escape family violence or unfairly penalize clients. (TANF State Plan IV A 3 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

(E) ESTABLISH GOALS AND TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TEENAGE PREGNANCIES (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Under state welfare reform legislation, the director of the Office of Financial Management (OFM) is directed to establish an interagency task force on unintended pregnancy in order to: review existing research on the short and long–range costs; analyze the impact on the WorkFirst program; and develop and implement a state strategy to reduce unintended pregnancy.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Health Care Authority (HCA), Department of Health (DOH), Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and other state programs will establish goals and continue to take action to prevent and reduce the incidence of out–of–wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies.

Through a federal waiver, called TAKE CHARGE, the State provides pre–pregnancy family planning services to citizen men and women with family incomes up to and including 260% of the federal poverty level. The State also extends eligibility for family planning services to citizen women up to 260% of the federal poverty level for a year after their pregnancy ends. Non–citizen women with Medicaid coverage for the birth of a child receive state–funded family planning services for 1 year after the end of their pregnancy. These women are NOT eligible for family planning services under the federally–approved family planning waiver. Non–Medicaid, low–income men and women can also receive family planning services through DOH Title X–funded family planning clinics.

Additional programs that contribute to achieving out–of–wedlock pregnancy goals include: the State Need Grant and College Bound Scholarship programs for low–income students wishing to pursue higher education; the Early Childhood Education Assistance Program serving low–income 3 and 4 year old children; the Promoting Academic Success and Learning Assistance Programs for low–income and high–risk public school students; and the full–day kindergarten and reduced class size programs in high–poverty elementary schools. All of these programs affect long–term outcomes including less contact with the criminal justice system, higher earnings as adults, less reliance on social services as adults and fewer out–of–wedlock births. (TANF State Plan IV B 1 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

(F) CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND RELEVANT COUNSELING SERVICES, THAT PROVIDES EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE SO THAT TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MEN (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VI) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

In conjunction with the Washington State Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, through the WAPA/State Judicial Case Processing Task Force, the state has developed mandatory reporting protocol for child support cases meeting the criteria for statutory rape.

The state has linkages with an Interagency Workgroup on Unintended Pregnancy Prevention to review current outreach programs for men and women which deal with teen pregnancy, and make recommendations concerning the incorporation of appropriate education about the crime of Rape of a Child.

Under the WA State Personal Responsibility Education Program or PREP, “intervention partners” across the state use evidence-based curricula to educate youth (males and females and primarily ages 11 to 18) on both abstinence and contraception for the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. The focus is on the fifteen counties with the highest rates of teen pregnancy or risk of teen pregnancy – low-income and teens of color. In addition, three adulthood preparation subjects are addressed, including healthy relationships. The healthy relationships curriculum includes positive self-esteem, relationship dynamics, friendships, dating, romantic involvement, marriage, and family interactions. Partners include school districts, boys and girls clubs, county public health departments, juvenile detention centers, and community based organizations.

Youth committed of a sexual offense to a Juvenile Justice Rehabilitation Administration (DSHS) facility receive counseling and specific sex offender treatment while in residence and also while on parole aftercare supervision.

Under state welfare reform legislation, acceptable living arrangements for a minor parent’ or pregnant minor cannot include the other natural parent of the minor parent’s child or unborn child when the minor is under age 16 and the other parent is 18 or older and meets the age criteria for Rape of a Child as set forth in state law (See RCW 9A.44.079). (TANF State Plan IV C)[http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

(G) IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTION IN AN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE OR POINT-OF-SALE DEVICE LOCATED IN A PLACE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 408(A)(12), INCLUDING A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE HAVE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THEIR CASH ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

In 2011 the legislature enacted RCW 74.08.580 to address concerns regarding use of benefits at prohibited establishments; specifically, the following activities and products: gambling, pari–mutuel betting, lottery tickets, tattoos, body piercings, tobacco products, and alcoholic beverages. It further prohibits taverns, beer/wine specialty stores, nightclubs, contract liquor stores, bail bond agencies, gambling establishments, tattoo/body piercing shops, adult entertainment venues, or any establishment where persons under the age of eighteen are not permitted, from having Automated Teller Machines (ATM's) and Point of Sale (POS) terminals on their premises that accept EBT cards.

The Department compares a list of EBT transactions at ATMs and Point of Sale (POS) machines monthly to a list of prohibited locations throughout the State provided by appropriate licensing authority for the state. The state Office of Fraud and Accountability or the state licensing authority for that business type (e.g. Liquor Control Board, Gaming Commission) physically inspects the location to verify that the match is accurate and appropriate and first sends letters to non–compliant businesses and clients; continued non–compliance by businesses result in referral to individual licensing authority for regulatory action. Continued non–compliance by clients results in opening of intentional program violation investigation. (TANF State Plan V D 1 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

(H) ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE OR WITHDRAW ASSISTANCE WITH MINIMAL FEES OR CHARGES, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE WITH NO FEE OR CHARGES, AND ARE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON APPLICABLE FEES AND SURCHARGES THAT APPLY TO ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE ASSISTANCE, AND THAT SUCH INFORMATION IS MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VIII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Adequate authorized access to cash by recipients is ensured via an analysis required of the EBT vendor. The vendor is required by contract to perform a cash access assessment on an annual basis. The results are reviewed with the Department to address any drought identified, especially related to remote locations. If such a locale is identified during the annual review, the EBT vendor is prepared to deploy EBT-only point of sale (POS) machines that would allow case transactions and cash-back access for those clients.

As of August 1, 2012, the EBT transaction fee was eliminated. This means that there is no fee for EBT transactions at POS sites. However, there may be fees at automated teller machine (ATM) sites. This information is provided on the form “Your DSHS Cash or Food Benefits” (DSHS 14-520), the informational pamphlet “Your Washington EBT Quest Card” (DSHS 22-310), and in rule at WAC 388-412-0005(8). (TANF State Plan V D 1)

[http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

(I) INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO TREAT FAMILIES MOVING FROM ANOTHER STATE DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER FAMILIES UNDER THE PROGRAM, AND IF SO HOW (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Families from other states receive the same benefits as other Washington state residents. (TANF State Plan I A 4 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

(J) INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS, AND IF SO INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The State exercises its option to provide federally funded TANF, Medicaid, and social services block grant (SSBG) benefits to qualified alien families who are eligible to receive these benefits. The State provides State Family Assistance (SFA) which is a state–funded WorkFirst cash and medical benefits to those individuals in families who do not qualify for federally–funded assistance, including children and pregnant women. These are segregated funds and expenditures are claimed toward the state's MOE requirement.

The State follows federal sponsor deeming rules for qualified alien families receiving federally funded benefits. The income and resources of the sponsors for families receiving state–funded assistance will be deemed for up to five years in accordance with state law. (TANF State Plan I D 8 a [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

(K) SET FORTH OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND THE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF HOW IT WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED TO BE HEARD IN A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OR APPEAL PROCESS (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The State will provide client protections by requiring that clients be treated with dignity and respect, be given sufficient opportunity to make their needs known to the Department, be free from discrimination on any basis prohibited by state or federal law, have their eligibility determined according to rules and procedures of the Department promulgated pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act (RCW 34.05), be permitted to make applications for benefits and have the application processed and decision made in a timely manner, have their rights and responsibilities explained to them, be informed of which programs and services are available to them through the Department, have the conditions, requirements and benefits for which they are eligible explained to them, and be allowed to exercise, after full explanation, options and choices available to them.

Fair and equitable treatment does not mean that all WorkFirst benefits and services are available to all clients in all areas of the state at any one time. The state's need in some cases to gradually phase in a new service or to undertake pilot initiatives for purposes of determining program effectiveness may limit access to some services for some clients for limited periods of time. (TANF State Plan IV C 3 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

Washington will ensure applicants and recipients of assistance are notified in writing: of the decisions of the Department regarding the type and amount of benefits available to them, including an adequate and advance notice of adverse actions; the legal basis for the determination; that they may request, within 90 days of such notice an administrative hearing, with due process protections, and conducted by the independent Office of Administrative Hearings pursuant to Chapters 74.08 and 34.05 RCW; and that they may obtain judicial review of an adverse decision without payment of a fee or posting a bond for filing such appeal or preparation of any necessary record. The State will provide an opportunity for any applicant or recipient aggrieved by an agency action to have an impartial administrative hearing before an Administrative Law Judge pursuant to RCW 74.08.080 and Chapter 34.05 RCW. The State will continue benefits pending the hearing decision, pursuant to WAC 388–458–0040. (TANF State Plan IV C 2 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

(L) INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO TRAIN FOR, SEEK, AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)—

1. PROVIDING DIRECT CARE IN A LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED UNDER SECTION 1397J OF THIS TITLE); OR

2. IN OTHER OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO ELDER CARE, HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS, OR OCCUPATIONS EXPECTED TO EXPERIENCE LABOR SHORTAGES AS, DETERMINED APPROPRIATE BY THE STATE FOR WHICH THE STATE IDENTIFIES AN UNMET NEED FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL, AND, IF SO, SHALL INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF SUCH ASSISTANCE.

The state will assist TANF adults in receiving training for or obtaining employment in eldercare related employment in the home, health, community care, and long–term care facilities when there are identified employment opportunities in local communities. (TANF State Plan II A 4 [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

In general, the TANF/WorkFirst program seeks to balance meeting the needs of adults, based on their particular work histories, employment barriers, and personal goals, with the actual opportunities available to them on the job market. As indicated under (c) above, the Department relies upon its WorkFirst partner, Employment Security, to provide job market information and other employment services to its clients. The State Board for Community and Technical colleges, another WorkFirst partner, provides oversight of high–wage, high–demand education and training program approval and career pathway planning services to clients. The ultimate goal is economic self–sufficiency and an end to reliance on public assistance.

(M) PROVIDE FOR ALL MOE-FUNDED SERVICES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: THE NAME OF THE PROGRAM BENEFIT OR SERVICE, AND THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA THAT FAMILIES MUST MEET IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THAT BENEFIT OR SERVICE. IN ADDITION, FOR TANF MOE-FUNDED SERVICES (CO-MINGLED OR SEGREGATED MOE) DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM BENEFIT PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES (SSP SERVICES DO NOT HAVE TO INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION BUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICECS ENCOURAGES IT) (§263.2(B)(3) & §263.2(C) PREAMBLE PAGES 17826-7)

MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT (MOE)

Through a variety of state and community–based service providers, the State offers the following types of services which help families remain intact, reduce their dependence on public assistance by encouraging employment, reduce risky behaviors which can result in unplanned out of wedlock pregnancies, or support the formation of two–parent families. Services are provided to families (and qualifying non–custodial parents) whose income is at or below 400% of the federal poverty level (FPL):

a) Financial literacy;

b) Classes in child development, community resources, and parenting skills;

c) One–to–One mentoring of children and youth in professionally supported relationships;

d) Individual, marital, and family counseling services, to include domestic violence counseling for victims and offenders;

e) Alternative secondary education for at–risk youth that provides education, clinical counseling, and social services to students and families who have social adjustment, emotional, or school related difficulties;

f) Community centers that provide family support and family preservation services;

g) Domestic abuse shelters provide victims of domestic violence and their families with a safe haven of temporary shelter with provisions for basic needs (food, clothing, etc.), counseling, and services for children;

h) Housing for eligible victims who need safety and support and are ready to go to school/work;

i) Preschool programs for 3 and 4 year old children provided at no cost to income eligible children;

j) Medical services and financial benefits to needy family members to address work–related injuries;

k) Domestic violence services such as assessment service, planning, counseling services, case management, and linkage and referral to recipients of TANF and Temporary Assistance to Other Needy Families who have or are currently experiencing issues of safety and functioning related to domestic violence, which would adversely affect their ability to become self–sufficient;

l) State funded medical care to help needy families; m) After school programs for children;

n) Food, meals, groceries, and volunteer services at food and commodity outlets and soup kitchens;

o) Services and education activities to prepare for employment;

p) Residential shelter and outreach to eligible teens; q) One–time financial and material assistance to eligible families;

r) Education and enrichment programs to children from infancy and up;

s) Youth development programs

t) Programs that address social–economic barriers, family violence, inadequate parenting skills, lack of workplace skills, poverty, teenage pregnancy, poor school performance, and behavioral difficulties;

u) Programs that provide public awareness, education, and advocacy to prevent child abuse and neglect in families; and

v) Drug and alcohol treatment. (TANF State Plan I H [http://www.workfirst.wa.gov/about/tanf.asp])

w) Subsidized and unsubsidized work experience

TANF CERTIFICATIONS

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:

Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act) Yes

Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under The Unified or Combined State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act) Yes

Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; Yes

Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services Yes

Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act) Yes

Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act) Yes

(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).— screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals; Yes

(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).— refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; Yes

(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence Yes

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)))

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The State agency must prepare and submit an Employment and Training (E&T) Plan to its appropriate Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office. The E&T Plan must be available for public inspection at the State agency headquarters. A State agency may include its plan for the SNAP E&T program in a Combined Plan under WIOA but will require FNS approval prior to implementation and must continue to make a copy of the plan available for public inspection. If a State includes SNAP E&T in a Combined Plan under WIOA, the State agency will detail the following for each year covered by the Combined Plan:

1. THE NATURE OF THE E&T COMPONENTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO OFFER AND THE REASONS FOR SUCH COMPONENTS, INCLUDING COST INFORMATION. THE METHODOLOGY FOR STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT FOR EDUCATION COMPONENTS MUST BE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED;

Washington's E&T Program, called Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) began as a pilot in 2005 in the White Center community. BFET provides assistance to Basic Food recipients on a voluntary basis to assist in employability. Eligible individuals have the ability to receive the following services through contracted services offered at local community based organizations (CBO) and community and technical colleges (CTC):

Basic Education is education provided to participants to raise their overall employability. BE activity may include education in basic computer skills, literacy, or math training. High School Equivalency (formerly GED), Basic Education for Adults (BEdA), and English as a Second Language (ESL) are categorized as BE components.

Case management is ongoing assistance, support coordination, and advocacy provided to participants to overcome barriers to employment and remain engaged in the BFET program. This includes referrals to additional programs and services not covered by the BFET program, and one-on-one coaching.

Job Search may include access to a computer, job listings, email, fax, telephone, participation in a job club, or other activities to assist participants in finding employment. JS participants must be employment ready.

Job Search Training activity is education and assistance provided to participants to make them employment ready. JT activity may include, but is not limited to: resume writing, interview skills, and preparation of a master application, instruction and support related to seeking employment, workplace etiquette workshops, life skills and balancing work and family, and career planning.

Support Services are ongoing supplemental assistance to assist clients during the transition to education and/or employment approved activities. This can include: transportation, child care, housing, clothing, books, educational supplies, tools, emergency assistance, etc.

Vocational Education is education or instruction that leads to a certificate or degree in an occupational field. VE activity is organized educational programs that directly relate to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations that require training other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree.

Job Retention is assistance and support provided to employed participants to achieve satisfactory job performance and increase earnings over time. BR may include counseling, coaching, case management, and participant reimbursements.

BFET is a 50/50 match reimbursement program. CBO's are reimbursed for 50% of the approved activities as outlined in their contract. During FFY 2015, DSHS contracted and operated a 50/50 match program with 29 CBO's, 34 community and technical colleges and the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (ORIA).

Link to **Table 2: E&T Component Details** – http://wtb.wa.gov/SNAPWIOA.asp

2. AN OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR WITH AN ESTIMATE OF THE COST OF OPERATION FOR EACH FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR COVERED BY THE COMBINED PLAN. ANY STATE AGENCY THAT REQUESTS 50 PERCENT FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR STATE AGENCY E&T ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS, OTHER THAN FOR PARTICIPANT REIMBURSEMENTS, MUST INCLUDE IN ITS PLAN, OR AMENDMENTS TO ITS PLAN, AN ITEMIZED LIST OF ALL ACTIVITIES AND COSTS FOR WHICH THOSE FEDERAL FUNDS WILL BE CLAIMED, INCLUDING THE COSTS FOR CASE MANAGEMENT AND CASEWORK TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION FROM ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH WORK. COSTS IN EXCESS OF THE FEDERAL GRANT WILL BE ALLOWED ONLY WITH THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF FNS AND MUST BE ADEQUATELY DOCUMENTED TO ASSURE THAT THEY ARE NECESSARY, REASONABLE AND PROPERLY ALLOCATED. A STATE MUST SUBMIT A PLAN AMENDMENT TO REQUEST BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS AT LEAST 30 DAYS PRIOR TO PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION;

Link to **Operating Budget** and **Fiscal Year Costs Tables** – http://wtb.wa.gov/SNAPWIOA.asp

3. THE CATEGORIES AND TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO EXEMPT FROM E&T PARTICIPATION, THE ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF WORK REGISTRANTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO EXEMPT, AND THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO REEVALUATE THE VALIDITY OF ITS EXEMPTIONS;

BFET is voluntary participation program. The BFET state plan submitted and approved by FNS exempted all households receiving Basic Food Assistance from mandatory participation in E&T activities. This includes those that are mandatory work registrants, with the exception of recipients who meet the definition of ABAWD's as a result of Washington's ABAWD waiver that will be eliminated in January 2016.

Link to **Work Registrant Details Table** – http://wtb.wa.gov/SNAPWIOA.asp

4. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO PLACE IN E&T;

BFET serves individuals who are eligible for Basic Food Assistance and have a desire to pursue an education or need assistance in obtaining employment. Recipients enrolled in the BFET program require the following barriers to employment:

• Lack of employment skills

• Basic skills deficient

• Childcare

• Cost of certificate or other education leading to employment

• Limited English Proficiency

• Needing support services

• Needing wraparound services

• ABAWDs who need to participate in work activities to keep their benefits

Washington's BFET program applied and secured funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA) through a provision in the Agricultural Act of 2014. In March 2015, Washington was awarded $22 million to operate a three year pilot focusing on SNAP recipients who are work registrants. Washington's BFET pilot, called Resources to Initiate Successful Employment (RISE), is overseen by DSHS and administered by local CBO's and community colleges throughout the pilot counties (King, Pierce, Spokane, and Yakima). RISE will enhance the current BFET program by adding a standardized approach to comprehensive case management, provide Strategies for Success training (similar to life skills) and create work–based learning opportunities. SNAP recipients must meet the following requirements to be eligible for services:

• Homeless;

• Veterans;

• Limited English proficiency;

• Long–term unemployed;

• Non–custodial parents (NCP) owing arrears; and

• Approved barriers as outlined by the program.

5. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS THE STATE AGENCY EXPECTS TO PLACE IN E&T;

It is estimated 34,000 individuals will participate in BFET in FFY 2017.

6. THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS COVERED AND NOT COVERED BY THE E&T PLAN AND WHY, AND THE TYPE AND LOCATION OF SERVICES TO BE OFFERED

BFET services are administered by local CBOs and community and technical colleges. BFET currently operates and provides services in 30 of the 39 Washington counties. These counties

include: Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Grant, Grays Harbor, Island, King, Kitsap, Lewis, Lincoln, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, Stevens, Thurston, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla, Whatcom, and Yakima Counties.

BFET continues to seek opportunities to expand into the 9 counties not currently served (Adams, Columbia, Garfield, Jefferson, Kittitas, Klitckitat, San Juan, Skamania, and Whitman). The program has not had the opportunity to provide services in these counties due to the lack of CBOs operating E&T activities in these counties.

7. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO COUNT ALL WORK REGISTRANTS AS OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR;

Method for Obtaining Initial Count of Work Registrants

The State uses SAS Software to generate the Work Registrant Data. The SAS Software gathers the required information from the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) and eJAS. The initial count of work registrants is the number of work registrants receiving SNAP on October 1 of the current federal fiscal year.

8. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO REPORT WORK REGISTRANT INFORMATION ON THE QUARTERLY FORM FNS–583

Method for Obtaining Initial Count of Work Registrants

The State uses SAS Software to generate the Work Registrant Data. The SAS Software gathers the required information from the Automated Client Eligibility System (ACES) and eJAS. The initial count of work registrants is the number of work registrants receiving SNAP on October 1 of the current federal fiscal year.

Method for Ensuring an Unduplicated Work Registrant Count

This system omits double counting of all clients that have been counted within the previous eleven months through matching of Social Security numbers.

DSHS's ACES and the Employment Security automated system (JOBNET) provide ongoing reports of work registrants and exemptions on an actual basis. Case file data in ACES and eJAS is used to track work registrants and count all Basic Food recipients.

ACES omit double counting of all clients that have been counted within the previous eleven months by matching Social Security numbers. All potential client households go through an interactive interview process. If they were previous clients, coding for their work registration is saved. The state utilizes this reported information to complete the Form FNS-583 quarterly.

9. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO PREVENT WORK REGISTRANTS FROM BEING COUNTED TWICE WITHIN A FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR. IF THE STATE AGENCY UNIVERSALLY WORK REGISTERS ALL SNAP APPLICANTS, THIS METHOD MUST SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE EXEMPT FROM WORK REGISTRATION UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(B)(1). IF THE STATE

AGENCY WORK REGISTERS NONEXEMPT PARTICIPANTS WHENEVER A NEW APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED, THIS METHOD MUST ALSO SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE PARTICIPANTS WHO MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AS SPECIFIED UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(A)(1)(I);

This system omits double counting of all clients that have been counted within the previous eleven months through matching of Social Security numbers.

DSHS's ACES and the Employment Security automated system (JOBNET) provide ongoing reports of work registrants and exemptions on an actual basis. Case file data in ACES and eJAS is used to track work registrants and count all Basic Food recipients.

ACES omit double counting of all clients that have been counted within the previous eleven months by matching Social Security numbers. All potential client households go through an interactive interview process. If they were previous clients, coding for their work registration is saved. The state utilizes this reported information to complete the Form FNS-583 quarterly.

10. THE ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITS RESPONSIBLE FOR CERTIFICATION AND THE UNITS OPERATING THE E&T COMPONENTS, INCLUDING UNITS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. FNS IS SPECIFICALLY CONCERNED THAT THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION BE EFFICIENT AND THAT NONCOMPLIANCE BY THE PARTICIPANT BE REPORTED TO THE CERTIFICATION UNIT WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS AFTER THE NONCOMPLIANCE OCCURS;

SNAP eligibility is determined by DSHS staff located within the local Community Service Office (CSO). Staff who determine SNAP eligibility and certification are Financial Service Specialist (FSS) or Work First Specialist. During the eligibility process staff recognize that a client may be eligible for BFET services. If this occurs, a referral through the states internal system BARCODE is made to the BFET operations team. The BFET operations team consists of ten FSS (BFET specialist), one supervisor and a Deputy administrator. The primary focus of this team is to support the CBO's and ensure integrity of program operations; this includes auditing CBO's who determine BFET eligibility through the eJAS system. Referrals received from the CSO's are reviewed by the BFET Specialist, who makes contact with the SNAP recipients to discuss the BFET program and refers these individuals to local CBO's offering services.

BFET services are administered by CBO's. SNAP recipients must make contact with a CBO in their area who determine eligibility for the BFET program and engage participants in approved BFET activities. BFET activity is tracked in the eJAS system. The eJAS system relays participant information to/from the ACES system, which informs DSHS staff of a participant's participation in the BFET program. BFET is a voluntary participation program and noncompliance by the participant does not impact SNAP certification.

11. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AGENCY AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IT PLANS TO COORDINATE WITH FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES, INCLUDING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. COPIES OF CONTRACTS MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION;

Washington's BFET Program contracts services with CBO's and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to administer services. Each contract specifies performance measurements and identifies allowable services participants are eligible to receive.

12. THE AVAILABILITY, IF APPROPRIATE, OF E&T PROGRAMS FOR INDIANS LIVING ON RESERVATIONS AFTER THE STATE AGENCY HAS CONSULTED IN GOOD FAITH WITH APPROPRIATE TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS;

DSHS currently contracts with Northwest Indian College to provide BFET services. The program is in current negotiation with other Native American Nations to expand partnerships.

13. IF A CONCILIATION PROCESS IS PLANNED, THE PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL FAILS TO COMPLY WITH AN E&T PROGRAM REQUIREMENT. INCLUDE THE LENGTH OF THE CONCILIATION PERIOD

BFET does not have a process for this as it is a voluntary program.

14. THE PAYMENT RATES FOR CHILD CARE ESTABLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROVISIONS OF 45 CFR 98.43, AND BASED ON LOCAL MARKET RATE SURVEYS.

BFET participants who are participating in activities and in need of child care services are required to apply for child care assistance through Washington's Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP). Funding for the CCSP is paid out of the TANF block grant. If participants are not eligible to receive CCSP funds, CBO's may assist the participant and request reimbursement from the program.

15. THE COMBINED (FEDERAL/STATE) STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR TRANSPORTATION COSTS AND OTHER EXPENSES REASONABLY NECESSARY AND DIRECTLY RELATED TO PARTICIPATION INCURRED BY E&T PARTICIPANTS. IF THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO PROVIDE DIFFERENT REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS TO ACCOUNT FOR VARYING LEVELS OF EXPENSES, FOR INSTANCE FOR GREATER OR LESSER COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE STATE, IT MUST INCLUDE THEM HERE.

The BFET program will reimburse CBO's for providing support services (participant reimbursement) for transportation expenses for participants in an approved BFET activity. This includes bus passes, gas voucher, auto repair, etc. These costs cannot exceed $150 per month.

16. INFORMATION ABOUT EXPENSES THE STATE AGENCY PROPOSES TO REIMBURSE. FNS MUST BE AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW AND

COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED REIMBURSEMENTS BEFORE THEY ARE IMPLEMENTED.

The BFET program will reimburse CBO's for providing support services (participant reimbursement) if the client is participating in an approved activity. BFET will reimburse CBO for the following support services:

Books: Participants may receive assistance with textbooks, training materials, and other reasonable and necessary school supplies for training.

Clothing: The general clothing limit is $300.00 per participant per program year. You may also provide the clothing directly to the participant and submit the cost for reimbursement in your billing. You must provide verification of the cost of the clothing and a justification explaining the need for the clothing.

Course Registration Fees: Participants may receive assistance with tuition, lab fees, and other education related costs necessary for training connected to a BFET activity.

Child Care: If a participant is ineligible for childcare through Childcare Subsidy Program (CCSP), but performs approved BFET activities, you may approve childcare services for the participant through a third party.

Housing and Utility Assistance: You can provide funds for housing and utility assistance only after exhausting all other resources. We recommend limiting housing and utility assistance to a one or two time maximum per program year (October to September).

Legal Services

Medical Services (including emergency dental work, inoculations, eye examinations, eye glasses): You can provide funds for medical assistance only after exhausting all other resources, including coverage through the Affordable Care Act.

Permits and Fees (union dues, test fees, licensing and bonding fees, background checks, drug tests, fingerprinting): Participants may receive assistance with the cost of testing and/or securing permits needed for training or to support job search activities.

Personal Hygiene: Participants may receive assistance with personal hygiene products and services (e.g. toothpaste, shampoo, body soap, haircuts, etc.) necessary to meet your or potential employer's appearance standards.

Reasonable Accommodation Supplies: Participants with disabilities may receive assistance with reasonable and necessary purchases of goods or services (including testing) that accommodate the individual's disability.

Student Activity Fees: Only if required to participate in class.

Training Materials

Transportation Expenses (public transportation fare, gasoline, automobile repairs): The transportation limit for each participant is $150 per month with a maximum limit of $600 per program year. Transportation assistance may include: Transit tickets or passes; Necessary/non-maintenance vehicle repairs for a reasonable amount; or Fuel for participants.

Work and Training Tools (equipment, tools, safety clothing, uniforms): Determine the need for these tools on a case-by-case basis. These costs do not fall under the clothing limit.

(B) ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD)

A State agency interested in receiving additional funding for serving able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs)* subject to the 3-month time limit, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. §273.7(d)(3), must include the following for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA:
*7 CFR § 273.7(c)(7)

1. ITS PLEDGE TO OFFER A QUALIFYING ACTIVITY TO ALL AT-RISK ABAWD APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS

Its pledge to offer a qualifying activity to all at-risk ABAWD applicants and recipients;

Washington is requesting pledge funds to serve ABAWDs. These funds will ensure Washington provides the best customer service to our ABAWD clients as well as building capacity to ensure accurate case processing for ABAWD cases.

BFET remains a voluntary program available to mandatory ABAWDs to meet participation. Washington State continues to offer four main pathways to serve ABAWDs to maintain SNAP eligibility:

1. BFET – Services include job search, job search training, basic education, vocational education, case management to remove barriers and job retention services. BFET also offers support services such as transportation and educational supplies. Clients must participate in at least 20 hours per week, with no more than 10 job search or job search training hours each week.

2. RISE – Includes comprehensive case management, work-based learning, and strategies for success training (similar to life skills). Many participants would be co-enrolled into BFET while in RISE. RISE participants will be included under the 15% additional exemption criteria regardless of the hours of participation.

3. Workfare – DSHS provides a Workfare component in FFY 2017. DSHS has contact with at least 50 non-profit agencies to provide voluntary positions that comply with Workfare provisions. The State will consider the minimum Workfare requirement for ABAWDs choosing the Workfare option to be the SNAP monthly benefit amount divided by The Washington State Minimum wage of $9.47 per hour. Workfare will comply with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) minimum wage laws. Workfare anticipates $4,000 in workers' compensation insurance pay to the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries to cover program participants for the year.

4. Unsubsidized work – Working with the Employment Pipeline program and in partnerships with local Workforce Development Councils, DSHS may navigate clients to these and other employment programs to find employment that meets minimum requirements.

2. ESTIMATED COSTS OF FULFILLING ITS PLEDGE

In order to provide a fairly accurate budget and include the funds in the 100% federal funds portion of the budget, the ABAWD Pledge funds that FNS may award Washington State have been estimated at $2 million based on numbers of ABAWDs in other states. If FNS awards a smaller amount of ABAWD pledge funds, WA State will consider reducing the BFET Accessibility Expansion Project and specialized ABAWD staff to come into line with the budget limitations.

3. A DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT CONTROLS IN PLACE TO MEET PLEDGE REQUIREMENTS

The BFET program manager will manage the ABAWD compliance, along with the duties of the specialized ABAWD staff, which will include:

- outreach to Workfare sites,

- auditing ABAWD data and personal exemptions,

- processing monthly changes to cases when necessary (i.e., clients that turn age 18 during the certification period),

- applying the monthly time limit accruals to non-exempt ABAWDs that fail to meet participation,

- ensuring proper notices to ABAWDs,

- assisting clients with meeting participation requirements,

- evaluation of “unfit for work” exemption claims,

- assisting in the administrative (fair) hearing process,

- collaborating with BFET and RISE programs, and

- reviewing all case files to ensure ABAWD coding is appropriate.

DSHS is also able to use comprehensive data mining systems to ensure program compliance and accurate ABAWD coding based on demographic and other data entered during SNAP eligibility determinations.

In the event that specialized ABAWD staff need assistance in meeting ABAWD applicant/recipient needs, DSHS has a Workload Prioritization Team (WPT) that can distribute work to the hundreds of other financial services eligibility staff to assist. DSHS also fosters quality integrity, and will ask for assistance from our Office of Program Integrity to ensure we are complying with ABAWD and work registration regulations.

4. A DISCUSSION OF ITS CAPACITY AND ABILITY TO SERVE AT-RISK ABAWDS.

The counties that have at-risk ABAWDs for FFY 2017 are King and Snohomish counties. BFET remains a voluntary program available to mandatory ABAWDs to meet participation. Washington State continues to offer the following pathways to serve ABAWDs to maintain SNAP eligibility:

1. BFET – Services include job search, job search training, basic education, vocational education, case management to remove barriers and job retention services. BFET also offers support services such as transportation and educational supplies. Clients must participate in at least 20 hours per week, with no more than 10 job search or job search training hours each week.

2. RISE – Includes comprehensive case management, work-based learning, and strategies for success training (similar to life skills). Many participants would be co-enrolled into BFET while in RISE. RISE participants will be included under the 15% additional exemption criteria regardless of the hours of participation.

3. Workfare – DSHS provides a Workfare component in FFY 2017. DSHS has contact with at least 50 non-profit agencies to provide voluntary positions that comply with Workfare provisions. The State will consider the minimum Workfare requirement for ABAWDs choosing the Workfare option to be the SNAP monthly benefit amount divided by The Washington State Minimum wage of $9.47 per hour. Workfare will comply with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) minimum wage laws. Workfare anticipates $4,000 in workers' compensation insurance pay to the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries to cover program participants for the year.

King County has sixty six (66) service providers: 11 BFET colleges, 16 BFET CBOs, 6 BFET Refugee CBOs, 9 RISE Providers, and 24 Workfare sites.

Snohomish County has twenty one (21) service providers in: 2 BFET colleges, 1 BFET CBO, 2 BFET Refugee CBOs, 16 Workfare sites.

5. INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIZE AND SPECIAL NEEDS OF ITS ABAWD POPULATION

Washington State currently estimates 104,809 ABAWDs statewide, with 22,231 in non-exempt areas. After applying the maximum number of 15% exemptions (278 clients receiving the exemption for 12 months), 21,953 are considered at-risk for losing SNAP benefits due to having no personal or geographical exemptions. The ABAWDs in the two ABAWD Counties without the waiver are typically among the lowest income individuals, who also face some of the highest barriers such as homelessness and undiagnosed mental/physical health conditions. DSHS will attempt to assist at-risk ABAWDs by providing all available resources directly to clients, as well as providing education to other community agencies that ABAWDs may access.

6. INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORKFARE COMPONENTS IT WILL OFFER TO MEET THE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENT.

ABAWDs have the ability to receive the following services through contracted services offered at local community based organizations (CBO) and community and technical colleges (CTC):

Basic Education is education provided to participants to raise their overall employability. BE activity may include education in basic computer skills, literacy, or math training. High School Equivalency (formerly GED), Basic Education for Adults (BEdA), and English as a Second Language (ESL) are categorized as BE components.

Case management is ongoing assistance, support coordination, and advocacy provided to participants to overcome barriers to employment and remain engaged in the BFET program. This includes referrals to additional programs and services not covered by the BFET program, and one-on-one coaching.

Job Search may include access to a computer, job listings, email, fax, telephone, participation in a job club, or other activities to assist participants in finding employment. JS participants must be employment ready.

Job Search Training activity is education and assistance provided to participants to make them employment ready. JT activity may include, but is not limited to: resume writing, interview skills, and preparation of a master application, instruction and support related to seeking employment, workplace etiquette workshops, life skills and balancing work and family, and career planning.

Support Services are ongoing supplemental assistance to assist clients during the transition to education and/or employment approved activities. This can include: transportation, child care, housing, clothing, books, educational supplies, tools, emergency assistance, etc.

Vocational Education is education or instruction that leads to a certificate or degree in an occupational field. VE activity is organized educational programs that directly relate to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations that require training other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree.

Job Retention is assistance and support provided to employed participants to achieve satisfactory job performance and increase earnings over time. BR may include counseling, coaching, case management, and participant reimbursements.

ABAWDs participating in the **Resources to Initiate Successful Employment (RISE)** will also have additional components:

• Comprehensive Case Management

• Strategies for Success

• Work Based Learning

ABAWDs have the ability to participate in **Workfare**. Workfare improves the overall employability through work experience at a private or public non-profit agency.

(C) PLAN MODIFICATION

If FNS determines that the performance of a State agency with respect to employment and training outcomes is inadequate, FNS may require the State agency to make modifications to the State E&T plan to improve the outcomes.*

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*7 U.S.C. 2025(h)(5)(E) as amended by Agricultural Act of 2014 .

FUNDING DISCLAIMER

Funds may not be available when SNAP E&T portions of a Combined State Plan under WIOA are approved. FNS's obligation after approving a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is contingent upon the availability of an appropriation from which payment can be made. Any FNS funding resulting from an approval of a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is subject to FNS receiving sufficient funds (in the Program Financial Control System for FNS) to fund this and all prior approved SNAP E&T plans submitted as part of a Combined State Plan in their entirety in the time and date order received. Federal reimbursement to States for 50 percent of State administrative expenditures and for participant reimbursements is subject to the above conditions.

WORK PROGRAMS UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 6(O) OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(O))

(C) OPTIONAL WORKFARE

State agencies or other political subdivisions must describe in detail in the plan how the political subdivision, working with the State agency and any other cooperating agencies that may be involved in the program, will fulfill the provisions of 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m). If a State opts to operate an optional workfare program or modify an existing optional workfare program, through a combined plan under WIOA, it must provide the following:* *7 CFR § 273.7(m)

1. SUBMITTING A WORKFARE PLAN MUST SUBMIT WITH THE PLAN AN OPERATING BUDGET

State agencies or political subdivisions submitting a workfare plan must submit with the plan an operating budget covering the period from the initiation of the workfare program's implementation schedule to the close of the Federal fiscal year for each year covered by the combined plan. In addition, an estimate of the cost for one full year of operation must be submitted together with the workfare plan for each Federal fiscal year covered by the combined plan.

WA State will not be using this option.

2. FNS WILL DETERMINE WHICH POLITICAL SUBDIVISION WILL HAVE ITS PLAN APPROVED

If workfare plans are submitted by more than one political subdivision, each representing the same population (such as a city within a county), FNS will determine which political subdivision will have its plan approved. Under no circumstances will a SNAP recipient be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program. If a political subdivision chooses to operate a workfare program and represents a population which is already, at least in part, subject to a SNAP workfare program administered by another political subdivision, it must establish in its workfare plan how SNAP recipients will not be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program.

(D) VOLUNTARY WORKFARE

State agencies and political subdivisions may operate workfare programs whereby participation by SNAP recipients is voluntary. In such a program, the penalties for failure to comply, as provided in 7 C.F.R. §273.7(f), will not apply for noncompliance. The amount of hours to be worked will be negotiated between the household and the operating agency, though not to exceed the limits provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(5)(ii). In addition, all protections provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(6)(i) shall continue to apply. Those State agencies and political subdivisions choosing to operate such a program shall indicate in their workfare plan how their staffing will adapt to anticipated and unanticipated levels of participation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA. FNS will not approve plans which do not show that the benefits of the workfare program, in terms of hours worked by participants and reduced SNAP allotments due to successful job attainment, are expected to exceed the costs of such a program. In addition, if FNS finds that an approved voluntary program does not meet this criterion, FNS reserves the right to withdraw approval.* * 7 CFR § 273.7(m)(8)

WA State will not be using this option.

(E) COMPARABLE WORKFARE

The State agency or political subdivision must provide a description of its program, including a methodology for ensuring compliance with 7 C.F.R §273.7(m)(9)(ii) for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA.* *7 CFR § 273.7(m)(9)

Washington State's Workfare program is under development but will follow the Comparable Workfare format in that ABAWDs who are at risk of losing their SNAP benefits will be allowed to count volunteer workfare hours to regain or retain eligibility.

DSHS provides a Workfare component in FFY 2017. DSHS has contact with at least 50 non-profit agencies to provide voluntary positions that comply with Workfare provisions. The State will consider the minimum Workfare requirement for ABAWDs choosing the Workfare option to be the SNAP monthly benefit amount divided by The Washington State Minimum wage of $9.47 per hour. Workfare will comply with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) minimum wage laws.

Organizations which wish to register as a Workfare site will need to complete an agreement. The organization must:

• Be a nonprofit, public or government agency

• Provide supervised duties in which participants will learn vocational skills and gain work experience.

• Provide necessary documentation and reporting of attendance to DSHS.

• Report documentation monthly.

• Report any issues or problems timely.

• Furnish training, equipment and materials required for duties of the workfare position.

BFET dollars will be available to cover Labor and Industries (L & I) insurance costs for volunteers at the Workfare site. Workfare anticipates $4,000 in workers' compensation insurance pay to the L & I to cover program participants for the year.

(F) PROCESS

The State agency must submit amendments to the SNAP E&T segment of the Combined Plan for FNS approval at least 30 days prior to the planned implementation in order to receive federal SNAP E&T funding for the activities not covered by the approved Combined Plan.* *7 CFR § 273.7(c)(8)

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA)

There are no program-specific state planning requirements for TAA. If the state includes TAA in a Combined State Plan, the state must incorporate TAA in its responses to the common planning elements in sections II, III, IV, and V of the WIOA State Plan requirements instrument.

Trade Act is an integral part of the one-stop centers in Washington. While not all WorkSource offices have a Trade Act counselor, the counselors can be deployed as necessary to offices close to where participants live. We also add counselors as needed to be adequately staffed when new petitions are certified. The counselors network with all of the programs in the WorkSource offices and refer participants to co-enroll in appropriate programs. Wagner-Peyser employees are available to assist participants as needed through workshops and assistance in the resource rooms. Additionally, Trade Act participants are usually co-enrolled in the Dislocated Worker program. If the participants are veterans they are referred to the veteran's programs available in the WorkSource offices. Co-location with WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker, TANF and veteran's programs offer unlimited opportunities for easy referral and cooperation among the programs.

The Employment Security Department is implementing a new case management system in 2015-16 and Trade Act is financially contributing to the cost of the system. Trade is also participating in helping create the system so that it will meet the program needs. This new system will provide easy access to many more reports than have been available previously. These reports will provide the opportunity to more easily manage the reporting to DOL and ensuring consistent program administration and fiscal integrity.

In the State of Washington, all Trade Act counselors are merit system employees and the Trade Act program is funded and administered through the Employment Security Department.

Has the state incorporated TAA into the sections indicated above? Yes

JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS

The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to (including DC, PR, VI and Guam). The JVSG is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula defined in the statute (38 U.S.C. 4102A (c) (2) (B) and regulation and operates on a fiscal year (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported (VETS-200 Series Reports) quarterly (using four "rolling quarters") on a Program Year basis (as with the ETA-9002 Series). Currently, VETS JVSG operates on a five-year (FY 2015-2019), multi-year grant approval cycle modified and funded annually.

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(b)(5) and § 4102A(c), the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET) makes grant funds available for use in each State to support Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a State Plan narrative, which includes:

(A) HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS UNDER THE JVSG

To improve veterans services, LVERs and DVOPs will support improvements in their AJCs and communities where:

- LVERs work with all AJC staff to identify and increase skill development opportunities designed to generate pathways to long-term high-wage employment for veterans who can qualify for support such as unemployment benefits while in training, the GI Bill, etc.;
- DVOPs articulate training programs to Veterans with SBEs, for alignment with military experience in order to expedite advanced placement whenever possible;
- LVERs build bridges to apprenticeship providers and advocate for placement based upon the merits veterans bring from their prior training and experience; and

As a state, our vision for the future is the well-being of veterans, transitioning service members and their families and helping veterans with solid educational and skill development opportunities that lead to good paying jobs. Service to veterans is an ongoing responsibility for Washington state. Employment services made possible by the Jobs for Veterans Grant are a major investment in easing the transition for returning veterans and continuing to develop civilian career opportunities for all our veterans in the 21st Century.

(B) THE DUTIES ASSIGNED TO DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF BY THE STATE; SPECIFICALLY IMPLEMENTING DVOP AND LVER DUTIES OR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS OUTLINED IN 38 U.S.C. § 4103A AND 4104. THESE DUTIES MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH CURRENT GUIDANCE;

DVOP: The role of the DVOP is to serve those veterans receiving services at WorkSource in accordance with Title 38, Section 4103A, and as outlined in VPL 03-14 VPL 04-14, at the Intensive/Work Skills level. Out state's DVOPs will support eligible veterans by:

- Providing intensive services to veterans with significant barriers to employment. All veterans receiving intensive services from a DVOP will have an assessment made to determine skills, interests, attitudes and aid in the creation of an IEP. These assessments and plans will be recorded in the SKIES system. Case notes will be used and recorded in SKIES, and appropriate hard copy files for information not recorded in SKIES will be collected, for all veterans who are receiving services from a DVOP. The case management model implemented statewide on December 1, 2013 ensures a standardized and integrated approach to assisting veterans in overcoming SBEs and ultimately securing living wage employment (See Attachment 2).
- Targeting intensive services to veterans with SBEs and eligible spouses. To accomplish this task, the DVOP coordinates services with other WorkSource partners and programs as well as veteran-focused programs, such as the VR&E program using the assistance of the ISC, HVRP program, food banks and shelters, community and faith based assistance centers, Stand Downs and veteran centers.
- Outreach and relationship building, as time permits. DVOPs will continue to build relationships with key community partners that support veterans, to locate veterans with SBEs in need of intensive services. They will also continue to attend events, such as stand-downs, that attract veterans with SBEs.

When appropriate, the DVOP will co-enroll veterans with other WIA-funded programs, such as Dislocated or Adult Worker to address skill-based, educational, or support services gaps. WorkSource staff providing intensive services to veterans in other programs will coordinate those services with local DVOPs to provide a seamlessly integrated case management approach.

LVER: The role of the LVER is to promote the hiring of veterans with employers, employer associations, and business groups in accordance with Title 38, Section 4104B, and as outlined in VPL 03-14. Our LVERs will support the hiring of veterans by:

- Planning and participating in job and career fairs. The LVERs routinely host or partner in employment events focused on the hiring of veterans. These include specialized hiring events, such as a June 2014 one for Federal contractors that was attended by more than 70 employers with current job openings. At hiring events, the LVERs collect contact data and conduct outreach to promote One-Stop services and DVOP referral, where appropriate.
- Conducting employer outreach. LVERs reach out to local employers to promote the hiring of veterans, explaining the practical advantages to hiring veterans, as well as the benefits, such as Work Opportunity Tax Credit and potential for funded OJTs.
- Partnering with employers to conduct job searches and workshops. Washington State's LVERs conduct job search workshops and establish job search groups/job clubs in conjunction with the needs of local employers. This has proven beneficial to both providing employers a better appreciation for the challenges faced by veterans in transitioning to civilian employment. This practice will be implemented statewide in this program period.

LVERs also conduct job developments (on behalf of employers) and mine data from Labor Exchange job listings.

- Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and business organizations to promote training programs, credentialing and licensing for veterans. LVERs outreach to organizations and entities, such as their local business communities, Business Services Teams, professional organizations, and Chambers of Commerce to serve as an advocate for employing a veteran. Activities that support these efforts include planning and participating in veteran focused job fairs or hiring events, promoting credentialing, education and training opportunities, and direct entry into apprenticeship and skill-based training programs. The future LVER position that will be reallocated to Central Office will directly support these efforts on behalf of the state One-Stop centers.
- Informing Federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans. LVERs reach out to Federal contractors using Labor Exchange job listings, Federal contractor listings, VetCentral listings, company web-sites, and other places where employers may post job announcements. ESD has engaged with OFCCP to provide valuable information on Federal contractor participation in the state employment system. Additionally, LVERs work directly with contractors to advise them on the benefits and process for locating and hiring veterans into their workforces. Recently, the state program coordinator spoke at an event hosted by OFCCP to educate Federal contractors on utilizing the One-Stop system for veteran recruitment. We will continue this focus, with the future LVER position being hired to Central Office.
- Working with other One-Stop staff to assist in development of the service delivery strategies for veterans and educating partner staff with employment initiatives and programs for veterans. Statewide, LVERs are providing training to AJC staff on serving veterans, which will be critical in promoting the new culture, where an anticipated 70% of veterans are being served by non-JVSG staff. The LVERs are using and promoting completion of the recently released online NVTI course for front line staff serving veterans.

Washington is moving toward integrating LVER staff with Business Service Teams, where gains can be made in promoting the hiring of veterans with local employers. Effective 3rd Quarter FY 2014, LVER staff are reporting all categories of the above responsibilities in the quarterly site manager reports. Program staff will monitor these for best practices and compliance with the intent of VPL 03-14 regarding LVER duties.

(C) THE MANNER IN WHICH DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM OR ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNER NETWORK;

Several state policies describe the integration of services, priority of service guidelines and the roles and responsibilities of the LVER, DVOP, WorkSource Partners, and veterans work studypositions include:

- WIA Policy 3641, Jobs for Veterans Act Priority of Service
- Labor Exchange Policy 4030, Services to Veterans
- Labor Exchange Policy 4031, Local Veterans Employment Rep (LVER)
- Labor Exchange Policy 4032, Disabled Veterans outreach Program (DVOP)
- Labor Exchange Policy 4034, Federal Contractors Listing
- Labor Exchange Policy 4035, Federal VA Work Study Allowance Program
- Veterans Program Letter 07-09, Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter 10-09, Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses

MOUs are in place to formally link organizations with a common mission to serve veterans in Washington State. These agreements allow for the sharing of data, information on veterans, co-utilization of resources and an integrated service delivery package customized for individual veterans that extends around and beyond employment assistance. Some of these agreements are with the following agencies:

- VA/VR&E Program, ESD, and the DOL/VETS to provide services to veterans who are receiving funding from the VA/VR&E Program in order to gain skills and training needed to enter the workplace in new occupational fields. The DVOP assigned to the Seattle Regional VA Center facilitates this process.
- Washington Military Department to share information applicable to redeploying members of the National Guard and Reserve Forces. This information aids in outreach efforts to this targeted population for employment services.
- WDVA to share information on recently exited veterans who file their DD 214 information with the WDVA and for veterans receiving support assistance through WDVA programs, such as the Rural and Non-Rural HVRP Grants and VIP Program.
- Military installations to define for base leadership, how support will be provided DVOP staff assigned to provide intensive services (contingent upon authorizes extension beyond FY14).

Multiple activities take place in Washington State to aid the integration of services for veterans. DVOP staff assigned to two major military installations work with TAP, the Army Career & Alumni Program (ACAP), and the Family Assistance Center. The DVOP assigned to the American Lake VA Facility provides employment information and intensive services to recovering and injured veterans. DVOPs across the state work closely with local Veteran Coalitions that serve veterans, often in crisis. A DVOP in Spokane County participates in the American Indian Advisory Council and has attended Native American events and summits. This partnership offers employment services coupled with intensive services to help veterans with life and employment barriers to overcome these and successfully enter into the workplace or, in some cases, retain existing employment.

Veterans are marketed to local labor markets and employers by LVER staff and local Business Services Teams. This marketing may take the form of group presentations citing the advantages of hiring a veteran or to job development contacts with staff serving veterans, on behalf of a specific

employer need. Partnerships with businesses through the VA, supported by OJT or Work Experience opportunities, assist the VA/VR&E-served veteran (receiving intensive service from the DVOP) to gain skills and experience. Job Fairs, veteran-focused hiring events, and Stand Downs work to attract veterans and employers in need of services by either the LVER or DVOP, based on the designated roles and responsibilities listed above.

Job developments, WorkFirst/TANF, and OJT training agreements are promoted statewide to veterans seeking work and employers seeking qualified employees. Significant job training opportunities along promising career pathways are vigorously promoted through WIA adult and dislocated worker programs. Collaboration between the ISC position, the Washington State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and the VA/VR&E program connect veterans receiving vocational rehabilitation assistance with employers. The HVRP grant programs, along with local shelters, food banks, and community and faith-based organizations, connect veterans with employers and support systems. Ex-offender veterans released in the last 12 months (as detailed in VPL 03-14) receive intensive services and support, either through the DVOP, Department of Corrections, or local jails, to help them integrate back into society as valued members of the community.

DVOPs work closely with Veterans Navigators at the colleges to partner in helping veterans with SBEs determine appropriate career paths based on interest and labor market information, ultimately leading to marketable skills and employment. Additionally, LVERs engage training providers to secure opportunities for veterans with SBEs in the trades. The addition of the future LVER position at Central Office will further relationships with the colleges and training providers.

(D) THE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED USING THE 1% GRANT ALLOCATION SET ASIDE FOR THIS PURPOSE, AS APPLICABLE;

Washington state law and the agency's Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Washington Federation of State Employees discourage or prohibit cash or non-cash incentives or awards. We plan to select 6 offices to each receive $7,500 each, based on achievement levels for common measures (veterans entered employment, employment retention, and average wage for veterans entering employment). A small board of program and leadership representatives will review the data, as detailed on reports, and will select the 6 recipients. The monetary award will be provided to office administrators, to determine a spending plan that will benefit veterans in their offices or communities. All incentive funding will be utilized by September 30th of the budget cycle and will be reported in the fourth quarter TPN. Funds for incentive awards will be administered by the SWA. A separate funds category will be established to track incentive funding.

(E) THE POPULATIONS OF VETERANS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS DESIGNATED BY THE SECRETARY AS ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES, AND ANY ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS SPECIFICALLY TARGETED BY THE STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY FOR SERVICES FROM ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS (E.G., NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS; VETERANS IN REMOTE RURAL COUNTIES OR PARISHES);

Veterans requesting services at the WorkSource offices come from numerous pathways, ranging from the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops, Unemployment Insurance (UI) claim filing, the public Labor Exchange website (Go2WorkSource.com), various community partners, walk-in traffic and word-of-mouth referrals from current/past clients. Regardless of the path that leads them to WorkSource, each veteran is welcomed and invited to receive an assessment in order to determine the best service or bundle of services to assist their successful transition into work. Priority of service protocols are used to identify the veteran at first contact, regardless of the point of entry. At this time, each veteran is informed of their eligibility for priority service, the programs that support veteran priorities, and the eligibility requirements of those programs. These protocols also are used to identify and serve spouses of veterans who meet the requirements of an eligible person under JVA guidelines.

When veterans enter the WorkSource system, they complete a questionnaire that determines what program or service best fits their needs, and they are appropriately routed. If the veteran indicates that she/he has significant barriers to employment (SBEs) or meets the special population criteria, she/he is referred to the DVOP for intensive services consideration. The DVOP follows a structured intensive services model that implements standard case management methodologies and has been standardized across the state. This includes the use of individualized employment plans (IEPs), whereby the veteran sets specific goals with assistance from the DVOP. Specific groups of veterans targeted for services are:

- *Transitioning and Recently Exited Service Members.* The focus is on transitioning and recently exited service members (who at any point in the previous 12 months have been unemployed for 27 or more weeks), through numerous outreach efforts. Unemployment Insurance claim listings are monitored by local WorkSource staff to identify claimants whose past employer was military branch of service or those who are identified as having served in the military. Washington State also supports transitioning service members through DVOP outreach to three of the major military installations, locating those with SBE, and engaging them at the earliest stages so employment preparations can begin prior to separation. It is critical that the transition of recently exited veterans benefit from partnerships of multiple service providers: the Washington Military Department, the DoD Transition Assistance Advisor of the Washington National Guard and the Yellow Ribbon Program providing redeployment activities. These activities connect members of the state's National Guard with WorkSource services.
- *Veterans Lacking a High School Diploma or Equivalent Certificate*. State DVOPs maintain close connections with Workforce Education offices, SkillSource Centers and employment placement specialists at local colleges to help locate Veterans with SBE, provide services to educationally disadvantaged veterans who require such services to obtain or retain employment leading to self-sufficiency, and to encourage enrollment in high school equivalency programs, as appropriate. While 2013 data indicates that 99% of veterans using our services have a high school or higher education level, DVOPs continue to work with partners in education to provide opportunities for those who require additional education for employment.

- *Low Income Veterans.* DVOPs work closely with WIA program staff to provide intensive services and co-enroll low income veterans in programs such as on-the-job training (OJT) and short term training, which open opportunities for in-demand, living wage employment.
- *Native American Veterans with SBEs Residing on Tribal Lands*. We continue to outreach to Native American veterans. A DVOP in Spokane county attends American Indian Veterans Advisory Council meetings and has planned and attended various events and summits representing American Indian veterans, as permitted by the Tribes.
- *Homeless Veterans*. Working connections exist between Washington State's Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP) grantees and WorkSource. This partnership has included the HVRP grant awarded to the WDVA for services to veterans in both rural and non-rural areas. In addition, services to homeless veterans are a focus at the Building 9 project at Retsil, a model transitional assistance facility operated by the WDVA. The DVOP who is out-stationed at the American Lake Veterans Hospital provides intensive services to veterans receiving treatment at this medical center, focusing on those being treated for chemical abuse, PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and long-term homelessness. Additionally, DVOPs conduct outreach activities at specific areas and events where homeless veterans would likely be found, such as Veteran Stand Downs and homeless shelters.
- *Service-Connected Disabled Veterans*. Disabled veterans may receive assistance and intensive services from WorkSource staff and partners, The Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the VA/VR&E Program, a local DVOP, or any combination of these. Disabled veterans are identified during the veteran validation process at WorkSource and are referred to the appropriate level of service based upon the veteran's interests, abilities, skills, needs, and SBE status. Also, through a close partnership with the VA, DVOPs assist veterans who are seeking entry into new careers and have received vocational rehabilitation assistance from the VA/VR&E program in alignment with at least one of their 5 Tracks to Employment to obtain workplace skills. Local DVOP staff work in partnership with VA/VR&E case managers to jointly build career plans that aid the veteran in obtaining suitable work based upon their abilities. This partnership is supported by the Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC), a DVOP out-stationed at the VA/VR&E Regional Offices in Seattle. Washington State also coordinates to provision of intensive services for VR&E clients with VA/VR&E case managers stationed at the Portland, OR and Boise, ID Regional Offices. ESD and the Regional VA/VR&E office in Seattle are planning a cross-agency Lean event to assess and improve services being provided to VR&E clients.
- *Ex-Offenders*. For years, the Employment Security Department has conducted specialized outreach services to incarcerated and soon to be released offenders. Unfortunately, some veterans are among the special offender population in both prisons and jails. The agency is making efforts to strengthen the connection between WorkSource services, local county/city jails, and the Jail Industries programs that identify and assist incarcerated offenders and veterans. In three areas, the DVOPs provide monthly outreach to a Veterans Court forum where convicted veterans are matched with community mentors. The WDVA has applied for an Incarcerated Veterans grant, in which ESD has been identified as a partner. The grant application promotes early identification of incarcerated veterans who have not yet been released to begin an individualized plan for their reintegration into society. WorkSource will work closely as a partner in this program.
- *Veterans Aged 18*-24: DVOPs continue to outreach to this population, with strong relationships on the military installations and colleges. These veterans are provided intensive services to assist navigating a difficult civilian employment sector.

Additionally, our WorkSource offices are seeing an aging population of veterans, as indicated by statistics of veterans using our services in 2013 (approximately 30% were 55 years or older). These Cold War and Vietnam-era veterans have unique challenges; with the economic downturn, many are facing unemployment for the first time since entering the civilian market. These veterans often face challenges with the administrative and technological aspects of today's job search and employment application processes. Our offices partner with community resources that teach computer skills and take full advantage of the series of employment-related workshops offered in each WorkSource office. Our state believes that aging veterans have unique barriers that are best addressed through intensive case management by DVOPs, and requests DOL/VETS consider this for inclusion in the SBE definition.

Outreach to veterans takes place in all WorkSource offices by the DVOP and WorkSource staff. DVOP specialists and LVER staff, through their unique roles, are serving veterans with significant barriers to employment, and employers who want to hire Veterans. LVER staff provide advocacy and outreach for veterans of all eras and build employment connections and placement through job search workshops (in coordination with employers), while DVOP staff seek out veterans with significant barriers to employment, assess their barriers and develop solutions through an intensive case management approach. Washington currently performs DVOP outreach at Fairchild AFB and Smokey Point Complex in support of Naval Station Everett, and has a DVOP stationed at American Lake VA Medical Center to locate and provide services to veterans with SBEs. Additionally, the state has been approved for a Rapid Recovery grant to support transitioning service members at Fairchild AFB impacted by the military drawdown. This grant provides supportive services and the assignment of a WIA employment specialist on the installation.

Strong relationships have been formed with other veterans-focused agencies and organizations in Washington State to jointly serve veterans. MOUs have been established with the following agencies:

- Military Department to better serve demobilized National Guard members WDVA to better identify recently exited veterans and veterans in crisis
- VA/VR&E Program to provide intensive services and the smooth handoff of veterans receiving rehabilitation services as they become prepared for job search activities

DVOPs work closely with county veterans coalitions, veteran service organizations, veterans centers, homeless shelters, various community events and activities to outreach for veterans with SBEs who have contacted these groups for emergency support services or who are seeking employment. LVERs outreach to local business groups such as Chambers of Commerce, Hire America's Heroes, local military sites and professional organizations to promote hiring of veterans.

One good example of successful partnering takes place in King County, the state's most populated area. DVOPs collaborate with the King County Veterans Program, which is funded by a Veterans and Human Services Levy through 2017. This partnership, which includes a plethora of community and veterans services organizations, provides low-income, homeless, disabled and at-risk veterans with emergency financial assistance, housing, employment guidance, benefits counseling and health referrals.

Multiple tools are used to monitor, manage, and assess the services and outcomes provided to veterans. Federal standards are closely monitored through the ETA 9000 and VETS 200 reports, as well as various reports from the state employment information system. State and local performance measures are monitored through a strong state internal audit system. Administrators use the

WorkSource Management Information System (WSMIS) reports and special reports generated by local power users. All data is retrieved from the state's management information system (MIS), Services, Knowledge & Information System (SKIES), which is used by all veteran representatives and is mandatory for major WorkSource partners to record services provided to current and future jobseekers, businesses and Labor Exchange Job Orders. VR&E Monthly Services Reports are used to inform and coordinate services with VR&E case managers for VR&E-enrolled veterans. Information requested by the DOL/VETS and the DVET, such as Quarterly Site Managers Reports and Site Validation or Technical Assistance visits by the DVET or their staff, are also used to monitor grant performance and services to veterans an employers. WorkSource Validation Monitoring is also used to ensure services to veterans are delivered in accordance with federal guidance, state workforce and local workforce delivery plans, and established policies and directives.

(F) HOW THE STATE IMPLEMENTS AND MONITORS THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO COVERED PERSONS;

Veterans receive priority of service at WorkSource offices. These actions are supported by WIA Policy 3641, Jobs for Veterans Act Priority of Service, Labor Exchange Policy 4034, Services for Veterans, and VPL 07-09/TEGL 10-09, Implementation Priority of Services for Veterans and Eligible Spouses. Veterans are targeted for priority of service among adults with barriers to employment in the state's workforce development plan http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/HSHW2008.pdf and local Workforce Development Area Plans.

Priority of service, as it is fully implemented in Washington State, means that veterans and other eligible persons are identified at first contact within the WorkSource system, including electronic media and in person contact. At first contact, the veteran or eligible person will be informed whether they are eligible for priority of service, what the programs are that are required (or voluntarily support) priority of service, and the eligibility criteria of those programs. This is re-enforced at WorkSource Orientations, Job Hunter Workshops, Job Clubs, and other formal presentations and job search development trainings conducted by WorkSource staff.

Tools that are used to monitor priority of service standards are the ETA 9002 and VETS 200 reports, Quarterly Site Managers Reports, and DOL/VETS Site visits. One-stop monitoring and validation are handled by supervisors, One-Stop administrators, the state program coordinator and Central Office director, the agency's workforce administration monitoring staff (in a separate agency division), and by the DOL at the state, regional, and national levels.

Services are made available to veterans in three general service delivery modes:

- Internet connection - These services are provided to veterans via the state's public Labor Exchange website, Go2WorkSource.com. On this site, veterans are identified, informed of their eligibility for priority of service, and have access to the Labor Exchange self-service job bank. They will also find direct connections to information pertaining to priority of service standards and veteran specific job search connections such as the Helmets to Hardhats program, DOL/VETS, the O*NET Military Code Crosswalk, the VIP Program, VA Resources (including the GI Bill), and the Employer Support for the Guard and Reserves (ESGR). Additional connections are available to labor market information, unemployment insurance claim processing and information on improving job search activities. Veterans are also able to develop and post their resumes for viewing by potential employers, as well as directly apply for jobs listed in the Labor Exchange job bank. Additionally, the website allows employers to indicate veterans' preference in hiring for open positions; this information is easily searchable by veteran jobseekers.
- Self-Services at WorkSource - Veterans may take advantage of multiple self-service options at the WorkSource offices, as they sometimes prefer limited staff assistance. This includes access to resource rooms with computers for self-assessment of skills and interests, job search and resume and cover letter creation. Other self-serve resources include copy machines, fax machines, telephones and general information on job fairs, WorkSource services, community support agencies, and organizational supports that are available through WorkSource connection activities.
- Staff Assisted Services - Veterans may receive assistance from any WorkSource staff member or partner, but those with significant barriers to employment are identified during initial assessment and are referred to DVOPs for intensive services. Priority of service means that the best service can be delivered and managed by WorkSource staff that that is

appropriate to the veteran's needs and situation. The Case Management Model includes developing an employment plan for veterans, which can lead to DOL and other program enrollments that provide priority of service as well.

Annual agreements, MOUs and other partnerships are established with the WDVA, Washington Military Department, DOL/VETS, DoD, and VA/VR&E Program. These agreements aid veterans in connecting with services regardless of point of entry or contact agency. Veterans priority of service is the bottom line.

(G) HOW THE STATE PROVIDES OR INTENDS TO PROVIDE AND MEASURE, THROUGH BOTH THE DVOP AND ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNER STAFF:

1. JOB AND JOB TRAINING INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES,

As our military services downsize and personnel return from Iraq, Afghanistan and other military operations, we continue to seek partnership opportunities that will ease the transition to civilian employment. DVOPs stationed in Washington's American Job Centers (AJCs) across the state will improve essential intensive transition services. Commitments with multiple partner organizations and community colleges by way of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), wherein the partners accept responsibilities to coordinate within the centers and throughout local areas, help make strong linkages to employment and training programs.

Additionally, Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) has placed Veterans Navigators in colleges throughout the state to work closely with veterans who undertake education upon discharge from the military. Our DVOPs work with these Navigators and provide intensive services to veterans aged 18-24 and educationally disadvantaged veterans, that create a smooth transition from education to employment. Returning veterans and veterans from other service eras with significant barriers to employment benefit from additional working relationships LVERs have with local employers, veterans service organizations, and county veteran staff, and DVOPs with transitioning service members at area bases, and federal VA/VR&E staff. Although our veterans offer tremendous advantages to both prospective civilian employers and their communities, many veterans return from service with partial disability. In addition, we realize that many who have served in combat theatres will have a difficult time readjusting to civilian work. In far too many cases, veterans who struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that may surface after retirement or discharge from the military often contact staff at a WorkSource office or are referred by our veterans advocates for services. We will continue to train our WorkSource staff to recognize employment limitations and access appropriate referral resources to help these warriors.

2. EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES, AND

Compounding the problems experienced in readjusting after spending a tour or more away from home is the fact that military work life for many soldiers creates a dependency to act only upon command. In contrast, civilian life is far less structured, so veterans often need help discovering their deep reserve of self-initiative that is necessary to plan a course of action and work toward a new career. LVERs at Washington's WorkSource locations have partnered with employers to develop successful workshops and DVOPs provide intensive services, to veterans with SBEs, to assist with this cultural shift. We will continue to seek and recognize best practices in this area for statewide benchmarking. In 2006, Washington state passed legislation called the Veterans Innovations Program (VIP), and appropriated funds for struggling veterans. This program, administered by WDVA, also provides emergency funds for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Hundreds of veterans and their families have received help with basic needs such as rent, utility bills and even college tuition through this program. AJC staff help veterans with emergency needs by completing and submitting applications for VIP. This emergency assistance is always followed up with wrap around services that, at a minimum, include core information about employment and training assistance and often include referrals to WIA or apprenticeship opportunities. DVOPs make the connections and work through obstacles whenever a veteran with SBEs seeks employment-related training. Every source of funding is coordinated to support the veteran and his or her family so that they can be successful during training and transition from training to employment. Following training,

DVOPs reengage with these current and future jobseekers to match their new skills with employment opportunities in the local labor market.

3. JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING AND SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT SERVICE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS;

These programs and support services are fully utilized by DVOPs to help struggling veterans with SBEs or ages 18-24 make solid career plans and work their way toward high skilled, high wage jobs. The local DVOP is a fellow veteran, a mentor and friend to many veterans in their communities, which goes a long way toward encouraging veterans to take advantage of services and move ahead. Additionally, our LVERs take on key roles on planning committees and veterans organizations, reinforcing partnerships and providing input to strategies to help veterans overcome barriers and secure employment.

ESD's DVOPs and LVERs are exemplary individuals with passion for the mission they fulfill. DVOPs attend events and provide intensive services that support transitioning service members and veterans, both within the gates of our military installations and in their local communities (contingent upon an authorized extension past FY14). The growth of veterans centers and veterans coalitions in our communities has provided excellent partnering opportunities in a variety of areas, including case staffing, life and employment barrier resolution, and transition services. Our DVOPs remain active partners in these organizations, providing intensive services and promoting a seamless and holistic approach to assisting veterans.

(H) THE HIRE DATE ALONG WITH MANDATORY TRAINING COMPLETION DATES FOR ALL DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF; AND

Full Name	Position	Hire Date	NVTI Tng 1	NVTI Tng 2
William Edward Adamek	LVER	9/1/2006	9/4/15	7/31/07
Michael E. Benko	LVER	10/16/2014	10/22/10	7/31/15
Randi R. Bowman	DVOP	6/1/2010	10/19/10	3/21/11
Eileen Elizabeth Boylston	LVER	6/1/2001	12/4/01	5/15/15
Sefarian Levar Butler	DVOP	8/16/2011	2/6/12	5/21/12
Michael Donnell Crawford	LVER	3/1/2013	8/5/13	8/27/13
John Cruz	DVOP	8/11/2015	Requested	Requested
Robert Dixson	DVOP	6/8/2015	Scheduled	Requested
Bryan P. Dooley	DVOP	10/1/2010	5/9/11	5/1/15
Nickolas L. Erickson (Nick)	LVER	11/16/2012	4/16/12	2/26/13
John W. Geelan	DVOP	10/1/2010	10/19/10	6/24/11
Raymond Gopher	DVOP	8/3/2015	Requested	Requested
David Alexander Gray	DVOP	11/16/2012	6/7/13	7/26/13
John Michael Greenway	LVER	10/16/2014	6/5/15	7/31/15
John Martin Gross	DVOP	8/18/2014	10/31/15	2/13/15
Colleen Hankins	DVOP	10/16/2014	7/31/15	5/8/15
Clinton T. Hede (Clint)	LVER	7/16/2013	4/25/14	8/25/14
Michael A. Hester	LVER	5/1/2006	1/6/04	4/7/15
Linda Hollingsworth	DVOP	11/1/2010	4/11/11	8/30/11
Clarence Hurling	DVOP	11/18/2013	5/23/14	6/27/14
John C. Joseph	DVOP	1/5/1995	12/14/98	6/12/15
Victor Livio Kemp	DVOP	10/1/2012	5/20/13	6/17/13
Mauricio A. Kenny	DVOP	2/1/2007	4/24/07	4/17/15
Brenda C. Laban	LVER	4/15/2007	7/24/07	11/18/08
James W. Lapsley	LVER	1/1/2008	6/19/07	9/9/08
Daniel Ledgett	DVOP	12/16/2013	5/23/14	8/11/14
David Leo Madden	DVOP	10/16/2014	2/27/15	4/17/15
Seth Michael Maier	DVOP	4/1/2013	7/29/13	7/3/13
Monique Y. Martin	DVOP	10/17/2011	2/27/11	1/7/13
Michael O. Mc Evoy	DVOP	10/16/2007	5/2/00	7/16/14
John L. Moysiuk	DVOP	5/1/2008	9/30/08	6/12/15
Jose Ortiz	LVER	1/17/2012	6/10/12	8/21/15
Paul Lewis Pelot	DVOP	3/1/2011	8/23/11	8/7/15
Samuel Phillip Rabideau (Sam)	DVOP	5/1/2010	10/19/10	3/21/11
Michael Ramos	DVOP	7/16/2014	10/31/15	4/28/15
Michael Alan Robinson	DVOP	7/16/2012	6/3/13	7/8/13
Jimmy Roth	DVOP	6/1/2015	10/23/15	10/30/15
Hannah M. Schoepp	LVER	5/1/2012	2/27/11	2/11/13
Steve A. Severson	DVOP	8/7/2015	Requested	Requested
Kevin Joseph Sullivan	DVOP	10/16/2013	6/6/14	6/27/14
Luis Torres	DVOP	6/9/2015	Requested	Requested
Richard L. Truitt	LVER	11/16/2009	6/13/10	2/13/14
Terence L. Webster	DVOP	6/1/2015	Requested	Requested
Shane Allen Wise	DVOP	1/18/2011	7/26/11	4/7/12
Jarrod E. Wright	DVOP	10/16/2014	2/27/15	4/24/15

(I) SUCH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS THE SECRETARY MAY REQUIRE.

No additional information provided.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI)

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) program requires a State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) on a 2-year planning cycle that is a condition of receipt of administrative funding to administer the program. The SQSP is the State's UI performance management and planning process that allows for an exchange of information between Federal and State partners to enhance the UI program's ability to reflect their joint commitment to performance excellence and client-centered services. A formal two-year SQSP is submitted biennially. On the off years, States may be required to modify the SQSP with additional corrective action plans and narrative if they are failing any new performance measures, and they are required to provide updated budget documents, certifications, and assurances. ETA Handbook No. 336, 18th Edition provides detailed guidance for the preparation and submittal of the SQSP and supplemental guidance is provided in an annual UIPL, issued as UIPL 21-14 for the FY 2015 SQSP. The Social Security Act (SSA) sections 302 and 303 authorize the Secretary of Labor to provide funds to administer the UI program and govern the expenditure of those funds. States that choose the option to include UI in a WIOA Combined State Plan will be required to submit their SQSP through the Combined State Plan process. The SQSP must be prepared in accordance to the instructions in ET Handbook 336, 18th Edition and there are no changes to the established SQSP cycle if a State chose to submit their SQSP through the Combined State Plan process.

(A) CONTENTS OF A COMPLETE UI SQSP PACKAGE

A complete UI SQSP package includes the following documents, as described in Chapter 1, ETA Handbook 336, 18th Edition:

1. TRANSMITTAL LETTER

A cover letter to the appropriate Regional Office (RO) transmitting all the required SQSP documents.

September 23, 2016

Mr. Steve Narolewski

Employment & Training Administration

US Department of Labor

90 - 7th Street, Suite 17300

San Francisco, California 94103-1516

Dear Mr. Narolewski:

I am pleased to submit the Washington State's annual State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) for your consideration. The enclosed documents include the state plan narrative, the corrective action plans, integrity action plan, budget forms and worksheets, assurances, organization charts, and signature page.

We appreciate the strong partnership with the Department of Labor and your constructive feedback and support. Thank you for your ongoing guidance.

If you have questions or concerns about the accompanying materials, please contact me at

(360) 902-9303 or ngorrell@esd.wa.gov, or Joy Adams, Performance Management Coordinator, at (360) 902-9764 or jadams@esd.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Neil Gorrell, Employment System Policy & UI Director

Employment Security Department

Enclosures

Note: The signed copy of the SQSP Transmittal Letter for the Washington Employment Security Department is maintained with the state agency and the USDOL regional office.

2. BUDGET WORKSHEETS/FORMS

Budget worksheets/forms and plan for program administration based on projected allocations received from the Federal partner. These forms include Worksheet UI-1 and SF 424, SF 424A and SF 424B. The SF 424A is only required if the State vary the quarterly distribution of base claims activity staff years.

Budget Worksheets and Forms

From the SF 424:

Title: FY 2017 Unemployment Insurance Base Grant

Description: FY 2017 Unemployment Insurance Base Grant

Funding total: $75,651,978.00

Project start date: 10/01/2016

Project end date: 09/30/2017

Name of authorizing representative: Lisa Marsh, Deputy Commissioner

The signed copy of the SF 424 and other appropriate budget-related forms for the Washington Employment Security Department are maintained with the state agency and the USDOL regional office.

3. THE STATE PLAN NARRATIVE

The State Plan Narrative is a vital element of the SQSP that provides a vehicle for sharing with the Federal partner State-specific efforts that affect the administration of the UI Program. The State Plan Narrative allows the State to describe in a single narrative: a) State performance in comparison to the Government Performance Review Act goals; b) actions planned to correct deficiencies regarding UI programs, UI program reviews and reporting requirements; and c) results of customer satisfaction surveys (optional).

STATE PLAN NARRATIVE

(Washington - Fiscal Years 2017 and 2018)

A. Overview

The Washington Employment Security Department (ESD) remains committed to providing the highest quality of service to unemployed workers as they receive benefits and seek new jobs, to serving Washington businesses that support the UI program with their taxes and look to the department for help filling their employment needs, and to fulfilling its responsibilities to guard the integrity of the unemployment insurance system.

State Climate and Issues Affecting Administration of the UI Program

Economic Outlook

The Washington Economic & Revenue Forecast Council's (ERFC) June 2016 quarterly economic forecast assumes the Washington economy will continue to expand at a moderate pace. The forecast calls for growth in payrolls to be 1.9 percent this year, after a 2.5 percent growth in 2015. Employment growth is expected to slow to 1.3 percent in 2017 and continue to average 0.7 percent through 2021. As a result of the steady job growth, we expect the unemployment rate to average 4.8 percent in 2017.

Recent and Future Legislative Action

Proposals for the 2017 legislative session are being explored at this time. The interim has been active for us, as we have responded to several inquiries from legislators and staff. In light of a difficult state budgetary situation, we anticipate there may be legislative action in the next biennium that affects the Unemployment Insurance program, to include coverage changes and adjustments to trust fund provisions.

Basic Operations Funding Shortfall

No discussion concerning the state climate and issues affecting the administration of the UI Program would be complete without an acknowledgement that our state does not receive sufficient UI administrative funds to run this complex program in the way that our citizens deserve, commensurate with what employers have paid through their FUTA taxes. The funding mechanism at the national level continues to calculate total funds available at a lower-than-sustainable rate, which sets up continual competition among the states for funding. This "spiral down" system rewards low cost states without regard to quality or the complexity of individual state UI laws.

Shortly after the 2002 distribution of Reed Act funds, ESD was successful in gaining the state legislature's support in partially closing this gap through Reed Act appropriations, which allowed us to run a more robust UI program than the federal government funded. ESD has also taken full advantage of other supplemental funding opportunities each year to shore up basic program functions. With the exhaustion of supplemental Reed Act funds, Washington had to meet the significant challenge of scaling UI spending back to match the federal funding.

In last year's State Quality Service Plan, we acknowledged that our performance would likely deteriorate given the significant downsizing and deep spending cuts implemented over the past few years. Between the three reductions in force, we have lost a total of approximately 1,000 positions.

Vision, Mission and Objectives

ESD conducted a Lean strategic planning process to update its mission statement and set new objectives. Please see the attached Strategy Map for a high-level view of our current objectives.

Mission: We partner to connect employers and job seekers -- supporting transitions to new jobs and empowering careers.

Vision: The right job for each person, every time.

Values:

• Serving customers

• Strengthening partnerships

• Acting with integrity

• Empowering people

• Anticipating future needs

• Achieving goals

ESD has been using Lean methods and tools to eliminate waste, save time, and standardize workflow. We have effectively reduced backlogs and decreased process complexity, and have been focusing our efforts on tasks which produce the most valuable services for UI claimants, job seekers, and employers. ESD continues on its long-term journey to incorporate Lean processes into daily routines, enabling better service to UI claimants, job seekers, and employers. Our goal continues to be to build our agency's capacity to do Lean in-house by learning, and to work with other state agencies and private sector partners with extensive Lean experience.

Lean management is an approach that asks those who know best - our frontline employees - to identify strategies to help them serve the people of Washington more quickly and easily. Lean provides proven principles, methods and tools for creating more efficient processes while developing a culture that encourages employee creativity and problem-solving skills. Lean can be applied at all levels of our organization to review processes from a customer's point of view and consider what adds value, and what can be eliminated. During the past two years we have worked to use these efficiencies to dampen the blow, and while they were not able to prevent all consequences, these strategies were quite successful in helping us continue to serve our customers.

Technology Enhancements

Washington continues to pursue technology enhancements as a main strategy to improving and stabilizing our UI program in the face of downsizing and spending reductions. In the past two years we have implemented a new UI tax computer system, purchased and developed a new UI benefits computer system, and implemented a new job-matching and case management system for workforce development staff. Additionally, we have completed other projects including a refresh of our UI claims center phone system. These projects have used Agile methodologies, and the UI benefits system and the job-matching system were purchased Commercial Off-the-Shelf (COTS) products that were configured to our needs. This is a new approach for the department, and has been largely successful despite some challenges.

However, one challenge of undertaking so many enhancements simultaneously has been to stretch our staff capacity to its limits. As an example, for our UI benefit system replacement, over a third of our adjudication and intake staff have been assigned to the project as business analysts and subject matter experts, or taken temporary assignments with the project as system testers. Additionally, all staff will complete several days of classroom training over the summer and fall of this year. These efforts to ensure the success of the new system directly impact our ability to complete day-to-day operations and meet acceptable levels of performance. This is reflected in our March 2016 performance levels, and is anticipated to continue for a time after the system goes live in fall 2016. We do fully anticipate that the investment we are making in the system's successful development will

pay substantial dividends in reduced process time, improved service metrics, and increases in our performance.

Next Generation Tax System (NGTS)

Multi-year implementation of the Next Generation Tax System (NGTS) culminated in a rollout in March 2014. NGTS replaced the main tax and wage applications along with fifteen ancillary applications with a single, modern system. The new system better performs UI Tax & Wage functions while improving productivity and eliminating duplication of data. The system's rollout has had its challenges, as documented in the Tax Performance System Annual Report, and our approach to the challenges has been to prioritize work that impacts our customers ahead of internal adjustments.

UI Benefit System Replacement (UTAB)

As noted in previous years, ESD's benefit payment system, GUIDE, has been a major impediment to process improvement. A 2012 feasibility study strongly recommended replacing GUIDE and its ancillary systems. In spring 2015 we contracted with Fast Enterprises to purchase and configure a replacement for our antiquated COBOL-based GUIDE system. Fortunately, that effort, called the Unemployment Tax and Benefits (UTAB) system, is now underway. We expect that UTAB will go live in Fall 2016, and will be a dramatic improvement both for our customers and for our staff.

In the past, we have primarily custom built our IT systems. For this project, we selected a COTS system that can be configured much more quickly and for less cost than a custom system, which is critical for us as we are at our lowest funding level in decades, and our current system is at its end of life.

As the first part of this project, we unveiled a secure customer portal to allow people to view their benefits information such as payment history, account balance, and wages reported by their employers. Using an Agile development philosophy, ESD released secure messaging through the portal to allow people to send questions to claims center agents. Agents serve customers more quickly and accurately than email because they know exactly which claimant they're serving.

The portal also gives people easy access to their Washington wage history, which is helpful to those applying for other benefits, such as food stamps or housing. Previously, people needed to contact our public records unit or visit a WorkSource office to get their wage records. Now they can access the information themselves and simply print it off. This new capability also helps job seekers developing resumes or claimants applying for unemployment. Customers don't need to be currently receiving unemployment benefits to use the portal.

New Case Management /Job Matching System

Over the past two years, ESD worked to replace its current case management and job-matching programs with a single, unified solution to allow workforce development staff to track job seeking customers' progress through their program participation. The new system will also assist workforce development staff members who support the variety of programs and labor exchange activities crucial to workforce development and employments. Finally, the new system will help us continue to better integrate workforce development with unemployment insurance.

In May, ESD launched a new job match and client management system called WorkSourceWA.com, bringing exciting changes to the way Washington connects employers and job seekers. WorkSourceWA.com, built by industry veteran Monster.com and ESD staff, offers employers vastly improved recruitment tools, such as:

• Award-winning talent-management software to help them find qualified candidates faster.

• Unlimited job postings for free.

• The largest talent database in the state, including Monster's candidate pool for all of Washington and bordering cities in Oregon and Idaho.

Job seekers also will find fresh job hunting and career resources, such as:

• A new and improved resume builder to help them stand out.

• Advanced job search tools to find jobs more easily.

• Skill and interest assessment tools to chart a new career.

• Economic data and a budget calculator to make informed career decisions.

• Microsites for veterans, migrant seasonal farm workers and dislocated workers.

Since the site launched in early May:

• Nearly 2,700 employers have created approved accounts and 48,000 jobs have been posted;

• More than 21,000 job seekers have created self-service accounts; and

• More than 20,000 people have submitted nearly 157,000 applications—or roughly 8 applications each.

Washington's highly mobile workforce can view the new site on multiple devices, including smart phones and tablets, and it's accessible for people with disabilities. ESD is engaged in a comprehensive outreach campaign to share the new site with even more job seekers and employers — and we're already working with other state agencies and organizations to expand our reach.

Assessment of past performance and expected future performance, and external factors that may have performance implications.

Core Measures and Secretary's Standards: Washington met or exceeded U.S. Department of Labor Core Measures and Secretary Standards in 16 of 22 categories.

Nonmonetary Determinations Timeliness and Quality

• Nonmonetary Determinations Time Lapse within 21 days: ALP 80%, Washington 39%.

• Nonmonetary Determinations Quality - Separations: Exceeded ALP.

• Nonmonetary Determinations Quality - Nonseparations: Exceeded ALP.

Appeals Case Aging

• Exceeded Appeals Average Age, Lower Authority ALP.

• Exceeded Appeals Average Age, Higher Authority ALP.

• Exceeded Lower Authority Appeals Quality ALP.

• Exceeded Lower Authority Appeals, decided within 45 days of filing ALP.

• Exceeded Lower Authority Appeals, decided within 30 days of filing ALP.

Tax

• New Employer Status Determinations Time Lapse: Exceeded ALP.

• Tax Quality (Part A) - Eight tax functions failed of Status Successor and Inactive, Collections, Report Processing, Debits/Billings Contributory and Reimbursable, Credits/Refunds and Tax Rates.

• Tax Quality (Part B) - Collections failed.

• Effective Audit Measure - Passed.

Reemployment: Exceeded Facilitation of Reemployment ALP.

Detection of Overpayments: Three Year Aggregate: ALP 50% - 95%, Washington 102.3%.

Washington's results for detection of overpayments for the three year period ending 3/31/16 are higher than expected for federal review purposes because of its work search-related overpayments and how they interact with the federal performance formula. Washington does not believe the results indicate a systemic problem with detection of overpayments.

Coordination with other plans

The Employment Security Department is an integral partner in the WIOA State Plan. We collaborate with state and local agencies that participate in the workforce system and serve UI claimants, job seekers, and businesses. We are actively seeking to break down barriers within the agency and promote the vision of UI benefits as a bridge between jobs and ESD's active participation in the workforce pipeline that delivers skilled workers to employers. ESD continues to progress in its long-term journey toward Lean methodologies, performance improvement, and standard work.

B. Federal emphasis (GPRA goals)

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) -- Washington's results for the year ending 3/31/16 have not met USDOL goals for timely benefit payments, prompt establishment of tax accounts, and facilitation of reemployment of claimants.

• Make Timely Benefit Payments - Washington 83.1% - CAP written

o Target: 87.5% of intrastate first payments for full weeks of unemployment compensation will be made within 14/21 days from the week ending date of the first compensable week.

• Detect Benefit Overpayments - Washington 102.3% - CAP written

o Target: Overpayments established will be at least 61.4% of the estimated detectable, recoverable overpayments.

• Establish Tax Accounts Promptly - Washington 86.5%

o Target: 88.0% of status determinations for new employers will be made within 90 days of the end of the first quarter in which liability occurred.

• Facilitate the Reemployment of Claimants - Washington 67% - exceeded goal

o Target: No target has been set for FY 2017. USDOL performance goal as of 3/31/16 was 64%.

As noted above, Washington's results for detection of overpayments for the three year period ending 3/31/16 are higher than expected for federal review purposes because of its work search-related overpayments and how they interact with the federal performance formula. See CAP attached.

C. Program Review Deficiencies - Washington has completed program reviews as required.

D. Program Deficiencies

Nonmonetary Determination Time Lapse Accuracy (Correct Issue Detection Dates in at least 95% of cases reviewed)

Washington's benefit payment system (GUIDE) required three areas of reprogramming to properly identify the correct Issue Detection Date (IDD):

1) Properly set the IDD when an initial or continued claim is submitted outside of regular business hours,

2) Give staff the ability to update the IDD when information identifying a separation issue is received from an employer,

3) Correct a system incident to properly re-set the IDD when a claim becomes monetarily valid.

These technology issues were the major factor in our IDD error rate for BTQ results. Due to competing technology priorities including federal and state legislative mandates, additional required system fixes remain incomplete. As we have said in past years, it is likely that we will be unable to completely resolve this issue unless and until we can successfully replace our GUIDE system.

We are nearing the replacement of GUIDE with an updated UI Benefits payment system (UTAB), which is scheduled to go live in Q4 2016. As such, our efforts changed over the past year from prioritizing the fix in GUIDE to ensuring that IDD is correctly identified in the new system. In addition

to the technology improvements, we are using Lean practices to complete a thorough review of processes and procedures in all areas of benefit payment. With this dual effort, we expect to see significant improvement in several deficient areas, to include IDD.

Detection of Overpayments: Three Year Aggregate: ALP 50% - 95%, Washington 102.3%.

Washington's results for detection of overpayments for the three year period ending 3/31/16 are higher than expected for federal review purposes because of its work search-related overpayments and how they interact with the federal performance formula. Washington has very strong work-search requirements in state law, mandating a progression to an "all weeks" review if the one week review uncovers eligibility or work-search errors. This results in a number of "all weeks" denials due to work-search errors, which create large overpayments.

The Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM) Operational Rate, the denominator of the overpayment detection ratio, excludes work search related overpayments. The numerator, overpayments established, includes work search related overpayments. Washington establishes a very high proportion of work search related overpayments in relation to total overpayments. Given the legal structure in Washington regarding work search overpayments, it is mathematically impossible for the state to meet the 95% acceptable level of performance for overpayments established to overpayments detected ratio by virtue of how the ratio is calculated.

Washington is addressing work-search overpayments from a number of angles. We are in the midst of a review of administrative rules regarding work search, with the goal to create opportunities for coaching and corrective action before creating overpayments when errors are minor or inadvertent. We also have built better tools in our new UI Benefits system to provide quicker visibility to work-search related errors on claims. These measures, partnered with expanded RESEA encounters and our existing work on cross-matches, should continue to bring the overall measure down toward the ALP. However, we may not ever be within the 50-95% parameter established due to our structural impediments.

There are also concerns that the combination of struggles in the Benefit Accuracy Measurement program and issues with Data Validation in certain benefits populations (see CAPs) may be affecting the underlying data to calculate the overpayment detection ratio. Washington will be continuing corrective actions in both these areas during the period, and will be considering where there may be hidden effects on the ETA 227 data that require correction. These efforts will be tracked and reported through appropriate CAP milestones.

E. Reporting Deficiencies - In addition to technology challenges in our main UI computer systems, the department had unexpected staff turnover in key roles. Due to our inability to adequately transfer knowledge to newly-responsible staff, certain reports were not submitted timely. The department is reviewing all reports required for the various programs, and working to ensure that they are correctly and timely produced moving forward. Some of these efforts are happening along with the rollout of our new UI benefits system and fixes to our UI tax system.

F. Customer Service Surveys (optional) - Not applicable

G. Other (e.g., approach to maintaining solvency, requests for technical assistance)

Trust Fund Solvency

Over the past 10 years, Washington's governor and legislature have worked together in a bipartisan manner to develop a stable unemployment insurance tax and benefit system to sustain the state through difficult economic times. Because of this, Washington's trust fund remained solvent while 36 other states exhausted their trust funds and were forced to secure loans from the federal government to maintain unemployment insurance benefits. And Washington's average unemployment tax rate dropped from 2nd-highest in the nation in 2007 to 22nd-highest at the end of March 2016. As of June 30, 2016, Washington had $4.00 billion (approximately 16.2 months of benefits) in the unemployment trust fund.

Effective Audit Measure

The 2015 Computed Measures, is comprised of "Four Factors" and is known as the Effective Audit Measure as described in UIPL 03-11. States must pass with an overall passing score of at least 7.0.

Factor 1: Contributory Employers Audited Annually - 1.0% Minimum Core Score

The percent of employers audited annually is above the National Average and minimum Core Measure score of 1.0% and shows an increase from last year. Additional training was given to provide consistency in submitting accurate completed audits.

2013 2014 2015

1.3% 1.3% 1.6%

National Average 1.1% 1.2% 1.2%

Factor 2: Total Wage Change from Audit - 2.0% Minimum Core Score

The percent of total wage change is the same as the National Average and above the minimum Core score of 2.0% and shows an increase from last year. This was attributed to additional training being given to provide consistency in submitting accurate completed audits.

2013 2014 2016

5.7% 5.8% 7.4%

National Average 6.1% 5.8% 5.9%

Factor 3: Total Wages Audited - 1.0% Minimum Core Score

The percent of total wages audited is above the National Average and minimum Core Measure score of 1.0% in spite of reduced funding. The decrease in total wages is due to auditing small businesses.

2013 2014 2015

1.7% 1.7% 1.4%

National Average 1.2% 1.4% 1.3%

Factor 4: Average Number of Misclassified Employees per Audit - 1.0 Minimum Core Score

The average number of misclassified employees audited is significantly below the National Average, but is above the minimum Core Measure score of 1.0. A discovery during Q1/2016 identified that not all misclassified employees were being counted. Procedures have now been put in place which should result in an increase in the number of misclassified employees being reported starting with the Q2/2016 ETA 581 Report.

2013 2014 2015

2.3 1.6 1.1

National Average 3.3 3.9 3.7

Effective Audit Measure Total Score (Sum of Factors 1-4)

The Effective Audit Measure's total score should be equal to or greater than 7 to pass. Washington passed the Effective Audit Measure with 11.5. This score should increase next year because misclassified employees will be counted correctly.

2013 2014 2015

11.0 10.4 11.5

National Average 11.7 12.3 12.1

National Priorities

Improving State Capacity to Administer and Operate the UI Program Effectively

Washington's challenges with maintaining high-quality programs in our current environment of substantially-reduced resources have been well documented throughout this narrative. We are working to design and implement new technology solutions as we decrease staff. We are working to reduce backlogs in several areas while we lose substantial subject-matter expertise to retirement and reduction-in-force. The cumulative effect of three reductions-in-force over three years continues to jostle work units and create inefficiencies as relocated staff learn their new work. We have proactively worked to introduce and expand the use of Lean methodologies throughout the agency to identify opportunities for improvement, streamline and standardize workflows, and improve performance. During this calendar year, we have undertaken a full review of roles and responsibilities for each division in the agency, and redistributed the responsibilities in a way that more efficiently serves our internal and external customers. This move alone freed up several FTE to move to customer-facing work.

Improving Prevention, Detection, and Recovery of UI Improper Payments

In the previous period, Washington undertook 15 integrity strategies as documented in its Integrity Action Plan. A number of those projects will be continuing into the next FFY. As noted in the overview section, ESD has undergone a series of very deep budget cuts. Initiatives funded with SBR money were shielded from direct cuts; however, the indirect impacts of reductions in staffing affect

the ability to carry out these projects as competition for scarce resources increases. This is particularly acute for projects requiring IT support. Staffing reductions have negatively affected Claims Center Operations quality and timeliness as measured by BTQ reviews. They have also put Lean process improvement efforts at UI Claims Centers, which are critical to preventing overpayments, behind schedule. The agency is putting enormous efforts into process improvement but it will be challenging to meet BTQ standards in this environment. Washington remains committed to national integrity efforts and plans to propose only those projects we realistically expect to bring to completion within the two-year timeframe specified.

Improving Program Performance Nationally

As noted above, Washington state government as a whole has been directed to use Lean process analysis and improvement techniques to provide services to Washington citizens as efficiently and effectively as possible. The UI Division initially undertook Lean efforts using internal resources. FY12 Integrity SBR funds enabled the division to expand its Lean efforts. In Calendar Year 2013 ESD invested funds to engage in a facilitated agency-wide strategic planning process. This effort was led by UI staff trained in Lean techniques with SBR funds and assisted by the same consultant working with Claims Center Operations management and staff on its Lean initiatives. ESD believes Lean processes could be used by any state to help improve system performance.

Additionally, ESD staff have taken active leadership roles in several national groups. Our Commissioner is the current President of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, and our Employment System Policy and UI Director is the chair of the UI Integrity Center. We also have participated on several national workgroups, such as the current efforts to review UI work search. Through these efforts we seek to advocate for best practices across the country, and learn from our colleagues different ways we can serve our customers.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The Employment Security Department is an integral partner in the WIOA State Plan, and has elected to submit this State Quality Service Plan as part of a WIOA Combine State Plan. Additionally, we are working internally to further integrate our UI Tax, UI Benefits, and Labor Exchange programs to more fully support UI claimants and job-seeking customers throughout their experience. We are accomplishing this through a careful look at the roles and responsibilities of the units within our department, seamless integration of our main customer technology systems in a single web portal, and careful integration of UI elements into our WorkSource programs in the one-stop centers.

Reemployment of UI Claimants

ESD has worked diligently under the direction of our Commissioner to integrate unemployment compensation and workforce services much more closely. The Commissioner's vision of UI benefits as a support bridge between jobs directly aligns with USDOL's emphasis on claimant reemployment. Agency strategic plan success measures include reduced duration of UI claims and reduced time to find employment. The action plan includes working more successfully to meet employer needs, which will also result in better access to job opportunities for UI claimants and other WorkSource clients.

As reflected in our strategic plan, we are actively searching for additional ways to integrate our unemployment insurance program with labor exchange programs, and increasing visibility of UI in one-stop centers across the state. We have a strong Reemployment Services and Eligibility

Assessments (RESEA) program centered in the one-stops, and are pursuing full integration of our new UI benefits and job-matching computer systems in one customer portal, in order to provide job-seekers with a seamless experience between their job search and their unemployment benefits.

Addressing Worker Misclassification

ESD is currently working under a Supplemental Budget Request offered through UIPL 18-15. For this work, ESD hired two staff to perform Underground Economy (UE) investigations and audits. The initiative proposes, per year, to:

• Support Washington State's Underground Economy Task Force.

• Detect an additional 430 misclassified employees.

• Identify $6.89 million in unreported wages that may be eligible for garnishment activities to recover overpaid unemployment benefits.

• Increase ability to meet USDOL audit performance measures.

ESD's efforts to address worker misclassification are part of joint efforts to combat the underground economy with the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) and the Department of Revenue (DOR). Particular emphasis is placed on data sharing between the agencies and other areas where the agencies have partnered to uncover and take action on tax misreporting or fraud.

Staff from these three agencies meet quarterly in a cross-agency referral committee to share information on tax discovery, fraud prevention, new technology and data sharing opportunities, audit data and findings, and unregistered businesses that were involuntarily registered.

On-going efforts of the committee focus on new cross-match scenarios and how to refine existing queries. Members continue to discuss and focus on 1) using technology to the best advantage, 2) data analysis best practices software, and 3) how to refine and share leads. In addition to the work of the committee and the automated exchange of data, staff at all levels in the three agencies continue informal sharing of information on individual cases, special projects, or other items of interest.

H. Assurances

The State will comply with the following assurances:

a. Assurance of Equal Opportunity (EO).

b. Assurance of Administrative Requirements and Allowable Cost Standards.

c. Assurance of Management Systems, Reporting, and Recordkeeping.

d. Assurance of Program Quality.

e. Assurance on Use of Unobligated Funds.

f. Assurance of Prohibition of Lobbying Costs (29 CFR Part 93).

g. Drug-Free Workplace (29 CFR Part 98).

h. Assurance of Contingency Planning.

Provide the most recent dates for the following:

• Information Technology (IT) Contingency Plan Implemented: _ July 2013_

• IT Contingency Plan Reviewed/Updated: _ July/August 2016_

• IT Contingency Plan Tested: _ July/August 2016_

i. Assurance of Conformity and Compliance.

j. Assurance of Automated Information Systems Security.

Provide the most recent dates for the following:

• Risk Assessment Conducted: __December 2015__

• System Security Plan Reviewed/Updated: __August 2016 __

k. Assurance of Confidentiality.

4. CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS (CAPS)

Corrective Action Plans (CAPs): CAPs are expected as a part of the SQSP when State's annual performance does not meet the established criteria for core measures, Secretary's Standards, UI program, assurances, and other program deficiencies identified in the annual SQSP guidance provided by the Department. The CAP must list both specific milestones for key corrective actions or improvement activities, and the completion date for each milestone.

First Pay Promptness

A. Reason for the deficiency:

As mentioned in our non-monetary timeliness CAP, UI Claims Centers have struggled with staff resources for the past three years, due to reductions in force and deployment of staff to projects such as our new UI benefit system replacement. These vacancies have created opportunities for intake staff to promote to adjudication, further reducing the staffing available for initial claims taking. This has, at the end of the period, resulted in a drop in performance below the ALP for first payment promptness.

Washington continues to use Lean methodologies to improve processes and make gains on quality and timeliness of payment. However, the department took on a major technology project to upgrade our UI benefits computer system, which will come online in fall 2016. To assist with the success of this project, many of the "best and brightest" program staff were deployed to the project as business

analysts and subject matter experts. We expect this painful investment to pay substantial dividends when the new system is deployed.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance:

The performance levels of late reflect the substantial investment of time and talent that we have made in getting the new system correctly programmed to meet our needs. As that system comes online, we expect much of the pressure to be relieved and to begin work on what issues remain.

As we prepare for the system's deployment, all benefits staff will invest several days in training and process reengineering during the quarter prior to deployment. As such, we do not anticipate our numbers will immediately improve in the first two quarters of this CAP. Claims Centers have recently hired several new intake agents, who are currently beginning training for entry-level claims center work. While this training takes several weeks before the agents are available to assist with regular work, it does represent an investment toward future resource stability as we move into the new UI benefits system.

Technical training for all staff using the new UI Benefits system has so far consisted of 2.5 days of familiarization with the new program. During October and November 2016, all staff will receive up to ten more days of training on up to seventeen different modules, specifically oriented to each staff's job description. This is to ensure staff can work efficiently in the new computer system on Day One, minimizing downtime and errors in the first weeks.

Come Spring 2017, we expect the new system will be fully deployed, staff currently on loan to the project will have returned to the Claims Centers, and the winter peak workload will have abated. At that time, we believe our numbers will improve, and we will be able to determine our next steps if any gap remains between performance and expectations at that time.

C. Previous years' plan:

Not applicable

D. Plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals:

UI benefits managers continue to monitor claim center metrics on a weekly basis, and adjust resources as available.

Milestones:

1. Complete all staff technical training in new UI Benefits system before Go-Live date in November 2016 - 100% staff in intake and adjudication units. (12/31/2016)

2. Complete intake and adjudication process (classroom and OJT) training for newly-hired staff cohorts (timeline TBD). (6/30/2018)

3. Implement ("Go-Live") new UI Benefits system in November 2016. Resolve any remaining technical issues with project vendor and IT staff. (6/30/2017)

4. Reintegrate 20 business analyst staff assigned to UI Benefits system (UTAB) project into claims center staffing, returning to fully-staffed levels of operation. (3/31/2017)

5. After system implementation, complete business process analysis to assess performance of new system and develop plan to address any performance issues that emerge. Plan will include timelines for improvements and corrections. (9/30/2017)

Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness

A. Reason for the deficiency:

Washington has struggled with nonmonetary determination timeliness for the past three years. The two main reasons for this have been reduced staffing levels due to technology investments, and challenges with current outdated computer systems.

Washington continues to use Lean methodologies to improve processes and make gains on quality and timeliness of payment. However, the department took on a major technology project to upgrade our UI benefits computer system, which will come online in Fall 2016. To assist with the success of this project, many of the "best and brightest" program staff were deployed to the project as business analysts and subject matter experts. We expect this painful investment to pay substantial dividends when the new system is deployed.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance:

As we have said in prior CAPs, we recognize that little progress will be made on the root causes of nonmonetary timeliness issues until we replace our current COBOL-based benefits system. The performance levels reflected during 2015 and 2016 reflect the substantial investment of time and talent that we have made in getting the new system correctly programmed to meet our needs. As that system comes online, we expect much of the pressure to be relieved and to begin work on what issues remain.

As we prepare for the system's deployment, remaining adjudication staff are concentrating on clearing the backlog of decisions to ensure that the data converted to the new system is as fresh as possible. Additionally, all benefits staff will invest several days in training and process reengineering during the quarter prior to deployment. As such, we do not anticipate our numbers will immediately improve in the first two quarters of this CAP.

Come Spring 2017, we expect the new system will be fully deployed, staff currently on loan to the project will have returned to the Claims Centers, and the winter peak workload will have abated. At that time, we believe our numbers will improve, and we will be able to determine our next steps if any gap remains between performance and expectations at that time.

C. Previous years' plan:

The prior plan recognized that little progress would be made on the root causes of nonmonetary timeliness issues until we replaced our current COBOL-based benefits system. The performance levels reflected during 2015 and 2016 reflect the substantial investment of time and talent that we have made in getting the new system correctly programmed to meet our needs. As that system

comes online, we expect much of the pressure to be relieved and to begin work on what issues remain.

D. Plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals:

UI benefits managers continue to monitor claim center metrics on a weekly basis, and adjust resources as available.

Milestones:

1. Meet timeliness standards for nonmonetary decisions by minimizing backlog of non-monetary issues to less than 5% of total open issues. (9/30/2018)

2. Complete all staff technical training in new UI Benefits system before Go-Live date in November 2016 - 100% staff in intake and adjudication units. (12/31/2016)

3. Complete intake and adjudication process (classroom and OJT) training for newly-hired staff cohorts (timeline TBD). *(Cohort 1 Feb 2017 - 5 staff; Cohort 2 Oct 2017 - 9 staff)* (12/31/2017)

4. Implement ("Go-Live") new UI Benefits system in November 2016. Resolve any remaining technical issues with project vendor and IT staff. Reintegrate 20 business analyst staff assigned to UI Benefits system (UTAB) project into claims center staffing, returning to fully-staffed levels of operation. (6/30/2017)

5. Reintegrate 20 business analyst staff assigned to UI Benefits system (UTAB) project into claims center staffing, returning to fully-staffed levels of operation. (3/31/2017)

6. After system implementation, complete business process analysis to assess performance of new system and develop plan to address any performance issues that emerge. Plan will include timelines for improvements and corrections. (9/30/2017)

Tax Quality

A. Reason for the deficiency:

The Next Generation Tax System (NGTS) defects continue to be greatly affecting the generating of correct billing statements, processing employer tax reports and payments, and correctly applying payments received. These errors continue to contribute to samples failing in Report Processing, Contributory and Reimbursing Debits/Billings, Credits/Refunds, Employer Tax Rates and Collections during the 2015 TPS reviews. New and Inactive Status Determinations deficiencies were result of NGTS defects and staff errors. Eight of thirteen different functions had more than the allowable number of failed samples. The main reason the Collection sample failing was because employers were not being contacted timely or at all on the majority of samples reviewed resulting in no collection actions being conducted.

B. Provide a description of your “Plan-Do-Check-Act” corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance:

NGTS System defects have been continually monitored by the project's business teams and steering committees, with bugs being logged, assigned, prioritized and corrected as quickly and effectively as possible.

In April 2016, the Collections function was merged with the Benefit Payment Control Unit to create a single Employment Security Collections unit. Additionally, staff developed tools to make visible all accounts on which collection actions are to be taken, and performance standards are in place requiring three collection actions per account per calendar quarter. As a result, employers are now being contacted for collection attempts while tax staff continue to respond to the large number of employer inquiries.

C. Previous years' plan:

This has been previously identified as a multi-year CAP. We have made some progress, as demonstrated by passing more samples this year than the year before.

D. Plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals:

UI Tax managers continue to monitor performance statistics regularly and adjust resources as needed. Leadership monitors all activity through regular updates on the tax floor.

Milestones:

1. Log, track, and resolve system defects until NGTS has reached stabilization as defined by the steering committee. Develop reporting and tracking tools to specifically respond to inquiries from RO for more frequent updates on ticket status in relation to Tax Quality, Data Validation, and reporting. (12/31/2017)

2. Work with Tax staff to identify root causes (both technical and process-based) for system inaccuracies, and determine and implement solutions to ensure correct account balances and samples. (9/30/2018)

3. Increase staff capacity to complete required activities by utilizing Lean techniques to improve efficiency and effectiveness. This will include increasing the number of Tax units having daily huddles to six, and completing and documenting 70 process improvements. (6/30/2017)

4. Implement business process analysis with new system tools to ensure our ability to adjust resources and work methods to best achieve and exceed standards for all tax functions. This includes monthly monitoring progress toward success and training staff on required TPS rules. (9/30/2018)

<u>Benefits Data Validation</u>

A. Reason for the deficiency:

As noted in prior years, Washington has limped along with an obsolete, COBOL-based UI benefits system which is highly troublesome to reprogram due to its structure. Multiple efforts to program federal and state law changes, especially during recessionary periods, exposed the limits of this

system and caused cascading errors in some populations. With our current efforts to bring up a new UI benefits system as its replacement, IT staff have not been able to prioritize fixes to the old system that would address data validation errors.

Our issues with case sampling in the BAM unit may also have impacted the accuracy of certain reports, driving a high percentage of detected overpayments as described in our Narrative. We are addressing this potential issue with a deep dive into our reporting structure and data validation efforts, and will monitor the percentage as BAM's case sampling returns to full standard.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance:

Our experience with implementation of our new UI Tax system (see DV Tax tab) brings into sharp relief the need for correct programming backed by thorough testing as we stand up our new UI Benefits system. During 2015 Washington contracted with a vendor for a commercial off-the-shelf benefits system to replace the current system (GUIDE). All efforts are now directed to standing up the new UI benefits system, which is due to come online in Fall 2016. DV staff are working with agency IT staff and the vendor to ensure that the underlying programming for data validation is correct in the new system, but we do not expect corrective programming to occur in the existing system.

Further, a significant aspect of our difficulties with data validation comes with the specialized knowledge required to thoroughly identify and evaluate the errors we see. We continue to review our resources that we have available for data validation, and pursue knowledge transfer and training (informal and possibly formal) to bring more resources to bear on the issues we find. This will become especially important as we complete the transition to modernized UI systems.

Our issues with case sampling in the BAM unit may also have impacted the accuracy of certain reports, driving a high percentage of detected overpayments as described in our Narrative. We are addressing this potential issue with a deep dive into our reporting structure and data validation efforts, and will monitor the percentage as BAM's case sampling returns to full standard.

C. Previous years' plan:

As noted above, previous corrective action plans have identified that the Benefits population issues will not likely be resolved until we can successfully replace the GUIDE system. The new UI Benefits system is expected to go live in Fall 2016.

D. Plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals:

Senior managers of the UI, ESPIO and ITBI divisions meet regularly to discuss status of major UI infrastructure projects. Reporting and data validation is a standard agenda items for these meetings. Additionally, senior agency leadership meet quarterly to review and prioritize all IT projects to balance the needs of the agency. These meetings discuss both large IT replacement projects as well as smaller, emergent IT needs to balance projects and priorities.

Milestones:

1. Implement ("Go-Live") new UI Benefits system in November 2016. Verify programming is correct to pass data validation for all benefits populations. Resolve any remaining technical issues with project vendor and IT staff. (6/30/2017)

2. Determine appropriate resources and increase staff capacity to troubleshoot data validation issues by training and knowledge transfer. Create structure for training plan and succession planning to ensure smooth transfer of duties when vacancies arise. (9/30/2017)

3. Complete business process analysis (beginning with Lean kaizen event, date TBD) to fully catalog all ETA reports to be produced by the department. This will include multiple divisions and seek to identify and clarify responsibility to the unit and desk level for data production, data verification, system of record by field, and other goals established by the BPA team. (12/31/2017)

Tax Data Validation

A. Reason for the deficiency:

Washington's new UI Tax system, NGTS, went live in March 2014. During system stabilization, several errors in programming and data conversion were discovered that greatly affected the system's ability to generate correct billing statements, process employer tax reports and payments, and correctly apply payments received. These errors cascaded into several sample failures during data validation for the year.

Additionally, the overwhelming response from employers to UI Tax staff to request information, ask for corrections and recalculations, and argue penalty assessments overwhelmed staff's ability to conduct normal business and drove the prioritization for IT staff to fix NGTS errors. As such, tickets relating to reports and data validation are prioritized behind tickets relating to critical system failures and direct service to employers.

Specific errors found in 2016 data validation include:

- Population 3 included Liability Dates that were further into the future than the Activation Processing Date.

- Population 4, Account Receivable, included timely paid tax amounts and benefit charges.

- Population 4, Audits, had the wrong criteria for identifying a large employer.

- Module 4 failed because of the Liability Date was further into the future than the Activation Processing Date for New and Successor Status Determinations and programming differences in the Terminations/inactivation Status Determinations.

- In Module 5, the exact filing methods were not being saved in NGTS.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance:

NGTS System defects have been continually monitored by the project's business teams and steering committees, with bugs being logged, assigned, prioritized and corrected as quickly and

effectively as possible. The vendor responsible for programming the system has been retained through the end of CY 2015 to continue providing corrective programming fixes, as well as completing work that had originally been included but later dropped due to time constraints. At the same time, agency IT staff are continuing to learn from the vendor so that they can provide programming support after the vendor's contract is exhausted. Some fixes have been set aside until after the start of the new year to allow the programming team to concentrate on finding and fixing the root causes of incorrect processes. The emergent nature of the system errors and the lack of current knowledge regarding root causes for these errors means we cannot predict when we will completely resolve these issues. As such, our "milestones" have ongoing timelines for now, with the expectation that over the next several months timelines and prioritizations can be established as the full universe of system defects is identified. By identifying and resolving these basic defects, we expect the entire system to stabilize and all measures related to tax data (including TPS samples and data validation) to quickly improve.

Specific tickets to address 2016 errors include:

- A service request was submitted to resolve the Liability Date requirements in Population 3.

- A service request was submitted on 12/18/15 to resolve timely payments from being included in Population 4.

- A service request was submitted on 04/11/16 to correct the large employer criteria in Population 4.

- Module 4 Status New, Successor and Terminate was determined as "Not Submitted" but was reconsidered to be "Submitted" but failed.

- Service requests have been submitted to resolve the Liability Date for New and Successor Status Determinations and to resolve the difference in the TPS Universe count against the ETA 581 report.

- A service request was submitted to have exact filing methods saved to perform Module 5 wage item DV.

Lastly, a significant aspect of our difficulties with data validation comes with the specialized knowledge required to thoroughly identify and evaluate the errors we see. We intend to review our resources that we have available for data validation, and pursue knowledge transfer and training (informal and possibly formal) to bring more resources to bear on the issues we find. This will become especially important as we complete the transition to modernized UI systems.

C. Previous years' plan:

We continue to work to fix the errors in our NGTS system, prioritizing errors that impact our customers ahead of internal issues.

D. Plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals:

Senior managers of the UI, ESPIO and ITBI divisions meet regularly to discuss status of major UI infrastructure projects. Reporting and data validation is a standard agenda items for these meetings. Additionally, senior agency leadership meet quarterly to review and prioritize all IT projects to

balance the needs of the agency. These meetings discuss both large IT replacement projects as well as smaller, emergent IT needs to balance projects and priorities.

Milestones:

1. Work with Tax and IT staff to identify action plan listing specific Tax populations and modules being targeted for correction and identify expected completion date for these corrections. Report plan to RO staff by December 31, 2016. (12/31/2016)

2. Log, track, and resolve system defects until NGTS has reached stabilization as defined by the steering committee. Develop reporting and tracking tools to specifically respond to inquiries from RO for more frequent updates on ticket status in relation to Tax Quality, Data Validation, and reporting. (12/31/2017)

3. Identify root causes for system inaccuracies, and determine and implement solutions to ensure correct account balances and samples. (9/30/2018)

4. Determine appropriate resources and increase staff capacity to troubleshoot data validation issues by training and knowledge transfer. Create structure for training plan and succession planning to ensure smooth transfer of duties when vacancies arise. (9/30/2017)

5. Complete business process analysis (beginning with Lean kaizen event, date TBD) to fully catalog all ETA reports to be produced by the department. This will include multiple divisions and seek to identify and clarify responsibility to the unit and desk level for data production, data verification, system of record by field, and other goals established by the BPA team. (12/31/2017)

Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM)

A. Reason for the deficiency:

The Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM) unit has endured several staff upheavals during the past four program years. Due to reductions in force, unexpected medical leave, reasonable accommodations, and the length of time necessary to train an investigator to do the audit, the team has struggled to maintain timeliness standards while pulling the mandated number of cases to review. Training multiple new staff over the years and transitioning cases in process for various reasons has heavily impacted the unit's ability to maintain production standards. Prior State Quality Service Plans noted that staffing fluctuations in this unit would eventually impact its ability to maintain timeliness standards, though there was insufficient data to quantify the expected effect.

However, it should be noted that substantial progress was made in the past year. Case sampling improved from 79% to 85% of paid cases, and from 76% to 91% of denied cases, and the unit met seven of the eight timeliness standards, missing only on 90-day paid cases by less than two percent. With initial training of our new investigators complete and other staffing issues stabilized, the unit is projected to meet quarterly and annual case sampling requirements by Q1 2017.

Our issues with case sampling may also have impacted the accuracy of certain reports, driving a high percentage of detected overpayments as described in our Narrative. We are addressing this potential issue with a deep dive into our reporting structure and data validation efforts, and will monitor the percentage as BAM's case sampling returns to full standard.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance:

The BAM unit will continue to build upon the substantial progress made during the last year. We rebuilt the supervisor role to create a technical lead, which has helped immensely with training new staff and consistency in the quality of investigations. We have stabilized our experienced staff, and brought on experienced adjudicators to learn BAM audit methodology. We also cross-trained several staff within the Employment System Policy division to both provide learning opportunities to those staff, and create a cadre of investigators who could assist if further staff disruptions arise. The team has also developed several Lean methods to track open cases, assist colleagues with investigative tasks, and make visible our progress toward our goals. This team ethic sets us up well to reengineer our processes as we move into the new UI benefits computer system.

During Q4 2016, we will continue to move toward full case sampling each week, though we anticipate our progress may be slowed when the new UI benefits system goes live during this quarter. We are projected to have all weeks at full sampling or better by the end of Q4 2016, and are projected to pull sufficient additional cases to exceed the federal standards of 480 paid and 450 denied cases for the 2016-17 program year.

Sampling Variance: Washington will implement a new UI Benefit computer system in Fall 2016. We expect the programming issues that exist in GUIDE will be corrected in the new system, either at go-live or immediately following. This will be monitored at case sampling on a weekly basis. We will also monitor any impact on ETA reports as BAM's case sampling returns to full standard.

C. Previous years' plan:

The manager's first priority during this year has been to assess needs and develop training, sampling, and case assignment plans that honor the unit's need to close existing cases and clear the backlog in order to reattain timeliness goals. We identified and addressed several training issues, as well as deficiencies in the position's job description that have been corrected with our human resources division. We also added staff resources to the unit. As timeliness continues to stabilize, case sampling is increasing to the standard level until we have reached our performance goals in that area as well. As the unit returns to full and fully-trained staffing levels, we will monitor timeliness and sampling against standard to evaluate further steps that may be needed. We also thoroughly reviewed and restructured the unit to maximize efficiency and create new opportunities for staff to learn and grow. These steps provide a solid foundation on which to continue to build our success and move to stable operational compliance.

D. Plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals:

The unit manager is monitoring all metrics (timeliness, quality, sampling numbers and population variance) on a daily basis, and intervening to redirect resources as appropriate. While we will likely have a dip in performance immediately following the implementation of our new UI benefits computer system, we expect to have better visibility into the root causes of these issues and act accordingly.

Milestones:

1. Monitor and improve case timeliness by using daily management methods with BAM team to adjust resources with goal to close cases within 60 days. The team will work to achieve goals of (a)

average of 135 open cases at any given time and (b) no more than ten cases open past 60 days at any given time. (9/30/2017)

2. Meet quarterly and annual case sampling requirements by using weekly monitoring and case assignment methods that more flexibly adjust team resources to meet workload demands. Increase case assignment until on track to maintain full case sampling requirements, then maintain that level by managing workloads. (6/30/2017)

3. Implement ("Go-Live") new UI Benefits system in November 2016. Ensure new system meets technical requirements (sampling variance, NDNH procedures). Resolve any remaining technical issues with project vendor and IT staff. (6/30/2017)

4. Complete and implement business process analysis with new system tools to ensure our ability to adjust resources and work methods to best utilize new tools to exceed standards. (12/31/2017)

5. Continue to stabilize team staffing by proactively cross-training division staff in BAM methods, improving staffing to exceed minimums as expected in ETA 395 6th ed., and improving our outreach to operations staff to increase awareness and enthusiasm for any potentially necessary recruitments. (multi-year)

a. Given that Washington has struggled with training and retaining qualified BAM staff for the past several years, we recognize that building awareness of our team's work is an ongoing effort. As such, we look not only to immediate needs for staffing improvements, but also to building a strong path to the BAM team from our operational units. This will include measures such as developing "BAM 101" training for staff in the department, making our reports more visible and actionable, and other awareness activities. Additionally, we are working with HR and operational units to develop innovative ways to train staff in BAM methodology, including developmental assignments, shadowing, and other potential avenues to build skills. With these efforts, we hope to have a strong pool from which to draw enthused, engaged, and competitive recruits for openings that will arise in the future.

Nonmonetary Determination Issue Detection and Determination Date Accuracy

A. Reason for the deficiency:

Washington's current benefit payment system (GUIDE) required three areas of reprogramming to properly identify the correct Issue Detection Date (IDD):

1) Properly set the IDD when an initial or continued claim is submitted outside of regular business hours,

2) Give staff the ability to update the IDD when information identifying a separation issue is received from an employer,

3) Correct a system incident to properly re-set the IDD when a claim becomes monetarily valid.

These technology issues were the major factor in our IDD error rate for BTQ results. Due to competing technology priorities including federal and state legislative mandates, additional required

system fixes remain incomplete. We have said in past years that we would be unable to completely resolve this issue until we replace our GUIDE system.

We are nearing the replacement of GUIDE with an updated UI Benefits payment system (UTAB), which is scheduled to go live in Q4 2016. As such, our efforts changed over the past year from prioritizing the fix in GUIDE to ensuring that IDD is correctly identified in the new system. In addition to the technology improvements, we are using Lean practices to complete a thorough review of processes and procedures in all areas of benefit payment. With this dual effort, we expect to see significant improvement in several deficient areas, to include IDD.

B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance:

This issue will not be remedied until we complete the replacement of our UI benefits system. We are nearing completion of the project to replace our UI Benefits system with a Commercial-Off-the-Shelf (COTS) product. The projected implementation date for the project is Q4 2016. This system is currently being tested to ensure that it correctly identifies the issue detection date, and to re-program any pieces that require it.

C. Previous years' plan:

As stated in past SQSP and CAPs, this issue was set aside until replacement of our UI benefits system. That new system is scheduled to go live in Q4 2016.

D. Plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals:

We will continue to monitor IDD identification via BTQ to ensure it is properly programmed in the new system.

Milestones:

1. Implement ("Go-Live") new UI Benefits system in November 2016. Verify programming correctly identifies Issue Detection Date for separations and nonseparations. (3/31/2017)

2. Monitor IDD identification via BTQ to ensure it is properly programmed in the new system. (6/30/2017)

3. After system implementation, complete business process review of procedures to determine and correct any non-technical causes for IDD errors, and develop plan to address any performance issues that emerge. Plan will include timelines for improvements and corrections. (9/30/2017)

5. UI PROGRAM INTEGRITY ACTION PLAN (UI IAP)

The UI IAP outlines the strategies the State will undertake during the planning period regarding the prevention reduction and recovery of UI improper payments.

<u>UI Integrity Action Plan (IAP)</u>

State: Washington

Federal Fiscal Year 2017

Top Three Root Causes (IPIA 2015)

		IPIA Year 2014 (% of $ Overpaid)	IPIA Year 2015 (% of $ Overpaid)
Root Cause 1:	Work Search	60.20%	68.79%
Root Cause 2:	Separation Issues	14.43%	19.02%
Root Cause 3:	Benefit Year Earnings	14.06%	7.29%

Summary: (Provide a summary of the plan that the state has designed. The summary should include outreach efforts planned by the agency to inform all UI and workforce staff, and employers of the strategic plan to ensure everyone understands the importance of maintaining program integrity.)

Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM) estimated overpayments for the most current reporting period continue to show the same top three causes of estimated overpayments: work search issues, separation issues, and benefit year earnings. For the 2014 IPIA reporting period, improper payments due to benefit year earnings decreased significantly, while improper payments due to work search and separation issues remained rose slightly.As noted in both this year's and the previous year's State Quality Service Plan narrative, Washington is at a historically low staffing level due to budget constraints. Washington remains committed to addressing integrity issues within its available resources. Previous SBR funding enabled Washington to move forward with a variety of integrity related programs, but that funding is expiring. Limitations on IT resources continue to constrain our options. Much of our efforts have been directed in the past year toward the replacement of our UI benefits system, scheduled to come online in Fall 2016. We are eagerly anticipating that the new system will provide better tools to detect and prevent improper payments throughout our system.

Instructions for the following section: In each individual section below, enter a Root Cause, from above, and the top three focused Strategies that will be employed to correct or reduce this cause of overpayments. An additional line is available in each section to include other significant strategies that target the root cause.

Root Cause 1: Work Search

Strategies	Actions	Targets & Milestones	Resources
Improve and increase claimant education re work search requirements	Update claimant materials Identify and use connection opportunities to reinforce requirements	Reduce incidence of work-search related overpayments	Handbook for Unemployed Workers Online materials RESEA and WorkSource interactions
Evaluate ways to review work search activities	RESEA Interactions Job-search log reviews	Reduce duration of work-search related overpayments	RESEA staff UI Special Programs staff
Review legal constraints and propose enhancements	Review administrative rules National UI Work Search workgroup	Improve tools to encourage and enforce compliance in appropriate ways	Employment System Policy staff

Root Cause 2: Separation Issues

Strategies	Actions	Targets & Milestones	Resources
Improve surveillance activities to reduce improper claims	IP address capture Claim data comparison	Reduce instance and duration of improper claims	Office of Special Investigations staff
Increase frequency of cross-match to identify BYE claims	wage cross-matches NDNH cross-matches Benefit/Wage investigations	Reduce incidence and duration of fraud related overpayments	Office of Special Investigations staff
Identify and review claims for wage audit	wage cross-matches NDNH cross-matches Benefit/Wage investigations	Reduce incidence and duration of non-fraud related overpayments	Office of Special Investigations staff

Root Cause 3: Benefit Year Earnings

Strategies	Actions	Targets and Milestones	Resources
Improve adjudication processes	Lean process improvements New UI Benefit System deployment - related process changes	Meet non-monetary adjudication quality ALP	Lean processes UI Claims Center staff
Expand use of SIDES Web Services	Improve SIDES processes Conduct Employer outreach	Increase number of employers exchanging data via SIDES	UI staff IT staff Communications staff National UI SIDES staff
Expand use of SIDES E-Response	Improve SIDES processes Conduct Employer outreach	Increase number of employers exchanging data via SIDES	UI staff IT staff Communications staff National UI SIDES staff

6. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

The organization chart must conform to the requirement for delivery of service through public employment offices, or such other designated providers as the Secretary may authorize; show the State's configuration from the Governor of the State down to the point of Employment Service and UI customer service delivery; and provide sufficient detail to show each organizational unit involved and the title of the unit manager.

Organization Chart

The Organization Chart for the Washington Employment Security Department is maintained with the state agency and the USDOL regional office.

7. SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE

The State administrator must sign and date the SQSP Signature Page. By signing the Signature Page, the State administrator certifies that the State will comply with all the assurances and activities contained in the SQSP guidelines.

U.S. Department of Labor

SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE

OMB Approval No. 1205-0132 Expires 12/31/2017

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Employment and Training Administration	FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2017	STATE WA

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCESTATE QUALITY SERVICE PLANSIGNATURE PAGE

This Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) is entered into between the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and _____WASHINGTON_____ (STATE'S NAME)

The Unemployment Insurance SQSP is part of the State's overall operating plan and, during this Federal fiscal year, the State agency will adhere to and carry out the standards set forth in Federal UI Law as interpreted by the DOL, and adhere to the Federal requirements related to the use of granted funds. All work performed under this agreement will be in accordance with the assurances and descriptions of activities as identified in the SQSP Handbook and will be subject to its terms
.

TYPED NAME AND TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
STATE ADMINISTRATOR Lisa Marsh Deputy Commissioner Washington Employment Security Department	/s/	9/22/2016
DOL APPROVING OFFICIAL Virginia Hamilton Regional Administrator, Region 6 Employment and Training Administration United States Department of Labor	/s/	9/28/2016
DOL APPROVING OFFICIAL (signature block for At-Risk states)		

Note: The signed copy of the SQSP Transmittal Letter for the Washington Employment Security Department is maintained with the state agency and the USDOL regional office.

(B) REQUIREMENTS FOR STATES ELECTING TO INCLUDE UI IN THE COMBINED STATE PLAN

States that elect to include UI in the Combined State Plan must:

1. SUBMIT AN SQSP IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER DEPENDING ON THEIR TIMING IN THE SQSP CYCLE:

(A) IF A STATE IS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF THEIR 2-YEAR CYCLE, A COMPLETE SQSP PACKAGE MUST BE SUBMITTED. A COMPLETE SQSP PACKAGE WILL INCLUDE THE TRANSMITTAL LETTER, BUDGET WORKSHEETS/FORMS, STATE PLAN NARRATIVE, CAPS (INCLUDING THE MILESTONES AND THE COMPLETION DATE FOR EACH MILESTONE), THE UI IAP, ORGANIZATIONAL CHART, AND THE SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE. ONE OF THE KEY GOALS FOR THE UI PROGRAM IS TO ENSURE THAT CLAIMANTS ARE ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY RETURN TO WORK. AS SUCH, THE SQSP STATE PLAN NARRATIVE MUST PROVIDE A DISCUSSION OF THE PLAN COORDINATION WITH OTHER WIOA COMBINED PLAN PROGRAMS TO ENSURE A COORDINATED EFFORT AND INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY.

(B) IF A STATE IS IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE 2-YEAR CYCLE, THE STATE IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THE MOST RECENTLY APPROVED COMPLETE SQSP PACKAGE WITH A MODIFICATION THAT MUST INCLUDE THE TRANSMITTAL LETTER, BUDGET WORKSHEETS/FORMS, ORGANIZATIONAL CHART, AND THE SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE. THE MODIFICATION MAY ALSO INCLUDE CAPS FOR NEW IDENTIFIED PERFORMANCE DEFICIENCIES, AND ANY REQUIRED MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING CAPS. THE CAP MUST LIST BOTH SPECIFIC MILESTONES FOR KEY CORRECTIVE ACTIONS OR IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES, AND THE COMPLETION DATE FOR EACH MILESTONE.

2. SUBMIT THE REQUIRED OFF-YEAR SQSP COMPONENTS AS A MODIFICATION TO THE COMBINED STATE PLAN ON THE SAME CYCLE AS THE REGULAR SQSP PROCESS WHICH MUST BE APPROVED BY SEPTEMBER 30TH EACH YEAR.

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.)

This area is discussed in the overall Combined State plan, but focusing on the SCSEP target population.

Current substantial employment opportunities for SCSEP participants include child care workers, senior center program assistants, retail sales associates, housekeeping, food service, and customer service.

Every year, the Washington State Employment Security Department's (ESD), Labor Market and Performance Analysis branch (LMPA) publishes an Employment Projections report which produces forecasts for two, five and 10 years in the future. The report uses both time series and indicator data sets to produce the forecasts.

According to the report, the top three occupational groups for job openings are projected to be office and administrative support, food preparation, healthcare service, and customer services and related occupations. Combined, these three major occupational groups represent one–third of projected total job openings in spite of diminishing shares of overall employment.

While office and administrative support, food preparation, healthcare service related and sales related occupations will continue to employ large groups of people, the fastest growing occupational groups are projected to be computer and mathematical occupations, building and grounds cleaning and maintenance, personal care occupations, and the two health–related occupational groups. (See Figure 3 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

Included in the Appendix to Employment Projections 2011, are the projections for both the state as a whole and the projections specific to each of the state's 12 workforce development areas. Occupations which require short–term on–the–job training are most common (52 occurrences) on the comprehensive list, followed by occupations requiring a bachelor's degree or higher (29 appearances), moderate on–the–job training (28 appearances), and associ¬ate degree, post–secondary training, or long–term on the job training (19 appearances).

We will continue to monitor the recent trends of SCSEP participants and potential SCSEP participants having higher academic credentials and/or professional work–experience. In the past year there have been a number of SCSEP participants who have been gaining valuable hands–on IT experience as a part of their job trainings. It will be critical to explore and expand upon options for individuals to gain hands on job training in the IT/Computer and support education and vocational training.

One of the Combined plan area focuses upon expanding upon IT and Accessibility issues (WIFI, and universal IT access either onsite or remotely) one of the challenges will be not to unintentionally

develops barriers to those that don't have the IT resources or the training in order to utilize the WorkSource programs.

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))

The aforementioned occupations fit well with SCSEP participant's goals for unsubsidized employment. Training and service opportunities should be focused on these sectors, based on the participant's individualized employment plan (IEP). While a number of occupations are low–skill jobs, even low–skilled jobs require a modest ability to interact with technology.

The State grantees are providing an array of job training opportunities wherein computer training on a variety of levels is occurring. All grantees have recognized the critical import participants acquiring not just these skills, but also of becoming more comfortable with exploring the need to address not just for employment but also for personal and life necessities. Additionally several grantees have now provided support for individuals gaining administrative assistant credentials and home health/Certified Nurses Aid certifications. The State manager is also working closely with the DSHS Employment Security Administration in that organizations "Employment Pipeline" program towards creating trainings in the home care industry, or certifications to become Independent Providers "IPs" for the DSHS Aging and Long Term Services Administration programs.

Goodwill Industries, Inc. is preparing for high growth areas by assigning participants to hospitals and related agencies for medical secretary types of training and to some nursing facilities to gain experience in care–giving skills. They also place a significant number of participants in janitorial community services assignments that have resulted in unsubsidized employed. They will continue to place participants in these stable and growing sectors to provide the training necessary to gain employable and marketable skills.

AARP works with local providers including community college Institutes for Extended Learning (IEL) and health care training centers to equip SCSEP participants with desirable skills. They have also established national relationships with large employers such as Allied Barton Security, Walgreens and TJX companies.

NAPCA is currently providing many training opportunities for office assistants and in health care related fields. NAPCA also sees customer service representatives and child care workers as areas of high growth, with substantial opportunities in security guard occupations as well.

Among the high–growth sectors, the state grantee has been targeting healthcare, janitorial, building maintenance, Information Technology, services to seniors and other disabilities populations. The sectors targeted that are not necessarily high–growth, but still have substantial opportunities include, but are not limited to, service provision, government, professional and business services, retail, and transportation. In partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation we are also seeking to develop agreements that would enable accessing the Supported Employment in State Government for those SCSEP participants that meet the criteria for the program.

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 following charts depict the types of positions that are the current trends for employment opportunities for the general public and for SCSEP participants. (See Figures 4 and 5 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

Historically SCSEP participants have trended to desire positions more within the part–time entry level areas of the employment industries. But in recent years the SCSEP providers have been witnessing and increase in the number of individuals with higher levels of work experience and educational backgrounds. The SCSEP providers will need to expand the options and opportunities to better meet the needs of those individuals who may desire work in IT and computer work; private sector occupations; as well as maintaining the ability to provide supports to those who desire to work in the social services arenas on a part–time basis.

This will also be the challenge of the WIOA partners and business development segments of the WorkSource system. It will be critical for the business development aspects to be marketing not only for the Youth in Transition, the younger workforce towards the Sector strategies professional sectors, but for those within the disadvantaged, disabilities and SCSEP communities for positions that may not necessarily be Career Pathways for all involved in the Work Force system.

(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))

As SCSEP is included in the Washington State WIOA Combined State Plan (2016–2020) SCSEP and the Core Programs are creating operational strategies for increasing the levels of cooperation and partnership. The partnerships and collaborative efforts will better connect the SCSEP Program, the WIOA Title I–B Employment and Training Programs and Wagner–Peyser labor exchange services. As a part of the combined plan these collaborative efforts will be occurring at both the State and local levels. The state Workforce Board and the Employment Security Department will co–host a workgroup with representatives from the following:

• DSHS Aging & Long Term Support Administration (ALTSA)

• National SCSEP contractors operating within the state, currently:

• AARP Foundation (a current national SCSEP contractor)

• Tacoma Goodwill (national SCSEP contractor)

• Washington Workforce Association

• Workforce Development Councils

• Employment Security Department (Employment and Career Development Division)

• Employment Security Department (Workforce Standards and Integration Division)

• Workforce Board

• Other interested workforce development system stakeholders

Grantees will continue to refer SCSEP participants to WIOA programs and accept all WIOA assessments. Co–enrollment continues to be encouraged to maximize and leverage the training, workshop, resume preparation and employer referrals available through the WIOA programs. Grantees within the state will be encouraged to participate regularly in WIB partnership meetings.

Both Goodwill Industries, Inc. and NAPCA participants are required to register and utilize the services of the WorkSource Centers as best they can. When language inhibits this process for NAPCA participants, the SCSEP program director coordinates translated workshops to provide resume writing or other training to our participants from the WorkSource Center. English capable participants are assigned by NAPCA to the WorkSource Centers whenever possible to help create a bridge to other AAPI older workers who need help accessing one–stop services.

The transition from WIA to WIOA will have significant impacts to how the different employment programs operationalize and provide services. SCSEP program staff and representatives are becoming familiar with the changes and how this may impact the SCSEP program(s). The State SCSEP Manager has been involved with the Washington State Auditor's Office as they review all of the state and federally funded programs operating in the state of Washington that are involved with WIA/WIOA. Additionally the State SCSEP Manager has been invited to participate in two of the four State Key areas of Work and Potential WIOA Implementation Committees. The two committees being: The Performance Accountability and ETPL Committee and the Education and Career Pathways through Integrated Service Delivery Models. In addition there are significant changes to the Rehabilitation Services Act that are impacting how DVR provides services; There are also many changes through the Center for Medicaid Services (CMS), the Administration for Community Living that have positive ramifications for enhancing employment services. An additional partner in this process is the Office for Disabilities and Employment Policy at the Federal and local levels.

We are in the process of developing an increased presence in the WorkSource system by engaging with Aging Forums in a number of counties around the State; providing presentations on issues facing the Aging Workforce, to individuals receiving services through the WorkSource systems in an effort to both market SCSEP and also in regards to providing additional opportunities for collaboration between the organizations and systems.

(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))

As mentioned previously, six state Sub–grantees are Area Agencies on Aging. Under the Older American's Act OAA, AAAs have a long history of collaborating with different entities to facilitate comprehensive service support systems for older adults. Their public planning processes include analyses of local trends and needs. In Washington State, this facilitation extends to adults with disabilities, family caregivers of persons of all ages, including children with developmental disabilities and in–home care agencies for persons with developmental disabilities. Washington's AAAs are both providers of direct services and funders of community service providers. They maintain close relationships with their partnering subcontracted providers to ensure that services are provided in conformance with their area plans, state and federal requirements, and consumers' individual choices. The non–AAA SCSEP Sub–grantees coordinate closely with the AAAs for understanding community service needs and facilitating cross–referrals.

The AARP Foundation and Goodwill Industries also coordinates with the local Area Agencies on Aging to understand available services and assist participants to link up with services for which they may be eligible. These relationships also assist individuals determined ineligible for SCSEP, but in need of help to navigate the aging & disability network. The AARP Foundation has been a long–time national partner with the Administration on Aging for improved services for older adults, including family caregivers and older workers.

The Area Agencies on Aging are continually working via government to government relationships with tribes located in their planning and service areas (PSAs), including those that receive funding under Title VI of the OAA. This is a work in progress with ongoing improvement and refinement.

With the advent of the Affordable Care Act during the past year many more it will be important to be aware of and engage in discussions as to options for potential service opportunities (healthcare, and employment) that may now be available to participants.

The Social Security and entitlements (Federal, State and Veterans) can be very complex and difficult to understand and navigate. Many individuals decide not to work or work fewer hours based upon the misperceptions that they will lose their benefits (medical and financial) if they go to work. As such we are in the process of developing partnership efforts with the Washington State Benefits Planner Networks, The Maximus Ticket to Work WIPA program, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and others in an effort to provide individuals with access to these resources. This is in addition to the Affordable Care Act and the Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities (HWD) or Medicaid Buy In program.

(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))

The SCSEP providers that are Area Agency providers have established relationships with organizations providing services to older adults and persons with disabilities. These include, but are not limited to, aging information & referral/assistance (I&R/A), transportation, family caregiver support, kinship caregiver support, nutrition, legal services, and in–home care. All but a few of the AAAs provide aging I&R/A directly. As the I&R/As transform over the next few years into Aging and Disability Centers (ADRCs) their knowledge and collaborative efforts will expand via relationship–building with disability–related service systems, including independent living centers, Labor and Industries, and Ticket–to–Work programs. The SCSEP programs will be natural partners with the ADRCs as one ADRC goal is to connect consumers with workforce options.

Local 2–1–1 development and implementation has also provided impetus for relationship–building and coordination. In the arena of private employers, AAAs have established relationships with healthcare organizations and business–related services. Because of these established and emerging relationships, AAAs are well–positioned to coordinate within their communities to build strategic alliances on behalf of older workers. The combination of AAA and workforce–related entities among the state's Sub–grantees results in a dynamic opportunity for creative and successful private/public partnerships.

SCSEP providers use other public and private agencies as part of their community outreach. Recruiters visit public places older people frequent such as senior centers, faith–based centers, senior apartments, job fairs, and food stamp and Social Security offices. Project directors will leverage relationships with Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans Affairs, disease groups and March of Dimes to help with physical barriers to employment.

NAPCA seeks partnership and information resources in local ethnic communities which can help AAPI older current and future jobseekers with special needs or disabilities. The partnership with local ethnic organizations is very important due to many participants' limited language capacity.

We will continue to follow the process required by the statutes (both Federal and the State of Washington) in fulfilling the obligation(s) of soliciting and collecting public comments. We will fulfill these obligations in the development of the 2 Year Plan Modification process; as well as continue to provide for comments and recommendations during the final two years of the Four Year State Plan.

Starting in October of 2013 ALTSA has engaged with employment service staff and partners from the DSHS family of agencies to explore collaboration and partnership opportunities to expand employment service opportunities for Washington State. The DSHS agencies represented from the Developmental Disabilities Administration; Behavioral Health Services Integration Administration, Juvenile Justice Rehabilitation Administration; Employment Security, Healthcare Authority.

The aforementioned DSHS partners have also initiated discussion with the Washington State Centers for Independent Living Council; Washington State Rehabilitation Council; and Traumatic Brain Injury Council and Veterans Administration to explore options for enhancing opportunities for the SCSEP program and other employment and education providers and interested stakeholders.

We will continue to develop Overviews of the SCSEP program on a minimum of an annual basis and provide to the aforementioned and required organizations; as well as making this available to other community stakeholders and potential partners. (Such as the Washington Business Leadership Network; the Community Employment Alliance; Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation; WISe (Washington Institute for Supported Employment).

These are elements critical to developing additional partners and other sources of income towards sustaining and enhancing the opportunities for the program.

(D) ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))

The state Sub–grantees and the national grantees' local projects coordinate at the local level with vocational rehabilitation agencies ensuring potentially eligible SCSEP participants are referred appropriately and that referrals are also received. Community Colleges have provided great opportunity for participants to expand their educational experiences, including having access to literacy improvement programs and tools, high school completion preparation, English Language Acquisition (ELA) classes, computer classes, and employability skills. As noted before, one of the state Sub–grantees is a community college.

At Tacoma Goodwill Industries, three of their subprojects have other job programs located within the facilities. These include veterans' programs, WIA Programs and other jobs programs supported by Goodwill dollars. This enables each program to share trainings and information.

At AARP, there is a formal hiring partnership with several top corporations from a wide variety of industries, including retail, transportation, information technology, health, finance, security and staffing. There is a close working relationship with eight partners, including: AlliedBarton Security Services, T.J. Maxx and Marshall's. Currently, AARP is developing relationships with non–medical care providers such as Seniors Helping Seniors.

The AARP Foundation coordinates efforts with the public workforce system as part of the nationwide Workforce Initiative, specifically with the Workforce Investment Boards and local One–Stop Career Centers. AARP Foundation SCSEP project sites also maintain an extensive network of social service agencies, including Area Agencies on Aging and state employment services.

The SCSEP Manager whose duties also entail being the Employment Program Manager for the ALTSA has been engaged with and involved in such projects as The Governor's Committee on Employment for Individuals with Disabilities Governor's Committee on Disabilities and Employment; the Office of Disabilities Employment Policy ODEP Vision Quest State Strategic Planning workgroup consisting of DSHS agencies (Developmental Disabilities Administration; Behavioral Health Services Integration Administration; ALTSA, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation) tasked with creating means of developing partnerships between the systems of care towards enhancing employment options and opportunities.

Washington State legislation has passed House bill 1519 WA State House Bill 1519 and Senate Bill 5732 WA State Senate Bill 5732 in which the DSHS systems of care services are directed to utilize Best Practices and inclusion of outcome measures for employment and meaningful activities to provider contracts in 2016. How this will be implemented is in the process of being developed in the Behavioral Health and Aging and Long Term Care systems.

In reviewing the data over the course of the past four years it is apparent that a substantial number of individuals are enrolled or receiving some form of public assistance. It is unknown how many of these individuals may be able to enroll in DSHS services (such as with Behavioral Health, ALTSA, and DVR) due to the Affordable Care Act and accessing Medicaid services. DSHS is in the process of developing Medicaid Waivers and/or the Healthcare Authority making Supported Employment a Medicaid reimbursable service. A new task force has been created for continuing the process of transforming the Medicaid service options. In those discussions employment is a component of the overall change conversation.

Currently individuals self–disclose whether they have a disability. Statistically the numbers in SCSEP are only 16% who have disclosed being in this category. It is highly likely that the actual number of individuals with a disability is much higher. If so the number of individuals who could be co–enrolled with other DSHS Medicaid covered services could be a valuable addition to the support and training options for SCSEP participants.

At this point in time it is uncertain how many individuals may be enrolled /co–enrolled with DVR services. One of DVR's goals on its newly developed State Plan is to increase access to services for those individuals with disabilities (on SSDI) who have a work history but became unemployed and exhausted their unemployment benefits. Based upon the Washington State ESD data approximately 5,000 individuals are identified in this category in the state of Washington. We will strive to work with DVR leadership and local staff to support these individuals engaging with DVR. Additionally this could be an additional source of revenue for the SCSEP programs if they were to become Community Rehabilitation Programs able to contract to provide these services.

Ticket to Work Employment Network. Washington State DSHS agencies (DBHR, DDA, ALTSA/HCS and DVR) are now partners as an administrative Employment Network. The SCSEP State Leadership has expressed interest in being involved with this collaboration. Goodwill Industries is currently an Employment Network and several of the State Sub–grantees are either currently or in discussions with becoming an Employment Network via their involvement with the local WDCs.

(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 is a mandatory partner under the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) and as such, it is a part of the One Stop Delivery System. SCSEP grantees are required to follow all applicable rules under WIA (20 CFR 652) and must provide all WIOA core services. Core services include determination of eligibility; outreach, intake, and orientation; initial assessment of skills, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs; job search and placement; career counseling, where appropriate; assistance in establishing eligibility for other social service programs and unemployment; and data or record keeping related to employment statistics and performance measures (20 CFR 662.240).

An assessment or Individual Employment Plan (IEP) completed by the SCSEP satisfies the condition for an assessment, service strategy or IEP completed at the One Stop and vice–versa.

Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs): The memorandum of understanding is an agreement developed and executed between the Local Board and the One Stop partners relating to the operation of the one stop delivery system in the local area.

The MOU must cover the services to be provided through the One Stop delivery system; the funding of the services and operating costs of the system; the methods for referring individuals between One Stop operators and partners; and the duration and procedures for amending the MOU. It must also contain a statement that Title V resources may only be used to provide Title V services to Title V eligible individuals. The MOU should also discuss the reciprocal arrangements and the contents of the SCSEP IEP and WIOA IEP.

Although SCSEP participants are not automatically eligible for intensive and training services under Title I of WIOA, local boards may deem SCSEP participants, either individually or as a group, as satisfying the requirements for receiving adult intensive services under Title I of WIOA.

One of the current challenges facing the development of this agreement is that in the majority of the Counties and the local WDC areas there can be three to four different SCSEP providers. In many of the local WDCs there may only be one SCSEP provider as a signatory to the local plan. A key component of this challenge is the current contracting process. DOL contracts directly with the national grantees. This process may work effectively in other areas of the country. However, in Washington State it has become a barrier in different situations for SCSEP providers to be included in the local WDC planning and service delivery system.

(F) EFFORTS THE STATE WILL MAKE TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.

Grantees or local projects will collaborate with local workforce development and economic development councils in both urban and rural areas in order to provide education on the exceptional qualities that older adults bring to the work–place, to learn about potential employment growth opportunities, to discuss where older workers could add value to growth areas, and to increase job opportunities.

In moving towards each of the SCSEP providers (both State and National Grantees) are included and signatories in the local WDCs, this will support both the philosophical approach of WIOA and the practical applications of the collaborative efforts.

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.)

The SCSEP Grantees are all engaging with and seeking to be more integrated with the State plan aspects of business engagement. This is discussed in the overall State Plan.

Additionally the SCSEP Grantees will continue to develop and expand upon the respective efforts of their individual organizations to create opportunities for the participants in the program. As not all individuals involved in the program may be seeking the career ladder, and/or types of professional positions spoken to with WIOA, it will continue to be critical for the respective Grantees to be able to respond to the needs and desires of the individuals enrolled in the program.

3. DESCRIBE THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITIES UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (C))

In compiling the data of enrollment and minority enrollment from the SPARQ data base for the State of Washington for the past three program years (PY12, PY13, and PY14) depicts some changes in enrollment during the course of the past three years. (See Figure 6 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

That being said some of these changes are due to the loss of “Authorized” slots due to the Washington State Minimum Wage issues. Additional considerations may be due to Washington State having two Limited Competition National Grantees (NAPCA and NICOA) which specialize and focus on providing services to the Asian Pacific and American Indian groups and that the majority of the Washington State Grantee also shares SCSEP services with two National Grantees (AARP and Goodwill Industries) in many of the counties within the State.

That being said in reviewing the SPARQ for PY12, PY13 and PY14 through Third Quarter the numbers of individuals served and overall percentage served have remained fairly constant with the exception of the Asian and the White/Caucasian groups. Asian numbers have dropped from 12 participants served in PY12 to a total of 4 Participants to date in PY14 and from 7% to 3%. For the White/Caucasian group there has been a drop from 127 individuals served in PY12 to 85 individuals served in PY14 and a drop from 76% percent served to 67% percent served in the state of Washington. Additionally it needs to be noted that those of two or more minority groups the number served and percentage has increased during that timeframe. From 1 individual served in PY12 to 5 individuals served in PY14 or from 1% in PY12 to 5% in PY14. Based upon that information from SPARQ the Washington State Grantees have maintained or increased their services to individuals from the various minority groups.

As the SPARQ data system doesn’t provide the breakdowns on outcomes for the PY14 time period we will be reviewing the outcomes for the past PY three time frames through the information

compiled from the Minority Reports for SCSEP Participants provided by the Department of Labor for the PY11, PY12 and PY 13 time frames.

Based upon the data from the aforementioned DOL Minority reports for PY11, PY12 and PY13 the following graph depicts that the Washington State SCSEP grantee is providing services to individuals from the minority groups (overall) at higher percentage than what the census numbers are. (See Figure 7 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

Upon reviewing the data for each of the minority groups the SCSEP program in Washington State is at or near the percentage of that minority group census percentage, and in some cases a higher rate of participation than reflected in the overall census of the population in the state of Washington.

Hispanic/Latino: In the Hispanic/Latino segment of the minority report for PY11 and PY12 the percentage of this population enrolled in SCSEP was at a higher rate than that of the Washington State segment of the population in the state of Washington. In PY13 the percentage enrolled in SCSEP dropped to be a little lower than the overall census of the Hispanic/Latino population in the state of Washington. (See Figure 8 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

Black/African American: For the Black and African American segment of the population the Washington State SCSEP program provided services at a higher percentage than the overall census Washington State population segment of the population. (See Figure 9 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

Asian: For the Asian Population the percentage enrolled in SCSEP has historically been 1% lower than the Asian Population of the overall Washington State census population. With the National Asian Pacific Council on Aging (NAPCA) also operating in the State it is questionable if these numbers are an accurate depiction as NAPCA also operates in King County area which most likely has had an impact upon the Washington State Grantee enrollment and resulting data outcomes. (See Figure 10 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

American Indian and Native Alaskan: During the past three years the Washington State SCSEP Grantee has witnessed a drop in the number of American Indians enrolled in the program. Some of the mitigating factors are the transition from Authorized slots to Modified slots due to Washington States higher minimum wage and also that the National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA) has begun operating and providing SCSEP services in a number of counties that the Washington State Sub–grantees also provide services. (See Figure 11 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

Pacific Islander: For the Pacific Islander segment of the Washington State population the percentage enrolled in SCSEP is at a higher rate than the overall Census percentage in Washington State. (See Figure 12 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

Outcomes: Upon reviewing the data from the PY11, PY12, and PY13 SCSEP Minority Reports from the Department of Labor critical questions and potential issues become apparent. In reviewing the data for Common Measures Entered Employment; Common Measures Average Earnings; Common Measures Average Earnings Ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino) and Common Measures Employment Retention (Figures 9 –12) it can be witnessed that the numbers of those gaining employment (minority and non–minority) is approximately the same percentage of 76% non–minority and 24% minority in PY12 (80% non–minority gaining employment and 20% minority gaining employment) and enrollment of 73% non–minority and 27% minority in PY13 (approximately the same

percentages gaining employment for minority and non–minority). (See Figure 13 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

The area that we will monitor is exhibited in Figure 10 and 11 wherein there is a significant discrepancy in fluctuations of earnings depicted in the minority reports from the PY11, PY12 and PY13 timeframes.

In general the earnings for Minority and the Non–Minority SCSEP populations gaining employment was approximately the same. That being said there was a significant difference in PY12 wherein the Non–minority individuals were paid average earnings of $9,807 and minorities were paid average earnings of $3,510. (Figure 10)

Additionally we witnessed a similar disparity with Hispanic and non–Hispanic segment of the SCSEP data during that PY12 time–frame. (Figure 11)

In reviewing the data from the three year period (Figure 10 and 11) this appears to an anomaly. There are many factors that could be considered for this disparity (such as number of hours, pay range, location of employment (Urban Seattle area vs. rural Washington). This will be an area to continue reviewing and monitoring for any further anomalies.

Another area that we will continue to monitor based upon the recent Minority reports is that of Employment Retention. (See Figures 14 and 15 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

Wherein in PY11 Minority reports the data depicted that retention % for minorities has dropped from 89% in PY11 to 33% in PY13 reports. For Non–Minorities the retention % has fluctuated from 50% in PY11 to 95% in PY12 to 60% in PY13. (See Figure 16 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

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)

Community service needs are identified by the State of Washington SCSEP grantee and its partnering agencies through several means. The grantee and its local projects identify these needs through participating in community needs assessments, information and referral networking and local planning processes. They also review workforce data and assessments to better determine which community services might provide training and skill development that is transferable to high–growth or substantial employment opportunities.

Needs assessments are conducted by several entities, including but not limited to health districts, United Way agencies, mental health providers, healthcare providers, workforce development councils, and area agencies on aging. From their different perspectives, these needs assessments can help pinpoint specific unmet needs and offer an opportunity to discuss solutions for meeting those needs. An example of this can be found online at United Way of King County WA Snapshot. It reviews several key indicators of basic need: requests for basic need assistance (including utility and rent, food, and financial), employment security and the unemployment rate, and home foreclosures. Their assessment website links to best practices where specific organizations successfully addressing the issues can be found.

Also available to the grantee and its local projects is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The BRFSS data is health related; however, many community services address the behaviors or circumstances that affect health, for example caregiving, oral health, immunizations, exercises, etc.

Information and Referral (I&R) programs and agencies maintain databases or lists of services that are not readily available or accessible in communities. I&Rs are more than willing to share this information with stakeholders for potential improved service coordination, accessibility and delivery. This would include which organizations providing services within needed areas might be good candidates for host agency opportunities. Some of the I&R entities that can provide this information are: Aging Information & Referral/Assistance (I&R/A) programs (or Aging & Disability Resource Centers); 2–1–1 Call Centers; Crisis Clinics; Child Resource & Referral; and libraries.

Planning processes occur on both local and state levels. Local workforce development councils participate in the Washington State Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board's (WTB's) Strategic Plan. The WTB process involves workgroups from partnering state agencies.

Washington's thirteen AAAs participate in the development of the Washington State Plan on Aging. The state's AAAs provides multiple services to both older adults and persons with disabilities. They are well recognized for four–year area planning processes that include stakeholders from multiple use levels and from a wide variety of backgrounds – each with the same purpose: to improve the coordination and the delivery of services in their planning and service areas. Each area plan sets priorities for a four year period and is updated after two years. Most AAAs provides online access to their most recent area plans. Their web sites can be located through the DSHS/ ALTSA's website where there is an interactive map to locate services. The area plans feed into the State Plan on Aging, approved by the Administration on Aging (AoA). The most recent Washington State Plan on Aging Washington Council on Aging State identifies six specific goals and strategies.

The most common need in the rural areas of the state is transportation. In the majority of the rural counties, employment opportunities are much fewer and many older individuals do not have adequate or reliable transportation to allow them access to employment and training in the larger population centers. Dental, medical services and low cost housing are also needed in all areas.

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))

One of the key strategies embarked upon has been the decision was for SCSEP to become a part of the Washington State WIOA Combined Plan. This process has enabled a great deal of cross system education and opportunities between the Core and mandatory partner systems.

Currently DOL contracts with the Five Grantees separately. Though DSHS/ALTSA is recognized by the Governor as the responsible party for the State management of SCSEP, it is a process of management in name only. During the discussions with the State and local Workforce systems in the development of the State WIOA combined plan one of the key discussion elements was that this "splintered" system created confusion and potential barriers to more effective partnership efforts.

• Recommendation: For DOL to review the current contracting process within the State of Washington. Coordination with WIOA is stressed in the SCSEP Final Rule, but there is not the same level of emphasis for coordination within SCSEP within the State.

• Recommendation: in addition to the State Program Manager pursuing involvement with the WIOA Combined Planning process with the Core and Mandatory partners on the part of the State and National Grantees DOL should balance the emphasis for coordination within SCSEP

The rationale being that this would:

• Enable a more cohesive and united SCSEP across all of the systems involved with WIOA and the Social Services systems.

• Increase partnership efforts across the SCSEP Continuum of programs; provide clarity for the State and local WDCs

• Provide a platform to develop joint single point partnerships with the WDCs. Currently there may be 3 or 4 separate SCSEP providers operating within a local WDC area of responsibility. Creating a single point of contact will ease the process of creating MOUs both for the “separate” SCSEP grantees and for the local WDCs this will increase the involvement of all of the SCSEP provider’s involvement within all of the WDC areas.

• Provide a platform that will review the possibilities of increasing level of integration within the spectrum of the WorkSource systems; potentially engagement with a single intake process; fully engaged with the business development process; shared training options for professional development.

• Provide a platform to develop agreements with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; data sharing agreements with ESD, the DSHS systems of health care services, entitlement systems, and cross system training agreements.

• Provide options to collaborate on Grant opportunities for expanding additional funding mechanisms for the program.

• Recommendation: DOL work with state and national grantees to revise service areas in order that the grantees can provide services with increased efficiency and cohesiveness.

Position Locations:

• Position locations within the state have been organized over time with limited acknowledgement of the state’s regional geography and natural patterns of commerce and transportation.

• Recommendation: DOL refocus its national and regional training efforts to be affordable and efficient, thereby allowing retention of a limited amount of resources and time to support local training efforts.

• Reinitiate SCSEP Grantees to be able to carry –over unspent program dollars and utilize for training expenses.

• Make training and joint training (State and National Grantees) a requirement of the SCSEP contracting process

• Continue Quarterly conference calls with SCSEP program Leads (State Manager; National Grantee and Set Aside Grantee leadership to review SCSEP data, discuss trends; Explore opportunities for enhancing collaboration and partnership efforts.)

• Develop additional training opportunities (cross systems) for SCSEP program staff (Option possibly to access trainings through DVR courses)

• The SCSEP State Manager continues to work closely with the DSHS/DDA, DBHR and DVR staff towards creating training opportunities with regards to employment best practices.

• These training opportunities potentially involve the Best Practices in Employment utilized in the DDA and Behavioral Health Care systems. This would entail opportunities for SCSEP staff to be included in trainings from the Institute for Community Inclusion (University of Massachusetts) Institute for Community Inclusion UMass Boston and Dartmouth College's Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation Dartmouth College for the IPS Best Practice in Supported Employment.

• AARP is also utilizing a best practice model of employment for its SCSEP programs on a state and National basis. The opportunity to share these resources in a substantive manner provide for an enormous staff development and networking across systems opportunity.

• The SCSEP program Manager is also working with the ALTSA Community Living Connection Program staff in the development of an Options Counseling module on Employment (Person Centered Career Planning). Trainings such as this will be made available to SCSEP staff.

• Continue to engage with the Workforce Development partners (State and Local) Washington State Council on Aging; Washington State Indian Advisory Board; Centers for Independent Living Council; Traumatic Brain Injury Council, Washington State Rehabilitation Council and others to be determined.

Training of SCSEP Staff:

In the past several years, the SCSEP program has concentrated on grantees achieving performance outcome requirements, addressing changes in regulations, and understanding and coordinating with other workforce initiatives through national and regional training. In the meantime, more local training previously supported by DOL for improving front–line case management and older adult employment support skills has decreased dramatically. Due to recurrent staffing changes, increasing costs for, administration, transportation, and the need to support continuous quality improvement, localized training venues are needed where front–line staff can share experiences and receive customized and consistent training and technical assistance. It will be incumbent upon not only the SCSEP programs, but also the WIOA Core Partner Programs to engage in shared training to enhance cross system professional development opportunities. This is especially needed in regards to engaging with the Social Service systems (Aging and Long Term Support Administration, Behavioral Health and Service Integration Administration, Developmental Disability Administration, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Economic Services Administration) for engaging in relevant trainings (Behavioral Health, TBI, Trauma Informed Care, Soft Skills training, Motivational interviewing…). The WIOA plan discusses person centered planning, Wrap Around Services, holistic case management, however, it comes from a perspective of focus on the Employment and Education

aspects. It will be critical for the intentions of WIOA to provide Career Pathway success for individuals that these services be included in the support of the individual's goals and aspirations.

Individually, each grantee makes long–term adjustments to their programs in each of the areas served based upon the regulations and expectations established by the Department of Labor (DOL) and in relation to each grantee's available budget. Each aspect of the program is an opportunity for forward change and is looked at by staff, participant staff, coordinators, and managers in how it can be improved to better serve participants and the community as a whole. This includes localized forms, participant, recruitment and enrollment strategies, host agency recruitment and oversight, employer relations and so on.

The state grantee is challenged by having the lowest number of positions and the largest geographical distribution. Over the next four years, it will be reviewing options for improving efficiency and performance by working with Sub–grantees on potential program design changes that ensure priority populations continue to be served in appropriate proportions to the general population. Due to the economies of scale, it is difficult to recruit new entities interested in providing the service.

Tacoma Goodwill Industries evaluates their program on a continual basis to determine what is working and what needs to be improved. Currently, they feel that putting a focus on employment is important. They work with the top 20% of their participants to encourage involvement in job clubs. They are also adding skill training to the program in the soft skill area that will help with retention. Tacoma GII will be working on skills such as problem solving, learning to compromise, communication, etc. They are in the process of training participant staff in all aspects of the program so they will be able to step in and be employed with the SCSEP program if the need arises.

AARP Foundation's strategy for improvement includes: 1) strengthening the focus on national employer partnerships; and 2) improving and better matching educational and training resources in high growth sectors. Building and nurturing these national relationships increase employment and training opportunities for older workers. They are currently accomplishing this with AARP's National Employer Team which includes hiring partnerships with 41 national and large regional corporations from a variety of industries, including businesses such as Walgreens, Home Depot, Staples, Allied Barton Security and Adecco. They work closely with host agencies to make employment opportunities available to participants once they are trained. AARP also uses their marketing expertise to reach those with significant barriers to employment, including a campaign based on research from AARP's Public Policy Institute. The majority of AARP SCSEP staff and all of the grant funds are dedicated completely to SCSEP. AARPF recently reorganized and put more emphasis on helping older workers find employment and manage their resources, no matter how small.

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))

The steps to transition enrollees into unsubsidized employment include the tools built into the program, beginning with the assessment and IEP, community service assignment, training and follow–up.

Strategies for Overall Grantee Success:

In order to develop strategies for overall grantee success in serving participants and the community, local projects will work with their grantees within local economic regions to systematically help participants become well matched with their community's high–growth industry recruitment criteria. The following possible strategies will be available to assist them in this process:

Strategies for Identifying Current and Projected Regional Employment Opportunities:

• Grantees will access Washington State Employment Security Department data and relevant regional/local analyses from Washington Workforce Explorer at Washington State Workforce Explorer. This data can assist grantees and local projects in targeting employers as potential partners and support participants in understanding how to use the data in considering occupation opportunities.

• Grantees will also meet with local workforce and economic development councils and WorkSource Centers to learn their perspective on regional employment opportunities, how best to serve local employers, and potential partnership and program leveraging opportunities with industries and occupations that are critical to the success of the regional economy.

Strategies to Developing and Maintaining Partnerships with Employers:

Grantees or their representatives will meet and strategize with local workforce development and economic development councils, in coordination with local WorkSource Centers to participate in building a unified regional approach to developing and maintaining successful employer partnerships and ensure performance–based successful placements that meet community needs. In addition, grantees will also ensure support for the SCSEP follow–up and satisfaction survey process. Consistent and ongoing communication and follow–up with partners will provide sub–grantees with feedback and understanding on how to better serve both participants and community partners. Participation in a regional approach will provide increased opportunities for recognition and participation in future activities thereby establishing more long–term relationships.

Strategies for Placing Individuals in Industries and Occupations Critical to Regional Economic Success:

• Grantees or local projects will collaborate with local workforce development and economic development councils in both urban and rural areas in order to provide education on the exceptional qualities that older adults bring to the workplace, to learn about potential employment growth opportunities, to discuss where older workers could add value to growth areas, and to increase job opportunities.

• Grantees will facilitate enrollee skill and professional development that matches the needs of industries and occupations critical to regional economic success.

• Enrollees will be encouraged to pursue certifications and sub–grantees will facilitate on–the–job employment (OJE) opportunities that place them within view of and consideration by these industries and occupations.

Strategies to Identify Employment Opportunities with Established Career Ladders:

• Grantees or local projects will review regional employment data to identify employment opportunities with established career ladders and that have annual vacancies suggesting that they can benefit from an ongoing relationship with the SCSEP program.

• Grantees or local projects will pursue partnerships with these entities in conjunction with other partnership development activities and learn what their needs are and how the SCSEP program can serve them.

• Enrollees will be encouraged to consider these industries in their IEPs, training, and job search activities via supportive counseling and facilitated access to supportive services.

Retention Strategies:

• Participants will give written permission to SCSEP projects to contact and obtain employment wage, benefit and employment progress information.

• At a minimum, grantees or sub–grantees will perform follow–up activities as required under the program, including participant and employer satisfaction surveys.

• In addition to required follow–up activities, grantees or sub–grantees will continue case management activities in coordination with ongoing employer communication and supportive services to ensure retention and/or additional placement assistance.

• Grantees or sub–grantees may utilize their retention activities with employers to secure relationships and build an experiential portfolio of successful placements for use in recruitment of new employer partnerships.

• Grantees will assist staff and sub–grantees to access technical assistance and training opportunities in support of these activities.

Additional Strategies for Transitioning Enrollees into Unsubsidized Employment:

• The host agency develops the funding for an enrollee's position and the participant becomes a permanent employee.

• The host agency hires the participant into a vacant position. Host agencies are required to consider SCSEP enrollees for any positions which become available and for which enrollees are qualified or can be trained.

• The host agency is the employer of record and progressively develops funding to establish an unsubsidized position for the enrollee within durational limits. For example: in the enrollee's first year, the host agency uses SCSEP funds for 100 percent of the wage; in the second year, the host agency develops funding to provide match for 5 percent of the wage, increasing match each year until the participant is transitioned to a newly established, permanent, unsubsidized position of employment within the host agency.

• The four SCSEP grantees in Washington State will work with the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to develop a statewide WIA/SCSEP memorandum of understanding.

• Grantees will require sub–grantees that are not already part of the local workforce development council or contracting with a work entity are required to submit finalized memoranda of understanding.

• Grantees will facilitate referrals to the Washington State Health Care Quality Authority home–care worker registry.

• The grantees will work with subprojects to target current participants enrolled for over three years to provide intensive reassessment, IEP revisions, and training to help them transition to unsubsidized employment prior to reaching their individual durational limit on participation.

• Grant funds will be reallocated to underserved areas of the state, including through short–term participant enrollments and potential equitable distribution changes within the grant. Strategies for Increasing the Statewide Level of Unsubsidized Employment Placement Performance:

• Local projects will organize group training for all of their enrollees and host agency supervisors that will include topics pertinent to job search skills, such as resume writing, interviewing skills, or confidence building, and a review of program goals and participant and host agency responsibilities.

• Enrollees will have ongoing access to training that supports improved professional comportment, occupation–specific skill development, and overall job performance.

• Participants will be encouraged to attend occupation–specific training sessions outside their community service assignments.

• Training may be provided by the host agencies, subproject agencies, employment, and training program staff at WIA programs, one–stop centers, community colleges, adult education programs, computer training centers, and corporations that support specialized, occupation–specific training.

• Emphasis will be on training for high–employment or fast–growing occupations.

• Training may be provided on location or in a distance–learning environment in order that participants, even in the most rural settings, will have access to relevant training.

• Any Older Americans Act training programs developed and implemented by Area Agencies on Aging may be available to interested SCSEP enrollees.

Training provided to SCSEP participants will be selected as a result of individual assessments, an analysis of regional economic and occupational trends/needs, and IEPs. Assessments and IEPs will be reviewed and updated throughout participant enrollment periods in accordance with federal SCSEP requirements. Supportive services may be provided to participants in order to facilitate access to training opportunities, especially for those living in rural settings. This might include, but is not limited to, transportation, computer access, internet access, and/or certification/registration costs.

State Grantee Methods for Ensuring Attainment of Unsubsidized Placement Employment Goal:

The State of Washington expects to observe ongoing, continual improvements for all subprojects toward meeting and exceeding performance standards. This will be accomplished through the

following venues: DOL–sponsored training opportunities; on–site visits for technical assistance and program monitoring; linkages to technical support; and ongoing communication regarding regulations, policies, procedures, and the philosophy of the SCSEP.

In regard to specifically attaining the unsubsidized placement employment goal, the state grantee reviews management reports in SPARQ to determine how sub–grantees are performing required follow–up contacts with exited SCSEP participants and provides ongoing encouragement, technical assistance, and reminders to conduct and appropriately record follow–up activities.

Data validation and monitoring activities will provide additional opportunities for reviewing and improving specific sub–grantee performance. Corrective action plans will be required of sub–grantees that are not meeting performance objectives, whether from lack of case management activities or inadequate documentation and data maintenance.

Strategy: SCSEP grantees in WA State will nurture a collaborative climate to attain continual quality improvement by improving communication and sharing of best practices. Engaging with the WIOA CORE and Mandatory Partners will expand the resources available to SCSEP participants.

This will be achieved through the following means over the next four years:

• Convene quarterly conference calls to discuss goals and strategies.

• Negotiate a statewide cross–program cooperative agreement to better link SCSEP, WIOA, and Wagner–Peyser employment and training and job placement services. The state Workforce Board and the Employment Security Department will co–host a workgroup to establish this cooperative agreement.

• Develop an ongoing method for sharing SCSEP services and contact information with the aging and disability services network to stimulate conversations, cross–referrals and cross–training.

• Develop a statewide training plan for local project staff, including participant staff.

• Discuss development of more stringent criteria for selection of sub recipients.

• Participate in annual equitable distribution negotiations.

• Consider strategies for improving service to rural communities in coordination with equitable distribution negotiations.

(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))

SCSEP services are provided throughout the State of Washington based upon the Federal Census reports, Department of Labor reports, and based upon the Department of Labor's determination every year for the number of participant slots available throughout the state based upon the Equitable Distributions reports to be discussed in further detail within this section of the State Plan.

Due to the funding issues discussed previously the rural areas are significantly impacted in regards resources available both SCSEP and the WorkSource system in general. During the past two years two of the largest counties in the state (King and Pierce Counties have had cities enacting increases in the minimum wage. This has and will continue to have an impact on the actual number of slots available in those areas as well.

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.

See Figure 17 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp.

3. DESCRIBE ANY CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.

Overall the Grantees are providing services in accordance with the equitable distribution requirements of DOL and the respective contracts. The performance is depicted in the following chart(s) (See Figures 18, 19, and 20 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp) which depict the utilization of slots by Grantee; by County, and service levels. This data was and continues to be compiled by the State Manager via the SCSEP Equitable distribution reports found on SCSEP Equitable Distribution Reports DOL.

Due to the dramatic funding cuts experienced by SCSEP this has had a significant impact on the ability to provide services effectively in the rural parts of the state. Greater levels of partnership are a necessity for not just with the SCSEP providers, but also throughout the WIOA systems. The SCSEP Grantees will continue to move towards increasing the level of collaboration both amongst the Grantees as well as continuing to explore and create new partnerships in order to better serve the rural areas.

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.

The state will work with Grantees (State, National, and Limited Competition) to support the development and/or expansion of collaborative efforts with community stakeholders to meet the SCSEP program and service needs in all areas of the State. This coordination will be a key component of the forthcoming National Competition. The focus during that process will be to insure that adequate coverage and services for all areas of the State.

During the early part of 2016 the DOL will be initiating the National Competition for which national Grantees will be operating in the state. During this process the issues of short and long term strategy for achieving equitable distributions across the state will be formulated. The opportunity for further collaboration and true partnership efforts between the State and National Grantees will be critical for the long term success of the SCSEP program in the State.

Though the approach philosophically is for the State and National grantees to coordinate such position moves, currently the individual Grantees and National Grantees can do so independently via discussion with their Federal Policy officer.

B. EQUITABLY SERVES BOTH RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

According to 2010 census data, the total population in the state was estimated to be 6,724,540. It is also estimated that 5,651,869 (84%) of WA State's population live in under four percent of the total geographic area with the remaining 16% residing in rural areas. The average population density in urban areas in the state is 2380 persons per square mile while the population density in rural areas is under 17 for the same area.

According to PY10 Year End Quarterly Progress Reports (QPR), thirteen percent of the participants served during the program year lived in rural locations. This is up from under six percent in PY07. Efforts were made collectively from grantees to expand service to these areas and improvements have been made. The overall number is just short of the population that lives in rural areas and the grantees will work together to improve outcomes.

While each grantee's system design is distinct, most program coordinators are located in urban areas within the service area.

This has been done in order to achieve efficient service delivery amidst the need to address economies of scale. In many parts of the state, inadequate resources reduce the potential for program requirements to be met successfully, resulting in the need for creative solutions and strategies.

The challenges for the grantees in rural settings include, but are not limited to:

• Building relationships with high growth/high–wage industries or those that provide substantial and reliable employment opportunities.

• Recruiting new host agencies that truly embrace the roles of mentor, coach, and educator and that will provide up–to–date and appropriate training and skill development needed by local employers.

These are not different from challenges in urban settings, but the solutions may look very different and be hallmarked by collaborative creativity.Some specific strategies grantees will use to improve service to rural areas include the following:

Grantee project directors/coordinators will work closely with already established resources to maximize potential training and community service opportunities.

Grantees will work with local projects to analyze and use employment data to improve participant's skill development in areas sought by potential employers.

Transportation options are limited in many rural settings, especially with the current cost of fuel. This affects all components of SCSEP service delivery, including: outreach and recruitment of participants, host agencies and potential employers, community service opportunities, entrance into unsubsidized employment, and program oversight.

AARP is looking at offering virtual services in rural areas to allow potential participant access. Drawbacks to virtual services are a potential lack of participant computer literacy and high speed internet access.

Transportation for participants can be provided as a supportive service, but may be costly due to the local public transportation infrastructure, rural/urban designation, and geography. The grantee, or its sub–grantee, may arrange for transportation for enrollees provided the transportation is directly related to employment or related training, is to and from a work or training site, there are adequate funds, and all other resources for transportation have been exhausted. Costs for transportation vary widely by mode, distance, and availability.

In many rural areas, public transportation benefit areas do not exist or are in the formative stages. In the course of their daily business, grantees and Sub–grantees operating in rural areas will collaborate with other community services, including providing input on the needs of participants, toward improving transportation options for persons who are transportation disadvantaged. Their efforts will be focused on results that enhance community–wide opportunities for self–efficacy, access to community services employment–related transportation, and overall mobility improvement for all residents.

The SCSEP programs have all recognized the difficulties in providing program services and opportunities in the rural areas. AARP took the lead in developing a workgroup to explore better mechanisms to engage these areas and the individuals within those areas. That being said there are extremely limited resources available as is evident in reviewing the tables for Equitable Distribution.

At this time fourteen (14) of the thirty–nine (39) counties in Washington State continue to be designated as Counties with Persistent Unemployment. (DOL report 2009–2011) These 14 Counties are considered rural.

Additionally all of the counties within the state have substantial areas which are considered rural. Examples of this being King, Pierce and Snohomish Counties wherein major metropolitan areas (Seattle, Bellevue, Tacoma, Everett) lie within those county respective boundaries. Within those county boundaries substantial rural areas also exist within those expansive county areas.

Transportation, training and employment resources which may be available in urban and suburban areas of the county(s) can be markedly limited and/or non–existent in rural areas of those same counties.

Of the fourteen counties with Persistent Unemployment four (4) of the eleven (11) Sub–grantees are providing SCSEP program services in those counties. Goodwill Industries has nine (9) counties that they operate within that fall within the persistent unemployment category. AARP is operating in three (3) of the counties designated as those with Persistent Unemployment. The majority of the grantees are operating in rural areas with significant transportation and employment and training resource needs which impact the ability of the sub–grantees to deliver a comprehensive range of services.

These transportation issues severely impact and hinder the participants and potential participants from access the full range of SCSEP options and opportunities. The access to resources has become more of a challenge in the past two years. Both urban and rural areas have witnessed significant cuts to public transportation. Additionally as the economy has made improvements many of the WorkSource services have been cut due to changes in funding. The impact to the funding has had a dramatic impact on services in the more rural areas of the state. These complications created additional barriers to the participants and have added to the burden of the SCSEP staff in providing a comprehensive array of services to participants and potential participants.

Washington's population is aging. According to the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) Forecast of the State Population, in 2011, there were about 852,000 persons age 65 and older, representing 13 percent of Washington's total population. In 2010, persons age 64 and over represented 12.3 percent of the state's population, up from 11.2 percent in 2000. Persons age 65 and over comprise one–fifth or more of the population in eight counties. The counties with over 20 percent of the population are in some of the more isolated and rural parts of the state. Since 2000, the number of counties with greater than 15 percent of the population over age 65 increased from 13 to 21. (See Figure 21 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp) for a map of Washington counties with percentages of population age 65 and over).

2010 census data on disabilities is not yet available, however, from the Washington State Census 2000 Summary Data, the number of persons with disabilities is organized by just three age groups: 5–15 years of age, 16 – 64 years of age and 65 years of age and older. For persons 16–64 years of age, 1,159,686 disabilities were tallied, with 402,370 (35%) of those disabilities being employment–related; 184,708 (16%) affecting the ability to go outside the home; and 62,242 (5%) affecting self–care. The data further reveals that among non–institutionalized persons 65 years of age and older, 544,316 total disabilities were tallied and 141,878 persons over 65 had two or more disabilities. Self–care was affected for approximately 42% of those with greater than two disabilities.

In 1980, about 6.9% of the state spoke languages other than English in their households. By 2010, that number had increased to 18.3%. In PY 2010, 13% of participants were limited English proficient (LEP). Grantee and Sub–grantees make efforts to reach populations which may have LEP as a barrier by offering training in other languages, providing host agencies where language skills can be acquire, distributing brochures and outreach materials in multiple languages and providing newsletters in a variety of languages and sign language to the hearing impaired. (See Figure 22 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp) for a map of households in Washington where English is spoken as a second language).

According to the Washington State Veteran's Affairs (WAVA), there are 670,628 veterans living in WA State in July 2012. It can be presumed that persons who entered service by or before 1975–

1979 will be 55 years of age or older between 2012 and 2016. The Vietnam War occurred from 1965 to April 30, 1975. 122,174 Washingtonians served in World War II; 74,247 served in the Korean conflict; and 225,276 served during the Vietnam era. These figures do not include eligible spouses of veterans. According to the WAVA, over the next twenty years there will be a marked shift in the composition of WA veteran's by period of service. Based on the year end PY10 QPR, 18% of SCSEP participants in the state were either veterans or a spouse of a veteran. The number of Veterans enrolled with SCSEP has dropped each of the ensuing program years, PY11 18%; PY12 16% and PY13 14% enrolled in the program were Veterans or spouses of Veterans. (See Figure 23 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp for charts of Washington state veterans by period of service, and percentage of Washington veterans with incomes under $20,000, by age).

Currently, there is no data that captures the number of individuals, 55 years or older, in the state with low employment prospects; however, a review of distressed areas can provide a good overview of where in the state it is most difficult to find work. It identifies all counties with three–year average unemployment rates equal to or greater than 120 percent of the statewide unemployment rate. (See Figure 24 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp) for chart of distressed economic areas, by data collected by the Washington State Employment Security Department).

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the number of overall homeless in WA State has decreased ten percent from 2009–2011 and the number of chronically homeless has decreased 18% over the same time period. However, the number of people "doubled up", that is living with friends or family, increased by eleven percent which is one indication of individuals "at risk" of homelessness. For SCSEP participants in WA State, 12% indicated "are homeless or at risk of homelessness" in 2007 while 53% indicate the same thing in PY11. Federal American Recovery and Reinvenstment Act funds available during this time period represent efforts to prevent a potential recession–related increase in homelessness, but many more individuals live with the very real threat of becoming homeless.

In the most recent Report on Homelessness their has been an increase of 19.9 % in those being homeless. This is represented in SPARQ with an increase from 53% in PY11 to 56% in PY14.

C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

Grantees will ensure that individuals afforded priorities of service are given precedence in enrollment.

Priority of services includes individuals who have one or more of the following characteristics:

• Are over 65 years of age

• Have a disability

• Have limited English proficiency or low literacy skills

• Reside in a rural area

• Are veterans, or spouses of veterans

• Have low employment prospects

• Have failed to find employment after using services provided through the One–Stop delivery system

• Are homeless or are at risk of homelessness

Other priority populations identified in the statute are eligible individuals:

• With the greatest economic need

• Who are minorities

• With the greatest social need

5. PROVIDE THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))

See Figures 25 and 26 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp.

6. PROVIDE THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

A. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

The following chart depicts the slot allocation. It should be noted that the all counties within the State of Washington have rural areas. PY15 Distribution Rural and Urban (See Figure 27 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp).

B. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

“Greatest economic need” refers to persons at or below poverty level. According to the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) three year estimate, there were just under 126,000 Washington residents over the age of 55 living under the poverty level, with more total females impacted then males. (See Figure 28 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp) for chart of Washington residents over age 55 living below poverty level.)

C. ARE MINORITIES

The Projections of the State Population by Age, Gender and Race/Ethnicity: 2000–2030 provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management estimates that in 2006, 134,975 minority individuals, 55 years of age and older, lived in Washington State. This equates to 9% of the total 55+ population and 2% of the total population. It is expected that, as the population ages, the percent of minorities will continue to increase. This is already evident in metropolitan service areas, especially King and Snohomish Counties. According to the report, Asian and Pacific Islander and Hispanic populations will continue to be fast growing minority groups. SCSEP programs in the state will need to continue building cultural competence and responsiveness. The counties which have the highest percentage of minorities in 2010; with the exception of King and Pierce, the top 11 counties are all in eastern Washington. Each grantee ensures that local projects are aware of the current eligibility requirements for income, age and unemployment, along with participant most–in–need priority

criteria and requirements for serving minority individuals. Grantees use a common certification form designed by DOL to ensure accurate and documented eligibility determinations and prioritize participants by their most–in–need characteristics for enrollment when position vacancies occur. Eligibility documentation procedures, methodology, and required forms are determined by each grantee. Some specific methods used by the different grantees operating in Washington State are below.

To ensure equitable participation by persons who meet SCSEP most–in need criteria, cross–referral coordination and recruitment partnerships with local entities serving prioritized individuals are fostered by the state and national grantees and achieved by local projects. Some of these partners include, but will not be limited to:

• WIOA Core and Mandatory Partner programs

• Local organizations serving minorities and/or individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), including local translation/interpreter services

• Indian tribes

• Centers for Independent Living, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other disability–related organizations, including those serving individuals with physical, learning, developmental, mental and sensory disabilities

• Home and community–based long–term care social service organizations and providers

• Congregate meal sites and other places were older adults congregate for publicly–funded services

• Information and Referral/Assistance (I&R/A) programs, including 2–1–1, aging I&R/A, Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), Family Caregiver Support, Military Family Support Centers, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren programs and Kinship Navigators, Child Resource and Referral, etc.

• Housing and Homeless programs

• Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) local offices, where staff determine and authorize Medicaid, food–stamps, general assistance and other public programs for low–income individuals

• Faith–based organizations

• Other Employment and Training Programs, including WorkSource employment centers, Ticket – to Work programs, and national SCSEP sponsors

• Local and regional Veterans' contacts and entities, including the State Department of Veterans Affairs, Veteran medical centers, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

• In addition, employment newsletters, local newspapers and electronic bulletin boards/Internet job listings, where available, may be utilized to recruit most–in–need enrollees.

Recruitment goals for targeted, priority participants will continue to be met primarily by using the Application for SCSEP services.

This application will be used to determine and document participant income eligibility according to revised income definitions, inclusions and exclusions. Once an inquiry has been made to a SCSEP office, staff/participant staff will determine who is eligible and, if there is a waiting list, the priority that will be given to each applicant.

It is the policy and procedure of DSHS Aging & Long Term Support Administration (ALTSA) for all subprojects to serve minorities in at least the same proportion to a service area's population. Grantees will work jointly to provide enhanced emphasis on training and technical assistance to assist subprojects to improve targeted outreach, recruitment, and identification for persons who meet eligibility and most–in–need criteria.

D. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT.

The Washington State and National Grantees engage in similar efforts as described previously in recruiting and working with individuals with limited literacy and limited English proficiencies.

Additionally the partnership opportunities for participants engaging in community–based and community and technical college education programs afforded through the WIOA Core programs will support their efforts towards increased employment options.

E. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

"Greatest social need" status refers to individuals with physical or mental disabilities, language barriers or cultural, social or geographical isolation. It is difficult to quantify some aspects of "greatest social need", but some areas can be measured.

A review of the all grantee's operating in WA State year–end PY14 SPARQ QPRs reveals the rate at which priority populations were served by SCSEP. (See Figure 29 at http://www.wtb.wa.gov/SCSEPWIOA.asp)

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))

The grantees in Washington State work collaboratively to avoid disruptions in service whether from shifts in the location of the eligible population or from over–enrollment for any other reason.

For shifts in the location of the eligible population, the grantees will work together to revise the equitable distribution report and develop strategies for reducing the differences in how positions are distributed across the state in relation to any new distribution factors. In general, positions are shifted gradually from one county to another or from one grantee to another through attrition and placement into unsubsidized employment on one end, and capacity building on the other.

In the case of over–enrollment for any reason, the grantees will work together to ensure eligible participants maintain enrollment within appropriate time limits. The grantee where over–enrollment occurs will work with the local project to reduce any disruption in services for otherwise eligible participants. It may mean that the grantee will reduce funds in one area that is under–enrolled and move them to the over–enrolled area. If funds cannot be moved, another grantee may offer to assist with enrolling transferred participants. Although this would be a last resort, it has occurred from time to time and has worked well for participants and host agencies due to the collaborative nature of the grantees and their local projects. Grantees work with their local projects to appropriately budget their funds and resources so that over–enrollment occurs only rarely.

Washington State and the national grantees confer, agree to changes and then notify the state grantee before going forward. Any changes to the equitable distribution report must first be reviewed and approved by the state's Department of Labor SCSEP Federal Project Officer. All participant transfers receive final approval from the Department of Labor's grant officer. When transfers occur between grantees, the two grantees work together gathering needed participant and host agency information, conducting informational and enrollment meetings with the participants and conducting host agency meetings.

Grantees have established strategies to handle funding or enrollment fluctuations such as freezing enrollment, increasing or decreasing average work hours and some grantees are not offering durational limit extensions to any participants as a way to manage change.

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

HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

There are no program-specific state planning requirements for HUD employment and training programs. If the state includes HUD employment and training programs in a Combined State Plan, the state must incorporate such HUD programs in its responses to the common planning elements in sections II, III and IV of the WIOA State Plan requirements instrument.

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)

Note: Below is information about the employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) that is included in the WIOA Combined State Plan. The complete CSBG State Plan is submitted directly to the Federal agency that administers that program and is collected under OMB Control Number: 0970-0382.

Where CSBG is included in the Combined State Plan, the State CSBG Lead Agency (as designated by the chief executive of the State under the requirements of section 676(a) of the CSBG Act (42 U.S.C. 9908(a)) will coordinate plans for employment and training activities under CSBG as part of a larger antipoverty and workforce development strategy.

As part of the Combined State Plan,the State CSBG Lead Agency must:

(a) Describe how the State and the eligible entities will coordinate the provision of employment and training activities through Statewide and local WIOA workforce development systems; and may

(b) Provide examples of innovative employment and training programs and activities conducted by eligible entities or other neighborhood-based organizations as part of a community antipoverty strategy.

The state Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), administered by the Department of Commerce, awards funds to local community action agencies to provide services to low–income households at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (FPL). CSBG Grantees determine how funding will be used to support allowable CSBG activities, such as employment and training activities. These funds may be used to provide actual services to individuals, or they may be used to support the administration of allowable services and activities funded thru a different source. When the CSBG grantee elects to use CSBG funding to provide workforce development employment and training services to individuals, those services will be required to align with the States WIOA strategies and be coordinated with the local one–stop center. When CSBG funding is used to support allowable services and activities funded thru a different source, WIOA requirements will be determined by the primary funding source.

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	72.00	76.00	65.00	76.00
Dislocated Workers	73.00	78.00	73.00	78.00
Youth	65.00	66.90	65.00	68.40
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	68.00	68.00	69.00	69.00
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	72.00	73.50	63.00	73.50
Dislocated Workers	73.00	73.20	73.00	73.20
Youth	68.00	65.40	68.00	66.90
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	66.00	66.00	67.00	68.60
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	6,036.00	6,036.00	6,209.00	6,209.00
Dislocated Workers	8,390.00	8,550.00	8,390.00	8,550.00
Youth	2,713.00	Baseline	2,713.00	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	5,854.00	5,854.00	6,053.00	6,053.00
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	57.00	57.00	57.00	60.00
Dislocated Workers	56.00	60.00	56.00	60.00
Youth	60.00	70.00	60.00	71.50
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	15,723.00	15,931.00	16,171.00	16,370.00
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)