

WIOA STATE PLAN FOR THE STATE OF ALABAMA FY-2018

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## CONTENTS

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WIOA State Plan for the State of Alabama FY-2018 .....	1
Overview .....	4
Options for Submitting a State Plan .....	4
How State Plan Requirements Are Organized .....	5
I. WIOA State Plan Type .....	7
Combined Plan partner program(s).....	7
II. Strategic Elements .....	8
a. Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis .....	8
b. State Strategic Vision and Goals.....	53
c. State Strategy.....	59
III. Operational Planning Elements .....	69
A. State Strategy Implementation .....	69
b. State Operating Systems and Policies.....	84
IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs .....	112
V. Common Assurances (for all core programs) .....	113
VI. Program-Specific Requirements for Core Programs .....	115
Program-Specific Requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B .....	115
Program-Specific Requirements for Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Services) .....	132
Program-Specific Requirements for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Programs.....	149
Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation .....	168
VII. Program-Specific Requirements For Combined State Plan Partner Programs.....	254
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) .....	254
TANF Certifications.....	277
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))) .....	278
Jobs for Veterans’ State Grants.....	283
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) .....	300
Appendix 1. Performance Goals for the Core Programs.....	322
Table 1. Employment (Second Quarter after Exit).....	323
Table 2. Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) .....	324
Table 3. Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit).....	324
Table 4. Credential Attainment Rate.....	325

Table 5. Measureable Skill Gains ..... 326

Table 6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers..... 327

Table 7. Additional Indicators of Performance..... 328

Appendix 2. Other State Attachments (Optional)..... 329

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## OVERVIEW

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

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### OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

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

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II),
- 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 where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (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.

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## HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

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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. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, Supplement to the Workforce and Innovation Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

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

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

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## I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

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

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### COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

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Indicate which Combined State 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))) No

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

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

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### A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

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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.

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#### 1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

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##### A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

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

##### I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

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

##### II. EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND 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.

##### (II)(A)(1)(A) ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

In 2008 when the recession hit, Alabama lagged the rest of the nation in the effects. The recession began in Alabama in 2009, with its most significant economic losses. When the rest of the nation started pulling out of the recession, Alabama again lagged. In 2015, construction still had not yet begun to recover, and economists wondered if it would ever get back to prerecession levels. Federal, state, and local government budgets suffered tremendously during the recession, and cutbacks occurred since at all levels. Federal budget constraints hurt the state's military base operations and also the federal research contracts in the state. This led to fewer jobs and a slower recovery. In 2016 when states began to see their unemployment rates finally decline, Alabama had the highest rates in the Southeast Region, and were in the top five highest in the nation; however, the data reflected some confidence in the recovery with civilian labor force numbers rising.

Historically, the economy in the United States has thrived from its manufacturing industries. At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many states had shifted away from manufacturing, due to cheaper labor overseas. Alabama is one of only 5 states in the nation where manufacturing was the largest industry every year since 1990. That could be a reason why Alabama had a more difficult time recovering from the recession. The 21<sup>st</sup> century brought diversification to the state's economy, with an emphasis in the location of several foreign owned companies into the state. The impetus for this began with the influx of major automotive manufacturers into the state. While the major auto manufacturers did suffer during the recession, they have experienced increases in auto sales and exports since, which has led to additional shifts and employees. This in turn had a positive effect on the output of the parts suppliers in the state. The resurgence in automotive manufacturing has also led to additional transportation manufacturers locating in the state. Aerospace Manufacturing has always had a large presence in the state due to Marshall Space Center in Huntsville, AL, but since 2000 this industry has grown to other areas of the state to become a major aerospace presence in the nation. Since 2011, the state's exports have risen over 21.0 percent. Alabama produced a record \$21.7 billion in exports in 2017.

Alabama has a population of approximately 4.8 million people and has experienced a growth rate of 2.7 percent since 2010. Since 2000, Alabama's population has grown an average of 0.6 percent each year. The population in the state is 70.2 percent white, 27.3 percent Black, 1.6 percent Asian, and 1.2 percent American Indian. The largest percentage of white population lives in north Alabama, while the largest percentage of black population lives in central Alabama. Mobile County has the largest percentage of American Indian population. The largest percentage of the Asian population resides in Jefferson County, followed by Madison County. The latest Hispanic population figure for the state is 193,503, which is 4.0 percent of the state's population, up from 3.4 percent in 2010. The counties with the largest percentage of Hispanic population are Franklin - 16.0 percent, DeKalb - 14.0 percent, and Marshall - 13.0 percent, all counties in the north part of the state. The population in the state continues to age at a fast pace. In 2000, only 22.4 percent of the population was over the age of 55, while in 2016, over 28.3 percent of the population was over 55.

In 2016, the state had 10 regional workforce development councils that worked with industry to ensure they had trained workers to meet the demand of those high demand industries. In 2017, leadership of the Alabama Workforce Council along with partner agencies of WIOA and the WIOA State Board decided to reduce the regions to seven. At the same time, state WIOA leadership worked toward increasing the number of local WIOA boards from 3 to 7, and match those regions to the 7 regional workforce development councils. Each of the regions have boards consisting of industry leaders, educators, economic developers, etc. The workforce development councils, are arranged as 501c3 organizations with executive directors, and are primarily funded by the state through the Alabama Community College System (ACCS). Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council (SAWDC), was the first of these in Alabama. This region includes the Mobile and Daphne/Fairhope/Foley metropolitan areas. In 2017, the Mobile local WIOA board expanded to the same geographic area of SAWDC, and became the Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE). The Jefferson County local WIOA board expanded to the geographic area of the Central Six Workforce Development Council, and became Central Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (CAPTE). The remaining counties that were previously part of the third local state board, were divided into the geographic areas of the other 5 regional councils,

and function as the same names. This region includes the Mobile and Daphne/Fairhope/Foley metro areas. Each of the 7 regions in the state varies economically. All include at least one metropolitan area, which often drives the economy and jobs in the region. All include at least one major metropolitan area and four-year college or university.

North Alabama Works encompasses three metropolitan areas, Huntsville, Decatur, and Florence/Muscle Shoals. The estimated population in 2016 was 1,134,607, which is a 2.8 percent gain since 2010. The per capita income in 2016 was \$38,563, which is \$333 less than the state average. Total employment in 2016 was 519,107, up 3.1 percent since 2014. Manufacturing employs the largest percentage of the workforce in the region, at 19.2 percent. This region is highly-regarded for its nationally recognized high-tech hub in the Huntsville metro. With the second largest research and development park in the United States, the area is home to a large array of fortune 500 companies, local and international high-tech companies, and U.S. space and defense agencies. This center for research and development employs nearly half of the state's total architecture and engineering occupations, and a third of the computer and mathematical occupations. Federal government has lost 4.2 percent since 2009.

Along with the rest of the state, this region has experienced immense growth in employment in transportation manufacturing. For several years motor vehicle body and trailer manufacturing was a huge part of the economy in the western portion of the region. In addition, Toyota has had an engine manufacturing plant in the Huntsville area since 2003, but since the recession, the region has attracted numerous motor vehicle parts manufacturers. Employment in this industry has increased by 53 percent since 2009. In January of 2018, Toyota announced plans to build a \$1.6 billion plant, located between Decatur and Huntsville, that will employ up to 4,000 people. Toyota's new presence will certainly increase the business for surrounding parts and metals manufacturers in the region, and statewide. Although Huntsville metro is high tech, many of the surrounding counties in the region still depend on agriculture, with an estimate of over 17,000 employed. This region continues to be a large producer of large poultry, cattle, corn and cotton in the state. In December 2017, the unemployment rate for the region was 3.2 percent, 16,399 unemployed workers, which is lower than the state rate of 3.4 percent.

East Alabama Works includes the Gadsden and Anniston metropolitan areas. In 2016 the region's population estimate was 374,071, a loss of 2.4 percent from 2010. Population in the two metro areas in the region make up over 55 percent of the region's population. These metro areas had a population decline of over 9,000 people since 2010. Per capita income in the region was \$33,708, approximately 13.3 percent below the state average in 2016. The largest percentage of the workforce in the region is employed in manufacturing industries. Total employment in 2016 was 144,243, up only 1.0 percent since 2014. Although manufacturing has grown slightly in the region since 2014, 2.7 percent, the region is still trying to replace textile and apparel jobs that moved overseas. These industries dominated the manufacturing base in the region prior to the year 2000. These industries employed 7,740 in 2000, and only 1,588 jobs remain in 2016. Fortunately, the area landed a major automobile manufacturing plant in 2001, which also attracted parts suppliers to the area. Transportation manufacturing employment has grown 22.5 percent since 2010, with an employment of 9,225 in 2016. The latest unemployment data for the region shows that in

December 2017 the region had approximately 5,631 unemployed, equaling a 3.6 percent unemployment rate, the lowest rate ever recorded for this region.

West Alabama Works includes the Tuscaloosa metropolitan area; however, the surrounding counties in the region are considered rural. The region had an estimated population of 335,620 in 2016, 61.4 percent residing in Tuscaloosa County. Per capita income in the region is over \$4,000 less than the state average, with an estimate in 2016 of \$34,394. Tuscaloosa County makes up approximately 66.4 percent of the region's total employment. Educational Services is the dominant industry in Tuscaloosa County, with the University of Alabama located there. The region, as a whole, experiences a large impact with manufacturing. Total employment has grown 2.2 percent since 2014, reaching 138,548 in 2016. While the region has experienced significant losses in apparel, petroleum, and coal product manufacturing, transportation manufacturing in the region has grown, as it has in the rest of the state. The transportation manufacturing industry, employing 7,200 people in 2016, experienced over 15.3 percent growth since 2014. In December 2017, the region had an estimated 5,098 people unemployed, with a rate of 3.4 percent.

The most heavily populated region in the state is in Central Alabama Partnership for Training & Education (CAPTE), which consists of the Birmingham metropolitan area. The 2016 population estimate was 1,124,774, showing an increase from 2010 of 1.8 percent. The region's per capita income is above the state average at \$46,128. Nearly 24.3 percent of the state's workforce is located within the region, with a total employment of 551,205 in 2016. This region is centrally located in the state with a six-spoke interstate system. This makes it a perfect location for regional distribution centers. The region is also the financial center of the state, with approximately 34,900 employed in finance and insurance industries. This is 48 percent of the state's finance and insurance industries. According to the Federal Reserve, Birmingham has nearly \$220 billion in bank assets, ranking it as the second largest banking center in the south and 11th nationally. Corporate headquarters for four financial institutions and several major insurance companies are located here. CAPTE also leads the state in health care services and medical research. The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) is the fourth largest academic medical center in the United States, and it ranks 44th out of 965 institutions in the National Science Foundation Total R&D Expenditures. Furthermore, UAB's University Hospital is the third largest public hospital in the nation. This region currently has the lowest unemployment rate in the state at 3.1 percent, with 15,978 unemployed.

Central Alabama Works comprises 13 counties and includes the Montgomery and Auburn/Opelika Metropolitan areas. The 2016 population estimate for this region is 755,143, which represents 15.5 percent of the total state population. In 2016, the per capita income was \$36,820, 5.3 percent lower than the state average. A large number of veterans live in this region, with the presence of the Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery County. Total employment in the region was estimated at 313,743 in 2016, which is a slight gain of over 3,000 from 2014. But like most of the other regions of the state, Central Alabama Works has experienced immense employment growth in transportation manufacturing industries. With the location of a major automobile manufacturing plant in the region, employment has grown 31.4 percent in automotive manufacturing and 17.9 percent in automotive parts manufacturing since 2014. The region has also enjoyed growth in

## (II)(A)(1)(A) ECONOMIC ANALYSIS (CONTINUED)

aerospace manufacturing, with continued stable growth and employment over 1,000. Another major industry in the area is education services, due to the presence of several major universities, such as Auburn, Tuskegee, Alabama State, AUM, Huntingdon, Faulkner, Troy Montgomery, and also many community colleges in the region. A study by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities reported that Auburn had a \$5.1 billion economic impact in the state in 2014. Chemical manufacturing employment has grown 3.7 percent since 2014. Furthermore, the region has seen stable employment in fabricated metal product manufacturing with just under 3,000 employed. The latest unemployment figures for December 2017 show that an estimated 11,540 people were unemployed, producing a 3.4 percent unemployment rate, matching the state rate.

Southeast Alabama Works includes the Dothan metropolitan area and surrounding counties. Population in the region remained stable with an estimate of 378,906 in 2016. Coffee County showed the most population growth, during the same period, of 2.6 percent reaching 51,226. Military veterans are a huge part of this region, with the latest figures showing that an estimated 34,000 in the region are veterans, the highest in the state. Houston County had the highest percentage of veterans, with an estimated 8,800 residing there. Coffee county had the highest per capita income in the region, at \$39,321 in 2016, slightly higher than the state average. The region's 2016 per capita income was \$36,142, which was \$2,753 below the state average. This region is home to a major university, military base, and strong presence in aviation training. Additionally, the region still holds a major role, both in the state and nation, in agriculture production. The area continues to be a large producer of cotton, peanuts, and poultry and eggs. Total employment in the region in 2016 was estimated at 153,097. In December 2017, the unemployment rate was 3.8 percent, slightly higher than the state average, with 5,822 people unemployed.

Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training & Education (SWAPTE), encompasses the southwest region of the state. This area consists of the Mobile and the Daphne-Fairhope-Foley metropolitan areas. The latest population estimates for the metro areas combined are approximately 624,400, while the total population for the remaining six counties in the region is 136,780. Per capita income for the region in 2016 was \$36,668, 5.7 percent below the state average, with Baldwin County having the highest at \$41,286. Total employment has grown 3.3 percent between 2014 and 2016, and manufacturing employment has remained stable with growth around 1.0 percent. Primary metal manufacturing employs over 4,000, and transportation equipment manufacturing has grown to over 7,700 employed, most of the growth being in ship manufacturing. In 2017, Amazon announced the opening of a \$30 million Distribution Center and Walmart also announced a distribution center in the area, establishing the area as a hub for distribution centers with a growth of already 16.3 percent in warehousing and storage since 2014. In the region, the December 2017 data shows that approximately 13,127 people were unemployed, which equates to a regional unemployment rate of 4.1 percent, the highest of all the regions, however each county in this region has experienced its lowest unemployment rates ever recorded beginning in late 2017.

During 2014, wage and salary employment for the state averaged 1.86 million, still lower than the pre-recession level of 1.95 million. Alabama's total employment dropped to an annual average of 1.81 million at the height of the recession. Since 2014, wage and salary employment has reached over 2 million, gaining 81,000 jobs through 2017, 32,500 of them since 2016. The industry sector

with the largest effect on the state's economy continues to be manufacturing, with \$19.43 billion in manufactured goods exports in 2016. In the 20th century, the majority of manufacturing in the state consisted of nondurable goods, such as textile, apparel, food, paper, etc. Due to changes in trade agreements and many manufacturers moving out of the country due to labor costs, these industries are no longer the primary source of income for the state. In the 21st century, durable goods manufacturing industries have risen to the forefront, through extensive economic development efforts, to replace those thousands of jobs lost in nondurable goods. Transportation manufacturing has had the greatest impact, presently making up 25 percent of the manufacturing employment in the state. Between 2010 and 2016, manufactured goods exports grew nearly 52 percent. This success is due to great dedication and effort of the state's economic development efforts. In July of 2011, Governor Robert Bentley signed through executive order a statewide economic development strategic plan for the state; *Accelerate Alabama*. Since then, all targeted industries within this state plan have seen new and expanding industries, creating thousands of additional jobs.

#### (II)(a)(1)(A)(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

A majority of the industries targeted for recruitment, retention, and renewal are manufacturing industries. Three of those targeted industries, *Aerospace*, *Automotive*, and *Metal Manufacturing*, which includes ship building, are in the transportation manufacturing sector. At the height of the recession, transportation manufacturing dropped down to 45,692 employed, but since has grown over 31.0 percent, with automotive parts manufacturing growing the most at 78.0 percent since 2010. Ship and boat building had a slight hiccup in 2010, decreasing from an employment of 3,515 in 2009 to 3,018 in 2010, possibly affected by federal budget cuts and less federal contracts. However, it quickly jumped back up to 3,640 in 2011 and continues to increase every year. Due to economic development efforts, in 2017 thousands of future new jobs in these industries were announced for the state. Alabama's Air National Guard's 187<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing in Montgomery will be home to the F-35 jets, which are key to the nation's future military needs. This will bring more aerospace jobs to the central region. Furthermore, thousands of jobs were announced around the state with companies like Boeing, Airbus, Aerojet Rocketdyne, and Lear. This will boost the need for jobs like avionics technicians and various other engineering technician jobs. The state will also gain another major automotive manufacturer in North Alabama. Toyota announced that it would build a plant to build both toyotas and mazdas creating around 4,000 new jobs in the state, and thousands of additional parts manufacturing and other jobs will also be created to supply this new plant. The state is going to have to produce thousands more trained workers in jobs such as CNC operators, machinists, fabricators, industrial machinery mechanics, industrial maintenance specialists, and other skilled manufacturing jobs that require some training and education beyond high school.

*Bioscience* and *Chemicals* are also being targeted through the state's strategic plan. While the total for the bioscience cluster has experienced a downturn since 2000, the cluster has grown over 14.0 percent since 2010, and there have been announcements of 335 new jobs in upcoming months. Most of those jobs announced are in pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing, which has experienced a steady growth in employment of 473.0 percent since 2000, and continued to grow during the recession years. The chemicals cluster also took a downturn since 2000, but has grown slightly since the recession. Although a very

small portion of this cluster, soap, cleaning compound, and toiletry manufacturing has grown 154.0 percent since 2000. Over 500 new jobs were announced for this industry within the last year. This will increase demand for chemical equipment and plant operators and other industrial maintenance and equipment operators that are also in demand from growing auto and aerospace manufacturing industries in the state.

Two more targeted clusters in *Accelerate Alabama* are *Distribution Centers* and *Corporate Operations*. While distribution, like most industries, took a hit during the recession, it has steadily increased in employment since 2010. Warehousing has especially grown, with an increase of nearly 47.0 percent since 2010, and over 1,500 new jobs announced in 2016-2017. Two of these companies will locate in the Mobile area; Amazon and Walmart. These large centers will create hundreds of jobs in this particular region. Several new jobs in food and beverage distribution were announced all across the state, many in the Birmingham metro area. This is going to increase the demand for truck drivers in the state. Truck drivers are already the

high demand jobs in the state, with an average of over 2,500 online job ads each month. These new companies are going to require hundreds of customer service reps, computer user support specialists, and warehouse jobs requiring industrial equipment operation and maintenance. Corporate operations have been growing at a steady pace since 2000. From 2000 to 2014, this cluster has grown 60.0 percent, with new jobs announced in the upcoming months.

*Information Technology*, another targeted industry cluster, overlaps the *Enabling Technology* cluster somewhat. The largest industry in the information technology cluster is business support services which has grown at a steady pace, even during the recession, of over 63.0 percent since 2000. The Huntsville area is the prime location for IT industries in the state.

The final two clusters targeted in Alabama's strategic plan are historically a large part of the state's economy; *Food Products* and *Forest Products*. Alabama's Agriculture industry produced cash receipts of \$5.35 billion (*Table 1*). In the U.S. the state ranks third in peanut production, second in aquaculture, and fourth in broilers. The state also ranks sixth in the U.S. in both cotton and cotton seed production. According to the Alabama Forestry Commission, Alabama's forests generate over \$21 billion in timber production and processing revenue. The state ranks third in timberland acreage in the 48 contiguous states, behind only Georgia and Oregon. According to a 2013 report published by Auburn University (Auburn University, February 2013), agriculture, forestry and their related industries account for 41.0 percent of Alabama's \$174 billion economy and provide 22.0 percent of all jobs in the state. The study has determined that agriculture, forestry, and related industries generate eight jobs per million dollars of sales. This report identified over 90 industry sectors that are related to agriculture and forestry production, including food and kindred product distribution sectors, like wholesalers, food stores, and restaurants. For these reasons, it is beneficial to the economy of the state to continue to support and pursue advancements in production and research for these industries.

Table 1. *Alabama Agricultural Facts*

Alabama: *Leading Commodities for Cash Receipts, 2016*

2016 Highlighted  
Crops

Commodities	Cash Receipts	U.S. Ranking
<b>All Commodities</b>	\$4.95 billion	27
<b>Broilers</b>	\$2.86 billion	4
<b>Cattle and Calves</b>	\$416 million	29
<b>Chicken Eggs</b>	\$367 million	7
<b>Cotton</b>	\$199 million	6
<b>Peanuts</b>	\$116 million	3
<b>Aquaculture</b>	\$119 million	2

**Table 2.**

Top Occupations for Food Products Cluster	2016 Employment	Mean Hourly
<b>Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers</b>	11,290	\$11.60
<b>Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products</b>	24,940	\$31.10
<b>Helpers--Production Workers</b>	16,350	\$12.35
<b>Packers and Packagers, Hand</b>	8,010	\$11.66
<b>Food Cooking Machine Operators and Tenders</b>	***	\$13.73
<b>Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders</b>	3,690	\$14.18
<b>Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand</b>	42,190	\$12.38
<b>Industrial Machinery Mechanics</b>	10,060	\$25.30
<b>Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment</b>	5,320	\$11.48

Source: 2017 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.

**Table 3.**

Top Occupations for Forest Products Cluster	2016 Employment	Mean Hourly
<b>Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders</b>	1,860	\$19.61
<b>Sawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Wood</b>	2,630	\$13.38
<b>Woodworking Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Except Sawing</b>	2,530	\$13.52
<b>Logging Equipment Operators</b>	2,880	\$17.89
<b>Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters</b>	2,350	\$14.66
<b>Helpers--Production Workers</b>	16,350	\$12.35
<b>Team Assemblers</b>	37,800	\$17.30
<b>Industrial Machinery Mechanics</b>	10,060	\$25.30

Source: 2017 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.

One industry sector that is not addressed in the *Accelerate Alabama* plan is Health Care. The fact that the baby boomers are hitting retirement age, and also that people are living longer, is beginning to have a large impact on the health care system. Additionally, there are many more specialized jobs in health care, than in the past, due to the fact that health care costs have risen and so has demand for health care. While hospitals have experienced small, but steady, growth every year since 2000, most of the growth in health care employment comes from industries that provide more focused care. Industries such as outpatient care centers, home health care services, and specialized health practitioners have doubled in employment since 2000. In addition employment in residential disability, mental health, and substance facilities have grown 226.0 percent since the turn of the century.

Continuing care retirement and assistant living facilities have also doubled in employment. Furthermore, as the population ages, so does the workforce in the health care industry. In Alabama in 2016, 21.0 percent of the health care workforce was over the age of 55. With the projection, for the period 2014-2024, of nearly 60,000 new jobs in health care, combined with an increasing number of workers retiring, the demand in health care workers is very high in the state.

**Table 4.**

Top Occupations for Aerospace Cluster	2016Employment	MeanHourly
<b>Computer Programmers</b>	6,460	\$41.26
<b>Software Developers, Applications</b>	4,960	\$46.15
<b>Software Developers, Systems Software</b>	4,460	\$49.53
<b>Computer Systems Analysts</b>	4,510	\$39.67
<b>Computer User Support Specialists</b>	6,030	\$23.17
<b>Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians</b>	2,940	\$33.55
<b>Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers</b>	1,490	\$25.65

Source: 2017 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.

(II)(A)(1)(A)(I) EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS  
(CONTINUED)

**Table 5.**

Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2016Employment	MeanHourly
<b>Team Assemblers</b>	37,800	\$17.30
<b>Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers</b>	11,480	\$17.11
<b>Industrial Machinery Mechanics</b>	10,060	\$25.30
<b>Tire Builders</b>	1,600	\$26.36
<b>Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic</b>	5,840	\$15.91
<b>Industrial Engineers</b>	4,430	\$42.49
<b>Engine and Other Machine Assemblers</b>	1,630	\$22.68
<b>Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic</b>	1,700	\$18.39

Top Occupations for Automotive Cluster	2016Employment	MeanHourly
<b>Assemblers and Fabricators, All Other</b>	3,920	\$13.40

Source: 2017 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.

**Table 6.**

Top Occupations for Bioscience Cluster	2016Employment	MeanHourly
<b>Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products</b>	24,940	\$31.10
<b>Dental Laboratory Technicians</b>	960	\$18.03
<b>Chemical Plant and System Operators</b>	1,200	\$33.38
<b>Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists</b>	2,520	\$26.78
<b>Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians</b>	2,160	\$17.55
<b>Phlebotomists</b>	2,260	\$14.51
<b>Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers</b>	11,480	\$17.11
<b>Customer Service Representatives</b>	30,670	\$16.02
<b>Packers and Packagers, Hand</b>	8,010	\$11.66

Source: 2017 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.

**Table 7.**

Top Occupations for Chemicals Cluster	2016Employment	MeanHourly
<b>Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders</b>	1,780	\$26.82
<b>Extruding and Drawing Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic</b>	2,120	\$15.97

Top Occupations for Chemicals Cluster	2016Employment	MeanHourly
<b>Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers</b>	11,480	\$17.11
<b>Packers and Packagers, Hand</b>	8,010	\$11.66
<b>Industrial Machinery Mechanics</b>	10,060	\$25.30
<b>Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders</b>	2,230	\$19.79
<b>Chemical Plant and System Operators</b>	1,200	\$33.38
<b>Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic</b>	1,690	\$17.53
<b>Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators</b>	10,210	\$16.13

Source: 2017 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.

**Table 8.**

Top Occupations for Corporate Operations Cluster	2016Employment	MeanHourly
<b>Customer Service Representatives</b>	30,670	\$16.02
<b>Telemarketers</b>	2,460	\$11.54
<b>General and Operations Managers</b>	28,060	\$61.17
<b>Bill and Account Collectors</b>	5,010	\$16.87
<b>Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks</b>	24,500	\$18.34
<b>Accountants and Auditors</b>	16,810	\$33.85
<b>Office Clerks, General</b>	44,500	\$12.43
<b>Computer User Support Specialists</b>	6,030	\$23.17

Source: 2017 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.

**Table 9.**

Top Occupations for Distribution Cluster	2016Employment	MeanHourly
<b>Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</b>	34,440	\$19.71
<b>Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand</b>	42,190	\$12.38
<b>Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators</b>	10,210	\$16.13
<b>Stock Clerks and Order Fillers</b>	22,830	\$12.33
<b>Packers and Packagers, Hand</b>	8,010	\$11.66
<b>Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks</b>	8,520	\$15.88
<b>Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical an</b>	24,940	\$31.10
<b>Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers</b>	11,920	\$14.94

Source: 2017 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.

**Table 10.**

Top Occupations for Information Technology Cluster	2016Employment	MeanHourly
<b>Computer User Support Specialists</b>	6,030	\$23.17
<b>Computer Programmers</b>	6,460	\$41.26
<b>Software Developers, Applications</b>	4,960	\$46.15
<b>Management Analysts</b>	5,870	\$46.68
<b>Computer Systems Analysts</b>	4,510	\$39.67
<b>Software Developers, Systems Software</b>	4,460	\$49.53
<b>Network and Computer Systems Administrators</b>	4,700	\$35.49

Source: 2017 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.

**Table 11.**

Top Occupations for Sheet Metal and Ship Manufacturing Cluster	2016 Employment	Mean Hourly
<b>Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers</b>	9,830	\$19.65
<b>Machinists</b>	6,800	\$21.21
<b>Cutting, Punching, and Press Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic</b>	5,840	\$15.91
<b>Team Assemblers</b>	37,800	\$17.30
<b>Industrial Machinery Mechanics</b>	10,060	\$25.30
<b>Layout Workers, Metal and Plastic</b>	830	\$18.71
<b>Helpers--Production Workers</b>	16,350	\$12.35
<b>Rolling Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic</b>	760	\$24.75
<b>Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters</b>	2,530	\$18.19

Source: 2017 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.

**Table 12.**

Top Occupations for Healthcare Cluster	2016 Employment	Mean Hourly
<b>Registered Nurses</b>	47,050	\$28.14
<b>Nursing Assistants</b>	23,820	\$11.44
<b>Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses</b>	14,530	\$17.95
<b>Personal Care Aides</b>	14,880	\$9.27
<b>Medical Assistants</b>	6,800	\$13.75
<b>Home Health Aides</b>	5,490	\$10.10
<b>Office Clerks, General</b>	44,500	\$12.43
<b>Receptionists and Information Clerks</b>	13,840	\$12.55
<b>Secretaries and Administrative Assistants</b>	46,680	\$17.14
<b>Medical Secretaries</b>	4,920	\$16.22

Top Occupations for Healthcare Cluster	2016 Employment	Mean Hourly
<b>Billing and Posting Clerks</b>	7,620	\$16.55
<b>Radiologic Technologists</b>	3,540	\$23.50
<b>Dental Hygienists</b>	3,140	\$22.13
<b>Dental Assistants</b>	3,500	\$16.35
<b>Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics</b>	3,880	\$14.17
<b>Medical Records and Health Information Technicians</b>	2,760	\$17.17

Source: 2017 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.

#### (II)(A)(1)(A)(II) EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Alabama’s strategic plan for economic development is also targeting industries that are associated with *Enabling Technology*, due to the increased use of nanotechnology and robotics used in many of the large automotive production plants in Alabama and surrounding states. To show the dedication to prepare the workforce for these types of jobs, the State of Alabama, Calhoun Community College, AIDT, and robotics industry leaders across the nation collaborated to build the robotics technology park. The park consists of three training facilities, each targeted to a specific industry need. While the industries associated with this cluster show minimal growth thus far, over 1,000 additional jobs have recently been announced specifically for this high tech cluster, and many of the new manufacturers in the state employ the use of robotics and other advanced technology in their plants.

*Cyber Security* is an emerging industry, another cluster which overlaps the Enabling Technology cluster. Huntsville in North Alabama is home to the second largest research park in the United States, Cummings Research Park, with over 400 companies that include Fortune 500 companies, local and international high-tech enterprises, and US space and defense agencies. It also includes a thriving business incubator and competitive higher education institutions. In 2016 the Air Force created a cyber college and headquartered it at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, where the Air University is located. The capacity of this training reaches airmen around the world. It brings in both local and external experts in cyber security to teach these courses. Many of these experts come from the Maxwell Gunter Annex in Montgomery, where IT services are provided to the air force, and also where cyber defense is handled for the Air force. Due to the military’s needs for this cyber training, Montgomery became the first of only four cities in the Southeast, and first in the state, with an Internet Exchange. Furthermore, Maxwell in partnership with the City of Montgomery, the County, and the State plan to build and innovation center, which will be a place where leading experts from across the country in tech advancements can work with the military toward advancements. This will create a huge advantage for economic development in the region.

**Table 13.**

Top Occupations for Enabling Technology Cluster	2016 Employment	Mean Hourly
<b>Electrical and Electronic Equipment Assemblers</b>	2,570	\$15.64
<b>Computer Systems Analysts</b>	4,510	\$39.67
<b>Machinists</b>	6,800	\$21.21
<b>Software Developers, Systems Software</b>	4,460	\$49.53
<b>Multiple Machine Tool Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic</b>	3,470	\$14.53
<b>Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers</b>	9,830	\$19.65
<b>Electrical Engineers</b>	5,110	\$47.95
<b>Industrial Engineers</b>	4,430	\$42.49
<b>Team Assemblers</b>	37,800	\$17.30

Source: 2017 release of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Report in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics; wage data aged using the most current Employment Cost Index (ECI) factors. Note: Data reflects wages across all industries, not specifically to respective industry cluster.

Targeted Industries and Occupations by Workforce Development Regions:

North Alabama Works Target Industry Sectors: Advanced Manufacturing; Aerospace; IT; Healthcare; Construction; Transportation/Logistics

North Alabama Works Occupations: Machinists; Industrial Maintenance; Nursing; Truck Drivers; Computer; Electricians East Alabama Works Target Industry Sectors: Automated Manufacturing and

Robotics; Construction and Construction Services; Healthcare; Hospitality and Tourism Services

East Alabama Works Occupations: Quality Assurance and Safety; Heavy Equipment Operator; Healthcare Practitioner; Medical Records and Health Information Technician; Industrial Maintenance; Computer User Support Specialist; Plating and Coating Machine Setters Operators and Tenders; Welding, Soldering and Brazing Workers; Metal Workers and Plastics Workers; Electrical Workers and Electronics Repairers, Commercial/Industrial

West Alabama Works Target Industry Sectors: Automotive; Healthcare; Construction; Manufacturing; Professional Services West Alabama Works Occupations: Healthcare/Nursing; Transportation/Drivers; Logistics; Information Technology; Machinists; Industrial Maintenance; Production/Assemblers; Welders/Fitters

Central Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (CAPTE) Target Industry Sectors: Manufacturing; Healthcare; Energy; Services; Logistics

Central Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (CAPTE) Occupations: Welders/Fitters; Machinists; Industrial Maintenance; Nursing; Allied Health; Green Technology; IT; Customer Service; Culinary; Drivers  
 Central Alabama Works Target Industry Sectors: Healthcare; Transportation, Logistics and Distribution; Construction; Manufacturing; Hospitality and Tourism; Agriculture  
 Central Alabama Works Occupations: Nurses; Truck Drivers; Industrial Maintenance; Welders; Electricians; Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists  
 Southeast Alabama Works Target Industry Sectors: Healthcare; Transportation; Manufacturing; Aviation; Services

Southeast Alabama Works Occupations: Nurses; Surgical Technicians; Truck Drivers; Automotive Technology; Welder; Industrial Maintenance; Sheet Metal Fabricators; Customer Service Representatives; Physical Therapist Assistants  
 Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE) Target Industry Sectors: Aviation and Aerospace; Advanced Manufacturing; Construction; Healthcare; Maritime  
 Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (SWAPTE) Occupations: Pipe Fitter/ Pipe Welder/ Combo Welder; Electrician; Ship Fitter; Millwright/ Mechanics/ Machinists; Mechanical Maintenance/ Mechanical Engineer; Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic/ Assembler/ Avionics; Process Technician/ Operator; Registered Nurse; Lab/ Med/ Biomedical Technician

Source: Alabama Workforce Development Region Councils

Table 14. Knowledge, Skills, Abilities

Top 10 KSAs

Demand Occupations in Targeted Industry Clusters

Knowledge	Rank	Skill	Rank	Ability	Rank
<b>English Language</b>	12.2%	Critical Thinking	10.42%	Problem Sensitivity	7.10%
<b>Customer &amp; Personal Service</b>	9.8%	Monitoring	9.57%	Near Vision	6.79%
<b>Mathematics</b>	8.9%	Reading Comprehension	9.01%	Oral Comprehension	6.31%

Knowledge	Rank	Skill	Rank	Ability	Rank
<b>Mechanical</b>	8.2%	Active Listening	8.93%	Deductive Reasoning	5.71%
<b>Production and Processing</b>	7.5%	Speaking	8.14%	Oral Expression	5.44%
<b>Public Safety and Security</b>	6.7%	Operation Monitoring	6.29%	Written Comprehension	5.27%
<b>Education and Training</b>	5.4%	Coordination	6.18%	Information Ordering	4.74%
<b>Computers and Electronics</b>	5.2%	Judgment & Decision Making	4.84%	Speech Recognition	4.65%
<b>Medicine and Dentistry</b>	4.8%	Quality Control Analysis	4.44%	Control Precision	4.09%
<b>Engineering and Technology</b>	4.2%	Operation and Control	3.93%	Manual Dexterity	4.02%

Source: Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division. O\*Net OnLine.

(II)(A)(1)(A)(III) EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

In 2014, only 32 percent of jobs were in occupations that typically require formal postsecondary education for entry. Within this group, jobs in occupations which require a Bachelor's degree for entry held the largest share at 55 percent. Occupations requiring a high school diploma or equivalent and less than high school made up 68 percent of jobs in 2014. All occupations requiring postsecondary education are projected to grow faster through 2024 than the state total average growth at 7.7 percent. Occupations requiring postsecondary non-degree award or associate degree are expected to grow 22 percent through the 2014-2024 period. When categorized by on-the-job training levels, apprenticeship jobs are expected to have the most growth over the period at 10.0 percent. This makes the state's new Apprenticeship Alabama program important for the future of Alabama's trained workforce.

Over the past five years there have been a multitude of reports all over the country on the topic of skills gaps. More importantly the emphasis has been on soft skills. Alabama is no different. Employers all over the state have been claiming that they cannot find employees with adequate skills. In 2013, The Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division published the results of a skills survey conducted on the manufacturing, utilities, and construction industries in the state. A sample of 6,926 employers was randomly selected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Over 5,000 employers in the targeted industries responded to the survey. The survey instrument included three categories of questions: Recruitment Challenges; Skills Gaps Identified; and Training and future needs. Employers in the sample who had hired within the past two years were asked the level of difficulty they had in finding candidates with adequate basic skills. A majority of those stated

that it was either extremely or moderately difficult. The responses also indicated that it was most difficult to hire people with experience in the occupation, but hundreds of employers said it was most difficult to hire for entry level positions. Over 1,300 employers indicated that the number one reason for rejecting applicants was that they did not pass a drug screen, surpassing lack of work experience. When given the opportunity to list other reasons, employers indicated lack of driver's license or reliable transportation, lack of required certification, attendance history, employment history, failed employment skills testing, and others, most relating to soft skills.

A list of soft skills, and a list of technical skills was provided, so the employers could choose all skills gaps that have been identified in existing staff. Of the soft skills, across all industries and all areas, attendance was the skill that employers identified as the number one problem with present staff. Others chosen at high levels were time management, following directions, critical thinking, and communication. Gaps identified in technical skills often varied by industry. In a majority of the manufacturing industries, the top technical gaps were machining, welding, and electrical. In utilities, the number one technical skill selected was math. Utilities employers also ranked engineering and electrical at high levels. The selections from construction companies varied depending on the type of work that was done. Some of the top choices were carpentry, blueprint reading, industrial experience, equipment operating, electrical, and welding.

When employers were asked what area of training would be most valuable to improve the workforce, choosing from soft skills, occupational experience, or education, the majority ranked soft skills as most valuable. Respondents also were given the opportunity to list future technologies that would require training. Employers listed mobile technology, robotics, computer numerical control (CNC) technology, manufacturing automation technology, and general computer advancements as the top five technologies. The survey revealed that a majority of employers do not presently use training resources provided to them by various workforce development partners. A majority of employers still conduct their own training, on the job.

## 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'.

### (II)(A)(1)(B)(I) EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

While the unemployment rate has declined since the highest point of the recession in 2009, Alabama experienced a lag compared to the rest of the nation. Throughout 2016, Alabama's unemployment rate continued to be higher than the nation and one of the highest in both the southeast region and entire country. The 2016 annual average unemployment rate in Alabama was 6.0 percent, while the national rate was 4.9 percent. Alabama also had one of the lowest employment-population ratios in the nation at 53.4 percent, compared to 59.7 percent for the nation. These trends continued through the first 2 months of 2017 with rates over 6 percent, but began dropping in March. By June of 2017 Alabama's rate was lower than the nation at 4.6 percent and by the end of the year, the state was experiencing record lows of 3.5 percent unemployment rate, and under 76,000 people statewide that were unemployed. Unemployment rates for Alabama's seven regions by the end of 2017 ranged from a low of 3.1 percent in CAPTE to a high of 4.1 percent in Southwest. One of the most significant facts is that by the end of 2017 there were not any counties in the state with double-digit unemployment rates. Wilcox County, which has traditionally ranked in the Top 5 in the nation for highest unemployment rates, dropped to 8.9 percent in September, 2017. In December 2017 only 2 counties had a rate higher than 6.5 percent; Wilcox and Clarke.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, youth unemployment rates were also much lower in 2016. Youth, age 16 to 19, experienced an estimated unemployment rate of 19.3 percent in 2016, which is 10 percent lower than it was in 2014. Labor Force participants between the ages of 20 and 24 experienced a less significant drop in unemployment rate between 2014 and 2016, dropping from 12.9 percent to 10.0 percent. The unemployment rate for African Americans tend to be significantly higher than for Whites. When examining the rates by race and sex, the unemployment rate for Black males was 6 percent higher than White males, as it also was for Black females compared to White females. Black Males had the highest rate of 11.3 percent in 2016, which had dropped from 14.6 percent in 2014.

**Table 15. Unemployment Rate by Demographics**

Subject	
AGE	Unemployment rate
<b>16 to 19 years</b>	26.40%
<b>20 to 24 years</b>	16.70%
<b>25 to 44 years</b>	8.50%
<b>45 to 54 years</b>	5.70%
<b>55 to 64 years</b>	4.10%
<b>65 to 74 years</b>	3.70%
<b>75 years and over</b>	3.00%
RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN	
<b>White</b>	6.70%
<b>Black or African American</b>	13.70%
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native</b>	8.60%
<b>Asian</b>	4.90%
<b>Some other race</b>	5.00%
<b>Two or more races</b>	14.50%
<b>Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)</b>	6.60%
<b>White alone, not Hispanic or Latino</b>	6.70%
POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	
<b>Below poverty level</b>	28.50%
DISABILITY STATUS	
<b>With any disability</b>	17.20%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT 25 TO 64 YEARS	
<b>Less than high school graduate</b>	13.70%
<b>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</b>	8.90%
<b>Some college or associate's degree</b>	6.60%

Subject	
<b>Bachelor's degree or higher</b>	3.10%
MILITARY	
<b>Veterans</b>	5.54%
<b>Source: American Community Survey 2014</b>	

Alabama's labor force participation rate has fallen from 61.4 percent in 2007 to 56 percent in 2017, a series low for the state and one of the five lowest in the nation. The labor force participation rate is defined as the percentage of civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 and over who are employed or seeking employment.

In December of 2017, data published by BLS indicated that Alabama had the third lowest labor force participation rate in the nation, at 56.4 percent, behind West Virginia and Mississippi. According to a study conducted by The Liberty Foundation, where it compared labor force participation rates using 2013 BLS data, out of the 51 states, Alabama ranked second lowest labor force participation for ages 35 to 44, third lowest for ages 45 to 54, and fourth lowest for ages 55 to 64. Between 2014 and 2017, the labor force participation rate for those ages 35 to 44 dropped 5.5 percent, from 80.2 percent to 74.6. Upon further investigation, the noninstitutionalized population for that age group dropped nearly 60,000, with 40,000 being women. On the other hand, BLS data shows that labor force participation for youth age 16 to 19 has risen between 2014, at 25.7 percent, and 2017, at 28.5 percent.

In 2016, the measure of labor underutilization in Alabama was 10.4 percent, 2 percent lower than 2014, and close to the nation's rate of 9.6 percent. This measure includes the unemployed, those employed part time, and those marginally attached to the labor force. According to the Current Population Survey (CPS), Alabama had an average of 131,200 unemployed residents in 2016. Approximately 70,800 workers were employed part time for economic reasons, which is referred to as involuntary part time. These people were either part time because the businesses they worked for were experiencing poor business conditions or were unable to find full time employment. People marginally attached to the labor force are those who are not presently working, but would like to work, are available to work, and have looked for work within the last year, but have not searched within the last four weeks. In Alabama, the marginally attached in 2014 was approximately 25,600. The number of discouraged workers in the state, which is a subset of the marginally attached, was around 7,900, accounting for 31.0 percent of all marginally attached.

The latest census figures for 2016 estimate the population in the state age 16 to 19 is 271,306. Over 44,000 were not enrolled in school, and nearly 15,000 were not enrolled in school or participating in the labor force. In Alabama in 2016, there were approximately 130,177 youth age 14 to 21 in the workforce, 60.0 percent of them worked in retail trade and accommodation and food services, earning an average monthly wage of \$901. Nearly 8,050 worked in manufacturing, earning an average monthly wage of \$2,160, 7,500 in health care with an average monthly wage of \$1,220, and 8,900 in administrative and support and waste management services with an average monthly wage of \$1,470.

According to the SSI Annual Statistical Report 2016, Alabama ranks second in the nation, behind West Virginia, in the percentage of the population who are receiving disability social security benefits, 8.5 percent. Census estimates from 2016 reveal that there were approximately 787,132 people in the state with a disability, 40.0 percent over the age of 65. Nearly 135,000 disabled persons were in the labor force in 2016, with over 20,000 being unemployed. Half of those unemployed had some form of cognitive difficulty. Approximately 12,000 of the employed disabled persons had been determined to be below poverty level within the previous twelve months, while 7,300, over 60 percent, of the unemployed were below poverty level. Over 46.0 percent of the households in the state, with one or more people having a disability, received food stamps.

Table 16. Households & Families Receiving Food Stamps

<b>Households Receiving Food Stamps</b>	<b>270,409</b>
<b>Households with one or more people 60 years and over</b>	29.80%
<b>Households with children under 18 years</b>	70.20%
<b>Households below poverty level</b>	55.50%
<b>Households with one or more people with a disability</b>	46.10%
<b>Household Median income (dollars) past 12 months</b>	16,820
<b>Families Receiving Food Stamps</b>	183,628
<b>Families with no workers in past 12 months</b>	28.30%
<b>Families with 1 worker in past 12 months</b>	47.80%
<b>Families with 2 or more workers in past 12 months</b>	23.90%
<b>Source: American Community Survey 2014</b>	

In 2016, Alabama ranked 20<sup>th</sup> in the country in veteran population. (VA National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics) The state is home to five military bases: Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Montgomery; Anniston Army Depot, Bynum; Fort Rucker, Dale; Redstone Arsenal; and, Aviation Training Center Coast Guard, Mobile. In addition, Alabama is home to the fifth largest Army National Guard in the nation, with a total force of approximately 13,000. According to the US Department of Veterans Affairs, the veteran population in the state in 2016 was 373,761, 9.8 percent of the adult population. Over 43 percent of the state's veterans were 65 or older. Over 25 percent of the veterans live in the North region and 21 percent live in the Central six region.

A high percentage of veterans usually participate in the labor force, with Alabama's rate at 70 percent in 2016. Over 63.0 percent of the veteran population in the state has at least some education beyond high school, with 26.4 percent holding a bachelor's degree or higher. While the unemployment rate in 2016 averaged around 6.0 percent, the rate for veterans was 5.0 percent (ACS 2016). Still, there are many who need additional assistance due to disabilities which are often incurred during military service. Nearly 25,000 veterans were considered below poverty level in 2016 (ACS 2016). In addition, The Department of Veterans

Affairs (VA) National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics estimated that 94,803 veterans in the state were receiving disability compensation.

### (II)(A)(1)(B)(I) EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

An additional source of skilled labor exists in a pool of workers who are considered underemployed. Workers in occupations that underutilize their experience, training, and skills are underemployed. These workers often respond to job opportunities that they believe are better for reasons that include; lack of job opportunities, low wages in available jobs, and living too far from jobs. Workforce partners in Alabama fund an annual underemployment survey, which is now in its eighth year of existence. The 2016 survey reported approximately 6,719 responses across the state. In 2016, the underemployment rate in Alabama was 24.3 percent. More than half of the counties in the state had an underemployment rate higher than the state. The workforce development regions with the lowest rates were East Alabama Works and North Alabama Works, with 23.2 and 23.4 percent respectively. Central Alabama Works had the highest, 25.8 percent, with West Alabama Works close behind at 25.4 percent. Both of those regions include universities which produce large numbers of college graduates annually.

Most workers are satisfied with their jobs, but not satisfied with their earnings. If offered jobs paying up to 5.0 percent higher wages, 9.5 percent of the underemployed, about 48,000 workers, will leave their current jobs; 8.2 percent of all workers, almost 170,000, would leave for only a 5.0 percent increase. Respondents are asked if they have looked for a better job within the past three months. For all employed respondents in the state in 2016, 21.5 percent responded that they had looked for a better job, which was slightly less than 22.0 percent in the previous year. Of only those considered underemployed in the state, 35.5 percent had sought another job, slightly less than 36.0 percent in the previous year. The latest survey reported that more of those employed in Central, East, and Southwest Alabama Works are more willing to leave their current jobs for higher income. More of those that are employed in Central Six, Southeast, and West Alabama Works are willing to leave their current jobs for higher income as long as the offer is greater than 5 percent. In North Alabama Works, 10.0 percent of the underemployed are willing to leave their current job for just up to a 5.0 percent more income, compared to 5.5 percent for all employees.

Included in the survey instrument were questions about job satisfaction and willingness to train. Data collected showed that almost 70.0 percent of workers classified as underemployed were willing to train for a better job. Understandably, more were willing to train if the cost was covered by someone other than themselves. However, more of the underemployed were willing to pay for training themselves to develop their skills and gain better opportunities.

### (II)(A)(1)(B)(II) LABOR MARKET TRENDS

Nonagricultural employment of Alabama residents in the state averaged about 1.8 million quarterly from the second quarter of 2001 to the second quarter of 2014. The number of jobs in the state dropped from a high of 1.9 million in fourth quarter 2007 to a low of 1.7 million in the first quarter of 2011. Employment has shown signs of recovery after the first quarter of 2011, but was just above 1.8 million in the second of quarter of 2014.

The manufacturing sector was the leading employer in Alabama with 254,575 jobs in the second quarter of 2014. Rounding out the top five industries by employment are health care

and social assistance, retail trade, accommodation and food services, and educational services. These five industries provided 1,063,112 jobs, 58.8 percent of the state total. Manufacturing has historically had a huge impact on the economy of the state. Due to the export of jobs to other countries, a large fraction of Alabama's manufacturing employment in textile and apparel dwindled down to only a few thousand, tens of thousands at its height. Alabama has since replaced many of those lost jobs with transportation manufacturing. The state is home to four major auto manufacturing plants, a major ship building plant, several aerospace manufacturing plants including one producing planes in the US for the first time, located in Mobile, AL. These major plants have led to hundreds of thousands of jobs in parts manufacturing across the state. Automobiles have become Alabama's number one export. The state ranks second in the United States in vehicle exports, and fifth in the number of vehicles manufactured.

The insurgence of transportation manufacturing in the state has produced a huge demand for highly skilled technical workers. Occupations such as team assemblers, aircraft mechanics, aircraft assemblers, welders, industrial machinery mechanics, computer-controlled machine operators, machinists, and many others have experienced significant increases in employment. Furthermore, advances in technologies, such as the wide use of robots for parts assembly, have raised the level of skills required to compete for these jobs. As a result, industry and workforce development leaders in the state joined forces to open a Robotic Maintenance Training Center in 2010. This facility provides industry specific training in robotic systems, advanced manufacturing, welding, and more at no cost to Alabama industries and their affiliates. In 2011, the advanced research and development center was added to the Robotics Technology Park. This facility is used by public and private entities that are engaged in research and development of robotic and automated technologies. The newest facility, set to open in early 2016, is the integration, entrepreneurial and paint/dispense training center. The entrepreneurial section will allow Alabama companies space to build and adapt automation for new and existing manufacturing processes. It will also allow the companies to train staff on equipment processes before moving that equipment into the plant. The paint/dispense division gives Alabama businesses the opportunity to train employees in both manual paint spraying techniques as well as robotic dispense training. It can also be used for dispense process research and testing. This facility as well as the Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) Maritime training facility in Mobile are providing invaluable training services to manufacturing employers across the state.

Health care makes up approximately 13.0 percent of the state's employment. While hospitals have maintained a fairly steady employment level over the last decade, the more specialized areas of the health care industry are showing rapid growth. Due to the rise in the age of the population, the demand for home health services and nursing care facilities has grown rapidly. Two of the largest occupations in demand in recent years, have become personal care aides and home health aides. Although these are entry level occupations, and the wages are very low, they provide those who are interested in health care as a career a wonderful opportunity to enter the field before their training is completed. Outpatient surgical procedures have become the norm due to advances in technology, and this has created a boom in outpatient care facilities, or rehabilitation facilities. The huge demand for physical therapists, physical therapists assistants, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists is a result of the increasing number of people who need assistance in order to

function independently after medical procedures. The huge demand for health care has also created higher patient loads on physicians, which in the last decade has resulted in an increase in medical assistants, physician assistants, surgical assistants, etc. These professionals get trained to perform basic health care services, such as physicals, minor illnesses and health issues, and administer diagnostic tests, under the supervision of a physician. This frees the physicians to focus on the more serious medical problems. This is the trend throughout the health care industry. The number of surgeons, physicians, dentists, anesthesiologists cannot alone handle the huge needs from a growing and aging population. This provides huge opportunities for people who are interested in working in a health care field and earning a sustainable wage without having to obtain advanced degrees. In Alabama, as in most of the states in the nation, specialized health care occupations dominate the high demand occupations. Half of the current list of the top forty occupations in highest demand are health care occupations, with nine requiring less than a bachelor's degree for entry into the careers. Furthermore, looking at a list of the top 40 occupations in demand requiring less than a bachelor's degree, nearly half of those are also health care occupations.

The high demand occupations in the state are reflective of the industries that are presently in high demand, and are expected to continue that trend into the next decade. Workforce development partners are dedicated to providing training to meet employers' demands for a skilled workforce in these high demand industries and occupations. The goal to lift the state's economy is to provide its citizens with the necessary tools so that they are successful in careers that are high demand, fast growing, and also provide sustainable wages. The current top 40 high demand occupations in Alabama are based on the 2014-2024 occupational employment projections (Table 21). All three factors, demand, growth, and wages, are used to determine the occupations which fall into the category of high demand, or hot jobs, in the state.

Eleven of the occupations in high demand in the state are a result of the growing need for health care. The top five of these healthcare occupations that are in demand are in nursing or physical therapy, most of them requiring a bachelor degree or higher. The healthcare occupation in highest demand is still registered nurses, which is projected to have an average of 1,750 openings a year in the state through the year 2024. To enter a position as a registered nurse, applicants need an associates degree at minimum; however, the trend is rising for most to have a bachelor degree. Fortunately, nurses are in such great demand, that each year of education beyond high school can easily get people into the career, and move up with every new level of degree. Due to insurance costs and an increased number of the population needing health care, there are more demands for medical technician and assistant positions. Occupations such as physical therapist assistants, medical assistants, nursing assistants, dental assistants, and others of this nature are increasing in demand to help physicians with the increased patient loads. Furthermore, the rise in the aging population is presenting needs in home health care and nursing care facility healthcare occupations. While the demand is high, so is the turnover; for, these careers offer fairly low wages. But these are great occupations to begin a career ladder in healthcare.

Approximately 25.0 percent of the high demand occupations are in what's being referred to as skilled trade occupations. These are normally occupations that appear in construction and manufacturing industries. Four of them, industrial machinery mechanics, engine and other machine assemblers, team assemblers, and computer-controlled machine tool operators, are a direct result of a fast growing transportation and aerospace manufacturing industries in the state.

There is also a high demand for welders and various types of machinists across the state due to the state’s expanding manufacturing industries. While these are statewide demand occupations, the demand for skilled trade occupations in the state vary by region depending on the industry structure. This variability is reflected in the high demand occupations by region.

The remaining occupations that occur statewide in the high demand list are IT occupations, engineers, managers, and various financial and data analyst type occupations. Computer occupations will continue to be in high demand as technology increases the careers that require some type of computers use, even in manufacturing industries. In recent years, however, interest in the pursuit of advanced IT careers has waned, so workforce development is working on efforts to increase the number of students trained in this field. The three engineering occupations are all imperative for the success of the state’s thriving manufacturing sector; industrial engineers, mechanical engineers, and aerospace engineers. This analyst demand is both a reflection of an aging population that is planning for retirement and also an increased emphasis on making effective and efficient decisions based on data analysis. More than ever, companies are regularly examining data to determine the current level of production and how they can make it better.

Twenty occupations were selected as the fastest growing in the state for the 2014-2024 period (Table 18). Each of these occupations were expected to have an average of 2.35 percent growth each year during the period. Fourteen of the twenty are health care related occupations, and four were primarily construction or manufacturing occupations

(II)(a)(1)(B)(ii) Labor Market Trends (continued)

Table 17. Alabama High Demand Occupations 2014-2024

SOC Occupations	2014	2024	Percent Change*	Average Annual Growth (%)	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary(\$)
<b>15-1132 Software Developers, Applications</b>	4,910	5,860	19.43	1.78	165	93,782
<b>29-1141 Registered Nurses</b>	45,920	52,570	14.48	1.36	1,750	57,170
<b>15-1121 Computer Systems Analysts</b>	4,390	5,440	23.83	2.17	160	80,610
<b>29-1123 Physical Therapists</b>	2,120	2,820	33.22	2.89	125	86,538
<b>17-2112 Industrial Engineers</b>	4,380	5,000	14.16	1.33	190	86,347
<b>15-1133 Software Developers, Systems Software</b>	4,330	5,190	19.99	1.83	150	100,645
<b>17-2141 Mechanical Engineers</b>	3,480	4,100	17.57	1.65	170	89,020

SOC Occupations	2014	2024	Percent Change*	Average Annual Growth (%)	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary(\$)
<b>13-2011 Accountants and Auditors</b>	16,630	18,450	10.95	1.04	625	68,761
<b>49-9041 Industrial Machinery Mechanics</b>	10,120	12,570	24.19	2.19	505	51,054
<b>29-1171 Nurse Practitioners</b>	2,080	2,760	32.77	2.87	115	92,567
<b>41-4012 Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products</b>	24,180	26,560	9.86	0.94	735	62,788
<b>13-1111 Management Analysts</b>	5,350	6,080	13.74	1.29	150	94,824
<b>15-1151 Computer User Support Specialists</b>	5,960	7,080	18.65	1.74	190	47,092
<b>41-3021 Insurance Sales Agents</b>	6,880	7,610	10.72	1.01	255	76,607
<b>31-2021 Physical Therapist Assistants</b>	1,850	2,610	40.93	3.50	130	54,728
<b>49-3011 Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians</b>	2,920	3,590	22.80	2.09	135	67,678
<b>51-2092 Team Assemblers</b>	35,680	45,000	26.10	2.35	1,695	34,897
<b>29-1127 Speech-Language Pathologists</b>	1,540	1,980	28.93	2.54	85	71,015
<b>29-2061 Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses</b>	14,480	16,530	14.15	1.33	615	36,472
<b>51-4041 Machinists</b>	6,790	8,010	17.99	1.67	320	42,782
<b>43-4051 Customer Service Representatives</b>	30,420	34,080	12.02	1.14	1,115	32,476
<b>47-2111 Electricians</b>	9,630	10,780	11.90	1.13	260	46,877
<b>29-1122 Occupational Therapists</b>	1,200	1,530	28.26	2.46	55	82,640
<b>13-2052 Personal Financial Advisors</b>	2,280	2,690	18.06	1.67	100	127,515
<b>31-9092 Medical Assistants</b>	6,600	8,060	22.10	2.02	285	27,694
<b>13-1161 Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists</b>	3,010	3,580	18.92	1.75	95	60,814
<b>39-9021 Personal Care Aides</b>	13,850	18,040	30.27	2.68	530	18,669

SOC Occupations	2014	2024	Percent Change*	Average Annual Growth (%)	Average Annual Openings	Average Annual Salary(\$)
<b>17-2011 Aerospace Engineers</b>	4,240	4,550	7.26	0.71	150	116,098
<b>51-4121 Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers</b>	9,490	10,600	11.62	1.11	380	39,644
<b>15-2031 Operations Research Analysts</b>	900	1,210	34.67	3.00	45	97,540
<b>49-3031 Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists</b>	4,540	5,230	15.31	1.42	150	41,470
<b>53-3032 Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</b>	34,340	36,880	7.38	0.72	835	39,607
<b>15-1142 Network and Computer Systems Administrators</b>	4,710	5,130	8.92	0.86	105	72,130
<b>31-1011 Home Health Aides</b>	5,190	7,030	35.41	3.08	300	20,324
<b>43-6013 Medical Secretaries</b>	4,700	5,610	19.35	1.79	140	32,871
<b>29-2011 Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists</b>	2,430	2,790	14.93	1.39	95	54,417
<b>21-1022 Healthcare Social Workers</b>	2,340	2,790	19.13	1.77	100	47,343
<b>31-1014 Nursing Assistants</b>	23,820	27,350	14.81	1.39	890	23,034
<b>35-2014 Cooks, Restaurant</b>	14,890	17,360	16.53	1.55	640	22,060
<b>49-9051 Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers</b>	3,920	4,580	16.77	1.57	220	65,630

Note: Occupations were selected using unrounded data based on the descending order of average ranking based on four variables: growth, openings, wages, and Help Wanted Online job ads. Wages based on the 2016 employment and wage estimate file. Data provided by the Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division in cooperation with the Projections Managing Partnership, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Totals in some occupational groups may not add due to exclusion of sub-groups and/or individual occupations with employment of less than 10 in the base (2014) and projected (2024) years or where publication of the occupation would violate confidentiality. \*\*\* The data for these occupations are confidential according to standards provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 1. Employment is rounded to the nearest 10. 2. Average Annual Growth is compounded and based on unrounded data. 3. Openings are rounded to the nearest 5. \* Percent change is based on unrounded data.

Table 18. Alabama Fast Growing Occupations 2014-2024

SOC	Occupations	2014 Employment	2024 Employment	Percent Change*	Average Annual Growth (%)	Average Annual Openings
<b>31-2011</b>	Occupational Therapy Assistants	500	730	45.71	3.86	35
<b>31-2021</b>	Physical Therapist Assistants	1850	2610	40.93	3.50	130
<b>31-2022</b>	Physical Therapist Aides	610	840	36.66	3.25	40
<b>53-3011</b>	Ambulance Drivers and Attendants, Except Emergency Medical Technicians	580	790	36.51	3.14	30
<b>31-1011</b>	Home Health Aides	5190	7030	35.41	3.08	300
<b>51-4012</b>	Computer Numerically Controlled Machine Tool Programmers, Metal and Plastic	550	740	35.35	3.01	35
<b>15-2031</b>	Operations Research Analysts	900	1210	34.67	3.00	45
<b>29-1071</b>	Physician Assistants	520	700	34.42	3.02	30
<b>29-1123</b>	Physical Therapists	2120	2820	33.22	2.89	125
<b>29-1171</b>	Nurse Practitioners	2080	2760	32.77	2.87	115
<b>29-9091</b>	Athletic Trainers	460	610	32.68	2.86	25
<b>51-2091</b>	Fiberglass Laminators and Fabricators	780	1040	32.61	2.92	45
<b>51-4011</b>	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	1670	2190	31.06	2.75	105
<b>39-9021</b>	Personal Care Aides	13,850	18,040	30.27	2.68	530
<b>51-2011</b>	Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers	1470	1890	28.95	2.54	70
<b>29-1127</b>	Speech-Language Pathologists	1540	1980	28.93	2.54	85

SOC	Occupations	2014 Employment	2024 Employment	Percent Change*	Average Annual Growth (%)	Average Annual Openings
<b>15-1134</b>	Web Developers	760	970	28.67	2.47	30
<b>29-1122</b>	Occupational Therapists	1200	1530	28.26	2.46	55
<b>29-2041</b>	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	3610	4580	26.81	2.41	155
<b>31-9097</b>	Phlebotomists	2140	2700	26.53	2.35	100

NOTE: THE 20 OCCUPATIONS WERE SELECTED BASED ON THE HIGHEST ANNUAL AVERAGE GROWTH USING THE UNROUNDED DATA PLUS THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA: 1) EMPLOYMENT OF AT LEAST 10. 2) AT LEAST 5 ANNUAL AVERAGE OPENINGS. DATA PROVIDED BY THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, LABOR MARKET INFORMATION DIVISION IN COOPERATION WITH THE PROJECTIONS MANAGING PARTNERSHIP, AND THE U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS.

Totals in some occupational groups may not add due to exclusion of sub-groups and/or individual occupations with employment of less than 10 in the base (2014) and projected (2024) years or where publication of the occupation would violate confidentiality.

\*\*\* The data for these occupations are confidential according to standards provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

1. Employment is rounded to the nearest 10.
  2. Average Annual Growth is compounded and based on unrounded data.
  3. Openings are rounded to the nearest 5.
- \* Percent change is based on unrounded data.

(II)(A)(1)(B)(II) LABOR MARKET TRENDS (CONTINUED)

Table 19. Alabama High Demand Occupations Requiring Associate Degree and Under 2014-2024

SOC	Occupations	2014	Work Keys Math	Work Keys for Info	Work Keys Info	Average Openings	Average Salary (\$)
<b>49-904</b>	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	10,120	4	4	4	505	51,054
<b>41-401</b>	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	24,180	5	5	4	735	62,788
<b>15-115</b>	Computer User Support Specialists	5,960	4	4	4	190	47,092
<b>41-302</b>	Insurance Sales Agents	6,880	4	5	5	255	76,607
<b>31-202</b>	Physical Therapist Assistants	1,850	4	4	4	130	54,728
<b>49-301</b>	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	2,920	4	5	5	135	67,678
<b>51-209</b>	Team Assemblers	35,680	3	4	4	1695	34,897
<b>29-206</b>	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocation Nurses	14,480	4	4	4	615	36,472
<b>51-404</b>	Machinists	6790	4	4	4	320	42,782
<b>43-405</b>	Customer Service Representatives	30,420	4	4	4	1115	32,476
<b>47-211</b>	Electricians	9630	4	5	5	260	46,877
<b>31-909</b>	Medical Assistants	6600	4	5	4	285	27,694
<b>39-902</b>	Personal Care Aides	13,850	3	4	4	530	18,669
<b>51-412</b>	Welders, cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	9490	3	3	4	380	39,644
<b>49-303</b>	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	4540	3	4	4	150	41,470
<b>53-303</b>	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	34,340	3	4	4	835	39,607

SOC	Occupations	2014	Work Keys Math	Work Keys for Info	Work Keys Info	Average Openings	Average Salary (\$)
<b>31-101</b>	Home Health Aides	5190	3	4	4	300	20,324
<b>43-601</b>	Medical Secretaries	4700	3	5	4	140	32,871
<b>31-101</b>	Nursing Assistants	23,820	3	4	4	890	23,034
<b>35-201</b>	Cooks, Restaurant	14,890	3	3	4	640	22,060
<b>49-905</b>	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	3920	4	4	4	220	65,630
<b>49-902</b>	Heating, A/C, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	5080	4	4	4	150	39,937
<b>47-206</b>	Construction Laborers	10,420	3	4	4	340	28,899
<b>35-302</b>	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	46,320	3	3	3	2080	18,365
<b>51-906</b>	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	11,040	3	4	4	405	34,513
<b>53-706</b>	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	40,870	3	3	4	1615	24,880
<b>49-907</b>	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	15,420	4	4	4	515	38,343
<b>47-203</b>	Carpenters	11,890	4	4	4	515	37,221
<b>43-302</b>	Billing and Posting Clerks	7470	4	4	4	265	33,549
<b>43-417</b>	Receptionists and Information Clerks	14,060	3	4	4	530	25,445
<b>29-204</b>	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	3610	3	5	4	155	28,806
<b>43-508</b>	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	22,190	3	3	4	910	25,000
<b>47-215</b>	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	5930	4	4	4	135	41,922

SOC	Occupations	2014	Work Keys Math	Work Keys for Info	Work Keys Info	Average Openings	Average Salary (\$)
<b>51-401</b>	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	1670	4	4	4	105	37,084
<b>29-202</b>	Dental Hygienists	3040	3	4	4	100	44,972
<b>53-705</b>	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	9670	3	3	3	330	32,415
<b>41-203</b>	Retail Salespersons	59,990	3	4	4	2,525	27,075
<b>31-909</b>	Dental Assistants	3390	3	4	4	140	32,922
<b>49-302</b>	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	9220	4	4	4	305	39,685
<b>31-201</b>	Occupational Therapy Assistants	500	4	4	4	35	58,900

**(II)(A)(1)(B)(III) EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE**

In 2012, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) revised their assignment of educational and training categories to occupations. While these assignments represent a typical path to enter an occupation, more often than not additional training must occur to develop employees to perform more specified tasks. Using American Community Survey (ACS) and the Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) data, BLS assigned every occupation an education and training category including three parts; typical education needed for entry, work experience required in a related occupation, and typical on-the-job training.

Using these assignments, the training and educational level of the present workforce and future needs of the workforce was analyzed in Alabama using 2012-2022 occupational employment projections data. In 2012, only 30.0 percent of the people worked in occupations that required formal education beyond high school. In other words, only 30.0 percent of the jobs required at least some college or postsecondary award or certification to qualify them to enter employment. However, around half the people in jobs that didn't require formal training, high school diploma or less, were still required to successfully complete some level of moderate to long term training to learn the specific duties of the job. When looking at the projected employment through 2022, the state is expected to grow 10.4 percent. Analyzing the projected growth by formal training categories, jobs requiring an associate's degree are expected to grow the most at 18.9 percent, significantly higher than the state average. Furthermore, all categories from some college without a degree all the way through a doctoral or professional degree are expected to grow at a rate higher than the state average. This is the norm throughout the country. Those jobs only requiring a high school diploma or less are projected to grow near 9.0 percent over the period.

Looking at projected growth by on-the-job training requirements, jobs requiring apprenticeships are projected to grow twice as fast as the state average, at 20.3 percent. Statistics have always shown that education pays, and the data still holds true. But in 2013 in Alabama, the average salary for the workforce in jobs requiring an associate degree, \$48,622, nearly equaled the state average salary for all occupations at \$48,723. The data also proves that work experience pays more; for, people holding jobs that required work experience to enter the occupation, received higher than the average wages for all occupations in the state. Those requiring at least five years of work experience nearly double the salary of the state average.

In recent years, national attention has been drawn to skills requirements for jobs. Employers are telling workforce development officials that they cannot find people with the skills to fill their open positions. Often employers and public officials will use the term “high skilled jobs” or that they can’t find skilled people to fill these jobs. The understanding is that these gaps are often in skilled trade positions and jobs that do require training past high school, some more intensive than others, but don’t require as high as a bachelor degree to enter the job and be successful. Some researchers have begun using terms such as low skill, medium skill, and high skill jobs. Low skill are jobs that require a high school diploma or GED or less and no further training to enter the occupation. High skill jobs require a bachelor’s degree or higher. Medium skill jobs have become the focus of workforce development efforts. These are jobs that may not require a degree, but do require at least some training after high school, whether it’s extensive on the job training, or a certification, license, or apprenticeship, or maybe an associate degree. These are the jobs employers are experiencing difficulties filling. Over a third of the jobs in Alabama fall into this category. Furthermore, looking at the top forty occupations that ADOL determined to be high demand for the projection period of 2014-2024, not only are there more people currently employed in those high demand medium skilled jobs, than the high and low skilled jobs combined, there will obviously be more openings due to growth and replacement in those jobs than the high and low skilled combined. Just the medium skilled high demand jobs alone were projected to create over 32,000 new jobs through 2024. These are the jobs that are important to fill, for these are determined to be growing faster than average, produce a large number of job openings, and also provide a sustainable wage.

During the 2011-2012 school year Alabama’s high school graduation rate was 75.0 percent, higher than only ten states in the nation, with the national rate at 80.0 percent. Education and public officials in the state have worked tirelessly to improve the graduation rate, implementing PLAN 2020, with the goal of preparing all students to be successful in college and/or career upon graduation from high school, and getting the high school graduation rate up to 90.0 percent by 2020. As a result, during the 2013-2014 school year, Alabama’s high school graduation rate was up to 86.3 percent, up from 80.0 percent the previous year. Furthermore Alabama had the nation’s second highest increase behind Delaware in the same time period. Hot off the presses, on January 14, 2016 the Alabama State Department of Education announced that early results show that during the 2013-2014 school year, the graduation rate increased to 89.0 percent. Early data shows that approximately 68.0 percent of those met standards for either college, work, or the military. Although the graduation rate has improved, the percentage of students, enrolled in Alabama public colleges, taking remedial classes has remained steady at 32.0 percent. Half the high school graduates in Alabama in enrolled in Alabama public colleges. Of these nearly 23,000 students, 15.0

percent of them took remedial math, 5.6 percent took remedial English, and another 11.4 percent took both remedial math and English in college. The large percentage of Alabama students required to take remedial classes beyond high school intensifies the gaps in decision making and problem solving skills. Alabamians who are weak in the basic math and English skills will be less likely to be able to apply these to everyday workplace decisions.

#### (II)(A)(1)(B)(IV) SKILL GAPS

According to employers, the more apparent problem with the workforce in the state is a lack of soft skills. Skills such as work ethic, dependability, basic comprehension skills, ability to follow rules, critical thinking, and leadership are lacking in the workforce in the state. Alabama's *Ready To Work* program, provided at 63 sites, was developed to train students in basic skills requiring a 95.0 percent attendance and punctuality rate, a 70.0 percent score on the *Alabama Certified Worker Examination*, a minimum WorkKeys Assessment Level 3 on Applied Math, reading for information, and locating information, and others. The AIDT Maritime Training Center in Mobile reports that tardiness and absenteeism is the major cause of the industry's 38.0 percent turnover rate. A survey conducted by Southwest Alabama Workforce Development Council (SAWDC), revealed that the main reasons for terminating employees were not lack of technical skills, but tardiness, absences, and lack of teamwork.

The Occupational Information Network (O\*NET), divides skills into various categories, with basic skills being skills that all occupations require at some level. O\*NET also uses additional categories of skills, such as complex problem solving, resource management, social, systems, and technical skills. For total openings projected for Alabama through 2018, the highest skills gaps are expected to occur in basic skills, obviously because these skills are present in all occupations. The most critical of these skills was reading comprehension, with active listening next. The resource management skill which will experience the highest gap is time management. The highest skills gap for systems skills was in judgment and decision making, and the highest for technical skills was equipment selection.

In closer examination of the required skills for Alabama's projected high demand, fast growing, and high earning occupations, a determination was made on the percentage of occupations that include a particular skills as primary, or ranked in the ten most important skills for the occupation (Table 24). Complex problem solving is a primary skill in 58.0 percent, judgment and decision making primary in 65.0 percent, and social perceptiveness in 55.0 percent of the high demand occupations. Technical skills which were prominent in the high demand occupations were operation monitoring (watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly) and quality control analysis (conducting tests and inspections of products, services or processes to evaluate quality or performance).

Table 20. Percentage of Selected Occupations for Which Skill Is Primary

Skills	Selected High-Demand Occupations	Selected Fast-Growing Occupations	Selected High-Earning Occupations
<b>Basic Skills: Active Learning</b>	38	35	54
<b>Basic Skills: Active Listening</b>	98	80	90
<b>Basic Skills: Critical Thinking</b>	98	90	90
<b>Basic Skills: Learning Strategies</b>	10	10	10
<b>Basic Skills: Mathematics</b>	8	5	18
<b>Basic Skills: Monitoring</b>	73	80	56
<b>Basic Skills: Reading Comprehension</b>	85	70	82
<b>Basic Skills: Science</b>	15	10	34
<b>Basic Skills: Speaking</b>	93	80	88
<b>Basic Skills: Writing</b>	53	30	60
<b>Complex Problem Solving Skills: Complex Problem Solving</b>	58	25	72
<b>Resource Management Skills: Management of Financial Resources</b>	3	0	2
<b>Resource Management Skills: Management of Material Resources</b>	0	0	0
<b>Resource Management Skills: Management Personnel Resources</b>	8	0	12
<b>Resource Management Skills: Time Management</b>	35	50	12
<b>Social Skills: Coordination</b>	45	55	28
<b>Social Skills: Instructing</b>	23	35	14
<b>Social Skills: Negotiation</b>	0	0	8
<b>Social Skills: Persuasion</b>	8	10	12
<b>Social Skills: Service Orientation</b>	35	45	12
<b>Social Skills: Social Perceptiveness</b>	55	55	42
<b>Systems Skills: Judgment and Decision Making</b>	65	40	80

Skills	Selected High-Demand Occupations	Selected Fast-Growing Occupations	Selected High-Earning Occupations
<b>Systems Skills: Systems Analysis</b>	10	5	8
<b>Systems Skills: Systems Evaluation</b>	5	0	2
<b>Technical Skills: Equipment Maintenance</b>	3	0	0
<b>Technical Skills: Equipment Selection</b>	3	0	0
<b>Technical Skills: Installation</b>	0	0	0
<b>Technical Skills: Operation and Control</b>	5	5	2
<b>Technical Skills: Operation Monitoring</b>	10	10	2
<b>Technical Skills: Operations Analysis</b>	3	0	8
<b>Technical Skills: Programming</b>	5	5	2
<b>Technical Skills: Quality Control Analysis</b>	13	15	0
<b>Technical Skills: Repairing</b>	3	5	0
<b>Technical Skills: Technology Design</b>	0	0	0
<b>Technical Skills: Troubleshooting</b>	3	5	0

Note: Rounding errors may be present

Source: O\*NET Online and Center for Business and Economic Research, The University of Alabama

While data collected at the national and state level are helpful to identify very general skills that are lacking in the workforce, it is vital for workforce development partners to ascertain more specific information. Employers are experiencing firsthand the skills gap problems and are an excellent resource to determine the skills that are lacking in the workforce.

According to employers in manufacturing, utilities, and construction industries across the state, applicants are rejected often because they do not display essential skills rather than lacking technical skills. The *2013 Alabama Skills Gap Survey* reported that 67% of respondents rejected applicants due to poor attitude or presentation. Employers also listed additional reasons for rejecting applicants such as lack of driver's license or reliable transportation, attendance history, employment history, and failed employment skills testing. When those employers were asked to identify weaknesses in their existing workforce, the overwhelming response was attendance problems. Over 800 employers indicated following directions, and approximately 750 employers chose time management as major deficiencies in their workforce. Employers were asked which of the three would be the most valuable training to improve the workforce between more education, occupational experience or skills, or soft skills. Employers indicated that training in soft skills would be most valuable to improve the workforce.

Youth in Alabama have the lowest participation in the labor force than any other age group. Youth who are participating in the labor force experience the highest unemployment rate of all age groups. Research conducted by the Education Testing Service reported that adults born after 1980 are weak in literacy, math, and problem solving in the present high tech environment. The data reports that this population in the U.S. is far weaker than other countries, and can hurt the economy in the U.S. According to the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE), over 3,500 students graduating in 2015 who enrolled in Alabama public colleges were required to take remedial math classes in college. Additionally, 30% of the graduates in Alabama's public colleges were enrolled in remedial math, remedial English, or both.

While youth in Alabama display gaps in math and reading skills, employers are concerned more about life skills. Youth are lacking fundamental skills which employers expect all employees to have; punctuality, good attendance, respect for superiors, and motivation. In addition, employers are concerned about skills involving teamwork and communication. The education system is addressing these skills with students enrolled in K-12 and in community colleges, but out of school youth need training in these essential skills that will allow them to be successful in the work place.

Adults face many of the same challenges as youth. As mentioned above, people born after 1980 that reside in this country are weaker in math and reading skills than those in other countries. As a result, even adults into their 30's need assistance in developing these skills. Many adults born before 1980 need additional training in using today's technology. Many older adults are not as computer literate as today's workplace requires. Burning Glass reported that 78% of middle-skill jobs in the country require computer skills, such as spreadsheet and word processing. In today's world, problem solving in the workplace requires an understanding of digital technology. Adults need computer skills to seek job opportunities, apply for jobs, develop a resume, at the very least, and a large number of adults in Alabama need computer applications training. More than a third of Alabamians lack internet access, either due to service area or choice not to pay for service. Many of these residents are low-income individuals, who need assistance to gain additional skills that can help them secure sustainable employment.

The TANF population all fall into the "Low Income Individuals" category. However, they may be represented in of several of the categories listed above. TANF clients are the larger welfare population while JOBS clients are a subset of TANF clients that participate in the TANF work program known as JOBS. Analysis and observations show the following:

- 20% of TANF clients lack a high school diploma or GED
- Majority of JOBS client lack a substantive work history
- Majority of JOBS clients lack reliable transportation
- Majority of TANF clients lack reliable/legal Child Care services Soft

Skills deficiencies for JOBS clients include:

- Attendance
- Attire
- Customer Service

- Communication
- Adaptability
- Problem Solving
- Computer Knowledge
- Work Ethic
- Research
- Writing

(II)(a)(1)(B)(iv) Skill Gaps (continued)

The JOBS Program in Alabama referred 3,731 clients to job readiness classes during 2015 with the intention of developing and/or significantly improving the client's work skills, especially soft skills. From these, a total of 1,065 people acquired employment. Further investigation reveals that out of a total 233 new hires for the year, 138 remained employed for at least 90 days after their start date.

SNAP participants fall in the "Low Income" category. Many participants in this category face barriers to employment, especially ABAWDS (Able Bodied Adults without Dependents). There are approximately 14,729 ABAWDS in the state that are unemployed. There are an additional 86,881 SNAP participants that are not working for various reasons. Currently, ABAWDS in 10 counties are referred to partnering Career Centers for assistance to find employment. While there, participants may also receive assistance with skills gaps that are barriers to employment. Some of the skills gaps identified by the Career Centers are:

- Effective Communication Skills
- Computer Skills
- Conflict Resolution Skills
- Customer Service Skills
- Dressing for Success
- Interviewing Skills
- Resume Preparation
- Soft Skills (How to Maintain Employment)
- Coping with Change
- Teamwork
- Time Management
- Effectively Dealing with Stress
- Work Ethics

The aforementioned gaps are confirmed with our Alabama Department of Labor Career Center partners, who work with our clients to meet these needs on a regular basis. Many Career Center locations hold workshops on location to cover these topics in an effort to educate the population that we serve with the overall goal in mind of improving a participant's employability. Approximately 10% of those referred are taking advantage of the services currently offered at the Career Centers but we are maximizing our efforts to increase that number to help ensure that all in need receive the best services afforded to them. Although only ABAWDS are currently referred to the Career Center, any SNAP participant may partake of the services that are offered at the various Career Centers located throughout the state. Through our many visits, it has been made known that many other

SNAP participants do take advantage of the Career Center services offered, they simply are not ABAWDs.

Alabama's residents who are faced with some type of disability have additional barriers and unique skills gaps. Data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and American Community Survey demonstrate that approximately 73% of working age Alabamians with a disability who wish to participate in the labor force are unemployed. While each individual with a disability's barriers to employment are unique, it may be observed that certain skill-gaps are quite common. Data on educational outcomes and skill attainment consistently show disproportionately lower outcomes among Alabamians with disabilities, particularly among those disabled at an early age. Educational qualifications appear to be of critical importance to Alabamians with disabilities as they pursue entry to the labor market. The positive effects of post-secondary training upon both labor force participation and lifetime earnings of persons with disabilities is firmly established within data from the Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics. After reviewing consumer surveys, findings from public hearings, and VR's most recent Comprehensive Needs Assessment, ADRS identified the most common skills gap, or barriers to skills attainment, faced by ADRS consumers. They are as follows:

**A.** The majority of Alabamians with disabilities who are capable of post-secondary education require reasonable accommodations within the postsecondary setting. Yet many never receive these accommodations. VR's instruction in the self-advocacy skills needed to acquire academic accommodations has been proven effective in this regard. VR counselors also assist students with disabilities in their pursuit of academic accommodations by helping them obtain the necessary documentation that is required.

**B.** Alabamians with disabilities have a need for greater access to rehabilitation technology resources to include assistance in selecting the right solution, training in the use of these resources, and financial assistance to acquire them.

**C.** Because of the inherent limitations posed by some disabilities, Alabamians with disabilities must make informed choices regarding their vocational goal selection and subsequent career pathways in order to minimize barriers to employment and maximize success on the job. There are times when an individual with a disability may pursue a job goal for which, according to Alabama's labor market demand, little opportunity of job growth exists. To address this issue, ADRS will provide professional staff with a labor market "dashboard" that will make it clear and easy to recognize which occupations within the state show the most promising future. Training will be provided to staff to enhance their ability to use current labor market information to facilitate the employment of individuals with disabilities into higher demand jobs.

**D.** Alabamians with disabilities often experience delays in participating in employment opportunities and subsequently lack "soft skills" such as communication, team building, decision-making, time-management, etc. Furthermore, Alabamians with developmental disabilities have a "soft skills" gap because of the nature of the disability and will require specific training geared towards addressing this "soft skills" gap.

**E.** Long gaps in employment history, due to absences from the job market either because of the onset of a disability or the intermittent need for medical treatment due to a disability, are often a source of concern among employers because there is a loss of skills that is

typically be gained by workers who acquire specific skills-sets while working on-the-job over long periods of time.

## 2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

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

### A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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

\* Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

#### (2) (A) The State's Workforce Development Activities

Alabama devotes significant resources to education and workforce development at the local, regional and State levels. In 2014, the Governor created and formally established the Alabama Workforce Council. The Council was tasked with advising and supporting core partners in Alabama's workforce development and education system to include, but not limited to, reviewing ways to streamline and align the existing workforce development functions in the State, evaluating regional workforce development and educational needs by promoting regional workforce councils and evaluating public/private partnerships (sectors) to create a feedback loop for industry and education.

The core programs including WIOA Title I-B, Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education and Rehabilitation Services provide a number of educational training activities through their respective programs. All of these activities are represented on the Alabama Workforce Development Board (AWDB). The AWDB also has cross representation from the private business sector membership on the Alabama Workforce Council.

The core programs previously under the Workforce Investment Act and currently under WIOA have participated and partnered in Alabama's One-Stop Career Center system since 2001. The core partner programs include WIOA Title I, adult, dislocated worker and youth training activities provided through a newly developing system within Alabama. In the proposed system there

will be not less than six (6) and not more than nine (9) local workforce development boards and an appropriate number of administrative entities. The State level administrative entity for WIOA Title I is the Alabama Department of Commerce, that provides oversight and policy guidance through the Alabama Workforce Development Board for activities under WIOA Title I.

The yet to be determined workforce development areas provide career services, client assessment, case management, referral to Individual Training Accounts, on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, and work based learning. They also provide specialized employment and training activities for youth, including basic education, GED programs, occupational skills training, and work based learning activities.

The Alabama Workforce System (AWS) includes the following programs and entities operated through the following agents.

- Alabama Career Center System - Operated as a partnership between the Alabama Department Of Commerce ((WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, nd Youth) And The Alabama Department Of Labor (Wagner- Peyser) UI, TAA And Veterans). The Career Center System also collaborates with Adult Education, Rehabilitative Services, TANF, Snap and Title IV of the Older Americans Act (SCESP). Statewide there are 26 comprehensive career centers and 14 satellite and itinerant sites in the system. In PY2014 the Alabama Career Center System provided 352,837 individuals with Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange Services and 7,924 individuals with WIOA training services, serving low-income adults, youth, and dislocated workers. Wagner-Peyter funding for PY2014 was \$8,502,449 and Workforce Investment Act Funds totaled \$32,090.579.
- Adult Education Activities - Adult Education Services Are Offered through the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) throughout the State. In Fiscal Year 2015 funding totaled \$20,154,737 and had enrolled approximately 20,000 full time and 26,000 part time students in adult education classes. Adult Education have been an active partner with the Alabama Career Center System since 2001and will continue to expand services within the Career Centers under WIOA.
- Alabama Department Of Labor - Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act, And Veterans Services - The Alabama department of Labor (ADOL) houses the Wagner-Peyser Program (Employment Service), Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act, and Veterans Services Programs. ADOL Wagner-Peyser And WIOA Title I programs have been collocated as part of the Alabama Career centers Since 2001. The Alabama Job Link (AJL) Is provided by the ADOL. Alabama Job Link Is the online job seeker and employer registration system that provide job seeker skills, abilities and work history with employers posting job openings in the system. ADOL provides Trade Act Services And Veterans Employment Representatives in the career centers. In PY2014 approximately 350,000 job seekers were registered in the AJL system.

- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) – The Department of Rehabilitation Services Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) provides specialized employment and education related services and training to assist teens and adults with disabilities to become employable. services include skill assessments, counseling, training programs, job placement, assistive technology and transportation. for Program Year 2014 funding for the VRS program totaled approximately \$25,000,000; and for the same period 31,244 jobseekers with disabilities were provided services. since 2001 the VRS has been an active partner in the Alabama Career Center System.

### **(A) The State’s Workforce Development Activities (continued)**

#### **Optional Partner Programs**

- Alabama Department of Human Resources - TANF and SNAP – the Alabama TANF program operated by the Alabama Department of Human Resources. TANF provide family assistance to provide income to low income one parent families needing support to provide basic needs for dependents. The welfare to work component of family assistance is known as the Jobs Program. all clients receiving assistance are referred to the jobs unit for assessment in regard to their skills, prior work experience and employability. Individuals on family assistance determined to ready to engage in work activities will be placed in a work-related activity such as subsidized/unsubsidized employment, job search, job readiness classes, skills training or GED classes. The number of TANF clients in work activities for FY15 averaged 4,800 monthly and TANF expenditures for work activities totaled \$12,243,965.
- SNAP or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps) also operated a work-related program through a contract with the Alabama Department of Labor for job search assistance. The number of clients provided services was 18,089 and expenditures totaled \$1,392,000.
- Alabama Department of Senior Services - Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) - The Senior Community Service Employment Program provides work-based job training for older Americans age 55 and up. For Program Year 2014 Alabama was allocated \$1,599,492 for the program to fund 165 slots for older workers through sixteen (16) sub-grantees across the state.

Although not formal partner programs included in this plan, Alabama’s community college system and K-12 public schools provide important support for the Alabama workforce system. Alabama’s College and Career Ready standards for all high school graduates play an important role in preparing all students for college and workplace success. The Alabama Community

College System is critical to the success of all workforce development activities in the state. Their specific programs for Career Technical Education in K-12 and the ACCS programs and activities are described in relevant sections of this plan.

## **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.

The strengths and weaknesses of Alabama's workforce development activities include the following:

**Strengths:**

- STRONG SUPPORT FROM POLITICAL EDUCATION AND BUSINESS LEADERS FOR WORKFORCE PROGRAMS ACROSS ALL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS.
- BUSINESS LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM TO ALIGN TRAINING PROGRAMS WITH THE NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY.
- THE ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM (ACCS) WITH ITS NETWORK OF 26 COLLEGES AND 89 INSTRUCTIONAL SITES PROVIDES ACCESS TO STUDENTS THROUGHOUT THE STATE SEEKING CAREER PATHWAYS AND CREDENTIALS TO QUALIFY FOR MIDDLE SKILLS JOBS.
- ALABAMA HAS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN STATE LEVEL CORE PROGRAM AGENCIES THAT GOES BACK TO 2001. THERE IS A CULTURE OF STRONG COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION THAT ENHANCES SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE ALABAMA CAREER CENTER SYSTEM.
- THE ALABAMA CAREER CENTER SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES SERVICES TO JOB SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS AT 26 COMPREHENSIVE CENTERS AND 16 SATELLITE AND ITINERANT SITES.

**Weaknesses:**

- LIMITED DATA INTEGRATION - TWO OF THE CORE PARTNER PROGRAMS MAINTAIN SEPARATE DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR PARTICIPANT TRACKING AND CASE MANAGEMENT FUNCTIONS.
- LIMITED AWARENESS OF THE STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE SYSTEM AS A BRAND BY JOB SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS. A UNIFIED AND UNIVERSAL BRAND FOR THE ALABAMA WORKFORCE SYSTEM NEEDS TO BE CREATED AND IMPLEMENTED.
- LACK OF A P-20W STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM TO TRACK HOW JOB SEEKERS AND STUDENTS ARE USING THE ALABAMA WORKFORCE SYSTEM AND COMPETENCY JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS FROM K-12 AND POSTSECONDARY TO EMPLOYMENT.
- THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM CORE AND OTHER PARTNERS MUST CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE SOFT SHELL TRAINING INTO ALL ALABAMA WORKFORCE SYSTEM SUPPORTED TRAINING PROGRAMS.

## **C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY**

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

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) currently consists of 25 community and technical colleges with over 100 sites to deliver education and training for the citizens of Alabama. The ACCS has over 150 Career and Technical Education credit programs that may lead to stackable short certificates, certificates, and Associate of Applied Science Degrees, with most having stackable, nationally recognized credentials as part of the program. The industry sectors that have the biggest enrollments are healthcare, manufacturing, and construction. The ACCS works very closely to with regional/local business and industry to support programs in high demand to meet capacity needs. The ACCS has several tools to offset potential capacity issues, such as utilizing labs at the partner secondary schools, mobile training units, employing adjunct faculty from business and industry, and etc.

The ACCS also has short term training programs at each of the colleges that target high demand, high wage careers on scheduled and on an “as needed or as required basis”. These programs have tremendous flexibility, and provide another avenue for those individuals needing a quicker setting for completing their training needs so they can move into their career pathway faster. This type of training leads to nationally recognized credentials or licensing and the curriculum provides a linkage for the individuals to potentially gain college credit should they choose to pursue additional training and education during their career.

Alabama’s workforce system capacity to provide services to both jobseekers and employers is shared by a number of agencies and program providers as summarized in (2)(A) of this document. The State’s network of Career Centers is a shared function among the Alabama Department of Commerce for WIOA Title I services, the Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL) for Wagner-Peyser, UI, Trade Act and Veterans’ services, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation services for vocational rehabilitation services and the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) for adult education (ABE) services. The network of twenty-five (25) comprehensive Career Centers and twenty-two (22) satellite and itinerant centers provides broad coverage in all sixty-seven (67) counties in Alabama. Also, the Alabama JobLink is an internet-based online registration system for jobseekers and employers.

The State agencies overseeing Alabama’s WIOA core programs and optional partners not only share space and services throughout the Alabama Career Center System but also interact on a regular basis to share program opportunities to best deliver programs on a local and regional basis. Our agencies working off a solid background of sharing data and collaboration of program services are ready to serve the State’s businesses, jobseekers, training seekers, and others with the most viable options to meet their needs. The Alabama Workforce System has implemented a number of recent changes including agency/program consolidation and industry led regional councils to ensure more efficient and comprehensive access to available services.

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## B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

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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

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

Alabama will have a Workforce System that is aligned with the general and specific needs of Alabama business and focus on the alignment of programs to meet the skills gap needs of our workers (especially those with barriers to employment) and the economic strategies provided through the state's *Accelerate Alabama 2.0* Strategic Plan.

## 2. GOALS

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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—

- A. GOALS FOR PREPARING AN EDUCATED AND SKILLED WORKFORCE, INCLUDING PREPARING YOUTH AND INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS OF EMPLOYMENT\* AND OTHER POPULATIONS.\*\*
- B. 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.

### I.(b)(2) Goals

The Alabama Workforce Council has recommended and the Governor and Legislature have wholly adopted these recommendations as Alabama's goals:

1. THE STATE OF ALABAMA WILL IMPLEMENT A WORKFORCE SYSTEM BASED ON THE GOVERNOR'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN (*ACCELERATE ALABAMA 2.0*) WHICH IS THE SECOND PART OF A TWO PART PLAN TO MAINTAIN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MOMENTUM ENJOYED BY ALABAMA OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS.

2. PROVIDE A LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEM AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE NEW WORKFORCE SYSTEM.
3. DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STRONG NETWORK OF EMPOWERED REGIONAL WORKFORCE COUNCILS THAT WILL PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN BRIDGING BUSINESS NEEDS WITH A TALENT SUPPLY CHAIN.
4. IMPLEMENT A STREAMLINED FUNDING SYSTEM THAT ENABLES EACH SUPPLY POINT TO EXCEL AT MEETING BUSINESS NEEDS AND NEEDS OF CITIZENS ALREADY IN OR PREPARING TO BE IN THE ALABAMA WORKFORCE.
5. CREATE OR IDENTIFY STREAMLINED FUNDING CHANNELS FOR TRAINING WITH CLEAR PERFORMANCE METRICS.  
DEVELOP AND SUPPORT A STATEWIDE EDUCATION AND TRAINING RESOURCE SYSTEM THAT ENABLES EACH RESOURCE TO EXCEL AT MEETING BUSINESS NEEDS EFFECTIVELY.

Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce in Alabama include the following:

1. TO ALIGN AND CONSOLIDATE THE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM AND REGIONAL WORKFORCE COUNCILS WITH THE STATE'S VISION AND GOALS.
2. TO ALIGN THE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS OF COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, AND TRAINING AGENCIES WITH THE *ACCELERATE* ALABAMA 2.0 PLAN'S THREE MAIN TENETS--RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND RENEWAL.
3. TO ENSURE THAT ALL PROGRAMS HAVE STRATEGIES TO SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT. (THE STATE HAS A VERY STRONG DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES THAT WORKS WITH MANY TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS. OUR GOAL IS TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF SOLUTIONS FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS TO BE VERTICALLY INTEGRATED INTO ALL WORKFORCE PROGRAMS.)

Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers in Alabama include the following:

1. TO IMPLEMENT A ROBUST REGIONAL WORKFORCE COUNCIL SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES DIRECT FEEDBACK TO EDUCATION PROGRAMS (COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM, THE K-12 CAREER TECH SYSTEM, ETC.) AND TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE WIOA TRAINING PROVIDERS.
2. TO ALIGN THE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS OF LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS WITH ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS THE STATE REGIONAL WORKFORCE COUNCIL SYSTEM.
3. TO DEVELOP PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS THAT PROVIDE DIRECT ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ENTITIES TO INCREASE CAPACITY FOR MEETING EMPLOYERS' WORKFORCE NEEDS.

Alabama's core workforce development programs and WIOA partner programs are gathering and analyzing data on performance indicators to report for the current reporting period. All programs will reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor in conjunction with the Secretary of Education on state adjusted levels of performance for the indicators for Program Years 2018 and 2019. To effect an orderly transition to the performance accountability system in Section 116 of the WIOA, the Departments will continue to use the transition authority under WIOA Section 503(a) to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators. Alabama is committed to collecting and reporting on all indicators as required by WIOA for current and future years using the reporting system prescribed.

### 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.)

Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)

PY 2018 Adults Proposed 75.30% Final 77.00%

PY 2019 Adults Proposed 75.80% Final 78.00%

PY 2018 Dislocated Workers Proposed 78.80% Final 78.80%

PY 2019 Dislocated Workers Proposed 79.30% Final 79.30%

PY 2018 Youth (Education, Training or Employment) Proposed 58.20% Final 58.20% PY

2019 Youth (Education, Training or Employment) Proposed 58.70% Final 58.70% PY 2018

Adult Education Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Adult Education Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2018 Wagner-Peyser Proposed 65.00% Final 71.00%

PY 2019 Wagner-Peyser Proposed 66.00% Final 71.50%

PY 2018 Vocational Rehabilitation Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Vocational Rehabilitation Proposed baseline Final baseline

Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)

PY 2018 Adults Proposed 73.50% Final 73.50%

PY 2019 Adults Proposed 74.00% Final 74.00%

PY 2018 Dislocated Workers Proposed 75.00% Final 75.00%

PY 2019 Dislocated Workers Proposed 75.50% Final 75.50%

PY 2018 Youth (Education, Training or Employment) Proposed 64.50% Final 66.00%

**PY 2019 Youth (Education, Training or Employment) Proposed 65.00% Final 67.00%**

PY 2018 Adult Education Proposed baseline Final baseline  
PY 2019 Adult Education Proposed baseline Final baseline  
PY 2018 Wagner-Peyser Proposed 68.00% Final 72.00%  
PY 2019 Wagner-Peyser Proposed 69.00% Final 72.50%  
PY 2018 Vocational Rehabilitation Proposed baseline Final baseline PY  
2019 Vocational Rehabilitation Proposed baseline Final baseline Median  
Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)  
PY 2018 Adults Proposed \$5,550.00 Final \$5,550.00  
PY 2019 Adults Proposed \$5,750.00 Final \$5,750.00  
PY 2018 Dislocated Workers Proposed \$6,700.00 Final \$6,700.00 PY  
2019 Dislocated Workers Proposed \$6,900.00 Final \$6,900.00 PY 2018  
Youth Proposed baseline Final baseline  
PY 2019 Youth Proposed baseline Final baseline  
PY 2018 Adult Education Proposed baseline Final baseline  
PY 2019 Adult Education Proposed baseline Final baseline  
PY 2018 Wagner-Peyser Proposed \$4,600.00 Final \$4,600.00  
PY 2019 Wagner-Peyser Proposed \$4,700.00 Final \$4,700.00  
PY 2018 Vocational Rehabilitation Proposed baseline Final baseline PY  
2019 Vocational Rehabilitation Proposed baseline Final baseline  
Credential Attainment Rate  
PY 2018 Adults Proposed 53.80% Final 56.00%  
PY 2019 Adults Proposed 54.30% Final 57.00%  
PY 2018 Dislocated Workers Proposed 55.50% Final 57.50%  
PY 2019 Dislocated Workers Proposed 56.00% Final 58.50%  
PY 2018 Youth Proposed 38.80% Final 38.80%  
PY 2019 Youth Proposed 39.30% Final 39.30%  
PY 2018 Adult Education Proposed baseline Final baseline  
PY 2019 Adult Education Proposed baseline Final baseline  
PY 2018 Wagner-Peyser Proposed N/A Final N/A  
PY 2019 Wagner-Peyser Proposed N/A Final N/A  
PY 2018 Vocational Rehabilitation Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Vocational Rehabilitation Proposed baseline Final baseline  
Measurable Skill Gains

PY 2018 Adults Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Adults Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2018 Dislocated Workers Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Dislocated Workers Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2018 Youth Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Youth Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2018 Adult Education Proposed 44.00% Final 44.00%

PY 2019 Adult Education Proposed 45.00% Final 45.00%

PY 2018 Wagner-Peyser Proposed N/A Final N/A

PY 2019 Wagner-Peyser Proposed N/A Final N/A

PY 2018 Vocational Rehabilitation Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Vocational Rehabilitation Proposed baseline Final baseline

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

PY 2018 Adults Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Adults Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2018 Dislocated Workers Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Dislocated Workers Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2018 Youth Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Youth Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2018 Adult Education Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Adult Education Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2018 Wagner-Peyser Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Wagner-Peyser Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2018 Vocational Rehabilitation Proposed baseline Final baseline

PY 2019 Vocational Rehabilitation Proposed baseline Final baseline

Note: Baseline data is being collected for several measures and no performance levels will be set at this time.

#### 4. ASSESSMENT

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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.

Assessment goals and goals for using assessment feedback to make improvements in programs and activities are as follows: 1. A longitudinal data collection and feedback system in the Regional Workforce Council regions will be implemented to report to and inform decision making by the Alabama Workforce Council (AWC). The State plans to begin implementation with state funds beginning in January 2017. Initial implementation will establish additional partner input and timelines. 2. The AWC will use the feedback/assessment data to make recommendations to the Governor, the Alabama Community College System Chancellor, the Alabama State Department of Education Superintendent, the Alabama Secretary of Commerce, and the Alabama Legislature to meet business needs and improve training/education activities and programs. 3. The WIOA Board and its leadership will ensure that 75% of the membership in each of the seven (7) Regional Workforce Councils are business and industry leaders and that each Region formally surveys, at least annually, these business professionals regarding the skill needs in each Region. 4. As the management of the seven (7) Regional Workforce Councils resides in the Alabama Department of Commerce along with the administrative support for the Governor's Alabama Workforce Council, there will be a natural and direct link between the Regional Councils and the Alabama Workforce Council. 5. The Department of Commerce will assist the Regional Councils and the Alabama Workforce Council in the formal reporting of the workforce needs from the regions. 6. The Deputy Secretary of Commerce for Workforce Development has established formal communications regarding the workforce needs with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Community College System, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Human Services, and all other necessary agencies and entities that will have a direct impact on serving citizens that may have barriers to employment. 7. The Department of Commerce has formally established a working group of agency professionals for ongoing discussions related to the workforce data collected with a goal to establish action plans with goals and objectives directly related to the skill needs and the Accelerate Alabama Economic Development Strategic Plan that is facilitated by the Alabama Department of Commerce.

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### C. STATE STRATEGY

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

#### 1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY

SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION 101(D)(3)(B), (D). "CAREER PATHWAY" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(7) AND INCLUDES REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP. "IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(23).

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(c ) State Strategies to achieve goals

Alabama's strategies for achieving its strategic workforce development goals emerged from a two-year task force study by the Alabama Workforce Council appointed by the Governor on July 2, 2014. This study, by Alabama's leaders of industry, business, education and government, recommended these strategies in their report to the Governor on January 31, 2015:

1. Develop and implement a robust longitudinal data system (P-20W) for use by all stakeholders to inform decision-making and planning to meet changing workforce training and education needs. The P-20W data system will collect data from state education agencies, the Department of Labor, industries, and other parties to evaluate education and workforce trends. The system will serve as the centerpiece of the education and industry "feedback loop".
2. Create and launch an awareness campaign to change generational misperceptions about long-term careers in the skilled trades and raise awareness about long-term career opportunities in Alabama. The campaign will serve as the marketing centerpiece for the state's workforce development efforts to educate students and adults about career pathways and opportunities, and to direct them to a one-stop-shop online resource for more information about educational programs, industry websites, and other workforce development programs.
3. Develop and implement a "One Stop Shop" online workforce information resource - a - single online resource for all information about state workforce development efforts and career opportunities. Separate portals within the main site will deliver content relevant to each of the identified target demographic groups - (1) students, (2) adults seeking to re-enter the workforce, (3) parents, and (4) educators.

State strategies including sector strategies and career pathways as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3) (B), (D)

Alabama's 26 Community Colleges (ACCS) has adopted a "1:2:7 Imperative" designed to better address the needs of students for whom a bachelor degree or graduate degree is not needed for employment. To assist these workers, ACCS's goal is to create a highly with multiple access points to provide educated, skilled workers reflecting the needs of regional businesses, thus improving both the local and state economy.

Alabama Community College System (ACCS) annually provides an entry to postsecondary education for approximately 150,000 students including credit, non-credit, and adult basic education. In order to meet the challenges of Alabama's current and emerging industries, ACCS is committed to providing the education and training to meet the skills demanded of the new and restructured jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Projections show an increasing number of those occupations, also know as middle-skill jobs, require a high school education coupled with some level of

postsecondary training in career and technical education programs rather than a baccalaureate or advanced degree. It is projected that out of every ten (10) projected future occupations, one (1) will require a postgraduate degree, two (2) will require a bachelor's degree, and seven (7) will require a certificate, credential, and/or an associate's degree.

To meet these challenges, ACCS is implementing programs and strategies to:

- Cultivate partnerships and implement a modified “supply chain” approach;
- Create highways to completion (clear, defined steps to completion coupled with student-centered services and supports)
- Build capacity (acquire resources to accomplish the ACCS mission)
- Make data-informed decisions using a longitudinal data collection to evaluate progress and plan next steps.

Alabama's K-12 education system is also involved in workforce development and educating students for Alabama's high demand, high-paying jobs. Alabama public schools now (as of 2014) require all graduates to be college and career ready. Students enrolled in public high schools participate in career awareness courses and have opportunities to earn both college credit and career certifications while attending high school. All 12<sup>th</sup> grade students take the ACT WorkKeys assessment to provide prospective employers with information about their work place skills. In addition, all Alabama 11<sup>th</sup> grade students take the ACT to assess the achievement of academic skills.

Alabama's K-12 schools have a wide variety of Career Technical Education (CTE) programs that allow students to pursue areas of interest for future employment. Career Pathways form a transit system for careers, mapping out the various routes workers can take to achieve their career and life goals. They serve as a recruitment and retention tool for industry sectors, clearly conveying the career pathways within the industry to incumbent and potential employees.

Businesses identify the career progression within occupations they need to prosper. The education system, with continued consultation with employers, organizes programs that allow job seekers to access the right amount of education and training to fulfill those job requirements and move up the career ladder throughout their lives.

The career pathway approach connects levels of education, training, counseling, support services, and credentials for specific occupations in a way that optimizes continuous progress towards 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.

Career pathways are most effective when they are highly informed by businesses in a regional economy and, when they are supported by system partners. These pathways

can offer a mechanism for those with barriers to employment to move more efficiently into jobs. The workforce development partners can identify potential participants and provide the support services for these job seekers to succeed in their education and training. Business input can help the education system better tailor and update curriculum based on regional industry needs and trends.

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) represents all schools in the state of Alabama, including 136 high schools. The ALSDE career and technical education (CTE) section is responsible for facilitating career, technical and academic education. Alabama organizes its CTE programs using the Career Clusters framework. Alabama CTE is offered through the following institutions: (1) Comprehensive high schools, (2) specialized CTE centers, and (3) Community Colleges. Alabama implements programs of study across all sixteen Career Clusters. Alabama has adopted the National Career Clusters Model and is implementing standards and programs across all 16 Career Clusters. The Alabama State Plan indicates that Career Cluster implementation will provide a smooth transition between secondary and postsecondary education and eliminate duplication of coursework. They will help students select a program of study that is academically and technically challenging that will also lead to postsecondary education opportunities or entry in to a high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand occupation. Alabama CTE leaders are working to align the state's CTE with the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations' top 40 high-skill, high-wage, and high-demand occupations. This information is being used for all secondary CTE Courses of Study development.

State strategies including sector strategies and career pathways as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3) (B), (D) (continued)

Programs of Study: Alabama maintains programs of study, secondary CTE standards and postsecondary CTE standards in each of the Career Clusters.

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Career Cluster
- Architecture & Construction Career Cluster
- Arts, A/V Technology & Communications Career Cluster
- Business Management & Administration Career Cluster
- Education & Training Career Cluster
- Finance Career Cluster
- Government & Public Administration Career Cluster
- Health Science Career Cluster
- Hospitality & Tourism Career Cluster
- Human Services Career Cluster
- Information Technology Career Cluster
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security Career Cluster
- Manufacturing Career Cluster

- Marketing Career Cluster
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Career Cluster
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Career Cluster

Secondary to Postsecondary Transition & Alignment: Alabama offers dual enrollment and statewide articulation to ease the transition from secondary to postsecondary, namely through the Accelerated High School program, the Early College Enrollment Program and other dual enrollment opportunities.

Alabama has statewide articulation agreements in the following Career Clusters:

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources Career Cluster
- Architecture & Construction Career Cluster
- Arts, AV Technology & Communications Career Cluster
- Business Management & Administration Career Cluster
- Education & Training Career Cluster
- Human Services Career Cluster
- Information Technology Career Cluster
- Manufacturing Career Cluster
- STEM Career Cluster
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics Career Cluster

Recognizing a major shortage of craft professionals within Alabama and a need for better career pathways for students, Alabama’s legislature signed into law a requirement for all of ALSDE’s CTE programs to have industry-supported advisory programs to ensure students are career ready upon graduation.

Industry Collaboration: In 2013, ALSDE created industry committees in response to new legislation requiring Alabama CTE programs to have advisory programs to ensure industry has influence on the training process. ALSDE identified representatives for the construction industry advisory committee by utilizing trade associations, like Associated Builders and Contractors and Home Builders Association. The construction advisory committee consists of a diverse group of industry stakeholders ranging from large contractors to state-led utilities to residential builders.

Feedback from all industry advisory committees indicated a strong demand for industry-recognized credentials, so the committees established Career Readiness Indicators, which equate to credentials or certifications that demonstrate a student is ready for career placement. The construction advisory committee strongly supported the use of NCCER curricula for the craft professions because committee members agreed NCCER provided the most widely recognized credentials.

The construction advisory committee meets twice a year to monitor Career Readiness Indicators, evaluate goals, validate curricula and ensure that students are learning in-demand skills. This routine observation and feedback allows industry to refine students' skills so that they are better suited for employment right out of high school.

**Simulating the Workplace:** In the fall 2015 semester, ALSDE launched the Alabama Simulated Workplace initiative that creates an environment modeled after the workplace. For example, students log their time and attendance and receive a simulated paycheck. The program is designed to build a student's real-world portfolio, and instead of receiving a letter grade, the student receives practical feedback on how to improve for his or her career. If a student's portfolio is weak, the student can even be fired.

The Simulated Workplace not only enhances instructional delivery and changes the culture of CTE, but also gives students the opportunity to take ownership of their individual performance. By 2018, every Alabama CTE center will become a simulated Alabama company. An essential component of the Simulated Workplace is feedback from industry advisory committees that inspect programs using industry-based rubrics as measurement tools. Each inspection team will review curriculum, interview instructors and students, and observe classroom environments, safety procedures and working processes.

Additionally, students graduating from ALSDE-endorsed workplaces receive not only a high school diploma, but also two credentials. The first credential is from ALSDE representing successful completion of an endorsed program, and the second is an industry credential that the curriculum is based upon. Students learning construction crafts earn NCCER Core or level credentials, which are also Career Readiness Indicators.

An important part of effectively delivering NCCER training to all of Alabama's CTE students was for the ALSDE to become an NCCER Accredited Training Sponsor. Doing so allowed the ALSDE to establish each of its schools that offer construction programs as NCCER Accredited Training Education Facilities. This streamlined the process of delivering NCCER training and assessments, and made it easier for students to obtain NCCER credentials.

State strategies including sector strategies and career pathways as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3) (B), (D) (continued)

**Career Preparedness:** To better facilitate career-based decision making among its students, ALSDE requires every student take a one-credit career preparedness course in ninth grade that focuses on academic and career planning prior to graduation.

The career preparedness course has three integrated areas of instruction: academic planning and career development, financial literacy and technology. Students define their career goals and plan their coursework through grade 12. This four-year plan is a dynamic document that can be updated, but it serves as a compass for students' career paths. The course allows students to spend a year looking at careers and what it takes to get there.

In addition, ALSDE employs 79 career coaches to better educate students on the options available to them. Career Coaches in Alabama high schools act as liaisons between industry, students and parents in each of ALSDE’s schools. More students are earning in-demand industry credentials than ever before. From 2013 to 2014, NCCER module completions rose by nearly 90 percent and ALSDE expects to see even greater growth in when 2015 results are reported. The ACT WorkKeys assessment is administered to all high school seniors in Alabama public schools.

As baseline data for Alabama’s CTE programs the following information for the 2014-15 school year is presented in Table 24 below.:

Table 21. Career Technical Education programs in Alabama

Item/Feature of CTE in Alabama	Number, Amount of Percentage
<b>Number of public high schools</b>	376
<b>Number of public high school offering CTE courses</b>	72
<b>Students enrolled in public high schools</b>	262,062
<b>Students enrolled in CTE courses</b>	170,448
<b>Students identified as high school CTE concentrators</b>	81,341
<b>Number of public community colleges</b>	26
<b>Number of full and part-time students enrolled in public community colleges</b>	125,477
<b>Number of post-secondary CTE concentrators</b>	39,932
<b>Total Perkins funds received</b>	\$ 19,175.065
<b>Percentage of Perkins funds distributed to secondary schools</b>	70 %
<b>Percentage of Perkins funds distributed to post-secondary</b>	30 %

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).

The Department of Commerce’s Workforce Development Division is dedicated to assisting the growth of Alabama businesses and the workers that sustain their operations. By directing individuals toward job skills improvement programs,

education, and training, the Workforce Development Division equips workers with the tools and talents that employers demand. At the center of the Workforce Development Division's mission is the Alabama Industrial Development Training agency (AIDT), one of the nation's top state workforce training agencies. AIDT offers comprehensive pre-employment selection and training, leadership development, on-the job training, and assessments — all specific to each company's needs. AIDT has worked with thousands of businesses and trained more than 600,000 workers. The Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce is responsible for several workforce programs formerly managed by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, including the Alabama Career Centers (funded by the Alabama Department of Commerce and managed by the Alabama Department of Labor) and various training programs. The division also oversees the state's seven (7) Regional Workforce Development Councils, which connect local business leaders with education officials to formulate strategies to ensure the job demands of the industry are being met. Formally established in 2015 by the Alabama state legislature by Alabama Legislative Act No. 2015-450, the Regional Workforce Councils provide a direct link to the workforce needs of business and industry at the local level. The Councils are business-driven and business-led, and work with their member counties to develop a regional strategic plan and comprehensive workforce development system that supports local economic and job development activities. Councils monitor the workforce needs of business and industry in their region, then develop and implement practical solutions. These range from hosting regional job fairs for immediate hiring needs, to addressing the short-term and long-term training needs of businesses. Regional Workforce Councils are a key mechanism in helping to ensure that there is an available pipeline of highly trained workers with relevant skills that Alabama companies want. Alabama's Regional Workforce Councils direct critical information and data to and from the Alabama Workforce Development Board. To achieve the goals set by the Alabama Workforce Councils, Regional Workforce Councils, State WIOA Board and the Local Area Boards it is imperative that not only our core partners of the Combined Plan are fully integrated into the developing workforce system, but our optimal partners, as well. In the state legislation that created the Workforce Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce it clearly outlines that the Deputy Secretary of Commerce work directly with the Alabama Community College System Chancellor in developing joint process and rules for development and delivery of programs, such as the Regional Workforce Council Guidelines and the rules for developing the state's new Apprenticeship Alabama program. The point is, the Alabama Community College System and the Alabama Department of Commerce are working together on many levels and will continue that partnership as we seek to develop training for the populations to be served. Adult Education in Alabama is managed within the Alabama Community College System and its leadership is included on our management team as well as on the Combined Plan writing team. Currently, the Alabama Department of Commerce is actively involved with state agencies and institutions of Alabama's Rehabilitation Services to develop services for the populations they serve. Specifically, a Workforce Training Center has been established at the EH Gentry Campus of the Alabama Institution of the Deaf and Blind. This is an example of partnerships in action and the willingness and courage to continue developing

pathways for populations that may have barriers to reach the workplace. The Alabama Department of Labor manages the Alabama Career Center System that is funded by WIOA in Alabama. The respective staffs of these agencies are fully engaged and integrated as we serve the citizens. The Combined Core Partners and Optimal partners have vowed to continue formally working together and developing strategy going forward as we learned the power we have when working as a team through this exercise of plan development. Our experience at the national convening meeting in Washington helped us see the value and we will continue working together through formal meetings and joint activities aimed at our special populations. We have learned that leveraging our resources is very powerful. In working with our core and optimal partners, to insure employment, the ACCS has an ever expanding Work Based Learning initiative in both non-credit and CTE credit programs. This is targeting ALL populations. As part of our Work Based Learning strategies we have registered apprenticeships, nonregistered apprenticeships, Cooperative learning, clinicals and preceptorships. We are in the process of redesigning CTE programs to ensure Work Based Learning is an integral part in any CTE program submitted that is a key component of the program. Core partners will be aligned through the guidance of the State and Local Workforce Development boards to meet the vision of a world class skilled workforce. Each core and additional partner will focus their services and resources to support the needs of jobseekers and employers. The ACCS Adult Education Office is Alabama's eligible agency for adult education and is responsible for the administrative and programmatic oversight of the Title II AEFLA funds distributed to eligible, competitively selected providers. Under WIOA, ACCS Adult Education eligible providers' services may include all of the following: • adult education and literacy; • workplace adult education and literacy; • family literacy; • English language acquisition; • Integrated English literacy and civics education; • workforce preparation; • integrated education and training.

ACCS Adult Education will focus on expanding low-skilled individuals' access to career pathways in high-demand occupations. With this focus, the integrated education and training (IET) activities and the contextualized curriculum and materials used for IET will be aligned to Alabama's College and Career Readiness standards for ELA/Literacy, science, and math. In addition, workforce preparation activities will align to OCTAE's Employability Skills Framework, and any occupational training components provided will be based on business and industry standards. All low skilled jobseekers will have access to these Pathways through a "no wrong door" approach to career center services. The 1:2:7 Initiative that has been discussed in previous sections will allow guidance for all partners to focus alignment of resources to meet the objective of a trained skilled workforce. Alabama's strategies for achieving its strategic workforce development goals emerged from a two-year task force study by the Alabama Workforce Council (AWC) appointed by the Governor on July 2, 2014. This study, by Alabama's leaders of industry, business, education and government, recommended these strategies in their report to the Governor on January 31, 2015: 1. Develop and implement a robust longitudinal data system (P-20W) for use by all stakeholders to inform decision-making and planning to meet changing workforce training and education needs. The P-20W data system will collect data from state education agencies, the Department of Labor, industries, and other parties to evaluate education and workforce trends. The system will serve as the

centerpiece of the education and industry “feedback loop. 2. Create and launch an awareness campaign to change generational misperceptions about long-term careers in the skilled trades and raise awareness about long-term career opportunities in Alabama. The campaign serves as the marketing centerpiece for the state’s workforce development efforts to educate students and adults about career pathways and opportunities, and to direct them to a one-stop-shop online resource for more information about educational programs, industry websites, and other workforce development programs. 3. Develop and implement a “One Stop Shop” online workforce information resource -- a single online resource for all information about state workforce development efforts and career opportunities. Separate portals within the main site will deliver content relevant to each of the identified target demographic groups - (1) students, (2) adults seeking to re-enter the workforce, (3) parents, (4) educators and (5) individuals with disabilities. 4. The Governor has directed that all actions related to job creation and workforce development are required to have a direct correlation to the Accelerate Alabama Plans that formally identify twelve (12) industry development sectors. The AWC recommendations mentioned here are all based on direct industry input, workforce data, and are connected through the Accelerate Alabama Plan. The Alabama Department of Commerce, through its Workforce Development Division, will insure alignment and full integration with all workforce system agencies, entities and citizens.

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### III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

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

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#### A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

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The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

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##### 1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

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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 Alabama Workforce Development Board (AWDB) was appointed by the Governor in November 2015 in compliance with Section 101(a) of WIOA. The AWDB carries out its WIOA required functions as provided in Section 101(d) of WIOA to ensure the alignment of Alabama's workforce development programs. The Alabama Workforce Development Board meets quarterly and provides feedback on policies, programs and system effectiveness to core workforce partners and employers.

The Board has four (4) working committees in addition to the Executive Committee. The working committees are:

**Strategic Planning Committee:** The committee provides guidance and promotes strategies to strengthen partnerships among education, workforce partners and economic development efforts. Among other functions, the committee may also make recommendations regarding the alignment of programs and services within the Regions.

**Performance Accountability and Oversight Committee:** The Performance Accountability provides leadership and guidance regarding the development and continuous improvement of a statewide system of activities funded through WIOA and carried out through the one-stop career center system. The committee will also assist in assessing the effectiveness of the local Workforce Development Areas in continuous improvement of workforce development activities. **Communication and Marketing Committee:** The Communication Committee recommends ways to increase public awareness and promotes the services offered by Alabama's workforce development system. This Committee also recommends strategies to promote greater awareness of the system to business and industry.

**Innovation and Opportunity Committee:** The Innovation Committee assists the Board in developing a strategy to increase external growth and to leverage available existing resources to improve the quality of services.

The State Workforce Development Board’s decision making process generally starts with the Board committees discussed above, State Board committees will meet between quarterly Board meetings to review recommended state policies, Department of Labor or Other Federal partner agency guidance and core partner staff proposals for operational guidance. Committee recommendations will be submitted to the Executive Committee or the full Board with recommendations for Full Board action via vote. State Board support staff may also provide policy recommendations and /or operational guidance recommendations electronically to the Board or Board committees for Board feedback and input. Any Board member may also present recommendations to the Executive Committee or the full Board for consideration and vote by the Board. All actions and recommendations by the Board are presented as a motion and a second before a vote is taken. All motions and the Board decisions via vote are maintained in the official Board minutes available on the Department of Commerce website ([www.madeinalabama.com](http://www.madeinalabama.com)).

The staff support for the Alabama Workforce Development Board will be provided by the Alabama Department of Commerce’s Workforce Development Division; however, the Board and its Committees will also utilize core partner staff to assist in carrying out required Board functions outlined in WIOA.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

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

### A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE’S STRATEGY

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

The six (6) core programs under the major core components of WIOA are in four (4) different agencies: Title I is in the Alabama Department of Commerce; Title II is in the Alabama Community College System; Title III is in the Alabama Department of Labor; and, Title IV is in the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. These agencies, however, have partnered with each other since 1992 in providing coordinated or co-located services in the Alabama Career Center System. These agencies have met on a regular basis throughout WIA to provide and improve services to job seekers and employers through the system. WIOA has renewed these agencies to ensure coordinated and cooperative services.

Core program and optional plan partners’ activities to carry out the state strategies identified in the plan are based on unique partnerships between the partners, the Alabama Workforce Development and the Governor’s Alabama Workforce Council. All core partners participate at the executive level, the senior management level and the volunteers participating on the Board. The fact that sixty-five counties of

Alabama's sixty-seven counties form one local area and the administrative entity/fiscal agent is the Alabama Department of Commerce ensures that activities are aligned across programs. Also the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and the Career Tech programs within the Alabama Department of Education participates on the executive level meeting senior staff meetings and council and Board meetings. The activities funded to implement the State's strategies includes enrollments in Title I activities for adult, youth and dislocated workers, adult education activities provided in the Comprehensive Career Centers, Wagner-Peyser employment services and Rehabilitation Services staff referrals to any appropriate services.

However, the state has reorganized the local areas based on a newly developed plan that divides the state into 7 workforce regions. The 3 previous local areas (Jefferson, Mobile and 65 counties) were re-organized and developed into 7 local areas that match the workforce regions. The purpose is alignment across all the partners. Not only Core Partner agencies, but all sub-partners will have access to local data and strategic decisions will be made in each local area regarding solutions to workforce needs and especially those populations to be served. This reorganization was fully implemented as of July 1, 2017.

Five of the new local workforce development areas, which were formerly part of the 65 county balance of state, operate policy wise and with administrative support from the Alabama Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division, which had administered the 65 county local workforce development area. Policy support and the coordination of services will continue from the other core partners for the five new local workforce development areas in order to ensure continuity of established policies such as priority of services to public assistance recipients. Senior Level from the core as well as non-core partners such as DHR, will continue to meet and seek to continue services to targeted groups of job seekers as we have done for years. The five new local workforce development areas will not be without experienced senior level guidance and support. When there a problem serving either the job seeker or the employer, we fix the problem.

SNAP E&T services will be expanded from 10 to 38 Alabama Career Center's across Alabama for FY 2017. The focused of the Career Centers will be on job search activities for Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDS). Referrals to the Career Center's come to Alabama Job Link electronically and allow for any SNAP E&T ABAWD to have access to services immediately at any of those 38 Career Centers. The plan is to work with local DHR offices and Career Centers in those 38 counties to continue to establish policies, priorities and outreach for this population within the first quarter of 2017. SNAP E&T is also in the planning stages of a partnership with the Alabama Community College System Adult Education program. This partnership will start with a pilot program for 50/50 Administrative match program in Mobile County by January 2017. This partnership will include two community based organizations in this area as well as the local Career Center. The focus of this partnership is to look at barriers ABAWDS may have to employment in this area and match the services needed to overcome employment barriers and match them to the local workforce needs of that area. Once this partnership establishes protocols and policies we look to role this out statewide over FY 2017 and FY 2018

The TANF Program is a cash assistance and work program operated by the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR). There are approximately 5,000 clients receiving TANF and participating in DHR's work program called JOBS. JOBS clients are required to register with Alabama Job Link (AJL). The plan is to create an interface with DOL whereby a record is automatically created or updated in AJL for JOBS clients. This will allow us to track TANF clients as they progress through the Career Center System and other workforce partner programs. The automated referral to DOL will expedite receipt of services for TANF clients as they will not have to go to another office to register in AJL and they will be clearly identifiable as TANF clients so they will receive assistance according to the mandated priority of service. As a result of the automated referral DHR will receive performance outcome data that will be used to modify policies and procedures as appropriate. In the interim, we plan for monthly contacts between the JOBS case manager and Career Center case manager to ensure TANF clients are receiving full benefit of work force services.

For clients that access the Career Center office first but may be interested in services provided by TANF, we will have information packets available at the Career Centers for any clients who inquire about the TANF program. Additionally, our long term goal is to develop an online application process for TANF which will be easily accessible by the client from any computer.

#### 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.

As noted above, the Alabama Workforce System (AWS) includes programs and activities outside the Plan to include Perkins Act, Community Services, HUD and Reintegration Services. Coordination and collaboration for programs not included in the Plan, again is provided through a strong partnership supported by the workgroups such as the Alabama WIOA Roundtable Workgroups. Workgroups also have been formed around career clusters, registered apprenticeships, career pathways and career tech at the secondary levels, Executive senior management and council member level to ensure activities are not duplicated. Alignment Actions: 1. The leadership of the four (4) core partners and the leaders of the optional partners have agreed to assemble the representatives that attended the "National Convening" in Washington DC to formerly and actively develop alignment steps. The group will be known as the "Partners Team." This Team has collaborated to write our Combined Plan and have agreed to continue the work and insure the various Combined Plan components are successful. 2. Training and cross training of various partners is required for success as each partner works to understand the articulation between each and a formal "process flow" for citizens and clients is being developed for all employees and citizens can visually see where the individual is within the process. 3. In working with our core and sub-partners, to insure employment, the ACCS has an ever expanding Work Based Learning initiative in both non-credit and CTE credit

programs. This is targeting ALL populations. As part of our Work Based Learning strategies we have registered apprenticeships, nonregistered apprenticeships, Cooperative learning, clinicals and preceptorships. We are in the process of redesigning CTE programs to ensure Work Based Learning is an integral part in any CTE program submitted that is a key component of the program. 4. ACCS is in discussion with the US Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship in becoming a Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (RACC) as a state-wide system.

### C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

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

Customer focused services to individuals is a priority for the Alabama Workforce System. Enhanced services to individuals has and is occurring by providing major media market such as TV Job Bank programs, Career and Job Fairs in rural high employment areas and Hiring Fairs in labor shortage areas. The State is also looking at providing a website portal that will give any individual how to access partner services for Workforce or supportive services in a few mouse clicks. The Alabama Workforce Development Board and the Alabama's Workforce Council are empathic that services to individuals are provided in an effective, efficient and responsive manner. A "process flow" that identifies and visually communicates how individuals pass through the various processes will be developed. Based on where the individual enters the process they and each partner will know where the individual should go next and with what information or actions are required at each step. All partner employees will be trained to assist individuals on the specific steps required and with no duplication of efforts by the individual. The main goal is a "user friendly" process and experience through each step and that the individual receives the needed and necessary assistance.

### 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 needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The Alabama Workforce System partners will ensure that there is a coordinated, aligned, delivery model for services to employers. Partners, who meet on a regular basis, will continue to meet and align their resources and support to the local needs of employers. The melding of the partners and employers safeguards the coordination of educational and training services in alignment with the performance

measures established by the boards and through each partner's governing authority under WIOA.

With this in mind, and in order to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs, and to achieve the goals of industry sector partners in the state, Alabama Work Force System (WFS) core partners will coordinate their activities and resources to determine a set of "core principles" in regards to the collaborative delivery of business services. The core principles will include the following: 1. WIOA Core Partners will serve as the lead, and equal, providers of services to business, particularly in each programs' area(s) of expertise 2. Business partner input will be an important consideration in the collaboration and alignment of services 3. No core partner will be excluded from direct interaction with the business customer, as needed and appropriate 4. Existing partnerships with business will be respected in order to address the preferences and needs of the business within the purview of that partnership 5. Whenever possible, collaboration and alignment will drill down to the local level but will consider recommendations from each core partner's leadership in regards to this focus.

WIOA core partners will form an executive level leadership team with a representative from each partner's program who have expertise in, and responsibility for, the design and delivery of services to business customers at the state, regional and local level. • This executive team will meet quarterly to address collaborative strategies and alignment with business customers. • This executive team will also identify agency local representatives with similar expertise to serve on regional or local teams that focus on collaboration and alignment of engagement with existing or potential business customers. • This executive team will also initiate on-going cross training to enhance core partners' understanding of each partners' expertise so that the core partners are aware of the "go-to" agency to best address the unique needs of the business customer. In order to make it easier for businesses to access these unique services, while developing and sustaining a trusted partnership, the Alabama Workforce System core partners will establish a "lead point of contact" from each core partner program with each business at the state and/or local level to build the capacity to be responsive to each business in a collaborative and timely manner in order to meet their needs. The following strategies will be used to engage in collaborative delivery of business services based on the needs of the business. • Identification of Business Services deliverable by each WIOA core partner. • Facilitated quarterly meetings among each of the Core Partners at the state and regional/local level as noted above. • Cross training internally for the regional/local business service representatives which will focus on: o Familiarity with the business services deliverable by each core partner o Consideration of the methodology of service delivery to business for appropriate referrals when special business needs arise with core partner business relationship o Sharing of "subject-matter expertise" to acquaint core partners with the many resources available to businesses to meet their needs • Jointly funded initiatives with Core Partners and businesses coordinated through each core partner's representative on the executive team to ensure appropriate alignment and collaboration • Customized services to employers based on special populations and core partner expertise to address new or emerging needs of business • Other strategic approaches will be added to this list over time and

will be generated by the collaborative engagement at the executive level core partner meetings noted above, along with input from the local collaboration gatherings.

MORE SPECIFICALLY: Senior level management staff for the core partners, who have expertise in the delivery of services to businesses, will convene to identify specific business services offered by their program for each of the “Employer Services” enumerated in the “WIOA/Effectiveness in Serving Employers Report Template.” Those six (6) areas are: 1. Employer Information and Support Services 2. Workforce Recruitment Assistance 3. Strategic Planning/Economic Development Activities 4. Untapped Labor Pools Activities 5. Training Services a. Incumbent Worker Training Services 6. Rapid Response/Business Downsizing Assistance a. Planning layoff response.

Because the above list is not all-inclusive of each partner’s regulatory requirements for business services, nor does it fully address the specific needs of business, it is imperative that each core partner reconciles the above list with the services they currently deliver to allow each partner to meet their regulatory requirements while meeting the needs of businesses collaboratively. The Core Partners will begin by reconciling the categories of business services on the report template with the more definitive services listed in the regulatory guidelines for each core partner. Once this has been reconciled by the executive team described earlier, each core partner will specifically identify the deliverable services they can offer to employers based on their statutory guidelines, particularly in relation to the targeted populations with which they work.

For Title I partners, the State and the State Workforce Development Board will continue to refine and assess how services to employers are carried out through the Career Center system. Also, the Alabama Workforce Council is a primarily employer led advisory council appointed by the Governor in 2013 to assist in coordinating all resources in Alabama to provide high quality comprehensive services to employers. The Alabama Workforce Council has recommended and plans are underway to establish a strong network of funded and empowered regional workforce entities that will be tasked with the central role of bridging business needs with a “talent supply chain.” These regional entities which will include representatives of the core partner agencies will report to a board of regional business, industry and education leaders. Plans are also underway to establish a new online “one stop” resource to serve clear and focused needs while being accessible by a number of users including employers.

Alabama Adult Education Title II programs will coordinate with all of the WIOA required partners to align services to employers. As employment opportunities arise at the varied levels of qualifications; Adult Education students will be informed and included in the pool of potential candidates to fulfill the workforce demands in their local labor market. Distance learning opportunities are offered to those that are employed but need to continue their adult education skills training in order to earn stackable credentials and attain better employment

The Title IV Vocation Rehabilitation Program will work collaboratively with the WIOA required partners to provide effective services to employers on a state, regional and local level. In addition to the business services provided by the WIOA

partners, there are additional categories of services that can be provided by ADRS as part of the collaborative effort to meet business needs. These services have been identified by our business customers and ADRS received input from our business customers in developing these services so that their needs would be met. One area is customized, but varied training related to disability issues, for example, Disability etiquette and Disability bias training; Awareness of specific disabling conditions; and Emergency Preparedness for employees with disabilities. With Federal legislation and specific mandates for compliance around disability matters, ADRS also provides relevant training on the successful methodology and resources for implementation. Retaining valued workers whose job is affected by illness, injury or disability has been a major concern by business and ADRS has customized stay-at-work and return-to-work services to increase the likelihood of that worker with a disability keeping their job. And finally, in looking at generic personnel issues related to the workforce, ADRS provides services to address personnel processes, job descriptions, website accessibility, targeted recruitment, and the use of the ADRS rehabilitation technology specialist team and, of course, the statewide Business Relations Consultants that provide all those services at the local level.

The core and required partners continue to refine and assess how services to businesses can be delivered collaboratively to employers through the Career Center system. Variations occur in the collaborative delivery of services when those services are unique to the expertise of the core partner and the targeted populations they are mandated to serve and in deference to the specific needs of the business.

For example, Alabama Career Center staff and Case managers have specifically developed internships and unpaid work experience slots for TANF recipients with employers under a TANF program known as Work First. Career Center staff (Business Services Representatives) have also developed dedicated OJT contracts with employers for TANF and other low income limited work history job seekers. In another example, Adult Education through the Community College System has developed Integrated Education and Training Career Pathway programs for adult education participants to gain industry recognized stackable certificates for employment. Many students have gained jobs in the field of logistics, truck driving, welding, construction trades, healthcare, culinary arts, manufacturing. Alabama DHR senior staff meets regularly with Partner agencies' senior staff to discuss employment strategies for public assistance recipients since employers are seeking employees to hire from a limited labor pool as the economy continues to improve in the state.

#### 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).

Core and non-core programs have strong partnerships with the Alabama Community College System and the Alabama Department of Education's Career Tech system.

Representatives of both entities are members of the Alabama Workforce Development Board along with the Executive Director of the Alabama Commission of Higher Education (ACHE). Partner representatives from Alabama Community College System, Alabama Career Department also participate in quarterly WIOA Roundtable meetings which includes State Board staff, One-Stop Career Center regional management staff, Local Workforce area staff, and non-core partner staff such as TANF, SNAP and UI senior management. These Roundtable participants represent senior and mid-level management and have access to information related to activities of the core programs and opportunities for collaboration, coordination and partnering. At the regional level, there are quarterly Regional Workforce Council meetings that include business, local community college workforce development coordinators, local career tech directors, one-stop career center managers and economic development staff. The Community College and local Career Tech representatives at these meetings provide program updates and seek core partner and business input into training processes and equipment needs.

In Alabama the core and additional partners have a very close relationship with the state's ACCS. The Alabama Community College System not only provides the academic and technical training but also is the entity responsible for operating the Title II Adult Education grant. This allows for the full array of skills, from basic skills to specialized skills training. There are several Workforce Career Centers located on community college campuses and adult education is represented in all of the Comprehensive Career centers. The close knit relationship streamlines the process to move the jobseekers into training and supportive services for skill development and to connect with local employers. Core and additional partners are enabled to connect their customers to training that leads to the high demand occupations. Adult education provides additional state funding to local programs to increase partnerships with Career Technical Education to expand Integrated Education and Training Career Pathway initiatives. Core partners and additional partners such as TANF, SNAP, ABAWDS, veterans, English Language Learners and Senior Services refer jobseekers into the IET training pathway programs. Alabama has adopted a dual enrollment integrated adult career pathway model. An increased focus will be placed on expanding short term training, Ready to Work, Bridge programs, and Adult Career Pathways that target high demand, high wage sector strategies in the regional areas.

For the state of Alabama Title II Programs, 93% of the providers are located on the campus of the community college system. This integration allows increased discussion, access and engagement within the state's educational system. In addition, most campuses also have transitional counselors that can connect students to additional educational opportunities

The ADRS will collaborate with all secondary educational institutions in the State of Alabama by providing Pre-Employment Transition Services and Transition Services to students with disabilities (ages 16-21) to assist with transitioning into the state's workforce. Pre-Employment Transition Services activities will focus on:

- Job exploration counseling
- Work - based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships) that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible.
- Counseling and guidance on opportunities for enrollment

in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education • Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living • Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

The ADRS has Transition Counselors assigned to each of the 136 high schools in our state. Through collaboration with each Local Education Agency (LEA), the ADRS will develop and improve transition partnerships, programs and service models by implementing and expanding the following services/programs. • Summer work program - Job Exploration Training (JET) Students are provided training in the areas of job exploration, career assessment, social skills training, mock interviewing, resume preparation, and self-advocacy training. Paid work experiences in a community setting are arranged for each student satisfactorily participating in the training. • Smart Work Ethics Training (SWE) - SWE is a social skills curriculum that addresses communication skills and work place behaviors (attitude, work ethic, image and appearance, interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, accountability) needed to obtain and maintain successful competitive employment. This curriculum is provided to the student in the LEA by a certified trainer from a Community Rehabilitation Program. • Jointly-Funded Job Coach - ADRS is committed to providing jointly funded job coaches in local education agencies to assist with the provision of pre-employment transition services.

The jointly-funded job coaches provide pre-employment transition services which are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre-employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for competitive integrated employment. Currently, ADRS has 27 jointly funded job coaches in place through third-party cooperative agreements. • Career Interest Inventories - ADRS transition counselors will expand the delivery of career interest inventories to students with disabilities earlier in the transition planning process to assist with identify the student's interests, abilities, aptitude, and values.

The ADRS also has a liaison to two secondary educational institutions housed within the Alabama Department of Corrections (DOC). This liaison collaborates with DOC staff to ensure referral to ADRS is made within 90 days of release. The goal of this collaboration effort is to ensure that the inmates will have an appointment with a VR counselor within one week of community re-entry to avoid any delay in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. Post-Secondary - The ADRS also collaborates with two-year colleges and universities across the state to provide college preparation programs to prepare individuals with disabilities in entering post-secondary education. Typically, classes are held for one week on the college/university campus. Topics of discussion include note taking, finding your best study style, time management, how to better prepare for college tests, and how to access student support service.

#### **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.

Alabama's WIOA partners are working on a number of strategies to engage other education and training (including providers on the State's Eligible Training Provider List) as partners in the workforce system. These efforts include engaging the state funded training program for new and expanding businesses known Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) in short term training and referral to new jobs. We are working with AIDT to utilize the one-stop career centers in finding workers for their start-up projects entering the labor market from dislocation events.

The Alabama Technology Network (ATN), the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, often provides Incumbent Worker Program Training as part of its role improving manufacturing processes.

The AFL/CIO Labor Institute for Training (LIFT) provides assistance to Registered Apprenticeship programs to be added to the State's ETPL.

The Construction Education Foundation of Alabama (CEFA) is a private non-profit training provider established by the construction industry to provide pre-employment and pre-apprenticeship training for skilled trades. CEFA's programs are on the State's ETPL

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) also works with other education providers to ensure students have the opportunity to choose a seamless pathway from secondary through the community colleges to four-year institutions with multiple entry and exit points.

ADRS currently engages the following educational and training providers as partners in the workforce development system in order to create job-driven education and training systems: Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, EH Gentry. These educational entities are focused on training individuals with visual and/or hearing impairments in curricula that are geared towards labor market needs. In addition to engaging with other educational entities, ADRS has partnered with other training providers, to include community rehabilitation programs and Alabama businesses to provide industry-specific training that is geared towards the learning styles of individuals with cognitive disabilities. ADRS will continue to seek out job-driven educational and training opportunities in order to enhance the skills attainment of individuals with disabilities and meet the workforce needs of Alabama's businesses. ADRS will also work closely with all education and training providers to assess the need for and provide accommodations for the successful completion of training programs.

#### 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).

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) has implemented streamlined Prior Learning Assessments for those individuals that have gained skills while on the job, military, or other means. This allows the students to earn college credit for the past experience, and accelerates their entry into their chosen career pathway. This

program is also available for those Adult Education students that may have several years of experience and are looking to improve themselves and increase their earning capacity. Our plan is to develop a working “focus group” of all the workforce resources within the state to develop strategy for leveraging the current funding sources and plan collaboratively how we can link our programs in a resource pipeline. The purpose, to assist our underserved populations get in the pipeline at the appropriate access point and exit when they reach their goal or where they are comfortable to exit with employment that provides a living wage for their family. The group meets now in various venues, but not formally for the purpose we propose. Our action step will be to formalize the “focus group” with specific tangible goals and objectives.

Funding for ABE courses is distributed according to the targeted needs of an area and how many instructors are needed. Funding for ABE programs is provided through a competitive grant award and is based on the annual appropriation from ACCS Office of Adult Education. Grantees will be aligned with system-wide goals and labor market needs of local program areas and will have the capability to provide Career Pathway services throughout the state. ACCS community colleges also provide training through the state’s Workforce Development Fund.

The Alabama legislature currently allocates ten million dollars to the ACCS for CTE dual-enrollment scholarships for high school students. The ACCS workforce development division also has funds allocated for training special populations. In FY 2017, the construction industry will be contributing financial resources for training Alabamians through the Construction Industry Craft Training Act. The new law will add \$1 per \$1,000 of project value onto the cost of building permits in the state. It is expected to raise between \$3 million and \$5 million each year, money that will be dispersed in the form of grants to qualified craft education programs such as community colleges, private schools and unions.

The Alabama Community College System’s Adult Education office has established Integrated Education & Training Adult Career Pathway models by leveraging the expertise and resources of the core and additional partners. The IET programs are available to eligible jobseekers at no cost through the braiding of financial resources from the partners. Partners can expand their presence in an area by taking advantage of career center partner facilities with a “no wrong door” approach to service. Cross training in the intake procedures and the administration of assessments is one of the many areas of leveraging human and financial capital. Adult Education continues to provide online TABE assessment access and training to all Career Centers for assisting in the proper educational placement of participants.

The ACCS - Title II-Adult Education programs are coordinating with all of the WIOA required partners to create formalized referral processes, local linkages to information and resources, as well as creating efforts for a uniformed intake and/or assessment process to streamline and expedite the provision of services. Title II Adult Education through the Alabama Community College System has created an educational and workforce skills path for Title I, SNAP ABAWDS, TANF, Rehabilitation Services and Senior Services. A participant will receive the basic academic skills, essential workforce skills, and specific technical skills needed to attain the stackable

credentials which will allow them to compete for and attain employment. These participants will include any and all eligible populations as defined under WIOA for each of the core and additional partners. English language learners and participants with disabilities and/or significant barriers to employment will be targeted.

As a partner in the workforce development system, the Alabama Community College System, Adult Education (Title II) programs are administering integrated education and training career pathway opportunities. The implementation of career pathways programming throughout the state will be guided by local labor market information and reflective of the local industry needs. The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) federal funds support the advancement of individuals into postsecondary education and work. The grants to eligible providers require states to consider “whether the eligible provider’s activities provide learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship” (Section 231(e) (8)). The integration of literacy instruction and occupational skills training is an allowable activity that states can use leadership and federal funds to support.

Adult Education funds are used to support an Integrated Education and Training (IET) career pathway programs that provides instruction in reading, writing, mathematics, or English proficiency that is below the postsecondary level. This instruction in basic literacy skills and the English language should be contextualized to support the occupational skills portion of the program. The Career Pathway curriculum address both the basic literacy skills and the occupational competencies needed for the participant to complete the program successfully. AE funds are used to plan, develop, and deliver the portions of the curriculum that address basic literacy skills in a contextualized way to ensure applicable of the knowledge and skills.

#### H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

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

WIOA training services often lead to recognized credentials such as high school equivalency, Career Readiness Certificates, and certificates from partner community colleges. Local workforce development boards will determine strategies for credential attainment based upon area employer requirements.

An additional strategy employed by the ACCS is implementing an extensive expansion of stackable certificates. The ACCS is implementing and will continue to execute several strategies to improve access to postsecondary credentials. The ACCS has long been a nationally recognized leader in the number of articulated CTE courses between secondary and postsecondary, allowing high school students an edge in accessing college credentials. In addition to articulation, Alabama has become a national leader in providing high school students dual credit for dual enrollment in CTE and academic courses. Alabama has increased the numbers of students taking

advantage of this opportunity each year, and has realized tremendous growth in the last five years as more students and parents learn of the significant savings that are available in both time and money. Tremendous momentum is in place and should continue as more systems, parents and students learn of the advantages of these opportunities. Our funding for CTE dual enrollment scholarships has tripled in the last three years and we anticipate increased funding, so students will have greater access to post-secondary credentials.

The ACCS is seeing extensive expansion of stackable certificates (awards) within CTE Programs. Students may earn several short certificates (minimum of 9 semester hours for each certificate) that lead to a Long Certificate or AAS Degree, depending on the program. This also includes advanced certificates that may be pursued once a Long Certificate or AAS has been obtained. This structure allows for multiple entry and exit points for students, and allows them to gain a nationally recognized credential when they exit a program. Some of the credentials awarded are NCCER for construction and maintenance related sectors and NATEF/ASE certifications in a transportation sectors.

The Alabama Legislature passed an apprenticeship tax credit for Alabama companies who have a USDOL Registered Apprenticeship. The Alabama Community College System and other eligible training providers will play a critical role in the rapidly growing apprenticeship program across the state. The legislation, specifically, directs the Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System to work directly with the Deputy Secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce to develop the rules and procedures for the new apprenticeship program. Alabama will start its new program focused on five target areas, manufacturing, healthcare, construction, information technology, and logistics/ transportation. Each of these target areas have hundreds of possible apprenticeship paths that will lead to journeyman status and various post-secondary credentials.

The ACCS has an ever expanding Work-Based Learning initiative in both non-credit and CTE credit programs. This is targeting ALL populations. As part of our Work-Based Learning strategy, we currently have registered apprenticeships, nonregistered apprenticeships, cooperative learning, clinical and preceptorships. We are in the process of redesigning CTE programs to ensure Work-Based Learning is an integral part of any new CTE program submitted and that it be a key component of the program. We will be working to transition the current Work-Based Learning programs into registered apprenticeships.

ACCS is in discussion with the US Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship about becoming a Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (RACC) as a state-wide system. We anticipate implementation in the fall of 2016.

In Alabama, registered apprenticeship programs will be an integral part of our utilizing our educational system to prepare the workforce.

Utilizing the aforementioned structure, ACCS will be able to develop the educational pipeline by enrolling more low skilled jobseekers through the various core and additional partner access points. A strong statewide apprenticeship program will be made possible through the leadership of the education and training community,

employer community and the commitment of the core partners. Workforce development requires an enriching learning experience, which will allow participants to obtain the necessary skills to be effective in the workplace. This is why the ACCS, adult education, and all of the core and additional partners will braid resources and provide the skill development training and apprenticeships to help the State's citizens be successful.

#### 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.

The WIOA staff resources have recently been placed within the Alabama Department of Commerce in a newly created Commerce Workforce Division. The Alabama Department of Commerce is the entity responsible for the economic development strategies for the state. By this new alignment, it is the specific job duty of the Deputy Secretary of Commerce Workforce Development Division to make sure the WIOA program is coordinated with the economic development strategies.

The Department of Commerce will take the following Action steps; 1. Through a new marketing/branding program currently being developed by a 3rd party, Commerce will disseminate current workforce information and program along with projected long term programs in the future through a monthly newsletter. 2. The Deputy Secretary of Commerce for Workforce Development is a standing member of the Economic Development Association of Alabama (EDAA) Board and through various meeting reports and EDAA newsletters and email blasts, communicates across the entire state. 3. The Department of Commerce manages and coordinates the state's economic development strategy, Accelerate Alabama. Accelerate Alabama, the economic development strategic plan for the state, was developed during a six-month period led by the Alabama Economic Development Alliance (Alliance), created by Executive Order of the Governor. Accelerate Alabama is meant to provide direction for Alabama's economic development efforts over the next three years. Eleven targeted business sectors, along with areas of focus for each, have been identified for the state of Alabama to focus its recruitment, retention and renewal efforts.

The determination of the targets identified for Accelerate Alabama involved thorough research, including the review of the current business/industry base in Alabama, current targeted sectors of state, regional and local economic development organizations in Alabama, as well as the various power providers, recent project activity, and other emerging sectors that have shown growth at the national, state and possibly local level. The strengths of Alabama related to each sector were also considered. The targeted sectors and areas of focus are outlined to the left. The Alliance was created to organize and direct the preparation of a strategic economic development plan for the state to ensure the recruitment, retention and renewal of business and industry in Alabama. These three economic development drivers serve as the basis for recommendations included in the Accelerate Alabama plan. These drivers are defined as follows: Recruitment: Programs that focus on the attraction of new business and industry. Retention: Programs that focus on the retention and expansion of existing business and industry. Renewal: Programs that focus on job creation through innovation, entrepreneurship, research and development, and

commercialization. In order to successfully compete for the jobs of tomorrow in each of the targeted business sectors, the state must diversify its economic development efforts through a balanced emphasis on recruitment, retention and renewal. Each recommendation in the plan is designed to accelerate the state’s economic development efforts with each tactic providing a path to success. The accelerators are organized within the context of the three economic drivers, but most will require collaborative efforts across the full spectrum of Alabama’s economic development community. There are some economic development accelerators that transcend the three primary economic drivers. These recommended initiatives have been presented after the three drivers in an “Other” category. Following are the economic development drivers and accelerators associated with each in the plan:

Recruitment RECRUITMENT: Provide a Workforce with Skills Aligned with Prospect Needs  
 Ensure Availability of Sites and Infrastructure that Meet Prospect Criteria Determine Competitiveness of Financial Assistance Proactively Reach Out to Suspects/Prospects Build Capacity and Recruit Entertainment Production Develop Global Lead Generation Strategy

RETENTION: Align Workforce Services Develop ACCS Strategic Plan Strengthen the Training for Existing Business and Industry Develop Small Business Assistance Initiative Implement Education/Workforce Services Communications Program Increase Exports Support Military Assets and Contractors RENEWAL: Create Statewide Organization for Innovation Coordinate and Increase Commercialization Efforts Develop Legislative Agenda for Innovation Build Research and Development Capacity Support Existing Industry Develop the Information Technology Sector Foster Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Provide Financial Support for Commercialization OTHER: Support Rural Development Enhance State Economic Development Brand Inventory and Understand Sustainability Efforts Support Downtown Redevelopment Programs and Other Related Initiatives.

The Secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce implemented the plan with the assistance of the Economic Development Alliance. The Plan is currently in its 3rd year and an updated Plan is about to launch that will continue the work outlined in the original Plan with appropriate updates.

4.The Made in Alabama website is currently the “go to” site for all things economic development within the state of Alabama.

5.The WIOA partners will be working closely with our economic development partners to determine labor supply in specific industry sectors to include student enrollment. Part of our strategy is to provide a balance to meet labor supply and demand on a regional basis. In Alabama, Adult Education programs are coordinating with the economic and workforce development strategies by providing an entry way for individuals to become part of the state’s workforce pipeline. Jobseekers and low skilled participants can gain the skill level to become gainfully employed through Career Pathway, Bridge programs, and Ready to Work programs that offer industry recognized credentials and certificates in a stackable format. The One Stop Career Center partners will provide the support service required for successful completion.

## 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—

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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.).

The Longitudinal Data System (LDS) funding for development and implementation is in the Governor’s budget, fully funded for four years. Negotiations with the legislative budget chairs and legislative leadership are underway, and all indications are that we will be successful in getting the funding. This LDS will meet all requirements for integrated data collection and reporting to support the coordinated implementation of State Strategies. It will integrate data collection, reporting, and analysis of labor market information systems, data systems, communications and case-management systems, job banks, and all related data to inform decision making and to facilitate evaluation of programs, activities, and strategies.

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

Alabama, through the partnership between the core partner agencies (Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Alabama Community College System and Department of Rehabilitation Services), working with the Governor’s Office of Information Technology, will be able to produce reports required by Section 116 of the WIOA. Continued assessment of current systems will provide a plan for data integration and sharing before the Program Year targeted for the WIOA performance reporting.

Data collection and reporting processes for Title 1 and Title III programs is through the The Alabama Job Link system for participants through the one stop centers . Participant data for Title I adult, dislocated worker and youth programs are is uploaded nightly to the Alaworks data collection programs used by the Department of Commerce for Title I programs. Adult Education and Rehabilitative Services use programs developed to facilitate reporting requirement from their respective funding agencies

\* 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, PROVIDE THE STATE’S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS’ CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM.

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The State Plan WIOA partners is intending to implement a WIOA Common Intake and Reporting System that will capture demographic participant information for the four core programs and additional partners as requested. The system will align accountability measures and generate automatic referrals among programs. The system will begin to be developed in early 2017 and have a target date of late 2017 or early 2018 for implementation.

As of August 2016, each partner has its own data accountability and performance system. Memoranda of Understanding are in place, but being revised, to allow for data matching of participants to collect the required common measures and partner specific information for reporting.

State-developed guidelines for State-administered One-Stop partner programs' contributions to the One-Stop delivery system were via Governor's Workforce Innovation Directive Number PY2015-10 on January 20, 2016. This Directive requires each local area, the Local Board, chief elected officials and One-Stop partners to come to an agreement regarding the methodology for determining One-Stop infrastructure cost contributions per WIOA 121(h)(1)(B). If local officials are unable to reach consensus, they will be required to use the infrastructure funding methodology determined by the Alabama Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division on behalf of the Governor.

Funds for infrastructure costs must come only from the administrative funds (when no consensus has been reached) of each respective program (per WIOA Section 121(h)(2)(D)(i) (I)) and shall be subject to the program's limitations with respect to the portion of funds under such program that may be used for administration. Limitations are also placed on how much each partner can contribute to infrastructure costs. These limitations are as follows, by program:

\*Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth: Shall not exceed 3 percent of the federal funds provided to the State for a full program year. \*Wagner-Peyser Act: Shall not exceed 3 percent of the federal funds provided to the State for a full program year. \*Vocational Rehabilitation: Shall not exceed .75 percent of the federal funds provided to the State in the second full program year; 1 percent of the federal funds provided to the State in the third full program year; 1.25 percent of the federal funds provided to the State in the fourth full program year; 1.5 percent of the federal funds provided to the State in the fifth full program year and in each succeeding year. \*Other Partners: Shall not exceed 1.5 percent of the federal funds provided to the State. Subject to the above limitations, those local areas in which the local board, chief elected officials, and One-Stop partners fail to reach a consensus agreement on methods to fund the infrastructure of the One-Stop Career Centers in the local areas beginning on July 1, 2016 and thereafter, the Governor, after consultation with chief elected officials, local boards, and the State Board, shall determine the portion of funds to be provided by each One-Stop Career Center partner. In making such determinations (for the purpose of determining funding contributions), the Governor shall calculate amounts for the proportionate use of the One-Stop Career Centers in the State consistent with Chapter II of Title 2, Code of Federal Regulations (or any corresponding similar regulation or ruling) taking into account the costs of administration of the One-Stop delivery system for purposes not related to One-Stop Career Centers for each partner.

The Governor shall exclude from such determination of funds the amounts for proportionate use of one-stop centers attributable to the programs of one-stop partners for those local areas of the State where the costs of infrastructure of one-stop centers are funded under the option described in WIOA Section 121(h)(1)(A)(i)(I), e.g. funding methods agreed on by the local board, chief elected officials, and One-Stop Career Center partners (and described in the memorandum of understanding described in WIOA Section 121(c). The Governor shall also take into account the statutory requirements for each partner program and the partner program's ability to fulfill such requirements. Per WIOA Section 121(h)(2)(C) in a State in which the State constitution or a State statute places policymaking authority that is independent of the authority of the Governor in an entity or official with respect to the funds provided for adult education and literacy activities authorized under Title II, postsecondary career and technical education activities authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.), or vocational rehabilitation services offered under a provision covered by Section 3(13)(D), the determination with respect to the programs authorized under that title, Act, or provision shall be made by the chief officer of the entity, or the official, with such authority in consultation with the Governor.

Pursuant to WIOA Section 121(h)(2)(E), the Governor shall establish a process, described under WIOA Section 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(IV), for a One-Stop partner administering a program described in WIOA Section 121(b)(1) to appeal a determination regarding the portion of funds to be provided by the One-Stop partner. Such a determination may be appealed under the process on the basis that such determination is inconsistent with the WIOA requirements for One-Stop partners' contributions for One-Stop Career Center infrastructure costs. Such process shall ensure prompt resolution of the appeal in order to ensure the funds are distributed in a timely manner, consistent with the requirements of WIOA Section 182(e).

### 3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

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#### 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 Governor of Alabama leads state workforce efforts and organizations for the entire state. In the organizational chart for WIOA organization shows the Governor at the top. Two entities, the Alabama Workforce Council and the WIOA State Board, report directly to the Governor to recommend actions, legislation, initiatives, and operations. These two entities are made up of respected and experienced leaders from all regions of the State. The Alabama Workforce Council has been in place for many years, and its members represent local councils, providing communication and information on local and regional needs and opportunities.

The WIOA State Board, created in accordance with the newly-established WIOA guidelines, reports directly to the Governor and has direct lines of responsibility and communication relationship with all WIOA partner organizations and agencies,

namely the Alabama Department of Senior Services, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Department of Labor, the Alabama Community College System, the Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce, and the Alabama Department of Human Resources.

On the WIOA organizational chart of relationships for WIOA Alabama, these six (6) departments, in turn, oversee their respective programs and agencies and, receive input, data, and information for decision making from local constituencies, citizens, businesses, industries, employers, and members of the current and potential workforce.

The Alabama Department of Senior Services implements Alabama's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services implements Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The Alabama Department of Labor is the agency administering Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act, and Veterans programs. The Department of Labor is also the lead agency for the operation of Alabama's Career Centers (One Stops). The Alabama Community College System administers all Adult Education programs for the State. The Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce administers the WIOA Title I programs, organizes and assists the regional workforce councils, and organizes and assists local WIOA area boards and their participants. The Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce also shared has operational and oversight responsibilities with the Alabama Department of Labor for Alabama Career Centers (One Stops). The Alabama Department of Human Resources operates the workforce development and employment assistance components of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Employment Training (SNAP-ET) programs for eligible families.

The essential collaborative relationships of representative boards, councils, State departments, agencies, and programs in Alabama are well established. All of the above-described entities participated in the planning of the Alabama WIOA plan and continue to work toward shared data, resources, and personnel to efficiently and effectively serve the employers, employees, and those seeking employment in Alabama. The collaborative planning process has focused attention on those with barriers to employment, to those who may be underemployed, and to the newly-identified growth areas for workforce development. New lines of communication, opportunities and technologies for data sharing, and the focus and energy of the WIOA Board members are resulting in greater opportunities and resources for the Alabama workforce.

Local level activities and programs are provided through the Alabama Career Center Systems One-Stop Career Centers. There are currently seven local workforce development areas. The Alabama Workforce Development Board in June 2017 approved a plan to realign five (5) of the Balance of State counties with the former Jefferson County Local Workforce Development Area, eight (8) of the balance of State counties with the former Mobile County Local Workforce Development Area and the remaining fifty-two (52) counties into five (5) new local areas with Local Workforce

Development Boards governing WIOA activities. This realignment will took effect on July 1, 2017.

## B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

The State Board shall include The Governor (WIOA Sec 102(b)(1)(B)). The Alabama State Board includes the Governor, Kay Ivey. The State Board shall include a member of each chamber of the State legislature (to the extent consistent with State law), appointed by the appropriate presiding officers of such chamber; therefore, the Alabama WIOA Board includes Representative Terri Collins of the Alabama House of Representatives and Senator Clay Scofield of the Alabama Senate. The Board must contain a majority of representatives of businesses in the State appointed by the Governor. These members must be owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of businesses, or other business executives or employers with optimum policymaking or hiring authority, and who, in addition, may be members of a local board described in section 107(b)(2)(A)(i); must represent businesses (including small businesses), or organizations representing businesses described in this subclause, that provide employment opportunities that, at a minimum, include high-quality, work-relevant training and development in in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the State; and are appointed from among individuals nominated by State business organizations and business trade associations.

In accordance with these categories of business leaders, the appointed business representatives of the Alabama WIOA Board are George Clark (President of Manufacture Alabama), Ronnie Boles (President of General & Automotive Machine Shop, Inc.), Joseph Brown (Area Manager of Alabama Power Company), Russell Dubose (Human Resources of Phifer, Inc.), A. J. Cooper, (Attorney of Cooper Law), Bobby Humphrey (VP of Bryant Bank), Jason Long (Human Resources Director of Thompson Tractor Company, Inc.), Mike Reynolds (President of BroadSouth Communications, Inc.), Wayne Silas (President of Silas Electric and Tree Service LLC), Perry Hand, President/CEO of Volker, Inc), Sandra Koblas (Human Resources Director of Austal USA), Patrick Cagle (Executive Director of JobKeeper Alliance), Cleveland Poole (VP of Pioneer Electric Cooperative, Inc.), Kasey Myers, (Manager of CSP Technologies), Jessica Horsley (Director of the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce), Sherry Vest (a self-employed executive), Ashley Ramsay-Naile (VP of Crowder Gulf), Bruce Willingham (President of Mach III, Inc.), Ronnelle Stewart (Human Resources Officer of Brookwood Medical Center), Tony Woiciechowski (Human Resources Manager of Hyundai Power Transformers USA), Steve Hildebrant (Manager of Alabama Power Company), Donny Jones (Chief Operating Officer of the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama), Anne Savage (Controller of American Buildings Company), Jim Searcy (Executive Director of the Economic Development Association of Alabama), and Ken Tucker (Director of The Boeing Company). Not less than 20 percent (20%) of the members of the Board shall be representatives of the workforce within the State who shall include representatives of labor organizations, who have been nominated by State labor federations; shall include a representative, who shall be a member of a labor organization or a training director, from a joint labor-management apprenticeship program, or if no such joint program exists in the State, such a representative of an apprenticeship program in the State; may include

representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including organizations that serve veterans or that provide or support competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities; and may include representatives of organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth. Alabama Board members meeting the above-listed criteria include Mike Fields (Director of the Alabama AFL-CIO Executive Board), Bren Riley (President of the Alabama AFL-CIO), Mary Albritten (Project Director of the Alabama AFL-CIO), Donnie Stanley (President of the Alabama State Building and Construction Trades), Frank Coiro (Center Director of Montgomery Job Corps), William Webb (President of Still Serving Veterans), Jason Phelps (Executive Director of Alabama Construction Recruitment Institute, Lynne Stokley (CEO of Easter Seals of Alabama), and Sydney Raine (President of Mobile Works, Inc.)

The balance of the members of the WIOA Board shall include representatives of government who shall include the lead State officials with primary responsibility for the core programs; and shall include chief elected officials (collectively representing both cities and counties, where appropriate); and may include such other representatives and officials as the Governor may designate, such as the State agency officials from agencies that are one-stop partners not specified in subclause (I) (including additional one-stop partners whose programs are covered by the State plan, if any); State agency officials responsible for economic development or juvenile justice programs in the State; individuals who represent an Indian tribe or tribal organization, as such terms are defined in section 166(b); and State agency officials responsible for education programs in the State, including chief executive officers of community colleges and other institutions of higher education. The required WIOA Core Partner Board members for Alabama include Fitzgerald Washington (Secretary of Labor, Alabama Department of Labor, representing Title III), Ed Castile (Deputy Secretary of Commerce for Workforce Development, Alabama Department of Commerce representing Title I), Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw (Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services representing Title IV), Jimmy Baker (Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System representing Title II). The required county elected official on the Board is Merceria Ludgood (Commissioner of Mobile County). The required city elected official is Tony Haygood (Mayor of the City of Tuskegee). Other members of the WIOA Board under this classification include Nancy Buckner (Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Human Resources), Jim Purcell (Executive Director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education), Josh Laney (Alabama Department of Education, Career Tech), and Alan Baker (Member of the Alabama House of Representatives).

#### I. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

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

The State Board shall include The Governor (WIOA Sec 102(b)(1)(B)). The Alabama State Board includes the Governor, Kay Ivey. The State Board shall include a member of each chamber of the State legislature (to the extent consistent with State law), appointed by the appropriate presiding officers of such chamber; therefore, the Alabama WIOA Board includes Representative Terri Collins of the Alabama House of Representatives and Senator Clay Scofield of the Alabama Senate. The Board must contain a majority of representatives of businesses in the State appointed by the Governor. These members must be owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of businesses, or other business executives or employers with optimum policymaking or hiring authority, and who, in addition, may be members of a local board described in section 107(b)(2)(A)(i); must represent businesses (including small businesses), or organizations representing businesses described in this subclause, that provide employment opportunities that, at a minimum, include high-quality, work-relevant training and development in in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the State; and are appointed from among individuals nominated by State business organizations and business trade associations.

In accordance with these categories of business leaders, the appointed business representatives of the Alabama WIOA Board are George Clark (President of Manufacture Alabama), Ronnie Boles (President of General & Automotive Machine Shop, Inc.), Joseph Brown (Area Manager of Alabama Power Company), Russell Dubose (Human Resources of Phifer, Inc.), A. J. Cooper, (Attorney of Cooper Law), Bobby Humphrey (VP of Bryant Bank), Jason Long (Human Resources Director of Thompson Tractor Company, Inc.), Mike Reynolds (President of BroadSouth Communications, Inc.), Wayne Silas (President of Silas Electric and Tree Service LLC), Perry Hand, President/CEO of Volker, Inc), Sandra Koblas (Human Resources Director of Austal USA), Patrick Cagle (Executive Director of JobKeeper Alliance), Cleveland Poole (VP of Pioneer Electric Cooperative, Inc.), Kasey Myers, (Manager of CSP Technologies), Jessica Horsley (Director of the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce), Sherry Vest (a self-employed executive), Ashley Ramsay-Naile (VP of Crowder Gulf), Bruce Willingham (President of Mach III, Inc.), Ronnelle Stewart (Human Resources Officer of Brookwood Medical Center), Tony Woiciechowski (Human Resources Manager of Hyundai Power Transformers USA), Steve Hildebrant (Manager of Alabama Power Company), Donny Jones (Chief Operating Officer of the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama), Anne Savage (Controller of American Buildings Company), Jim Searcy (Executive Director of the Economic Development Association of Alabama), and Ken Tucker (Director of The Boeing Company). Not less than 20 percent (20%) of the members of the Board shall be representatives of the workforce within the State who shall include representatives of labor organizations, who have been nominated by State labor federations; shall include a representative, who shall be a member of a labor organization or a training director, from a joint labor-management apprenticeship program, or if no such joint program exists in the State, such a representative of an apprenticeship program in the State; may include representatives of community-based organizations that have demonstrated experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of individuals with barriers to employment, including organizations that serve veterans or that provide or support competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities; and may include representatives of organizations that have demonstrated experience and

expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, including representatives of organizations that serve out-of-school youth. Alabama Board members meeting the above-listed criteria include Mike Fields (Director of the Alabama AFL-CIO Executive Board), Bren Riley (President of the Alabama AFL-CIO), Mary Albritten (Project Director of the Alabama AFL-CIO), Donnie Stanley (President of the Alabama State Building and Construction Trades), Frank Coiro (Center Director of Montgomery Job Corps), William Webb (President of Still Serving Veterans), Jason Phelps (Executive Director of Alabama Construction Recruitment Institute, Lynne Stokley (CEO of Easter Seals of Alabama), and Sydney Raine (President of Mobile Works, Inc.)

The balance of the members of the WIOA Board shall include representatives of government who shall include the lead State officials with primary responsibility for the core programs; and shall include chief elected officials (collectively representing both cities and counties, where appropriate); and may include such other representatives and officials as the Governor may designate, such as the State agency officials from agencies that are one-stop partners not specified in subclause (I) (including additional one-stop partners whose programs are covered by the State plan, if any); State agency officials responsible for economic development or juvenile justice programs in the State; individuals who represent an Indian tribe or tribal organization, as such terms are defined in section 166(b); and State agency officials responsible for education programs in the State, including chief executive officers of community colleges and other institutions of higher education. The required WIOA Core Partner Board members for Alabama include Fitzgerald Washington (Secretary of Labor, Alabama Department of Labor, representing Title III), Ed Castile (Deputy Secretary of Commerce for Workforce Development, Alabama Department of Commerce representing Title I), Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw (Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services representing Title IV), Jimmy Baker (Chancellor of the Alabama Community College System representing Title II). The required county elected official on the Board is Merceria Ludgood (Commissioner of Mobile County). The required city elected official is Tony Haygood (Mayor of the City of Tuskegee). Other members of the WIOA Board under this classification include Nancy Buckner (Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Human Resources), Jim Purcell (Executive Director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education), Josh Laney (Alabama Department of Education, Career Tech), and Alan Baker (Member of the Alabama House of Representatives).

## II. BOARD ACTIVITIES

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

The Governor appoints members of the Alabama Workforce Development Board (AWDB) and designates the Chairperson. The State Board through its bylaws will establish working committees to assist the Governor and the full Board in carrying out the functions and responsibilities in Section 101(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These working committees include, but will not be necessarily limited to, an Executive Committee, a Strategic Planning and Initiatives Committee, and a Communication and Marketing Committee. The Chair will also appoint short-term subject-related task

forces to address issues such as (1) the development and continuous improvement of the workforce system in the State, (2) the development and improvement of the one-stop services delivered to workers, job seekers, and employers, and, (3) the development of such other policies to promote and enhance the performance of the workforce development system in the State. Both committees and task forces will have Alabama Department of Commerce staff and/or staff from the required core partners as designated resources to assist in completing committee and task force objectives as they carry out the responsibilities of WIOA Section 101(d).

In 2014 the Governor also created the Alabama Workforce Council to enhance industry and education collaboration on an on-going basis and to review ways to streamline and align the existing workforce development functions in the State. A number of the members on the Alabama Workforce Council have also been appointed to the Alabama Workforce Development Board to provide continuity and to develop common recommendations on policy and workforce alignment needs. State Board meetings will be held quarterly. Committees and task forces will meet every other month to consider recommendations and initiatives for submission to the full Board. All Board meetings are subject to the Alabama Open Meetings Act.

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

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##### 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.

At a minimum, core workforce system partners program services included in the WIOA State Plan, will be assessed using the common measures as provided in WIOA Section 116(b). Performance will be reported on the State and Local Workforce area level. Each Core Partners' performance in each of the primary indicators of performance will be a start point for the further evaluation of quality, effectiveness and opportunities for improvement. Each core partner program will submit their performance metrics in a statewide dashboard report on a quarterly basis. The quarterly dashboard report will be provided to the State Board's Performance Accountability Committee with accomplishments, plans and strategies to continue successes or make improvements, as necessary, how partners address areas that are not being met and the identification of resources or supports needed to move forward.

The state and local workforce development areas providing Title I-B, Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs will be assessed based on a comparison of actual performance levels with the negotiated / adjusted levels of performance each quarter and annually. The following definitions will be utilized by the federal agencies in determining if the State met performance. Additional federal guidance is

pending which may require adjustments to performance levels later in 2016 or early 2017.

Levels of Performance:

“Exceeds” Goals: If the actual performance in any indicator is greater than 100 percent of the negotiated level.

“Meets” goals: If the actual performance in any indicator in 90 percent or more and up to 100 percent of the negotiated level.

“Failed to Meet Goals”: If the actual performance of any indicator is less than 50% of the negotiated level this measure will “fail” the proposed threshold outlined in Section 677.190(d)(2) of the WIOA regulations. Sanctions based on performance failure will be applied only after all indicators have at least 2 years of complete data not including Program Year 2016. The State intends to issue State policy regard local area performance failure by the end of the second quarter in PY2016. Sanctions based on performance failure will be applied to local areas if two consecutive years a (after 2016), the local area fails to meet:

o 90 percent of the overall local area program score for the same core program; o 90 percent of the overall local area indicator score for the same primary indicator; or 50 percent of the same indicator or score for the same program.

#### B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PROGRAM 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.

Alabama WIOA Partner Programs for Title 1-B adult, dislocated worker and youth programs and Title III Wagner-Peyser activities will report quarterly to the State Workforce Development Board and the Board’s Performance Accountability Committee. These quarterly reports will compare planned performance goals vs. actual performance. The Performance Committee will assess actual performance against planned goals for these partners and ask the Title I and/or Title II entities to submit corrective actions as needed to address any performance issue. The Performance Committee will then make recommendation to the full Board at six months and nine months into the program year. Local Area Board Chairs and signatory officials will also be provided quarterly reports for Title I and Title III partner services and any State Board recommendations regarding suggested corrective action.

Title Adult Education and Title IV Rehabilitation services partners will report actual performance measures to the Boards’ Performance Committee at six months and nine months into the program year. The Performance Committee will then make any recommendations to the full Board prior to the beginning of the next full program year.

Combined Plan non-core program partners will provide performance reports prior to the beginning of the next full program year and will be asked to address any corrective actions as needed to the full Board.

### C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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

The State Workforce Development Board Performance Accountability Committee will adopt policies and procedures to review performance and assessments for PY2016 and PY2017. The review process will include recommendations to improve or enhance performance outcomes at the regional and local levels.

### 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.

On an annual basis, the required partners in each local workforce area will work with the Commerce - Workforce Development Division to reach agreed upon levels of performance that apply to Focus Area 1 and with the Commerce - Workforce Development Division to reach agreed upon continuous improvement goals that apply to Focus Area 3.

The chair of the local board shall be copied on all local plan quarterly and annual reports provided to Commerce - Workforce Development Division so that the Commerce - Workforce Development Division can maintain data on an ongoing basis. At the request of a local board, when it engages in the certification process for the One-Stop Career Centers and the One-Stop delivery system, the Commerce - Workforce Development Division will provide to the local board a summary of the performance data that has been provided to the Commerce - Workforce Development Division on the above criteria. The state agencies of required partners shall forward quarterly or annual reports to the Commerce - Workforce Development Division so that data on partner programs can be maintained and shared with local boards during the assessment process. Local boards should contact Commerce - Workforce Development Division to obtain information on WIOA performance measurements.

Local boards are responsible for assessing the One-Stop Career Centers and the One-Stop delivery system with these criteria and submitting a record of the assessment and certification determination to Commerce - Workforce Development Division within 10 days of completing the certification determination. Local boards are

required to have policies and procedures in place for assessing the One-Stop Career Centers and the One-Stop delivery system.

The policies and procedures: -Must include the criteria outlined; -May include additional criteria beyond the items outlined by state policy; -Must be submitted to the Commerce, Workforce Development Division for review prior to approval by the local board; -Will be incorporated into the compliance review procedures conducted by the State Program Integrity Unit.

## 5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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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—

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

The State of Alabama will apply the “alternate” Section 128(b)(3)(B) Youth allocation formula to sub-state allocations. The “alternate” procedures seem an effective means to ensuring the available WIOA employment and training funds are appropriately better channeled to urban areas. The “alternate” Youth formula applies seventy percent (70 percent) weights to the basic Section 128(b)(2) local area statutory formula. The remaining weights, i.e. thirty percent (30 percent) are comprised of local area “excess poverty” and “unemployment above the State average”.

The excess poverty “alternate” allocation component is derived from the most recent available American Community Survey (ACS) and the most current Alabama CPS population data. The State applies “above 7.5 percent of population” to capture the “excess poverty” for WIOA Youth “alternate” allocation formula components.

The WIOA alternate formula “Unemployment above State average” component is calculated in much the same way as the WIOA formula “excess unemployment” component. The difference is the WIOA formula defines “excess unemployment” as that above 4.5 percent of the labor force; “unemployment above the State average” is that unemployment above the Alabama average, i.e., 3.603 percent of the labor force.

The two above “alternate” 30 percent formula elements are pooled, resulting in a single Poverty/Unemployment index for each county/allocation entity. In order that a greater share of available WIOA resources might be directed toward the easing of local conditions of poverty, a 75 percent weight is assigned to the poverty factor in this pooling, and a 25 percent weight is assigned to the unemployment factor. The structure of the “alternate” formulas and its greater focus on the incidence of local area conditions of poverty should help lessen the adverse effects of any year-to-year WIOA funding changes which may occur. Youth funds distributed to the local workforce development areas are guaranteed to be no less than 90% of the average allocation percentage for each local workforce development areas prior two years.

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

The State of Alabama will apply the “alternate” Section 133(b)(3)(B) Adult allocation formula to sub-state allocations. The “alternate” procedures seem an effective means to ensuring the available WIOA employment and training funds are appropriately better channeled to urban areas. The “alternate” Youth and Adult formulas apply 70 percent weights to the basic Section 133(b)(2)(A) local area statutory formula. The remaining weights, i.e. 30 percent are comprised of local area “excess poverty” and “unemployment above the State average.”

The excess poverty “alternate” allocation component is derived from the most recent available American Community Survey (ACS) and the most current Alabama CPS population data. The State applies “above 7.5 percent of population” to capture the “excess poverty” for WIOA Adult “alternate” allocation formula components.

The WIOA “alternate formula “Unemployment above State average” component is calculated in much the same way as the WIOA formula “excess unemployment” component. The difference is the WIOA formula defines “excess unemployment” as that above 4.5 percent of the labor force; “unemployment above the State average” is that unemployment above the Alabama average, i.e., 3.603 percent of the labor force.

The two above “alternate” 30 percent formula elements are pooled, resulting in a single Poverty/Unemployment index for each county/allocation entity. In order that a greater share of available WIOA resources might be directed toward the easing of local conditions of poverty, a seventy-five percent (75percent) weight is assigned to the poverty factor in this pooling, and a twenty-five percent (25percent) weight is assigned to the unemployment factor. The structure of the “alternate” formulas and its greater focus on the incidence of local area conditions of poverty should help lessen the adverse effects of any year-to-year WIOA funding changes which may occur. Adult funds distributed to the local workforce development areas are guaranteed to be no less than 90% of the average allocation percentage for each local workforce development areas prior two years.

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

Dislocated Worker funds annually allotted to the state are formula allocated among the local areas. This allocation is accomplished using the six-part formula prescribed at Section 133(b)(2)(B)(ii).

Table 22. Dislocated Worker Allocation Formula Weights

Allocation Factor	Weight Assigned in Formula	Data Source(s) and Time
	<b>Average Monthly U.I. Beneficiaries (“Insured Unemployment Data”)</b>	<b>19%</b> <b>Alabama Department of Labor/ Labor Market Information - 10/2013 - 09/2014</b>
	<b>Excess Unemployment (“Unemployment Concentrations”)</b>	<b>19%</b> <b>Alabama Department of Labor/ Labor Market Information - 10/2013 - 09/2014</b>
<b>Estimated Layoffs (“Plant Closing/Mass Layoff Data”)</b>	19%	Alabama Department of Labor/ Labor Market Information - 10/2013 - 09/2014
<b>Jobs Lost (All Industries) (“Declining Industries”)</b>	19%	Alabama Department of Labor/ Labor Market Information - 10/2013 - 09/2014
<b>Farm Operators Change (“Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship”)</b>	5%	2012 & 2007 Census of U.S. Agriculture
<b>Unemployment Compensation Exhaustees (“Long-Term Unemployment Data”)</b>	19%	Alabama Department of Labor/ Labor Market Information - 10/2013 - 09/2014

Dislocated Worker funds distributed to the local workforce development areas are guaranteed to be no less than 90% of the average allocation percentage for each local workforce development areas prior two years. Draft allocation policies and methods, along with the funds allocation information are presented to the Board for review, comment and approval on an annual basis. The staff who perform the calculations are always available to respond to questions. Questions regarding these processes have been asked and answered at State Board meetings. Local areas are notified of the outcomes in terms of funding as well as the procedures for the allocations. Local elected officials are provided drafts of allocation policies and are asked for their review and comment. This assures that time is allowed for comments prior to the time the directive is published as policy.

**B. FOR TITLE II:**

**I. MULTI-YEAR GRANTS OR CONTRACTS**

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

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Adult Education state office will implement a new competitive application process for all federal AEFLA funding to determine the eligible providers that will be awarded funds starting July 1, 2017. This process will apply to applications for all funds (231, 225, and 243). The review of the applications will include rating responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA. The following is a timeline that will be used for the competition:

- February 2017: ACCS Adult Education (ACCS/AE) state office publishes three-year federal AEFLA Request for Proposals (RFP) aligned with the priorities in the approved State Combined Plan.
- February-March 2017: ACCS/AE state office provides Technical Assistance Workshops and continued technical assistance to inquiries from potential eligible providers.
- February-March 2017: ACCS/AE state office recruits candidates to review and score AEFLA grant applications.
- March 2017: Due date for AEFLA grant applications.
- March-April 2017: Reviewers review and score AEFLA grant applications.
- April 2017: ACCS/AE state office conducts review of budgets and other grant requirements and develops a rank-ordered slate based on applicant scores.
- April-May 2017: ACCS/AE state office announces AEFLA grant applicants that will receive funding.
- July 1, 2017: AEFLA grant providers begin grant cycle, programming, and funding.

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Adult Education state office will allocate adult education funds to all competitively selected, eligible providers servicing the 67 counties of the state. The funds will be distributed by county, through a needs-based funding formula. If a county is served by multiple competitively selected, eligible providers, the funds will be distributed based on the adjusted share of need within the provider's proposed service area. The funding formula will use the population in need for each county, based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-year estimate. The population in need in a county is defined as 18 and older without a high school diploma or high school equivalency. The award period for the AEFLA funds will be for a three-year period. An award letter stating the funding amount based on need will be sent to each eligible provider selected through the competitive bid process. Each area of the state will be provided adequate coverage by ensuring direct services in each county. Providers will be required to collaborate with partners from the Career Centers and other social services, education, and employment-related supports in the area. To determine organizations of demonstrated effectiveness, prospective providers will be required to provide data demonstrating their ability to improve skills of low-literate adults in the applicable academic areas related to the Request for Funding Proposal (RFP). Prior recipients will use data from the state data collection system, referred to as Alabama Adult Education System for Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) to show how they met state assigned performance measures for all student levels, as well as for English language learners. New prospective providers will address within their proposal how they have been successful in providing educational and literacy services, including services to low-literacy level and English language learners. Each application will be required to demonstrate its record of

improving the knowledge and skills needed to transition successfully to postsecondary education, skills training, or employment. Each application will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the standard of demonstrated effectiveness. Applications that do not provide sufficient evidence of demonstrated effectiveness will be eliminated from the competition. The proposal application will collect basic information regarding the eligible provider including, but not limited to, location, service area, scope of work for the program, demographics served, fiscal management procedures, and audit history. Additionally, each applicant will be required to submit a proposed budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements. Questions may include the following: 1.

Provide the vision and mission of the program or organization. Please include a description of the population that the program will serve, including how the program will meet the needs of adults with barriers to employment (e.g. Displaced Homemaker, Low-income Individual, individuals with Disabilities, Single Parents, and other individuals as described in the law). 2. Provide a description of any cooperative agreements/contracts that the program has with other agencies and service providers for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities. Also, describe ways in which the program coordinates with other service providers to provide wrap-around services to participants (e.g. child care, transportation). 3. Describe how the program will align activities to the Local Plan for WIOA providers and supportive services. Include a description of how the program will promote concurrent enrollment with Title I programs. 4. Describe the methods the program will employ to meet the State adjusted levels of performance. Additionally, describe the program's mechanism and process for collecting and reporting data to assess performance.

The description of the program's methods to meet performance measures should focus on efforts to meet or achieve: a. Percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment after program exit; b. Median earnings of program participants; c. Percentage of participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma/equivalent during program participation or after exiting; d. Effective service provided to employers. 5. Describe the program's current and/or future involvement as a local One-Stop Career Center partner, including how the program will contribute to products or services for Career Center participant, with emphasis on individuals with barriers to employment. Describe how the program's contribution to the One-Stop Career Center will be coordinated with other core providers, and delivered to participants. 6. Describe the scope of the program's activities, and the delivery of services to ensure that the needs of all eligible participants will be met. 7. Describe the program's ability to meet the 13 considerations used to assess the RFP that are listed below. Assessing the RFP The assessment of each grant application will involve an intense evaluation of the ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs of the area and to comply with the expectations and statutes described within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. At minimum, the review process and scoring rubric will consider the following: 1. The ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs and English language needs identified for the population in the area. Particular emphasis will be given to the provider's ability to provide targeted service to individuals with barriers to employment—including low literacy skills and an English language barrier. 2. The eligible provider's ability to provide service to individuals with a (physical or learning) disability.

3. The eligible provider's demonstrated effectiveness in providing literacy instruction, including its ability to meet State-adjusted levels of performance and improve the literacy levels of eligible individuals. 4. The eligible provider's alignment with the WIOA Local Plan. 5. The depth, intensity, and rigor of the programs and activities offered by the eligible provider. The proposed program must incorporate the basic tenets of reading instruction. Attention will be given to the extent to which the eligible provider incorporates stringent research in the grant proposal submission and the development of the literacy program itself. 6. The extent to which the eligible provider's program is based on intense research and best practices. 7. The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates the effective use of technology for instruction, to include distance education, toward students' improved performance. 8. The eligible provider's demonstrated integration of contextualized instruction, to blend literacy skills, and preparation for transition to post-secondary education or entry into the workplace. Particular attention will be given to activities that promote and lead to economic self-sufficiency, and the ability to exercise the full rights of citizenship. 9. The qualifications and expertise of the eligible provider's instructors, counselors, and administrative staff. All instructors must hold (at minimum) a Bachelor's degree. The eligible provider must also demonstrate its ability and intent to provide high quality professional development to instructors and staff, toward the improvement of student performance. 10.

The eligible provider's collaboration with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community. Particularly, the eligible provider should have or establish significant partnerships with public schools, post-secondary institutions, industry/business partners, and workforce boards. 11. The flexibility of program scheduling offered by the eligible provider, including coordination (when available) with Federal, State, and local support services such as childcare, transportation, and mental health services. 12. The eligible provider's information management system; the expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the state-administered designated Adult Education System for Accountability and Performance for all grant related data collection and reporting. 13. The demonstrated need within the area occupied by the eligible provider for English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

## II. ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS

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

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Office of Adult Education, will hold a full and open competition consistent with the standards of CFR 200.319. All eligible agencies will be granted direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants or contracts. The following steps will be initiated to ensure direct and equitable access: An announcement of the availability of federal funds, under the auspices of Title II of the Workforce Innovation Act of 2014, will be circulated in various professional publications, newsletters, and newspapers, in order to provide the widest possible state coverage. The same announcement, grant and application process will be used for all eligible providers in the state in sections 221, 225, 243 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Standard criteria for evaluation of local proposals will be used for all eligible providers. The application processes will be designed so that direct application to the State eligible agency is clearly evident, customary, and nonnegotiable. Direct application will be the norm regardless of whether an applicant, if awarded funds, would be considered a grantee or a contractor. Technical assistance workshops will review the entire process and provide information to all eligible providers interested in applying. Dates, times, and places of these workshops are included in announcements and the Request for Proposal. The announcement will contain information pertaining to: • Type of grants available. • Contact person to obtain RFP guidelines. • Timeline with grant application due date included. • Other pertinent WIOA required information.

### 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.

The Alabama Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program is a combined agency housed within the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. Therefore, funds for services provided to individuals who are blind are from the same federal and state funds used for all individuals served. Internally, Blind and Deaf Services is a separate division from the General VR division and, each year, the amount of money allocated to the two divisions is based on the amount of funds needed for each program.

## 6. PROGRAM DATA

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### A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

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

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

Two of the core partners in Alabama have interoperable management information systems to exchange common data elements. The WIOA Title I entity (Alabama Department of Commerce) and the Wagner-Peyser entity (Alabama Department of Labor) run a nightly data extract that moves data from Alabama JobLink (AJL) to AlaWorks for the WIOA adult, dislocated worker and youth reporting elements. Also,

the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and the Alabama Department of Human Resources participate in a data warehouse provided by the Department of Commerce, known as the Interagency Electronic Linkage System (IELS). The IELS allows these agencies to extract data already collected by the Alabama Career Centers of clients served by these respective agencies.

The State plans to appoint a management information systems/data integration committee to develop a plan to ensure alignment of data for the core partners. The Alabama Legislature has recently introduced legislation to create the Alabama Longitudinal Data System to provide for the operation of a system to track performance and workforce data throughout Alabama's education systems. The core program partners will continue, however, to work together over the coming months to implement the exchange of common data elements over all six core program activities.

Alabama's core partner program entities will continue to work throughout Program Year 2016 to fully streamline intake and service delivery to track participation across the core and optional programs. Management will require data collection and reporting staff to meet quarterly (at a minimum) to develop plans and recommendations to ensure this occurs. As mentioned previously Title I and Title II programs currently have common intake.

The Alabama Workforce Development Board will establish an ad hoc work committee to make recommendations regarding data alignment/integration. This committee will seek input from the Governor's Office of Information Technology regarding the alignment or integration of current or future data system.

Alabama, through the partnership between the core partner agencies (Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Alabama Community College System and Department of Rehabilitation Services), working with the Governor's Office of Information Technology, will be able to produce reports required by Section 116 of the WIOA. Continued assessment of current systems will provide a plan for data integration and sharing before the Program Year targeted for the WIOA performance reporting.

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

Two of the core partners in Alabama have inter-operable management information systems to exchange common data elements. The WIOA Title I entity (Alabama Department of Commerce) and the Wagner-Peyser entity (Alabama Department of Labor) run a nightly data extract that moves data from Alabama JobLink (AJL) to AlaWorks for the WIOA adult, dislocated worker and youth reporting elements. Also, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and the Alabama Department of Human Resources participate in a data warehouse provided by the Department of Commerce, known as the Inter agency Electronic Linkage System (IELS). The IELS allows these agencies to extract data already collected by the Alabama Career Centers of clients served by these respective agencies.

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Alabama's core partner program entities will continue to work throughout Program Year 2016 to fully streamline intake and service delivery to track participation across the core and optional programs. Management will require data collection and reporting staff to meet quarterly (at a minimum) to develop plans and recommendations to ensure this occurs. As mentioned previously Title I and Title II programs currently have common intake.

The Alabama Workforce Development Board will establish an ad hoc work committee to make recommendations regarding data alignment/integration. This committee will seek input from the Governor's Office of Information Technology regarding the alignment or integration of current or future data system.

Alabama, through the partnership between the core partner agencies (Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Alabama Community College System and Department of Rehabilitation Services), working with the Governor's Office of Information Technology, will be able to produce reports required by Section 116 of the WIOA. Continued assessment of current systems will provide a plan for data integration and sharing before the Program Year targeted for the WIOA performance reporting.

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

Legislation has been introduced and has the support of the Governor to create the Alabama Longitudinal Data System to be developed, operated, and maintained by the Alabama Office of Education and Workforce Statistics within the Department of Labor. This data system will match information about students from early learning through postsecondary education and into employment. The purpose of the system is to generate timely and accurate information about curriculum performance that can be used to improve the education system of the state and guide decision makers at all levels. The system will facilitate the enhancement of college and career ready students through the collection and analysis of performance and workforce data.

An advisory board to the Office of Education and Workforce Statistics is created by the legislation. This board will oversee the development and operation of the system and will establish the research agenda of the office. All student information collected from participating education and workforce authorities shall be protected, safeguarded, kept confidential, and used only by appropriate educational and

workforce authorities in order to serve the best interests of students in accordance with state and federal law.

The advisory board consists of the following members:

- THE COMMISSIONER OF LABOR
- THE SECRETARY OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- THE GOVERNOR'S EDUCATION POLICY ADVISOR
- THE CHAIR OF THE SENATE EDUCATION BUDGET COMMITTEE
- THE CHAIR OF THE HOUSE EDUCATION BUDGET COMMITTEE
- A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
- THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION OR HIS/HER DESIGNEE
- A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES
- THE CHANCELLOR OF THE ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
- THE PRESIDENT OF THE ALABAMA COUNCIL OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY FACULTY PRESIDENTS OR HIS/HER DESIGNEE
- THE PRESIDENT OF THE ALABAMA ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES OR HIS/HER DESIGNEE
- THE CHAIR OF THE ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION OR HIS/HER DESIGNEE
- THE SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OR HIS/HER DESIGNEE
- THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE OR HIS/HER DESIGNEE
- THE STATE SERVICE COMMISSIONER OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OR HIS/HER DESIGNEE
- THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION OF ALABAMA OR HIS/HER DESIGNEE
- THE CHAIR OF THE ALABAMA WORKFORCE COUNCIL OR HIS/HER DESIGNEE
- ONE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EXPERT REPRESENTING PRIVATE INDUSTRY WITH EXPERTISE IN LARGE DATA SYSTEMS AND DATA SECURITY
- ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM SUPERINTENDENTS
- ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PUBLIC

The Alabama Workforce Development Board will establish an ad hoc work committee to make recommendations regarding data alignment/integration. This committee will seek input from the Governor's Office of Information Technology regarding the alignment or integration of current or future data system.

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

Alabama, through the partnership between the core partner agencies (Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Alabama Community College System and Department of Rehabilitation Services), working with the Governor's Office of

Information Technology, will be able to produce reports required by Section 116 of the WIOA. Continued assessment of current systems will provide a plan for data integration and sharing before the Program Year targeted for the WIOA performance reporting.

*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. 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.

Alabama utilizes UI wage rewards to track participant success for WIOA Title I and Title III programs for entered employment, employment relation and median wage measures. Agreements for Title II, (Adult Education) and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation participants tracking for these three measures will be effected in order to track measureable employment and wage activity.

For the measures relating "Evidential Attainment", "Measurable Skill Gains" and "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" the core partner agencies will utilize extensive call management through the Alabama Career Center System data on these measures.

The Alabama Longitudinal Data System (ALDS), once it becomes operable in 2017, should provide information on all students in postsecondary education and below. The purpose of the ALDS includes the timely and accurate information about education performance that can be used to improve the education system of all education providers and guide decision makers at all levels, to facilitate the enhancement of the performance data and workforce data. The ALDS will require the primary users of data on educational attainment, including the State and Local Workforce Development Boards to address deficiencies in the delivery of educational programs throughout the system.

## 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.)

Alabama will continue to utilize quarterly State UI records wage data as well the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) which facilitates the exchange of wage data among participating States in order to measure progress and performance

accountability for State and local area performance measures. This wage data also assists in evaluating and accessing workforce and local labor market information. Currently, the Alabama Workforce Development Division has a data sharing agreement with the Alabama Department of Labor (State UI records) and with WRIS. These data sharing agreements are modified as necessary to reflect changes in staff and/or federal or state law. Safeguards are in place to ensure wage data stored for reporting purposes is deleted after ETA reports have been generated.

The Alabama Department of Labor's Unemployment Compensation Division will share specific bits of data as it relates to an individual's wage history in keeping with 20 CFR part 603 and the Alabama Unemployment Compensation Law, Code of Alabama 25-4-118 (d) "The director may, at his discretion, release information regarding employment, wages, wage rates, and unemployment to institutions of higher education of this state, or a federal governmental corporation upon payment of a reasonable cost therefor, for the purpose of making economic analyses; provided, that such institution or corporation agrees that information so obtained will not be published or released by it to any person or persons in such a manner as to permit the identification of any specific individual or employing unit." The bits of information that are provided will require the Department of Education to garner a release from each student and maintain a copy of such release in their file.

#### 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.

Data collection and data analysis for decision-making and planning for Alabama's workforce development and education programs shall conform to privacy safeguards established in state and federal law. The longitudinal data system described above in

III. (B) (6) (A) (ii) will be operated and maintained by the Office of Education and Workforce Statistics. This office is considered an authorized representative of the State Department of Education under applicable federal and state laws for purposes of accessing and compiling student record data for research purposes. The Office will develop de-identification standards and processes using modern statistical methods. The Office is responsible for the protection and the maintenance of confidentiality of collected student data, including compliance with the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and all other relevant state and federal privacy laws, including rules and policies established by the advisory board that are not in conflict with existing state or federal laws or rules or regulations.

#### 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.

In affiliation with the American Job Center (AJC) network, the Alabama Veterans' Services Program within the Alabama Career Center system shall offer comprehensive employment and career placement service to nearly 25,000 veterans a year through a combination of self-service Internet-based job services and direct assistance at AJCs throughout the state. The Alabama Job Link (AJL) system, as a point of entry for self-service registration, provides a priority service notification to veterans and covered persons at the Alabama Joblink website. Veterans and persons entitled to priority services and training complete a universal application that includes features and questions designed to assist staff members in identifying them for priority services and training at the point of entry into the workforce development system. Veterans who can use AJL competently are encouraged to self-register and make maximum use of the automated access to resources. As a core service, career center specialists review applications and resumes submitted by veterans and covered persons who register for employment using self-service, to ensure that veterans' applications clearly state job objectives and show meaningful information with regards to work history, education and training. Because veterans' resumes are listed first in the search results and are annotated with an American flag, employers can quickly locate qualified veterans for job openings. To ensure that veterans' receive priority in referral to job openings, the Alabama Job Link system provides 24-hour email alerts to veterans for any job listing that matches their resumes.

The automated system to select qualified candidates for job openings is programmed to refer only qualified veterans in the first 24 hours of the listing, unless no qualified veterans are available. Priority service is also provided when veterans, or others eligible for priority, are identified at intake when registering for services at any AJC, or other service delivery points. Career center specialists will ensure that each veteran completing a full application will have properly recorded their skills, education, training, job or career interests, work experience, licenses or certifications, employment availability, contact information, and other vital information. Additionally, AJCs will use signage, graphics, and displays to inform veterans and Covered Persons of priority service (as described under Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 42 and 20 CFR Part 1010) and as applicable to all US DOL-funded employment services and training. Moreover, local career center managers will develop outreach activities to locate Covered Persons under Veterans' Priority. Managers or designated representatives will review special reports generated by AJL for the purpose of identifying veterans and Covered Persons who may be contacted and made aware of their priority in services and training. Career Center managers will develop local service strategies and training goals for veterans and Covered Persons entitled to Veterans' Priority, in consultation with their partner agencies and training providers, to encourage maximum utilization of services and training by veterans and Covered Persons. All Alabama Workforce Development regions have implemented Veterans' Priority in the State WIOA and Wagner-Peyser Plan of Service. Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) shall complement Priority of Service provided by the AJC to veterans and Covered Persons, as mandated under Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter 41, and in accordance with the general and special provisions of the Jobs For Veterans State Grant (JVSG), and applicable regulations, policies, and directive guidance for JVSG from the Assistant Secretary, Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET), including Veterans

Program Letters addressing DVOP-LVER Roles and Responsibilities. The Alabama strategy leverages improvements in technology to enable career center specialists to locate and review the resumes of veterans using on-line self-services for the purpose of offering helpful advice or suggestions on presenting their skills and abilities to prospective employers, because the AJL data system is designed to support employers searching for key words, then automatically flags the resumes of veterans and Covered Persons who are identified as qualified candidates within the parameters entered by the employer. This advantage offers veterans and Covered Person a Priority in Service and enables an employer to contact them directly, with or without a referral through a posted job order. Targeting Services to Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE): Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job center (AJC) network will provide comprehensive employment, training, and career placement services to nearly 25,000 veterans a year through a combination of Internet-based job services and personal assistance at Alabama Career Centers in the statewide AJC network. Alabama has more than 32,000 residents currently serving in the Armed Forces and of that nearly 13,000 in the National Guard and Reserve component. Alabama National Guard ranked fifth in numbers of troops deployed.

The Alabama Career Center system in the American Job Center network operates under the auspices of the Alabama Department of Labor, the state agency responsible for providing employment services and related services to veterans, and is authorized by the Governor to make application for funds to carry out the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) to carry out the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) program as mandated under Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41.

The Alabama Job Link (AJL) enables veterans to use self-services, including registration. Upon entering the Career Center, these self-service Veterans will have an initial assessment performed by Wagner- Peyser staff. Alabama DVOP specialists prioritize their efforts with veterans who are facing significant barriers to employment (SBE) in securing employment, including veterans who appear to be having difficulty in using the Alabama Job Link (AJL) automated system. The assignment of DVOP specialists at specific Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job Center (AJC) network is based on a strategy to ensure veterans with SBEs are priority customers in the Alabama Workforce Development system. Although many veterans can and will use the internet-based self-registration and various self-service features, veterans with SBEs are provided intensive services. Veterans who enter the Alabama Workforce Development System at an AJC (Alabama Career Center), are served initially by career center specialists. For veterans who appear to have an SBE, career center specialists will offer additional services, to include referral to a DVOP who will provide intensive services and case management services to veterans having a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE), as defined by Veterans Program Letter (VPL) 03-14, VPL 03-14 chg. 1&2 VPL 04-14 and any future VPLs providing guidance on SBEs: 1. All veterans enrolled in the Five-track Employment Program administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service. As covered in a separate agreement with VR&E, a client determined to be "Job-Ready" by VR&E will be referred by a VR&E Employment Coordinator to the state's Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC), who will refer the Job Ready VR&E client to an appropriate AJC manager for case

management and job placement services. 2. A Special Disabled Veteran or Disabled Veteran, as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C § 4211(1). Special Disabled and Disabled Veterans are those who are entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs; or, were discharged or released from active duty because of a service connected disability. 3. Veterans in the categories above will be provided a comprehensive Assessment of Employability, addressing barriers to employment and a written Individual Employment Plan (IEP) outlining the individual's employability planning. Locating Priority Group Veterans: Veterans in priority groups will be located in the data system by developing special reports and search capabilities of the AJL system. Career Center/AJC staff members will outreach to veterans who may benefit from DVOP services. DVOPs will outreach to homeless shelters, community agencies that provide services to homeless individuals, and will participate in special events for disabled and homeless veterans, such as Homeless Veterans Stand Downs.

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

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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.

### III. (B) (7) Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System

Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) prohibits discrimination against individuals who apply to, participate in, work for, or come into contact with programs and activities that receive financial assistance from DOL, or, under certain circumstances, from other Federal agencies or are otherwise part of the American Job Center delivery system. Section 188 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation or belief, among other bases. [Section 188 of WIA, 29 U.S.C. § 2938; Section 188 of WIOA, 29 U.S.C. § 3248] Section 188 also requires that reasonable accommodations be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities in certain circumstances. On July 22, 2014, the President signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). In general, WIOA took effect in July 2015, and supersedes WIA. Section 188 of WIOA contains provisions identical to those in Section 188 of WIA.

In 2005, a team of persons with disabilities and others reviewed each Alabama Career Center for physical and programmatic accessibility using a survey checklist developed under Section 188 of WIA. A re-survey of Career Centers (including satellite centers) is being done in FY 2016 to check physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, services, technology and materials using a DOL survey checklist developed under Section 188 of WIOA and a policy checklist. The surveys also measure compliance with

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. This re-survey is being conducted by a team of persons with disabilities and others that includes assistive technology experts on deaf and blind needs. All of these surveys measure physical access from parking to entrances to where services are provided as well as accessibility of bathrooms, telephones, tables, and water fountains. Policies are also being evaluated to ensure that they do not exclude individuals with disabilities. Computers are being evaluated to ensure access for those with disabilities affecting hearing, vision, and manual dexterity.

At the completion of surveys of the Career Centers, a summary report will be compiled which will list all physical and programmatic barriers, if any, and suggested strategies to remove those barriers. New policies to ensure access may also be suggested. Responsibility for implementation of barrier removal strategies will be divided between the one-stop delivery system partners. Staff training may be developed where necessary to ensure that they have the knowledge, sensitivity, and awareness to address the needs of individuals with disabilities.

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

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

Needs of English Language Learners at Alabama's One-Stop centers are met in a variety of ways, depending on the individual client's needs. One-Stop centers are equipped with computers and software that translates documents from English into a variety of languages. Staff training will include methods for obtaining translators, use of language translation software, and procedures for securing assistance from partner and outside agencies for clients who are English Language Learners (ELLs). The non-English speaking and limited-English proficient population in Alabama is growing rapidly. All public school systems and Alabama's community colleges comply with all federal guidelines in serving ELLs and have many resources that can be accessed by the One-Stop centers and WIOA partner programs to meet the needs of ELLs who need workforce training or related services.

#### IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

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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.

Coordinated planning for all Alabama core and partner programs will be centered in the Alabama Department of Commerce. The WIOA staff resources have recently been placed within the Alabama Department of Commerce in a newly created Commerce Workforce Division. The Alabama Department of Commerce is the entity responsible for the economic development strategies for the state. By this new alignment, it is the specific job duty of the Deputy Secretary of Commerce Workforce Development Division to make sure the WIOA program is coordinated with the economic development strategies. Regional Workforce Councils in the workforce regions of the state are also, the responsibility of the Department of Commerce will serve as the foundational information gathering entities that provide data and recommendations to the Alabama Workforce Board. The Workforce Board quarterly meetings and the meetings of its committees will bring forward needs, recommendations, data analysis, and initiatives to improve workforce development and to meet the needs of Alabama's current and emerging industries. The Partners Team is defined as the Alabama Team that attended the "National Convening" in Washington a few months ago. This team developed the original Alabama Combined Plan and continues to work as a team to edit and expand the Combined Plan to resolve the identified conditions received from USDOL. This team represents the working group of several Cabinet level Secretaries, Commissioners and Directors that have directed the team to align, leverage, coordinate and lead the Combined Plan. The Governor, through these Cabinet members has directed the agency coordination. The Partners Team will formally plan and set up coordination strategies that will be disseminated to all the Career Centers and Career Center staff to insure all plans and actions that guarantee citizen success is placed into action. Basically the partnership team sets the policies and the Career.

## V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

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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 administering the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board; Yes
- 5.** The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities; Yes
- 6.** The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3); Yes
- 7.** The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable; Yes
- 8.** The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program; Yes

**9.** The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of 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

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## VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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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.

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

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

#### A. ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

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##### 1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

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

Alabama for a number of years was divided into three local Workforce Investment Boards. The local WIBS included Mobile county, Jefferson county and the balance of 65 counties. While this may have made sense at the time these decisions were made, we have now designated seven (7) new or reconfigured Local Areas. These seven (7) Local Areas have been formed with consideration of the changing dynamic and continued growth among the business sectors within the state, to improve services to rural Alabama, and to ensure that all citizens are served effectively and appropriately with local input. The seven local areas are:

North Alabama Works! (Lauderdale, Limestone, Madison, Jackson, Colbert, Lawrence, Morgan, Marshall, DeKalb, Frankline, Marion, Winston, and Cullman Counties)

East Alabama Works! (Cherokee, Etowah, Calhoun, Cleburne, Talladega, Clay, and Randolph Counties)

West Alabama Works! (Lamar, Fayette, Pickens, Tuscaloosa, Bibb, Sumter, Greene, Hale, and Marengo Counties)

Central Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (Walker, Blount, Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby, and Chilton Counties)

Central Alabama Works! (Perry, Coosa, Tallapoosa, Chambers, Dallas, Autauga, Elmore, Macon, Lee, Lowndes, Montgomery, Bullock, and Russell Counties)

Southeast Alabama Works! (Butler, Crenshaw, Pike, Barbour, Covington, Coffee, Dale, Henry, Geneva, Houston Counties)

Southwest Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (Choctaw, Clarke, Wilcox, Washington, Monroe, Conecuh, Mobile, Baldwin, and Escambia Counties)

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

The Department of Commerce has for many years worked directly with practically every business and all the business sectors within the state. Commerce is involved with small business development, export/trade, film/entertainment, industry recruitment and workforce training in all 67 counties. Commerce is involved with large municipalities and very rural communities statewide to include county commissions, city councils and mayors. Whether it is business leaders or community leaders and they are sending a very clear message, the current three local area designations are not working and citizens are not being served adequately. These leaders have been quoted as saying we do not know how to access WIOA to assist our local citizens.

The Governor appointed a business led, CEO level Workforce Council two years ago and they have made many recommendations. This group of business professionals represent all areas of the state and are a cross section of health care, manufacturing, banking, construction and government leaders and in their very first set of recommendations made in January of 2015 they recommended reviewing and changing the current WIOA (WIA at that time) Workforce Boards to better and more effectively serve the citizens of Alabama. They recommended the Governor hire an outside independent third party vendor to survey state wide business leaders, employed workers, college students, unemployed workers and all potential stake holders related to the Alabama workforce and workforce programs. In 2015 companies from Orlando, Florida,

The Ideas Group and an Alabama Company, Direct Communications were hired to perform this task over a several month period. As predicted the recommendation was made by these companies in their report to the Governor to implement “a strong network of effective empowered regional workforce regions who should own the central role in bridging business needs with a talent supply chain.” In addition, the vendors recommended the Workforce System be driven by business and industry demand and criteria. In other words the decisions for workforce initiatives should be made locally and a 65 county local area of a 67 county state does not allow appropriate local representation or decision-making. The Governor and the Department of Commerce, The Alabama Community College System, Alabama Department of Labor and the economic developers of Alabama agree that the state should introduce a seven (7) to eight (8) region, local area designation for all workforce issues to include WIOA resources with decisions made at the local level by local business and concerned citizens.

Governor’s Workforce Innovation Directive PY2014-05 and PY2014-05, Change 1 (See appendix 2) provided local areas the process for submitting local area designation requests. The policy was posted on the Alabama WIOA agency's website for public comment. Change 1 to GWID PY2014-05 defined “performed successfully”

as the local area met or exceeded the levels of performance the Governor negotiated with local Board and Chief Elected official, and the local area has not failed any individual measure for the last two (2) consecutive program years before the enactment of WIOA. Sustained fiscal integrity means the secretary nor the Governor has not made a formal determination during either the last two (2) consecutive years preceding the determination regarding such integrity, that neither the grant recipient nor the administrative entity of the local area misspent funds under the Workforce Investment Act, Title 1 due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration. State WIA Reporting and Fiscal staff verified performance measures and fiscal integrity for each local area that submitted a request for initial designation.

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

A local area that applies for local area designation under WIOA Section 106(b)(2) (initial designation) or Section 106(b)(3) (subsequent designation) and is not granted designation may submit an appeal to the State Workforce Development Board. The local area must file notice of intent to appeal and within ten (10) working days must submit their rebuttal package stating the grounds for the appeal and the reasons why the appellant should be initially designated. The rebuttal must be sent via certified mail to the Alabama Department of Commerce c/o State Workforce Development Board, Post Office Box 304106, Montgomery, Alabama 36130. The appellant may be asked to provide additional information and documentation. State WIOA staff will work in conjunction with the State Board to expedite the appeal and schedule a formal hearing before the Board. The goal for any appeal is to be resolved within 30 days of the filing of the appeal. If the appeal to the State Board does not result in designation, the appellant may request a review by the Secretary of Labor. (See appendix 2 GWID, PY2014-05, Change 01.)

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

State partner agencies responsible for the administration of Title I-B Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education, and Rehabilitative Services have agreed to physically co-locate in all comprehensive one-stop career centers in each local area. The State is in the process of developing a WIOA policy to establish an appeals process related to determinations of infrastructure funding by the Partners. The appeals process will be incorporated in the State's WIOA one-stop certification policy.

## 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.

Alabama WIOA statewide policies and guidance for the Statewide Workforce Development System are developed and officially issued to the local areas and core partner agencies as applicable by issuing Federal Department of Labor ETA policies (TEGL's, TEN's, etc.) via Governors Workforce Innovation Directives (GWIDs). State

initiated GWID's are also issued to provide guidance from the WIOA statute and the WIOA implementing regulations issued on June 30, 2016. The Alabama Workforce Development Board (AWDB) will provide an opportunity to review state policies and guidance to the Workforce Development System beginning the second quarter of PY2016 to make recommendations and provide partner and business member input to required federal and state policies.

The GWID's are posted on the Alabama Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division website section and at the time of posting to the website (<http://madeinalabama.com/divisions/workforce-development/governors-workforce-innovation-directive/>), an email is sent to local workforce development areas and to workforce partner agencies as well as to other workforce system personnel to notify them a new or revised policy has been posted on the website. Policies cover all areas of compliance both fiscal and programmatic in compliance with the Act and final WIOA regulations.

State of Alabama general funds are allotted to the Alabama Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division (Title I-B Administrative Entity). These funds are governed by State Legislation and expenditures are used to enhance programs and activities for capital improvements or equipment that promote literacy, adult education, public health and welfare and mental health. The uses of these funds governed under the code of Alabama 1975, Section 41-23-3.

**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 State has an established and approved budget for the use of WIOA Governor's Set Aside funds. The required state level activities for oversight and monitoring, grant administration, reporting to the USDOL, incentive awards to local workforce development areas, pre apprenticeship project, etc. are included in the approved budget. Also, allowable activities such as incumbent worker training projects funded with Governor's Set Aside funds are included in the approved budget. The Title I-B administrative entity also provides funds for operational costs to include the costs for the driver/operator for the State's Mobile Career Center Vehicle (MCCV) with Governor's Set Aside funds as well as Rapid Response funds when the vehicle is being used for a Rapid Response related layoff event. The State has administered a successful incumbent worker training program since 2001, which was funded with Workforce Investment Act, Governor's Set Aside funds. If necessary, the budget may be submitted to the State Workforce Development Board for approval of an amendment should other allowable statewide activities be considered for funding with WIOA Governor's Set Aside funds.

Rapid Response activities in Alabama are the responsibility of the Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Commerce. Rapid Response staff responds to WARN and non-WARN events immediately upon notification of pending layoffs or business closures. Rapid Response staff will contact the designated

contact person for the company or business to provide an overview of services and material available to the affected employees. If the affected employees are part of a union, a representative of the AFL/CIO Labor Institute for Training (LIFT) is also included in the meetings. Once Group Employee Meetings (GEM) dates are established, the Rapid Response Unit immediately notifies the local Career Center, UI, Community Based assistance agencies and others that can provide support and information to the affected workers.

The State has a newly established “layoff aversion team,” whose purpose is to provide assistance to “at-risk” companies should those companies contact the team prior to it being too late to avoid layoffs. The purpose of this team, which is composed of staff from several workforce partner agencies, is “lay-off aversion.” Each agency funds its own staff members for this team, so there’s no additional cost to the WIOA Title I-B administrative entity. One example of assistance might be incumbent worker training, if that is determined (by the team and the employer being assisted) to be the best route to avoid layoffs.

**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.**

The Alabama Dislocated Worker Unit, Rapid Response section is part of a State Level team that initially will meet to discuss assistance to any area of the state designated as a national disaster area. The Department of Commerce’s Workforce Development Division provides the Governor’s Office with information regarding available Rapid Response resources. State partnerships then includes the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) to provide the initial links for communication to FEMA as well as county level emergency management personnel. Rapid Response staff members also coordinate with the Alabama Department of Labor’s Career Centers to ensure State and local partnerships coordinate services to employers and workers affected by natural disasters.

The Rapid Response activities and coordination of services to be provided are the Governor’s initial part of Emergency Response Task Force to ensure information can and will be provided with agencies and contacts that will assist in meeting the needs of impacted individuals through the various agencies.

**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.**

Early intervention for possible TAA-eligible workers is provided by the State Rapid Response Unit assisted by local Career Center staff that, together, comprise the Rapid Response team. Customers attending Rapid Response General Employee Meetings are provided a general outline of available TAA services and instructed to report to their local Career Center upon receipt of their TAA eligibility notice. Available to assist in early interventions efforts are the Mobile Career Center Vehicle (MCCV) providing internet access to areas removed from Career Centers and ten (10) Portable One-Stops each offering ten (10) PCs with internet access.

## B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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### 1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. On-the-job training, Incumbent Worker training, Transitional Jobs, and Customized Training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

Governor's set aside funds are utilized to assist in funding a position in the State AFL/CIO office to assist in facilitating a registered apprenticeship program being added to the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The State Workforce Development Board will also strongly encourage local workforce development areas to set aside a dedicated sum of local Title I-B funds for Registered Apprenticeship training slots. (see III.a.2.H) Alabama utilizes the Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) with WIOA state set aside funds as authorized in section 134(a)(A)(i). The IWTP is designed to provide skills training upgrade to full time, permanent workers. The training must be a business necessity that will enhance companies' ability to compete in global economies, expand present markets and help ensure the permanency of businesses in the state. For the workers, the training will upgrade present work skills, heighten job security and increase the possibilities of higher wages and promotional opportunities. Local Workforce Development Areas/Boards are also highly encouraged to utilize a portion of their funds for work based training models through on-the-job training, transitional jobs, work experience and customized training.

### 2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

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

The Alabama Department of Commerce, in the 2016 Regular Session of the Legislature, was directed to develop a robust apprenticeship program for the state and include a state income tax credit for eligible Alabama employers. The intent is for Commerce to develop along with the USDOL Apprenticeship a new apprenticeship model that will be inclusive and appealing not only to manufacturing but four other sectors to include health care, information technology, construction and logistics/transportation. The legislature wants a specific focus on small business and

minority owned business. The newly forming section within the Workforce Division of Commerce will be known as Apprenticeship Alabama. The staff will rely on USDOL program requirements for all new apprenticeships as the tax credit will apply only to registered apprenticeships and the staff will work closely with the Alabama Department of Revenue for the income tax credit. Apprenticeship Alabama staff will work closely with Alabama companies to develop an apprenticeship, with eligible training providers for required instruction and with individual apprentices as they seek more skills. Apprenticeship Alabama staff will work closely with Alabama companies to develop an apprenticeship, with eligible training providers for required instruction and with individual apprentices as they seek more skills. As the Apprenticeship Alabama staff and the WIOA state staff are located within the Alabama Department of Commerce and both sections report directly to the Deputy Secretary of Workforce programs there is a built in alignment, which was the actual goal of the Governor and Legislative Leadership. Included in the apprenticeship legislation is a directive for the Deputy Secretary of Commerce to work closely with the Chancellor of the Community College System in develop the rules and apprenticeship process. The development is underway and the Community College System and Department of Commerce are jointly developing the rules, process and program.

The ACCS has an ever expanding Work Based Learning initiative in both non-credit and CTE credit programs. This is targeting ALL populations. As part of our Work Based Learning strategy we currently have registered apprenticeships, nonregistered apprenticeships, Cooperative learning, clinicals and preceptorships. We are in the process of redesigning CTE programs to ensure Work Based Learning is an integral part in any new CTE program submitted that is a key component of the program. We will be working to transition the current Work Based Learning programs into registered apprenticeships. ACCS is in discussion with the US Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship in becoming a Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (RACC) as a state-wide system. We anticipate implementation in the fall of 2016. In support of these strategic and initiatives to incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into Alabama's WIOA strategy and services and to expand registered apprenticeship opportunities to Alabama's communities, business, and constituents served by the state and the business sector, the Alabama Department of Commerce-Workforce Development Division under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary of Commerce has engaged with leaders from Governor's Office, ADOL, ALSDE (K-12), ACCS, Veterans Affairs, Related Labor Organizations, Industry Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development, other Apprenticeship Training Organization in the implementation ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator Grant.

The key component of this accelerator grant opportunity is the completion of the ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator Grant Action Planning Tool. The Strong collaboration between the partnering agencies in the completion of the self-assessment tool has yielded a strategic path forward to expand statewide apprenticeship opportunities by utilizing and leveraging WIOA Tile I, II, and, III resources. In addition, the ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator Grant Action Planning Tool is being used to design and develop a USDOL ApprenticeshipUSA Expansion Grant. These two critical planning initiatives along with the partnerships from the Governor's Office, ADOL, ALSDE (K-12), ACCS, Veterans Affairs, Related Labor Organizations, Industry Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Economic

Development, other Apprenticeship Training Organizations will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into Alabama's state WIOA strategy and services. The WIOA state apprenticeship goals, strategy, and services are in direct alignment with the USDOL Department's goals for ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion. The following are the three priorities: . 1) To advance the State's Registered Apprenticeship as a workforce development strategy and post-secondary education career pathway that will expand and create, adaptable, and highly skilled workforce. 2) To integrate, Statewide apprenticeship strategies and increase Alabama's capacity to engage industry and meet the demand for new programs in both traditional and non-traditional industries such as IT, Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Building Trades, Cybersecurity, and Business Services. 3) To advance the State's innovations to significantly increase apprenticeship opportunities for all Alabama's workers, particularly low-income individuals and underrepresented populations in apprenticeship including youth, women, communities of color, Native Americans, and persons with disabilities, and take steps to facilitate their successful completion of apprenticeship programs. By designing, developing, and implementing the Alabama Department of Commerce - Workforce Development Division Apprenticeship Alabama State Expansion initiative, the Department is helping the business and community stakeholders to bring together the right partners to strengthen Alabama's apprenticeship systems under the WIOA State Plan for the State of Alabama.

### 3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

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

The Alabama Department of Commerce's Workforce Development Division issued Governor's Workforce Innovation Directive Number PY2015-03, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Eligible Training Provider Policy on September 11, 2015 (See Appendix 2). This policy described the process and procedures required by local workforce development areas and interested training providers to apply for and maintain eligibility on Alabama's WIOA Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

Registered Apprenticeship programs need only submit a letter requesting to be included on the ETPL with information about occupations included, name and address of program sponsor, location of related instruction and method and length of instruction. Apprenticeship sponsors will not be required to meet the State's minimum performance goals and will be granted automatic approval to the list.

### 4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDED BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM.

As mentioned in other sections, Alabama's approach to economic and workforce development begins with a base principle to ensure that all populations, especially the basic skill deficient, economically disadvantaged, physically, mentally, and verbally challenged participants are provided the services to assist in attaining gainful employment. The Career Centers partners and the regional workforce development boards must put together local plans based on the requirements outlined in WIOA for each core partner and allowable additional partners. WIOA specifies that services for adults will be provided through One-Stop Career Centers. Service such as career guidance and workforce information may also be provided virtually. WIOA authorizes two types of service that are potentially available to job seekers:

**1. Career Services** - includes outreach, job search and placement assistance, provision of labor market information, comprehensive assessments, development of individual employment plans, counseling and career planning, and other services specified in Section 134(c)(2)(A).

**2. Training Services** - includes Occupational Skills Training, One-the-Job Training activities, Customized, Training, Individual Training Accounts, and other training services specified in Section 134(c)(3)(D).

Priority for both career and training services must be given recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the federal requirement.

The Alabama Workforce Development System will provide priority of services to veterans and eligible spouses, as specified in the Jobs for Veterans Act and its implementing regulations at 20CFR Part 101. When Veterans Priority is applied in conjunction with Priority of Services for WIOA Adult Program Participants, veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skill deficient will receive first priority. The second priority would be recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient who are not veterans or eligible spouses. Local Workforce Development Boards are required to develop and include in their local plan, policies that implement Priority of Services for WIOA Adult Program Participants for the One Stop Center and service delivery plan for the local training providers. The State Program Integrity Section is tasked with monitoring the LWDAs to ensure that Priority of Services policies are established and approved by local boards, as well as sample testing participant files for adherence to stated policies. The State Program Integrity Section will monitor each local area on an annual basis and conduct extensive reviews of local area policies and conduct sample testing of participant files to ensure LWDAs adhere to their respective policies, as well operate within compliance of WIOA regulations for Priority of Service and regulations for Jobs for Veterans. A description of how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient is provided in the Governor's Workforce Innovation Directive (GWID) PY 2016-01, located on the Department's website at Department of Commerce Made In Alabama website.

([http://www.madeinalabama.com/divisions/workforce-development/governors-workforce-innovation-directive/.](http://www.madeinalabama.com/divisions/workforce-development/governors-workforce-innovation-directive/))

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

Local Workforce Development Areas must submit a plan modification request to transfer funds between adult and dislocated worker programs. Once funds are transferred from one funding stream to another, the program eligibility and activity requirements transfer to the new program. However, the funding allocation must be tracked separately in the financial system and reported as if it retained its original identity.

Up to 100 percent of the funds allocated to the local area for Adult and Dislocated Workers may be transferred between adult employment and training activities and dislocated worker employment and training activities per WIOA Section 133(b)(4) and the WIOA's Implementing Regulations at 20 CFR 683.130. Transfer requests must be accompanied by appropriate justification, clearly indicating why the request is being made and how granting the request will benefit local area delivery of workforce development services. At a minimum, the rationale for the transfer should address: 1) the situation necessitating the transfer, including local conditions (labor market, economic, etc.) contributing to the need for the transfer request; 2) how the funds transfer will impact the participant levels in both programs; 3) the transfer's effect on current providers of training and other services; and 4) a description of the expected impact on WIOA performance outcomes for both funding streams.

The fund transfer may be approved by the Governor, provided that: 1) the transfer will not adversely impact an area's capacity to adequately provide appropriate services to individuals in need of such services provided by the program subject to reduced funding; 2) the transfer should also not adversely impact the area's ability to achieve program performance measures established for the current or subsequent years; 3) the local area will expend, at a minimum, 80 percent of all funds budgeted to the receiving funding stream by the end of the program year.

#### C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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

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

\* **Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)**

Alabama's WIOA youth program activities are administered by the seven (7) local workforce development areas / boards. Policy guidance (Governor's Workforce Innovation Directive PY2015-09) was issued on January 21, 2016 to the local workforce areas that delineated State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants (contracts) for WIOA youth workforce programs and activities. Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) will follow the procurement procedures established within their area to ensure proper competition and transparency as required by WIOA Section 123(a). Each local area, is offered the opportunity providers of youth services that effectively address the needs of eligible youth.

The local areas / boards, per the policy Directive, are required to consider funding youth providers based on program cost data provided by potential providers and based on criteria that may include those youth providers and activities that:

-Develop relationships between youth and caring adults -Involve family members -Develop youth citizenship and leadership skills -Provide appropriate services based on age and needs of each youth -Demonstrate involvement of the business/employer community - Demonstrate prior successes in providing employment and training services to youth, both basic skills and occupational skills -Demonstrate the connection between work and learning

In addition, each Local Area/LWDB must use the following criteria in awarding contracts for youth services:

1. Ability to measure and attain youth-related core performance levels; participant and employer (customer) satisfaction levels (Note: the State calculates and tracks official standards and performance.)
2. Coordination with local secondary and post-secondary institutions; 3. Prior experience working with disadvantaged, special populations, and in operating education, training, and employment programs;
4. Leveraging funds with other funding sources;
5. Fiscal accountability; and
6. Program design that includes the following components:
  - a. An objective assessment for each participant; b. Individual Service Strategies (ISS); and c. Services that prepare youth for post-secondary education opportunities, link academic and occupational learning, prepare youth for employment, and provide connections to intermediary organizations linked to the job market and employers.

WIOA has established core performance indicators to ensure that Federal investments in employment and training programs are accountable to job seekers, employers, customers, and taxpayers. This is a renewed system, which will ensure access for all individuals, of every skill level, the opportunity to pursue the skills, training, and education they need to obtain employment that will lead to financial stability and economic security for themselves and their families. Employers will also have the assurance that trained and qualified workers will be available to fill their current and future openings.

Specifically related to this Youth Policy are the Youth Measures and Descriptions.

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

The WIOA requirement that increases the minimum out-of-school youth (OSY) expenditure rate to 75 percent signifies a much greater focus on both funds and resources on the OSY population. Early in Alabama's WIOA implementation process representatives from state level core and optional one-stop partner focused on reviewing requirements for aligning program services and activities. Guidance and recommendations will continue to be developed and should be completed and issued to Local Workforce Areas by the end of 2016.

The State Workforce Development Board supports cost-efficient, collaborative efforts that result in comprehensive and innovative services that lead youth to academic improvement, high school graduation or High School Equivalency attainment, employment, military services, advanced or apprenticeship training, paid and unpaid internships, and/or post-secondary education. Local programs must link academic and occupational learning and develop measures of successful outcomes. Effective programs require the involvement of local groups providing input on the proposed program design, and coordinating the delivery of the youth services with local employers, One-Stop Career Centers and other youth services already available in the community.

Local programs have the discretion to determine what specific program services will be provided to a youth participant, based on each participant's objective assessment and individual service strategy. Critical to the success is integrating a youth development strategy that focuses on a young person's assets, provides a variety of interventions and supports allowing the youth to grow, learn and mature—successfully transitioning to careers and productive adulthood. Youth development activities include leadership development opportunities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors. It is expected that each youth will participate in more than one of the fourteen program elements required as part of any local youth program. The overall goal of the youth program is to help youth complete a high school diploma or equivalent and to prepare for a career pathway that will transition into skilled employment and/or postsecondary education.

In Alabama, the workforce system will expand education, training, and employment services to youth and adults with disabilities by using a career pathway framework to increase opportunities. Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and the ACCS Adult Education program partners on serving individuals with disabilities that lack the basic academic skills and soft "essential" skills to be successful in postsecondary education and employment. The services include eligible services outlined under section 202 of the

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title II Adult Education and the support services that are offered by ADRS under section 414 (Vocational Rehabilitation Services) of WIOA.

Alabama will use multiple strategies to achieve improved outcomes for out of school youth as described in 129(2)(1)(B). These strategies will include all of the combined partners, especially Title II and Title IV being inclusive in their deliver models. The integrated Education and Training opportunities that will be offered through the Alabama Community College System adult education and technical education programs will emphasize braided funding and support services for continued success. All Out of School Youth will follow the eligibility and performance requirements as outlined in WIOA.

The State is implementing a WIOA Common Intake and Reporting System that will capture demographic participant information for the four core programs and additional partners as requested. The system will align accountability measures and generate automatic referrals among the programs. The system is under development and will have a target date of 2017 for full implementation.

Currently each partner has their own accountability and performance systems for tracking client information and generating reports and referrals. Memorandums of Understanding are in place to allow for data matching of participants to collect the required common measure and partner specific information for accountability.

Using a no wrong door policy, all participants will develop an individualized plan which will entail an optimum blend of services and funding to achieve their objectives. The plan will guide a participant to a pathway built to meet his/her needs and integrate multiple programs and services in a seamless and effective manner.

This model is an integrated compilation of programs and services intended to develop basic academic, technical and employability skills; provide continuous education, training, and work supports that lead to high-demand jobs in targeted sector areas in the local region.

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

\* Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)

The criteria to solicit competitive proposals (per WIOA Section 123(a)) for the operation of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I, Public Law 113-128 youth purposes and activities, will ensure that Youth Programs are competitively procured and solicited for comprehensive year-round Youth Programs for out-of-school youth between the ages 16-24, and in-school youth between the ages of 14 and 21. Local Areas' youth program design must offer a unique opportunity to provide a creative and innovative mix of services designed to address the academic, vocational, and employment needs of at-risk youth.

Targeted activities include:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential; 2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component, academic and occupational education, which may include:
  - a. summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; b. pre-apprenticeship programs; c. internships and job shadowing; and d. on-the-job training opportunities;
4. Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA Section 123;
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate;
7. Supportive services;
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;
11. Financial literacy education;
12. Entrepreneurial skills training;
13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.
15. The State's Program Integrity Section (monitors) will provide technical assistance and monitor to ensure that local area policies and procedures meet the requirement delineated in WIOA Section 129(c)(2).

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR “REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT” CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.

Alabama’s state policy definition for someone who “requires additional assistance to complete and educational program or to secure and hold employment” is a low income individual who is (1) Indian, Alaska Native, or Hawaiian Native; (2) individuals who are English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; and (3) eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers.

5. INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION, AS DEFINED IN LAW, FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ATTENDING SCHOOL AS SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(I) AND SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(I). IF STATE LAW DOES NOT DEFINE “NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL” OR “ATTENDING SCHOOL,” INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE AND PROVIDE THE STATE POLICY FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A YOUTH IS ATTENDING OR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL.

Every child between the ages of 6 and 17 years is required to attend a public school, private school, church school, or be instructed by a competent private tutor for the entire length of the school term in every scholastic year except that, prior to attaining his or her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday every child attending a church school as defined in Section

**16-28-1** is exempt from the requirements of this section, provided such child complies with enrollment and reporting procedure specified in Section 16-28-7. Admission to public school shall be on an individual basis on the application of the parents, legal custodian, or guardian of the child to the local board of education at the beginning of each school year, under such rules and regulations as the board may prescribe. The parent, legal custodian, or guardian of a child who is 6 years of age, may opt out of enrolling their child in school at the age of 6 years by notifying the local school board of education, in writing that the child will not be enrolled in school until he or she is 7 years of age.

6. IF USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION WHICH MUST FURTHER DEFINE HOW TO DETERMINE IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS UNABLE TO COMPUTE OR SOLVE PROBLEMS, OR READ, WRITE, OR SPEAK ENGLISH, AT A LEVEL NECESSARY TO FUNCTION ON THE JOB, IN THE INDIVIDUAL’S FAMILY, OR IN SOCIETY. IF NOT USING THE PORTION OF THE DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.

N/A

#### D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

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In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must include—

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)
2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)
3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

This does not apply to Alabama. Alabama does not have a single-area.

4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.
5. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.
6. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.
7. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.
8. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

#### 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:
  - i. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT
  - ii. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;
  - iii. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;
  - iv. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND
  - v. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.
5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND
6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESSES USED TO:
  - i. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;
  - ii. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;
  - iii. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;
  - iv. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.
  - v. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE'S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT
7. THE SECRETARY MAY REQUIRE THAT STATES PROVIDE THE MOST RECENT DATA AVAILABLE ABOUT THE OUTCOMES OF THE EXISTING WAIVER IN CASES WHERE THE STATE SEEKS RENEWAL OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WAIVER;

**N/A**

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#### TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

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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

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**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM  
(EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)**

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**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.**

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**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.**

Alabama Wagner-Peyser employment services utilize professional development activities from several resources. Bedrock of the professional development is the Alabama State Personnel Department which offers courses such as interview and selection; performance appraisal; presentation skills; and dynamics of supervision to ensure selection of quality staff, properly motivated to perform with a high level of interpersonal skills. Each ASES staff member has this training plan in his or her individual file. One-Stop Center weekly staff meetings of all partners are conducted to share information and train staff. Veteran's staff training provided periodically by NVTI is leveraged by Employment Service to include ES staff. Staff members are also afforded the opportunity to attend Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) conferences twice a year to learn the latest in workforce development programs and skills training. Additionally, ADOL-ETA and Workforce Three-One training webinar offerings are transmitted to One-Stop staff for live participation or viewing of recorded programs later. Finally, implementation of the Kuder Professional Development Program is being evaluated to provide ES staff Career Advisor Training which teaches skills needed to deliver career exploration, career decision making, job seeking, and job placement services. This training meshes with the Alabama Department of Education that has implemented Kuder as their Career Planning System for all students.

**2. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM, AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION.**

Wagner-Peyser staff members are cross-trained on UI eligibility issues and are responsible for conducting the UI work test and, more recently, have been designated as responsible for the UI eligibility assessment portion of the Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. Other core programs, including WIOA staff, are aware of UI eligibility issues through One-Stop staff meetings and a desk-aid developed by UI for One-Stop staff use in identifying potential eligibility issues. Wagner-Peyser management works closely with Unemployment Insurance management to provide continuous training to One-Stop staff on UI program changes that may affect eligibility.

**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.**

Information, both written and verbal, on filing a claim for unemployment compensation is available in the reception area in all one-stop centers where client service needs are assessed and identified. Telephone and internet computer access for filing claims are provided in One-Stop Center resource rooms. Individuals needing assistance in filing claims are provided staff-assistance by Wagner-Peyser resource room attendants.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

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Wagner-Peyser staff reach out to UI claimants occurs early and often in their claim, either electronically, by phone, and/or by mail to apprise of one-stop center services and encourage visiting their nearest center for reemployment assistance. Claimants profiled and selected for RESEA are mandated to come to a center for mandatory reemployment services to include: (1) orientation to all services, including self-service; (2) provision of labor market and career information; and, (3) development of an Individual Reemployment Plan that includes work search activities such as assessments, counseling, training, resume preparation, and job search. UI claimants not selected for RESEA receive many of the same reemployment services through the Wagner-Peyser grant and the state funded Claimant Assistance Program. Other unemployed individuals have available many of these same reemployment services as determined appropriate with their needs by interview and assessment with Wagner-Peyser staff.

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:

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1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

UI claimants must register in Alabama Job Link (AJL), the state's automated labor exchange and log-in to the website weekly to search for a job, or visit a one-stop center for staff-assisted services as part of their job search requirement for receipt of benefits. UI claimant contacts are recorded in AJL and reported electronically to UI. Failure to comply with job search requirements may jeopardize benefits.

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

Alabama State Employment Services (ASES) has an integrated workforce registration system that captures and shares common information from both UI and Alabama JobLink (AJL) in establishing a labor exchange registration for all UI claimants in AJL.

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

Wagner-Peyser staff members are trained in administration of the work test for UI claimants, including making eligibility assessments. As possible availability issues are detected during interviews with UI claimants, they are reported to UI staff for adjudication. Wagner-Peyser staff members also provide staff-assisted reemployment services to include job search and placement services.

#### 4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

Wagner-Peyser staff members are trained to recognize clients, including UI claimants, needing education and training services and/or resources in order to acquire skills leading to high demand, high wage career paths. They are also trained to provide referral and application assistance to reach this goal.

#### 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.

##### Assessment of Need

Alabama is not identified by the U.S. Department of Labor as a significant Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) state, or among states with the highest estimated MSFW activity, relative to the MSFW program.

A review of the latest available statistics from the United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed the number of farms in Alabama decreased significantly (-11.3%) since 2007 to number 43,228 in 2012. While all size categories registered losses, the steepest declines were found among smaller farms (less than 180 acres) which shrank 13.7%. Farms with 180 acres or more declined 3.5% during this period. Farm acreage also decreased (-1.4%) during this period. Agricultural employers number an estimated 1,500 in the state. During PY 2014, an estimated 200 agricultural job orders for almost 1,600 agricultural job openings were placed in Alabama Job Link, the state's automated labor exchange. It is projected that PY 2015, job orders and job openings will remain unchanged or decline slightly from the preceding year.

The number of acres harvested for crops in Alabama, where historically MSFWs may be employed because of the crop's need for hand harvesting, hand planting or both, have also declined. These crops and acreage are: Sweet Potatoes - 2,700; Potatoes - 1,100; Tomatoes - 1,300; Sweet Corn - 1,200; Vegetables - 19,000; Watermelons - 3,100; and Peaches - 3,500 (Tons). Overall, total acreage for these labor intensive vegetable crops has also decreased over the last few years as many growers have

switched to crops such as peanuts and feed corn which are highly mechanized in their production, thus necessitating the need for fewer agricultural manual workers.

An attempt to review and analyze agricultural hired farm labor, to include the number of MSFW employed and possible labor shortages in these labor intensive crops, found only summary total agricultural labor numbers available in the United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) 2012 Census of Agriculture. Detailed information was not found available by crop for labor. Lacking data on hired farm labor, estimates available through the Labor Exchange Agricultural Reporting System (LEARS) as determined in collaboration with WIA/MSFW grantee (Telamon Corp.), Alabama Livestock and Crop Reporting Service, Extension Service and Alabama Job Link were used to estimate the number of MSFWs in Alabama at approximately 200.

The estimated number of MSFW in PY 2014 appears to be down from the previous year's estimates owing to fewer farms and the shift to more mechanized, less labor intensive crops. No significant change in MSFW is expected in the State in PY 2015. During PY 2014, it is estimated that sixty-three (63) MSFW registered for work in Alabama Job Link (AJL).

Assessment of MSFW numbers and needs, while difficult to ascertain, have been estimated from information and input from many sources such as WIA/MSFW 167 Grantee (Telamon Corp.), Alabama Livestock and Crop Reporting Service, Extension Service and other knowledgeable sources.

As a non-significant MSFW state, ASES cooperates and works closely with Telamon, WIOA 167 Grantee, to outreach, identify, and serve the state's MSFWs. Through this agreement with Telamon, ASES is able to achieve many of the state's outreach goals and determine needs to include employment, training and housing.

In PY 2015, Telamon (WIOA 167 grantee), partnering with One-stop Career Centers and with co-location in two (2) centers (Mobile and Huntsville), will require registration of all farm workers who enter through the WIOA, Title I, Section 167 door into Alabama Job Link, the state's labor exchange system. The possibility of additional co-locations is also being explored. This collaboration is expected to increase the number of MSFW registered in AJL in PY 2015.

#### Assessment of Need (continued)

Through this agreement ASES and Telamon Corporation work cooperatively to combine resources for more efficient service delivery to MSFWs. This includes the provision of employment, training and housing assistance. ASES One-stop staff members make every effort to ensure appropriate resources are made available to MSFWs. Services may include assessment, counseling, job development, job referral, training, support services and job placement assistance.

Telamon and ASES plan to have regularly scheduled meetings with ALFA, The Alabama Coop, Alabama Department of Agriculture, and various other farm related agencies and several farmers have volunteered to participate in an effort to better reach farmworkers.

In consideration of agricultural industry and employment trends, and the small number of MSFWs in the state, the available resources for outreach would appear sufficient.

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.

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#### Assessment of Need (continued)

Through this agreement ASES and Telamon Corporation work cooperatively to combine resources for more efficient service delivery to MSFWs. This includes the provision of employment, training and housing assistance. ASES One-stop staff members make every effort to ensure appropriate resources are made available to MSFWs. Services may include assessment, counseling, job development, job referral, training, support services and job placement assistance.

Telamon and ASES plan to have regularly scheduled meetings with ALFA, The Alabama Coop, Alabama Department of Agriculture, and various other farm related agencies and several farmers have volunteered to participate in an effort to better reach farmworkers.

In consideration of agricultural industry and employment trends, and the small number of MSFWs in the state, the available resources for outreach would appear sufficient.

**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.

#### Assessment of Need

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As a non-significant MSFW state, ASES cooperates and works closely with Telamon, WIOA 167 Grantee, to outreach, identify, and serve the state's MSFWs. Through this agreement with Telamon, ASES is able to achieve many of the state's outreach goals and determine needs to include employment, training and housing.

In PY 2015, Telamon (WIOA 167 grantee), partnering with One-stop Career Centers and with co-location in two (2) centers (Mobile and Huntsville), will require registration of all farm workers who enter through the WIOA, Title I, Section 167 door into Alabama Job Link, the state's labor exchange system. The possibility of additional co-locations is also being explored. This collaboration is expected to increase the number of MSFW registered in AJL in PY 2015.

#### Assessment of Need (continued)

Through this agreement ASES and Telamon Corporation work cooperatively to combine resources for more efficient service delivery to MSFWs. This includes the provision of employment, training and housing assistance. ASES One-stop staff members make every effort to ensure appropriate resources are made available to MSFWs. Services may include assessment, counseling, job development, job referral, training, support services and job placement assistance.

Telamon and ASES plan to have regularly scheduled meetings with ALFA, The Alabama Coop, Alabama Department of Agriculture, and various other farm related agencies and several farmers have volunteered to participate in an effort to better reach farmworkers.

In consideration of agricultural industry and employment trends, and the small number of MSFWs in the state, the available resources for outreach would appear sufficient.

## 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:

One-Stop Career Center outreach activities will assist in providing timely information to partner agencies and Workforce Development Boards about special employment, training, economic and educational needs of MSFW and their families. Outreach activity will interface with the WIA 167 grantee activities to assure all resources and assistance available to MSFW and their families is accessible. This coordination of service is assured and enhanced through the collaboration and, in some instances, co-location of WIA 167 grantee staff in One-Stop Career Centers.

### A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES.

Intensive efforts will be made to contact MSFW whose residence is in the local Career Center area served and those that migrate into the area that are not aware of the Center(s) or services available. In an effort to make sure that farmworkers are being informed of resource available to them, the state MSFW Monitor Advocate will continuously conduct outreach and reach out to all available resources related to MSFW program. Among these resources are the state's One-Stop Career Centers. The Monitor Advocate will visit and inform Center staff of the MSFW program and their responsibilities to outreach and provide services. Pre seasonal canvassing will be conducted by Career Center staff with leads provided from the State Monitor Advocate to determine anticipated MSFW population in local Center areas. Career Centers contact individuals and groups to identify, offer and provide services to these individuals not reached by usual Career Center intake activities.

As part of the outreach, MSFW will be informed of their rights to full Career Center services and invited to the local Center for registration, orientation, and assessment in accordance with ADOL/MSFW regulations. Services, including job referral, job development, as well as referral to other service agencies to include WIOA for possible individualized and training services, will be provided. Appropriate information will be directed to MSFW informing them of their rights, including the complaint process, under various Federal and State laws, as well as directives of service agencies in the community. Handouts will be provided to each person contacted advising them of this information.

Telamon, (WIOA 167 grantee) partnering with the Career Centers also performs outreach registering farmworkers in Alabama JobLink (AJL) who may be eligible for additional American Job Center services through the Career Center system. Telamon is currently co-located in two (2) Centers (Mobile and Huntsville) with possibility of additional co-locations being explored. Through this partnership Career Centers and Telamon Corporation work cooperatively to leverage resources for more efficient service delivery to MSFWs. This includes the provision of employment, training and housing assistance. Career Center One-stop staff members make every effort to ensure appropriate resources are made available to MSFWs. Services may include assessment, counseling, job development, job referral, training, support services and job placement assistance.

**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.**

All core programs including UI will engage staff members in annual training designed to inform staff members of the needs, services, activities, and outreach efforts to assist MSFWs and other farmworkers who may need assistance. Training will be

coordinated by Wagner-Peyser outreach staff and Telamon staff to ensure current information and resources are included in the staff trainings. One-Stop Career Centers maintain information, technological resources, and assistance contact information to provide technical assistance outreach workers. Designated staff members will attend state, regional and national conferences to stay abreast of current training, resources, and information needed to provide effective and efficient assistance fo MSFWs and other farmworkers who may need serivces. Intensive efforts will be made to contact all MSFW whose usual residence is in the local Center area and those that migrate into the area that do not contact Career Centers for service. MSFW will be informed of their rights to full Career Center services and invited to the local Center for registration, orientation, and assessment in accordance with ADOL/MSFW regulations. Services, including job referral, job development, as well as referral to other service agencies to include WIOA for possible individualized and training services, will be provided. Appropriate information will be directed to MSFW informing them of their rights under various Federal and State laws, as well as directives of service agencies in the community. Handouts will be given to each person contacted advising them of this information.

Bilingual regular and outreach staff, if possible, will be assigned to offices where substantial proportions of MSFW are primarily fluent and/or literate in Spanish, but not in English.

#### 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.

All core programs including UI will engage staff members in annual training designed to inform staff members of the needs, services, activities, and outreach efforts to assist MSFWs and other farmworkers who may need assistance. Training will be coordinated by Wagner-Peyser outreach staff and Telamon staff to ensure current information and resources are included in the staff trainings.

#### 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.

Merit staff outreach workers are provided professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers. Bedrock of the professional development activities are courses taught by the Alabama State Personnel Department which include presentation skills, public speaking, and interviewing and selection.

Professional development programs are being evaluated to provide Career Center staff professional training and certification in the field of workforce development. This will include skills in career resources, career exploration, career planning, career development, interviewing, resumes, assessment, case management, job search, job development, job placement and employer outreach services. The training will complement Alabama Department of Education staff training which has implemented Kuder Career Advisor Training as their Career Planning System for all

students. Selection of a Professional Development program is scheduled for January 2017, with implementation March 2017.

Outreach staff training also leverages one-stop partner Veterans Program - National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) training for LVER. This training closely tracks WIOA outreach training, and is conducted periodically at in-state venues as well as NVTI in Denver at the University of Colorado. Staff members are also afforded the opportunity to attend Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) conferences twice a year to learn the latest in workforce development programs and skills training. A workforce partner committee has been formed and is exploring development of an annual state-wide workforce development conference further economic and workforce development in Alabama.

Additionally, Workforce 3-One training webinar offerings, to include MSFW training, are transmitted to One-Stop staff for live participation or viewing of recorded programs later.

The State Monitor Advocate visits Career Centers on a regular schedule and conducts training for staff on the MSFW program.

#### E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS.

ASES Career Center staff members have a working partnership with Telamon Corporation, the 167 Grantee. Coordination of outreach efforts is assured through regular meetings and communication and is further enhanced through the co-location of WIA 167 grantee staff in selected Career Centers. A cooperative, coordinated effort is pursued to minimize duplication of services and maximize the number of MSFWs contacted. As MSFW are contacted, their needs are assessed and, those in need of Career Center services are referred and encouraged to visit for assistance. Services may include assessment, job referral, job placement, job development, counseling, training, support services, and information on unemployment insurance. Also, ASES, Telemon, and ALFA, have agreed to have quarterly meetings to discuss ways to effect overall improvement of the MSFW programs and services.

### 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
  - ii. WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS; HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES.

Pre-seasonal canvassing is conducted by local Career Center staff with leads provided from the State Monitor Advocate to determine anticipated MSFW population in local Center areas. Career Centers will conduct outreach activities to identify MSFW and services needed. Individuals and groups are contacted to offer and provide services to those not reached by usual Career Center intake activities. Telamon, partnering with the Career Centers, registers farmworkers in Alabama JobLink (AJL) who may be eligible for and in need of additional services through referral to the Career Center system. Career Centers strive to ensure that MSFWs are afforded the same basic, individualized and training services available to all clients. Agricultural employers continue to be reached by ASES as part of the Work Alabama program, focused on helping farmers find and hire temporary agricultural workers. Agricultural employers are encouraged to place job orders in Alabama Job Link. Career Center staff will assist in referring farm laborers.

#### **B. MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS.**

Telamon, the 167 Grantee partnered with ASES, coordinates outreach efforts that will assure through regular meetings, communication with farmworkers and advocacy groups to include information on the complaint system. In addition, co-location of WIA 167 grantee staff in selected Career Centers will ensure the successful distribution of information to MSFWs visiting Centers. Telamon, the 167 Grantee, assists migrants and seasonal farm workers in the State of Alabama. Its two primary objectives are: (1) to help farm workers seek alternatives to agricultural labor; and, (2) to improve the agricultural lifestyle of those who wish to remain in agriculture.

Agency staff and Telamon workers educate farmers regarding the posting of DOL migrant and seasonal farmworker posters and literature addressing farmworker rights, to include terms and conditions of employment, in visible high traffic areas such as check-in areas and break-rooms. Staff members also notify other State agencies that may serve Migrant Seasonal farmworkers of this information as well.

In a collaborative effort, ASES works with local partner agencies to ensure that farmworkers reached through outreach are informed and encouraged to visit their local Career Center where they can have access to the full complement of services offered by the Alabama Career Centers. Staff in each Center work cooperatively to ensure information on each agency's services is available to MSFWs upon visiting a Center. This includes information on the complaint system. Some of the agencies, ASES, and Telamon partner with are local community action agencies that offer assistance with paying utility bills, local food banks that supplement food needs, and, health departments/agencies that may help with free or low cost health and dental care.

#### **C. MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.**

The Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) is integrated into the Career Center System's operating system, Alabama Job Link (AJL). Agricultural job orders may be placed directly into the system by employers or placed into the system with assistance of Career Center staff. Brochures on "The Agricultural Recruitment System:

An Agricultural Worker’s Guide” and “The Employer Guide to participation in the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program” will be available and provided to agricultural employers. Brochures highlighting all of the services available to employers through Career Centers are provided to employers as part of the Career Center System marketing program.

State attention was focused on the agricultural sector in 2010-2011 with introduction of the Governor’s “Work Alabama” initiative aimed at ensuring farmers have an adequate farm labor supply. This initiative required Career Center staff to identify, outreach and contact agricultural employers in the state to identify labor shortages and market Career Center services such as AJL, ARS and recruitment, and programs such as H2-A to ensure farmers an adequate agricultural labor supply. This relationship established between Career Centers and agricultural employers continues today and remains strong.

Additionally, the State Monitor Advocate will participate in meetings with farmworker organizations, county cooperatives, extension service, and others representing farmers to inform of and market Career Center System services, including ARS, H-2A programs to farmers. In a collaborative effort, Career Center staff work with partner agencies to ensure that farmworkers reached through outreach are informed and encouraged to visit their local Career Center where they can have access to the full complement of services offered by the Career Center System. Staff in each Center work cooperatively to ensure information on each agency’s services is available to MSFWs upon visiting a Center. This includes information on the complaint system. Some of the agencies partner with local community action agencies that offer assistance with paying utility bills, local food banks that supplement food needs, and health departments/agencies that may help with free or low cost health and dental care. Pre-seasonal canvassing is conducted by local Career Center staff with leads provided from the State Monitor Advocate to determine anticipated MSFW population in local Center areas. Career Centers will conduct outreach activities to identify MSFW and services needed. Individuals and groups are contacted to offer and provide services to those not reached by usual Career Center intake activities. Telamon partnering with Career Centers, register farmworkers in Alabama JobLink (AJL) who may be eligible for and in need of additional services through referral to the Career Center system. Career Centers strive to ensure that MSFWs are afforded the same basic, individualized and training services available to all clients.

#### 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).

In a collaborative effort, ASES works with local partner agencies to ensure that farmworkers reached through outreach are informed and encouraged to visit their

local Career Center where they can have access to the full complement of services offered by the Alabama Career Centers. Staff in each Center work cooperatively to ensure information on each agency's services is available to MSFWs upon visiting a Center. This includes information on the complaint system. Some of the agencies, ASES, and Telamon partner with are local community action agencies that offer assistance with paying utility bills, local food banks that supplement food needs, and, health departments/agencies that may help with free or low cost health and dental care.

## 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.

In developing the Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) information and suggestions were solicited through survey of the WIOA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee (Telamon Corporation), and other appropriate groups, agencies, organizations to include: the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alabama Farmers Federation (ALFA), and Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries. The State Monitor Advocate for MSFW was also provided an opportunity to review and comment on the AOP.

The items that follow are the suggestions received and the State response to the survey conducted:

Telamon - WIOA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee

- COMMENT: TELAMON, PARTNERING WITH THE CAREER CENTER SYSTEM AND CO-LOCATED IN SOME JOB CENTERS, WILL REGISTER FARMWORKERS IN ALABAMA JOBLINK (AJL) WHO MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR ADDITIONAL AMERICAN JOB CENTER SERVICES THROUGH THE CAREER CENTER
- RESPONSE: CLOSER COLLABORATION/COORDINATION WITH PARTNERS SERVING MSFW SHOULD FURTHER OUTREACH EFFORTS ALLOWING EASIER ACCESS TO SERVICES, RESULTING IN INCREASED REGISTRATIONS, STIMULATION OF DUAL ENROLLMENTS WITH PARTNERS, AND ACCESS TO ALL SERVICES OF THE ONE STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM.

- Comment: Need to be provided with referrals from One-Stop partners of individuals entering the One-Stop system who are identified as primarily dependent on farm work for their livelihood.
- Response: Increased awareness of One-Stop partners of specialized services, including educational and job training programs for individuals with agricultural farm work experience, should increase referrals resulting in better service to farmworkers.

#### Alabama Farmers Federation (ALFA)

- Comment: Communication/information on services available through career centers doesn't always reach farmers and farm workers.
  - Response: Outreach and networking through agricultural groups, agencies, organizations and in particular the WIOA 167 national farmworker jobs program (NFJP) grantee should help ensure farmers and farm workers are aware of the services available to them through the career center system.
- Comment: Farmers don't always use the Career Center services available to them.
  - Response: Outreach and networking through agricultural groups, agencies and organizations to promote awareness of services available and staff assistance if needed should encourage farmers to use these services.

#### Alabama Cooperative Extension System

- Comment: The extensive network of job centers located throughout the State, the itinerant point centers located in key locations and the outreach activities planned provide appropriate levels of support for employment and training services to MSFWs and agricultural employers.
  - Response: None.

#### State Monitor Advocate

- Comment: Better data on the number of farm workers in the State is needed.
  - Response: Meetings with partners and organizations and agencies with agricultural interests will be pursued to explore means to improve estimates of farm workers in the State.

The AOP was also posted on the ADECA-WDD website for public review and comment. Although solicited, no additional information or comments were received.

### C. DATA ASSESSMENT.

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Planned progress in agricultural outreach in PY 2014, did not achieve all of the progress sought. Agricultural job orders received and Agricultural job openings received remained largely unchanged from the previous two years at 240 job orders and 2,000 openings. Based upon historical trends, ASES does not expect these trends in the agricultural sector or the numbers of MSFW to change significantly in PY 2016. This reflects the continued decline in the number of farms and acres harvested in the state. The conversion to crops that are highly mechanized in their production also curbs the necessity for agricultural manual workers.

This trend is also reflected in the number of MSFW registering and seeking services through the Career center system. Those registered during the previous program year by quarter were: June 2014 - 98; December 2014 - 18; March 2015 - 35; June 2015 - 63; and September - 33. Of those served, indicators of compliance were met in referrals to employment, receipt of staff-assisted services, and Career Guidance while compliance was not met in referral to support service, job development contacts, and job placement.

Achievement of the state's goals was hampered by transition of the Monitor Advocate position following retirement of the incumbent and hiring of a new Monitor Advocate. This disruption in continuity of service delayed many of the plans for outreach. The new Monitor Advocate and Telemon (167 Grantee), along with Alabama Career Center management and staff, have resumed pursuit of increased the outreach efforts that are expected to net positive results. While too soon to tell if the increased efforts have made a significant improvement, with continued outreach and effort based on the current information, Alabama should see no less than an upward trend in outreach.

### 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.

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#### E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

The State Monitor Advocate is a merit employee of the Alabama Department of Labor and was afforded the opportunity to review, comment, and approve the AOP.

#### WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

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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

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#### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

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The Unified or Combined 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

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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)).

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Workforce Division's Adult Education Office has aligned to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards for Adult Education that were disseminated through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). The CCR standards reflect the necessary skills and abilities required for the rigor of postsecondary education, training, and employment. The CCR standards provide benchmarks aligned to the Common Core standards that create a framework that can be used to strengthen adult education instruction. Alabama Adult Education has officially adopted the College and Career Readiness standards that support the State standards used by the Alabama Department of Education.

The Alabama State Board of Education, the governing board of the Department of Education, approved the adoption of the internationally benchmarked Common Core State Standards along with selected Alabama standards in November 2010. By combining both Common Core and Alabama's standards, our state has adopted a set of the most comprehensive standards in the nation, ensuring students are prepared for a successful future in the ever-expanding global environment. The adoption and alignment of the College and Career Readiness standards allow adult educators to target the specific skills that will ensure our adults are prepared to attain a high school equivalency, postsecondary education, training, and/or employment. Collaboration with K—12 and college partners will confirm consistent expectations for preparing students for entering postsecondary education without the need for developmental education. As of July 1, 2016, Adult Education Title II contracted programs or any future selected programs are required to teach these standards to maximize the effectiveness of curricula and instruction, and to prepare students with the skills and abilities for postsecondary education, training, and the demands of the workforce. To facilitate the understanding and knowledge of CCR standards in the adult education classroom, professional development training will focus on how to use and implement the standards. Standards training will continue to be the foundation of targeted professional development.

The courses will deliver the intensity and duration to lead to successful understanding and skills mastery. The curriculum, instructional techniques, and support materials used in the instructional process must align to the standards for warranting quality and rigor. Instructors have been participating in professional development activities that support the use of the standards. For example, instructors have participated in standards training through various professional development activities such as: facilitated online standard courses through the National Center for Family Learning, self-paced online courses through the U.S. Department of Education supported Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS), and local targeted professional development and

specific sessions during the Summer Adult Education conference. Three groups of instructors, directors, and state staff members attended the 2016 College and Career Readiness Implementation Institutes in Texas, Nashville, and Washington D.C. Additional training sessions are continuing scheduled the efforts in teacher preparation, and to share the acquired knowledge obtained from the standards professional development activities with the field. We conducted “Train the Trainer” sessions in statewide venues with the directive for the local programs to do the same with their staff. State efforts will support all programs using a standards based approach to adult education, in which standards—based education is defined as the process for planning, delivering, monitoring and improving academic programs in which clearly defined academic content standards provide the basis for content in instruction and assessment. A standards based approach will help to ensure that students learn what is important, rather than allowing textbooks to dictate classroom practice. This approach aims for a deep level of student understanding that goes beyond traditional textbook—based or lesson—based instruction. Although standards define individual skills, standards—based education does not promote a skill—by—skill methodology. Multiple standards can and will be integrated in instructional activities to promote College and Career Readiness for preparing the skilled workforce of tomorrow. Adults that have not completed the requirements of a high school diploma will be able to prepare for a high school equivalency in an academic contextualized instructional pathway. The instructional pathway increases the skills necessary to attain employment, or participate in postsecondary education or training.

## B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

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Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

### ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

- ADULT EDUCATION;
- LITERACY;
- WORKPLACE ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES;
- FAMILY LITERACY ACTIVITIES;
- ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION ACTIVITIES;
- INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION; ○
- WORKFORCE PREPARATION ACTIVITIES; OR
- INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING THAT—

1. PROVIDES ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES, CONCURRENTLY AND CONTEXTUALLY WITH BOTH, WORKFORCE PREPARATION ACTIVITIES, AND WORKFORCE TRAINING FOR A SPECIFIC OCCUPATION OR OCCUPATIONAL CLUSTER, AND

## 2. IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT.

The ACCS Adult Education Office is Alabama's eligible agency for adult education and is responsible for the administrative and programmatic oversight of the Title II AEFLA funds distributed to eligible, competitively selected providers. Under WIOA, ACCS Adult Education eligible providers' services may include all of the following:

- adult education and literacy;
- workplace adult education and literacy;
- family literacy;
- English language acquisition;
- Integrated English literacy and civics education;
- workforce preparation;
- integrated education and training.

ACCS Adult Education will focus on expanding low-skilled individuals' access to career pathways in high-demand occupations. With this focus, the integrated education and training (IET) activities and the contextualized curriculum and materials used for IET will be aligned to Alabama's College and Career Readiness standards for ELA/Literacy, science, and math. In addition, workforce preparation activities will align to OCTAE's Employability Skills Framework, and any occupational training components provided will be based on business and industry standards.

ACCS Adult Education will solicit requests for funding proposals from eligible providers as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) law to serve the eligible adult education population who:

- have attained 16 years of age; AND
- are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and meet one of the following
- are basic skills deficient; OR
- do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or,
- are English Language Acquisition learners. The eligible entities selected will provide academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to:

read, write and speak the English language and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;

- transition to postsecondary education and training; and,
- obtain sustainable employment.

Eligible entities may include the following organizations, provided they have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services:

- 1) Local education agencies
- 2) Community-based or Faith-based organizations
- 3) Volunteer literacy organizations
- 4) Institution of Higher Education/Learning
- 5) Public or private nonprofit agencies
- 6) Libraries
- 7) Public housing authorities
- 8) Nonprofit institutions that are not described in (1) through (7) and have the ability to provide literacy services to adults
- 9) Consortium of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in 1 through 8.

Ineligible applicants would be characterized as the following:

- Applicants that are not compliant with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, or those applicants that discriminate on the basis of nationality, origin, race, gender, religion, or handicap;
- Applicants that lack evidence of the capability of stable fiscal control;
- Applicants that lack assurance that religious restrictions will not be violated;
- Applicants that lack qualified staff, facilities, and equipment.

In accordance with federal law, supplanting federal dollars for state and local dollars is prohibited.

ACCS Adult Education state office will distribute funds in accordance to the following process:

- 1) Not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contracts under section 231 and to carryout section 225, Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized individuals, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carryout section 225;
- 2) Shall not use more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds to carryout state leadership activities under section 223; and
- 3) Shall not use more than 5 percent of the grant funds for administrative expenses of the eligible agency.

Funding will be allocated and distributed according to the process described in the Title II distribution of funds Common Elements section. Funding will be awarded and distributed to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) process. The criteria will

include meeting the eligibility requirements, a proven record of demonstrated effectiveness, and a plan that will align with all of the requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Grants will be awarded on a multi-year (three year) basis contingent upon annual performance and demonstrated effectiveness.

The ACCS, Adult Education office will ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. The information will also be posted on the ACCS website and other means of available communication such as social media.

#### Federal Definitions

In Alabama, adult education means academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; transition to postsecondary education and training; and obtain employment.

In Alabama, eligible individual means an individual who has attained 16 years of age; who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and who- is basic skills deficient; does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or is an English language learner.

In Alabama, literacy means an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

In Alabama, workplace adult education and literacy activities means adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that is designed to improve the productivity of the workforce.

In Alabama, family literacy activities are those activities that are of sufficient intensity and quality, to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and that better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs, and that integrate all of the following activities:

(A) Parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement, and economic self-sufficiency.

(B) Interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children. (C) Training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.

(D) An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences. See Special Rule for Family Literacy.

Special Rule: The Alabama Community College System, Adult Education Office will 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 the 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, Adult Education will 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.

In Alabama, Integrated Education and Training is a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

In Alabama, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education is an educational service provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

In Alabama, Workforce Preparation Activities are those activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment.

In Alabama, Integrated Education and Training is a primary service of adult education programs. IET classes create contextualized opportunities for adults to gain academic and technical skills for employment. Adult Education programs integrate basic academic instruction to support the achievement of a high school equivalence and the skills needed to be successful in postsecondary education & training. This approach accelerates the understanding and applicability of knowledge. The integration of skills will ensure that our adult learners will be able to apply and use their knowledge to be successful in training and/or employment.

Request for Funding Proposal (RFP):

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) Adult Education state office allocates adult education funds through a needs- based funding formula by county. The formula will take into consideration the population in need in each county based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5 year estimate. Each area of the state will be provided adequate coverage by ensuring direct services in each county. Providers will be required to collaborate with partners from the Career Centers and other social services, education, and employment-related supports in the area. The formula will be designed to consider the levels of performance in the local

programs as compared to established goals as a basis for an increase or decrease in funds.

The proposal application will collect basic information regarding the eligible provider including, but not limited to, location, service area, scope of work for the program, demographics served, fiscal management procedures and audit history. Additionally, each applicant will be required to submit a proposed budget, as well as programmatic information regarding statutory requirements. Questions are based on the thirteen (13) considerations for Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of section 231(e).

#### Assessing the RFP:

The assessment of each grant application will involve an intense evaluation of the ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs of the area, and to comply with the expectations and statutes described within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. At a minimum, the review process and scoring rubric will consider the following 13 considerations of section 231(e):

- The ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs and English language needs identified for the population in the area. Particular emphasis will be given to the provider's ability to provide targeted service to individuals with barriers to employment—including low literacy skills and an English language barrier;
- The eligible provider's ability to provide service to individuals with a (physical or learning) disability;
- The eligible provider's demonstrated effectiveness in providing literacy instruction, including its ability to meet State-adjusted levels of performance and improve the literacy levels of eligible individuals;
- The eligible provider's alignment with the WIOA Local Plan;
- The depth, intensity, and rigor of the programs and activities offered by the eligible provider. The proposed program must incorporate the basic tenets of reading instruction. Attention will be given to the extent to which the eligible provider incorporates stringent research in the grant proposal submission and the development of the literacy program itself;
- The extent to which the eligible provider's program is based on intense research and best practices;
- The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates the effective use of technology for instruction, to include distance education, toward students' improved performance;
- The eligible provider's demonstrated integration of contextualized instruction, to blend literacy skills, and preparation for transition to post-secondary education or entry into the workplace. Particular attention will be given to activities that promote and lead to economic self-sufficiency, and the ability to exercise the full rights of citizenship;

- The qualifications and expertise of the eligible provider’s instructors, counselors, and administrative staff. All instructors must hold (at minimum) a Bachelor’s degree. The eligible provider must also demonstrate its ability and intent to provide high quality professional development to instructors and staff, toward the improvement of student performance;
- The eligible provider’s collaboration with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community. Particularly, the eligible provider should have or establish significant partnerships with public schools, post-secondary institutions, industry/ business partners, and workforce boards;
- The flexibility of program scheduling offered by the eligible provider, including coordination (when available) with Federal, State, and local support services such as child care, transportation, and mental health services;
- The eligible provider’s information management system; the expectation will be that the eligible provider will use the state-administered designated Adult Education System for Accountability and Performance for all grant related data collection and reporting.
- The demonstrated need within the area occupied by the eligible provider for English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

Selected providers will deliver adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both workforce preparation activities and workforce training, for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

All integrated education and training (IET), workforce preparation, adult education and literacy, and English Language Acquisition (ELA) activities must align contextualized curriculum and materials to Alabama’s College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS). In addition, IET and workforce preparation activities must also align to OCTAE’s Employability Skills Framework, and the occupational training component must be based on industry standards.

#### 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:

- ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES;
- SPECIAL EDUCATION, AS DETERMINED BY THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY; ○ SECONDARY SCHOOL CREDIT;
- INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING;
- CAREER PATHWAYS;
- CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT;
- PEER TUTORING; AND
- TRANSITION TO RE-ENTRY INITIATIVES AND OTHER POST RELEASE SERVICES WITH THE GOAL OF REDUCING RECIDIVISM.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under programs for corrections education and other institutionalized individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program

The Alabama Community College System (ACCS), Adult Education office will provide corrections education services and services for other institutionalized population as described under section 225. AE will not use more than 20 percent of the overall 82.5% or greater that is described in section 231 to carry out the activities as described in section 225 for corrections education and other institutionalized populations. Funding will be allocated, competed, and distributed according to the process described in the Title II distribution of funds Common Elements section of this plan and will comply with subpart C in Title II of WIOA. A correctional institution includes any prison; jail; reformatory; work farm; detention center; or halfway house, community—based rehabilitation center, or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders. A criminal offender is any individual who is charged with or convicted of any criminal offense. The funds shall be used for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and for other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs for—adult education and literacy activities; special education, as determined by the eligible agency; secondary school credit; integrated education and training; career pathways; concurrent enrollment; peer tutoring; and transition to re—entry initiatives and other post—release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. Each eligible provider receiving funds under section 225 to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution shall give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five (5) years of participation in the program. The correctional and institutionalized population will be afforded opportunities to develop their skills and abilities for successful re—entry into society after release. An emphasis on skills contextualize for pathway programs will ensure that inmates are prepared for employment opportunities. There are several innovative initiatives currently occurring in corrections education in Alabama.

One initiative incorporates the use of tablet devices with pre—loaded educational resources that are used back in the inmate’s dormitory. This allows for additional time on task that will lead to better knowledge and understanding of the material and the use of mobile devices. Other programs that adult education plays an integral part are the Correctional Life—Tech program and the Day Treatment Centers through Department of Pardons and Parole. These partnerships are designed to reduce prison overcrowding and recidivism by preparing deserving parolees for job success and life success. Life skills, adult education and technical skills are integrated into a structured program to assist parolees in the transition from prison to society.

#### D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

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##### 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.

Alabama Community College System Adult Education office will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs by offering a competitive, multi—year (three year) Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) process specifically for Integrated Literacy and Civics Education funds. Funding will be allocated, competed, and distributed according to the process described in the Title II distribution of funds Common Elements section of this plan and will comply with the requirements of Subpart C section 243 of WIOA. The purpose of this program is to assist immigrants and other individuals who are English Language Learners (ELL) in acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship. English language learners who hold degrees and credentials in their native countries are eligible to access all services provided by section 243. These services shall include instruction in literacy and English acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. Integration of workforce culture and skills training will enable learners to begin or continue careers in their chosen fields, including preparation for post—secondary education. A focused effort will be placed on providing English skills so that individuals with degree and credentials in their native countries will qualify for employment in the fields for which they have been trained.

The desired outcome from the workforce training under this title will be unsubsidized employment in high demand sectors and occupations that lead to economic self—sufficiency. All students in the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Programs, as well as students from all other Title II funded programs, may be co—enrolled in other workforce development system programs and receive services concurrently from several partners. Funding under this title will be awarded based upon the criteria for evaluation of programs applications contained in Section 243 of WIOA. An evidenced—based pathway approach will be the framework for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education. Team planning and teaching will be critical in ensuring the contextualize of the skills to master the English language and become a productive citizen with sustainable employment. The in—demand occupations will be targeted in each regional and local area. Specifically, the provider will deliver contextualized English language acquisition instruction that includes

general employability, workplace, and financial vocabulary as well as instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation. The curriculum will include an overview of important dates/events in U.S. history and their significance to current events, as well as an overview of the U.S. government at the federal, state, and local levels.

## 2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL FUND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE II, SUBTITLE C, AN INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM AND HOW THE FUNDS WILL BE USED FOR THE PROGRAM.

Alabama Community College System Adult Education office will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs by offering a competitive, multi—year (three year) Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) process specifically for Integrated Literacy and Civics Education funds. Funding will be allocated, competed, and distributed according to the process described in the Title II distribution of funds Common Elements section of this plan and will comply with the requirements of Subpart C section 243 of WIOA. Each program that receives funding under this section shall 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. Alabama Adult Education state office will consider the ELL population in each service area. The eligible provider must demonstrate the need and services to be provided which aligns with the mission of the combined state plan and the requirements under WIOA. The funds will target those areas that have a large population of English language learners and provide the skills to improve one’s abilities to read, write, speak the English language, and become a productive citizen with sustainable employment.

### E. STATE LEADERSHIP

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#### 1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA.

The Alabama Adult Education State office reserves the right to use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for the required State leadership activities outlined in section 223 (such as the support of State or regional networks of literacy resource centers; the development and implementation of technology applications; the development and dissemination of curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, developing content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways). Not more than 12.5% of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out these adult education and literacy activities to develop or enhance the adult education system of the State. The following activities will be supported through State Leadership funds:

1) Support in alignment of adult education and literacy services with one-stop partners and the core programs. Local programs will align with local one stop

partners to ensure that contextualized basic academic support is embedded in training designed to prepare the job seeker/student with the employability skills needed to be successful in achieving or sustaining gainful employment. There will be a seamless support of services between the partners. These funds will be used to cover the instructional costs for supporting these efforts.

2) Establishment and continued operation of high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to the local activities required under Section 231 (b) including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, and dissemination of information about best practices and research- based models for improving teacher effectiveness and quality of instruction.

**a.** Professional development targeted to models of integrated education and training, career pathways, and bridge programs that can prepare students for success in postsecondary education, training activities, and sustainable employment.

**b.** Professional development on how to design instructional activities that incorporate support services that will increase student persistence.

**c.** Professional development for implementing team teaching and planning methods which includes exit points with industry recognized certificates and credentials along the way.

3) Technical assistance to the local programs for compliance under the WIOA Title II requirements and the other parts of the law that describe the common performance measures and roles of the partners as related to state and local areas.

**a.** Assistance in the use of technology in both administrative and instructional formats to increase effectiveness and efficiencies

**b.** Leadership training for program directors will be used to enhance their abilities as administrative and instructional leaders.

**c.** Assistance in using data to inform programmatic, instructional decision making. Leadership funds will allow for any upgrades that will be needed for reporting common measures and assessing the performance of the program. Training on the Alabama Adult Education System of Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) will be provided on an annual basis at the summer conference and as needed periodically throughout the year on rollouts.

4) The state will provide grantee oversight to include data monitoring, site visits, and a program improvement process for low performing grantees.

Alabama Community College System, Adult Education will ensure that the requirements of section 223 are followed. Alabama Community College instructional staff and Adult Education are working together with the fiscal agent providers of adult education and career centers to expand Integrated Education & Training Career Pathway models. State level and local level staff have reviewed other states' models regarding the development of integrated education and training and career pathways at all educational levels. Currently there are several adult education career pathway models underway in the state with close partnership with the community college and the local workforce investment board.

In addition, multiple college providers are working internally with college faculty and adult education staff to create and establish pathway programs which provide multiple program options. Research, best practices, and strategies for creating and sustaining career pathway models are being disseminated through various professional development methods. Several Community College Presidents, in conjunction with local college and workforce investment board leadership, have been developing and refining their processes for implementation. The regional workforce councils are also very supportive of the career pathway programs, essential skills training, apprenticeships, and the contextualized academic instruction. Creatively incorporating all of the integrated education and training models, such as Alabama's Ready to Work program, will be central to successful transition to sustainable employment in the future. Adult Education is part of the Workforce Division of the Alabama Community College System and supports the Ready to Work program by integrating the basic academic and technology skills instruction to assist the participants to be successful in the training and attain a high school equivalence, if needed.

## 2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE.

The Alabama Adult Education State office reserves the right to use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for any of the following permissible State leadership activities outlined in section 223 (such as the support of State or regional networks of literacy resource centers; the development and implementation of technology applications; the development and dissemination of curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, developing content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways, ). Not more than 12.5% of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out these adult education and literacy activities to develop or enhance the adult education system of the State.

### F. ASSESSING QUALITY

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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.

WIOA common measures along with other measures established by U.S. Department of Education, Office of Community, Technical and Adult Education will be used to assess the quality and performance of the providers. In addition to these measures, the programs will also be evaluated on state established goals for enrollment, overall academic level completions, attainment of high school equivalencies and National Career Readiness Certificates. Local eligible programs are responsible to meet all programmatic goals and outcomes that are set by the state. Performance outcomes for each provider will meet or exceed the levels of performance for the common measures set forth under WIOA and the measures established by the National Reporting System performance indicators for Title II Adult Education. The effectiveness of grantees in achieving continuous improvement toward meeting the measures will be continuously evaluated. The performance outcome measures shall consist of the following core indicators:

(1) The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program; (2) The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program; (3) The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program; (4) The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and (5) The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers established pursuant to clause (iv). Performance Accountability: In addition to the above outcome measures, the ACCS Adult Education state office has established goals for enrollment, academic performance, high school equivalence, and for the number of National Career Readiness Certificates earned. Each provider received their portion of the state goal based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) of the population 18 and over without a high school diploma. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of provider programs for quality of instruction and implementation of best practices and models for adult education is an ongoing process within the state.

The process is defined as follows: Desk—top Monitoring—continuous process that includes the analysis of data from the AAESAP management information system and reports, such as the mid and end—of—year reports from providers. It informs management on how the provider is performing against the national and state expected measures. On—Site Monitoring includes review of Program Management; Recruitment, Orientation and Intake; Retention, Assessment, Curriculum and Instruction; Transition and Support Services; and Professional Development. Monitoring—the annual, systematic tracking of adult education program implementation. It consists of examining the progress made in the program against the agreed upon goals set forth in the application for funds. Monitoring also provides the opportunity to make constructive suggestions or recommendations. It employs systematic collection of data and on—site observations by providing stakeholders the extent of progress and achievement of objectives, proper and lawful use of funds, and compliance with federal and state level policies and guidelines.

Program Performance shall be assessed using the ACCS adult education state approved monitoring instruments. On—site monitoring is an in—depth process that requires preparation in notification of the intent, dissemination of the monitoring tool, the actual intensive visit process, and the all—important findings, results, corrective action plan, and follow—up to ensure issues have been resolved. This allows the adult education state office to determine the provider's understanding and ability to meet the intent and purpose of the WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and the requirements of the National Reporting System for adult education (NRS). Monitoring reports shall address specific findings and observations. Programs shall be monitored based on a risk analysis that incorporates data and information from the Alabama Adult Education System of Accountability and Performance (AAESAP) management information system. Adult Education has reasonable processes reflective of reporting requirements. For example, staff will provide a copy of the documented monitoring report within a timeframe based on business days from the conclusion of the visit. The provider will have a sufficient amount of

time based on business days to respond with a written report reflective of the action required (i.e. corrective action plan or program improvement plan). Adult Education will determine the appropriate follow—up measures to ensure that the program has complied with the plan of action. Targeted Monitoring is performed to follow—up and verify the satisfactory completion of findings identified during the performance of on—site monitoring. ACCS adult education staff conducting the targeted monitoring visit shall notify the provider within an agreed upon reasonable time for the visit and notify the provider in writing if the result is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Findings are the discoveries that the program is out of compliance or has issues that will impact the ability to accomplish the intent and purpose of WIOA, this plan, or initiatives directed by the Chancellor. Findings require a response and a solution for ensuring that it does not occur again.

The response is followed up on again to confirm that the solution has been implemented and is working. Adult Education will annually evaluate the effectiveness of the adult education and literacy activities, including performance measures in Sec. 223. Program reviews and evaluations of state—administered adult education programs, services, and activities will be conducted based on data analysis, site visits, and evaluation instruments. Activities such as professional development, instructional curriculum, and resources implemented into service delivery will be consistently monitored and evaluated through the year. Types of activities may include self—evaluation of program activities; report of progress in achieving state goals for adult education; effectiveness of teacher training; provider effectiveness; extent to which state adult education technology needs have been met; extent to which adult education for workers, the homeless, and other special populations have been met; and use of results to determine achievement of levels of national and state performance measures, and effectiveness of WIOA implementation. Mid—year Report gives the programs an opportunity to answer specific questions that are designed to create constructive self—assessment on where the program is and where it needs to be by the end of the year. Challenges and successes are reported. All mid—year reports are reviewed and receive a reply from adult education state staff. Year—end Report is the written report from the local provider addressing the success and challenges that were experienced during the year. It is reflective, yet it provides the context for designing services and instructional programming during continuation years. This report may also alert staff of risks that are apparent and would require a monitoring visit or follow—up.

The reports are used to discuss the readiness of WIOA implementation with questions that require programs to strategically assess employment and college and career readiness. The reports give insight into the challenges and barriers to success, which assists in designing professional development efforts. Evaluations are used after any professional development training offered at a local, regional, or state level to determine if the professional development training objectives were met. The evaluations are used by instructors and state-level staff to assess the success and areas of improvement that will need to occur before any additional training. Surveys are used to gather feedback from the practitioners to guide professional development needs and other activities pertinent to continuous improvement of programs and practitioners. The annual training plan includes state priorities, input from surveys about training needs, and focus groups to advise on all instructional components such as reading instruction, instruction related to the specif

needs of adult learners, instruction provided by volunteers and paid personnel, and dissemination about models and promising practices. Survey results are reviewed with the focus groups to decide how the training would best be delivered, face-to-face or through on-line webinars. Best practices, innovative instructional methodologies, to communicate statewide key initiatives and policies, as well information regarding additional instructional resources and professional development opportunities are discussed in webinars. As discussed previously, the Adult Education office will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities through data reviews, monitoring visits, performance reports, mid—year reports, and on—site program reviews. An important piece of the on—site review is teacher observation and evaluation. This is also part of the annual personnel review that is the responsibility of the program director. Teachers are reviewed by a tool used by state staff and directors to capture and assess the observations made during the review. If a program fails to meet performance goals or other programmatic requirements, specific actions will be taken to improve the quality of the program. The state office uses the following process to improve the quality of adult education services. 1. Corrective Action Plan (CAP) — A CAP will be implemented with programs that are out of compliance with state and/or federal policies. The Adult Education state office will provide technical assistance throughout the corrective process, and by the end of a designated timeframe, programs should be able to correct the identified issues and resolve the CAP. 2. Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) — A program improvement plan of action will be required for programs which are identified as low—performing when compared to the state performance on federal or state benchmarks. The plan will include specific action steps, such as student retention, post—testing and assessment, data analysis, training, and professional development which will be designed to improve program performance through an increase in the quality, rigor, and intensity of processes and direct services. 3. Program Self Review — A program self—assessment document is used to assist the programs in self—identifying programmatic and administrative compliance and the status of each area as related to adult education. The program can use the document as a guide to assess the strengths and opportunities for improving certain areas of need. Adult Education state staff will provide ongoing technical assistance, professional development, and other support to all programs. The type of technical assistance, professional development, and support will be based upon the specific area(s) of deficiency or need at a program level.

## CERTIFICATIONS

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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

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##### 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 **Alabama Community College System**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Mr. David Walters**

Title of Authorized Representative: **State Director of Adult Education**

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

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### ASSURANCES

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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**
- 7.** The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303 ). **Yes**

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### SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA )

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In the text box below, describe the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs provide the information to meet the requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), consistent with the instructions posted at <https://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/gepa427.doc>.

Alabama Adult Education, administered through the Alabama Community College System, serves an educationally, culturally, and socio economically diverse population of adults. The state office is strongly committed to equal access and treatment for all adults served through their programs, or employed by the system. It is the official policy of the Alabama Community College System that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, gender, religion, creed, national origin, age, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or employment. The Alabama Community College System 800 Policy Series on Non-Discrimination states: “no student shall be discriminated against on the basis of any impermissible criterion or characteristic including, but not limited to, race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, disability, gender, age, or any other protected class as defined by federal and state law”. An example of how this provision is enacted— the Human Resource Department for the Alabama Community College System places the following statement at the end of every position announcement:

*THE ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER.*

The Alabama Community College System is an equal opportunity employer. It is the policy of the Alabama Community College System, including all postsecondary community and technical colleges under the control of the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees, that no employee or applicant for employment or promotion, on the basis of any impermissible criterion or characteristic including, without limitation, race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, disability, sex, age, or any other protected class as defined by federal and state law, shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or employment.

New grant applicants that apply for Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funding under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are required to address GEPA section 427 during the competitive Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) application process which was released on February 16, 2018 and due on April 2, 2018. This entire document was embedded in the RFP application and must be completed by each applicant.

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### PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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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

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All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S REPORT, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S FUNCTIONS;

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services continues to have a State Rehabilitation Council which meets on a quarterly basis. Council membership is representative of most areas of the state and includes a cross section of disabilities and minorities. Local vocational rehabilitation advisory councils, created by the SRC to obtain direct consumer input at the local level and to provide easier access, continue to meet across the state, and SRC members continue to report on information or advice from these councils at each quarterly SRC meeting. The councils also continue to serve as recruitment grounds for future SRC members due to member training provided during meetings.

The SRC continues to advise the Designated State Unit or DSU on a variety of issues. Specific activities and advice of the SRC include the following:

Review and comment on the State Plan. As in prior years, an SRC subcommittee appointed by the SRC Chair reviewed the goals and priorities within the VR portion of the Combined State, and the DSU asked for comments. In FY 2018 the SRC through that subcommittee agreed with the goals and priorities in the State Plan.

Recommendation: The Agency should add a strategy to Goal 3 to improve counselor competencies regarding career guidance and job placement efforts for older individuals with prior work experience.

Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it as soon as possible.

Review and comment on the Agency's CSPD. The SRC received information on the CSPD and recommended no significant changes to the recruitment or retention plan. The SRC also reviewed information on current training programs for VRS staff and consumers and recommended no significant changes.

Review and comment on the VR Employer services. The SRC continued to work with the Agency on issues affecting employer services and made the following recommendations:

Recommendation: The Agency should facilitate upgrading of the applicant pool data in ABLE Network website.

**Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it as soon as possible.**

Recommendation: The Agency should continue to stay engaged in developing Indicator 6 measurements like RAVE and reasonable accommodations.

Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it as soon as possible.

Recommendation: The Agency should spend Pre-ETS funding on one-day trainings for summer youth employment programs.

Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it as soon as possible.

Recommendation: College preparation courses for individuals with disabilities should be provided at community colleges.

Agency Response: The Agency accepts this response to the extent that it will request that such training be held at community colleges and will partner with applicable organizations to implement this recommendation.

Recommendation: The Agency should use the Section 503 tool kit.

Agency Response: The Agency accepts this recommendation.

Recommendation: The Agency should add a separate page on Business Relations in its Annual Report and such page include excerpts from the job driven initiative video.

Agency Response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it as soon as possible.

Review and comment on Impartial Hearing Officer List: The SRC continued to monitor the list for vacancies and to recommend replacements where appropriate. No revisions to the list were recommended for FY 2016 or 2017.

Review and comment on VRS Consumer Satisfaction Survey and Related Issues: The SRC reviewed the Agency's consumer satisfaction survey and recommended the following:

Recommendation: The Agency should use the survey and methodology proposed by Auburn University.

Agency response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it.

Recommendation: The Agency should explore employment of mental health consumers as peer specialists.

Agency Response: The Agency has considered this recommendation and rejects it at this time as peer employment specialists are employed by the Alabama Department of Mental Health and their provider agencies and trained and certified through the Department. Additionally, ADRS has partnered with the Alabama Department of Mental Health to provide Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) supported employment, which is an initiative to reach out to individuals with mental illness and

co-occurring substance abuse, and provide an integration of services, including peer support services, in order to achieve competitive integrated employment outcomes.

Recommendation: The VR general consumer satisfaction survey should include SAIL clients.

Agency Response: The Agency accepts this recommendation and will implement it as soon as possible.

SRC Training. Council members received training and/or informational materials on the following areas (For FY 2016 and 2017):

- A.** Retaining a Valued Employee (RAVE)
- B.** State of Alabama Independent Living (SAIL)
- C.** State of Alabama Client Assistance Program (SACAP)
- D.** Alternative loan financing under the STAR program
- E.** Workforce Innovation and Opportunity ACT (WIOA)
- F.** WIOA regulations
- G.** Agency Blind Services
- H.** VR budget
- I.** VR production (number of VR clients successfully employed)
- J.** Deaf grassroots movement
- K.** Programs for youth with disabilities  
Project SEARCH in collaboration with local school systems,
- L.** Smart Work Ethics, Job Exploration Training, and Project GATE
- M.** Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) program
- N.** Pre-ETS
- O.** Alabama Parent Education Training Center (APEC)
- P.** Overview of Special Blind programs
- Q.** ADRS Adaptive Driving program
- R.** HB 253 LEAD K
- S.** CRP Services and Payment Restructure
- T.** College Tuition Policy Update
- U.** SSA Reimbursements
- V.** STAR Alternative Finance program
- W.** American Freedom Center for the Blind

Revision of SRC bylaws. During FY 2016 and 2017, the SRC amended its bylaws to allow for removal of SRC members who did not attend at least 2 meetings per year without documented excuses.

Review and comment on the Agency policies: The SRC gave the following input on Agency policies:

Recommendation: Agency's Self-Employment Policy should be amended to include in-kind contributions or expenses from the consumer.

Agency Response: The Agency accepts this recommendation.

## 2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

The DSU has accepted all of the SRC's recommendations as stated above and rejected one as noted above and below.

## 3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Agency rejects the recommendation that it explore employment of mental health consumers as peer specialists. Peer support specialists are employed by the Alabama Department of Mental Health and their provider agencies and trained and certified through the Department. Additionally, ADRS has partnered with the Alabama Department of Mental Health to provide Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) supported employment, which is an initiative to reach out to individuals with mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse, and provide an integration of services, including peer support services, in order achieve competitive integrated employment outcomes.

## B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

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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;

(b) This agency has requested a waiver of statewideness. The types of services to be provided by the program on a statewide basis are as follows:

- **JOINTLY FUNDED Pre-Employment Transition Specialist:** There are 138 school districts in Alabama. All school districts are offered the opportunity for jointly funded pre-employment transition specialist through a partnership with ADRS. The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services enters into these third party cooperative agreements with thirty one (31) local education agencies. These agreements are written and carried out in compliance with 34 CFR 361.28. The agreements provide for jointly funded pre-employment transition specialist to provide pre—employment

transition services that are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre—employment transition services are designed to prepare students with disabilities to enter competitive integrated employment by identifying and exploring career interests, as well as, increasing individual independence, self-sufficiency and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in their communities. Services provided by Pre-ETS Specialist are provided based on the individual needs of the student and may include: job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs, workplace readiness training and instruction in self-advocacy, which can include development of a peer mentoring program. Students served by this program include: Any student with a disability, age 16-21, who is eligible for or potentially eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, upon referral from the VR Transition Counselor. State Unit approval will be obtained before services are initiated. All services will be provided in accordance with the agency’s approved State Plan. The agency has on record that no federal funds are used by the LEA to provide their share of the services. LEAs with which third—party third cooperative agreements for Pre-Employment Transition Specialists are: Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind, Alabama School for the Blind— Talladega County; Alabama Institute for Deaf & Blind Alabama School for the Deaf — Talladega County; Anniston City — Calhoun County; Baldwin County — Jefferson County; Bessemer City; Blount County; Clarke County; Clay County; Dekalb County; Escambia County; Etowah County; Eufaula City — Barbour County; Fairfield City; Florence City; Gadsden City; Hale County; Haleyville City — Winston County; Homewood City — Jefferson County; Huntsville City; Lauderdale County; Leeds City — Jefferson County; Limestone County; Marshall County; Monroe County; Pell City — St. Clair County; Piedmont City — Calhoun County; Pike County; Shelby County; Sylacauga City — Talladega County; Talladega County; Tarrant City — Jefferson County.

- **JOINTLY FUNDED FULL TIME INSTRUCTOR:** The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services entered into this agreement to mutually serve students with disabilities in the Pike County and Troy City Boards of Education through cooperatively funding the professional services of one full-time nine month instructor, housed at Charles Henderson High School and Troy/Pike Center for Technology . Instruction will be provided in an integrated classroom setting with peers who are not identified as students with disabilities, and will focus on the area of pre-employment transition services. These pre-employment transition services, which are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA, will be provided in a group setting in a classroom or the community. The instruction of pre-employment transition services provided will be in the areas of: job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs, workplace readiness training and instruction in self-advocacy. This instruction is designed to prepare students with disabilities to enter long terms competitive integrated employment in high demand careers by identifying and exploring career interests, as well as, increasing individual independence, self-sufficiency and inclusion of students with disabilities in their communities. Students served by this program include any student with a disability enrolled at Charles Henderson High School and Troy/Pike

Center for Technology, who is in the 11th or 12th grades, is eligible for or potentially eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and has received a referral from the VR Transition Counselor, Special Education Teacher and/or school administrator. Course curriculum will consist of instruction in the following areas Basic Computer Skills, Financial Literacy, Problem Solving, Manufacturing, Job Acquisition. Course curriculum will also include discussion of local high demand careers, labor market information and activities that may include community based experiences.

- **PROJECT SEARCH:** Project SEARCH is a one—year internship program for students with disabilities in the last year of high school or with out of school youth. It is targeted for students and youth whose goal is competitive employment. The program takes place in a healthcare, government, or business setting where total immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process as well as the acquisition of employability and marketable work skills. Students participate in up to three (3) internships to explore a variety of career paths. The students work with a team that includes their family, special education teacher and skills training instructor to create an employment goal, and to support the student during this important transition from school to work. The program is a cooperative arrangement between the employer, the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama State Department of Education, the Alabama Council for Development Disabilities the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the local school systems (or post-secondary education for youth) and most importantly the employers. The program is currently available in the following counties: Montgomery, Birmingham, Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, Shelby, Etowah, Marshall, Baldwin, Calhoun and two (2) programs in Mobile. When participating in Project SEARCH, the student actually goes to the employment site each day as opposed to going to the school. The LEA provides a classroom teacher(s) to provide employment instruction in the morning, and the students go to assigned internships the remainder of the day. Internships include patient escort, food service, central sterilization, pharmacy, maintenance, grounds keeping, and other settings at the business. No funds from other participating agencies are used to match federal money drawn down by ADRS. State Unit approval is obtained before services are initiated. All services are provided in accordance with the agency’s approved State Plan.

- **INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORTS (IPS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT):** IPS Supported Employment is an approach to support employment for individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse. IPS is evidence—based SE that is based on the following principles: (1) zero exclusion, (2) competitive employment in the community, (3) mental health treatment and employment services being integrated, (4) benefits planning provided, (5) job search occurs rapidly, (6) employment specialists develop relationships with employers in their communities, (7) job supports are continuous, and, (8) consumer preferences are honored. In 2014, Alabama applied for and was among seven states that received a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to implement IPS Supported Employment at two sites in the state. The grant is for five years, during which time our agency and partners will be working towards sustainability and expansion. Currently IPS is being implemented at Chilton Shelby in West Alabama (rural site) and at Altapointe in Mobile. This year we are

expanding to a third site in Montgomery. No funds from other participating agencies are used to match federal money drawn down by ADRS. State Unit approval is obtained before services are initiated. All services are provided in accordance with the agency's approved State Plan.

No funds from these participating agencies are used to match federal money drawn down by ADRS.

**2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND**

State Unit approval is obtained before services are initiated.

**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.

All services are provided in accordance with the agency's approved State Plan.

**C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.**

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Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

**1. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;**

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services has cooperative agreements and working relationships with entities outside of the Statewide Workforce Development System. These agreements provide the agency with the opportunity to extend services to people with disabilities referred by other agencies, as well as the chance to utilize the services of other agencies for its consumers. (1) Federal, State and Local Programs • Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB): ADRS enjoys an excellent working relationship with AIDB. AIDB is charged with the responsibility of providing elementary and high school residential education for blind and deaf students in Alabama. Also, through its E. H. Gentry Technical Facility it provides vocational assessment and training for adults with visual, hearing, and other disabilities. ADRS refers consumers to E. H. Gentry for comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services. Also, the agency works very cooperatively with AIDB in providing appropriate services to students in the AIDB high schools for the blind and deaf. ADRS works collaboratively with the Alabama School for the Deaf (ASD) and the Alabama School for the Blind (ASB) to provide deaf and blind students with summer employment opportunities. ADRS also works actively with AIDB's Helen Keller School (HKS) that serves students who are deaf, blind, and/or have multiple disabilities. ADRS assists AIDB in transitioning these high school students into employment and/or training programs (to include college) by partnering to provide comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services. ADRS has written agreements with these programs including a collaborative agreement with AIDB to jointly fund Vision

Rehabilitation Therapists who provide instruction that enhances vocational opportunities, independent living skills, and the educational development of persons with vision loss, and may include working in center based or itinerant settings. The agency also jointly funds Randolph—Sheppard Specialists and Orientation and Mobility Specialists. • Department of Corrections: ADRS is cooperating with the Alabama Department of Corrections. ADRS receives referrals on inmates who are in the prison system who will be transitioning back into their home areas through liaison counselors to the prisons. ADRS has established a system to handle these referrals and to provide services to eligible individuals when they return home. An ADRS staff specialist in the State Office is overseeing this initiative. ADRS also provides transition services to eligible inmates in special education. ADRS has a written agreement with ADOC. • Department of Risk Management: ADRS works cooperatively with Alabama's Risk Management program. We receive referrals of individuals injured on the job to assist Risk Management in helping various state agencies retain individuals in employment who may have been injured. ADRS does not currently have a written agreement with the Department of Risk Management • Governor's Office: ADRS receives on a regular basis referrals from the Governor's office. The Governor's office contacts ADRS to make referrals of individuals who have contacted the Governor's office regarding various disability related issues.

These referrals are received by an Assistant Commissioner of ADRS, and forwarded to the appropriate local supervisor for follow up and assessment. Understandably, many of these referrals are for services beyond the scope of ADRS; however, efforts are made to provide the Governor's staff with an appropriate service outlet to address the needs of the consumer. • Bureau of Indian Affairs and State of Alabama Indian Affairs Commission: ADRS recognizes the need for services to Native Americans. The agency has liaison counselors assigned to various tribes throughout the state to receive referrals and to extend our services to Native Americans within Alabama. ADRS also coordinates services through the Alabama Indian Affairs Commission for Alabama's eight state recognized tribes and one state and federally recognized tribe. ADRS provides services to American Indians with disabilities to the same extent as the agency provides such services to other significant segments of the population with disabilities residing in the state. ADRS does not currently have a written agreement regarding services to American Indians. • Department of Youth Services (DYS): Alabama has a Department of Youth Services. This Department is established to work with delinquent youth. The expectation is that the services of DYS will prevent delinquent youth from eventually advancing to the adult correctional system. ADRS has a specialist who is very actively involved with DYS. This individual receives referrals on a regular basis from DYS and forwards those referrals to the appropriate field staff. ADRS has a written agreement with the ADYS • Department of Mental Health (DMH): The Agency maintains an ongoing relationship with DMH. ADRS serves numerous consumers with mental illness. ADRS works on cooperative initiatives to ensure services are provided to eligible consumers. ADRS maintains a relationship with the DMH Division of Substance Abuse and a network of residential aftercare service providers. ADRS is working extensively with the DMH to expand and improve the ADRS supported employment program. This includes efforts in the areas of Employment First, extended supports, and collaborating on grants. ADRS has a cooperative agreement with ADMH. • Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF): ADRS continues its relationship with the Alabama Head Injury Foundation.

This relationship is directed towards maintaining a service delivery system to address the needs of consumers affected by traumatic brain injury. • Community Rehabilitation Programs: ADRS continues an excellent working relationship with a wide network of community rehabilitation programs throughout the state. These CRPs are a critical link in our service delivery effort. ADRS maintains written agreements with the CRPs.

- Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA): ADRS has an ongoing partnership with the ADECA. The agency has worked cooperatively to pursue grants to serve people with disabilities.
- The Alabama Disability Advocacy Program (ADAP): ADAP is the Alabama arm of the Protection and Advocacy program for people with disabilities. ADAP makes referrals to Alabama's toll free number for information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through ADRS which coordinates the service.
- Statewide Independent Living Centers: ADRS is represented on the State Independent Living Council and works closely with Alabama's three Independent Centers to coordinate services and referrals.
- Governor's Office on Disability

(GOOD): GOOD serves as a clearinghouse for resources related to people with disabilities.

ADRS maintains an ongoing relationship with the Governor's Office in order to provide resources as needed. • Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP): ADRS partners with OFCCP to provide affirmative action training to employers on issues related to hiring and retaining workers with disabilities. ADRS hosted a major conference for employers in conjunction with OFCCP staff to provide information to employers on the 503 Federal Hiring mandates. • Social Security Administration (SSA): The Agency maintains an excellent working relationship with the SSA. The ADRS employs a Social Security Specialist that stays abreast of Social Security issues and has given numerous presentations on the Ticket to Work, Work Incentives Improvement Act, and other SSA initiatives to ADRS staff, consumer groups, and partner organizations. • Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): The partnership between EEOC and ADRS involves staff cross training on disability and employment law in addition to ADRS linkage to public and private sector businesses to assist with non—discriminatory practices in the employment, retention, training and promotion of individuals with disabilities. ADRS is a regular trainer for the EEOC technical assistance seminars for employers as well.

- Department of Labor — Veterans Employment Training Service (VETS): ADRS collaborates at the state and local level with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) staff to assist wounded warriors in return to work or obtaining employment with Federal contractors and other businesses. This includes vets access to the ADRS RAVE

(Retaining A Valued Employee) program. • Alabama Industry Liaison Group (ALILG): Represents Federal contractors' compliance issues to include those tied to disability (Section 503 of the Rehab Act). ADRS is the lead provider of information, training and resources related to outreach, employment and retention of individuals with disabilities to ALILG businesses and ALILG routinely trains ADRS business relations consultants and participates in local, regional and state conferences sponsored by ADRS. Cooperative Agreements.

- Alabama Business Leadership Employment (ABLE) Network: The 501c3 conglomerate of Alabama businesses that advocate for the employment of individuals with disabilities uses the ADRS business relations program as their lead resource for

disability in the workplace issues, while co—sponsoring numerous training events for employers. They also serve as an advisor to ADRS on disability issues and resources for employers. • Federal Office of Personnel Management (OPM): Representatives from a variety of Federal agencies throughout Alabama that function under the OPM work directly with the ADRS business relations consultants to implement Federal hiring mandates, Schedule A recruitment, accommodations, and employee retention impacting workers with disabilities in the Federal sector. • Department of Veterans Affairs: Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program. ADRS collaborates with the VR&E program at the national and state level to serve and place into employment veterans completing the VR&E program, providing customized services through ADRS specialty counselors, rehabilitation technology specialists for accommodations, and for return to work assistance. ADRS does not have a written agreement with the VA.

## 2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

**(2) Assistive Technology Act** — ADRS participates in providing assistance to people with disabilities living in the state who have technology related needs through the Statewide Technology Access and Response (STAR) program. This is a statewide device reutilization and loan program which loans out needed equipment through a network of reutilization centers. ADRS also participates in the ABILITY loan program that is a loan guarantee program to assist people with disabilities in obtaining financing for assistive technology.

## 3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

Rural Development of the US Department of Agriculture: ADRS maintains a relationship with this office to receive referrals from rural areas that may need agency services.

## 4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

Non Educational Youth Services: ADRS has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Youth Services to provide a process for transitioning youth who may or may not be involved in an educational program into employment or training. ADRS also serves out of school youth through CRP's and Supported Employment projects and through collaboration with Workforce partners in the Career Centers where we house VR counselors who serve large numbers of out of school youth.

## 5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

ADRS currently has no cooperative agreements to participate in state use contracting programs.

## D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

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**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.

Referrals for transition services and pre-employment transition services are carried out in a number of ways. Students can be referred by the LEA's, special education teachers, 504 coordinators, doctors, mental health professionals, parents, teachers, transition counselors assigned to the schools, or can be self-referred. Once referred to the VR counselors assigned to the school, the counselors works with educational officials to obtain pertinent documentation necessary for pre-employment transition services or transition services. Students may receive pre-employment transition services beginning in the 9th grade or age 16-21 (or younger if decided in the IEP). Students can be served as eligible or potentially eligible consumers. Students who require intensive services will require an application, be determined eligible within the required 60- day period (unless for specific, documented reason an extension is necessary) and a plan for transition services will be written within 90 days. It is expected that all students requiring VR services to be successful in competitive integrated employment will have a plan before they exit high school. We anticipate that many of our students served under potentially eligible will apply for services and become VR consumers in their 11th grade year. All pre-ets services for students ages 16-21 or in the 9th grade (younger if stipulated in their IEP) that are not served under potentially eligible, will have pre-ets services included in their IPEs.

Plans, policies and procedures for coordination with Education officials: ADRS is committed to providing pre—employment transition services to assist students with disabilities in the high school setting in making a seamless transition to the world of work or vocational/post —secondary education. ADRS maintains a formal Interagency Agreement with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) for the provision of transition services. This agreement serves to ensure that students with disabilities, who are eligible or potentially eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, are provided services without unnecessary delay, as well as, to increase the collaborative efforts of the ADRS and ALSDE regarding the coordination of services that will improve transition outcomes for students with disabilities. The agreement describes (1) the scope of services to be provided by the ALSDE and ADRS; (2) the financial responsibilities of each party; (3) the methods of consultation and technical services needed to formulate IPE's (4) the role of each agency in transition planning; and, (5) methods and strategies for identification of students needing transition services. Transition planning, sharing of student information, and consultation activities are stated in the agreement.

Pre—Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS): New federal mandate requires ADRS, in collaboration with the local educational agencies, to use 15% of ADRS federal allotment in providing or arranging for the provision of pre—employment transition services (Pre-ETS) for all students with disabilities, 9th grade or ages 16—21, in need of such services who are eligible for or potentially eligible for services.

Pre-ETS required activities include: • Job exploration counseling. • Work — based learning experiences, which may include in—school or after school opportunities or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships) that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible. • Counseling and guidance on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education. • Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living. • Instruction in self—advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

In order to achieve the 15% federal mandate, ADRS has increased efforts to develop and improve transition partnerships, programs, and service models by implementing and expanding the following services/programs: • Transition Unlimited — A collaboration between the ADRS and Auburn Transition Leadership Institute. Transition Unlimited is a pre-employment transition services initiative designed to build capacity and connect services to appropriately implement pre-employment transition services throughout the state. The goal of the initiative is to provide guidance to transition stakeholders and LEAs during the development of action plans for the delivery of Pre-ETS that best meet the needs of students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. Transition Unlimited underscores ADRS's commitment to keep a focus on transition services at the local level by bringing specific Pre-ETS planning to each local high school, which builds upon previous planning efforts. Each team's action plan is accessible so that teams can learn from one another. This provides an opportunity to build awareness of pre-employment transition services throughout Alabama. Ongoing technical assistance is available to teams during quarterly progress monitoring. • Summer work program — JET (Job Exploration Training) Students are provided training in the areas of job exploration, career assessment, social skills training, mock interviewing, resume preparation, and self—advocacy training. Paid work experiences in a community setting are arranged for each student satisfactorily participating in the training. • Smart Work Ethics Training (SWE) — SWE is a social skills curriculum that addresses communication skills and work place behaviors (attitude, work ethic, image and appearance, interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, accountability) needed to obtain and maintain successful competitive employment. This curriculum is provided to the student in the LEA by a certified trainer from a Community Rehabilitation Program. • Jointly—Funded Pre-Employment Transition Specialist — ADRS is committed to providing jointly funded Pre-ETS specialist in local education agencies to assist with the provision of pre—employment transition services. This is accomplished through cooperative agreements with local education agencies (ADRS pays 75% LEA pays 25%). The jointly funded pre-employment transition specialist provide pre—employment transition services that are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre—employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for long term competitive integrated employment. Currently, ADRS has 31 jointly funded pre-employment transition specialists in place through third—party cooperative agreements. • State Interagency Transition Team - At the state level, ADRS participates as an equal partner in the Alabama State Interagency Transition

Team (SITT). SITT is a multidisciplinary group of 37 representatives from 22 state agencies (ADRS, ALSDE, Alabama Department of Mental Health and Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education) and organizations providing services for students and young adults with disabilities. The purpose of this group is to develop a better understanding of each agency's role and responsibilities in service delivery for Alabama's students and young adults with disabilities, and to seek and implement new and better ways of providing secondary special education and transition services. At the local level, the ADRS has procedures in place to ensure the agency is actively involved in the transition of students with disabilities from school to work. The agency has a counselor assigned to each high school to act as transition counselor. The counselor visits the school on a regularly scheduled basis to meet with teachers and guidance counselors in order to provide vocational rehabilitation information and to receive referrals of students with disabilities in need of rehabilitation services.

The VR counselor meets with the student and parents in order to explain rehabilitation services to enable a student's informed choice regarding these services. School records and other information needed to serve a student as a potentially eligible consumer or needed for eligibility determination is obtained. Once eligibility is determined efforts are made to begin determining rehabilitation needs and a vocational goal. As appropriate and as necessary, the transition counselor can provide the student with vocational evaluation while still in high school in order to assist a student in determining an appropriate and feasible vocational goal. When invited to attend, counselors make every effort to participate in IEP meetings. This provides the counselor the opportunity to discuss pre-employment transition services needed by the student, as well as address any issues in the IEP related to disability.

The counselor also provides some level of expertise regarding accommodations the student may need related to disability. Per ADRS policy, when transition services are being provided to an individual (student) with a disability who is also eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is prepared in coordination with the appropriate LEA and includes a summary of the relevant elements of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for that individual. The ADRS transition counselor will complete an IPE on each student determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services by the time the student leaves the school setting.

## 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;

- Technical Assistance is provided to LEA's and Special Education teachers in a multitude of ways throughout the year. Most LEAs attend the transition conference or Mega conference and VR presents at both conferences. Transition counselors also work with all special education personnel at the local level to provide updates on VR services, trends and practices. Additionally, VR met with 360 high schools in the state to provide technical assistance and foster collaboration in development of pre-employment transition plans for the high schools. 94% of the participants (LEAs,

Special Education teachers, transition specialist, job coaches, 504 coordinators) stated that they better understood WIOA, 92% felt they received the guidance and technical assistance needed to develop viable action plans for collaborative services. 95% stated they were provided with a method of monitoring and evaluating transition services.

- Through MOUs between ADRS and the ALSDE (SEA) issues such as consultation and technical assistance for both agencies personnel, parents, students and advocates are identified under scope of services in sections A, B and C. Parent and advocacy groups have received information on WIOA, PreETs, and transition services in multiple venues on multiple occasions (specifically section C on the MOU).

ADRS provides consultation and technical assistance regarding pre-employment transitions services, potentially eligible status, VR, application process, eligibility requirements, vocational assessments, job placement services, local service providers, post—secondary education, and other topics deemed appropriate that will lead to a successful employment outcome. ADRS partners with ALSDE and Auburn Transition Leadership Institute to host an annual transition conference. This conference is attended by a variety of transition stakeholders including staff from LEAs, ALSDE, ADRS, Community Rehabilitation Programs and parents of students with disabilities. This conference provides an opportunity for counselors and transition staff to be updated on the latest successful trends and practices related to transition. Transition counselors also participate in transition work groups, teacher workshops and transition fairs hosted by the LEAs. Technical assistance is also provided to the transition counselors and LEA staff through quarterly progress monitoring of the Transition Unlimited action plans. These activities allow ADRS staff excellent interaction opportunities with education staff and teachers.

#### **B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;**

The new MOU between ALSDE and ADRS addresses transition planning and development of the IEP under scope of services for both ALSDE and ADRs collaboratively and individually. A revised agreement has been sent to SDE and is awaiting the new superintendent's signature. This replaces the agreement on file dated 5/6/2016.

ADRS emphasizes best practices in providing services to students in order to provide a seamless transition from school to post school activities. As stated earlier, ADRS has transition counselors designated to each LEA who work closely with the special education and career and technical education teachers in the development of the IEP for those students/consumers with whom the ADRS is involved and attend IEP Team meetings and/or provide input that will assist in making decisions about services that will be provided by the ADRS, such as assistive technology, career exploration or work experience opportunities. ADRS emphasizes best practices in providing services to students in order to provide a seamless transition from school to post school activities.

### C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

- The new MOU between ALSDE and ADRS outlines the scope of services that both agencies agree to individually in terms of personnel, roles and responsibilities. The agreement further outlines what the agencies, and agency staff are responsible for individually including which personnel will be providing the service to prevent duplication (section B4).
- The MOA clarifies that nothing under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act reduces the obligation of the LEA to pay for, or provide transition services that are considered special education services, or related services necessary for assuring a free and appropriate education for students. The agreement also states that all expenditures identified by the LEA and VR for provision of pre-employment transition services that are new, having a VR focus of preparing students with disabilities to access careers that will lead to long term competitive integrated employment, and are not duplicative of services provided by the LEA, be the responsibility of ADRS. It also clarifies in the memorandum of agreement, that expenditures approved by the VR Counselor for transition services that are provided to VR students with disabilities, eligible for VR services, that are vocational in nature and support and lead to the achievement of the employment goal in the IEP, will be the financial responsibility of the DSU.

ADRS recognizes the importance of clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each agency. Educational responsibilities rest with educational agencies that include the cost of accommodations for students with disabilities. Transition counselors are trained to be sure responsibilities of the education agency are not transferred to ADRS while the student is in school. The educational agency is responsible for ensuring students with disabilities are provided equal access to education. The school is responsible for providing school records to be used in determining eligibility and planning a rehabilitation program. ADRS utilizes school records and other available information in order to develop a rehabilitation program. These roles and responsibilities further defined in the formal interagency agreement with the Alabama State Department of Education.

### D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

- Section C of the MOU between the ALSDE and ADRS, specifically numbers 5-7 addresses outreach to students with disabilities requiring transition services. This is also addressed in Section B11 in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Outreach efforts continually occur between LEA staff and the designated VR counselor. These counselors (who most often have exclusive transition cases) work with teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, psychometrists and other education staff to identify students with disabilities who need transition services. Additional outreach will occur at IEP meetings, community based transition team meetings, teen transition clinic, job fairs, advocacy meetings, parent focus groups and

other related events. These outreach efforts will inform school personnel, students, other state agency personnel, advocates, appropriate family members and other representative of the following:

- a. Description of the purpose of VR
- b. Information regarding eligibility requirements
- c. Information regarding application procedures and
- d. Scope of services that may be available to eligible individuals.

#### E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) maintains a viable working partnership with 26 Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) statewide. The CRPs play a vital role in assisting the department to meet its mission of providing quality employment outcomes for individuals with severe disabilities. Currently, the Accreditation Commission (CARF) accredits 25 of the CRPs in Alabama and one provider who is in a “provisional status” and has agreed to meet CARF standards in a twelve—month time frame. As the nature of services provided by CRPs continues to change, the options regarding standards and accreditation requirements will change. Within the CRP section area, one State Office Administrator supervises the general CRP programs, another State Office Administrator supervises the Supported Employment Providers (SEP) and both share an Administrative Assistant. All three employees report to the Assistant Commissioner of VR general field services.

The CRP Administrator(s) are responsible for initiating agreements with non—profits and for profits from which ADRS consumers receive services. CRP section staff review the qualifications of both nonprofits and for profits, meet to discuss fees and payment rates, and monitor service delivery through management/data reports and field visits. Beginning 3/1/2017, ADRS required that new community providers meet the accreditation requirements of The Accreditation Commission (CARF). Community providers who are already approved, prior to this date, with Provisional Provider Status, will be expected to achieve permanent status (accreditation by The Accreditation Commission-CARF) at their annual review. This accreditation must be approved no later than one year from their MOA date.

Prior to 3/1/2017, community rehabilitation providers with current MOAs whose primary focus was to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities were certified through the Department of Mental Health. These providers can continue to provide services but are encouraged to pursue CARF accreditation. All new supported employment vendors will need CARF certification, regardless of current Mental Health approval or certification.

This requirement provides some assurance that CRP’s address issues like ADA accessibility, accountability, safety, staff qualifications, accommodations, and affirmative action in hiring persons with disabilities and address any special

communication needs of consumers. Currently, the CRP Administrator meets with CRP staff to discuss services and formulate an agreement that establishes agreed upon fees, referrals, and employment goals for each CRP. This information is shared with local counselors so that appropriate referrals and service authorizations can be made to the CRPs. The department continues to work cooperatively with CRPs statewide to improve services at the local level. There is a continuous need for services. The development and establishment of new programs will change with the assessment of consumer needs. Based on an assessment of the capacity and effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services currently provided by CRPs statewide, a number of trends appear to be taking place:

- Increased emphasis on serving individuals that are considered underserved, individuals with the most significant disabilities, and individuals residing in rural areas of the state.
- Increased emphasis on consumer choice.
- Increased emphasis on serving ADRS consumers in their home communities.
- Increased emphasis on competitive integrated employment.
- Increased emphasis on high school students with disabilities through Pre-Employment Transition Services.
- Increased emphasis on community based services.
- CRPs are becoming more diversified regarding services provided and funding streams. More options regarding accreditation requirements as providers and the nature of service provision changes.

The department's commissioner, the assistant commissioners for general field services, and blind/deaf services, and the CRP specialists meet regularly with all community rehabilitation program directors. These meetings provide the opportunity to discuss issues of mutual concern, improve communication, and focus on the continuous improvement of the partnership. Supported employment is available in Alabama to individuals who require intensive and extended support services for an appropriate and successful employment outcome. Supported employment services are available through some 38 community based providers in the state. These services are currently provided in all regions of the state through cooperative agreements with community—based organizations and agencies. The availability of job coach services is provided in most of the state's network of 26 community rehabilitation programs. Additionally, specialized community based services for blind and deaf consumers are being expanded and developed in local communities throughout the state.

- Services provided by the CRPs are monitored in various ways-most at the local level (counselor/supervisor) in terms of quality and timeliness of services. Monthly reports of employment services are required. Liaisons are assigned to monitor CRP referrals, and receive updates on progress. Additionally, they handle authorization reviews and handle individual concerns that may arise. The CRP dashboard enables supervisors and state office staff to monitor services delivered and outcomes.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services continues to stay abreast of national issues regarding community rehabilitation facilities through its attendance and participation in conferences of state and national significance including Alabama Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (AARF), Alabama Association of People Supporting Employment First (AL—APSE), Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and National Rehabilitation Association (NRA). Collaborative efforts between ADRS Computer Services and the CRP section have recently developed computer generated reports that assist the CRP section in tracking targeted CRP goals and outcomes such as numbers of individuals successfully employed, cost per successful closure, and average wage.

#### F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

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(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 (SE) is available in Alabama for individuals with the most significant disabilities who require intensive support services, and extended support services for an appropriate and successful employment outcome. These services are provided in all regions of the state by 38 approved community—based organizations. Supported Employment services are available to individuals regardless of their disability. Currently, the primary disabilities served include persons with significant intellectual disabilities, severe mental illness, cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorders, visual and hearing impairments, severe orthopedic impairments, traumatic brain injury, and other most significant disabilities.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services currently utilizes a Milestones service and payment process. Milestones, a service and outcome based payment system, has significantly improved the quality of supported employment throughout the state, while proving to be more cost effective for the Agency. Providers of supported employment are paid for successful outcomes achieved by individuals participating in supported employment. The Milestones program segments the rehabilitation process into four distinct areas: (1) Determination of Needs/Person Centered Profiles (including Assessments) and the Discovery Process, (2) Hire, (3) Job Retention/Coaching and (4) Closure. Extended supports including natural supports are available at the job site, and are provided for the duration of the employment. Providers of long term supports are required to document twice monthly contact with each consumer successfully working in the community, and to maintain this documentation in case files for the duration of that consumer's job. ADRS can fund extended supports to youth for up to 4 years or until they reach the age of 25 and are no longer considered a youth. If VR is funding extended services the case must remain open until the individual is receiving these supports funded through another source. To ensure the highest quality of services, training is provided throughout the year to address issues related to supported employment, including the provision of extended services, customized employment and supported self-employment.

This training is available to all SE providers as well as other agencies that may collaborate to provide supports to an individual working in the community. These agencies include the Alabama Department of Mental Health, The Alabama Department of Education, the Social Security Administration, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. This training is currently being offered twice a year in a collaborative effort between the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Alabama Department of Mental Health. APSE (Association for People Supporting Employment First) is sponsoring, and our state Chapter of APSE are also participating in CESP National Certification (National Certification for Employment Support Professionals). Project SEARCH, a statewide initiative to improve transition services for students with most significant disabilities began in Alabama in FY 2012 with two pilot sites. Alabama now has 11 Project SEARCH sites and we will continue to work to expand this transition program in our state. All sites have a state team member assigned to them to help with implementation and fidelity. Trainings take place throughout the year and the teacher and job coach both attend national SEARCH training as well. Cooperative Agreements between the Local School Systems (LEA's) or Post-Secondary education (for youth programs) Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Supported Employment Community Rehabilitation Program and the local employer supporting the program are in place for all 11 sites.

In FY 2014, ADRS in a collaborative effort with and ADM, piloted Project GATE. Project GATE (Gaining Access to Employment) moved consumers with most significant disabilities from sheltered work to training in industry. This program was recognized by the Institute for Community Inclusion for innovation in employment. "This innovative and collaborative training program blends funding from both key agencies. It provides opportunities for higher wages, more innovative and opportunities to provide customization. Job coaches are on site and training the interns". Participants are either offered employment at the host site or in the community upon completion of training." Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Alabama Department of Post—Secondary Education continue to work towards Employment First legislation. Individualized Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment is an evidence based approach to supported employment for individuals with serious mental illness. IPS, based on zero exclusion, competitive employment in the community, mental health treatment and employment services being integrated, benefits planning is included, job search occurs rapidly, employment specialist develop relationships with employers in their communities, job supports are continuous, and consumer preferences are honored. In 2014, Alabama applied for and was among 7 states that received a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to implement IPS Supported Employment at 2 sites in the state. The grant is for 5 years during which time we will be looking at sustainability and expansion. Currently IPS is being implemented at Chilton Shelby in West Alabama (rural site) and Alapointe in Mobile County (urban site). This year we will expand to include Montgomery Mental Health Authority. This grant includes Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Auburn University, and the Alabama Department of Veteran's Affairs.

In a cooperative arrangement with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, in collaboration with AL—APSE/ the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Education training and educational activities continue to be offered twice a year to improve the consistency of service delivery by job coaches, pre-employment transition specialist, skills training instructors, AIDB staff, IPS staff and others in the community that offer employment services to individuals with most significant disabilities. Customized employment training is also provided. This training is coordinated by ADRS and the ADMH and offered by Virginia Commonwealth University’s Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports. We currently have a cooperative agreement with the Alabama Department of Mental Health that includes both the DD Division of the Department and the MI/SA Division. This agreement gives and Overview of both Departments including their purpose, changes reflected in WIOA, the Legal basis for the agreement, Overview of the Departments and the Responsibilities of the Partners, Eligibility, Plan Development, Referral Process for the Departments, State level shared objectives, Responsibilities and Implementation-including extended services to individuals with most significant disabilities.

## G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

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(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

#### 1. VR Services

ADRS is committed to a “dual customer” approach in working with employers to identify competitive integrated employment opportunities and career exploration opportunities for the consumers we serve. While doing so, ADRS also focuses on developing effective working relationships with business to address their disability related issues in the workplace from outreach and recruitment, to accommodations, to education, to resources linkages and more via the development and delivery of appropriate products and services to meet the needs of business as specified in the WIOA proposed regulations and beyond. To accomplish the above, ADRS has a business relations unit, “READI-Net” (Resources for Employment And Disability Information Network), led by a State Office Administrator of Business Relations and staffed by specially trained Business Relations Consultants (BRCs), in a classification separate from Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. The Administrator serves as the ADRS representative with full oversight of collaborative relationships with businesses developed by any VR staff or other VR agencies in The NET (VR’s National Employment Team) that wish to establish or grow their partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation in Alabama. At the state level, the Administrator is the lead liaison to workforce partners, community organizations and other agencies that establish partnerships with business and is the “reviewing supervisor” of the business relations consultants. At the local level, the BRCs are charged with establishing and maintaining effective relationships with business to create employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities or to assist business with retention of workers whose job is affected

by illness, injury or disability. BRCs develop and deliver other disability-related services needed by business and are accountable for the quality and effectiveness of those services. They simultaneously assist consumers (youth and adults) with job readiness preparation (through group or one-on-one sessions), job development, job search, job retention and follow-up. In addition, ADRS works with a network of community-based organizations on customized placement services for consumers, necessitating coordination with employers. These partnerships include special assistance to students and youth with disabilities, Transition services, and supported employment assistance. This coordination with business also involves internal ADRS staff specializing in job readiness and placement services for individuals who are blind, visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing and may include Deaf Support Specialists, audiologists, or other contract employment specialists focusing on visually impaired. Engagement with businesses through the ADRS RAVE (Retaining A Valued Employee) program also necessitate collaboration with business and includes ADRS vocational rehabilitation counselors, BRCs, rehabilitation technology specialists and other rehabilitation professionals. To foster collaboration among these resources, thus avoiding duplication of effort with employers while maximizing assistance to consumers, ADRS has developed local collaboration teams facilitated by BRCs to include any and all local entities that assist VR consumers with job readiness, placement and retention services and who reach out to employers on behalf of those consumers. These groups meet either monthly or quarterly and can include: ADRS staff, community rehabilitation programs, supported employment projects, jointly funded job coaches with the school systems, disabled veterans organizations, workforce partners, staffing companies, state and Federal agencies, and more. To enhance coordination with employers, the ADRS READI-Net program and BRCs also engage with entities that represent business and disability-related issues: Staffing companies, Society of Human Resource Management, Chambers of Commerce, Alabama Industry Liaison Group, EEOC, OFCCP, and other partners that represent the needs of employers. BRCs work through these entities to deliver needed disability-related services to the business. Operating under an “employer account system” to ensure accurate record keeping of services provided to employers and to organize outreach to employers, ADRS has an employer data base, “Mr. ED”, that maintains permanent records on every business contacted by BRCs or with whom BRCs have a working relationship. These records reflect the following: 1) Company name and detailed demographics on contact info, staffing patterns, benefits, referral processes, type company (e.g. Federal contractor, Federal agency, private sector, etc.) and more; 2) Specific services provided to the company by ADRS; 3) Job vacancies, particularly those from businesses under affirmative action mandates - ADRS works with people with disabilities in all protected classes such as minorities, women, felons, LGBT, dislocated workers, poverty level, age and others; 4) Employment and retention outcomes with the company; 5) Archived records that reflect the history of the partnership and track repeat business. A number of customized services to businesses to enhance hiring opportunities of individuals with disabilities by the business, include a variety of the following, which require coordination with the business and delivery by ADRS staff or partners: Pre-hire work experiences; Mentoring or internships; Summer work experience; On-the-Job training support (fiscal and programmatic) after hire; Targeted Job Tax Credits; Accommodations at the job site such as: job coaching, delivery and set up

of accommodation resources, and additional follow up services to ensure success; and RAVE services to assist existing employees with disabilities. (A specific list of services to business, along with their explanations, is available on the ADRS website business page: [www.rehab.alabama.gov/business-partners](http://www.rehab.alabama.gov/business-partners) )

## 2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

2. Through the above mentioned programs, employer services and partnerships, ADRS will also coordinate with employers in order to facilitate the provision of transition services for students and youth with disabilities. ADRS will also coordinate with employers to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. ADRS will accomplish this by working with employers to arrange work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities. These work-based learning experiences will include setting up worksite tours, job shadowing and mentoring opportunities, paid and unpaid internships, apprenticeships and other learning experiences within business and industry sectors. ADRS will also involve employers in informational interviews and other mentoring activities in order to provide instruction in self-advocacy for students receiving pre-employment transition services. Lastly, employers will be used to provide information about in-demand industry sectors and occupations as well as labor market information, which can be used in providing job exploration counseling to students with disabilities receiving pre-employment transition services.

## H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

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Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

### 1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

The State of Alabama Independent Living Service, a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, provides comprehensive services for individuals needing independent living supports to remain in their communities. Those individuals who receive Medicaid Waiver services and indicate an interest in employment are served through the Independent Living division utilizing specialized case managers trained to provide both Targeted Case Management and Vocational Rehabilitation services. These combined services allow for a holistic approach to employment outcomes by managing home and workplace support needs to increase employment success.

In addition, Independent Living staff collaborate regularly with Alabama Medicaid to train staff, manage federal Medicaid rule changes and ensure consistency of service provision. Services provided through the Independent Living Division if the Department of Rehabilitation Services are administered within the guidelines of the

CMS sail waiver and in accordance with the collaborative agreement with Alabama Medicaid.

## 2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

2. Alabama Department of Mental Health is responsible for providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities, and ADRS works collaboratively in our state to increase competitive integrated employment, particularly for individuals with more significant disabilities. Initiatives such as Project SEACH, that currently serves over 100 individuals with significant disabilities at ten different locations throughout the state, the GATE project which is a collaborative effort to move individuals served through the waivers in day programs into community based, integrated employment opportunities through development of training sites embedded in employment opportunities in the communities, and conjoint trainings for job coaches working through both entities, community based rehabilitation partners, school personnel, jointly funded school personnel, skills training instructors, IPS staff and other community providers. We have a current cooperative agreement in place that outlines the roles and responsibilities of partners, over view and function as well as the state level shared objectives. This agreement is for both the DD and MI/SA divisions of the department. In 2017, ADRS entered into a cooperative agreement with the Alabama Department of Mental Health to provide benefits counseling services to individuals receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), are currently being served or on a waiting lists for either the Living at Home (LAH) or the Intellectual Disabilities (ID) waivers. Information and Referral as well as intensive benefits counseling services are provided by trained certified benefits specialists to any individuals whether the individual is currently employed, has a job offer or is in the contemplative stages of employment planning. Staff supported through the ADRS DMH cooperative agreement work in collaboration with other ADRS WIPA benefits counseling staff. The cooperative agreement targets 100 individuals annually.

## 3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

IPS SE is a collaborative effort between the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services to serve individual with severe mental illness and co—occurring substance abuse in SE. We currently have three IPS programs in Alabama. One in Chilton Shelby (rural) one in Mobile (urban and the mental health center in Alabama that serves the most individuals) and the third in Montgomery. The cooperative agreement with the Alabama Department of Mental health includes IPS services as well as the eligibility, department overview, functions, the referral process and shared objectives of the agencies.

ADRS benefits counseling staff work in collaboration with IPS staff coordinating services and providing additional support.

## I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

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(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

## 1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

### A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

#### I. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE STATE AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES IN RELATION TO THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY;

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) maintains a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. This system is based on finding candidates who possess prescribed levels of specific education and experience for available positions/job classifications. After employment, a second phase of this comprehensive system of personnel development is initiated. This includes an initial orientation to the department, its goals, and mission. A regular system of personnel appraisal and staff development is tailored to suit the needs of each staff member.

#### (1)(A) Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

ADRS maintains a comprehensive system of data on personnel needs. This is maintained within the agency's human resource division. This data system allows for the input of personal information about each staff member and includes all possible training opportunities for staff to attend. It can also record historical information about each training, maintain participant lists, and track continuing education credit hours as needed.

(i) As reported in the latest RSA—2 information (May 2018), the total number of consumers served by the staff in 2016 was 30,292. The majority (83%) of individuals served were coded in case files as having significant disabilities or higher.

#### **2014 RSA—2 Personnel Reporting Categories, Number Employed**

Administrative Staff, 60

Counselor Staff, 192

Staff Supporting Counselor Activities, 161

Other Staff, 2

Total, 415

#### II. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND

Those classified as "counselor staff," can be somewhat deceiving because it includes specialty staff (vision rehabilitation therapists and orientation and mobility

specialists) that may not be considered actual vocational rehabilitation counselors. It also includes four “hybrid” counselors who work under the State of Alabama Independent Living Program (SAIL) and serve consumers who dually qualify for independent living services and vocational rehabilitation services. The actual number of DVR rehab counselors is closer to 164. These are counselors who provide services through our field offices and One—Stop Career Center sites. Each of these counselors currently averages a caseload of approximately 153 consumers.

There is currently a state hiring freeze; however, the State Finance Director has granted a blanket approval for ADRS - DVR to fill direct service and direct-support service vacancies which are federally funded. With this approval, along with the addition of a master’s in counseling to the State Plan counselor standard, DVR will continue filling vacancies with qualified rehabilitation counseling staff.

A database is used to track the educational backgrounds and experience of the active counselors and field supervisors within the department for the express purpose of encouraging and enabling all staff to reach the state’s highest definition of ‘qualified rehabilitation professionals.’ This database supports already existing systems and contains information gathered from educational transcripts required upon application to this job classification.

The agency also employs orientation and mobility instructors, interpreters, vision rehabilitation therapists and rehabilitation employment specialists (business relations consultants). A qualification for orientation mobility instructor is an ACVREP or NOMC certification. Interpreters must be licensed by the Alabama Licenser Board for Interpreters and Transliterators. A vision rehabilitation therapist must have at least a bachelor’s degree and one year experience; however, most of these staff members have master’s degrees. The business relations consultants may come from a business background or a vocational rehabilitation service background with appropriate degrees.

### 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.

Approximately, fifty-nine (59) “rehab counselors/clerical support staff”, eleven (11) supervisors from the “administrative staff” and three (3) specialists from the “staff supporting counselor activities” will be eligible to retire within the next five years based on their age or years of service. These numbers represent actual positions currently filled and do not include those budgeted positions presently not filled. In addition, field supervisors and rehabilitation specialist positions are included in this number because counselors are often promoted into these supervisory roles, leaving counselor vacancies. Therefore, we can project the need for approximately sixty-three (63) counselors over the next five years to remain staffed at the current budgeted level.

It is difficult to project the number of ‘Staff Supporting Counselor Activities’ and ‘Other’ staff. However, of the remaining “administrative staff” (less the supervisors)

and the support staff (less the specialists) and the “other” the estimate would be eighty—five (85) eligible to retire over the next five years. This is based on the fact that 42% of the current overall agency staff will be eligible to retire within the next five years, based on age or years of service.

The department’s Leadership Training Institute (LTI) graduated fourteen (14) staff members in 2015. These graduates actively compete for leadership roles when vacancies occur. Another method of preparing LTI graduates for leadership roles is involving them in departmental task forces and special assignments. It gives current leadership the chance to see how well LTI graduates perform and the strengths they possess.

Prior to January 10, 2018, rehabilitation counselors hired to work with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services had to possess master’s degrees from an accredited university in specific fields of study and become “eligible to sit” for the CRC exam (except for one who was grandfathered in; however, he attained a Master’s in another field of study. Effective January 10, 2018, ADRS began requiring a master’s degree from an accredited college or university in Rehabilitation Counseling, Rehabilitation Services, Rehabilitation Administration, Vocational Evaluation, or Counseling. The new minimum requirements continue to uphold the higher education standards of the program while creating a larger applicant pool to fill future vacancies.

As of February 28, 2018, no new rehabilitation counselor positions have been filled under the new minimum requirements.

There are currently 170 rehabilitation counselor positions, 5 vacancies, and 25 vacancies projected over the next 5 years.

There are currently 19 rehabilitation field supervisor positions, 0 vacancies, and 11 vacancies projected over the next 5 years.

There are currently 5 orientation and mobility specialist positions, 0 vacancies, and 3 vacancies projected over the next 5 years.

There are currently 12 Interpreter positions, 2 vacancies, and 0 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

There are currently 4 rehabilitation audiologist positions, 1 vacancy, and 0 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

There are currently 17 vision rehabilitation therapist positions, 5 vacancies, and 0 projected vacancies over the next 5 years.

There are currently 9 rehabilitation technology specialist positions. There is 1 vacancy. The projected vacancies over the next 5 years is unknown.

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## 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;**

Currently, Alabama has five universities that offer the master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. The universities, recent enrollment figures, and last year's graduation numbers are listed below. (As reported by the universities)

**Institution, Number of Students Enrolled, Graduates form Previous Year**

Alabama A&M University, 55, 12

Alabama State University. 21, 9

Auburn University, 17, 9

Troy University, 17, 25

University of Alabama, 43, 7

Additionally there are numerous master's-level counseling programs in Alabama including fourteen universities that offer CACREP accredited programs in various counseling fields: Alabama A&M University, Alabama State University, Auburn University, Auburn Montgomery University. Jacksonville State University, Troy University, Troy University-Dothan, Tory University-Montgomery, Troy University-Phenix City, University of Alabama, University of Alabama Birmingham, University of Montevallo, University of North Alabama, and University of South Alabama. Updated enrollment and graduate data as reported by the universities will be submitted with the next CSPD reporting period.

**II. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND**

Currently, Alabama has five universities that offer the Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. The universities, recent enrollment figures, and last year's graduation numbers are listed below. (As reported by the universities)

**Institution, Students Enrolled, Graduates from the previous year**

1. ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY, 55, 12
2. ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY, 21, 9
3. AUBURN UNIVERSITY, 17, 9
4. TROY UNIVERSITY, 17, 25
5. UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, 43, 7

Additionally, there are numerous master's-level counseling programs in Alabama including fourteen universities that offer CACREP accredited programs in various counseling fields: Alabama A&M University, Alabama State University, Auburn University, Auburn Montgomery University. Jacksonville State University, Troy University, Troy University-Dothan, Tory University-Montgomery, Troy University-Phenix City, University of Alabama, University of Alabama Birmingham, University of Montevallo, University of North Alabama, and University of South Alabama. Updated enrollment and graduate data as reported by the universities will be submitted with the next CSPD reporting period.

The above institutions provide excellent candidates for available counseling positions. This translates into increased candidates for the department to recruit into employment.

The State Personnel Department's qualifications for rehabilitation counselor currently require specific master's degrees; therefore, ADRS will not be presented with candidates without appropriate degrees. Furthermore, candidates must provide an official transcript to ADRS prior to being appointed to a counselor position.

With the addition of master's degrees in counseling which are not specifically rehabilitation counseling, ADRS is able to increase the number of qualified candidates for employment in counseling positions.

**III. THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.**

With the addition of master's degrees in counseling which are not specifically rehabilitation counseling, ADRS is able to increase the number of qualified candidates for employment in counseling positions.

Currently, Alabama has five universities that offer the Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling. The universities, recent enrollment figures, and last year's graduation numbers are listed below. (As reported by the universities)

**Institution, Students Enrolled, Graduates from the previous year**

1. ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY, 55, 12
2. ALABAMA STATE UNIVERSITY, 21, 9
3. AUBURN UNIVERSITY, 17, 9
4. TROY UNIVERSITY, 17, 25
5. UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, 43, 7

The above institutions provide excellent candidates for available counseling positions. This translates into increased candidates for the department to recruit into employment.

Additionally, there are numerous master's-level counseling programs in Alabama including fourteen universities that offer CACREP accredited programs in various counseling fields: Alabama A&M University, Alabama State University, Auburn University, Auburn Montgomery University, Jacksonville State University, Troy University, Troy University-Dothan, Troy University-Montgomery, Troy University-Phenix City, University of Alabama, University of Alabama Birmingham, University of Montevallo, University of North Alabama, and University of South Alabama. Updated enrollment and graduate data as reported by the universities will be submitted with the next CSPD reporting period.

The state personnel department's qualifications for rehabilitation counselor currently require specific master's degrees; therefore, ADRS will not be presented

with candidates without appropriate degrees. Furthermore, candidates must provide an official transcript to ADRS prior to being appointed to a counselor position.

## 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.

With the addition of master's degrees in counseling which are not specifically rehabilitation counseling, ADRS is able to increase the number of qualified candidates for employment in counseling positions.

ADRS works diligently to implement strategies necessary to address personnel issues. Since 2002, the department has a dedicated staff specialist devoted to the issues of recruitment and retention. This individual works with the executive leadership team and task forces to create and implement a recruitment and retention plan that is updated annually to address the projected personnel needs of the department. However, ultimately the State Department of Personnel is the entity that provides and oversees hiring practices, salary schedules, and staff vacancies among other personnel issues. Within the strategic planning and implementation process, the following issues are addressed:

1. Maintain a strong relationship with key personnel at the State Department of Personnel and universities offering educational opportunities for potential ADRS employees. Unpaid internships will continue to be offered as a recruiting tool for students in the field of rehabilitation. Paid internships are offered as a recruiting tool for rural areas and/or areas where certain degree programs do not exist. The professional trainee job class may be used to attract individuals to pursue professions in rehabilitation requiring experience such as rehabilitation teacher and rehabilitation employment specialist. This will allow dedicated individuals to train while gaining the experience needed to be eligible for hire.
2. A hiring procedure known as 'disability preference' continues to enable ADRS to recruit qualified individuals with disabilities. Other avenues to recruit individuals with disabilities are made possible through specialty areas such as rehabilitation teaching and orientation and mobility. Also educating consumers with the potential to pursue rehabilitation professions is a recruitment tool as well as supporting entry level staff to pursue professional positions through a process of "grow your own." Additionally, ADRS participates in recruiting efforts/career fairs including those for persons with disabilities.
3. Continuation of promotions of deserving rehabilitation counselors to the senior rehabilitation counselor level. Promotions are based on exemplary performance of job duties and the ability to take on additional duties within the unit. This provides incentive for younger counselors to remain with the department and helps address the issue

of supervisory succession planning. The counselors who are promoted and retained are then in line to fill supervisory vacancies, with proper training.

4. Regularly scheduled exhibits at various professional, educational and disability organization meetings to share employment opportunities with potential candidates. Exhibits are used for recruiting students into the field of rehabilitation and for recruiting professionals into positions within the department. Several ADRS administrators have served on advisory boards for rehabilitation counseling programs and are also asked to sit on interviewing panels for RSA scholarship recipients.

5. Maintain an active role on the advisory committees of Alabama A&M University and Alabama State University. Both universities are known as historically black colleges/ universities and provide an opportunity to recruit students from more diverse backgrounds to positions within the department. Seasoned and retired staff are encouraged to work as adjunct professors within the graduate rehabilitation counseling programs which affords a practical application of information to the students.

6. Develop more marketing tools, created through annual meetings with educators, to increase interest in the field of rehabilitation from high school students and encourage undergraduate students to pursue master's level work in one of the rehabilitation or counseling programs. Departmental transition counselors are used to recruit high school students across the state. There has also been increased participation in high school career events to educate students of the many professions within the department.

The ADRS public website includes an expanded career opportunities section that can be accessed by college career services, advocacy groups, and students. This section provides information on career opportunities and employee benefits available within the department.

The development of an orientation program for new employees, which includes a disability etiquette section, serves as a recruitment and retention tool. It provides information for all new employee to effectively interact with individuals who have disabilities as well as knowledge regarding legal obligations and work procedures.

### 3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

#### A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-

APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services adopted a standard on January 10, 2018, which states rehabilitation counselors will have a Master's degree in

rehabilitation specific programs or counseling programs. Official transcripts are required prior to the appointment of candidates to counselor positions. The addition of the Master's degree in counseling to the State standard shall allow for a larger applicant pool especially in rural areas and areas where rehabilitation counseling programs do not exist. The listed salary range of our beginning rehabilitation counselor positions is \$37,389.60—\$56,685.60 and consists of eighteen pay steps. The senior rehabilitation counselor pay range is \$39,290.40—\$62,529.60 and consists of 20 pay steps. The pay ranges for ADRS counselor job classes increased effective January 1, 2017.

**B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.**

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services adopted a standard on January 10, 2018, which states rehabilitation counselors will have a master's degree in rehabilitation specific programs or counseling programs. Further consideration beyond the minimum qualifications is given for candidates who have experience working with persons with disabilities, have obtained or are eligible to sit for the CRCC, have obtained licenser in counseling, and./or have vocational or evaluation coursework.

**4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.**

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

**A. SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

The department has an extensive in—service training program. The department maintains a departmental training team that meets to identify, plan, and coordinate training. A department wide training plan, reviewed by this team on an on—going basis, targets core subjects as well as new topics related to particular job classifications or specialty areas.

(A) These topics may include, but are not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act, case management, Social Security work incentives, employment development, WIOA, medical aspects of disability, disability etiquette, assistive technology, assessment, job placement, ethics, and multicultural issues. Two assistive technology expos/symposiums are held annually to assist in carrying out section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. The National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation

Training Materials is accessed as well as RSA webinars to disseminate knowledge to staff from research and other sources.

The department utilizes MAESTRO learning management software to track training records for each staff member. This software allows for input from both field and state office staff. MAESTRO will track an individual's training record, training dates, and future training needs. AT&T Connect webinar system and in-house video—on-demand capabilities have broadened the counselors' ability to participate in training programs, webinars, and receive valuable time—sensitive information without spending time away from their office and consumers while significantly reducing travel/training 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.

DVR coordinates with Human Resource Development (HRD) and Business Relations (BR) to determine the information and training needs for professional and para-professional staff to assist in obtaining and disseminating professional information. HRD meets with and/or surveys staff to identify areas directly and indirectly related to the field of vocational rehabilitation. Based on the information obtained from staff and administration, DVR seeks training programs, webinars, and presenters demonstrating expertise knowledge in disabilities, technical issues, and federal and state policies, procedures and guidelines. In turn, DVR, BR, and HRD utilize the gained knowledge to develop instructor-led training programs and videos and to evaluate/offer appropriate webinars to staff. DVR administration and staff attend national and state conferences, search professional internet sites, and review professional magazines, articles and federal and state guidelines to stay abreast of current trends in the field of vocational rehabilitation. Trainings, both formal and informal, are developed and presented regarding current trends to ensure that staff has up-to-date knowledge to provide services to consumers. Some of the topics of vocational rehabilitation knowledge provided to professional and para-professional staff include orientation for new counselors, orientation for new DVR supervisors, ethics in relation to vocational rehabilitation services and practices, social media/technology and ethics, WIOA guidelines, HIPPA, different aspects of various disabilities, mental health issues, (i.e., suicide, substance abuse, etc.), assistive technology, Social Security Administration and Work Incentives, labor market and work force trends/data, and leadership.

The department's Leadership Training Institute (LTI) has been continuously changed and updated since 1994 to include new approaches and concepts of leadership. This training, offered nine times since its inception has proven to sufficiently meet the changing needs of the department by preparing staff to fill vacant leadership positions statewide. The most recent LTI class (2015) included 14 VR field staff.

The State Department of Personnel offers supervisory training in the areas of performance appraisal, progressive discipline, FMLA, sexual harassment,

employment law, interview and selection, and the dynamics of supervision. A portion of these trainings are required for all new supervisors.

#### 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.

ADRS maintains regular communication with programs providing specialized training in the areas of deafness and blindness. Communication is maintained with Western Oregon University to train staff in the area of deafness. Staff members serving the deaf and hard of hearing populations attend an annual training conference to address issues relative to deaf services and to meet with students at the Alabama School for the Deaf. The department also remains actively involved with Mississippi State University's blind program. Mississippi State also assists the blind programs with consumer satisfaction surveys. Staff members serving the blind and low vision populations attend training programs annually to address issues relative to blind services. The department possesses Braille and large print producing capabilities in local offices to address the needs of Braille and large print users. UbiDuos and video phones are available in the reception areas, resource rooms and counselor offices to assist staff and consumers with communication and hearing difficulties. ADRS requires all counselors for the deaf to be proficient in sign language to communicate with deaf consumers in their native language. To qualify for both the VR counselor and deaf support specialist positions, a person must possess an Intermediate rating on the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI). In addition, ADRS employs 11 full-time, nationally certified sign language interpreters. These interpreters help to facilitate communication between the deaf community and any ADRS staff. Our staff interpreters make every effort to provide services as needed but when necessary, qualified contract interpreters are also made available.

ADRS continues to work with Alabama A&M University to target and recruit candidates for the rehabilitation counseling program in either the blindness or deafness tract. This two year master's program includes the second year in Mississippi (MSU Vision Specialist) or Tennessee (UT's Orientation to Deafness) for the specialized training. Troy University and Winston-Salem University in North Carolina both have new deaf concentrations in their rehabilitation counseling programs and work closely with ADRS.

ADRS applicants and eligible individuals who speak limited English can be provided interpreters or are able to access vendors for remote interpreter services. The ADRS consumer guide has been translated into Spanish. Spanish instruction is encouraged by using technology and individual instruction either online or in person for staff.

#### 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.

Approximately half of ADRS cases served and the closures obtained, involve transition students. This year, 16,240 transition students received services and 2,238 were successfully employed. The department continues to strengthen the jointly funded pre-ets specialist program with thirty-one (31) LEAs across the state and two (2) with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB). This program is designed to provide pre—employment transition services, that are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA, to prepare students with disabilities to enter competitive integrated employment by identifying and exploring career interests, as well as, increasing individual independence, self-sufficiency and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in their communities. The program is cooperatively managed by local VR service staff and school system staff and employs full—time and part—time pre-ets specialists. Students, parents, rehabilitation counselors, local school special and regular education staff, and the pre-ets specialists, work together to plan for students' successful and smooth transitions to adult life and work.

ADRS continues efforts to develop and improve transition partnerships, programs and service models to meet the needs of students with more—significant disabilities and overcome barriers to employment and community living. College Prep Program services were offered at six sites around the state, with more than 200 students participating. Collaboration with the Special Education Division of the Department of Education and the Department of Corrections continues as ADRS implements the Prison Transition Initiative for youth with disabilities incarcerated in adult prisons.

ADRS established a statewide Transition Workgroup to develop a strategic plan for strengthening and improving transition services. A Best Practices Guide for Transition Services for staff was developed as an overview of the types of services and activities that may be provided to students with disabilities in schools and that also serves as a tool to help transition counselors develop ideas and services/programs in their local areas. ADRS also supports many local transition events such as career fairs, transition expos, mentoring days, and summer employment readiness program.

ADRS is represented on the State Interagency Transition Team (SITT). This is an interagency work group designed to identify existing interagency barriers to effective transition services and develop appropriate remedies. This group consists of representatives from ADRS, Division of Special Education, Auburn University, University of Alabama, Department of Mental Health, Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Alabama Association of Higher Education and Disability, and the Young Adults in Transition (YAIT) group. This group encouraged local areas to establish Community Transition Teams to address transition issues for youth with disabilities.

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is annually provided an opportunity to give input about the department's CSPD initiatives. Current and future personnel issues are presented by field services program directors. Detailed information is presented

through discussions, handouts and questions and answers. Comments and suggestions are requested at any time throughout the year.

Coordination for staff development and training to disseminate pertinent information, changes in the law, requirements for agencies, etc occurs in various ways and in various venues. ADRS participates in trainings hosted by ALSDE at both the statewide level (Mega) and at the local level through advisory boards. We participate and collaborate on the transition conference hosted by Auburn Transition Leadership Institute (ATLI) jointly participating in planning all the training for the conference. ADRS also collaborates on the local level with special education personnel (LEA's, special education teachers, transition teachers, pre-employment transition personnel and 504 coordinators in planning pre-employment services to all students at the local high school level through Transition Unlimited. These services are conjointly decided upon, monitored and evaluated through a website developed for this purpose. Staff have been provided training and have been introduced to all the changes in WIOA that are related to students and youth with disabilities (Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

## J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

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### 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;

Findings of the 2017 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment indicate that Alabamian's with the most significant disabilities (more so than others) need highly individualized employment services, specialized training and equipment, help with auxiliary problems, and an extended duration of support. Within fiscal years 2014 through 2016, among 20,451 individuals that were closed after receiving service, 2,900 had been designated to the agency's Most Significant Disability (MSD) category. Individuals in the MSD group were more likely to have a disability attributed to Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Disability, Deaf-Blindness, Traumatic Brain Injury, Serious Mental Illness (especially Schizophrenia and other Psychotic Disorders), Spinal Cord Injury, Congenital Conditions or Birth Injury (such as Cerebral Palsy or Spina Bifida), Neurological Disorders (arising from Epilepsy, Stroke, or Parkinson's), Blindness, and Deafness. The average cost of purchased services for individuals in the MSD category was over \$1,300 dollars higher per case than non MSD individuals. The higher amount appears due to differences in both the type and intensity of services purchased. With regard to type, individuals in the MSD category had much higher than average expenditures upon Medical Supplies, Wheelchairs, Surgery and Treatment, and Vehicle Modification. With regard to intensity and/or duration, higher than average expenditures for persons in the MSD group were noted for Therapy (Speech, OT, PT, etc), Job Coaching, Paid Work Experience, Diagnostic Medical Services, and Vocational Evaluation.

For external perspective, RSA funded research has concluded that VR consumers with MSD differed from those with disabilities classified as nonsignificant on the following characteristics: they were twice as likely to be receiving public financial assistance at entry and six times as likely to receive SSI/disabled; they had more often received special education services in high school and had less often completed high school; they more often had no work history, and if they had a work history, had more often been unemployed for at least two years prior to application for VR services; if employed at application, they more often were working in supported or extended employment and worked fewer hours per week; and they had more serious functional limitations and less familiarity with the labor market (Heyward, Schmidt-Davis 2003).

By examining data obtained from respondents to the Alabama State Rehabilitation Council's 2017 Unmet Needs Survey, we learned that Alabamians with disabilities who have been unemployed for long periods of time were more likely to report employment challenges related to transportation and their maintenance of health. Consistent with the 2014 iteration of this survey, a large number of narrative responses expressed frustration over transportation resources, especially those living in rural areas. Many expressed concerns over the affordability of housing and health care. Several individuals expressed a fear of losing government benefits. Another finding consistent with the 2014 survey (especially among those with the greatest functional limitations) is the expression of a need for more intensive job placement services. Several individuals desired that the agency take more proactive steps aimed at helping them get "a foot in the door" with employers. This year's narrative responses also included quite a few comments regarding the specific needs of individuals experiencing limitations due to mental illness. Many expressed concerns over limitations experienced due to the cyclical nature of mental illness, unmet treatment and medication needs, and a desire for more individualized services that are sensitive to unique challenges among those with mental health diagnoses. Several individuals expressed interest in VR providing employment services through Certified Peer Support Specialists.

Yet another perspective on the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities was available by examining the services most often anticipated for MSD individuals by counselors during the eligibility determination process. From 2014 to 2016, 24,122 individuals were determined eligible and assigned an eligibility category using the agency's Functional Limitations Priority Assessment (FLPA). 5,681 of these individuals were determined to the Most Significant Disability group. More often than those in other eligible categories, persons deemed MSD were anticipated to require Supported Employment Services, Customized Employment Services, Job Readiness Training, and Rehabilitation Technology and/or Devices. Supported Employment was anticipated for 3,181 of the 5,681 individuals in the MSD category, 56%.

By definition, Supported Employment is a unique employment service for individuals with the most significant disabilities who require ongoing support services to succeed in competitive employment. In one sense, the employment needs of individuals requiring supported employment are the same as would be expected of anyone else; inclusion in the community, opportunity for advancement, competitive

pay and benefits. The uniqueness of supported employment is its proactive role in the course of job development, customization of tasks, and the provision of long-term supports. Program data and input from the SRC cited above indicate increasing demand for these services. ADRS recognizes the value of supported employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities and has continued to increase strategic investments in these services despite budget challenges and constraints. Considerable efforts have been made to expand availability, enrollment and the array of providers statewide.

#### B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

While results of the 2017 CSNA did not indicate any specific ethnic groups with limited access to VR services, ADRS continues to assess its services to individuals with disabilities from minority populations. For the most part, the needs of minority respondents to the 2017 SRC Unmet Needs Survey were parallel to those of individuals of non—minority backgrounds. However, some differentiation can be noted. Respondents from minority backgrounds were more likely than others to report difficulties with transportation, housing, and access to training services. Although not reflected in the SRC survey, external research regarding minorities with disabilities identify language barriers as a concern, particularly among those of Hispanic or Asian origin. ADRS remains sensitive to language and cultural barriers that may occur during outreach and service delivery.

Recent Data from the American Community Survey (ACS) indicates a higher prevalence of disability among persons who may be considered minorities with the exception of those of Asian or Hispanic origin. African American individuals make up nearly 27% of Alabama's total population and there is a 19% disability rate among Alabama's African American Population as compared to a 14% rate among whites. Data from the Census Bureau regarding individuals who may be considered minorities in Alabama demonstrates a level of unemployment that is nearly double the rate of non-minorities in 2015. This disparity ranks Alabama 34th among states. While rates of disability and unemployment are higher among minorities in Alabama, so too is VR program participation among those same minority groups. For example, whereas Alabama's African American population comprises 27% of the total populous, African Americans make up 45% of those participating in VR services over the last three fiscal years. Findings of the 2017 CSNA suggest a significant increase in the number of Hispanic individuals with disabilities present within VR's service population. While 4% of Alabama's total population are of Hispanic decent, only 1.48% of Alabamians with disabilities are of Hispanic origin. In fiscal year 2014, only .9% of VR's service population were of Hispanic origin. VR participation among persons of Hispanic origin grew by at least 50 individuals per year over this CSNA period, reaching 1.3% of the service population in fiscal year 2016, and 1.9% in fiscal year 2017. Program data support the conclusion that VR services are made available equitably across all areas of the state. Representative diversity among minority populations can be demonstrated in terms of outreach, eligibility and program outcomes. Nevertheless, efforts will continue at the local level to be sure that minorities are aware of agency services and programs. Furthermore, the agency employs a diversity & recruitment coordinator to ensure that we have a diverse staff to meet the varied needs of the consumers served by the agency. ADRS maintains a

diversity plan that has been approved by the administration. This plan indicates strategies to hire minority staff to work within the agency. The agency conducts diversity training for all agency staff to address the needs of diverse consumers the agency serves. ADRS recognizes and has addressed statewide needs for contract interpreting services, particularly among individuals within the Hispanic population, but within other populations as well.

### C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Regarding “underserved” individuals, federal guidelines do not prescribe specific groups for analysis. Rather, it has been suggested that each state should examine matters from multiple perspectives to identify potentially underserved populations. This CSNA considered input received from the State Rehabilitation Council via the 2017 Unmet Needs Survey and also by way of its Report of Public Forums. It also conducted an analysis of internal program data, and in doing do, this CSNA defined the term “underserved” as any group for whom it may be shown that any of the following conditions are true; a higher than average percentage of those closed from eligibility for reasons that the individual’s disability was too severe, or, a rehabilitation rate that is far below that of the agency average, or average weekly earnings far below the agency average. All things considered, the 2017 CSNA identified the following groups as potentially underserved: A.) Individuals with Autism, B.) Individuals who are Blind, C.) Individuals who are Deaf, D.) Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, E.) Individuals with Major Physical Impairments, F.) Individuals with Serious Mental Health Impairments, and G.) Individuals with Disabilities who receive Social Security.

Group A —Individuals with Autism: The top vocational rehabilitation needs identified among those with autism spectrum disorders were: Supported Employment, Extended Supports, Living Wage & Benefits, Applied Social Skills Training, and Employment Preparation & Job Placement that capitalizes on the individual’s strengths and interests. VR program data examined over a six year span indicate that the majority of VR consumers with an autism diagnosis were in need of supported employment services. While the agency’s rehabilitation rate for individuals with autism outperforms the agency average from FY 2014 through 2016, weekly wage outcomes were significantly lower than the agency norm. Training compatible with the individualized interests of persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders has been shown to positively impact rehabilitation outcomes and earnings. Post-secondary education support for those meeting college admission requirements should include efforts to insure adequate post-secondary accommodations and college preparation. Persons with Autism who do not require supported employment have been found in need of individualized job development more so than most other disability types. The nature of functional limitations associated with Autism Spectrum Disorders can often complicate interpersonal relationships. Situational coaching and applied social skills training have been found useful in this regard.

Group B — Individuals who are Blind: The top vocational rehabilitation needs identified among individuals who are blind were: Orientation & Mobility Training, Assistive Technology, Transportation, and Career Guidance. While the agency’s average weekly wage for individuals who are blind outperforms the agency’s total

average from FY 2014 through 2016, the rehabilitation rate for blind individuals (57.4%) was significantly lower than the agency norm (67.5%) for the time period. Many rehabilitation outcomes were hindered due to limitations in personal independence and transportation. Research has shown orientation & mobility training, education, and competence with assistive technology has been shown to positively impact rehabilitation outcomes and earnings (Bell, 2015). SRC members representing the blind community have emphasized the need for career guidance that supports preparation for in-demand careers, such as those within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

**Group C — Individuals who are Deaf:** The top vocational rehabilitation needs identified among individuals who are deaf were: Interpreting Services, Assistive Technology, Career Guidance, and Training for In-Demand Occupations. Although agency outcomes (in terms of rehabilitation rate and average weekly wage) for individuals who are deaf are both above the agency average, many individuals who are deaf and working were found to be in unskilled, semiskilled or other manual occupations. Historically, there has been an underrepresentation of the deaf population in professional and administrative occupations. Concerns have been raised that jobs held by individuals in this population are frequently characterized by low job security and little opportunity for advancement beyond entry-level. Research has shown that, though reliable and stable employees, the average individual who is deaf and working earns 72 percent as much as the average individual with normal hearing in the labor force. Pre-vocational individuals who are deaf have greater difficulty in obtaining employment. The average levels of educational completion fall below that of the general population, further handicapping their ability to compete. Obstacles surrounding communication are important factors related to the earnings and occupational attainment of these workers.

**Group D — Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities:** The top vocational rehabilitation needs identified among individuals with intellectual disabilities were: Community Inclusion, Fair Wages, Employment Supports and Benefits. Agency outcomes in FY 2014 through 2016 for persons with intellectual disabilities for both rehabilitation rate and weekly wage were significantly lower than the agency norm. VR program data examined over a six year span indicate that the majority of VR consumers with an intellectual disability were in need of supported employment services. Many publications acknowledge the importance of school to work transition outcomes, that early exposure to a wide range of work-based learning experiences plays a large part in later outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Regarding those who have already made the transition from secondary education, it will be important for VR to monitor and address the need to offer VR services to those individuals who are currently being served within day programs.

**Group E — Individuals with Major Physical Impairments:** The top vocational rehabilitation needs identified among individuals with major physical impairments were: Accessibility, Transportation, Assistive Technology, Housing, and Medical Care & Supplies. Many persons with physical limitations made their voices heard in the 2017 SRC Unmet Needs Survey and also at SRC Public Forums held around the state. Transportation and accessibility remain formidable barriers for wheelchair users, often presenting a more daunting challenge than work itself. Many told us of ongoing

health care needs that are expensive and impossible to manage without proper medical benefits. Others emphasized the challenges they face finding accessible, affordable housing.

Group F —Individuals with Serious Mental Health Impairments. The top vocational rehabilitation needs identified among individuals with mental health impairments were: Access to Mental Health Care & Treatment, Individualized Placement Supports. Persons with mental health impairments are well represented in the ADRS service population, and are found in adequate proportion in all areas of the state. In terms of rehabilitation outcomes, however, agency data reveals that both weekly wage outcomes and rehabilitation rate were below the agency norm for the period. It has been established that some persons with Mental Health Disabilities, particularly those with the most significant disabilities, require specialized services that are sensitive to the unique limitations and treatment needs that are common among this population. Along this line of reasoning, several participants in this year's SRC Unmet Needs Survey expressed interest in VR's backing of the Individualized Placement and Supports model, as well as funding for Certified Peer Support Specialists.

Group G —Individuals with Disabilities who receive Social Security: To be eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance (DI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), a person must be deemed unable to engage in substantial gainful activity (SGA) due to a significant and long-lasting health condition. Because of this requirement, once receiving benefits, those who may be willing and able to work are often afraid of losing their benefits if they earn too much. Others are confused by the complex program rules governing benefit receipt for beneficiaries who work. Still others are unaware of the various incentives that SSA provides to encourage beneficiaries to return to work. VR Customers on the roles of SSI/SSDI need guidance tailored to their unique circumstances. This guidance should come with persons who possess a deep knowledge of the relationship between SSA work incentives and the VR process.

#### **D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND**

Each year, Alabamians with disabilities are served by other workforce programs, sometimes while duly enrolled with VR, and others exclusively by workforce programs. The primary need of individuals with disabilities participating within workforce programs is that the services and training offered should be accessible. Among those duly enrolled with VR, there is a need for services to be coordinated and unduplicated. Regarding accessibility, ADRS maintains a very active relationship with its workforce partners to ensure the accessibility of one stop career centers across the state. Regarding service coordination and the non-duplication of effort, we anticipate improvement in the coming years as implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act more closely aligns ADRS with its workforce partners.

#### **E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.**

Findings from the 2017 CSNA indicate that Alabama's Youth with Disabilities are affected by disproportionately high dropout rates, markedly lower rates of enrollment and completion of postsecondary education, and significantly higher rates of unemployment or underemployment. These observations are borne out by data from the Alabama Department of Education, the Census Bureau, as well as ADRS's own program statistics and survey research. Recently published findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study demonstrated that Youth with an Individualized Education Plan are more likely than their peers to be socioeconomically disadvantaged, experience difficulty completing typical tasks independently, and find themselves the object of bullying. Youth with an IEP were found to be suspended at higher rates and to lag their peers in planning and taking steps to obtain postsecondary education and jobs (Lipscomb et al., 2017). Furthermore, Youth with autism, deaf-blindness, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, and orthopedic impairments appear to be at highest risk for challenges making a successful transition from high school.

The problems and disadvantages described above may be reframed in terms of rehabilitation service needs. For Youth and Students with Disabilities to achieve their maximum potential, rehabilitation services should be made available that: a.) support optimal secondary education outcomes, b.) provide early exposure to a range of high quality career and higher education information, c.) create early opportunities for work based learning in competitive, integrated environments, d.) support the development of healthy self-esteem, self-advocacy, and self-determination, e.) promote attainment of in-demand skills and credentials. Data reviewed in this CSNA suggest that Youth and Students whose disabilities present the greatest functional limitations require the same set of services, yet the means of service delivery needed by these individuals is often more intensive and individualized. This holds true for Youth and Students with Disabilities affected by poverty, a limited social support network, and/or involvement in the juvenile justice system.

## 2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

While the findings of the 2017 CSNA do not suggest the need to establish further community rehabilitation programs within the state, changes underway that concern implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act make clear the need for certain developments and improvements. Since passage of WIOA in 2014, ADRS has worked closely with its Community Rehabilitation Program partners to adjust and implement WIOA's historic mandate. Influencing these historic changes are:

- Regulations on Transition Services and Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Regulations on Employment Outcomes and Competitive Integrated Employment
- Regulations on Supported Employment
- Regulations concerning VR Performance Indicators

- Regulations on Section 511 and Limitations on Use of Sub-Minimum Wage

The process of re-allocating our resources with the CRP program has already begun with Pre-Employment Transition Services and so far is considered a success. Of the total CRP set-aside dollars authorized to date in FY 17, 33% is for Pre-ETS service. Of all the consumers who had an authorization in the set aside, 44% of these were students with disabilities. The provision of Pre ETS through CRPs is an essential component of the department's plan to meet the needs of students with disabilities. In order to continue at this pace and to provide the services our consumers need to become better equipped to work, the method of payment for services provided by the CRP needs to transition from a performance or outcome based system as in STEPS I, II, and III to a service based system as we have done with Pre-ETS. It is proposed that these services be phased in as the CRP becomes prepared to provide them and meet the demands of the counselors. However, most of the CRP's are already equipped to or are providing these services.

Very strict guidelines have been included in WIOA related to the definition of competitive integrated employment. While VR and its CRP partners have had a focus on competitive employment for many years, this new interpretation states that persons who do not have a goal of competitive integrated employment are not eligible for VR and we cannot provide services which will lead to employment in a non-integrated environment. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has gone further to define a non-integrated setting as employment with organizations that exist to employ persons with disabilities, including Ability One and other programs under the Javits—Wagner—O'Day Act. While VRS has no choice but to adhere to the current federal interpretation of this new definition, there remains an understanding of the value of a work experience on future vocational success. While not suitable any longer as a long term rehabilitation goal, utilization of such opportunities for transitional employment, skill attainment, and work adjustment remain a viable option for person with disabilities.

The restrictions placed on access to sub-minimum wage and the expansion of supported employment opportunities are significant but not particularly new in the VR program. Sheltered employment at below minimum wage has not been a suitable outcome for VRS for almost 20 years. WIOA simply made it much more difficult for a person to by-pass VR and select sub-minimum wage employment. Most of the traditional community rehabilitation partners in the state have relinquished their Department of Labor (DOL) sub-minimum wage certificates in favor of paying at least the minimum wage in what was traditionally called "sheltered employment". With supported employment, the law places an emphasis on providing services to youth with disabilities and for providing extended supports for a longer period of time before the ongoing support is transitioned from VR to another provider.

Counselors are being trained on the new WIOA initiatives and requirements. An emphasis is being placed on providing services that will make a person more capable of getting and maintaining a job than they were when they applied for VR services. This might include sponsorship in vocational, technical, or post-secondary training. It may include purchase of and training in the use of adaptive equipment or adaptive driving to overcome employment barriers. Or it may involve a referral to a CRP for

job readiness, Smart Work Ethics, transitional employment, vocational assessment, work adjustment, career assessment, paid work experience, on the job evaluation or any other number of services to prepare and orient a consumer to the demands and skill requirements of work.

The WIOA performance indicators which will now be imposed on VR programs have been utilized for many years by our DOL partners. These performance indicators place a greater emphasis on employment retention and earnings after the employment outcome has been achieved. While VRS will still be judged on persons who maintain employment for 90 days and are closed as successfully rehabilitated, equal or greater weight will be given to whether that person has maintained employment for up to a year after services have been discontinued. Median earnings of all persons who retain employment is also a new standard for VR. These two indicators are intended to bring about a change in the services rendered to consumers. AVRS requires CRP partners who are committed to outcomes in which consumers maintain employment and earn a living wage.

### 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 .

ADRS recognizes that the provision of pre-employment transition services on an effective, equitable, statewide basis raises the bar for partnership with our secondary education partners. Section 113 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) requires VR agencies to go well beyond the level of coordination with education officials that has been established since 1973. Identification and referral of students is now but one aspect of VR's coordination with education officials. VR must also have in place processes and procedures for ensuring eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities are aware of pre-employment transition services, and that they participate whenever the service is needed.

It is fortunate that prior to new WIOA requirements for students with disabilities, ADRS had enjoyed a long and productive relationship with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE). ADRS maintains a formal Interagency Agreement with the ALSDE for the provision of transition services. At the state level, ADRS participates as an equal partner in the Alabama State Interagency Transition Team. At the local level, the ADRS has a counselor assigned to each high school to act as transition counselor. Furthermore, ADRS has for years been committed to the financial support of jointly funded positions, i.e. Pre-Employment Transition Specialists, in local education agencies to assist with the provision of transition services. Shortly after the final WIOA regulations were released in August of 2016, however, ADRS recognized the need for a comprehensive effort to build upon existing capacity and foster greater connections between ADRS staff and their Department of Education counterparts at the local level.

It is upon the foundation outlined above that ADRS collaborated with the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute to launch an effort entitled Transition Unlimited.

Transition Unlimited is an Alabama pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) initiative designed to build capacity and connect services to appropriately implement pre-employment transition services throughout the state. Transition Unlimited accomplishes this through the development of transition teams at the local level. These teams meet face to face to assess the LEA's unique pre-employment transition needs, documenting these within a web-based "Action Plan." Each action plan documents levels of need across each of the five pre-employment transition service types, as well as the "who, what, where and when" questions inherent to service provision. Action plans are monitored and followed up upon and all team members have access to the plan via the Transition Unlimited web-portal. In its first year of operation, Transition Unlimited held 18 meetings across the state with representatives from over 300 school systems statewide. Through the efforts of nearly 750 persons in attendance, 355 high schools developed Action Plans. Only five public high schools in the state failed to develop a plan. Once plans are developed, team members given online access to the Transition Unlimited site, wherein they can monitor progress, receive technical assistance, share resources, and collaborate to achieve action items.

Findings gathered from these 355 action plans suggest that student needs for pre-employment transition services vary by school system and by characteristics unique to each individual student. Individual variation of student Pre-ETS needs were dependent upon multiple factors such as age and grade level. In several schools, students participated in school led Pre-ETS activities during grades 9 and 10. Variation of Pre-ETS needs by school system was found to be relative to a system's availability of transition focused resources. Transition Unlimited helped illustrate that while some schools have ample human and capital resources for transition related services, others do not. These findings lend support to the assertion made above regarding the demand for Pre-ETS — not all students who may benefit from Pre-ETS are in need of these services within each and every academic year.

After completion of the first year of Transition Unlimited, ADRS administration felt that the initiative's value as a tool to extend coordination with education officials for the provision of pre-employment transition services had been proven. In the summer of 2017, ADRS elected to renew Transition Unlimited for the 2018 fiscal year. It is anticipated that the initiative's collaborative model and tools will continue to be useful for years to come.

## K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

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### **Describe:**

#### 1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

ADRS estimates a total caseload of approximately 31,000 individuals. Of this 31,000 approximately 8,000 individuals will be served as potentially eligible or eligible with funds set aside for Pre-Employment transition services. The estimated amount of these funds is \$9,500,000. For Fiscal Year (FY) 18, beginning July 1, 2018 it is estimated that of the 31,000 individuals who will receive services, 21,000 will be eligible for services under the VR program. It is estimated that 2,000 additional individuals will receive assessment and

and diagnostic services as applicants. Over the past four years ADRS has consistently implemented new plans on approximately 6,600 to 7,000 new individuals. ADRS is on target to implement new plans exceeding 7,000 new individuals in FY 17. It is estimated that ADRS will begin FY 18 with approximately 14,000 individuals implementing plan at the beginning of the period. It is estimated for FY 19 the number will remain stable as the same number of new individuals enter the program as are closed with employment and without employment. The estimate for FY 19 is 21,000 individuals will be eligible for services under the VR program. FY 20 should also remain stable with 21,000 individuals being served as eligible under the VR program.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

During FY 18 it is estimated 21,000 individuals will be eligible for services under the VR program. It is estimated 18,000 people with disabilities will be served under part B of Title I and 3,000 will be served under Part B of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. The DSU is not in an order of selection. During FY 19 it is estimated that the numbers will remain stable with a small increase in the number served under supported employment instead of title I. It is estimated 17,800 people with disabilities will be served under part B of Title I and 3,200 will be served under Part B of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. The DSU is not in an order of selection During FY 20 the total number of eligible persons is estimated to remain the same as FY 18 at approximately 21,000. It is estimated 17,600 people with disabilities will be served under part B of Title I and 3,400 will be served under Part B of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. The DSU is not in an order of selection.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

It is estimated 3,000 individuals with disabilities will have a supported employment plan in FY 18, approximately 3,200 in FY 19, and approximately 3,400 in FY20.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

ADRS is not in 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

ADRS is not in 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.

For FY 18, the following estimates apply: It is estimated a total \$83,333,948 will be available to deliver services which includes Title I funds, state matching, Social security reimbursement and funds earmarked for the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services. Subtracting an estimated 50% of \$9,500,000 reserved for Students with disabilities who are potentially eligible and not yet eligible, the funds available for the delivery of

services to eligible consumers and applicants is \$78,583,948. Estimated Number to be Served 23,000 \$78,853,948 Total Funds available Average Cost of Services Part B Title I Funds = \$3,428 It is estimated that funding under Title I, state matching dollars, and other sources will remain stable. These estimates of funds available and number of persons served will be the same for Fiscal Year's 19 and 20. FY 19 Estimated Number to be Served 23,000 \$78,853,948 Total Funds available Average Cost of Services Part B Title I Funds = \$3,428 FY 20 Estimated Number to be Served 23,000 \$78,853,948 Total Funds available Average Cost of Services Part B Title I Funds = \$3,428 For PY 18 it is estimated there will be 3,000 eligible consumers under Title VI. Title VI funds available. \$300,000 The average cost of serving an eligible consumer is approximately \$3,000. Therefore only 100 individuals will be served with the available Title VI funds. Fifty percent or more of these individuals will be consumers who are youth with the most significant disabilities. The remainder of the consumers receiving services under a supported employment plan will receive such services under Title I funds. It is estimated that funding under Title VI will remain stable. These estimates of funds available and number of persons served will be the same for Fiscal Year's 19 and 20. FY 19 \$300,000 -100 individuals to be served with available Title VI funds FY 20 \$300,000 -100 individuals to be served with available Title VI funds

#### L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

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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 below were jointly developed and agreed to by the agency and the State Rehabilitation Council. The SRC and the agency jointly reviewed the goals and jointly agreed to any revisions. These goals were developed after analysis of available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program including reports and recommendations from the SRC and the statewide needs assessment.

These goals and priorities are based on:

- A)** The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment,
- B)** The state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA,
- C)** and other available information from the State Rehab Council and monitoring activities under section 107.

##### 2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

The goals below were jointly developed and agreed to by the agency and the State Rehabilitation Council. The SRC and the agency jointly reviewed the goals and jointly

agreed to any revisions. These goals were developed after analysis of available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program including reports and recommendations from the SRC and the statewide needs assessment.

#### State Plan Goals PY 2018 and 2019

1. Continue to serve all eligible applicants and avoid an order of selection.
2. Maintain high levels of consumer satisfaction.
3. Expand and improve competitive, gainful employment opportunities for Alabamians with disabilities.
4. Improve services, outcomes and supports for Alabamians with the most significant disabilities.
5. Continue to expand and improve upon a variety of supported employment providers and approaches.

### 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;

These goals and priorities are based on the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment completed in 2017.

- B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

The agency is collecting baseline data for WIOA indicators.

- 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 are based on:

- A)** The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment,

- B)** The state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA, and

- C)** and other available information from the State Rehab Council and monitoring activities under section 107.

#### A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

These goals and priorities are based on the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment completed in 2017.

#### B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

The agency is collecting baseline data for WIOA indicators.

C. OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

These goals and priorities are based on: A) The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, B) The state's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA, and C) and other available information from the State Rehab Council and monitoring activities under section 107.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

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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.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

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.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection. Should an Order of Selection become necessary, this section will be amended to include a description of the above criteria.

#### N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

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##### 1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) has an extensive history and commitment to providing supported employment within the state. Currently, ADRS matches Supported Employment State Grant funds at over 10 times that amount. Our state currently receives 300,000 dollars for provision of supported employment. We currently spend over 3 million dollars in supported employment outcome based services and another million in contract services with our collaborative partners. The priority of the department is to improve services to Alabamians with the most significant disabilities. ADRS distributes supported employment funds to its rehabilitation counselors who in turn purchase needed supported employment services through a network of approved vendors utilizing a Milestones outcome based payment system. This process provides payments to authorized supported employment providers for assisting individuals to reach Milestones toward successful employment. Supported Employment providers are reimbursed for the following Milestones:

- 1: Determination of Needs (20% of total) (Discovery Profile can be substituted making it approx. 26%)
2. Job Development and Hire (20 % of total)
3. Job Coaching and Retention (25 % of total)
4. Successful Closure (Employment Stability for 90 days) (35% of total) \*\*\*80% of funding occurs on and after the person is employed (74% with Discovery)

Each provider receives funding based on the milestone achieved for each person served. Provider goals are based upon past performance, input from the ADRS liaison counselor, and the estimated need for supported employment services in each service area of the state. Supported employment services are provided utilizing an individualized, customer driven approach, encompassing each person's individual support needs to ensure an appropriate and successful job match. Additionally, The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services has committed to increasing successful supported employment outcomes through collaboration and coordination with other agencies and organizations including sharing or braiding funding. ADRS is currently participating in the following collaborative efforts to help achieve supported employment priorities:

We have 10 Project SEARCH sites in Alabama serving over 100 students. This collaboration involves Alabama Department of Mental Health-that provides extended services for students and youth, Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities that provides funding for training and technical assistance, the local school systems that

funds a teacher and some programs also fund a teachers aid, local Community Rehabilitation Partners that train and supervise the job coaches on site, and our department that funds two job coaches at each site. Our state is unique in that our Project SEARCH sites are led by a state team which supplies oversight to the programs and the steering committees. This state team consists of members of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Alabama State Department of Education, and the Alabama Department of Mental Health.

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment- This program serves individuals in supported employment who have serious mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse. This is a collaboration between the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, Auburn University, and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. Long term support is provided by the therapeutic team or case management at the local mental health centers.

Connections is a program that serves students and youth on the Autism Spectrum and provides support services for parents. This highly successful transition program is expanding in our state from its initial program in Birmingham, to a second site Montgomery last year. We are adding two additional programs this year and 2 the following year. Additionally, to address the increasing number of students and youth on the Autism spectrum we are introducing a pilot program, Transition to Success, in the tri-county area. This program will improve present and future employment and quality of life outcomes for students with autism. Transition to Success is a collaboration between the State Department of Education, the local school systems, a nationally recognized Community Rehabilitation Partner and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.

GATE- Gaining Access to Employment-This program recognized by the Institute for Community Inclusion for its creative sequencing of funding is a collaboration between the Alabama Department of Mental Health, Community Rehabilitation Programs and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation. This program is designed to move individuals with most significant disabilities away from traditional day habilitation and into competitive, integrated employment. Extended support services are provided under the waiver for individuals participating in GATE.

Additionally we are continuing to collaborate with all our state entities to improve services for students and youth with most significant disabilities. We are working with the State Department of Education on improving Assistive Technology access in order to improve the transition from school to work, and entry to Post Secondary settings. We are working with Career and Technical Education to increase participation for students with more significant disabilities.

- We anticipate that through the expansion of supported employment services to youth with more significant disabilities, including 3 new youth project SEARCH sites, and the new addition of an IPS site in Montgomery, we will continue to serve more individuals with significant disabilities in supported employment. We have seen an increase in SE services over the past several years and anticipate this trend to continue. We are also serving more supported employment students in high school through group pre-employment transition services and work based learning

experience. The goal for 2019 and 2020 is an increase of more than 5% of individuals in supported employment each year.

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

Project SEARCH, an innovative transition program for students, was piloted in two areas of Alabama beginning in 2012. We currently have 10 Project SEARCH sites. These programs are collaborations between our department, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Education, the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities, local school systems, and local supported employment programs. The State Team is working to expand this program and hopes to have additional sites in FY 2015. This includes the potential development of Project SEARCH for students who are deaf, blind, and individuals who are both deaf and blind within the next 2 years. This year long internship offers unique highly skilled training opportunities leading to competitive employment opportunities for students with the most significant disabilities. • Collaborative efforts continue as we work with the Alabama Department of Mental Health and the SELN (State Employment Leadership Network) through the Institute for Community Inclusion.

The goal is create systems change and develop resource information, effective employment systems and work as partners to maximize resources in Alabama. Through this collaboration we hope to increase the number of consumers that will be referred for community based integrated employment, and be able to utilize the waiver for long term support. To date, this collaboration has resulted in the addition of 5 Mental Health providers contracting with ADRS to become Supported Employment providers. • Certificate Based Job Coach Training is collaboration between our agency, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Department of Education, the Council for Developmental Disabilities, and Alabama APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First). This training ensures consistency of service delivery for supported employment providers and provides access to the latest marketing and training techniques. Training is provided by Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports. We offer this training twice a year to SE Job Coaches, School Job Coaches, Job Coaches employed by the Department of Mental Health and other community job developers and job coaches. This year, job coaches specializing in sensory impairments also participated in this training as we work to collaborate more closely with the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB) and their AIDB regional center staff located throughout the state. • Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Alabama Department of Post—Secondary Education have been working to secure Employment First legislation and continue to participate in the Employment First Leadership Mentoring Program Community of Practice through Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

These partners will continue to collaborate with human service agencies that work with people with disabilities and the workforce investment/development agencies to support the concept of Employment First. Additionally, several partners are participating in the Vision Quest training, offered through ODEP, to assist Alabama with options to infuse integrated employment into the Medicaid waiver, State Plan Options and increased collaboration to better serve consumers as they move towards integrated, community based employment options. ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to improve transition services; ensuring students who are appropriate for SE services have access to community based Supported Employment providers while still in high school. SE providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community based assessments or begin the Discovery Profile before they exit school, to facilitate a seamless transition to Supported Employment Services. 2. •The GATE program (Gaining Access to Employment) is a training program that takes consumers from sheltered work or day habitation and fully immerses them in industry training. This collaboration between the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and Alabama Department of Mental Health began in North Alabama and now has 5 sites. The GATE program braids funding utilizing from both ADRS and ADMH (Medicaid waiver). Adults, who are long term consumers of day programs are trained in competitive integrated employment settings using job coaches for support during their internships. Consumers are paid wages while they intern, primarily in manufacturing settings.

Extended service provision is provided to youth with the most significant disabilities in a variety of ways. This includes the Medicaid waiver, state dollars set aside to support youth in Project SEARCH, contract service provision to SE vendors, grant dollars for IPS and DEI, fund raising, and private pay. Extended services not to exceed four years.

- Extended services for youth are included in policy and in the counselor resource manual however this has not been necessary. State office has been contacted in regard to several cases of youth needed extended services, but in these cases, we were able to access waiver services for extended supports. We do anticipate that extended services for youth will be necessary for individuals who do not receive waiver services, but to date we have not had to use this provision and have been able to access the waiver. ADRS's allotment for FY 2018 for supported employment services for youth will include post-employment services and extended services for youth. VR currently spends about 3 million on supported employment and almost 1 million additional dollars through contracts for all individuals with most significant disabilities so easily expends its allotment requirements for youth. Additionally, this year we will be adding 3 new youth programs through Project SEARCH for out of school youth with more significant disabilities.

## 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.

Alabama is exploring the use of the Medicaid Rehab Option and targeted case management for IPS to support extended services to youth in that program. We are also partnering with Alabama Department of Mental Health to explore various opportunities to use the waiver to support extended services for individuals seeking community based integrated employment. We are currently partnering with DMH, and will continue to do so, to support youth in Project SEARCH requiring extended services. Fund raising and private funding is also being utilized to support extended services to youth.

## O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

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Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

### 1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

The agency employs a number of strategies to expand and continuously improve services. The sections below will describe some of the specific methods and strategies to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities in Alabama.

### 2. HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS.

The agency has multiple strategies to provide access to technology services and devices on a statewide basis during all phases of the rehabilitation process. To start the agency has a statewide network of degreed and qualified rehabilitation technology specialists. The team members are located strategically throughout the state so all staff have access to their expertise. This team meets on a quarterly basis to discuss among themselves, and with partner agency, staff various advances and new products in rehabilitation technology. These meetings provide vendors the opportunity to demonstrate new and innovative pieces of technology to demonstrate to the team. This team will act as a training agent for other agency rehabilitation staff throughout the state. Team members will attend unit meetings throughout the state to discuss and demonstrate technology to frontline counseling staff. The team members will also continue to attend national conferences, such as the Assistive Technology Industries Association (ATIA) conference, where they will be exposed to innovative technology. The rehabilitation technology team will continue to present at various conferences throughout the year. Conferences they will attend and present at include the Alabama Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) conference, the Alabama Assistive Technology & Expo Conference, the Technology Symposium (which focuses on blind and low vision technology), and other conferences as appropriate. As part of this statewide team of rehabilitation technology specialists, the agency also employs an assistive technology specialist specializing in deaf and hard of hearing assistive technology and an assistive

technology specialist specializing in blind and low vision technology. Having this team of rehabilitation technology specialists provides a resource for counselors to purchase and utilize technology for consumers throughout the rehabilitation process, including evaluation, IPE development and implementation, training, and employment.

The agency also has a state of the art Adaptive Driving Program. The agency has ten (10) vehicles equipped with comprehensive adaptive driving equipment. These vehicles are used by two (2) Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialists and five (5) Certified Driving Instructors who provide adaptive drivers training to people disabilities statewide. The program is unique in that through a cooperative arrangement with the Alabama Department of Public Safety, Driver's License Division, one of the agency's adaptive driving staff has been certified to give the driver's license road test to our consumers and confer upon them a driver's license. In partnership with the UAB Center for Low Vision the agency's Adaptive Driving Program is now providing comprehensive training in bioptic driving. Bioptic driving is a method of driving that utilizes both the individual's general vision in combination with intermittent spotting through a small telescopic system that improves the sharpness of the individual's far vision. This has been a very successful partnership and an avenue of independence for many individuals served by the agency. A number of agency staff attended the annual Alabama Assistive Technology & Expo Conference at Auburn University as well as the annual Technology Symposium (which focuses on blind and low vision technology) at the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind.

### 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.

**OUTREACH PROCEDURES** The agency has made significant efforts over the past four years to identify and work with the most significantly disabled. The agency developed an instrument to determine who are the most significantly disabled of applicants for services. This is known as the Functional Limitation Priority Assessment tool (FLPA). During the eligibility determination process VR Counselors answer specific questions about various limitations that consumer has and then a score is derived which will indicate if a consumer is most significantly disabled, very significantly disabled, significantly disabled, or disabled.

The agency has developed and continues to improve a system of business intelligence dashboards that provide a graphic view of caseload data for the VR Counselors and Field Supervisors. The VR Counselors and VR Field Supervisors can review this data to determine the number of most significantly disabled individuals being served and successfully rehabilitated. These dashboards are also use to monitor demographic information and this information can in turn be used to address unserved and underserved populations to include minorities and people with the most significant disabilities.

The agency recognizes the need to identify and serve the emerging Hispanic population in Alabama. Census data shows the Hispanic population in Alabama has

grown by 144% since the 2000 Census. The agency has established an account with language Line Solutions to provide interpreting on a real time basis so staff can converse with non—English speaking consumers and minimize any language barriers. The agency will contact various agencies serving Hispanics throughout the state, explain agency services, provide referral materials, and contact information. We will also maintain data on the number of Hispanics served to monitor progress on this issue.

The agency recognizes the need to identify and serve American Indians residing in the state through partnerships with other service provider, the State of Alabama Indian Affairs Commission, and tribal governments.

The agency will continue its active involvement in the One—Stop Career Center system involving deaf consumers. The agency is completing a Video Interpreting system that will allow consumers who is deaf to contact potential employers directly.

ADRS continues it's strong working relationship with Troy University and their Interpreter Training Program. Our Staff interpreters help mentor Troy students as they progress through the program. This will increase the supply of interpreters and eventually mean more support for deaf consumers. In conjunction with this, the agency is attempting to establish a "professional trainee" position. These students would occupy these positions for one year, then transition into employment with the agency.

The agency will continue its activities through the interagency agreement that has been established with higher education institutions throughout the state. This agreement delineates the specific responsibilities of the agency and that of each institution of higher education for individuals who are deaf.

The agency will utilize the Deaf Advisory Committee to help shape ADRS policy in terms of service provision to the deaf community. The Committee also serves as an advocate to legislators and other state officials and is a subcommittee of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

College prep for the deaf will be conducted at two university campuses: Troy University and Jacksonville State University. An ACT prep is hosted at Auburn University, and Career Exploration is housed at the University of Alabama.

The agency maintains an excellent service delivery system to consumers who are blind or have low vision. This service delivery system includes a network of Rehabilitation Counselors specializing in blindness, Vision Rehabilitation Therapists, Orientation and Mobility Specialists, Assistive Technology Specialists, Pre-Employment Transition Specialists, and Vision Rehabilitation Assistants who provide a wide range of services to individuals who are blind or have low vision. Additionally, there is a State Coordinator of Blind Services who oversees these services.

ADRS Blind Services annually partners with the Alabama School for the Blind Alumni Workers Association and the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind to provide a statewide Technology Symposium. During the symposium, blindness professionals conduct training sessions related to activities of daily living, independence, recreation, and employment for staff members, Teachers of the Visually Impaired

(TVI's), school administrators, and consumers and their families. Vendors are also on hand to showcase, demonstrate, and offer for sale the latest and greatest, cutting edge assistive technology devices.

ADRS, in Partnership with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, offers a Summer Work Experience Program. During the summer, students who are in high school or college have the opportunity to participate in this program. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Business Relations Consultants, Job Coaches, and Pre-Employment Transition Specialists partner with local businesses to provide students with a paid work experience. Students who participate in the Summer Work Program can work up to six weeks, a maximum of 40 hours a week, and earn a minimum wage salary which is paid out of counselors' case services budgets. The goal of this program is to offer students who are blind or have low vision a real world work experience.

ADRS, in partnership with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind and Central Alabama Community College, offers a Dual Enrollment Program. The Dual Enrollment Program is a comprehensive approach which provides a support system for students who are blind or have low vision or deaf or hard of hearing who are interested in earning a college degree. This Dual Enrollment Program involves the campuses of the Alabama School for the Deaf, the Alabama School for the Blind, and the EH Gentry Rehabilitation Facility. Students can attend classes on various Central Alabama Community College campuses. The goal of this program is to provide students with the appropriate assistance to ensure college success.

ADRS Blind Services, in partnership with AIDB Regional Centers, presents four Transition Day Events annually. All events are held on college campuses. The target age is high school students, grades 9 through 12. The goal of the Transition Day Events is to equip students and parents for life after high school; whether for attending a training program, college, or work.

ADRS Blind Services, in partnership with E. H. Gentry and the National Statler Center in Buffalo, New York, have established a distance learning training program. The program's focus is to train consumers who are blind or have low vision in the areas of telecommunications or hospitality. The students attend classes at E. H. Gentry with online instruction provided by the National Statler Center; local support comes from Gentry Assistive Technology Instructors. Students must also travel to Buffalo for three weeks of onsite training before completing the program. The goal of the program is to train consumers in job classifications in which they can work from home. A work from home job eliminates the transportation barrier to employment for people who are blind or have low vision.

ADRS Blind Services, in partnership with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind, Alabama Industrial Development Training, the Alabama Department of Commerce, and Auburn University, offers a College Preparatory Program called College Quest. This program targets students who are blind or have low vision, are 16 years old or approaching their junior year of high school, and have demonstrated the ability to earn a college degree. The program is held on the Auburn University main campus and runs for two weeks during the summer. The program addresses deficits that could prevent students from being successful in college. The areas of focus are: assistive technology, independent living, orientation and mobility, vocational

rehabilitation, student advisement, and team building. The goal of College Quest is to eliminate the gap year(s) that exist for many students who are blind or visually impaired between high school and college. This gap is due to students not being prepared to enter college upon graduation from high school. College Quest will ensure that students have the skills and confidence to live away from home and manage their needs while taking classes.

The agency will increase its services to disabled veterans as an underserved disability group. The agency is participating on a Governor's task force, the Alabama Veterans Network (AlaVetNet), to improve services to disabled veterans. The task force has brought together a wide variety of agencies that have services to offer veterans, including those with disabilities. The agency will continue to foster our relationships with the rehabilitation counselors employed by the Veterans Administration in an effort to make contact with disabled veterans. The agency counselors will receive referrals on veterans and initiate the vocational rehabilitation process to assist them with entering into employment. The agency will maintain a state office position related to serving veterans, some of the duties of which will include the oversight of veteran referrals and the monitoring of their progress through the VR process. The agency receives referrals from an organization in Huntsville, Alabama known as Still Serving Veterans. This organization assists veterans in returning to civilian life. The agency works cooperatively in processing referrals to assist veterans who may need employment services. The agency will continue to work with the Veterans Administration in Montgomery, Alabama to formalize the referral process referenced above.

The agency has an active program in serving individuals with traumatic brain injury. The agency has a staff person who oversees various activities related to traumatic brain injury and secures/directs traumatic brain injury grants. The agency has a task force related to brain injury. It includes members of various social service organizations who have contact with individuals who have traumatic brain injury. This organization meets on a quarterly basis for the exchange of information which will benefit services to individuals with traumatic brain injury. The agency has a network of TBI care coordinators located strategically throughout the state. The role of the care coordinator is to receive the initial referral of someone with a brain injury, then provide counsel and assist the individual and family in accessing the state's network of services for persons with TBI. This includes services of the agency and services of other agencies. Alabama has two specialty caseloads in Mobile and Birmingham dedicated to serving individuals with TBI. These two counselors also serve as a resource to other counselors in the state who may receive a TBI referral.

Program data support the conclusion that VR services are made available equitably across all areas of the state. Representative diversity among minority populations can be demonstrated in terms of outreach, eligibility and program outcomes. While rates of disability and unemployment are higher among minorities in Alabama, so too is VR program participation among those same minority groups. For example, whereas Alabama's African American population comprises 27% of the total population, African Americans make up 45% of those participating in VR services over the last three fiscal years. Nevertheless, efforts will continue at the local level to be sure that minorities are aware of agency services and programs. Furthermore, the

agency employs a diversity & recruitment coordinator to ensure that we have a diverse staff to meet the varied needs of the consumers served by the agency. ADRS maintains a diversity plan that has been approved by the administration. This plan indicates strategies to hire minority staff to work within the agency. The agency conducts diversity training for all agency staff to address the needs of diverse consumers the agency serves. ADRS recognizes and has addressed statewide needs for contract interpreting services, particularly among individuals within the Hispanic population, but within other populations as well.

The following are efforts the agency is making to overcome barriers and provide equitable access to and participation in supported employment services:

**1.** The agency has a state specialist overseeing the expansion and effectiveness of the agency's supported employment efforts. Two additional specialists have been hired to assist with the growth and expansion of supported employment in Alabama in the last 2 years. This growth includes eleven 11 project SEARCH sites, the continuation of the GATE Project, IPS SE for individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse, and expansion of the Connections program for individuals with Autism. We are currently collaborating with the LEAs and training rehabilitation transition counselors on provision of services to students at an earlier age while in the secondary setting. This should increase participation of students with more significant disabilities and provide those services earlier. We currently have jointly funded pre-ets specialists contracts with secondary education for students with most significant disabilities. ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to develop and implement a transition initiative; ensuring students who are appropriate for SE services have access to providers prior to their exit from high school. SE providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs to parents, students and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in community— based assessments before they exit school, to facilitate a seamless transition. Many students with most significant disabilities are participating in our summer JET program which includes work based learning emphasizing social skills acquisition, career exploration and paid work experience.

**2.** Training on Certificate Based Job Coach Training in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Department of Education, and the Council for Developmental Disabilities, and Alabama APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First), The Network on Employment continues. This training ensures consistency of service delivery for supported employment providers and provides access to the latest marketing and training techniques. Training is provided by Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports.

**3.** The agency began four years ago with two Project SEARCH sites. We currently have eleven (11) sites, and we expect this program to continue to grow. These sites provide real life internships embedded in businesses that lead to competitive integrated employment. We currently have over 100 participants in Project SEARCH. Many of the students qualify for SE services and some sites have as many as 70%qualifying for waiver services for extended supports. Several of our Project SEARCH sites serve individuals with autism and work to address behavioral issues that

negatively impact employment, and interpersonal skills necessary in today's work place. Many of these students are employed in highly skilled areas such as medical records and the hospital pharmacy.

4. ADRS continues to work cooperatively with Department of Mental Health to move consumers towards community—based employment from sheltered workshops. Many of the providers for ADMH that have traditionally supported day programs are vendors with ADRS for SE. We continue to work collaboratively on Employment First endeavors. Partners include: Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Medicaid, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Alabama Department of Post—Secondary Education. These partners will continue to collaborate with human service agencies that work with people with disabilities and the workforce investment/development agencies to work together to support the concept of employment first. Additionally they are working to identify barriers relating to provision of services to those who require additional supports.

5. ADRS will collaborate with local school systems to ensure students who are appropriate for supported employment services have access to providers prior to their exit from high school. Supported employment providers will be active in the local high schools to present information regarding their programs and services to parents, students, and staff. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in work based learning and/or community—based assessments before they exit school in order to facilitate a seamless transition from school to employment.

6. Services to Individuals with Autism: Autism is an emerging disability with increasing numbers requesting services from the public rehabilitation program. This holds true for Alabama. VR staff have participated in several training programs during the current fiscal year related to autism. The agency will provide consultation to supported employment projects and CRPs who need technical assistance and support in serving this expanding population. This effort is intended to build capacity within our existing provider network. We have identified Triumph, Inc., a successful supported employment provider for individuals with autism, to serve as the consulting organization. Triumph continues as a vendor to provide supported employment services. Lakeshore Rehabilitation Facility hosts a Connections programs for students, youth and young adults with Autism. This year—long social skills training takes place in the classroom, but then is applied in real world settings in the community where classroom skills taught are then utilized. Nearing completion of the program the participants are referred to community—based rehabilitation programs for employment or supported employment based on their needs. We currently have three (3) Connections programs and will be adding our fourth site in August. The goal is expand this program throughout the state so that individuals and their parents will have access to this program. Many of the programs have a parent support group component that meets in conjunction with the Connections classes.

#### 7. BENEFITS COUNSELING SERVICES:

Traditionally, individuals receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Insurance Income (SSI) have had the lowest employment rate as well

as average wage. A primary factor contributing to this trend is the lack of accurate and timely benefits counseling services. Fear of losing cash and health care benefits due to misinformation or lack of information has traditionally prevented or deterred individuals from either entering employment or increasing wages.

ADRS began receiving grant funds from the Social Security Administration in 2000. The initial program the Benefits Planning and Outreach (BPAO) program provided basic Information and referral services to SSDI and/or SSI beneficiaries and recipients. The BPAO program eventually expanded to include intensive and long term work incentive planning services in 2007—the Work Incentive Planning and Assistant (WIPA) program supported 2.5 staff serving 29 central and southern counties. A break in SSA funding for WIPA nationally in 2012. ADRS utilized SSA reimbursement funds to continue services to individuals in Alabama. When SSA funding returned nationally in 2015, ADRS and SSA entered into an agreement that utilizes joint funding to expand and continue WIPA benefits counseling services. This braided funding supports 6 SSA trained and certified benefits specialist providing services to all 67 counties. Benefits counselors provide both Information and Referral as well as intensive Work Incentive Counseling Services to all individuals receiving SSDI and or SSI. Counselors assist individuals with disabilities, their families and other team members in the development and maintenance of a variety of work incentives.

Benefits counseling services are provided to all eligible individuals. Services are provided based on the Social Security Administrations (SSA) prioritization protocol. Highest priority is given to those individuals currently working or have job offers pending. Individuals actively seeking employment with specific vocational goals are served followed by those in the early information gathering contemplative phase of employment goal development. Additionally, ADRS places individuals served through either SEARCH or DISCOVERY in the top priority. Individual of the highest priority are provided full intensive work incentive planning services, while others receive Information and Referral Services. At present, ADRS and SSA are in year 3 of the joint funded WIPA benefits counseling program and has provided information and referral services to 3,627 individuals —786 have been referred for intensive long term work incentive benefits counseling services.

Additionally, as a result of the expansion of the WIPA benefits counseling program, a cooperative program was developed with the Alabama Department of Mental Health in 2017 to support 5 additional benefits specialists specifically charged with serving individuals on the Intellectual Disabilities (ID) or the Living at Home (LAH) waivers. The staff supported by the ADRS DMH cooperative agreement are not bound to the SSA prioritization protocols and therefore, individuals in pre-vocational or contemplative phases of employment goal setting are all eligible for intensive work incentive planning as well as Information & Referral services.

#### 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).

ADRS continues to collaborate and coordinate transition services with the LEAs. ADRS has increased efforts to develop and improve transition partnerships, programs and service models by implementing and expanding the following services/programs:

**(1) Summer work program — JET (Job Exploration Training) —** Students are provided training in the areas of job exploration, career assessment, social skills training, mock interviewing, resume preparation, and self—advocacy training. Paid work experiences in a community setting are arranged for each student satisfactorily participating in the training.

**(2) Smart Work Ethics Training (SWE) —** SWE is a social skills curriculum that addresses communication skills and work place behaviors (attitude, work ethic, image and appearance, interpersonal skills, teamwork, time management, accountability) needed to obtain and maintain successful competitive employment. This curriculum is provided to the student in the LEA by a certified trainer from a Community Rehabilitation Program.

**(3) Jointly—Funded Pre-Employment Transition Specialist —** ADRS is committed to providing jointly funded pre-ets specialists in local education agencies to assist with the provision of pre—employment transition services. The jointly—funded specialists provide pre—employment transition services which are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA. These pre—employment transition services are designed to increase the likelihood of independence and inclusion of students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, in communities, as well as, maximize opportunities for these students for competitive integrated employment. Currently, ADRS has 31 jointly funded pre-ets specialists in place through third—party cooperative agreements.

**(4) Career Assessments —** Provided by a local community rehab provider to students with disabilities, who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services, to assist in determining interests and skills needed for employment in their community. For those students who are planning to enter post-secondary training, counselors may refer for an LD evaluation to determine interests, learning styles, accommodations that may be needed and to obtain documentation necessary for disability supports services.

**(5) Transition Unlimited —** A collaboration between the ADRS and Auburn Transition Leadership Institute. Transition Unlimited is a pre-employment transition services initiative designed to build capacity and connect services to appropriately implement pre-employment transition services throughout the state. The goal of the initiative is to provide guidance to transition stakeholders and LEAs during the development of action plans for the delivery of Pre-ETS that best meet the needs of students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. Transition Unlimited underscores ADRS's commitment to keep a focus on transition services at the local level by bringing specific Pre-ETS planning to each local high school (360), which builds upon previous planning efforts. Each team's

action plan is accessible on the Transition Unlimited portal, so that teams can share innovative practices. This provides an opportunity to build awareness of pre-employment transition services throughout Alabama. Ongoing technical assistance is available to teams during quarterly progress monitoring.

(6) Engage Alabama — Engage Alabama is a collaborative effort of the ADRS, Alabama State Department of Education, Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities and Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program to develop and provide an app for students with disabilities to improve the student's knowledge of transition services; assist the student in identifying and utilizing strategies to improve transition services and increase the student's capability to better advocate for transition service through the student led IEP process. Students may access Engage Alabama via the internet at [engageal.com](http://engageal.com), or by going to the Apple Store or Google Play store where students can download the app at no charge. Once all questions in the app are answered a transition plan will be generated that the student may print and share with his/her family and IEP case manager prior to the IEP meeting. This plan will serve as a self-advocacy tool to assist the student in successfully leading his/her IEP meeting, in discussing transition goals and what is needed for the students to reach those goals. Students may access this app as often as need during the school year to make any necessary changes, but it is recommended that students access the app on an annual basis prior to his/her IEP meeting. It is important to note that while the Engage Alabama application was designed for use by students who are receiving services under an IEP, any student with a disability (including those that would meet the requirements for 504 services) may access the app to assist with identification of needed pre-employment transition services and to develop transition goals.

(7.) Prison Transition Initiative — The agency continues to maintain collaborative efforts to assist those students with disabilities in transitioning back to the community upon release from adult prisons by making referrals to local VR counselors 90 days prior to release. However, with the agency's ability to serve students with disabilities who are potentially eligible, VR now has the capability to provide pre-employment transition services to those students, who are receiving services under an IEP, while incarcerated. A state office staff member will meet with the Special Service Assistant and Case Manager to identify those students with disabilities who can benefit for pre-ets services and obtain documentation needed to serve those potentially eligible consumers. This staff member will then coordinate and authorize for the provision of these services with a local community rehab provider. These services are designed to increase the likelihood of a successful transition back into the community and employment.

(8.) • JOINTLY FUNDED FULL TIME INSTRUCTOR: The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services entered into this agreement to mutually serve students with disabilities in the Pike County and Troy City Boards of Education through cooperatively funding the professional services of one full-time nine month instructor, housed at Charles Henderson High School and Troy/Pike Center for Technology. Instruction will be provided in an integrated classroom setting with peers who are not identified as students with disabilities, and will focus on the area of pre-employment transition services. These pre-employment transition services, which are not typically or customarily provided by the LEA, will be provided in a

group setting in a classroom or the community. The instruction of pre-employment transition services provided will be in the areas of: job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs, workplace readiness training and instruction in self-advocacy. This instruction is designed to prepare students with disabilities to enter long terms competitive integrated employment in high demand careers by identifying and exploring career interests, as well as, increasing individual independence, self-sufficiency and inclusion of students with disabilities in their communities. Students served by this program include any student with a disability enrolled at Charles Henderson High School and Troy/Pike Center for Technology who is in the 11th or 12th grades, is eligible for or potentially eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and has received a referral from the VR Transition Counselor, Special Education Teacher and/or school administrator. Course curriculum will consist of instruction in the following areas Basic Computer Skills, Financial Literacy, Problem Solving, Manufacturing, Job Acquisition. Course curriculum will also include discussion of local high demand careers, labor market information and activities that my include community based experiences.

#### 5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

As the agency continues on the path of serving the more significantly disabled, there may be the need to enhance the assessment and evaluation capability of CRPs. Three potential areas of Community Rehabilitation Program improvement were noted: (1) increased availability of comprehensive learning disability evaluations, (2) services to individuals with autism, and (3) increased emphasis on social skills training, (4) working with community rehab programs to build capacity for the delivery of Pre-ETS to students with disabilities while still providing quality employment services to individuals with disabilities The agency will invite CRP staff to specific trainings in order to improve and elevate skills of CRP employees in areas such as Pre-ETS, autism and social skills training.

#### 6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

1. RETENTION The agency will commit additional resources to have dedicated staff who will have the sole responsibility for follow-up with consumers, in order to provide needed services to ensure success on the job. Long-term retention will become a major focus for the agency. The agency has revamped and updated the Retaining A Valued Employee (RAVE) program. RAVE is a service to employers to assist them in procuring rehabilitation services needed to retain an employee who is having difficulties on the job due to disability. The agency recognizes that adequate transportation is a major factor that lends toward successful retention; therefore, resources will be made available to provide and enhance this needed service. The agency will also emphasize the availability of Post-Employment Services and Long-Term Follow-up. 2. SKILLS/CREDENTIALS The agency will provide specific services to consumers that will enhance skill levels and assist in obtaining credentialing that will

lead to specific jobs. School age students will be provided Pre-Employment Transition Services which are mandated in WIOA. These services are centered around Career Exploration, Work Base Learning, Counseling on Post-Secondary Education opportunities, Workplace Readiness, and Self-Advocacy. The agency will increase opportunities for College Preparation training and the agency will work with public schools statewide in order to plan vocational services and increase VR counselors' presence in the schools. In order to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to services offered through career centers, we will collaborate with workforce partners by having regular workforce meetings and by assuring the agency is represented on all local workforce boards. The agency will continue to assist consumers with gaining the skills necessary to compete for in demand jobs through collaboration with technical schools, universities, and partnerships with agencies such as the Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT).

**3. EFFECTIVELY SERVING EMPLOYERS** The agency will effectively serve employers through business services provided through its long-standing Business Relations Program called READI-Net. In order to improve the performance of the state in respect to this performance accountability measure, the READI-Net program will continue to provide disability resources, information and services to businesses in order to meet their disability and employment-related needs. The READI-Net program will also continue to develop new and innovative services for businesses. These new and innovative services will be driven by specific input from long-term ADRS business customers who serve as advisors to ADRS through the VR State Rehabilitation Council's Business Relations Committee, through the ABLN - Alabama Business Leadership Network, which is the state chapter of the U.S. Business Leadership Network, and through Business Roundtable Events.

The input gained from these business customers will be used to develop strategic plans with businesses which will facilitate the customization of business services in order to assist businesses with their outreach, recruitment, hiring and retention needs, as well as, staff training needs, affirmative action planning, metric and record keeping, and customized, company specific, disability-related services. The agency will work in collaboration with the Core Workforce Partners to record and report on the required measurements of Retention and Repeat business. The agency; however, will work in partnership with the Core Workforce Partners to develop an alternate means of measuring its effectiveness in serving employers, as allowed by WIOA regulations.

**4. INCREASE CONSUMER EARNINGS** The agency's Retaining A Valued Employee (RAVE) program will increase earnings for consumers based on the fact that these are long-standing employees needing rehabilitation services who are receiving higher wages due to time on the job. Successful rehabilitation of these consumers, results in a higher average wage for the agency and benefits the consumer and employer. The agency will also focus on providing services centered around career advancement within their employment. This will allow consumers to acquire additional skills that will elevate opportunities for higher earnings. The agency will also explore opportunities to incentivize increased payments to Community Rehabilitation Programs who place consumers on higher paying jobs. Employment outcomes with higher wages will also be emphasized with counselors.

## 7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

The agency maintains a very productive relationship with the Workforce Development System of Alabama. First, the Commissioner of the agency sits on the Statewide Workforce Development Board. Consequently, the agency has a voice at the table to advocate for the needs and issues of individuals with disabilities. The agency has counselors stationed on a permanent basis in One—Stop Career Centers in several of the larger cities in the state. These staff members receive referrals and also provide advice and information to other staff in the One—Stop Career Centers on how to serve individuals with disabilities. The agency will have numerous staff participate in the state Workforce Conference, when conducted, involving all partners and other service providers related to the Statewide Workforce Investment System. The agency sits on the planning council of this conference so that various breakout sessions related to the needs of individuals with disabilities are included on the agenda. The agency is currently working in collaboration with the Career Centers and Workforce Development Partners on assessing all of the Career Centers in the state for accessibility. Recommendations will be made by the agency and the Workforce Development Core Partners will work together to ensure that the Career Centers continue to be accessible for all individuals with disabilities. Also, as mentioned previously, the agency has established a Video Interpreting Network. Should a deaf individual come into the local One—Stop Career Center, a video interpreting situation can be set up for that individual to be served. Currently state office staff are submitting RFPs to the local Workforce Boards for expansion of Project SEARCH to serve out of school youth with disabilities. This collaborative proposal brings together several Workforce Development partners such as Post-secondary Education, ADRS, Alabama Department of Labor and Alabama Department of Commerce.

## 8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

### A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

Strategies to support Goal 1 — Avoiding an Order of Selection:

- Continue efforts aimed at drawing the maximum federal share available for Alabamians with disabilities, and when possible/necessary re-allotment funds.
- Monitor and manage service delivery time-frames to ensure efficient processing time and eliminate potential bottlenecks or other delays in eligibility determination or initial plan development.
- Investigate and implement case management system improvements which streamline the eligibility determination, vocational assessment, and plan development processes.
- Ensure that counselors have sufficient resources to meet caseload demands.
- Continue efforts to promote efficient spending, the utilization of comparable benefits, and the management of indirect/administrative costs.

- Seek additional sources of revenue as needed.

Strategies to support Goal 2 — Maintaining high levels of consumer satisfaction:

- Align the VR General, VR Blind, and VR Deaf consumer satisfaction surveys to provide the same core set of measures.
- Improve upon existing efforts to communicate consumer satisfaction results to counselors and their supervisors.
- Utilize satisfaction survey results more extensively in leadership meetings, and supervisory discussions.
- Set and attain consumer satisfaction goals at the state and unit level.
- Provide high—quality training and support, ensuring staff have the knowledge and skills needed to deliver high—quality vocational rehabilitation services. Through statewide case reviews, build an organizational culture of quality to strengthen substantial counseling and guidance.
- Continue to invest in practices and technologies that make VR counselors more accessible to their consumers. Seek specific improvement on the consumer satisfaction survey question which asks about the customer’s ability to reach their counselor whenever they need to.

Strategies to support Goal 3 — Expand and improve competitive, gainful employment opportunities for Alabamians with disabilities:

- Strive to uphold past levels of closed rehabilitated outcomes among VR consumers.
- Expand and leverage new employer and state agency partnerships to achieve Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act common performance measure outcomes. ADRS should build upon the existing business engagement activities, as well as state partnerships facilitated by the Alabama Workforce Development Board, to promote labor exchange between ADRS participants and employers seeking talent; with an emphasis on in-demand occupations.
- Enhance career guidance competencies of VR counselors by fostering knowledge of local labor-market information and in-demand careers. Having access to accurate and up-to-date labor market data, as well as information and guidance about career and training opportunities, can help individuals make better decisions about training and lead to better outcomes.
- Improve counselor competencies regarding career guidance and job placement efforts for older individuals with prior work experience. Consistent feedback from the SRC and consumer satisfaction surveys indicate that some older individuals placed into employment were dissatisfied that job outcomes did not capitalize on prior existing skills and abilities.
- Engage with employers and industry professionals with the goal of improving the alignment of training to employer needs.
- With youth and students, emphasize early work-site experiences with real employers in the community. Work experience for youth still in school, including

paid summer jobs, has some important results in terms of employment outcomes, particularly if job skills and education are combined.

- Emphasize, wherever practical, work-based learning, such as paid internships or cooperative education. Research has shown that the more closely training is related to a real job or occupation, the better the results for training participants.
- Implement, when feasible, 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. Build upon existing data analysis capacity and tools to support data—driven decision making.
- Develop capacity to measure factors influencing employment retention over time. Identify and invest in methods to ensure that placements have greatest likelihood of longevity.

Strategies to support Goal 4 — Continue to improve services and outcomes for those with the most significant disabilities:

- Maintain access to a broad range of assistive technology services for individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis.
- Monitor and address the need to offer VR services to those individuals who are currently being served within day programs, in particular, to individuals with severe and persistent mental illnesses and individuals with significant development disabilities.
- Support and advocate for efforts aimed at improved access to transportation for individuals with disabilities.
- Continue to support and advocate quality independent living outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Alabama through an active partnership with the State Independent Living Council.
- Develop further options, resources and capacity for Customized Employment services.
- Maintain and improve efforts to provide individualized guidance to persons who receive Social Security and are afraid of losing their benefits if they earn too much.

Strategies to support Goal 5 — Continue to expand and improve upon a variety of supported employment providers and approaches:

- Maintain and increase the number of Project Search sites in Alabama.
- Continue to explore avenues of service delivery based upon the Individualized Placement and Supports model.

#### **B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND**

Consistent with the findings of the 2017 comprehensive statewide assessment, the established goals and priorities of this plan, and collaborative efforts between the SRC and SILC, innovation and expansion funds will be targeted to the following:

1. Ongoing support of the efforts of the State Rehabilitation Council and the State Independent Living Council.
2. Expansion and innovation of Work Based Learning opportunities for Students with Disabilities
3. Expansion and innovation of Individualized Placement Supports for persons with significant mental illness.
4. Expansion and innovation of participation in formalized apprenticeship among all VR consumers.

#### 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.

ADRS has committed additional staff to address the needs of people with the most significant disabilities in order to improve access to services. Additional staff members have been added to expand and improve supported employment services for this population. Pre-employment transition specialists have been added to serve students and youth for the general program and for the blind and deaf program.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services strives to ensure that there is equitable access to the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program for all potentially eligible and eligible consumers. For participating in VR services all forms of auxiliary aids, as defined by the ADA, are provided to consumers based on individual needs including assistive technology. Our counselors for the deaf are required to possess an intermediate rating on the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) ensuring that deaf consumers are commuted to in their native language. In addition, we have 11 full-time nationally certified sign language interpreters located in our offices statewide, as well as access to additional sign language interpreters through our partners and vendor network. Counselors and staff have access to language interpreters through a language line service, as well as language interpreters through our vendor system. In addition, correspondence and other print materials are provided in the consumers format of choice to include large print, braille, electronic, etc.

To address the barrier of transportation in terms of access, we have 19 offices throughout the state. In addition, we have staff that are co-located in 29 One Stop Career Centers that are located throughout the state. As appropriate, and when necessary to promote access, itinerant services are provided in homes, schools, workplaces, etc. ADRS also has liaison counselors for all secondary and post-secondary schools, prisons, and select hospitals.

Specific strategies to overcoming identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals in the State Supported Services Program include continued collaboration with the Alabama Department of Mental Health to promote and expand the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment, continuation of the GATE Project, and expansion of the Connections Program for individuals with autism. State Office Specialists representing the State Supported Employment Services Program have contacted all the entities in the state

holding sub-minimum certificate to arrange counseling to those entities, individuals served by those entities, and their families. These efforts focus on providing access to information and services that will enable them to achieve competitive integrated employment and include benefits counseling and are ongoing.

## P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

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### **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.

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

Goal 1 Improve quality of job placement services so that the average hourly wage for VR consumers reaches \$10.60. ADRS achieved this goal through its efforts to improve outcomes which included expansion of the RAVE (Retaining a Valued Employee) program and continuous improvement of services provided through partnerships with community rehabilitation programs. The average wage calculated in 2016 was \$10.64 per hour.

Goal 2 Expend 15% of the state's federal allotment for Pre-Employment transition services. ADRS met the 2016 spending requirement for pre-employment transition services and has continued to increase spending for these services. ADRS spent \$9,448,585 in FY 2016 for Pre-ets which is 15% of the State's federal allotment. This was accomplished by expanding services available to transition students throughout the state and by the inclusion of potentially eligible students in pre-ets services. Extensive training was provided to rehabilitation counselors and service providers to develop and expand these services.

Goal 3 Meet a minimum of 4 times with workforce development partners in order to increase collaboration and improve services. ADRS staff have met with high level staff from the other workforce agencies 8 times during 2016 to continue collaboration, service planning and evaluation of programs. We continue to work together to develop joint programs to provide services benefiting people with disabilities in Alabama.

Goal 4 Increase by 5% the number served in all populations identified as undeserved in the Statewide Needs Assessment. The undeserved population identified in the 2014 CSNA was the Hispanic population. The ADRS vocational rehabilitation program increased the number of Hispanic consumers served in 2016 by 13%, meeting this goal.

Goal 5 Provide training to 90% of VR professional staff in the area of assistive technology. ADRS provided training to all of its professional staff through local

technology specialists and conferences which focused on assistive technology services/products. Rehabilitation Technology Specialists provide training locally to professional staff to provide continuous updates regarding advances in technology.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

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.

Goal 1 Increase case service dollars expended for supported employment by 5%. ADRS was able to increase its spending in the area of supported employment by 4.4%. ADRS expenditures were less than 1% short of this goal. The Supported Employment specialists continue to evaluate the need for additional providers throughout the state and are collaborating with workforce partners to expand project search sites.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

ADRS increased spending in Supported employment in 2016 in spite of a mandate to shift funding to pre-employment transition services. We now have multiple service providers statewide who offer these services and we have focused efforts on improving the quality of these services. ADRS fell short of this goal by less than 1% and Supported employment services continue to expand in this state.

3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

The agency is collecting baseline data for WIOA indicators.

4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

Innovation and Expansion (I&E) funds were used to support activities of the State Rehabilitation Council.

#### **B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.**

Several factors impeded achievement of this goal. Due to the high unemployment rate and slow economy experienced over the past seven years, Alabama has lagged behind other states in available employment and wage growth. Entry—level wages for new workers have not grown while the average wages for those experienced workers in the work force have made minor gains. Therefore, many ADRS consumers who are entering the workforce for the first time are subject to these lower wages, which affects performance on Indicator 1.5.

#### **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.

Goal Three: The agency will increase by 10% case service funds spent on consumers receiving supported employment services and increase by 10% the number of consumers participating in supported employment. This goal was accomplished. The increase in those consumers receiving an assessment or service with supported employment was over 15% from 2014 to 2015. There was over a 19% increase in successful closures of consumers in supported employment. In terms of expenditures we also met our goal by increasing expenditures by over 10% for individuals receiving supported employment and by adding an additional 3 contracts for additional Project SEARCH sites. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals— The goal was to expand supported employment program including long term supports. Many strategies were used to accomplish this above goals including: (1) concerted efforts by counselors who work with consumers with more significant disabilities, (2) an increased participation in projects like SEARCH and GATE, IPS Supported Employment, and,(3) working with students with more significant disabilities earlier in secondary education. .

## B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Although we accomplished our goals we still have the challenge in our state of individuals on the waiting list for waiver services that will require these services to be successful in employment. We have made strides, but it is still a challenge. Provider transformation is still a challenge for the Employment First effort. Difficulties exist in finding the resources to transform existing Medicaid funded day rehabilitation programs. We are receiving technical assistance to move forward with this effort.

employment services continue to expand in this state.

The waiting list at ALDMH Division of Developmental Disabilities for Home and Community Based Services for either the ID Comprehensive Waiver or Living at Home Waiver is not specific to employment. Currently there are about 2500 on the waiting list. Currently there are 597 that are between 19 and under 25 but we don't know many of these individuals are interested in employment services. These waivers provide services necessary to keep individuals out of institutions and in their own homes when possible. Employment is just one of many services available through these waivers. Individuals, including youth are referred to VR when seeking employment services through the waiver.

- ADRS works very closely at ADMH and we have been able to access their waiver for youth seeking employment requiring extended supports, through this collaborative effort. ADMH set aside reserve waiver slots for youth in project SEARCH who needed extended supports beyond what was typically provided. We seek their assistance and work closely with their department, when we have individuals (including youth) seeking employment that will need extended supports. Because of this relationship, we have not yet needed to fund extended supports. Additionally, because our secondary systems are no longer referring to 14Cs, we are getting more referrals for

are getting more referrals for students at a younger age that we feel like will need extended services. We do anticipate that we will use extended service funded by VR dollars.

### 3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

The agency achieved all indicators with the exception of Indicator 1.5, Average wage. Factors that negatively impacted the achievement of Indicator 1.5 include the following:

1.) ADRS serves a large number of transition cases that typically go to work at entry level wages. The data support this conclusion as 53.7% of all active cases were between ages 14—24 at application and 48.6% of all FY 15 successful closures fall in this age group at application. As with the general population of persons without disabilities, this age group typically goes to work at entry level wages and must obtain work experience or increased education or credentials in order to demand higher wages. The Blind/Deaf section easily exceeded the Indicator 1.5 wage threshold due to the fact that this population often enters into and completes higher education or vocational training in order to overcome their barriers to employment. The success rate with this population is evidence that vocational and or occupational training does result in improved wage outcomes. 2.) The economy of Alabama has been severely limited by the national economic crisis over the past seven years. Although 2015 showed some relief in the unemployment rate, wages in Alabama and nationally have remained stagnant. Therefore, increases in wages to meet the state's wage standard have not risen, especially for the entry level worker as described above.

3.) Alabama has in the past two decades invested heavily in attracting automotive manufacturing companies. In fact, Alabama is home to three manufacturing plants and their suppliers. This bumps up the state's average wage, which is a factor in calculating this indicator. Also, in Alabama the largest single employer is the University of Alabama in Birmingham medical center and its associated hospitals, clinics, and school. These highly paid professions serve to increase the average wage which is not readily available to person without the credentials to obtain the types of jobs offered in this work setting.

### 4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

Innovation and Expansion (I&E) funds were used to support activities of the State Rehabilitation Council. This included support for a portion of the SRC Director's salary and benefits, as well as operational expenses including travel and office expenses in order to assist in carrying out the functions of the SRC including providing input regarding the VR program. The I&E expenditures totaled \$95,013.00.

### Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

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**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.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) remains committed to the provision of quality services to individuals with the most significant disabilities through the provision of supported employment services. ADRS provides supported employment services through a collaborative/partnership effort with 38 service providers statewide in FY 2017. These providers cover all counties in the state. These providers offer services to individuals with a variety of significant disabilities without restrictions regarding disability type. The SE providers are distributed throughout the state in order to ensure maximum availability to those in need of supported employment to obtain or maintain competitive integrated employment or advancement in employment. Service providers receive funds for the provision of supported employment through an outcome based payment system. Providers must submit evidence that each milestone has been achieved. Some milestones include consumer and employer satisfaction surveys. Consumer satisfaction is designed to reflect satisfaction with the job or identify any consumer concerns or issues. The employer satisfaction survey is designed to reflect the consumer's job performance, stability and training needs. Supported employment funds are distributed to each provider agency based on the milestone achieved by each individual served. Job skills training is provided to individuals on site at the work setting. Supported employment services include placement in competitive integrated employment settings for the maximum number of hours possible and is based on the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests and informed choice of the individual. In FY 2017, the SE program: had 1019 consumers' complete situational assessments and/or the Discovery process. We closed 541 consumers in competitive integrated employment. These consumers worked an average of 23 hours a week and made an average of \$8.30 an hour. This represents an increase of 15% from the previous year in consumers served.

ADRS continues to seek methods to increase participation of individuals with all types of disabilities in supported employment programs. Initiatives for improving transition services for students with more significant disabilities are being implemented. Since WIOA students with more significant disabilities are being referred and receiving services at a much earlier age. SE providers are providing Pre-Employment Transition Services to these students with an emphasis on work based learning. We are procuring additional pre-employment transition specialist (jointly funded) to increase the likelihood of competitive integrated employment for students with more significant disabilities and expansion of innovative opportunities and collaborations including student led enterprises, participation in work based learning at a younger age, and successful programs like Project SEARCH. We will continue to work with career and technical education to develop innovative programs that address internship and apprentice opportunities as well as certifications in employment areas, especially in high demand areas for our state. We will continue to work with Workforce development to identify and provide services to youth in the area, especially underserved youth and those with more significant disabilities. All these identified entities are a part of our Employment First efforts in Alabama.

We are currently submitting 3 RFP's for collaborations with Workforce Boards, Post-Secondary Education, and Alabama One-Stop Centers for internships and services to youth through expansion of Project SEARCH to youth in their areas.

- Efforts continued to collaborate closely with Alabama APSE (Association of Persons Supporting Employment First)—The Network on Employment, Alabama Department of Mental Health, and the Alabama Council for Developmental Disabilities (DD Council), to provide training to staff, pre-employment transition specialist, skills training instructors, SE providers, IPS staff and other employment staff in Alabama that serve individuals with disabilities. Customized employment and Discovery are included in this training. ADRS continues to expand services within the state to increase opportunities for individuals to access to supported employment services. All counties in Alabama all have trained supported employment providers to serve consumers in their area. Many of our community rehabilitation programs provided paid summer work experiences that include job exploration, work place readiness, instruction in self-advocacy, in demand jobs in their areas, and paid work place paid work experience with employers in their local areas. Two additional staff members were hired as Rehabilitation Specialists for Supported Employment to assist the counselors and providers with quality supported employment and to provide training as needed to both groups. Additionally another state office specialist was hired to assist the statewide transition specialist. The addition of these specialists' will help to assure that we are providing quality services to students, youth, and adults with more significant disabilities that require supported employment. We continue to include Discovery and customized employment in our bi-annual training with staff to assure better job matches, and more opportunities for internships and training to consumers requiring SE. The following initiatives have been implemented:

- Continual training and consultation by state office staff on Supported Employment, Milestones, Discovery, Person Centered Profile Development, WIOA, IPS Supported Employment, Self-Employment, Pre-Employment Transition Services and Project SEARCH for transition students.
- Continued collaboration with the Alabama Department of Mental Health on moving consumers from facility based services to community based, competitive integrated employment. This includes making sure counselors have a better understanding of Medicaid waivers, SS implications, including work incentives and providers who don't contract with VR know about our application and eligibility process, supported employment services, the availability of benefit planners and section 511 of WIOA. SE Specialists have been working with providers known to VR to provide career counseling, information and referral, and benefits counseling to those in subminimum wage employment. This includes information on the supported employment providers in their area. We have also worked with school systems in our state to provide documentation and instruction on limitations and requirements for youth entering subminimum wage employment. VR, in collaboration with the State Department of Education, developed procedures and documentation for both the LEAs and VR. This in addition to efforts to reach students at a younger age should greatly encourage competitive, integrated employment as a first option for students and youth with more significant disabilities. Documentation collected from

individuals currently in sub-minimum wage employment suggests the median age is over 50.

- Collaboration continues with Alabama Association of Persons Supporting Employment First (AL—APSE) and Alabama Department of Mental Health to offer bi-annual job coach training to new job coaches, job developers, pre-employment transition specialists, skills training instructors, IPS staff, mental health staff and case managers. This training is conducted by Virginia Commonwealth University and provides instruction on best practices, innovative strategies and customized employment. For the last two years Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind sent local and regional staff personnel who serve those with sensory impairments.
- We continue to provide the GATE Project for provider agencies who have consumers in sheltered work who are seeking employment in their communities. GATE was recognized by ICI (Institute for Community Inclusion) as an innovative strategy to move consumers from segregated employment to competitive integrated employment. It is a partnership with our agency, the Department of Mental Health and local employers. This program is embedded in the workplace and gives the opportunity for those who will require extra time and additional supports and training to learn a job. This unique program braids funds from the two agencies to secure the supports and training needed.
- Alabama currently has 11 Project SEARCH sites. This model, founded by Cincinnati's Children Hospital is an innovative, transition/work model for students with most significant disabilities. Two employment sites, utilizing two school systems, were piloted in August 2012, and the program has grown to 11 sites since that time. This collaborative effort involves the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Mental Health, and the State Department of Education, the Developmental Disabilities Counsel, ten local school systems, one post-secondary partner and eleven employers. Other school systems have expressed an interest in having this program and we expect to continue our expansion. We are currently writing 3 RFPs to expand this very successful program to youth in other parts of the state. If approved Workforce, Post-secondary education, and the Alabama one stop career centers would partner.
- Alabama was one of seven states awarded a SAMHSA grant to provide evidence—based Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment. This evidence—based practice was initially implemented at Chilton Shelby Mental Health (a very rural area) and at Altapointe Mental Health in Mobile (an urban area). This year we are adding a third site in Montgomery, Alabama and are currently working on a plan for sustainability and expansion.
- Connections is designed for students and youth who have social skills deficits, specifically those with Autism. The program runs the entire school year and not only teaches social skills in the classroom, then moves those skills into real world settings in the community to practice them. This year long social skills acquisition program is then followed by supported employment services or employment services based on the needs of the participant. This program began in Birmingham, Alabama. Because of the success of Connections, we have expanded to three sites and will be adding a fourth site in August of this year. • The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation

Services provides a Supported Employment Administrator and two Supported Employment Specialists to monitor supported employment services and provide training and technical assistance. Each supported employment provider operates under a milestone/outcome—based program to ensure quality outcomes and appropriate employment options based on individual choice. Consumers are offered the opportunity to participate in community—based assessments to facilitate an informed decision regarding their employment goal. Job development is provided on an individual basis to locate employment based on the consumer’s interests, skills, limitations and community living needs. Job coaching is also provided at the work site to ensure that the individual has the necessary training, skills and supports to work. Once the consumer is stable in the workplace, extended services are planned and implemented to protect the long—term success of the job. Consumer and employer satisfaction regarding the services provided are measured at the time of employment and again before case closure. Extended services are a continuation of ongoing support services provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities. These extended supports are provided at the completion of stabilization, during the successful rehabilitation Milestone and beyond ADRS case closure. The option for Discovery and Customized Employment, or for Person Centered Profiles along with assessments are available to consumers to maximize success for individuals in supported employment. Supported Self-employment is also available for individuals wanting to start their own business.

## 2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

The plan for Supported Employment specifies the services under supported employment that will be provided, the extended services needed and the source of extended services. Extended services may include natural supports. If it is not possible to identify the source of extended support when the individuals plan for employment is developed, the counselor must describe the basis for the conclusion that there is a reasonable expectation that sources for extended support services will become available. Extended support services in Alabama, come from a variety of sources. These sources include the Medicaid waiver, state dollars set aside to support Project Search, grant funding, private funding, fund raisers and are included in contractual agreements with community rehabilitation providers who have supported employment programs. VR can fund extended services to youth with most significant disabilities for up to 4 years. Once the youth reaches the age of 25 they no longer qualify as a youth and the DSU must identify another source of extended services to ensure there is no interruption of services. The plan specifies the services under supported employment that will be provided, the extended services needed and the source of extended services. Services for SE often include service provision by other state or federal services. Services provided under an individualized plan are coordinated with other services provided under other individualized plans established for the individual.

We have updated the policy and counselor resource manual to provide clarity on extended services. Extended services for youth in supported employment follows Milestone 3-job stabilization. Extended services begin when the employed individual has reached stabilization for an agreed upon period of time, that meets the vocational

goal and work hour goal on the IPE, or amended IPE. VR can only fund extended services for youth for a period of 4 years or until the youth no longer meets the definition of a youth (25) whichever occurs first. These cases will require a review every 6 months to determine if continued services are needed, and to assure that another provider of extended supports will be identified-this may include natural supports at the workplace.

## CERTIFICATIONS

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Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Service**

Name of designated State agency: **Vocational Rehabilitation Services** Full Name of

Authorized Representative: **Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner** 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 I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA\*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.\*\* Yes
- 2.** As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the designated State agency listed above agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes
- 3.** As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan\* , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;\*\* Yes
- 4.** The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
- 5.** The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes
7. The Authorized Representative listed above has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes
8. The Authorized Representative listed above has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes
9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

## FOOTNOTES

### Certification 1 Footnotes

\* Public Law 113-128.

\*\* Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

### Certification 2 Footnotes

\* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

\*\* No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

### Certification 3 Footnotes

\* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in \*\*\* under Certification 2 footnotes

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CERTIFICATIONS FROM THE STATE

## CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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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    **Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Service**

Full Name of Authorized Representative:    **Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw**

Title of Authorized Representative:    **Commissioner**

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

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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    **Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw

Title of Authorized Representative: Commissioner

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

### ASSURANCES

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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 Yes

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: Yes

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. Yes

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

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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](http://www.regulations.gov) for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.

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

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### TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

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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).

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The State will conduct programs designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner) to provide assistance and/or services to needy families with children under the administration and supervision of the Alabama Department of Human Resources through County Departments of Human Resources located in the 67 counties in Alabama. Activities of these offices for programs 1 — 3 below include: accepting and processing applications for assistance; and as appropriate conducting reviews and redeterminations of eligibility, providing child support enforcement services, information and referral services, providing family intervention and preservation services and managing a program of work activities and requirements known as the JOBS Program. Special Projects may not necessarily be available on a statewide basis.

Programs: 1. Basic Assistance to Needy Families — Temporary Cash Assistance (limited to 5 years) — Work Program (includes services to current and former recipients of cash assistance) 2. TANF Emergency Assistance 3. TANF (Direct) Child Welfare 4. Special Projects Financial thresholds are provided for each in Attachment E in section k. Program component general descriptions are as follows:

Program descriptions for the components of the Family Assistance Program are as follows:

Basic Assistance to Needy Families: 1. Cash Assistance: Financial assistance to meet basic needs is available to a family with a dependent child under age 18 or under age 19 if s/he is a full—time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training and whose income does not exceed established agency standards and who are otherwise eligible. Non parent adult caretaker relatives may not be included in the Family Assistance unit.

Funding Source: Federal Funds.

2. Work Program: (See Section b.) Non— assistance expenditures for current and former recipients of cash assistance as well as certain needy applicants of cash assistance so as to maintain children in their own homes and end the dependency of needy parents by promoting work. Services include information and referral, case management short—term non—recurrent benefits as discussed in 45CFR 260.31, day care, transportation and other work and training services.

Funding Source: Commingled State and Federal Funds.

TANF Emergency Assistance (Formerly AFDC—EA with provision date of August 21, 1996): Assistance with paying for shelter or other emergency living expenses during a investigation of abuse and (non—assistance) services which include information and referral, case planning and case management, counseling and other support activities to normalize family functioning to or on behalf of a needy child 1) who is under the age of 21 and to any other member of the household in which he is living provided that such child is (or, within 6 months prior to the month in which such assistance is requested, has been) living with any of the relatives specified in section 406(a) (1) of the Act and further clarified in 45 CFR 233.90(c)(1)(v) in a place of residence maintained by one or more of such relatives as his or their own home; 2)

who has been removed from his/her home or is at risk of such removal and 3) whose emergency did not arise from his refusal or refusal of such relative with whom he lives without good cause to accept employment or training for employment.

Funding Source: Commingled State and Federal Funds.

TANF Direct Child Welfare: Non—assistance expenditures for payment of specific services for department child welfare cases such as counseling, case management, peer support, childcare, information and referral, transitional services and non—recurrent, short—term benefits as discussed in 45 CFR 260.31. An individual is certified if that individual meets either of the following: 1) a child resides in his/her own home; 2) a child is in out—of—home placement and has a permanency goal to remain at home, return home, or live permanently with relatives.

Funding Source: Federal and State funds.

Special Projects: 1. Eligible Families: Non—assistance expenditures for services including information and referral to needy parents/families such as short—term non—recurrent benefits as discussed in 45 CFR 260.31, day care, subsidized employment, transportation and work and training services, statewide food distribution network activities and pro—family activities expected to prevent and reduce the incidence of out of wedlock births as well as encourage the formation and maintenance of healthy two parent families including after school activities for teens, fatherhood and healthy marriage initiatives, mentoring and literacy programs and domestic violence/drug abuse/prevention/education programs. Additional non—financial criteria, if any, are dependent on the project plan.

Funding Source (s): Commingled State and Federal funds; Federal funds dependent on the project; State MOE.

After—School Care Program — Through a collaboration with the Alabama Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs, project based learning activities are provided for the purpose of preventing out of wedlock teen pregnancy. Projects include: Character, Health and Life Skills; Education and Career Development; and Health and Physical Education Programming.

Funding Source: Federal Funds

2. Pro—Family Activities for Other Than Eligible Families: Non—assistance in the form of non—federal cash and in kind qualified expenditures by third parties for individuals and families pursuant to 45 CFR 263.2(a) (4) (ii). Program specifics including non—financial eligibility criteria, if any, are contained in written agreements/contracts between the Department of Human Resources and the third party and in project plans as applicable.

These benefits and services are provided without regard to financial need or family composition.

Funding Source: State MOE.

Projects provided may not be available on a statewide basis but will be provided as determined appropriate by the state.

Provision of assistance and/or services to eligible, needy families is contingent on the availability of program funding.

Program operating guidelines which include all policies, procedures, etc., for the determination of initial and continuing eligibility for each program will be issued to the County Departments of Human Resources from the State Department of Human Resources as needed. Such operating guidelines contained in department program manuals or other correspondence is binding on the County Departments of Human Resources.

**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)**

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### 1. Requirements and Activities

The State will operate a welfare work program in compliance with Section 407 of Title IV-A of the Social Security Act and consistent with Alabama's approved Work Verification Plan. The program is known as the JOBS Program. All parents/stepparents, including teen parents, who are receiving assistance, are referred to the JOBS Unit for assessment in regard to their skills, prior work experience and employability. The assessment process includes screening for disability and language assistance needs. An Individual JOBS Participation (IJP) and Family Responsibility Plan (FRP) will be developed for these individuals. Individuals determined to be ready to engage in work will be immediately placed in work or work-related activities for up to 40 hours per week. After receipt of assistance for 24 months, all individuals not already participating in such activities will be required to engage in work activities, as defined in state policy.

**NONCOMPLIANCE WITH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS** Work Program-The parent(s) and/or stepparent(s) of a dependent child(ren) receiving assistance are required to participate in work activities designed to result in gainful employment unless the parent(s)/stepparent(s) is deferred or has good cause for not participating as specified in department program manuals. See Attachments B and C below. The penalties for failure to comply are as follows: Applicants: Upon overt refusal of the grantee relative or other member(s) of the assistance unit required to participate in JOBS activities, the application will be denied and entitlement to benefits for the month of application through the month of application disposition is lost even if reapplication is made in the month of the original application disposition. Recipients who have received for less than 24 months: For the first three months of non-compliance (consecutive or not), the grant amount is reduced by 50% of the payment standard for the assistance unit size. For a month of non-compliance in excess of three months, the assistance unit is disqualified for a one-month period for the first disqualification. For a month of non-compliance following the first disqualification, the assistance unit is immediately disqualified for a six-month period. For a month of non-compliance following the second and subsequent disqualifications, the assistance unit is immediately disqualified for a twelve-month period.

Recipients who have received for 24 months or more: The assistance unit is immediately disqualified for a one-month period for the first instance of non-compliance; a six-month period for the second instance of non-compliance and a twelve-month period for the third and subsequent instances. Recipients who voluntarily terminate employment or refuse employment without good cause (regardless of the number of months of receipt): The assistance unit is immediately permanently disqualified. Attachment B WORK PARTICIPATION DEFERRAL CRITERIA and SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES DELAY CRITERIA A. Deferral Criteria Individuals may be temporarily deferred from the participation requirements of the JOBS Program if the individual: 1. Is a person in the home whose presence is required on a substantially continuous basis due to the illness or incapacity, determined on the basis of medical evidence, of a related individual and no other appropriate individual is available to provide the needed care. 2. Has an illness or injury which is serious enough to temporarily prevent employment or training with the goal of employment. This includes pregnancy when it is determined by medical evidence that working or participation in training would be detrimental to the woman or the unborn child. 3. Is incapacitated with a physical or mental impairment determined by the Department of Rehabilitative Services which prevents the individual from engaging in employment or other work activity. 4. Has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty as defined in department program manuals to the extent participation in program work requirements is precluded. 5. Is participating in drug, alcohol or mental health counseling to the extent participation in program work requirements is precluded. 6. Is a single custodial parent caring for a child under the age of six (6) and appropriate childcare is not available or is inaccessible to the client. 7. Is a single custodial parent (age 18 or older) of a child age 6 months or younger. 8. Is age 60 or older. 9. Has no regular transportation of any kind available. 10. Has a personal barrier of such significance to preclude participation in a work activity or employment and is participating in other JOBS activities to overcome the barrier. 11. Is a parent in a two-parent family who has to provide childcare for a child while the other parent works or participates in a JOBS activity because appropriate childcare is not otherwise available, accessible and/or affordable. Attachment B cont'd. B. Special Circumstances Delay Criteria Participation for clients who are required to participate and do not meet deferral criteria may be delayed if no appropriate component/employment is available. Attachment C GOOD CAUSE FOR NONCOMPLIANCE WITH JOBS ACTIVITIES Good cause for failure or refusal to participate in JOBS activities or to accept employment includes the following: 1. Illness of individual or illness of a household member or family member which requires the presence of the individual. 2. Childcare problems 3. Transportation problems 4. Personal or family crisis 5. Domestic Violence issues 6. Rare/ Unusual Circumstances 7. Non-receipt of correspondence 8. Administrative error 2. Displacement Provisions

Pursuant to 45 CFR 261.70, no adult in a work activity as described in 45 CFR 261.30 will be employed or assigned to an employment when any other individual is on layoff from the same or an equivalent job in the company, or if the employer has terminated the employment of any regular employee or otherwise caused an involuntary reduction of the workforce in order to fill the vacancy so created with a recipient of Family Assistance. Aggrieved individuals may file a written complaint

with the Family Assistance Division, State Department of Human Resources. All complaints are investigated. Complainants are advised of findings in writing. Corrective action is taken by the Department as appropriate.

**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)**

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The FRP is developed jointly by the FA grantee relative and the JOBS case manager. It outlines the responsibilities of the FA grantee in regards to the participation of all required family members and includes a copy of the IJP for each required family member. The IJP outlining work activities, supportive services and other family needs is developed jointly by the recipient and the JOBS case manager. Support services such as childcare, transportation, and work/participation expenses will be made available as needed to enable recipients to participate in work or work—related activities. Other services include information and referrals for domestic violence and substance abuse issues. The individual will receive reimbursement or payment of agreed upon expenses directly related to participation in such activities. Each recipient will be informed of the work requirements, what constitutes noncompliance, and the sanctions for non—compliance. If a recipient refuses or fails to cooperate with work requirements as set forth in his/her IJP, the family's benefits will be reduced or terminated as set forth in state policy unless good cause for the non—compliance, as defined in state policy, is established. No sanction for failure to work or participate in work—related activities will be imposed on any single custodial parent caring for a child under age 6 if the individual proves that s/he has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care.

Each non—deferred recipient will be placed in a work—related activity consistent with his/her IJP. Work activities may include: Subsidized/Unsubsidized employment

On the job training

Job Search

Job Readiness Activities

Community Employment Placement (work experience)

Community Service Employment

Vocational education activities

Job skills training

Satisfactory attendance in high school or a course of study leading to a GED

Education directly related to employment

For the duration of the recipient's involvement in work activities, the JOBS case manager will monitor component participation and provide assistance to participants with any problems or barriers.

Individuals who agree to treatment programs for drug, alcohol, or mental health reasons may be temporarily deferred from a work activity when the person is making

a serious attempt to recover. Domestic violence victims will be deferred from a work activity when they are at risk of endangerment.

### **Definitions**

**a. Unsubsidized Employment:** This is paid employment for either wages or salary where no part of the pay is subsidized by TANF or any other public programs.

**b. Work Experience:** In Alabama this activity is called Community Employment or CEMP. CEMP is a work activity, performed in return for welfare that provides an individual with an opportunity to acquire the general skills, training, knowledge, and work habits necessary to obtain employment. Placements are designed to help prepare the client to obtain unsubsidized employment by allowing him/her to develop a current work history and establish references for future employment seeking efforts as well as develop and improve marketable skills. Placements will be in both non—profit and for—profit businesses. Placement in for—profit businesses will have shorter time frames (maximum of three months) than placements in non—profit businesses (maximum of six months).

**c. On—the—Job—Training:** In this component a public or private employer hires the TANF client full—time where part of the wages are subsidized, usually by a governmental entity such as Department of Labor. While employed in the OJT position, the client engages in productive work while receiving training in knowledge and skills essential for adequate job performance. The client is compensated at a rate comparable to that of other employees performing the same or similar jobs, but at no less than minimum wage.

**d. Job Search and Job Readiness:**

**1.** Job Search is assigned in increments lasting no more than two weeks. The client is expected to complete a number of serious contacts with potential employers and must also register with the Employment Service. The daily number of required contacts is determined by the case manager based on the client's specific circumstances and the geographic area. The case manager will randomly contact employers turned in as job contacts to verify that an application was submitted and/or an interview was conducted.

**2.** Job Readiness is an intensive, short—term component, consisting of formal classroom training designed to prepare the client for successfully seeking and maintaining employment. Activities focus on pre—employment preparation and are aimed at helping the client overcome barriers that might preclude employment. Typical activities include application completion, interview skills, ways to locate job openings, general workplace expectations, and the behaviors and attitudes necessary to compete successfully in the labor market. This activity also includes substance abuse, mental health and rehabilitation counseling for clients who are otherwise employable.

**e. Vocational Educational Training:** This is organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations requiring training including a baccalaureate or advanced degree. These courses should provide individuals with technical skills and academic

knowledge needed for success in current or emerging employment sectors. It also includes any formal instruction in a skill or trade traditionally referred to as job skills training, determined by the JOBS staff to be other than purely academic in nature, that prepares the client for a vocation. For example, technical programs designed to prepare a client for a specific occupation, including nursing, plumbing, electrical, auto mechanics, welding and barbering. The training is limited to education that leads to useful employment in a state recognized occupation. Training is available to clients through WIA, vocational/technical schools and some colleges and universities. Training includes courses for any state licenses, certificates, and/or degrees.

**f. Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment:** This is training or education for job skills required by an employer to provide an individual with the ability to obtain employment or to advance or adapt to the changing demands of the workplace. It includes training or education required as a prerequisite for employment or to advance or adapt to changing demands of current employment. Such training and education will be provided through educational and training organizations. This activity also includes all activities described above as vocational education and any four—year bachelor’s or advanced degree programs at any State certified college or university.

**g. Education Directly Related to Employment for Individuals with No High School Diploma or Certificate of High School Equivalency:** This is education related to a specific occupation, job, or job offer. It includes basic education and ESL, and where required as a prerequisite for employment, education leading to a GED or high school equivalency diploma in any educational program approved by the Alabama Department of Education.

**h. Satisfactory School Attendance for Individuals with No High School Diploma or Certificate of High School Equivalency:** Individuals in this activity must be attending an educational facility with the goal of achieving a high school diploma or certificate of high school equivalency. In addition, the student must be considered a “student in good standing”. The student must have regular attendance and the activity must be considered feasible for the student.

**i. Subsidized Public or Private Sector Employment:** This is paid employment funded with TANF or other public dollars in the public or private sector. In all cases, the employer is reimbursed by DHR or other public programs for the gross wages paid by the employer to the employee. In addition, subsidized public and private sector employment in Alabama may be provided through college work study programs that meet the guidelines.

**j. Community Service Employment:** This is publicly and/or state funded, wage—paying jobs designed to provide employment for individuals and to address unmet community needs. See i. above.

**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)

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Pursuant to Code of Alabama Title 38, Section 38—2—6 information/case records of program participants is considered confidential and shall not be subject to public use or inspection. The release and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance through the Family Assistance Program is limited in scope by the purpose/program for which it is released/disclosed. Such release/disclosure is only permissible as follows:

— in connection with programs operated under Title I — Aid to the Aged; Title IV—A — Aid to

Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); Title IV—A — Block grants to States for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Title IV—B — Child Welfare Services; Title IV—D — Child Support and Establishment of Paternity; — Title IV—E — Foster Care (FCMP) and Adoption Assistance; Title X — Aid to the Blind; Title XIV — Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled; Title XVI — Aid to the Aged, Blind and Disabled; Title XVI — Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Title XIX — Medicaid; or Title XX — Block Grants.

— in connection with services provided by other entities integral to and consistent with the administration of public assistance pursuant to state laws under written agreements with the Department of Human Resources.

— in connection with the administration of other federal or federally assisted programs providing assistance in cash, in—kind, or services, directly to individuals on the basis of need.

— at the request of state, local or federal law enforcement authorities searching for fugitive felons or individuals violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under federal or state law (current address only).

— in connection with a public audit.

— in connection with the investigation of problems related to misuse of funds issued by the Department of Human Resources.

— at the request of the client under certain limited conditions as specified in department program manuals.

— in connection with the investigation of program fraud under certain conditions as specified in department program manuals. — at the request of grand juries.

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)

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The Department of Human Resources partners with the Children’s Trust Fund of Alabama to competitively award grants to community and faith—based organizations for fatherhood programs across the state. These programs offer a myriad of services to all non—custodial parents, including parenting classes, with the over arching goal to strengthen families, to enhance child support collection and to address the multifaceted needs of children

growing up without the involvement of one or both parents in their lives.

The Department of Human Resources partners with the Alabama Department of Public Health which serves all women of child bearing age and the Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (ACPTP) for pregnancy prevention efforts. The mission of the ACPTP is “Leading Alabama in adolescent reproductive health and teen pregnancy prevention with an emphasis on positive youth development.” To further the mission, the ACPTP has adopted priorities as well as vision and value statements. The mission, vision and value statements as well as priorities and other information about the Campaign can be found on the ACPTP website at [www.acptp.org](http://www.acptp.org).

Our goal specifically targeting teen pregnancy is to maintain out of wedlock teen births to at least 5% below the national average as published by the National Center for Health Statistics. In regard to the overall issue of out of wedlock pregnancy prevention, as part of the JOBS Program client assessment the case manager provides discussion and information about the impact of additional children as it pertains to the goals of personal responsibility, parenting and family support. Through these discussions it is our goal to provide individuals with sufficient information and assistance to move families from welfare to work without additional pregnancies during receipt of assistance and until such time as the family is stable. These activities in conjunction with our fatherhood and healthy marriage initiatives provide the foundation for success in this area.

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)

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The Department of Human Resources has developed and issued pamphlets containing information regarding the legal definitions and consequences of statutory rape to be distributed by Alabama Fatherhood Programs administered by the Children’s Trust Fund of Alabama as part of the educational activities of these programs which are specifically targeted at non—custodial males. TANF funded Fatherhood programs number 21 throughout the state. Additionally, these materials are used in the educational activities of the Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. Further, these pamphlets are generally available in Alabama Departments of Public Health statewide. Staff of the Department of Human Resources distributes the pamphlets as appropriate to individuals applying for or receiving Family Assistance and in other program areas as deemed necessary.

TANF workers are required to report cases of suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate service staff. This activity specifically includes the circumstances of girls under the age of 16 having sex with males who are at least 16 years old and at least two years older than the female.

The Department of Human Resources participated on the Council on Violence Against Women in the development of the Alabama State Plan, Responding to Domestic and

Sexual Violence, to assist in promoting systemic change and improving responses to victims and perpetrators of such violence. This council membership included judicial, law enforcement, prosecution, health care, education, social services and mental health representatives. The 2010 State Plan can be viewed at [www.acadv.org](http://www.acadv.org).

**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)**

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**Statement of Policy:** Use of an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card to withdraw FA benefits or process a payment for merchandise or a service from an automated teller machine (ATM) or point of sale (POS) device physically located in liquor, wine or beer stores, casinos or other gambling establishments, strip clubs, tattoo or body piercing facilities or facilities providing psychic services is prohibited. Such use constitutes an unauthorized EBT transaction. Use of any portion of the FA benefits whether in cash or an EBT transaction to purchase alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or lottery tickets is also prohibited. Purchase of any of these items is referred to as unauthorized FA expenditures.

**Definitions:**

**Unauthorized EBT Transaction:** Use of an EBT card to withdraw FA benefits or process a payment for the purchase of merchandise/goods or services from an ATM or POS device physically located in a liquor, wine or beer store, gambling establishment, strip club, tattoo or body piercing facility or a facility providing psychic services.

**Liquor, wine or beer store:** Any retail establishment selling exclusively or primarily alcoholic beverages.

**Gambling establishment:** A retail establishment offering casino, gambling or gaming activities as the primary purpose of the establishment.

**Strip Club:** Any retail establishment providing adult—oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment.

**Tattoo or body piercing facility:** Any retail establishment selling exclusively or primarily tattoo or body piercing services.

**Psychic services facility:** Any retail establishment selling exclusively or primarily psychic services.

**Unauthorized FA expenditures:** Use of any portion of the benefits whether in cash or an EBT transaction for the purchase of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or lottery tickets.

**Alcoholic beverages:** Any alcoholic, spirituous, vinous, fermented, or other alcoholic beverage or combination of liquors and mixed liquor, a part of which is spirituous,

vinous, fermented, or otherwise alcoholic, and all drinkable liquids, preparations or mixtures intended for beverage purposes, which contain one—half of one percent or more alcohol by volume, and shall include liquor, wine and beer.

Tobacco products: Any product that contains tobacco such as cigars, cigarettes, pipe and chewing tobacco and associated paraphernalia.

Lottery ticket: Any ticket purchased for a game of chance operated by a state government such as instant lotteries, general lotteries and lotto.

Practices: Educate clients; investigate reported violations; and impose penalties on FA recipients.

Client Education Clients are educated about the spending restrictions as follows: mandatory discussion of the prohibition by the eligibility worker with all new applicants; public information materials which state the prohibition to include program summarized eligibility rules, client EBT brochures (under revision), automated client notices of case action, the program applicant/recipient affirmation and agreement statement which requires client certification of understanding and agreement to adhere to the prohibition in writing. The prohibition language is posted on the Department website and is being added to the EBT client portal in the future. Further recipient grantee relatives must acknowledge in writing understanding of the rule as part of the Family Responsibility Plan (FRP) under the JOBS Program as discussed in section (c) above.

Financial Penalties (1) For the first instance of non—compliance, the assistance unit will be disqualified from receiving benefits for a one—month period. (2) For the second instance of non—compliance, the assistance unit will be disqualified from receiving benefits for a three—month period. (3) For the third instance of non—compliance, the assistance unit may continue to receive benefits if otherwise eligible, but the grantee relative is permanently disqualified from receiving benefits as a grantee relative, and, if included in the assistance unit is permanently disqualified to be a member of the assistance unit. Payment to the assistance unit will be made to another relative living in the home or other protective payee pursuant to Department operating guidelines. The disqualified grantee relative may continue to receive benefits for other eligible assistance unit members for a temporary period while appointment of another grantee relative is being processed. (4) In addition to penalties in (1) — (3) above, the recipient must reimburse the Department as follows: For unauthorized EBT transactions, the amount withdrawn and/or used; for unauthorized FA expenditures, the amount of the purchase. Reimbursement in the full amount must be made before the assistance unit can again receive benefits following a period of disqualification as described in (1) and (2) above or before another relative living in the home or a protective payee can be approved to receive as described in (3) above.

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)

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Benefit Access and Fee Information Benefit Access—Recipients can access FA benefits at any ATM or POS device at any location with such a device other than the prohibited locations. EBT cards are not accepted in state owned liquor stores known as Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) stores. To ameliorate an identified situation of unauthorized EBT transactions, the client will be referred to the Client Help Desk provided by our Contractor who is required to provide Customer Service, toll free via a 1—800 number for benefit access information as well as other account information. As part of the delivery of Customer Service, our Contractor is required to provide information 24/7 about POS/ATM site locations where benefits can be accessed. The Contractor must provide general information to clients regarding stores and ATMs. In order to do this the Contractor maintains a database and tracks retailers providing cash back and ATMs that accept the Alabama EBT cards. The Contractor must ensure that no cash client travel any further than 15 miles to any cash access location (either retailer or ATM). Further, if the Contractor is informed of the fact that there is no location within 15 miles or less to provide cash services they will make an effort with assistance from the Department to look into the businesses that are in the area and see if a location is willing to provide the service. If there are no businesses that can or will do so, then the Contractor would inform the Department of why and provide the closest business that will. According to information from the Department EBT Office, to date there has not been an instance where the “15 miles or less” rule could not be met.

Information about benefit access, lost and stolen cards, customer service, pin numbers, etc. is explained to clients during the application interview and is provided in EBT client materials and on the EBT client website. Other Department materials contain customer service contact information.

Fee Information—The first two cash ATM withdrawals in a month are free. Any subsequent ATM withdrawals in the same month incur a fifty cents (\$.50) fee. Recipients can receive cash back when using their EBT cards for purchases and incur no transaction fee. Information regarding fees is provided in EBT client materials and on the EBT client website.

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)

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Families moving into the State from another State will be treated the same as other families under the program. Therefore, the policies and procedures of the Family Assistance Program applicable in a county will be applied uniformly to all residents of the State (County) whether current or new.

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)

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Citizens and qualified non—citizens are eligible to the extent permitted under federal law, Title IV of Public Law 104—193, as amended. Recipients must be citizens, qualified aliens who entered the United States before August 22, 1996, qualified aliens who entered the United States on or after August 22, 1996 who are excepted from the 5—year bar or aliens who entered the United States on or after August 22, 1996 and have been in “qualified alien” status for at least 5 years. Victims of severe forms of trafficking are eligible for federally—funded TANF benefits to the same extent as refugees. Aliens who (or whose child or parent) have been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty in the U.S. are eligible under certain circumstances consistent with Federal law as specified in program operating manuals.

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)

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Delivery of benefits is dependent on the component program of the FA Program and includes delivery by Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), by vendor payment, cash payments or provision of services.

Eligibility rules of the Department of Human Resources will be uniformly applied in all cases in a county. The determination of need and amount of assistance for all applicants and recipients will be made on an objective and equitable basis and all types of income and potential income will be taken into consideration in the same way except where otherwise specifically authorized by State or Federal law or the Administrative Code of the Department of Human Resources or as stated in program operating guidelines issued by the State Department of Human Resources, Family Assistance Division. The State will adhere to prohibitions and requirements of Section 408 of Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act. Pursuant to subparagraph (B) of Section 408(a)(10) Good cause exceptions to subparagraph (A) of Section 408(a)(10) include absence due to medical reasons, school attendance, visits, conducting business, participating in Job Corps or vocational training.

1. Financial Responsibility for Program Benefits

For assistance subject to time limits, financial responsibility for needy children includes parents and stepparents in the home and alleged fathers living in the home with their child and the child’s mother. Income of all members of the assistance unit will be considered in determining eligibility of the assistance unit for benefits and amount of payment.

Income of parents and stepparents ineligible due to alien status, disqualification for fraud or spending restrictions violations, exclusion as a parole violator, or for a conviction of a felony or for fraudulently misrepresenting residence will also be used to determine eligibility if appropriate and applicable according to department operating manuals or other instructions. Earned income from new employment may be disregarded for the first twelve months wages are received if timely and accurately reported and the individual is

otherwise eligible for the disregard pursuant to Family Assistance Program guidelines.

## 2. Summarized Eligibility Rules

In order to be eligible families must:

- meet component specific conditions including the following if applicable
- be U.S. citizens (or meet alienage requirements in Title IV of P.L. 104—193 and/or be a legal immigrant residing in the U.S. prior to August 22, 1996).
- be residents of Alabama.
- be in need by agency financial standards. See Attachment E.
- cooperate in self—sufficiency requirements including work and child support enforcement activities unless deferred from work requirements or unless good cause exists not to cooperate with child support if applicable.
- provide or apply for a SSN for each member of the assistance unit
- not be on strike (applicable to cash component only)
- complete applicant job search
- cooperate with drug screening activities

## 3. Medical Services

Federal law prohibits the use of federal funds to provide medical services and states that the term “medical services” does not include pre—pregnancy family planning services.

In addition to pre—pregnancy family planning services for purposes of federal expenditures, the following activities/services that are consistent with a TANF purpose and related to employment and/or work participation activities for cash assistance recipients or required as a condition of eligibility for cash assistance are not considered medical services:

- pre—employment physical examination by a health professional that does not include treatment.
- payment to a health professional for completion of Department forms. (Used for eligibility determinations related to time limits which constitutes an administrative cost and for work activities).
- payment to a health professional or entity for administration of a pre—employment drug test or TB test or for administration of a drug test as a condition of eligibility for cash assistance.
- assessment, testing or other determinations of modification by a health professional needed for reasonable accommodation related to a participant’s incapacity/disability. Excludes treatment.

— dental services (cosmetic, extractions, filings, etc.) needed to eliminate a barrier to participation or employment. The service may not be of a surgical or other medical nature.

The Family Assistance Program will provide cash assistance pursuant to 45 CFR 260.31 on a time limited basis (time limit is 5 years) consistent with provisions in section 408, Part A, Title IV of the Social Security Act (and supportive services to enable families to become self-sufficient) to eligible families. In order to receive past 60 months the grantee or spouse of the grantee must have a circumstance/situation which creates a barrier to self sufficiency known as a hardship and s/he must be cooperating with child support and complying with JOBS as appropriate. See Attachment F below.

#### Attachment F

#### CRITERIA FOR EXCEPTION TO TIME LIMITS

In order to receive past 60 months the grantee or spouse of the grantee must have a circumstance/situation which creates a barrier to self sufficiency known as a hardship and s/he must be cooperating with Child Support and complying with JOBS as appropriate. To be eligible both criteria in A & B must be met and continue to be met in each month after 60.

##### A. Hardships

The grantee or spouse of the grantee must meet one of the following circumstances and must not be employed. If a hardship is established but the individual becomes employed or employable (as determined by the JOBS worker) eligibility is lost.

A hardship may exist when the grantee or spouse of the grantee:

- 1.** Is a person whose presence is required on a substantially continuous basis due to the illness or incapacity of the spouse, child, mother-in-law, father-in-law or of an individual to whom the relationship of the caregiver is within certain degrees of relationship and no other person is available to provide the needed care.
- 2.** Has an illness or injury which has lasted or is expected to last at least 30 days and which is serious enough to temporarily prevent employment (or training with the hope of employment) when determined on the basis of medical evidence from the attending physician/clinic. This includes pregnancy when it has been determined by medical evidence that working or participation in training would be detrimental to the woman or the unborn child.
- 3.** Is incapacitated with a physical or mental impairment determined by a physician or a licensed or certified psychologist which prevents or substantially reduces the individual's ability to work.
- 4.** Is fleeing current domestic violence or abuse because s/he recently has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty as verified by certain documentary evidence specified in program manuals.

5. Is participating in drug, alcohol or mental health counseling as verified through the sources of the counseling to the extent participation in program work requirements is precluded.

6. Is age 60 or older.

7. Has a personal barrier of such significance as to preclude training and/or employment and is engaged in an activity to overcome the barrier.

8. Lives in a Food Assistance ABAWD waiver county and has not been disqualified due to noncompliance with JOBS since December, 1996.

#### B. Program Compliance Criteria

The grantee and/or the spouse of the grantee must cooperate with Child Support and comply with JOBS in each month past 60. Failure to meet this criteria results in (1) permanent loss of program eligibility for the grantee and spouse of the grantee regardless of family circumstances and (2) recovery of all benefits received past month 60.

#### CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

Individuals receiving assistance are required to cooperate in child support enforcement activities unless good cause as defined in department program manuals exists not to do so. See Attachment D below. The penalties for failure to cooperate are as follows:

##### Applicants:

Upon overt refusal of the grantee relative or other member(s) of the assistance unit required to cooperate with child support enforcement, the application will be denied and entitlement to benefits for the month of application through the month of application disposition is lost even if reapplication is made in the month of the original application disposition.

##### Recipients:

For the first three months of non-cooperation (consecutive or not) the grant amount is reduced by 50% of the payment standard for the assistance unit size. For months of non-cooperation in excess of three months, the assistance unit is disqualified for a one-month period for the first disqualification. For a month of non-cooperation following the first disqualification, the assistance unit is immediately disqualified for a six-month period. For a month of non-cooperation following the second and subsequent disqualifications, the assistance unit is immediately disqualified for a twelve-month period. Attachment D

#### GOOD CAUSE FOR NONCOOPERATION IN CHILD SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

An applicant/recipient for assistance under the Family Assistance Program must cooperate with the agency in child support enforcement activities unless it is determined that cooperation in such activities is not in the child's best interest. Circumstances under which cooperation may not be in the child's best interest include:

1. Physical or emotional harm of a serious nature is reasonably expected to occur to the child or to the parent or relative with whom the child is living.
2. The child was conceived as a result of incest or forcible rape.
3. Legal proceedings for adoption of the child are pending before a court of competent jurisdiction.
4. The applicant/recipient is currently being assisted by a public or licensed private social agency to resolve the issue of whether to keep the child or relinquish for adoption and the discussions have not gone on for more than three months.

#### DRUG SCREENING

Certain individuals applying for and/or receiving assistance must cooperate in activities needed to determine if reasonable suspicion exists that the individual uses or is under the influence of a drug and by taking a drug screening if reasonable suspicions exists. This provision is applicable to individuals applying for cash assistance on or after October 1, 2015 and to individuals awarded as a result of such application. The penalties for failure/refusal to cooperate are as follows:

##### Applicants:

Failure/refusal of an applicant to cooperate results in denial of the application for the assistance unit and loss of benefits for that application period, i.e., month of application through the month of disposition of the application. Failure/refusal of an applicant being added back to an open case results in denial of the application for the individual for that application period and case closure.

##### Recipients:

Failure/refusal of a recipient to cooperate results in case closure.

The penalties for a positive screening result without a valid prescription for the identified drug are as follows:

- For the first positive drug screening, a warning shall be issued that subsequent positive tests will result in loss of benefits and that other random drug screenings will be required.
- For the second positive drug screening, the adult will be ineligible for benefits for one year.
- For the third positive drug screening, the adult will be permanently ineligible to receive assistance and payment to the otherwise eligible assistance unit will be made to another relative living in the home or other protective payee pursuant to Department operating guidelines. The ineligible grantee relative may continue to receive benefits for other eligible assistance unit members for a temporary period while appointment of another grantee relative/protective payee is being processed.

Client Opportunity for Review of Action Taken Procedures for client review of case action taken provide for three options for review (1) a conference with the County Department of Human Resources, (2) a State Department of Human Resources case record review and (3) a fair hearing conducted by the State Department of Human

Resources. A request for options 2 and 3 must be in writing and submitted to either the County or State Department. Information about these opportunities as well as instructions regarding how to request and where to send the request is provided to clients as general information on all automated system notices generated and mailed to clients at award, termination or change in circumstances. If a system notice is not sufficient to explain case action a manually prepared case action form is completed and mailed which also contains the general information in regard to a review of case action described above. The summarized eligibility requirements pamphlet for the Family Assistance Program contains similar language and is required to be given and explained to all applicants and as needed to recipients during the interview process. Rules of review for special projects may vary dependent on the project and would be included in informational materials as appropriate.

Applications will be acted on in a timely manner. Department rules provide that not more than 30 days shall elapse between the date of application and the date the first benefits are made available or the notice of denial is mailed. The number of applications that exceed such standard is kept to a minimum. The standard of promptness is monitored and reported to

County Directors of Human Resources monthly.

Applicants and recipients are notified in writing of actions taken in their case.

#### PAYMENT ACCURACY AND PROGRAM INTEGRITY

The program is supported by an automated system known as the Family Assistance Certification, Employment and Training System (FACETS) operational in all counties of the State. An Income and Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) as required by Section 1137 of the Social Security Act for persons receiving assistance is operational in all counties of the State.

Methods are in place to ensure payment accuracy to eligible families which includes mandatory case record reviews by county office supervisory staff with a re-review of a sample of those records by state office field supervisors. Identified deficiencies require corrective action. State statistics about payment accuracy are published to the Directors, County Departments of Human Resources monthly. Payment accuracy is a component of County Director evaluations. The state is subject to Federal and State Audits.

Program operating guidelines contain provisions to strengthen and maintain program integrity from fraud prevention actions to recovery of erroneously paid benefits. Benefit recovery activities are supported through the Comprehensive Claims System (CCS) which interfaces with the program certification system, FACETS. Individuals found guilty of committing an intentional program violation by a court of competent jurisdiction in Alabama will be disqualified from participation in the cash assistance component of the Family Assistance Program as follows: for a period of 6 months upon the first occasion of any such offense; or a period of 12 months upon the second occasion of any such offense and permanently upon the third or subsequent occasion of such offense.

#### CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

The Family Assistance Program, like all programs and services of the Department of Human Resources, is administered in full compliance with Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and all other Federal and State civil rights laws.

Language assistance so as to ensure meaningful access to all Department programs, services and benefits is provided to individuals needing such services consistent with the Department's Language Assistance Plan first issued on August 24, 2005 and revised January 2012.

Reasonable accommodations are provided to enable full use of existing programs and services to those individuals who tell us (or for whom we determine) they have a physical, mental or learning disability that limits a major life activity. Client case action notices provide information about the availability of reasonable accommodations. Departmental program operating manuals for the TANF Program contain guidelines for county staff in this regard as well as information about language assistance.

#### SCREENING AND IDENTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Procedures are in place through the statewide Special Assessment, Intervention and Liaison Project (SAIL) for eligibility workers to routinely screen and identify domestic violence for individuals applying for or receiving cash assistance. JOBS case managers include questions on domestic violence as part of the JOBS assessment as well. For those identified as victims of domestic violence, referrals are made to the Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence for a variety of services including development of a safety plan, information and referral, supportive services, counseling and case management, etc. Certain program rules are waived for those individuals identified as in imminent danger and include child support enforcement activities, time limits and work participation requirements (although the client may volunteer to participate).

#### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Pursuant to Title IV-A, Section 402, Alabama's TANF State Plan is published and maintained on the Department of Human Resources website. Written comments on this plan were solicited and a period of 45 days was provided for such comments. Further Alabama law at Section 41, Chapter 22 Administrative Procedure, provides for the promulgation of program rules on requirements to receive assistance. Two of the stated purposes of that Act are to increase public access to governmental information as well as to increase public participation in the formulation of administrative rules. The law requires publication of the referenced program rules for public comment in the Alabama Administrative Monthly for a period of 35 to 90 days. This rule affords all interested parties reasonable opportunity to submit data, or arguments, orally or in writing. The publication of the plan on the website and the proposed program rules process provide for input from other state agencies, public and private organizations, the general public and other pertinent entities during development and implementation.

#### CERTIFICATION

The State will operate a program to provide temporary assistance to needy families so that the children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; to end dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage; to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. In administering and operating a program which provides temporary assistance to needy families with minor children under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act, the State will:

Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program under part A in all political subdivisions of the State: Alabama Department of Human Resources is the agency responsible for administering the programs.

Attachment E

1. Cash Assistance

**A. Monthly Maximum Payment Standards**

**STANDARDS FOR FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**Assistance Unit Size Payment Standard**

1 \$165

2 \$190

3 \$215

4 \$245

5 \$275

6 \$305

7 \$335

8 \$365

9 \$395

10 \$425

11 \$455

12 \$485

13 \$515

14 \$545

15 \$575

16 \$605

**B. Resource Standards**

Not applicable effective October 1, 2009.

### C. Work Program Supportive Services (Former Recipients and Needy Applicants)

Family's gross income is less than 200% of the HHS federal poverty guidelines by family size.

215

Attachment E cont'd.

### 2. TANF Emergency Assistance (Formerly EA)

Annual family income is lower than two times the state's estimated median income level (as published by HHS) for a family of three.

### 3. TANF Direct Child Welfare Assistance

Child's or family's gross income is equal to or less than 200% of the HHS poverty guidelines by family size.

### 4. Special Projects

Eligible Families: Child's, individual's (including pregnant women), or family's gross income can be up to 300% of the HHS poverty guidelines by family size. Additionally, the family's receipt of other means tested benefits/services is sufficient to convey categorical financial eligibility as well as receipt of benefits/services from an entity (organization, state agency, etc.) or program whose client population is largely low income.

### A. Hardships

The grantee or spouse of the grantee must meet one of the following circumstances and must not be employed. If a hardship is established but the individual becomes employed or employable (as determined by the JOBS worker) eligibility is lost.

A hardship may exist when the grantee or spouse of the grantee:

1. Is a person whose presence is required on a substantially continuous basis due to the illness or incapacity of the spouse, child, mother-in-law, father-in-law or of an individual to whom the relationship of the caregiver is within certain degrees of relationship and no other person is available to provide the needed care.
2. Has an illness or injury which has lasted or is expected to last at least 30 days and which is serious enough to temporarily prevent employment (or training with the hope of employment) when determined on the basis of medical evidence from the attending physician/clinic. This includes pregnancy when it has been determined by medical evidence that working or participation in training would be detrimental to the woman or the unborn child.
3. Is incapacitated with a physical or mental impairment determined by a physician or a licensed or certified psychologist which prevents or substantially reduces the individual's ability to work.
4. Is fleeing current domestic violence or abuse because s/he recently has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty as verified by certain documentary evidence specified in program manuals.

5. Is participating in drug, alcohol or mental health counseling as verified through the sources of the counseling to the extent participation in program work requirements is precluded.

6. Is age 60 or older.

7. Has a personal barrier of such significance as to preclude training and/or employment and is engaged in an activity to overcome the barrier.

8. Lives in a Food Assistance ABAWD waiver county and has not been disqualified due to noncompliance with JOBS since December, 1996.

#### B. Program Compliance Criteria

The grantee and/or the spouse of the grantee must cooperate with Child Support and comply with JOBS in each month past 60. Failure to meet this criteria results in (1) permanent loss of program eligibility for the grantee and spouse of the grantee regardless of family circumstances and (2) recovery of all benefits received past month 60.

#### 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)—

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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 does not intend to fund a special initiative for training/employment of individuals providing direct care in a long—term facility or in other occupations providing eldercare. However, on a case—by—case basis FA cash assistance recipients can receive assistance/ services while pursuing training/employment to provide such eldercare as part of their IJP and FRP as discussed in section (c) above. Assistance/services in this regard include payment for short term training to obtain classification as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), supplies, uniforms, equipment, etc. Further, the Department has partnered with a centrally located technical school and Baptist Health to provide support for a grant to fund such training. If awarded, referrals from our JOBS client pool can be accepted from 24 surrounding counties.

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 SERVICES ENCOURAGES IT)  
(§263.2(B)(3) & §263.2(C) PREAMBLE PAGES 17826-7)

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Special Projects: 1. Eligible Families: Non-assistance expenditures for services including information and referral to needy parents/families such as short-term non-recurrent benefits as discussed in 45 CFR 260.31, day care, subsidized employment, transportation and work and training services, statewide food distribution network activities and pro-family activities expected to prevent and reduce the incidence of out of wedlock births as well as encourage the formation and maintenance of healthy two parent families including after school activities for teens, fatherhood and healthy marriage initiatives, mentoring and literacy programs and domestic violence/drug abuse/prevention/education programs. Additional non-financial criteria, if any, are dependent on the project plan. Funding Source (s): Commingled State and Federal funds; Federal funds dependent on the project; State MOE.

2. Pro-Family Activities for Other Than Eligible Families: Non-assistance in the form of non-federal cash and in kind qualified expenditures by third parties for individuals and families pursuant to 45 CFR 263.2(a) (4) (ii). Program specifics including non-financial eligibility criteria, if any, are contained in written agreements/contracts between the Department of Human Resources and the third party and in project plans as applicable. These benefits and services are provided without regard to financial need or family composition. Funding Source: State MOE.

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TANF CERTIFICATIONS

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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

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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)))

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A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

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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;

Name of Component: Job Search Description of Component: Job Search is composed of several services offered through the Career Centers and is available to all ABAWDs who volunteer to participate in the offered component. All ABAWDs will not need all of the available services but will be assessed for determination of the services to most benefit the ABAWD in the job search process. Some of the services are provided in a group setting, while some are provided in individual interviews with One—Stop Career Center staff.

The services offered under Job Search, and a description of each is as follows: a. Career Center Orientation: Interview or meeting to orient client to Career Center services and provide information about the availability of, access to, and participation in services. May include tour of Resource Room, demonstration of Alabama Job Link (AJL), demonstration of self—assessment software and availability of Labor Market Information. Labor market information is important to recipients in the Job Search process, as it provides information about occupational demand, high wage— high demand jobs, education/skills required, wage data, etc. for the state and by geographic region. b. Job Search: Interview to develop a plan for the client’s job search. Includes assessment of client’s work history, education, interests, supportive service needs, barriers to employment, and eligibility for services. Plan includes steps to achieve employment objective. Information on available jobs can be found on the ADoL Job Link system accessible in the Career Centers. c. Resume Preparation: Client is provided instruction on the content and format of resumes and cover letters and provided assistance in the development of both documents. d. Job Shop: Short seminars to provide clients with information to improve their job—search knowledge and skills. Subjects will include: self—assessment, employment applications, resumes, employment interviews, and job search methods. e. Referral for Training: Interviewer refers a client to educational or training services to develop competency in basic literacy skills or job skills in order to secure employment. f. Individual Employment Plan: Interview with client who is determined not—job—ready to develop a plan to improve employability by addressing identified barriers to employment. Planning may include career exploration, education, training and/or job search activities. g. Case Management: Interview to assist client’s in resolving issues related to occupational choice, change or adjustment to include barriers to employment such as lack of educational achievement and/or basic skills proficiency, lacking or erratic employment history, family problems, or other factors precluding full employment. h. Referral for Support Services Referral for services not available from the one—stop partners to include food, shelter, health, transportation, veterans agencies, and financial counseling and services.

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;

The contractual cost of this component is \$950,236, plus state agency staff and other costs of \$203,481 and overall state agency E&T operational costs of \$40,000, for an annual total of \$1,193,717. This equates to an estimate of \$85.38 per participant. Revisions will be made when better estimates of actual participants are obtained.

Budget Details for JOB SEARCH

State Agency Salary & Benefits = \$198,481

State Agency Other Costs = \$5,000

Participant Reimbursement Transportation & Other Costs = \$481,476

Program Cost — \$950,000

Total Component Costs = \$1,635,193

Overall State Agency E&T Operational Costs = \$40,000

Total State E&T Costs = \$1,675,193

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;

An ABAWD waiver exists for the following counties, Barbour, Clarke, Choctaw, Conecuh, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Monroe, Perry, Sumter, Washington, and Wilcox. The estimated individuals in these counties is 5,000, and the wavier is good through December 31,2016.

4. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO PLACE IN E&T;

All participants will be voluntary, and we are focusing in on ABAWDS.

5. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS THE STATE AGENCY EXPECTS TO PLACE IN E&T;

13,980 volunteers are expected to participate.

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

Ten 10 counties are to be served with Job Search initially, with additional counties to be added.

7. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO COUNT ALL WORK REGISTRANTS AS OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR;

Electronic counting of work registrants will be used.

8. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO REPORT WORK REGISTRANT INFORMATION ON THE QUARTERLY FORM FNS-583

Manual submission of the quarterly Form FNS—583 will be used.

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);

Alabama has an automated system that provides a non—duplicated count.

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;

Alabama's participants are voluntary; noncompliance is not an issue.

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;

Alabama contracts with DOL in ten (10) counties; formal interagency agreements are in place.

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;

A letter has been sent to the Porch Creek tribal organization located Escambia County outlining our plans and asking for their input.

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

Noncompliance is not an issue as participation is voluntary in Alabama.

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.

Child Care is not available in Alabama's E&T plan.

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 combined amount for Alabama is \$481,476.

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.

Only transportation costs are reimbursed at \$25.00 per year per participant.

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;

Alabama is not a pledge state.

2. ESTIMATED COSTS OF FULFILLING ITS PLEDGE

Alabama is not a pledge state.

3. A DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT CONTROLS IN PLACE TO MEET PLEDGE REQUIREMENTS

Alabama is not a pledge state.

4. A DISCUSSION OF ITS CAPACITY AND ABILITY TO SERVE AT-RISK ABAWDs.

Alabama is not a pledge state.

5. INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIZE AND SPECIAL NEEDS OF ITS ABAWD POPULATION

Alabama is not a pledge state.

6. INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORKFARE COMPONENTS IT WILL OFFER TO MEET THE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENT.

Alabama is not a pledge state.

C. PLAN MODIFICATION

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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

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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.

JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS

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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 promote the hiring and retention of eligible veterans and eligible persons:

1. Alabama will move ahead with plans under the Accelerate Alabama initiative that will include the services provided by Alabama Career Centers affiliated with the Americans Job Center network to include veterans and eligible persons with resources and emphasis for technical training and higher education. 2. Increase business services outreach to Federal defense contractors and subcontractors, such as URS Group Inc. of Mobile for work on the Air Force’s KC—46C; Northrop Grumman of Huntsville for research and development services in support of integrated missile defense; Boeing Co. for work on Army helicopters; L—3 Coleman Aerospace of Huntsville from the Missile Defense Agency. 3. Expand the AIDT training and job opportunities listing on the Alabama Job Link (AJL) <https://joblink.alabama.gov/ada/> to increase priority referral of veterans and eligible persons to jobs and job training. 4. Increase employer outreach in the automotive manufacturing sector which employs many Recently Separated Veterans and pays the highest average wages of any manufacturing industry in Alabama — nearly \$75,000. 5. Encourage more veterans to enroll in the State’s workforce Job—driven training, in trade, manufacturing, and shipbuilding apprenticeship programs offered through the Alabama Industrial Development Training to increase the entered employment rate of Recently Separated Veterans and long term unemployed, older veterans. 6. Expand innovative partnerships such as the initiative of the Alabama Career Center in Mobile, American Job Center affiliate that is training veterans in the welding training and certification program under a joint—venture by AIDT with the ship building industry. Historically, veterans who complete training are placed in well—paying and stable jobs.

**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;**

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**Planned Deployment of Grant—Funded Staff**

JVSG funds allocated to Alabama this year will support 25 Full—Time Equivalent (FTE) DVOP positions and 10 FTE LVER positions. All LVER and DVOP representatives are state merit system employees. LVERs and DVOPs will be assigned to Alabama Career Centers in the American Job Center (AJC) network, and other service delivery locations where mediated labor exchange activities are provided to the public, to ensure maximum effectiveness and complete integration of grant activities and services on behalf of veterans.

As described in Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41, LVERs and DVOPs have distinctly different roles and responsibilities in support of Priority of Service to veterans and Eligible Persons in service delivery programs carried out by the AJC. The activities and functions of LVERs and DVOPs funded under the grant will be carried out in strict adherence to the Wagner—Peyster Act, as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter(s) 41 and 42, as amended by the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, Public Law 112—56, and will be subject to the provisions of the grant, and supplementary operating requirements that may be promulgated through Veterans Program Letters (VPLs), and related guidance from Veterans Employment and Training Service. All LVER and DVOP representatives as required by the Jobs for Veterans Act, as amended, will attend training at the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI) within 18 months of their hire date. Applications for NVTI mandated training will be submitted by the AJC manager to the State Director, Veterans Employment and Training Service, or designated NVTI coordinator, within one month of the hire date. LVER and DVOP assignments are made in consultation with the DVET.

DVOPs are to be located in proximity to community organizations and other entities serving veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE), and where DVOP outreach is effective at locating veterans and eligible persons with SBEs in need of intensive services and case management, as prescribed in current VPL guidance, such as locations within the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs that provide medical and benefits services, other U.S. Department of Labor grant recipients offering services to homeless veterans and veterans transitioning through ex—offender programs, with an emphasis on extending outreach to veterans and eligible persons who are educationally and economically disadvantaged. DVOPs assigned to work for managers of Alabama Career Centers in the American Job Center network will accept only veteran—clients referred by a career center representative and determined to have an SBE, as per the definition.

Alabama will fill LVER—DVOP vacancies by selecting applicants from hiring registers for the Employment Service provided by the State Personnel Department that only list qualified veterans and disabled veterans. Alabama, in consultation with the DVET, will immediately fill unplanned and unscheduled LVER—DVOP vacancies on a temporary basis with individuals who are currently in staff and are statutorily qualified for the LVER or DVOP position until a qualified veteran or disabled veteran can be hired on a permanent basis through the state merit system. This approach will help to keep planned expenditures on target and ensure that grant funds are applied at the planned locations as intended for providing services to veterans.

DVOP Staff

DVOP duties will be assigned in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4103A, as amended by VOW to Hire Heroes Act, Public Law 112—56. DVOPs are Employment Service (ES) staff, with principle duties to carry out intensive services to meet the employment needs of eligible veterans, and the following priority in the provision of services: (a) Special disabled veterans, (b) Other disabled veterans, (c) Other eligible veterans determined as priority, taking into account applicable rates of unemployment and the employment emphasis for covered veterans under federal contracts. DVOPs service only veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) as defined by current VPL guidance. Veterans using self—service to register on the Internet—based Alabama Job Link (AJL) will be identified from reports prepared for AJC managers to determine if the veterans may have a SBE and could benefit from DVOP follow up and intensive services.

DVOP Roles and Responsibilities Listed by Task and Activities:

### **Intensives Services**

- DVOPs will facilitate intensive services under a strategy of case management to veterans with special employment and training needs due to a SBE, as defined by current VPL guidance. These services may include any combination of services listed below, but at a minimum, an assessment of employability and a written employment plan are required in a program of case management. All services are to be documented including, assessment, career guidance, and coordination with supportive services, referrals to job training, and referral of “Job Ready” clients to career center job placement specialists.
- DVOPs prioritize services to veterans with SBEs who are economically and educationally disadvantaged, veterans enrolled as clients in a program of vocational rehabilitation administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans who are homeless, and other veterans identified as needing individual assistance and case management as determined by the Assistant Secretary for Veterans Employment and Training Services.
- DVOPs develop and promote apprenticeship and OJT positions for veterans with SBEs.
- DVOPs provide technical assistance to community—based organizations for employment and training services to veterans with SBEs.
- DVOPs provide vocational and career guidance to veterans with SBEs.
- DVOPs provide ES case management to veterans with significant obstacles and challenges to employment.

### **Outreach**

- DVOPs will conduct outreach activities or providing services at alternative service locations to locate candidates who could benefit from intensive services and market these services to potential clients in programs and places such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E), Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project (HVRP), and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and Vet Centers, with an emphasis on meetings the needs of those who are unable to obtain employment through core services.

### **Referral to Training**

- DVOPs will work with Homeless shelters, civic and community agencies, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners in the American Job Center network, vocational rehabilitation agencies, the Alabama Industrial and

Development Training (AIDT) program, and other training providers to locate and refer veterans to job—driven training and apprenticeship programs AIDT program. Veterans having a SBEs will be referred to DVOPs for intensive services. DVOPs will also be assigned to orientation sessions hosted by the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) to assist potential VR&E clients to make good choices in their Chapter 31 occupational and career training.

### **LVER Staff**

LVER duties will be assigned in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4104, as amended by the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, Public Law 112—56, the Special Grant provisions of the JVSG, and VPL 03—14 and 04—14, to exclusively benefit veterans and eligible persons by promoting the advantages of hiring veterans to employers, employer associations, and business groups, as well as those duties that facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans through the career center within the American Job Center (AJC) network of providers.

LVERs are assigned as team members in Business Service Units to (1) advocate for all eligible veterans and Eligible Persons served by the AJC with business, industry, and other community—based organizations by participating in appropriate outreach activities such as job and career fairs, conducting job search workshops with employers, employer summits, coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for all veterans and Eligible Persons; and (2) facilitate employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans through the labor exchange services offered under the Wagner—Peyser Act and the Jobs for Veterans Act , as amended (Ref. 20 CFR part 1010.)

The purpose of conducting outreach to employers in the area is to develop relationships, jobs, training, or training opportunities for veterans and eligible persons and the purpose of conducting seminars and establishing self—directed job search work groups is to ensure a greater number of eligible veterans and eligible persons have the skills needed to find employment. Specific duties of LVERs are negotiated with the DVET.

Alabama LVER Roles and Responsibilities Listed by Tasks and Activities:

Expanding Capacity of the Workforce development System to Assist Veterans

- LVERs will assist and facilitate in expanding the capacity of other career center partners in the American Job Centers in providing assistance and training to veterans and Eligible Persons by taking actions to ensure veterans are provided easier access to the full range of labor exchange services needed to meet their employment and training needs. • LVERs will work with other workforce development providers to develop their capacity to recognize, and respond to these needs. Responsibilities may include the following activities: Train other staff and service delivery system partners to enhance their knowledge of veterans' employment and training issues and promote the participation of veterans in employment and training, and refer veterans to training, supportive services, and educational opportunities with Career Center (One—Stop) partners and other community providers. Advocate for Veterans with Employers with Educational and Training Providers, Unions,

## Apprenticeship Programs, and the Business Community to Promote Employment and Training Opportunities for Veterans.

- AJCs will promote job—driven apprenticeship training to veterans under the GoBuildAlabama initiative offered through unions and the Alabama Construction Recruitment Institute. Established by the Alabama Legislature to increase outreach to unemployed and under—employed, and expand the involvement of community leaders, employers, labor unions, training programs, and veterans’ organizations, the GoBuildAlabama program is an excellent opportunity for veterans to enter OJT and apprenticeship in the trades, in addition to employment and training programs funded under WIOA.
- LVERs will maintain current information on employment and training opportunities.
- LVERs will plan and participate in job fairs and employer summits to promote veterans.
- LVERs will encourage streamlining of credentialing and licensing for veterans with military training comparable to the requirements of credentialing agencies and entities.

### Outreach to Employers on Behalf of Veterans

- LVERs as team members of Business Service Units will develop employer relations contact plans for career centers in the AJC network, to include identifying federal contractors and recruit jobs for all veterans from local employers.
- LVERs will establish, maintain, or facilitate regular contact with employers to develop employment and training openings for all veterans.
- LVERs will monitor job listings by federal contractors and encourage the referral of qualified veterans who may not have been referred to those job by the Alabama Job Link automated notification/referral system.

### Monitor, Evaluate and Advise Management on Services and Training to Veterans

- LVERs are administratively responsible to managers of employment services provided by career centers within the AJC network, and will assist the managers in developing quarterly reports regarding compliance with law and regulations in respect to special services and Priority of Service (P—O—S) for eligible veterans and Covered Persons. Consistent with Special Provisions of the LVER grant and Title 38 USC, quarterly reports will be forwarded by AJC managers, through the line of administrative authority, to the Director of Veterans Employment and Training (DVET) regarding compliance with federal law and regulations with respect to special services and Priority of Service for eligible veterans and Covered Persons in the provision of employment services and training, as per 20 CFR part 1010.
- LVERs will perform self—appraisal of procedures and outcomes with respect to negotiated performance measures and compliance with the law, applicable regulations, and state directives and federal grant provisions.
- LVERs will analyze recorded performance data made available to them through the AJC Veterans Reports for the career center/AJC to which assigned to determine accomplishments or shortcomings towards meeting the state’s negotiated performance measures for outcomes.

## 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;

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### Program Integration and Leveraged Resources

The partnership agreements among all service providers located within the Alabama Career Center in the statewide American Job Center (AJC) network and other strategic outstation activities have been established or modified to include common focus on services to veterans. LVER and DVOP services and program activities will be under the auspices of the Employment Service Division of the Alabama Department of Labor, the JVSG grantee and operator of the statewide network of American Job Centers, and a primary partner with all agencies in the Alabama Workforce Development system that includes all approved training providers in the Alabama Career Center system. LVERs and DVOPs work directly for employment service managers and are tasked to assist managers in the evaluation as to the degree of utilization of all services and training by veterans. LVERs will assist in providing training on Priority of Services to partners in statewide network.

LVERs will be assigned activities to increase public awareness that eligible veterans and Covered Persons have Priority of Service, as defined under 20 CFR Part 1010, and will assist managers in the training of POS requirements to all career center partners, within the American Job Center network, and will monitor the effectiveness and coordination among all network partners in the following endeavors:

- Individual assessments of veterans for job preparedness, referral to supportive services, job training and outreach services, and improving access statewide and local labor market information.
- Cooperation among all agencies and programs providing services and assistance to veterans to promote maximum awareness and availability of benefits among veterans, particularly veterans who may need such services or assistance in gaining employment or job training.
- Participation in state workforce development training conferences and workshops with topics regarding priority services to veterans and marketing veterans to employers. The Governor of Alabama established the Alabama Workforce Council and appointed state leaders in business, industry, education and government, to improve collaboration between educators and employers so that job—seekers can identify and participate in job—driven training that fit the skill sets needed for jobs available in business and industry. The grantee, as a member of the council, will ensure that job—driven training will recognize corresponding military skill sets, thus encouraging the participation of veterans and separating service members.
- Assisting Federal agencies to recruit veterans, particularly disabled veterans and veterans described by the Veterans Employment Service for special emphasis under Title 38 U.S.C Chapter 42 and the grant provisions, and 20 CFR Part 1010 (Priority Service for Covered Persons; and special recruitment initiatives of veterans by individual Federal agencies.)

As provided for under Title 10 U.S.C., the Alabama Career Center system in the American Job Center network will provide assistance to military service members and eligible spouses in transition to civilian jobs and careers through the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) at several military facilities in Alabama, and will provide intensive services to veterans participating in vocational rehabilitation, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (US DVA), as provided under Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter 31.

Alabama assigned a State Intensive Service Coordinator (ISC) to work directly with Employment Coordinators the US DVA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service to coordinate the referral of “Job Ready” veterans enrolled in vocational rehabilitation services under Chapter 31 of Title 38 U.S.C. to the American Job Center for assistance in gaining suitable employment consistent with their vocational rehabilitation plans. Policy for the delivery of Priority of Service by the State, Local Workforce Investment Boards, and the Alabama Career Centers in the American Job Center network include the following new or existing measures:

- The first point of contact for veterans and Eligible Persons seeking services from Alabama’s Career Center system in the American Job Center network is a representative from Employment Services.
- Those who access self—services through the Internet will complete a universal application that includes features and questions designed to assist staff members in identifying them for Priority of Service and training at any point of entry into the workforce development system.
- Additionally, AJC locations will use signage, graphics, and displays to create awareness of the policy that requires Priority of Service for eligible veterans and certain Eligible Spouses.

### **Partnerships and Alliances with Supportive Services**

The State of Alabama has made a commitment to provide the best possible services to our nation’s military service members, veterans and their families (SMVF) by establishing the Alabama Executive Veterans Network (AlaVetNet) Commission through Executive Order 42 signed by Governor Robert Bentley on December 10, 2013. The Commission is comprised of the following state agencies: Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Mental Health, Alabama National Guard, Department of Labor, Serve Alabama, Office of the Attorney General, Department of Education, Department of Corrections, Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Department of Post—Secondary Education, Commission on Higher Education, Department of Rehabilitation Services, Department of Public Health, Medicaid Agency, Law Enforcement Agency, Department of Human Resources, Department of Transportation, and Office of the Chief Justice.

The Executive Order requires the AlaVetNet Commission to study and evaluate all services in the state and direct at improving the well—being of SMVF in the areas of education, employment, health, homelessness and legal assistance. The Commission also included family services. The six committees functioning under its authority developed a Long Range Pan of Recommendations to assist SMVF in the areas of Behavioral Health, Education, Employment, Homelessness, Legal Assistance and Family Services. The statewide American Job Center network is an integral partner in the coordination of all state resources and services to assist SMVF which, to the extent possible, is to be based on using best practices and innovation. With regard to economic issues for veterans, the Commission set the following long range goals:

- (1) Reduce veteran unemployment in Alabama to under 5%.
- (2) The Commission will focus on improving public/private partnerships, identifying barriers to Veteran’s employment, incentivize proactive hiring of veterans by recognizing employers, agencies, and organizations that demonstrate excellence in supporting veterans, formally develop a statewide veterans’ entrepreneurial initiative, and support efforts

of the American Job Centers to partner with private organizations that can assist veterans to find good jobs and meaningful career opportunities. (3) The Commission will develop award incentives to recognize employers who make hiring veterans a priority, and proposes to support legislation that will expand the state's tax incentives to companies who hire unemployed veterans. AlaVetNet will work with the AJC system to implement this and the other recommendations from the Commission. Alabama hosted a U.S. Army Wounded Warrior (AW2) Conference at the State Capital to establish a permanent statewide coalition of services providers to assist wounded and seriously injured veterans. This very successful event was attended by representatives from nearly every state and federal agency and many community organizations sharing a common commitment of assisting military service members and their families and returning veterans and their spouses. The conference was an excellent opportunity for the participants to become acquainted with each other's objectives, resources and services, and to discuss ways in which they could work together to assist wounded or injured military in their transition to civilian lives. As a result, the coalition agreed to develop working relationships and define ways to share resources, and to collaborate on how to assist specific individuals with challenging disabilities to become employed and re—established in their hometowns. The JVS grantee will continue to participate in this highly effective forum for assisting challenged veterans and their families to successfully cope with re—adjustment.

### **Integration of VR&E Programs**

The VR&E Partnership is fully integrated into the statewide AJV network as required component of the LVER—DVOP grant (Veterans Program Letter No. 01—09, dated December 11, 2008). DVOP representatives will case manage all active VR&E clients referred from VR&E counselors, in addition to veterans with other significant barriers to employment (SBE). The standard case management requirement for DVOP representatives will be to document specific services required by an Employment Service directive. DVOP representatives' primary role with VR&E clients is to assist VR&E counselors and veteran—clients to develop career objectives and an effective employment plan. Other ES case management services to be documented include an assessment of vocational or training needs and economic considerations. Employment barriers with regard to the job search are to be described with the detail needed for carrying out successful job referrals or job development with potential employers.

Services, job referrals and contact with specific employers on behalf of clients are to be documented using the AJL case management screens. VR&E clients will have a services screen entry that identifies the client as "Job Ready" or "Not Job Ready", as determined by VR&E. Under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the US Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service, VR&E staff members and DVOPs will share training opportunities to apply the policies and procedures outlined in the VR&E/VETS Technical Assistance Guide (VR&E TAG). VR&E and the Employment Service (ES) will continue to jointly develop team training to improve coordination of services.

### **Integration with other VETS' initiatives and Programs**

Alabama will continue to conduct training sessions with LVERs, DVOPs and AJC managers on development of initiatives that will promote the hiring of returning and transitioning Alabama National Guard and Reservists and other veterans, such as participants in Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshops. The priority group in this effort are returning Alabama National Guard and Reservists, particularly those on medical hold and awaiting medical discharge. Alabama has a partnership with the US Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Division, to ensure that eligible separating military personnel at Warrior Transition Units are afforded employment and training services. TAP is conducted by the VETS' contractor at the US Army installations at Fort Rucker and Redstone Arsenal.

### **Integration into statewide AJC Training**

LVERs and DVOPs funded under the JVSG will be participating in many outreach, training, and supportive service opportunities that will require continuous professional upgrade of their skills and knowledge of resources that may be available to assist veterans. For that purpose, Alabama will budget based on review of projected cost of the projected allocation to conduct an annual Alabama Veterans' Training Conference. The training agenda will be developed in consultation with the Alabama DVET and may include professional training provided the National Veterans Training Institute (NVTI), in accordance with VPL No. 06—09, or an annual professional training conference to improve LVER—DVOP skills/ knowledge and to foster effective working relationships with workforce development partners and agencies in the AJC network. Appropriate NVTI Off—Site course(s) of instruction and the development of an agenda for an annual Alabama Veterans' Training Conference will be in consultation with the DVET to ensure all NVTI training and conference agenda will be in keeping with our mission. Requests for NVTI Off—Site training will be submitted per VPL No. 06—09, or the latest guidance.

### **Special Efforts to Homeless Veterans**

DVOP staff members in the AJC at the Alabama Career Center in Mobile have developed a partnership with the 15 Place Homeless Shelters in downtown Mobile, Alabama. Many agencies and volunteer groups have expanded the membership in this coalition, which is planning several Veterans' Stand Down events across the state this year. DVOPs will provide Homeless Veterans with job development services, and other intensive services under the case management approach to identify basic needs regarding safety, health, and shelter. Follow—up case management services in this effort will include referral to employment and WIA training providers to identify individual training needs.

Other Homeless Veterans efforts are planned in the Birmingham area. DVOP staff members are organizers and active participants in the annual Metro Birmingham Alabama Homeless Veterans Stand Down, sponsored by the Birmingham VA and Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter No. 4. Planning is coordinated each year with the VA Medical Center's Stand Down event designed to "provide refuge from the streets." Our agency is joining with the Veterans Affairs Medical Center staff, other federal agencies, military and veteran organizations, as well as community support, to provide homeless veterans and their families with basic healthcare services; assistance programs, mental health and spiritual counseling; clothing and sustenance

within an encouraging and respectful environment. DVOPs in Birmingham are assigned to assist Homeless Veterans to acquire job training and work, under an agreement with the Alethia House, which recently was awarded a grant by VETS under Homeless Veterans Reintegration Act.

In North Alabama, the Alabama Career Centers in the American Job Center network are partners in planning an annual Homeless Veterans' Stand Down in Huntsville, Alabama. This effort involves a large number of community and faith—based organizations, and is conducted simultaneously with a Veterans' Day Job Fair. The AJC in Huntsville is a primary organizer for recruiting community action groups, churches, and volunteers to host networking opportunities and Job Search workshops conducted by DVOPs for Homeless and Dislocated Veterans. Information will be provided to homeless veterans on how to find employment opportunities in the locality and how to relate their skills and experience into new work in other industries and occupations.

The Dothan Career Center in the American Job Center network is a partner in planning an annual event with a community—based coalition, headed by representatives of the faith—based House of Benjamin Center, to provide a large scale Homeless Veterans' Stand Down. With assistance from the Central Alabama Veterans' Healthcare System, Homeless veterans will be provided health screening, medical and dental services, counseling opportunities and access to job search services. Food, personal services, and clothing donations are already pledged by several community agencies and local businesses.

In East Alabama, the Opelika Career Center in the American Job Center network, provides a staff member to serve on the planning committee for the annual Homeless Veterans and Veterans in Need (HV/VIN) Stand Down in Columbus, Georgia, and assigns a DVOP to provide services during the event. Integration with Programs and Initiatives to Promote Veterans' Entrepreneurship

With regard to business and entrepreneurship opportunities for veterans, recent AJC training has resulted in new partnerships with organizations having resources to assist veterans open their own businesses and qualify for state tax breaks. A new American Express OPEN State of the Women—Owned Business Report ranks Alabama No. 8 in the nation in the growth of women—owned businesses over the past 17 years. Alabama is among the states leading the nation in deploying funds from the Small Business Credit Initiative offered by the U.S. Treasury. A study commissioned by USAA Insurance and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes program says Huntsville and Montgomery, Alabama, are two of the best medium—sized metro areas for job—seeking veterans of the Post 911 era. This is an important finding, given that since 9/11, the Alabama National Guard has called more than 21,000 personnel to active duty.

By Executive Order, the Governor of Alabama created the Alabama Executive Veterans Network (AlaVetNet), commissioned to study ways to improve services to those who have served our country in uniform, in the key areas of education, employment, health, homelessness, and legal assistance, and a new state law is designed to facilitate the ability of discharged military service members to receive licensure and academic credit for military education, training, and experience.

## **Integration into Efforts to Promote Development of Job—driven Employment and Training Opportunities for Veterans**

The Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job Center network as a key member in the Alabama Veterans Executive Network (AlaVetNet) will assist in the implementation of the Long Range Plan with the Alabama Business Council, Small Business Administration and the Alabama Community College System to consolidate and streamline job—driven training for veterans and separating military service members based on the needs of business and industry and the recommendations from employers, veteran employee mentoring programs, and feedback from a series of Regional Employer Summits being planned for 2015.

The statewide American Job Center network as a partner with public and private agencies in the AlaVetNet will encourage bridge training with community colleges and will work with the Alabama National Guard to offer all veterans to participate Alabama National Guard's Civilian Job Training program.

### **D. THE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED USING THE 1% GRANT ALLOCATION SET ASIDE FOR THIS PURPOSE, AS APPLICABLE;**

The intent of the Alabama Veterans Performance Incentive Award Program is to encourage the improvement and modernization of employment, training, and job placement services for veterans, and recognize eligible employees in the American Job Center (AJC) network for excellence in providing such services and training, or for having made demonstrative improvements in service delivery and training for veterans. The Alabama Veterans Performance Incentive Award program emphasizes fostering and strengthening partnerships that excel in services to veterans. As per Title 38 U.S.C., Part 4112, and the JVSG Special provisions, states are to set aside one percent of their grant award to provide Veterans' Performance Incentive Awards.

#### **Eligibility for the Alabama Veterans Performance Incentive Award**

This award is for Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER), Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives and the State's workforce development employees who provide services to veterans under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner—Peyser Act. As defined in the Alabama Labor Administrative Code, § 480—2—1—.03, the Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Labor is responsible for the awarding of cash awards only to eligible recipients, and for the administration of the awards program, pursuant to law and the Special Provisions of the JVSG.

The Alabama Veterans Incentive Award Program as approved for Alabama stipulates that recipients of Veterans Performance Incentive Awards will be individuals. Therefore, to nominate an entire unit, such as an Alabama Career Center, or a specific unit (such as the Business Services unit), the nomination must list the members and show what contribution was made by each member in the performance or accomplishment being considered for the award. Nominees must be funded from a grant or other funding from the U.S. Department of Labor.

#### **Selection of Veterans Performance Incentive Awards**

Selection of awardees may involve evaluating both objective and subjective data (Ref: Veterans Program Letter (VPL) No. 02—07. Nominees must have demonstrated outstanding efforts in providing employment, job and vocational training, job placement, and other employment—related services to United States veterans or separating military personnel. Services to veterans having especially significant barriers to employment and job training, such as homeless veterans, wounded veterans or seriously injured veterans, will be afforded extra weight in the selection criteria. The nominations may include a combination of performance data, examples of team building, motivation, descriptions of improvements made to veterans’ employment or training programs, and illustrations of positive feedback from job seeking veterans and business customers. Priority consideration for a performance incentive award will be provided to providers of outreach and services to veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE). As required under the JVSG, Alabama Veterans Performance Incentive Awards will be obligated no later than September 30 of the Fiscal Year and liquidated no later than December 31.

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);

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### **Targeting Services to Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE)**

Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job center (AJC) network will provide comprehensive employment, training, and career placement services to nearly 25,000 veterans a year through a combination of Internet—based job services and personal assistance at Alabama Career Centers in the statewide AJC network. Alabama has more than 32,000 residents currently serving in the Armed Forces and of that nearly 13,000 in the National Guard and Reserve component. Alabama National Guard ranked fifth in numbers of troops deployed.

The Alabama Career Center system in the American Job Center network operates under the auspices of the Alabama Department of Labor, the state agency responsible for providing employment services and related services to veterans, and is authorized by the Governor to make application for funds to carry out the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) to carry out the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) program as mandated under Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41.

The Alabama Job Link (AJL) enables veterans to use self—services, including registration. This approach enables specialists in the DVOP to review the registrations and resumes submitted by veterans on—line and then contact veterans who appear to need further assistance. Alabama DVOP specialists prioritize their efforts with veterans who are facing significant barriers to employment (SBE) in securing employment, including veterans who appear to be having difficulty in using the Alabama Job Link (AJL) automated system.

The assignment of DVOP specialists at specific Alabama Career Centers in the statewide American Job Center (AJC) network is based on a strategy to ensure veterans with SBEs are priority customers in the Alabama Workforce Development system. Although many veterans can and will use the internet—based self—registration and various self—service features, veterans with SBEs are provided intensive services. Veterans who enter the Alabama Workforce Development System at an AJC (Alabama Career Center), are served initially by career center specialists. For veterans who appear to have an SBE, career center specialists will offer additional services, to include referral to a DVOP who will provide intensive services and case management services to veterans having a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE), as defined by Veterans Program Letter (VPL) 03—14, (VPL) 03-14 changes 1 and 2, and VPL 04—14 or any future VPLs providing guidance on SBEs:

- All veterans enrolled in the Five—track Employment Program administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Service. As covered in a separate agreement with VR&E, a client determined to be “Job—Ready” by VR&E will be referred by a VR&E Employment Coordinator to the state’s Intensive Services Coordinator (ISC), who will refer the Job Ready VR&E client to an appropriate AJC manager for case management and job placement services.

Veterans with SBEs will be provided a comprehensive Assessment of Employability, addressing barriers to employment and a written Individual Employment Plan (IEP) outlining the individual’s employability planning.

### **Locating Priority Group Veterans**

Veterans in priority groups will be located in the data system by developing special reports and search capabilities of the AJL system. Career Center/AJC staff members will outreach to veterans who may benefit from DVOP services. DVOPs will outreach to homeless shelters, community agencies that provide services to homeless individuals, and will participate in special events for disabled and homeless veterans, such as Homeless Veterans Stand Downs.

### **Employment Service Case Management by DVOP Specialists**

Standard DVOP case management practices will include: 1. Assisting veteran—clients in development of job objectives and a resume. 2. Identifying significant barriers or challenges to employment. 3. Referring or assisting veteran—clients to appropriate supportive services. 4. Determining veteran—clients’ economic need. 5. Identifying training or educational goals. 6. Documenting contacts with employers on behalf of individual clients. 7. Maintaining current contact information. 8. Documenting job referrals and job development for employment, internship, or on—the—job—training (OJT) opportunities for individual clients.

DVOP representatives will use the AJL case management feature to load cases into the “My Cases” portfolio. Case management review of the caseload for every DVOP representative under the AJL “My Cases” feature will be conducted by ES managers on a quarterly basis to ensure that the adherence to required practices and privacy concerns. As a self—assessment measure, ES managers will review the “My Cases”

portfolio of their DVOP representatives to identify effective performances (best practices and success stories) and shortcomings in services needing correction.

DVOPs will use reports provided from the Alabama Job Link to outreach and contact Recently Separated Veterans, ages 18 to 24, and veterans receiving Ex—service members Unemployment Benefits (UCX) for the purpose of offering job placement or job training services. Veterans responding to this outreach will be provided assessment services to determine their readiness to apply for employment opportunities in their area of choice with their current skills. Assessment will include evaluating the additional skills needed for employment with employers having those jobs. This approach provides veterans with customer choice as to specific occupations for which to begin training. Veterans are also acquainted with the AJC resources that are available to pursue job—driven training in emerging industries, such as fast growing jobs in Green Industries.

#### F. HOW THE STATE IMPLEMENTS AND MONITORS THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO COVERED PERSONS;

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In affiliation with the American Job Center (AJC) network, the Alabama Veterans' Services Program within the Alabama Career Center system shall offer comprehensive employment and career placement service to nearly 25,000 veterans a year through a combination of self—service Internet—based job services and direct assistance at AJCs throughout the state. The Alabama Job Link (AJL) system, as a point of entry for self—service registration, provides a priority service notification to veterans and covered persons at [https://joblink.alabama.gov/ada/mn\\_veterans\\_dsp.cfm](https://joblink.alabama.gov/ada/mn_veterans_dsp.cfm)

Veterans and persons entitled to priority services and training complete a universal application that includes features and questions designed to assist staff members in identifying them for priority services and training at the point of entry into the workforce development system. Veterans who can use AJL competently are encouraged to self—register and make maximum use of the automated access to resources. As a core service, career center specialists review applications and resumes submitted by veterans and covered persons who register for employment using self—service, to ensure that veterans' applications clearly state job objectives and show meaningful information with regards to work history, education and training. Because veterans' resumes are listed first in the search results and are annotated with an American flag, employers can quickly locate qualified veterans for job openings. To ensure that veterans' receive priority in referral to job openings, the Alabama Job Link system provides 24—hour email alerts to veterans for any job listing that matches their resumes. The automated system to select qualified candidates for job openings is programmed to refer only qualified veterans in the first 24 hours of the listing, unless no qualified veterans are available.

Priority service is also provided when veterans, or others eligible for priority, are identified at intake when registering for services at any AJC, or other service delivery points. Career center specialists will ensure that each veteran completing a full application will have properly recorded their skills, education, training, job or career interests, work experience, licenses or certifications, employment availability, contact information, and other vital information. Additionally, AJCs will use signage,

graphics, and displays to inform veterans and Covered Persons of priority service (as described under Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 42 and 20 CFR Part 1010) and as applicable to all US DOL—funded employment services and training.

Moreover, local career center managers will develop outreach activities to locate Covered Persons under Veterans' Priority. Managers or designated representatives will review special reports generated by AJL for the purpose of identifying veterans and Covered Persons who may be contacted and made aware of their priority in services and training. Career Center managers will develop local service strategies and training goals for veterans and Covered Persons entitled to Veterans' Priority, in consultation with their partner agencies and training providers, to encourage maximum utilization of services and training by veterans and Covered Persons. All Alabama Workforce Development regions have implemented Veterans' Priority in the State WIA and Wagner—Peysner Plan of Service. Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) shall complement Priority of Service provided by the AJC to veterans and Covered Persons, as mandated under Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter 41, and in accordance with the general and special provisions of the Jobs For Veterans State Grant (JVSG), and applicable regulations, policies, and directive guidance for JVSG from the Assistant Secretary, Veterans Employment and Training (ASVET), including Veterans Program Letters addressing DVOP—LVER Roles and Responsibilities.

The Alabama strategy leverages improvements in technology to enable career center specialists to locate and review the resumes of veterans using on—line self—services for the purpose of offering helpful advice or suggestions on presenting their skills and abilities to prospective employers, because the AJL data system is designed to support employers searching for key words, then automatically flags the resumes of veterans and Covered Persons who are identified as qualified candidates within the parameters entered by the employer. This advantage offers veterans and Covered Person a Priority in Service and enables an employer to contact them directly, with or without a referral through a posted job order.

To ensure priority of service is being provided to Veterans the JVSG Coordinator/LVER's will use State Performance Data to conduct analysis of referral to DOL funded training programs, job referrals and Career Center services. In Alabama priority is given to Veterans in the use of Career Center resources i.e. Computers and internet access either by having a separate resource room or by designating computers for Veteran priority of service.

**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,**

Comparison of State Performance Data outcomes will use automated reports prepared from the AJL system. Additionally, AJC managers will submit a Manager Quarterly Report on Services to Veterans in the format approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service. Manager will also provide an assessment as to whether intensive services provided by DVOP specialists assigned to them are being correctly

documented and effective. Jobs and job training will be provided as cited by paragraph (a) above.

## 2. EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES, AND

Comparison of State Performance Data outcomes will use automated reports prepared from the AJL system. Additionally, AJC managers will submit a Manager Quarterly Report on Services to Veterans in the format approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service. Manager will also provide an assessment as to whether intensive services provided by DVOP specialists assigned to them are being correctly documented and effective. Employment placement services will be provided as cited by paragraph (a) above.

## 3. JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING AND SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT SERVICE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS;

Comparison of State Performance Data outcomes will use automated reports prepared from the AJL system. Additionally, AJC managers will submit a Manager Quarterly Report on Services to Veterans in the format approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans Employment and Training Service. Manager will also provide an assessment as to whether intensive services provided by DVOP specialists assigned to them are being correctly documented and effective. Job-driven training will be provided through OJT program, apprenticeship programs in conjunction with educational providers.

## H. THE HIRE DATE ALONG WITH MANDATORY TRAINING COMPLETION DATES FOR ALL DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF; AND

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Grant Funded Staff Name	Date Appointed	Training Completed
Chapman, Greg	04/01/1998	2/17/2009
Garner, Charlote Y.	10/16/2014	05/08/2015
Daugharty, William	10/01/2010	05/10/2011
Sneed, Nicarde	10/16/2014	06/15/2016
Harold, Walker	06/02/2015	03/18/2016
Brothers, Johnny	12/01/1994	12/5/2011
Jackson, LC	03/03/2014	4/29/2016
Tatum, Terris	10/01/1979	1/29/2016
Gossett, Robert	10/16/2014	09/27/2013
Merritt, Maxwell	10/01/2010	9/12/2012
Drake, James "Dave"	10/07/2013	11/7/2014
Smith, Susan B	04/01/2014	08/08/2014
Sasnette, Gerry	02/01/2015	07/31/2015
Flemons, Carlston	02/18/2014	8/1/2014
Scannell, Brian	12/01/2010	5/13/2011
William, Hardy	06/02/2015	9/22/2015
Kidd, Mae F.	12/29/2014	09/04/2015
Reeves, Steven B	12/22/2014	12/22/2014
Hyatt, Catina L.	02/04/2015	02/04/2016
Sterling, Joel	3/06/2015	07/31/2015
Owen, Lisa Diane	06/04/2013	3/21/2014
Bryan, Renaldo	08/20/2012	8/16/2013
Treadwell, Robbie A	06/17/2013	2/14/2014
Perkins, Dan	06/02/2015	01/11/2016
Warren, Phillip	11/01/2014	09/04/2015
Bowen, Nicholas	10/01/2010	04/29/2016
Turberville, Irvin	08/01/2014	06/05/2015
Cieutat, Donal(DVOP/ISC)	02/01/2011	06/24/2012

## I. SUCH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS THE SECRETARY MAY REQUIRE.

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At the time of plan submission, no additional information was requested by the Secretary.

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## SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

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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

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**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.)

The American workforce will shift dramatically in the years ahead. Many projections indicate by the year 2020, there will be more Americans over the age of 65 than 18 years or under. Alabama will be affected by this workforce shift. The mature worker is a resource that states cannot afford to lose. As Thomas Nelson, Chief Operating Officer at AARP said, "The mature workforce is undoubtedly one of the greatest untapped resources of developed countries. Engaging these workers should be of the highest priority." Alabama could not agree more. ADSS and its partner agencies will strive to train and develop our mature workers to take advantage of these future employment opportunities.

According to the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations Labor Market Information Division (LMI), the following are the top ten occupations that may potentially employ workers age 55 and older. This data is based on a 2011 Occupation/Employment Survey.

• Food Preparation and Serving Workers • Cashiers • Waiters and Waitresses • Retail Salespersons • Truck Drivers • Janitors and Cleaners • Nurses Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants • Secretaries • Registered Nurses • Cooks

Many of these occupations, including food preparation, cashiers, waiters and waitresses, and retail sales start at the lower end of the pay scale. However, ADSS and its partner agencies will seek to place older workers in higher paying jobs where possible, including truck drivers, secretaries, and nurses.

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))

LMI projections indicate that Alabama will be substantially impacted by the "graying" of its population over the coming decade. In fact, its aging rate will outpace developments in most other states and the nation as a whole. The pool of persons ages 55 and older is projected to grow by 30% over the next ten years, compared to

only a 4% growth rate for the 16-54 age group. Persons age 55 and older will account for nearly 75% of the projected increase in the nation's working-age population in the next decade, a historically unprecedented development. Alabama will be a part of this dramatic shift in the workforce.

What does this mean to the employment situation for older workers in Alabama? It means tremendous opportunity for seniors who want to stay in the workforce, or re-enter it after having retired. Many leading national corporations like Home Depot and CVS have discovered the value of the older worker, and have put programs in place to keep older workers on staff, or hire them back as consultants. Those companies that choose to ignore this "age wave" will struggle to keep their workforce intact in the very near future. Due to the decrease in the number of young people entering the workforce, jobs will be there for older workers who want to work.

These demographic and labor force changes in Alabama in the coming decade will pose a number of important challenges for the state's private and public sector employees and the workforce development system as a whole. In the years ahead, most employers will have to substantially increase the number of older workers on their payrolls and restructure their hiring practices to accommodate greater numbers of older workers.

Some of the strategies we will utilize include the following: • Provide a single point of entry through our 350 plus Senior Centers in the state, who will work closely with the One Stop Career Centers. • Develop training for employers that clearly defines the benefits of retaining mature workers. • Conduct statewide outreach to mature adults to create a new way of thinking about retirement, and to make individuals aware of the educational opportunities available to the mature worker. • Analyze possible disincentives that exist in the current system that would discourage the involvement of older Alabamians.

The Alabama Department of Senior Services SCSEP program will strive to improve the employability of our seniors, and extend the work lives of older Alabamians, especially the economically disadvantaged.

### 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 Alabama Department of Industrial Relations LMI Division has provided a "New Hires by Industry" report which lists the top ten industries employing workers 55 and older in Alabama.

The top ten industries are the following: • Administrative and Support Services • Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services • Ambulatory Health Care Service • Food Services • Specialty Trade Contractors • Truck Transportation • Nursing and Residential Care Facilities • General Merchandise Stores • Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers • Construction

Alabama has analyzed the state's occupations projections. We identified those occupations providing significant employment opportunities for SCSEP participants due to growth or high turnover. In identifying these occupations, ADSS considered the profiles of the SCSEP participants being served, including their employment history, educational level, and work skills as well as the particular challenges of those most-in-need. Consequently, Alabama concentrated on occupations requiring short-term or moderate-term on-the-job-training.

Overall, Alabama's workforce will increase an annual average growth of 1.35 percent, which is slightly higher than the nation's 1.23 percent projected growth. Many of the occupational titles appropriate for SCSEP participants are in growing industries. For example, healthcare occupations will continue to grow at a fast pace due to the aging of the state's population. Healthcare and social assistance employment will continue to grow over the next decade. ADSS plans to partner regionally with local community colleges to create training programs for mature workers that will provide the skills necessary to obtain employment in the health care field, where huge manpower shortages already exist.

Other industries exhibiting significant growth are the office and administrative support occupations, food services, and retail.

State Grantee will work collaboratively to address issues ensuring host agency assignments are truly providing skills training to meet the needs of both participants and employers. Sub-grantees will continue to utilize the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), in partnership with the participant and host agency supervisor, ensuring community service employment assignments are providing skills training that meet the needs of the participant and host agency. Sub-grantees will monitor participants at least once every six months at their community service employment assignments. During those visits, sub-grantee staff will review and update the IEP with both the participant and host agency supervisor.

Sub-grantees will continue to monitor the training to ensure participants will be prepared for unsubsidized employment through the acquisition of transferable skills in demand by local employers. In addition, where applicable, sub-grantees, in partnership with participants, will develop IEPs that combine community service employment with other permissible training (e.g., classroom training or on-the-job experience (OJE) in the private for-profit sector) as funding permits.

While realizing some seniors may not be best suited for many of the manufacturing and construction jobs in the state, there will be other opportunities for mature workers to "back fill" jobs in industries showing significant growth. ADSS plans to partner regionally with local community colleges to create training programs for mature workers that will provide the skills necessary to obtain employment in the health care field, where huge manpower shortages already exist.

Alabama's continued economic growth cannot be realized without including mature workers in workforce planning and training efforts.

## B. SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

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**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 GRANTEEES 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))

SCSEP is a mandated WIOA partner. Alabama's SCSEP looks forward to improving our coordination and collaboration with Alabama's WIOA during the next four years by looking to implement the following strategies to benefit SCSEP participants:

1. Identify training for seniors in soft and occupational skills including those seniors with disabilities.
2. Work with WIOA partners, faith-based and community organizations to identify financial assistance and financial planning supportive services for SCSEP participants;
3. Work with the WIOA and One Stop System to identify senior friendly user technology and identify resources to secure the technology, such as WorkKeys, as a career readiness tool for participants;
4. Work with WIOA partners, faith-based and community organizations to identify and encourage SCSEP participant participation in work-related training and education activities;
5. Identify literacy resources in Alabama and work to build partnerships and improve coordination of these resources with WIOA and SCSEP; encourage participation by SCSEP participants in these programs.

### B. ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEEES WITH THE

### ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE STATE UNDER THE OTHER TITLES OF THE OAA. (20 CFR 641.302(H))

SCSEP state grantees are co-located with the Area Agencies on Aging and the Regional Planning and Development Commissions/Councils of Governments (COGs). The AAAs and Regional Commissions/COG's have networks of partners, stakeholders, sub-grantees and member governments which are ideal locations for training and employment. A traditional partnership is reflected in the United Way Agencies that have been a major source of both training and employment. New and emerging partners are the community foundations which are assuming a regional character that approximate the regional service areas of AAAs and Regional Commissions/COG's. The community foundations are creating networks of partnerships which they fund; that overlap the SCSEP, AAA, Regional Commission and COG partnerships and have the potential of being a source for training and employment. SCSEP is a part of an emerging trend of regionalism and networking that has become the new template for both public and nonprofit agencies.

The purpose of SCSEP is to provide training opportunities for older individuals who want to re-enter the workforce. Gaining additional or enhanced job skills improves their employability. Job training is provided by host agencies that are either 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organizations or government agencies. SCSEP provides valuable training opportunities while increasing the capacity of these host agencies to fulfill their missions.

The mission and goals of SCSEP and its many host agencies overlap the mission and outreach of other OAA funded activities and programs. For example, one of the primary missions of OAA funded entities is to be the single-point-of-entry (or “no wrong door”) for older or disabled consumers. Frequently, consumers have needs that can only be met monetarily. The network of host agencies working with SCSEP enhances the capacity of the aging network to meet these needs and make good referrals to host agencies that may provide direct or indirect financial assistance. In addition, the consumer may see employment as an option to meet income needs.

Many OAA activities are coordinated under the Aging & Disability Resource Center, (ADRC) including training, cross-training, and outreach. The following actions will be taken to enhance the partnership between OAA (AoA, CMS) funded programs, host agencies, and other community partners:

Goal: To coordinate SCSEP activities with the activities of other OAA funded programs

Objective 1: ADSS will take the lead to encourage intra-agency cross-training that will increase staff members’ knowledge of all OAA funded programs and activities, thereby increasing the coordination of services and activities.

Objective 1.1: ADSS will develop training materials for each OAA funded program.

Objective 1.2: ADSS will provide cross-training opportunities and also develop testing to gauge the success of cross-training. Training may be in the form of webinars, seminars, joint-program meetings, etc. Testing may be web-based, multiple choice, standardized, or other forms.

Objective 1.3: ADSS will implement team meetings as needed, where Project Directors, Program Managers, Program Coordinators, and other staff can discuss planned activities, program needs, and client needs.

By facilitating communication among programs and program coordinators, ADSS will ensure that activities get the maximum “bang for the buck.” For example, if the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) is planning an outreach, then SCSEP can participate in this outreach or, at the very least, provide intake forms or materials for distribution to its target population. Another example: if SCSEP is planning a job fair and wants assistance with publicity, the nutrition program can include a flier to the senior center managers or include an article in the monthly nutrition newsletter.

Objective 2: ADSS will take the lead to encourage inter-agency cross training among its major partners.

All grantees will continue to develop partnerships and collaborate with other public and private entities that bring quality and valuable resources to the table, for the benefit of the participants. We have working relationships with faith-based organizations in the

community serving low-income individuals who need supportive services, including training and employment. As we learn of other agencies that benefit our participants, we will engage with them to establish partnerships that advance each of our missions.

**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))**

ADSS will continue to coordinate with partner agencies to enhance services to older Alabamians. Some examples of programs and partners that serve our seniors include the following:

The Alabama Department of Human Resources operates the JOBS Program to help recipients of Family Assistance (FA) find and keep jobs. This includes supportive services such as transportation and clothes. This help is available to all recipients of FA regardless of age. In addition, many counties have a JOBS Task Force where they pull together civic and faith based groups, employment agencies and employers to help individuals get jobs. These groups are open to any interested individual, program or agency and participation is encouraged. Job readiness classes funded by DHR are available in a variety of counties and are open to anyone below 200% of the federal poverty line. These classes vary in length from a few days to four weeks and cover a wide range of topics. Emphasis is on how to find a job and the soft skills needed to keep a job.

The Adult Protective Services Division and County Departments work to protect elderly and disabled adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation and to prevent unnecessary institutionalization. DHR also partners with the Job Access Reverse Commute grant (JARC). DHR currently provides TANF match money to both the Department of Transportation and ADSS to provide transportation to low-income Alabamians.

Transportation plays a critical role in providing access to employment, medical, and health care, education, and other community services and amenities. Efficient and affordable transportation services provide seniors independence to quality of life activities.

Currently SAFETEA-LU, the federal transit law requires projects selected for financial assistance under the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom (NF), and the Elderly Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) programs be derived from a coordinated transportation plan. Coordination plans identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting those local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. Plans are developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public. The Alabama Association of Regional Councils has produced twelve coordinated

transportation plans that include all of the regional councils respective planning areas. Plans are updated every four years.

The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) is the designated state unit recognized by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to deliver independent living (IL) services to older adults who are blind in the State of Alabama. The ADRS has a long history of providing rehabilitation teaching services for seniors who are blind. Within ADRS, the Older Alabamians System of Information and Services Program, referred to as the OASIS Program, provides IL services to older adults with visual impairments.

The OASIS Program is designed to meet the needs of both rural and urban segments of the population of elders who are visually impaired throughout Alabama. The overall goal of the OASIS Program is to enhance the level of independence among the State's elderly population who are blind or visually impaired. To be eligible for the OASIS program individuals must be age 55 or older, reside in the State of Alabama, and be blind or functionally visually impaired.

Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS), the largest division within the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, helps Alabamians with disabilities achieve independence through employment. VRS provides specialized employment and education related services and training to assist adults with disabilities in becoming employed.

To be eligible for VRS services, individuals must have a physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment and must be able to benefit from services in terms of going to work. For Alabamians with disabilities, VRS represents much more than a monetary return. Much like the SCSEP program, VRS helps clients gain employment, which creates pride, dignity and independence for our seniors.

The Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Volunteer Service coordinates the AmeriCorps State program and also works closely with local faith-based and community organizations particularly those involved in disaster preparedness and response. Through the network of AmeriCorps State programs annually hundreds of volunteers are engaged in communities across Alabama serving to meet critical needs.

AmeriCorps programs engage people of all ages and they actively recruit people with disabilities. Other national service programs operating in the State of Alabama include Senior Corps and AmeriCorps VISTA.

#### **D. ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))**

Older workers and the pre-existing programs authorized under the Older Americans Act (OAA), including Alabama's SCSEP, are now considered part of Alabama's comprehensive workforce development system. Alabama's SCSEP is an integral partner in the Alabama workforce development delivery system. This participation offers an unprecedented opportunity to assess the needs of mature and older workers in a unified and coordinated manner, at a time when those workers

represent a dominant portion of the workforce. Older workers are likely to need and seek workforce development services in order to allow them to remain in the workforce at levels sufficient to support their income needs. SCSEP participation in Alabama's workforce development delivery system affords new opportunities to improve services to older workers overall.

For those who need to remain part of (and even participate in training and retraining activities) the state's civilian labor force, their ability to use the workforce development system effectively will be critical to improving their skills and remaining in the labor force at levels sufficient to support their income needs. SCSEP plans to continue participation in Alabama's major labor market and job training initiatives.

**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)**

All SCSEP operators in Alabama shall, to the extent feasible, establish and maintain cooperative relationships and working linkages with other employment and training programs, to include activities conducted under the Workforce Investment Act and with affiliated agencies concerned with senior citizens. A major objective of coordination is to avoid the duplication of services and expand employment opportunities for senior workers. It is also desirable to provide a variety of services and training opportunities that respond to the needs of senior workers by linking them with services and programs provided by the Area Agencies on Aging.

To make certain the State Plan is inclusive and as comprehensive as possible, organizations engaged in older worker activities and employment services for older workers were invited to provide information on their activities that would be pertinent to workforce development. Local senior worker programs will be encouraged to work collaboratively with WIOA One-Stop Centers to maximize the effectiveness of the training and placement process. ADSS is a partner in the Workforce Investment Board's delivery of workforce development services. Entities responsible for WIOA activities will continue collaborating to create a delivery system that enhances access to services and improves employment outcomes for individuals receiving those services. SCSEP participants train at many of our One Stop Career Centers. Several of our SCSEP project directors are represented on the local boards. The WIOA included SCSEP as a required partner in the One Stop delivery system to ensure older workers have access to information about the range of employment related services available to them. An "umbrella" or "blanket" Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being used to define the roles and responsibilities of the Career Center (One-Stop) partner agencies for the provision and improvement of employment and training services to Alabama citizens residing within the 65 county Alabama Workforce Investment Area (AWIA). The MOU is between the Alabama Local Workforce Investment Board and the Career Center partners, including ADSS. It establishes guidelines for the partners to create and maintain cooperative working relationships. The blanket MOU, being more general in nature, works best to set direction while allowing flexibility.

The WIOA intends that all job seekers and persons looking to further their careers will be able to access the employment, education, training, and information services they need at Career Centers in their neighborhoods. The Centers offer core services (available to all adults with no eligibility requirements), intensive services (available to those individuals who are unable to find jobs through core services alone), and training services. In this age of limited resources, it is essential for programs to ensure they are not duplicating the efforts of others, and are using funds in the most effective and efficient manner. Some of the ways our programs cooperate to provide the best employment services possible for the older population are through joint planning sessions, information sharing, recruitment, cross referral of training, joint training, and development of a network of community service providers for older persons.

#### F. EFFORTS THE STATE WILL MAKE TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.

Forty-five percent of the state's SCSEP-eligible population is rural. SCSEP's definition of rural is based on Rural Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) codes, defined at the census tract level. Forty-three of Alabama's 67 counties have 100 percent rural populations.

##### Rural Service Delivery Challenges and Strategies to Address These Challenges

Grantees' greatest obstacles to providing SCSEP services in rural areas and assisting participants to find unsubsidized jobs are all related to shortages: of resources, services, and jobs, particularly in more isolated areas.

##### **Lack of Adequate Transportation**

Lack of adequate transportation significantly hinders SCSEP service delivery in rural areas. Area Agencies on Aging have identified transportation as the number one priority need for seniors in their annual plans. The minimal transportation available in small towns is on-demand assistance geared toward persons with disabilities and to taking people to doctor appointments. Although the majority of SCSEP participants drive their own cars, for those who do not have cars or are no longer able to drive, the lack of transportation poses a significant barrier to SCSEP participation and to finding and retaining unsubsidized employment.

##### **Strategies that Grantees will employ to address rural transportation needs include the following:**

- Seek to place participants and rotate participants in community service assignments as close as possible to their residences.
  - Seek host agency assignments that have transportation resources. Grantees will contact school districts and child care networks/facilities to determine in which rural areas the school bus is a feasible alternative. For example, if community service assignments with a school district or child care facility are feasible and appropriate for participants' career goals, Grantees will seek to negotiate with agencies to enable participants to use the same bus or van transportation provided for children to travel to and from their community service assignments.
- Faith-based organizations providing community services may be able to serve as host agencies and provide transportation.

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.)

SSAI's sub-grantees have well-established partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce. Sub-grantees often attend meetings in order to network with local business representatives. Through training provided by SSAI, sub-grantees regularly get on a Chamber's agenda to engage employers by promoting both SCSEP and job ready participants. In PY2014, SSAI Field Support Program Officers introduced an Employer Outreach Kit to a pilot group of sub-grantees. The kit includes both three-minute and ten-minute talking points, a PowerPoint presentation, general presentation tips, suggested wording for an elevator pitch, and advice on how to handle both cold and warm calls with employers. This kit has been proven to save a great deal of preparation time and has increased sub-grantee staff confidence about engaging employers. Further improvements to the kit will be made as we expand its use in future program years.

To promote employer outreach, SSAI Program Officers also work with sub-grantees to identify other employer organizations in order to increase the visibility of SCSEP. For example, SSAI promotes sub-grantee engagement with local chapters of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), a professional association of human resources professionals from various employers. These professionals are usually involved with hiring and tend to be focused on ensuring a diverse workforce, including mature workers. In addition, many of these SHRM chapters have a committee of volunteers willing to give their time to nonprofits. They can be a great resource for educating participants about what their companies look for in a new employee, helping prepare for interviews, and writing résumés that will get read.

Other SSAI employer outreach training focuses on showing sub-grantees how to approach the hidden job market by establishing relationships with their local, county and state economic development councils and accessing their press releases of future or growing business announcements. SSAI staff trains sub-grantees to approach these employers with the goal of establishing relationships as business partners. Job Development training of sub-grantees will remain multi-focused. One area of focus will continue to promote the identification and targeting of local employers by using the internet, especially in rural areas. Another focus will be on the basics of how to conduct employer outreach. The training to be provided includes group activities, role plays, and videos about job development. Another area of focus will be to provide technical assistance geared towards developing advanced networking skills of both sub-grantees and SCSEP participants.

Furthermore, as we increase employer engagement, SSAI will also increase exploration of on-the-job-experience (OJE) as a method of expanding employer engagement. While OJE has not been widely utilized by our sub-grantees in the past, the Program Officers will actively promote OJE as a tool for sub-grantees to use in future program years to gain more unsubsidized jobs for participant job seekers.

### 3. DESCRIBE THE LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITIES UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (C))

Targeted recruitment efforts must be incorporated into program operations to increase minority enrollments if identified as a concern based on data contained in the quarterly progress report. Additional recruitment efforts in minority communities could include advertising in minority newspapers, canvassing local venues to promote the program by displaying brochures or posting fliers, speaking to minority groups and organizations, and communicating with faith-based organizations that are frequented by minority members of the community. To address underservice and disparities in outcomes, SSAI developed its Analysis of Sub-grantee Service to Minorities in PY14. This report provides, at the sub-grantee level, the breakdown of service to minorities by race and ethnicity. Specifically it reports (1) the number served during a specific time period, (2) the Census Bureau's estimate of SCSEP-eligible people by subgroup, (3) the SCSEP percent served by subgroup, (4) the numerical difference between the SCSEP-eligible percent and those served by subgroup, and (5) subgroups who are notably underserved. This report provides an easy-to-understand and data-rich analysis of where the sub-grantee needs to focus. Further, it facilitates more focused dialogue and recommended actions between SSAI and sub-grantee staff. Staff and sub-grantee reaction to the report has been positive and they indicate that it is making a difference. As one staff said, ensuring service to minorities "has become a much bigger focus for me this year over the prior year. With the newly developed SSAI reports, it has allowed me to provide more detailed and informed assistance to sub-grantees individually and in group meetings." This tool enables SSAI staff to provide its sub-grantees more support and targeted enrollment technical assistance.

Some of the interventions that have resulted in increased service to minorities that are being replicated include: use of multi-lingual participant staff (e.g., Spanish), enlisting and partnering with host agencies that serve underserved subgroups and referral programs among current participants who are part of an underserved subgroup. One sub-grantee asked its minority participants to refer family members and friends who might qualify for SCSEP. Similar interventions are being implemented to promote employment among minority SCSEP participants. Specifically we are promoting job development and job fairs that focus on minority-owned businesses and inviting minority business persons to speak at SCSEP workshops.

### 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)

Alabama is comprised of sixty-seven counties with a 2015 population estimate of 4,858,979 residents. The most populated counties include Jefferson, Mobile, Madison, Montgomery, and Shelby County. Fifty-one of the 67 counties in Alabama meet the threshold for persistent unemployment, which is met when the annual average unemployment rate for a county is more than twenty percent higher than the

national average for two out of the last three years. The following counties have persistent unemployment indicating a significant barrier to employment:

Barbour County, AL Bibb County, AL Bullock County, AL Butler County, AL Calhoun County, AL Chambers County, AL Choctaw County, AL Clarke County, AL Clay County, AL Cleburne County, AL Coffee County, AL Colbert County, AL Conecuh County, AL Coosa County, AL Covington County, AL Crenshaw County, AL Dale County, AL Dallas County, AL DeKalb County, AL Escambia County, AL Etowah County, AL Fayette County, AL Franklin County, AL Geneva County, AL Greene County, AL Hale County, AL Henry County, AL Houston County, AL Jackson County, AL Lamar County, AL Lauderdale County, AL Lawrence County, AL Lowndes County, AL Macon County, AL Marengo County, AL Marion County, AL Mobile County, AL Monroe County, AL Montgomery County, AL Perry County, AL Pickens County, AL Pike County, AL Randolph County, AL Russell County, AL Sumter County, AL Talladega County, AL Tallapoosa County, AL Walker County, AL Washington County, AL Wilcox County, AL Winston County, AL

**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 GRANTEEES 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))**

In keeping with the DOL's principle of continuous improvement, ADSS will strive to increase our "Common Measures Entered Employment" rate by 5% each program year through 2019. Additionally, Alabama will make every effort to meet the higher of the state and national goals each program year.

In order to meet and exceed our goals, ADSS will continue to develop new relationships, as well as foster current relationships, with local and national employers throughout Alabama. ADSS will work to educate employers on balancing their workforce needs with the "aging workforce". Efforts will also be made to identify and train local HR Managers and their staff on "The Myths of Hiring Older Workers", thus allowing them to become engaged with our mission to find employment opportunities for SCSEP participants'.

ADSS will employ a variety of means to monitor and achieve state and national goals, such as providing ongoing and continuous training for sub-grantee staff as well as using a variety of management reports to track progress. Some of the strategies sub-grantees in Alabama use to place participants' in unsubsidized employment are:

- Offering job-seeking skills training courses
- Enforcing job search requirements and written IEP's
- Contacting participants with job leads
- Ensuring quality training is being provided through host agency assignments
- Requiring participants to register at local One-Stop Career Centers
- Encouraging participants to attend local job fairs

National grantees will continuously monitor the performance of sub-grantees with regard to unsubsidized placement. Sub-grantees identified as at risk for not meeting this performance measure will be provided additional technical assistance and

training specific to identifying “job ready” participants and how best to identify unsubsidized employment opportunities.

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))

Over the next four years ADSS, along with national grantees, will work collaboratively to consider practical approaches to address challenges in recruiting most-in-need individuals as well as best practices for preparing these individuals for unsubsidized employment.

Below are some examples of strategies that will be used:

- ADSS will seek to establish semi-annual collaboration meetings with other national grantees with the goal of sharing best practices, identifying challenges and developing strategies to overcome those challenges.
- ADSS will seek to improve participation and coordination of services between SCSEP and One-Stop Career Center partners.
- ADSS will identify and provide additional training opportunities and resources for participants, thus better preparing participants for entry into unsubsidized employment.
- ADSS will continue to be an active WIOA partner and advocate for meaningful services for the seniors of Alabama. All national grantees and sub-grantees in Alabama remain committed to fulfilling SCSEP’s dual mission of fostering individual and economic self-sufficiency as well as providing community service opportunities for those that we serve.

C. LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

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**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))

State Grantee Allocations Total National Grantees Allocations PY 16 Total ED Based on Census PY 15 State Grantee Allocation PY 16 State Allocations PY15-PY16 Change PY 15 National Grantee Allocation PY 16 National Grantee Slots Available PY15-PY16 Change  
Alabama 810 165 165 0 645 645 0 Autauga County, Alabama 6 7 6 -1 Baldwin County, Alabama 25 5 6 1 15 19 4 Barbour County, Alabama 6 8 6 -2 Bibb County, Alabama 4 4 4 0 Blount County, Alabama 10 2 2 0 8 8 0 Bullock County, Alabama 2 3 2 -1 Butler County, Alabama 6 7 6 -1 Calhoun County, Alabama 22 5 5 0 18 17 -1 Chambers County, Alabama 9 3 3 0 7 6 -1 Cherokee County, Alabama 6 5 6 1 Chilton County, Alabama 8 2 2 0 6 6 0 Choctaw County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 3 2 -1 Clarke County, Alabama 6 3 2 -1 6 4 -2 Clay County, Alabama 3 3 3 0 Cleburne County, Alabama 3 4 3 -1 Coffee County, Alabama 8 3 3 0 6 5 -1 Colbert County, Alabama 10 2 2 0 8 8 0 Conecuh County, Alabama 5 1 1 0 3 4 1 Coosa County, Alabama 3 1 1 0 2 2 0 Covington County, Alabama 8 2 2 0 8 6 -2 Crenshaw County, Alabama 4 4 4 0 Cullman County, Alabama 16 3 3 0 13 13 0 Dale County, Alabama 9 2 2 0 6 7 1 Dallas County, Alabama 12 4 3 -1 10 9 -1 DeKalb County, Alabama 15 4 3 -1 14 12 -2 Elmore County, Alabama 7 8 7 -1 Escambia County, Alabama 9 2 2 0 7 7 0 Etowah County, Alabama 21 5 5 0 16 16 0 Fayette County, Alabama 4 1 1 0 4 3 -1 Franklin County, Alabama 6 1 1 0 6 5 -1

Geneva County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 5 4 -1 Greene County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Hale County, Alabama 4 1 1 0 4 3 -1 Henry County, Alabama 5 2 3 1 2 2 0 Houston County, Alabama 18 5 6 1 11 12 1 Jackson County, Alabama 12 2 2 0 11 10 -1 Jefferson County, Alabama 107 26 26 0 72 81 9 Lamar County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Lauderdale County, Alabama 15 3 3 0 13 12 -1 Lawrence County, Alabama 7 7 7 0 Lee County, Alabama 16 3 3 0 11 13 2 Limestone County, Alabama 11 2 2 0 10 9 -1 Lowndes County, Alabama 3 3 3 0 Macon County, Alabama 5 2 2 0 4 3 -1 Madison County, Alabama 35 5 6 1 25 29 4 Marengo County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 4 4 0 Marion County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 6 4 -2 Marshall County, Alabama 16 3 2 -1 17 14 -3 Mobile County, Alabama 71 17 16 -1 52 55 3 Monroe County, Alabama 7 2 2 0 4 5 1 Montgomery County, Alabama 30 31 30 -1 Morgan County, Alabama 18 5 5 0 12 13 1 Perry County, Alabama 4 4 4 0 Pickens County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 6 4 -2 Pike County, Alabama 7 6 7 1 Randolph County, Alabama 7 1 1 0 6 6 0 Russell County, Alabama 13 2 2 0 9 11 2 St. Clair County, Alabama 14 2 2 0 11 12 1 Shelby County, Alabama 15 2 3 1 10 12 2 Sumter County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Talladega County, Alabama 16 2 2 0 14 14 0 Tallapoosa County, Alabama 9 7 9 2 Tuscaloosa County, Alabama 24 5 5 0 18 19 1 Walker County, Alabama 14 3 3 0 12 11 -1 Washington County, Alabama 3 5 3 -2 Wilcox County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Winston County, Alabama 7 1 1 0 6 6 0

**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.**

State Grantee Allocations Total National Grantees Allocations PY 16 Total ED Based on Census PY 15 State Grantee Allocation PY 16 State Allocations PY15-PY16 Change PY 15 National Grantee Allocation PY 16 National Grantee Slots Available PY15-PY16 Change  
Alabama 810 165 165 0 645 645 0 Autauga County, Alabama 6 7 6 -1 Baldwin County, Alabama 25 5 6 1 15 19 4 Barbour County, Alabama 6 8 6 -2 Bibb County, Alabama 4 4 4 0 Blount County, Alabama 10 2 2 0 8 8 0 Bullock County, Alabama 2 3 2 -1 Butler County, Alabama 6 7 6 -1 Calhoun County, Alabama 22 5 5 0 18 17 -1 Chambers County, Alabama 9 3 3 0 7 6 -1 Cherokee County, Alabama 6 5 6 1 Chilton County, Alabama 8 2 2 0 6 6 0 Choctaw County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 3 2 -1 Clarke County, Alabama 6 3 2 -1 6 4 -2 Clay County, Alabama 3 3 3 0 Cleburne County, Alabama 3 4 3 -1 Coffee County, Alabama 8 3 3 0 6 5 -1 Colbert County, Alabama 10 2 2 0 8 8 0 Conecuh County, Alabama 5 1 1 0 3 4 1 Coosa County, Alabama 3 1 1 0 2 2 0 Covington County, Alabama 8 2 2 0 8 6 -2 Crenshaw County, Alabama 4 4 4 0 Cullman County, Alabama 16 3 3 0 13 13 0 Dale County, Alabama 9 2 2 0 6 7 1 Dallas County, Alabama 12 4 3 -1 10 9 -1 DeKalb County, Alabama 15 4 3 -1 14 12 -2 Elmore County, Alabama 7 8 7 -1 Escambia County, Alabama 9 2 2 0 7 7 0 Etowah County, Alabama 21 5 5 0 16 16 0 Fayette County, Alabama 4 1 1 0 4 3 -1 Franklin County, Alabama 6 1 1 0 6 5 -1 Geneva County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 5 4 -1 Greene County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Hale County, Alabama 4 1 1 0 4 3 -1 Henry County, Alabama 5 2 3 1 2 2 0 Houston County, Alabama 18 5 6 1 11 12 1 Jackson County, Alabama 12 2 2 0 11 10 -1 Jefferson County, Alabama 107 26 26 0 72 81 9 Lamar County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Lauderdale County, Alabama 15 3 3 0 13 12 -1 Lawrence County, Alabama 7 7 7 0 Lee County, Alabama 16 3 3 0 11 13 2 Limestone County, Alabama 11 2 2 0 10 9 -1 Lowndes County, Alabama 3 3 3 0 Macon County, Alabama 5 2 2 0 4 3 -1 Madison County, Alabama 35 5 6 1 25 29 4 Marengo County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 4 4 0 Marion County,

Alabama 6 2 2 0 6 4 -2 Marshall County, Alabama 16 3 2 -1 17 14 -3 Mobile County, Alabama 71 17 16 -1 52 55 3 Monroe County, Alabama 7 2 2 0 4 5 1 Montgomery County, Alabama 30 31 30 -1 Morgan County, Alabama 18 5 5 0 12 13 1 Perry County, Alabama 4 4 4 0 Pickens County, Alabama 6 2 2 0 6 4 -2 Pike County, Alabama 7 6 7 1 Randolph County, Alabama 7 1 1 0 6 6 0 Russell County, Alabama 13 2 2 0 9 11 2 St. Clair County, Alabama 14 2 2 0 11 12 1 Shelby County, Alabama 15 2 3 1 10 12 2 Sumter County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Talladega County, Alabama 16 2 2 0 14 14 0 Tallapoosa County, Alabama 9 7 9 2 Tuscaloosa County, Alabama 24 5 5 0 18 19 1 Walker County, Alabama 14 3 3 0 12 11 -1 Washington County, Alabama 3 5 3 -2 Wilcox County, Alabama 4 2 2 0 2 2 0 Winston County, Alabama 7 1 1 0 6 6 0

### 3. DESCRIBE ANY CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.

SCSEP staff counsel sub-grantees monthly as to the status of the variance and provide technical assistance to ensure that the sub-grantee will serve the number of authorized positions per county by June 30, 2016. SCSEP staff confers with sub-grantees on issues related to service such as: recruiting new host agencies; conducting outreach to attract applicants to the program; and figuring out program operations issues that may be impacting enrollment of new participants. For example, SSAI staff is working with sub-grantee Jefferson County Commission to recruit new Host Agencies in Jefferson County.

SCSEP staff look to review both the total variance as well as the “snapshot variance” taken from SPARQ at the end of each quarter. For example, Morgan County, which is served by North-Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments, currently has 13 participants enrolled for 12 authorized positions; however, the service level since July 1, 2015 for Morgan County is over 100%. In such cases, more emphasis will be placed on enrolling participants in counties which have been underserved, such as Cullman County, also served by NARCOG, in which only 8 participants have been served for 13 authorized positions.

### 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.

Section 508 of the 2006 Older Americans Act (OAA) Amendments requires grantees to seek an equitable distribution of program resources and participant slots throughout the state. Therefore, equitable distribution (ED) is a cooperative effort, and each grantee in the state participates in the process. Alabama fully embraces the equitable distribution of SCSEP positions and has worked closely with the national sponsors to implement a plan that addresses under-served and over-served counties in the state.

ED within each state is based on the latest Census information about the percentage of poor elderly in each county. The data comes from the American Community Service (ACS), which incorporates the 2010 Census for population counts and age. The equitable distribution report of SCSEP positions by grantees in the state provides the

information needed to assess the location of the eligible population and the current distribution of people being served in Alabama. The report reflects both under-served and over-served areas and contains information on counties served, distribution factors, equitable shares, current number of positions, and increases or decreases in participant slots.

ADSS serves a coordinating role and ensures equitable distribution of employment through Title V SCSEP with the national contractors and local project directors. ADSS allocates Title V funds to Councils of Local Government and Area Agencies on Aging for local SCSEP administration.

With the continued cooperation of the national grantees, ADSS will coordinate any slot transfers necessary to meet equitable distribution, and will continue to coordinate this process.

Any county slot adjustments will be made only after approval by DOL. ADSS will continue to work with the national grantees to move slots from over-served to under-served counties. Since there are no excessively over-served or under-served counties in Alabama, equitable distribution will be achieved in the time frame required, with no disruption to participants.

#### **B. EQUITABLY SERVES BOTH RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.**

Section 508 of the 2006 Older Americans Act (OAA) Amendments requires grantees to seek an equitable distribution of program resources and participant slots throughout the state. Therefore, equitable distribution (ED) is a cooperative effort, and each grantee in the state participates in the process. Alabama fully embraces the equitable distribution of SCSEP positions and has worked closely with the national sponsors to implement a plan that addresses under-served and over-served counties in the state.

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served counties. Since there are no excessively over-served or under-served counties in Alabama, equitable distribution will be achieved in the time frame required, with no disruption to participants.

**C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)**

The State continues to ensure that in selecting eligible individuals for participation in SCSEP, priority is given to individuals who have one or more of the following characteristics: (1) Are 65 years of age or older; (2) Have a disability; (3) Have limited English proficiency or low literacy skills; (4) Reside in a rural area; (5) Are veterans (or, in some cases, spouses of veterans); (6) Have low employment prospects; (7) Have failed to find employment after using services provided through the One-Stop delivery system; or (8) Are homeless or are at risk for homelessness.

The stipulated priorities are applied in the following order: (1) Persons who qualify as a veteran or qualified spouse under § 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act, 38 U.S.C. 4215(a), and who possess at least one of the other priority characteristics; (2) Persons who qualify as a veteran or qualified spouse under § 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act, 38 U.S.C. 4215(a), who do not possess any other of the priority characteristics; (3) Persons who do not qualify as a veteran or qualified spouse under § 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act (nonveterans), and who possess at least one of the other priority characteristics.

**5. PROVIDE THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))**

All Grantees State Grantees National Grantees Total 55+ Population(a) Total 55+ Population Under 100% Poverty Level(a) Percent of Slots for Age Eligible Population Under 100% Poverty Level Alabama 810 165 645 1,313,281 149,620 0.54% Autauga 6 0 6 13,382 1082 0.55% Baldwin 25 6 19 60,063 4622 0.54% Barbour 6 0 6 7,684 1120 0.54% Bibb 4 0 4 5,898 633 0.63% Blount 10 2 8 16,545 1735 0.58% Bullock 2 0 2 2,968 394 0.51% Butler 6 0 6 6,511 1103 0.54% Calhoun 22 5 17 33,383 4231 0.52% Chambers 9 3 6 10,818 1618 0.56% Cherokee 6 0 6 9,224 1147 0.52% Chilton 8 2 6 11,902 1300 0.62% Choctaw 4 2 2 4,633 673 0.59% Clarke 6 2 4 7,640 1333 0.45% Clay 3 0 3 4,411 504 0.60% Cleburne 3 0 3 4,595 588 0.51% Coffee 8 3 5 13,855 1470 0.54% Colbert 10 2 8 17,292 1757 0.57% Conecuh 5 1 4 4,395 1024 0.49% Coosa 3 1 2 3,783 599 0.50% Covington 8 2 6 12,521 1473 0.54% Crenshaw 4 0 4 4,230 712 0.56% Cullman 16 3 13 24,229 2898 0.55% Dale 9 2 7 13,253 1673 0.54% Dallas 12 3 9 12,031 2350 0.51% DeKalb 15 3 12 19,378 2643 0.57% Elmore 7 0 7 20,070 1364 0.51% Escambia 9 2 7 10,813 1682 0.54% Etowah 21 5 16 31,363 3819 0.55% Fayette 4 1 3 5,604 686 0.58% Franklin 6 1 5 8,619 1073 0.56% Geneva 6 2 4 8,631 996 0.60% Greene 4 2 2 2,907 705 0.57% Hale 4 1 3 4,671 879 0.46% Henry 5 3 2 5,954 907 0.55% Houston 18 6 12 28,853 3072 0.59% Jackson 12 2 10 16,865 2193 0.55% Jefferson 107 26 81 174,886 20438 0.52% Lamar 4 2 2 4,834 734 0.54% Lauderdale 15 3 12 28,727 2696 0.56% Lawrence 7 0 7 9,895 1243 0.56% Lee 16 3 13 28,788 2833 0.56% Limestone 11 2 9 22,050 2067 0.53% Lowndes 3 0 3 3,208 705 0.43% Macon 5 2 3 5,927 937 0.53% Madison 35 6 29 85,570 6689 0.52% Marengo 6 2 4 6,468 1231 0.49% Marion 6 2 4 10,135 1129 0.53% Marshall 16 2 14

26,206 2783 0.57% Mobile 71 16 55 109,026 13347 0.53% Monroe 7 2 5 6,939 1482 0.47% Montgomery 30 0 30 55,654 5670 0.53% Morgan 18 5 13 33,288 3068 0.59% Perry 4 0 4 3,046 741 0.54% Pickens 6 2 4 6,195 1122 0.53% Pike 7 0 7 8,096 1282 0.55% Randolph 7 1 6 7,313 1374 0.51% Russell 13 2 11 13,657 2202 0.59% St. Clair 14 2 12 22,995 2384 0.59% Shelby 15 3 12 48,591 2613 0.57% Sumter 4 2 2 3,923 804 0.50% Talladega 16 2 14 23,454 2999 0.53% Tallapoosa 9 0 9 13,640 1608 0.56% Tuscaloosa 24 5 19 44,417 4051 0.59% Walker 14 3 11 20,707 2576 0.54% Washington 3 0 3 5,093 585 0.51% Wilcox 4 2 2 3,462 825 0.48% Winston 7 1 6 8,117 1344 0.52%

## 6. PROVIDE THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

Provide the relative distribution of eligible individuals who:

### A. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

Reside in urban and rural areas within the state

About 90% of Alabama's total land surface is considered rural, with 54 of 67 counties counting being classified as rural. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 41% of the total population lives in these rural areas.

It is the goal of all grantees operating the SCSEP program in Alabama to serve rural and urban areas equitably. While we are managing to provide services in each of the rural counties we serve, it is becoming increasingly more of an issue, due to the economy. More time is required to work with those residing in rural counties, due to the increased travel time needed to reach these participants. We are working to partner with community based organizations and state agencies in rural areas to provide services that would benefit our seniors.

Because education is a key element to gainful employment, we will encourage partnerships with universities, community colleges, and local communities to work with sub-grantees in rural areas to provide better training mechanisms, including online classes and distance learning. A major focus will include changing the public's negative attitude and stereotypes about older workers through education and best practices programs; and promoting the advantages of hiring older workers, especially in rural areas, to public and private sector employers.

Rural and urban SCSEP participants in Alabama need greater transportation options. Access to transportation has a direct impact on a participant's ability to secure and retain employment.

In a related initiative dealing with rural/urban populations, ADSS is working with the Federal Transportation Administration on the United We Ride (UWR) program, because transportation is a huge barrier for seniors in general and particularly for low income seniors who want to work.

### B. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

Greatest economic need means the need resulting from an income level at or below the poverty guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services and approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). (42 U.S.C. 3002(23).)

- According to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 18.9% of individuals in Alabama were below the federal poverty level, as compared to 15.6% nationally. The average monthly earnings in 2014 for people in Alabama was \$3,626 as compared to \$4,457 nationally.
- For Alabamians over 55 years of age, the most recent numbers report that 11.4% percent are at or below 100% of the Federal poverty line.

### C. ARE MINORITIES

According to the Resident Population by Race and State 2010 Census Statistics, the race of Alabama residents is broken up by the following: \*Alabama Population by Race White Alone 3327891 Black or African American Alone 1269808 Two or More Races 76428 Other 58618 Asian Alone 58322 American Indian/Alaska Native Alone 25181

Statewide, the Latino or Hispanic population grew 145% since the last U.S Census, adding 109,772 people to the state's population, and nearly 78,000 people 65 years of age and older. Latino's now make up 4.0% of the population, compared with 1.7% as reported by the 2000 U.S. Census. The largest increases in Latino population were in Jefferson, Madison, and Shelby counties, specifically in more urban geographic areas. The average age of the Hispanic population in Alabama is 23.7 years of age, indicating that the flux has not occurred within the 55 and older population as rapidly as the under 55 years of age population. To address the growing Hispanic population in Alabama, Senior Service America Inc. (SSAI) received funding from the AARP Foundation for a Latino/Hispanic Elders Peer Community Interpreters project. This project focuses on three unmet needs: (1) the needs of low income 50+ Hispanic workers at risk due to prolonged unemployment and financial insecurity; (2) the need of our publicly funded social service and workforce development systems to substantially improve their outreach and service to Hispanics; and (3) the need to develop policies that would support "Community Interpreters" as a critical element of a larger plan to reduce the impact of Limited English proficiency as a barrier to employment and services. SSAI's "Community Interpreters" project recruits, trains, deploys, and provides ongoing support to a minimum of 25 low income 50+ Hispanics who serve as Community Interpreters in 18-22 social service and workforce development agencies in greater Birmingham, AL, and Charlotte, NC. The goal of this project is for the peer Community Interpreters to increase the number of unserved, unemployed and underemployed 50+ Hispanic workers accessing available employment and social services.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, African American's represent 26.5% of the state's population, however the concentration of African Americans in certain counties over others shows the significant differences in geographic distribution of the population by race. The Asian population in Alabama remains low at 1.2% across the state.

### D. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT.

This population has not been active in SCSEP in Alabama, with 1% of the population currently being served in the state being classified as limited English proficiency

### E. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

Greatest social need means the need caused by non-economic factors, which include: Physical and mental disabilities; language barriers; and cultural, social, or geographical isolation, including isolation caused by racial or ethnic status, which restricts the ability of an individual to perform normal daily tasks or threatens the capacity of the individual to live independently. (42 U.S.C. 3002(24)).

- The number of people in Alabama who have not attained a high school diploma was 17.4% in 2014 while the national number was 13.6%, and the number of people with a Bachelor's degree or more was 23.1% compared to 29.3% nationally. In 2010, the total number of people over 65 in Alabama with no high school diploma was 20.5%, while the percentage of SCSEP participants in Alabama being served by Easter Seals who do not have a high school degree or equivalent was 24%.
- According to the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Years estimates, there are a total of 376,525 Veterans residing in Alabama, which is about 7.8% of the total Alabama population. According to the SCSEP Performance and Results QPR System, 10% of the State and Easter Seals SCSEP participants are classified as Veterans.

## 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))

Older individuals often feel vulnerable during times of change. SCSEP grantees in Alabama will make every effort to avoid participant disruptions by reassuring participants and their host agencies that a change of grantee in a particular area will not affect participants' SCSEP enrollment. Although the schedule for participants' receipt of their paychecks may vary somewhat from Grantee to Grantee, the mailing and direct deposit of participant paychecks will continue on a regular, dependable schedule.

### Changes in Grantee and/or Grantee Service Area

DOL allocates SCSEP-subsidized community service positions to each county using a formula based on the number of individuals ages 55 and older with incomes at or below 125 percent of the federal poverty level in each county. Participants may need to be transferred to a different Grantee if Grantees agree to trade counties to consolidate their service areas and improve the efficiency of their operations.

National Grantee service areas are changed or realigned by DOL. When there is a change of Grantee or Grantee service area, the state will proactively seek to avoid a disruption in service for participants and host agencies.

### Changes in the Number of Positions in a County

Other situations may occur where positions in a county may need to be increased or reduced over time, including these situations:

- Census updates on SCSEP-eligible population in counties, such as occurred in 2012, affect the equitable share, or number of positions allocated to a county;
- Grantees

seek to improve the equitable balance in counties by shifting enrollments from over-served areas to under-served areas.

#### Strategies to Avoid Participant Disruption

When there is a change in Grantee and/or Grantee service area, the SCSEP State Coordinator will direct the following actions:

- Host a conference call with the grantees involved to ensure that they develop a transition plan and timetable for: o informing participants and host agencies in advance; o transferring records; o holding orientations for participants and host agencies; o and supporting continuity in administrative and programmatic functions.

When positions need to be shifted from over-served to under-served counties, Grantees will carry out the following actions:

- Use a gradual approach to redistribute the slots via attrition; and • Encourage and work intensively to assist job-ready participants in over-served counties to find unsubsidized employment.

A Transition Plan will be implemented that has proven effective in ensuring minimal disruption to participants, host agencies, and the community. Alabama has experience in exchanging service areas with national sponsors. We have worked through and enjoyed smooth transitions. The process includes Notification of Change, Right of First Refusal, Notification to Participants, Record of Transfer, and Participant Placement.

Primary consideration is given to participants when decisions must be made about re-distribution of program positions. Unsubsidized employment is the optimum method for avoiding disruptions to participants in the program, and this policy is applied to the greatest extent possible.

No participants will be terminated for purposes of moving positions to coincide with any new census data or change in grantees. Instead, increased efforts will be made to assist participants through other local SCSEP sponsors, and to aggressively work with participants to obtain unsubsidized employment.

The state will follow the Department's recommendation of a "gradual shift that encourages participants in subsidized community service assignments to move into unsubsidized employment to make positions available for eligible individuals in the areas where there has been an increase in the eligible population."

In addition, ADSS will not transfer positions from one geographic area to another without collaboration between all grantees and approval by the Department of Labor. This collaboration between ADSS and national grantees allows for smooth transitions for SCSEP participants, with minimal disruption of service.

#### 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

## APPENDIX 1. PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

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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 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 two years of the plan. States will only have one year of data available under the performance accountability system in Section 116 of the WIOA; therefore, the Departments will continue to use the transition authority under WIOA sec. 503(a) to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators in the first plan submission. A “baseline” indicator is one for which States will not propose an expected level of performance in the plan submission and will not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance. “Baseline” indicators will not be used in the end of the year performance calculations and will not be used to determine failure to achieve adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The selection of primary indicators for the designation as a baseline indicator is made based on the likelihood of a state having adequate data on which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance and such a designation will vary across core programs.

States are expected to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as “baseline”. The actual performance data reported by States for indicators designated as “baseline” in the first two years of the Unified or Combined Plan will serve as baseline data in future years.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for each indicator, except for those indicators that are listed as “baseline” indicators below.

For this Plan, the Departments will work with States during the negotiation process to establish the negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs.

### **Baseline Indicators for the First Two Years of the Plan**

Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth):

- MEASURABLE SKILL GAINS
- EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

Title II programs (Adult Education):

- EMPLOYMENT IN THE 2ND QUARTER
- EMPLOYMENT IN THE 4TH QUARTER
- MEDIAN EARNINGS
- CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT
- EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

Title III programs (Wagner-Peyser):

- EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

Title IV programs (Vocational Rehabilitation):

- EMPLOYMENT IN THE 2ND QUARTER
- EMPLOYMENT IN THE 4TH QUARTER
- MEDIAN EARNINGS
- CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT
- MEASURABLE SKILL GAINS
- EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

States may identify additional indicators in the State plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the State indicators. Please identify any such State indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

TABLE 1. EMPLOYMENT (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
<b>Adults</b>	75.30	77.00	75.80	78.00
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	78.80	78.80	79.30	75.50
<b>Youth</b>	58.20	58.20	58.70	58.70
<b>Adult Education</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Wagner-Peyser</b>	65.00	71.00	66.00	71.50
<b>Vocational Rehabilitation</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

User remarks on Table 1

**Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation levels should be read as baseline.**

TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT (FOURTH QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
<b>Adults</b>	73.50	73.50	74.00	74.00
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	75.00	75.00	75.50	75.50
<b>Youth</b>	64.50	66.00	65.00	67.00
<b>Adult Education</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Wagner-Peyser</b>	68.00	72.00	69.00	72.50
<b>Vocational Rehabilitation</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

**User remarks on Table 2**

**Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation levels should be read as baseline.**

TABLE 3. MEDIAN EARNINGS (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

jlo	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
<b>Adults</b>	5,550.00	5,550.00	5,750.00	5,750.00

jlo	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	6,700.00	6,700.00	6,900.00	6,900.00
<b>Youth</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Adult Education</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Wagner-Peyser</b>	4,600.00	4,600.00	4,700.00	4,700.00
<b>Vocational Rehabilitation</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

**User remarks on Table 3**

**Youth, Adult Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation levels should be read as baseline.**

TABLE 4. CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT RATE

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
<b>Adults</b>	53.80	56.00	54.30	57.00
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	55.50	57.50	56.00	58.50
<b>Youth</b>	38.80	38.80	39.30	39.30

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
<b>Adult Education</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Wagner-Peyser</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Vocational Rehabilitation</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

**User remarks on Table 4**

**Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation levels should be read as baseline.**

TABLE 5. MEASUREABLE SKILL GAINS

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
<b>Adults</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Youth</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Adult Education</b>	44.00	44.00	45.00	45.00
<b>Wagner-Peyser</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
<b>Vocational Rehabilitation</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

**User remarks on Table 5**

**Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth and Vocational Rehabilitation levels should be read as baseline.**

TABLE 6. EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

Measure	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
<b>Line 1 (enter the measure information in the comments below)</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Line 2</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Line 3</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Line 4</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Line 5</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
<b>Line 6</b>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

**User remarks on Table 6**

Table cells with no information, no numbers are to be read as "baseline".

All cells on this table should read "baseline". Based on the Required Elements for Submission of the Unified and Combined State Plan Modifications Under the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act released on February 18, 2016 the Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation) Program will use baseline data for the first 2 years for all six of its indicators listed below and will therefore not submit expected performance levels for these indicators until this data has been established and can be used to negotiate adjusted levels of performance. Employment in the second quarter Employment in the fourth quarter Median Earnings Credential Attainment Measurable Skill Gains Effectiveness in Serving Employers

TABLE 7. ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

Measure	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level

User remarks on Table 7

## APPENDIX 2. OTHER STATE ATTACHMENTS (OPTIONAL)

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### ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM

April 24, 2015 Department of Economic and Community Affairs Workforce Development  
Division 401 Adams Avenue Post Office 5690 Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5690 GOVERNOR'S  
WORKFORCE INNOVATION DIRECTIVE NO. PY2014-10

#### SUBJECT:

1. Purpose. Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program Transition This transmits the following TEGL:

Number Date 23-14 03/26/15 Subject Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program Transition

2. Discussion. The purpose of TEGL No. 23-14 is to provide guidance and planning information to states, local workforce areas, and other recipients of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I youth formula funds on the activities associated with the implementation of WIOA.

In order to continue implementation prior to the final rule, a series of WIOA Operational Guidance documents that provide the needed implementation information will be issued in the form of Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs). These Operational Guidance TEGLs will inform the system about how to begin the important planning and reorganization necessary to comply with new WIOA statutory requirements for the upcoming Program Year (PY) 2015 (beginning July 1, 2015). The Operating Guidance TEGLs will provide a framework for program activities until the regulations are finalized. TEGL 23-14 is one in the ongoing series of Guidance.

Regarding the implementation of youth programs, TEGL 23-14 states that while previously issued TEGL No. 19-14 (discussed in GWID PY2014-07) says "States will receive their first WIOA allotment for the youth programs in April 2015 and will begin full implementation of WIOA for the Youth Program at that time," this was imprecise. Operational implementation of the WIOA youth program begins on July 1, 2015, with all provisions taking effect July 1, 2016. The PY 2015 WIOA youth allotment that is distributed in April 2015 is for preparation and programmatic activities for WIOA youth program implementation on July 1, 2015. In addition, states and local workforce areas are encouraged to use allowable transition funds to prepare for implementation of the WIOA Youth program. Page 2 Directive No. PY2014-10

TEGL 23-14 further discusses youth program planning and provides operational guidance for WIOA. This includes discussion on the transition from the required minimum thirty (30) percent expenditure rate for youth formula-funded programs on out-of-school youth under WIA to the new required minimum seventy-five (75) percent expenditure rate for youth formula-funded programs on out-of-school youth under WIOA and how the percentage is calculated. Other topics include Youth

Standing Committees, transitioning in-school youth programs, changes to the youth program elements, the new eligibility criteria, and many other programmatic changes. Examples of successful out-of-school youth programs currently meeting the seventy-five (75) percent expenditure rate are provided for research as well as a list of resources to help states and local areas successfully transition.

3. Action. This Directive should be distributed accordingly to local areas, workforce staff, and partners. Local area staff should review TEGL 23-14, and use presented strategies and resources to transition their youth programs to the WIOA.

----- ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM Department of Commerce  
Workforce Development Division 401 Adams Avenue Post Office Box 5690 Montgomery,  
Alabama 36103-5690 September 11, 2015 GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE INNOVATION  
DIRECTIVE NO. PY2015-03

SUBJECT: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Eligible Training Providers Policy

**1. Purpose.** This directive transmits the State's policy regarding the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Eligible Training Providers List in order to continue eligibility and to provide the procedures for potentially new training providers.

**2. Discussion.** Under WIOA, States shall establish initial eligibility for WIOA eligible training provider and certified training programs in order to continue to be eligible to provide training services until December 31, 2015. WIOA initial eligibility (for all current training providers on the ETPL) expires on December 31, 2015. All current training providers and their current programs are grandfathered in as eligible training providers. Procedures are included in this policy for current training providers to seek continued eligibility. Under WIOA, the State shall also establish a procedure to determine the eligibility of new training providers. The criteria and procedures for new training providers are included in the attached policy. It is the responsibility of the Workforce Development Division to collect the required information from all Eligible Training Providers, who provide services to WIOA participants in Alabama. This Directive supercedes all previous directives regarding policies, collection of performance, costs and other information on the ETPL including GWDD No. PY2002-03 through PY2011-23, change 2.

**3. Action.** It is the responsibility of the local workforce development areas and the training providers to review the attached policy and instructions and adhere to the established procedures.

Attached are the policy and forms to use in the continued eligibility process and/or the application process for new training providers. The required information is to be submitted to the Workforce Development Division and information updated on the website, [www.ETPL.alabama.gov](http://www.ETPL.alabama.gov), for each current program by December 31, 2015. Training providers are required to enter the information on the Eligible Training Provider List website. Training providers are strongly encouraged to keep the performance information listed on the ETPL website up-to-date. Training providers' information will be reviewed at least every 24 months for renewal purposes.

Training providers, who fail to follow the continued eligibility instructions by December 31, 2015, will be removed from the ETPL without exception.

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Alabama Workforce Investment System  
Department of Economic and Community Affairs  
Workforce Development Division  
401 Adams Avenue  
Post Office 5690  
Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5690  
February 26, 2015

GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE INNOVATION DIRECTIVE NO. PY2014-05 SUBJECT:

Local Area Designation Policy

1. Purpose. To transmit the State's local area designation request form.
2. Discussion. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires the Governor to designate local workforce development areas within the state through consultation with the State Workforce Development Board and after consultation with the chief elected officials and comments from the general public. Factors impacting these designations are listed in Section 106(b) of the WIOA. It is anticipated that supplemental instructions may be issued at a later date to address the requirements of Section 106(a) Regions, which must be addressed before the second full year program, e.g. prior to July 1, 2016. If there are any inconsistencies with the issuance of the final WIOA Implementing Regulations in calendar year 2016, this policy will be revised to comply with the Implementing Regulations.
3. Action. All local area designation requests must be submitted using the attached form. The effective date of this policy is the date of issuance of this Directive. The local Chief Elected Official (CEO) must submit the completed application to the Workforce Development Division no later than 5:00 p.m., March 31, 2015 for consideration of initial designation.
4. Contact. Questions regarding this information should be directed to Bill Hornsby, Supervisor, State Programs, Planning, and Divisional Budget Management Section at (334) 242-5847 or bill.hornsby@adeca.alabama.gov.

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Alabama Workforce Investment System  
Alabama Department of Commerce  
Workforce Development Division  
401 Adams Avenue

Post Office 304106

Montgomery, Alabama 36130-4106

December 9, 2015

GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE INNOVATION DIRECTIVE NO. PY2014-05, Change 01

SUBJECT: Local Area Designation Policy

**1. Purpose.** To transmit a revision to the State's Local Area Designation Policy pursuant to correspondence of September 22, 2015 from the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training as well as update information relative to the transfer of the Workforce Development Division of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs to the Alabama Department of Commerce per Act 2015-450.

**2. Discussion.** Subsequent to the issuance of the initial Local Area Designation Policy on February 26, 2015, the U.S Department of Labor (USDOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA) issued Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) Number 27-14 on April 15, 2015. Among other requirements, this TEGL required the states to include not only a definition of "Performed Successfully," which was in the initially issued state policy, but also definitions for the terms "met or exceeded" and "failure" consistent with how those terms were defined at the time the performance levels were negotiated. TEGL Number 25-13, dated May 15, 2014, is the relevant guidance in regard to the guidance used for the definition of the Workforce Investment Act performance measure parameters to define exceeds, met, or failed to meet. Per the Secretary of Labor's correspondence, as well as the guidance provided in TEGL Number 27-14, the applicable attachments to the State's Local Area Designation Policy have been revised to include the required additional definitions as stated in TEGL Number 25-13.

**3. Action.** Local area designation requests were received from three (3) entities pursuant to the initially-issued (February 26, 2015) Local Area Designation Policy. Two of the applications were approved by the Governor subsequent to recommendation by the State Workforce Development Board, so no action is required for those two entities (Mobile Works, Inc. and the Alabama Workforce Investment Area). However, the application for the Jefferson County Commission was not recommended by the State Workforce Development Board for approval by the Governor nor was it approved by the Governor.

Per the Assistant Secretary of Labor's requirement stated in her September 22, 2015 correspondence, the State is required to "allow the Jefferson County Commission to request initial designation under WIOA Section 106(b)(2) and review such request if submitted, and afford the local area the right to a State-level appeal under WIOA Section 106(b)(5) if the State rejects the local area's request for initial designation."

In compliance with this requirement, the local Chief Elected Official (CEO) for the Jefferson County Commission may submit the completed application to the Workforce Development Division no later than 5:00 p.m., December 31, 2015 for consideration of initial designation per Section 106(b)(2) of the WIOA.

4. Contact. Questions regarding this information should be directed to Bill Hornsby, Supervisor, State Programs, Planning, and Divisional Budget Management Section at (334) 242-5847 or [bill.hornsby@commerce.alabama.gov](mailto:bill.hornsby@commerce.alabama.gov).