WIOA STATE PLAN FOR THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT FY-2018

OVERVIEW

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.

OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

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

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and 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))

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

HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

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

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

- State Operating Systems and Policies,
- Assurances, and
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (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.

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

I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

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

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Yes

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. No

COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

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.) No

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

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

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

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

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

Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)) No

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

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

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

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

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

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

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

1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

A. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

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

I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

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

II. EMERGING 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.

I. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS The Unified 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. (a) (1) (A) Economic Analysis: Unified State Plan must include an analysis of economic conditions and trends in CT (including sub-state regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State). Our shared history in Connecticut demonstrates a commitment to new ideas and betterment of the old. From the invention of the sewing machine to decades of leading the insurance industry to the development and production of fuel cells, we in Connecticut have spent centuries showing the world how to improve. From world-ranking productivity to one of the highest levels of foreign direct investment, Connecticut models the attributes that are defining the modern economy. As we move further into the 21st century, Connecticut is dedicated to continuing to innovate and live up to our rich history as a national and world leader. Connecticut's strength starts with its people. We have the third most educated workforce in the nation, as well as the healthiest residents and the highest per capita income. We are a community of forward-thinkers, innovators, and researchers. By aligning education more closely with the needs of the private sector, Connecticut is ensuring that future generations have the skills to transform our world.

Connecticut also possesses an unparalleled quality of life. The abundance of natural resources, extensive network of cultural and creative assets, and variety of communities make Connecticut a great place to live and do business. Our location is ideal for residents and businesses alike, with ready access to major markets, financial centers, and colleges and universities. Within a one-day drive from Central Connecticut is one-third of the U.S. economy and two-thirds of the Canadian economy, making Connecticut one of the best locations in the nation. (Source: CT Economic Development Strategy, Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development.)

Update of Economic Analysis section of the Unified State Plan

(i) Connecticut has yet to regain the overall employment levels achieved before the start of the great recession. As of December 2017, Connecticut had recovered 91,000 of the 119,000 jobs lost from March 2008 to February 2010. The state's private sector is nearly at its previous peak — up 107,900 from February 2010 to December 2017 after losing 111,700 during the great recession.

In the two years ending December 2017, Connecticut has seen significant growth in eight sectors: Health Care & Social Assistance, Transportation Warehousing & Utilities, Durable Goods Manufacturing, Other Services, Wholesale Trade, Administrative and Support Services, Finance & Insurance, and Non-Durable Goods Manufacturing. State government, retail trade, construction, local government, management of companies, and information have declined.

(ii) The current (2017 -2019) short term projections developed by the Department of Labor's Office of Research show that employment growth is expected to be slightly faster over the next two years with a gain of more than 20,000 jobs during that period. Manufacturing, which grew over the past two years, is expected to add another 1,700 jobs by mid-2019. Construction is also projected to add jobs.

For services producing employment, Health Care and Social Assistance is projected to add the most jobs (+7,800 over two years) followed by Transportation and Warehousing. Retail Trade and Information are projected to decline as is Educational Services due to a declining school-aged population.

Looked at by occupational group, more than half the 20,000 job gain over the next two years will be in Personal Care & Service, Food Preparation & Related, Transportation & Materials Moving, and Healthcare Practitioners and Related occupations. Sales & Related and Office & Administrative Support occupations are expected to decline slightly.

The long term (2014-2024) projections show the largest gain is expected in the Health Care and Social Assistance Sector followed by the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector. Government and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (which includes casino gambling) are projected to decline. The long term projections were completed in the summer of 2016 and do not reflect any information that has become available since that time. In addition, they do not assume any policy changes. Currently there are significant policy changes being considered with regard to casino gaming which could affect employment in that industry during the projections period.

Looked at from the occupational side, Personal Care and Service Occupations are projected to show the largest increase followed by Management Occupations and Healthcare Practitioners & Technical. No occupational groups are projected to decline over the long term period, but Farming, Protective Service, and Legal Occupations have the smallest gains.

(iii) A majority of the projected employment growth will be in occupations requiring more than a high school diploma with 40% requiring a Bachelor's or advanced degree and 21% requiring an Associate's or some form of postsecondary training. The projections suggest that education will remain valuable over the next ten years. While the projections show thousands of openings in occupations with a minimum education requirement of less than a high school diploma, the current median wage for these occupations is less than $30,000 per year (assuming full-year, full-time work). On the other hand, most of the openings in high-paying occupations (those with a current median annual wage of $75,000 or more) require a college degree or even a professional or advanced degree. There will be opportunities for workers in low-skill, low-paying jobs to increase their incomes by gaining a credential and entering a Middle Skill occupation, while those who are able to graduate from college will greatly increase their chances of a high-paying career. (Middle Skill jobs are those that require at least a high school diploma plus some additional training or education — such as an Associate's Degree — but don't require a 4-year college degree.)

(i) From August 2015 through December 2017 Total Employment has increased by 11,000 with Private Sector jobs up 19,400 and the Government sector down 8,400.

Construction employment is down 2,900 jobs but unusual weather patterns the past couple of years have affected the seasonal pattern of hiring and layoffs (all data in this section are seasonally adjusted). Manufacturing jobs are up 3,100 with a 2,000 jobs gain in Durable Goods and an additional 1,100 in Nondurable Goods. Wholesale trade is up 1,800, Retail trade is down 3,700 and Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities are up 5,300 as on-line retailers have opened warehousing/distribution facilities in Connecticut while brick-and-mortar retailers have declined.

Finance and Insurance, which continued to decline even after the end of the great recession, turned around and increased by 1,300 jobs from August 2015 through December 2017. Real Estate added 800 jobs while Professional, Scientific and Technical Services fell by 500. Management of Companies declined by 1,600 but Administrative Support Services grew by 1,800.

Education Services, which increased even during the recession and was a driver of growth after the recession were up only 700 from August 2015 to December 2017. Demographics (declining school-aged population) are a drag on this sector while the aging population is boosting demand for Health Care. The Health Care and Social Assistance sector grew by 7,600. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation grew by 1,600 while Accommodation and Food Services added 1,200 jobs. Other Services increased by 2,100.

As mentioned above, the Government Sector declined by 8,400 with State Government down 7.6% (5,300 jobs) in the August 2015 to December 2017 period. Local government, which includes Native American tribal government employment, fell by 3,300 jobs or 2.2%.

(ii) After decades of decline, the increase in manufacturing employment is a major turnaround with prospects for continued growth as major companies in this sector have announced aggressive hiring plans. On the other side changes in the way consumers shop will continue to affect the mix between retail and warehousing employment. Major national retailers with significant employment in Connecticut have announced plans to retrench or even close. Demographics will continue to put upward pressure on the demand for health care and downward pressure on educational services. State and local finances will continue to constrain government employment.

(iii) The 2016 American Community Survey (1-year sample) shows that 43.7% of the Connecticut labor force aged 25 to 64 has a Bachelor's degree or higher and an additional 26.2% have some college or an Associate's degree. An additional 24.4% have completed high school leaving just 5.8% of the labor force without a high school diploma. Looking at the total labor force (age 16 and above) 68.9% are white not Hispanic or Latino, 10.6% are Black or African-American, and 14.5% are Hispanic or Latino. 4.4% of the labor force is under aged 20 and 1.0% of the labor force is aged 75 and over. 47.9% of the labor force is age 45 and above. 51.5% of the labor force aged 20 to 64 is male and 48.5% is female.

Connecticut's unemployment rate has continued to fall since August 2015. As of December 2017 it was 4.6%, still above the national average of 4.1%. For calendar year 2017, the unemployment rate was 4.9% (down from 5.2% for calendar year 2016). The 2017 rate was 4.8% for the White population, 6.0% for Black or African-Americans and 8.7% for Hispanic or Latinos. The rate was 9.5% for those with less than a high school diploma, 5.5% for those with a high school

diploma but no college, 3.6% for those with some college or an Associate's degree and 3.1% for those with a Bachelor's degree or higher.

Connecticut's 2016 overall poverty rate was 9.8% but was 10.6% for women and 12.9% for children under age 18. The poverty rate for those aged 25 years and over was 8.3% but 23.6% for those 25 and over who lacked a high school diploma, 10.9% for those with a diploma or equivalency, 7.5% for those with some college or an Associate's degree, and 3.4% for those with a Bachelor's degree or more. In households with a female householder and no husband present, 22.8% of households have income less than 100% of the poverty level.

(iv) The Connecticut Department of Labor's Office of Research has a publicly available tool on its website called the Training and Education Planning System (TEPS). TEPS attempts to compare the pipeline of education program completers in Connecticut to the estimated demand for new entrants into those occupations for which completers are being trained. TEPS uses program completer information from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and local education institutions and compares these values to the long-term estimates of annual demand for new entrants into an occupation from the projections program.

This tool is available for education planners throughout the state. For example, selected results from the TEPS program are presented to the appropriate committees of the legislature each year as part of the legislature's review of the Technical High School System. The results can be informative, but the limitations of the data and labor markets must be understood in order to properly use the information.

One limitation is that the ONET (Occupational Information Network) crosswalk which relates education programs (classified by CIP — Classification of Instructional Program codes) to occupations (classified by SOC — Standard Occupational Codes) is a many to many relationship in both directions. This means an educational program may train an individual for a number of occupations and an occupation may draw qualified entrants from a number of education programs. There is no reliable data available to apportion completers to each of its available occupations. TEPS assumes that all completers of an education program could enter any of the occupations for which they qualify.

Another limitation is that TEPS (or any state-based measure of labor supply and demand) assumes that labor markets begin and end at the state border. In fact, this is highly dependent on the occupation involved. Entrants to some new positions could come across state or international borders. Similarly, many trained in Connecticut could seek positions elsewhere.

Finally, the TEPS procedure recognizes but can't measure those who complete an education program and may not be directly entering the workforce. A particular education program may be a useful stepping stone toward further education and career choices.

As a result of these limitations, TEPS results that show a significant under or over supply of trained individuals for entry into an occupation should be taken as a preliminary indicator only. More analysis from those who are close to these professions is necessary to determine if too many or too few individuals are being trained for a particular occupation.

On February 3, 2016, Governor Dannel P. Malloy gave his State of the State Address to the House of Representatives at the State Capitol. For the most part he addressed the need for

change, presenting five budget principles: limit our spending to available resources; address unsustainable and post-employment costs; prioritize funding for core services; and hold state agencies accountable to the public and state legislature for their results. But he also recognized that progress is happening in Connecticut illustrated by these examples: As a result of Connecticut's concerted efforts to grow its economy, the private sector has grown more than 80,000 jobs in the last five years. Since July of 2015, Connecticut has secured employers such as Synchrony Financial and welcomed new employers like Serta Simmons from Massachusetts and MC Credit Partners from New York. These employers alone will create and retain more than 700 jobs in Connecticut. In January 2016 Electric Boat announced plans to add 800 new jobs to its workforce this year and 4,000 jobs in the years to come. Connecticut has held onto major employers such as United Technologies and Sikorsky along with their 24,000 employees. Connecticut is supporting more small businesses than ever before. In 2015 Connecticut's Small Business Express Program worked with more than 230 businesses to create or retain more than 4,400 jobs. In a special session last fall, Connecticut's Legislature made changes to its tax code that both parties agreed were necessary to help our business community. Because of this, employers can continue their strong pace of hiring and investing in the new innovative economy that will drive us into the future. Connecticut's community colleges and regents system has answered the challenge for precision manufacturing training. The University of Connecticut has increased its engineering school capacity by fifty percent, helping meet the demand for technology and manufacturing job openings across Connecticut. The Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) has launched two new programs geared specifically to training. One of those programs has already assisted 88 companies in training their workforce. Connecticut's public school teachers are working hard as well. Test scores are up; graduation rates have increased; and we're closing in on the achievement gap every year. Housing is more affordable; last year alone Connecticut funded more than 11,000 units of housing. Connecticut is the first state in the nation to end chronic veteran homelessness and this year will end chronic homelessness for everyone. And lastly, crime in Connecticut is at a 48-year low. Violent crime is down again from the previous year; the prison population has reached new lows and this year Connecticut closed its fourth prison. (i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations - Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

A Detailed Look at Connecticut's Recovery Connecticut's economic recovery has been progressing slower than the nation, but faster than some of its neighboring states. The low point of Connecticut's recession was in February 2010, but only recently has the state come close to the employment levels it experienced prior to the recession. As of July 2015, it has been 65 months into recovery. A year-by-year breakdown of growth in nonfarm employment since the trough is detailed below. This gives us a better idea of how each industry has shaped the state's current situation. There is a further discussion of where each industry was at during each year of the recovery. The first year of recovery started out strong with an increase of 17,100 jobs. The momentum has been slowly tapering off with each year into recovery. From 2013 to 2014, Connecticut added 12,500 nonfarm jobs, a growth rate of .8%. Four of the major industries have provided steady growth year-over-year throughout the recovery. Leisure and hospitality has had the largest yearly average percentage increase at 3%, while professional and business services has had the largest average of jobs added each year at 5,300. The education and health services industry has experienced an average of 4,500 added each year of the recovery. Trade, transportation, and utilities is the other sector that has shown consistent growth year-over-year.

Meanwhile, two industries have been a drag on the current recovery. The employment levels in financial activities and government have been decreasing year-over-year. Government started in 2010 to 2011 with its largest drop of 3,900 jobs and has been slowing down its job losses with only 400 from 2013 to 2014. Local government is the largest subsector of government and includes Indian tribal employment. Financial activities are showing an opposite trend. The sector only lost 200 jobs the initial year of recovery, but the most recent year-over-year figure shows it lost 2,100 jobs. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Employment Statistics shows employment levels, change, and employment growth rates for the major sectors in the Connecticut economy. The Construction, Natural Resources, and Mining sector had employment of 50,600 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This increased to 52,100 in 2011, 52,200 in 2012, 54,300 in 2013 and 56,100 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was 1,500, for 2011 to 2012 the change was 100, for 2012 to 2013 the change was 2,100 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was 1,800 representing growth rates of 3.0%, 0.2%, 4.0% and 3.3% respectively. The Manufacturing sector had employment of 164,800 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This increased to 165,500 in 2011, 164,200 in 2012, 162,600 in 2013 and 159,700 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was 700, for 2011 to 2012 the change was -1,300, for 2012 to 2013 the change was -1,600 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was -2,900 representing growth rates of 0.4%,- 0.8%, -1.0% and -1.8% respectively. The Trade, Transportation and Utilities sector had employment of 289,800 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This increased to 292,900 in 2011, 295,800 in 2012, 298,400 in 2013 and 301,300 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was 3,100, for 2011 to 2012 the change was 2,900, for 2012 to 2013 the change was 2,600 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was 2,800 representing growth rates of 1.1%, 1.0%, 0.9% and 0.9% respectively. The Information sector had employment of 31,700 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This fell to 31,300 in 2011, 31,300 in 2012, 32,100 in 2013 and 31,800 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was -400, for 2011 to 2012 the change was 0, for 2012 to 2013 the change was 800 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was -300 representing growth rates of -1.4%, -0.1%, 2.7% and -0.8% respectively. The finance and insurance sector had employment of 116,300 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This increased to 116,400 in 2011, 114,400 in 2012, 111,800 in 2013 and 109,400 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was 100, for 2011 to 2012 the change was -2,000, for 2012 to 2013 the change was -2,600 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was -2,400 representing growth rates of 0.1%, -1.7%, -2.3% and -2.1% respectively. The real estate and rental and leasing sector had employment of 18,900 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This decreased to 18,700 in 2011, 18,800 in 2012, 19,000 in 2013 and 19,300 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was -200, for 2011 to 2012 the change was 100, for 2012 to 2013 the change was -200 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was 300 representing growth rates of -1.1%, 0.5%, 1.1% and -1.6% respectively. The professional and business services sector had employment of 190,700 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This increased to 197,100 in 2011, 203,200 in 2012, 206,600 in 2013 and 211,800 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was 6,400, for 2011 to 2012 the change was -6,100, for 2012 to 2013 the change was -3,400 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was 5,200 representing growth rates of 3.3%, 3.1%, 1.7% and 2.5% respectively. The Educational Services sector had employment of 59,200 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This increased to 60,900 in 2011, 61,600 in 2012, 62,200 in 2013 and 63,500 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was 1,700, for 2011 to 2012 the change was 700, for 2012 to 2013 the change was 600 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was 1,300 representing growth rates of 2.9%, 1.1%, 1.0% and 2.1% respectively. The Health Care and Social Assistance sector had employment of 247,700 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This increased to 252,400 in 2011, 256,000 in 2012, 259,000 in

2013 and 261,500 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was 4,700, for 2011 to 2012 the change was 3,600, for 2012 to 2013 the change was 3,000 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was 2,500 representing growth rates of 1.9%, 1.4%, 1.2% and 1.0% respectively. The Leisure and Hospitality sector had employment of 133,600 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This increased to 137,300 in 2011, 142,600 in 2012, 147,300 in 2013 and 151,000 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was 3,700, for 2011 to 2012 the change was 5,300, for 2012 to 2013 the change was 4,700 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was 3,700 representing growth rates of 2.8%, 3.9%, 3.3% and 2.5% respectively. The Other Services sector had employment of 60,500 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This fell to 60,400 in 2011, 61,700 in 2012, 62,200 in 2013 and 63,000 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was -200, for 2011 to 2012 the change was 1,300, for 2012 to 2013 the change was 500 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was 800 representing growth rates of -0.3%, 2.2%, 0.9% and 1.2% respectively. Federal Government employment was 19,700 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This fell to 18,000 in 2011, 17,600 in 2012, 17,300 in 2013 and 17,400 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was -1,700, for 2011 to 2012 the change was -400, for 2012 to 2013 the change was -300 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was 100 representing growth rates of -8.6%, -2.2%, -1.7% and 0.6% respectively. State Government employment was 67,400 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This fell to 67,200 in 2011, 66,800 in 2012, 66,900 in 2013 and 67,000 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was -200, for 2011 to 2012 the change was -400, for 2012 to 2013 the change was 100 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was 100 representing growth rates of -0.3%, -0.6%, 0.1% and 0.1% respectively. Local Government employment was 157,100 in 2010, the trough year of the recession. This fell to 155,100 in 2011, 154,100 in 2012, 154,000 in 2013 and 153,400 in 2014. The 2010 to 2011 change was -2,000, for 2011 to 2012 the change was -1,000, for 2012 to 2013 the change was -100 and for 2013 to 2014 the change was -600 representing growth rates of -1.3%, -0.6%, -0.1% and -0.4% respectively. Local government employment includes Indian tribal government employment. Connecticut Nonfarm Employment has added fewer jobs each year since the recession with jobs up 17,100 from 2010 to 2011, up 15,300 from 2011 to 2012, up 13,200 from 2012 to 2013 and up 12,500 from 2013 to 2014. Professional and Business Services added the most jobs from 2010 to 2011, 2011 to 2012 and 2013 to 2014. Leisure and Hospitality added the most jobs from 2012 to 2013. Government had the largest drop from 2010 to 2011 and from 2011 to 2012 falling 3,900 and 1,800 respectively. Financial Activities fell the most from 2012 to 2013 and from 2013 to 2014, down 2,600 and 2,100 respectively.

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

Industry Employment Projections Short-Term The current short-term projections developed by the Department of Labor's Office of Research are for the two-year period from the third quarter of 2014 to the third quarter of 2016 are detailed below. Connecticut is expected to continue on its rebound from the recent recession over the period. The average annual growth rate is expected to be 0.7%. This will potentially bring the employment level to 1,823,049 by the third quarter of 2016. The goods producing industries are expected to contract at an annual average rate of 0.6%. The largest contributor to this is the manufacturing industry. Over the two-year period, it is expected to drop by 5,454 jobs. Construction has a brighter outlook, as it is projected to grow on average 2.2% annually. The much larger service providing industries are forecasted to grow 0.9% on an annual average basis. Service providing industries make up a large share of Connecticut's employment. The projected growth is largely aided by education and health

services. The industry is expected to grow 1.4% annually, keeping with recent trends. Other significant contributions to the anticipated employment growth are the trade, transportation, and utilities, professional and business services, and leisure and hospitality sectors. Information, financial activities, and government are all likely to shrink over the next two years.

According to the Short Term Projections, total employment for all Industries will grow from 1,799,082 in 2014 to 1,823,049 in 2016, a growth rate of 0.7%. For Goods Producing industries, employment will fall from 226,341in 2014 to 223,520 in 2016 a decline of 0.6%. For Natural Resources and Mining employment will increase from 7,098 in 2014 to 7,100 in 2016 a growth rate of 0.0%. Construction employment is projected to grow from 59,611 in 2014 to 62,242 in 2016, a growth rate of 2.2%. Manufacturing jobs are projected to decrease from 159,632 in 2014 to 154,178 in 2016 a decline of -1.7%. Service Providing industries are projected to increase from 1,455,087 in 2014 to 1,481,366 in 2016, a 0.9% increase. Trade, Transportation, and Utilities jobs are expected to increase from 296,252in 2014 to 299,374 in 2016, a 0.5% increase. The information sector is expected to lose jobs, falling from 32,050 in 2014 to 31,959 in 2016, a 0.1% drop. Financial Activities are projected to decline from 129,566 in 2014 to 128,322 in 2016, a 0.5% fall. Professional and Business Services will increase from 214,718in 2014 to 220,389 in 2016 for a gain of 1.3%. Education and Health Services are projected to grow from 446,494 in 2014 to 458,814 in 2016, a 1.4% rise. Leisure and Hospitality is projected to gain from 171,027 in 2014 to 177,329 in 2016, a 1.8% gain. Other Services (except Government) will go from 76,000 in 2014 to 76,419 in 2016, a 0.3% increase. Government jobs are expected to rise from 88,980in 2014 to 88,760 in 2016, a-0.1% decline. The composition of Connecticut 2016 projected employment is 81% Service Producing, 12% Goods Producing, and 7% Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers. Occupational Employment Forecast Short-Term Connecticut's occupational employment is expected to grow by 23,967 jobs over the 2014-2016 projections period. These projections are detailed below by major occupational category. The major categories with the largest employment change are food preparation and serving related, education, training, and library, personal care and service, and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations. There are also lists of the fastest growing and shrinking occupations based on the minor occupation group. Total Occupational Employment was 1,799,082 in 2014 and projected to increase to 1,823,049 in 2016, an increase of 23,967. Management occupations were 135,313 in 2014 and projected to grow to 136,335 in 2016, an increase of 1,022. Business and Financial Operations occupations were 94,899in 2014 and projected to grow to 95,431 in 2016, an increase of 532. Computer and Mathematical occupations were 47,516 in 2014 and projected to grow to 49,165 in 2016, an increase of 1,649. Architecture and Engineering occupations were 33,787 in 2014 and fell to 33,458 in 2016 a decline of -329. Life, Physical, and Social Science occupations were 13,203 in 2014 and projected to rise to 13,335in 2016 for a gain of132. Community and Social Service occupations were 37,911 in 2014 and projected at 38,915 for 2016, a gain of 1,004. Legal occupations were at 15,242 in 2014 and projected at 15,301in 2016 for a 59 rise. Education, Training, and Library occupations were at 119,293 in 2014 and rose to 123,402 in 2016 for a gain of 4,109. Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media occupations were at 36,917 in 2014 and projected to rise to 37,196 in 2016 for an increase of 279. Healthcare Practitioners and Technical occupations were at 105,660 in 2014 and projected to rise to 107,205 in 2016 for an increase of 1,545. Healthcare Support occupations were at 53,490 in 2014 and projected to rise to 54,316 in 2016 for an increase of 826. Protective Service occupations were at 35,456 in 2014 and projected to rise to 35,855 in 2016 for an increase of

399. Food Preparation and Serving Related occupations were at 139,510 in 2014 and projected to rise to 144,188 in 2016 for an increase of 4,678. Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance occupations were at 76,989 in 2014 and projected to rise to 79,210 in 2016 for an increase of 2,221. Personal Care and Service occupations were 92,842 in 2014 and projected at 96,497 for 2016 for an increase of 3,655. Sales and Related occupations were at 179,960 in 2014 projected to rise to 180,415 in 2016 for an increase of 455. Office and Administrative Support occupations were 268,983 in 2014 projected to rise to 269,054 for an increase of71. Farming, Fishing, and Forestry occupations were 4,676 in 2014 projected to fall to 4,675 in 2016 for a decrease of 1. Employment in Construction and Extraction occupations was 58,810 in 2014, increasing to a projected 60,639 in 2016 for an increase of 1,829. Installation, Maintenance, and Repair occupations were 56,814 in 2014 and projected to increase to 57,188 in 2016 for an increase of 374. Production occupations had employment of 96,922 in 2014 projected to fall to94,801 in 2016 for a decrease of 2,121. Transportation and Material Moving occupations were at 94,889 in 2014 and were projected to rise to 96,468in 2016 for an increase of 1,579.

The fastest growing occupations (by minor occupation group) are Water Transportation Workers which increase from 870 in 2014 to a projected 1,014 in 2016, a16.6% increase. Helpers, Construction Trades which were 1,384 in 2014 and a projected 1,461 in 2016 for a 5.6% increase. Postsecondary Teachers which were 32,000 in 2014 and a projected 33,614 in 2016, an increase of 5.0%. Other Personal Care and Service Workers had employment of 59,223 in 2014 and projected 62,163 in 2016 for a rise of 5.0%. Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapist Assistants and Aides had 2014 employment of 1,761 which rose to a projected 1,836 in 2016 for a 4.3% rise. Entertainment Attendants and Related Workers had employment of 6,753 in 2014 projected to rise to 7,020 in 2016 for a 4.0% increase. Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers had employment of 11,418 in 2014 which rose to a projected 11,857 in 2016 for an increase of 3.8%. Computer Occupations had employment of 44,775 in 2014 which rose to a projected 46,356 in 2016 a 3.5% rise. Food and Beverage Serving Workers had employment of 75,408 in 2014 and a projected 78,069 in 2016 for an increase of 3.5% Preschool, Primary, Secondary, and Special Education School Teachers had employment of 48,094 in 2014 which rose to 49,640 in 2016 (projected) for a 3.2% rise. The occupations (by minor occupation group) that shrank the fastest were Printing Worker which had employment of 2,982 in 2014 which fell to a projected 2,722 in 2016 for an 8.7% decline. Communications Equipment Operators drop from 1,589 in 2014 to a projected 1,532 in 2016 for a 3.6% drop. Supervisors of Production Workers fell from 8,081 in 2014 to a projected 7,851 in 2016 for a 2.9% decline. Plant and System Operators declined from 2,415 in 2014 to 2,355 in 2016 (projected) a 2.5% drop. Other Production Occupations fell from 23,595 in 2014 to a projected 23,023 in 2016 a 2.4% drop. Religious Workers fell from 2,848 in 2014 to a projected 2,784 in 2016, a 2.3% decline. Assemblers and Fabricators fell from 21,198 in 2014 to 20,744 in 2016 a 2.1% decline. Drafters, Engineering Technicians, and Mapping Technicians declined from 8,578 in 2014 to 8,396 in 2016, a 2.1% decline. Metal Workers and Plastic Workers fell from 28,398 in 2014 to 27,798 projected for 2016 a 2.1% drop. Material Recording, Scheduling, Dispatching, and Distributing Workers declined from 42,513 in 2014 to a projected 41,984 in 2016, a decline of 1.2%.

Ten-Year Projections Every two years, the Connecticut Department of Labor prepares ten-year projections of employment by industry and occupation. The current projections are for the 2012-2022 period. The projections are prepared using national projections produced by the U.S.

Bureau of Labor Statistics. The projections are based on the assumption of a full employment economy at the end of the projections period (2022).

Industry The largest sector, and the one expected to add the most jobs over the next ten years, is Health Care. Driven by the aging population employment is projected to grow by nearly 40,000 jobs by 2022. Most of that growth is expected to be in Ambulatory Care settings - offices of practitioners and outpatient centers. Home health care services are also expected to add employment. Hospitals and Assisted Living Facilities are expected to grow but employment at Skilled Nursing Facilities (nursing homes) is expected to remain flat. Educational Services is projected to add almost 18,000 jobs over the next ten years, the second largest sector in terms of job growth as elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities (public and private) are expected to add employment. This is a smaller increase than experienced over the past 10 years driven by slower projected growth in school-aged population. Close behind education and in a turnaround from the previous ten years, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services are projected to add 17,500 jobs over the next ten years with the largest gain in the Computer Systems Design industry. Similar to the national projections, Management Consulting, Accounting, and Architectural and Engineering Services are projected to grow strongly. Most other sectors are expected to add jobs over the next ten years. For example, Construction is expected to add over 11,000 jobs after a similar decline over the past decade with all major industries within the sector expected to grow strongly. In another major turnaround, Manufacturing is projected to add jobs. While the growth is less than 1% over 10 years, this follows a decline of over 40,000 jobs over the prior decade. Growth is uneven - with some manufacturing industries growing while others contract. Two sectors that are expected to decline over the next ten years are Information and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, although the declines will be significantly smaller in the next ten years than over the prior ten. Newspaper publishing is the main reason for the information decline while increased competition in other states for Connecticut's casino business will cause declines in the Entertainment sector. Occupations Consistent with the industry projections, the largest increases in employment are projected to be in Healthcare, Education and Personal Care categories. Registered Nurses, Physical Therapists, Home Health Aids, Personal Care Aides and teachers at all levels are all projected to grow significantly over the next ten years. Office and Administrative Support, Management, Food Preparation & Serving, Business & Financial Operations, Construction & Extraction, and Sales occupations are all expected to add thousands of jobs over the next ten years.

(iii) Employers' Employment Needs- With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (1) and (2), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including description of knowledge, skills and abilities required, including credentials and licenses. In addition to growth, the projections include estimates of openings due to replacement needs as workers retire or move on to new occupations. The occupations with most openings (Retail Salespersons, Cashiers, Waiters & Waitresses, Food Prep &Serving workers) are those with high replacements needs. While some workers make their careers in these occupations, for many these are held for a few years before the worker moves on. Interestingly, the growth in demand for health care workers is such that Registered Nurses, a career-oriented occupation, is fifth in terms of total openings.

Education and Training Each occupation is assigned a minimum education category based on our best knowledge of the minimum education required to enter the occupation. Particular jobs within an occupation may have different requirements but in most cases these requirements will be at or above the minimum for the occupation. In addition some occupations require work experience in a related occupation. Finally, some additional on-the-job training, an apprenticeship or an internship might be required to become proficient in the occupation. The projections show significant growth in many occupations that require a college or even a professional or advanced degree in fields from health care, education, finance, and information technology in addition to the need to replace many of these workers who will be retiring over the next decade. Occupations with a minimum education requirement beyond high school and less than a Bachelor's Degree, or those requiring a high school diploma plus an apprenticeship, internship, or moderate or long-term on-the-job training are classified as "Middle Skill" occupations. The largest occupation in the "middle skill" category is registered nurse because it's possible to become a registered nurse without a Bachelor's Degree (although many jobs within the nursing field may require a Bachelor's). Other middle skill occupations projected to grow over the next ten years cover a wide variety of fields in industries ranging from health care to education to construction to transportation. Less growth is expected in occupations that require only a high school diploma although there will be some growth in child care, security, and clerical occupations. Finally there will be growth in occupations that don't necessarily require a high school diploma to enter the occupation, such as Personal Care Aides, Retail Sales Clerk, or Waiter or Waitress. However, any particular job within an occupation may have additional requirements. An individual employer, for example, may decide to require a high school diploma or another credential for a particular position even if minimum to enter the occupation is lower.

Education and Wages The projections suggest that education will remain valuable over the next ten years. While we are projecting thousands of annual openings in occupations that with a minimum education of less than a high school diploma, the current median wage for these occupations is less than $30,000 per year (assuming full-year full-time work). On the other hand, most of the openings in high-paying occupations (those with a current median annual wage of $75,000 or more) require a college degree or even a professional or advanced degree. As detailed below, the number of annual growth openings projected for occupations by current median annual wage and minimum education and training requirements. The chart shows that there will be opportunities for workers in low-skill low-paying jobs to increase their incomes by gaining a credential and entering a "Middle Skill" occupation while those who are able to graduate from college will greatly increase their chances of a high-paying career.

According to the 2012-2022 long term projections, there will be a projected there will be 3,877 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage under $30,000 per year requiring less than a high school diploma to enter the occupation; 289 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage between $30,000 and 59,000 per year requiring less than a high school diploma to enter the occupation; 8 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage between $60,000 and 74,000 per year requiring less than a high school diploma to enter the occupation; 4 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage of $75,000 or more per year requiring less than a high school diploma to enter the occupation; 618 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage under $30,000 per year requiring a high school diploma or GED to enter the occupation; 1,562 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage between $30,000 and 59,000 per year requiring a high school diploma or GED to

enter the occupation; 12 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage between $60,000 and 74,000 per year requiring a high school diploma or GED to enter the occupation; 0 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage of $75,000 or more per year requiring a high school diploma or GED to enter the occupation; 351 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage under $30,000 per year requiring education or training in the middle skill category to enter the occupation; 3,914 in occupations with a median wage between $30,000 and 59,000 per year requiring education or training in the middle skill category to enter the occupation; 558 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage between $60,000 and 74,000 per year requiring education or training in the middle skill category to enter the occupation; 815 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage of $75,000 or more per year requiring education or training in the middle skill category to enter the occupation; 139 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage under $30,000 per year requiring a bachelor's degree and/or an advanced or professional degree to enter the occupation; 572 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage between $30,000 and 59,000 per year requiring a bachelor's degree and/or an advanced or professional degree to enter the occupation; 1,426 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage between $60,000 and 74,000 per year requiring a bachelor's degree and/or an advanced or professional degree to enter the occupation; 3,623 annual growth openings in occupations with a median wage of $75,000 or more per year requiring a bachelor's degree and/or an advanced or professional degree to enter the occupation. The Middle Skill category is defined as those occupations requiring at least a high school diploma or GED plus additional schooling, significant training, or credential but that do not require a bachelor's or advanced degree.

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'.

(B) Workforce Analysis: Unified State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups in CT and State-identified regions.

i. Employment and Unemployment - Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand. Connecticut's Recovering Labor Market Connecticut is now into its seventh year of recovery from the "great recession" that took its toll on the state from 2008 to 2010. Over the recession, Connecticut lost over 5% of its nonfarm employment, roughly 119,000 jobs based on the monthly current employment statistics from March 2008 to February 2010. The largest losses came from the construction, manufacturing, trade, transportation and utilities, and the professional and business services sectors. Those four sectors alone accounted for 79% of the lost jobs. The lone sectors that were able to create jobs during the recession were education, which posted a small gain, and health care and social assistance, which continued to add jobs during the recession. As of August 2015, Connecticut has yet to regain all of the nonfarm employment it lost in the recession. The 104,900 gain since February 2010 is 88% of the decline. All industry super sectors, except for manufacturing, financial activities and government, have added jobs since the recovery began. Manufacturing has dropped 2,400 jobs since February 2010, bringing the total loss to 27,300 jobs since the recession hit in March 2008. The financial activities sector has lost 6,600 jobs since the trough year, making a total loss of 14,800 jobs since the peak. Similarly, government has lost 6,300 jobs since the trough, creating a drop of 14,600 jobs since the peak. Only three super sectors have been able to reach or exceed their 2008 level. The professional and business services sector lost 14,800 jobs during the recession, but has since gained 21,100 jobs to bring it 6,300 jobs higher than in 2008. Leisure and hospitality took a small dip of 3,800 jobs from 2008 to 2010, but is now 13,600 jobs greater than it was pre-recession. The sector that has grown the most in recent years is not surprisingly the one that didn't lose jobs during the recession- education and health services. Education and health services grew 10,100 jobs when the rest of the economy was in a downfall, and has grown by another 18,100 since 2010. As detailed below, the annual averages of Connecticut nonfarm employment throughout the current cycle. The details compare the employment levels from the peak, trough and most recent complete year of data and also show the change in jobs from the peak to trough, trough to recent year, and peak to recent year. We then highlight the major industry sectors and show how the job share of each has shifted throughout the cycle. Nonfarm Employment through the Current Cycle had a peak year of 2008, a low year in 2010, while 2014 is a recent year. Total nonfarm employment was 1,699,000 win 2008 (the peak year) feel to 1,608,000 in 2010 (the low year) and rose to 1,666,100 in 2014 (the recent year). The change in jobs from 2008 to 2010 was down 91,000, from 2010 to 2014 was up 58,100 and from 2008 to 2014 was down 32,900. Total private employment was 1,446,500 in 2008, 1,363,800 in 2010, and 1,428,200 in 2014. The change from 2008 to 2010 was down 82,700, from 2010 to 2014 was up 64,400, and from 2008 to 2014 was down 18,300. For goods producing industries, employment was 252,700in 2008, 215,400 in 2010, and 215,800 in 2014. The change from 2008

to 2010 was down 37,300 from 2010 to 2014 was up 400 and from 2008 to 2014 was down 36,900. For construction, natural resources, and mining, employment was 66,100 in 2008, 50,600 in 2010, and 56,100 in 2014. The change from 2008 to 2010 was down 15,500, from 2010 to 2014 was up 5,500, and from 2008 to 2014 was down 10,000. For manufacturing, there were 186,700 jobs in 2008, 164,800 in 2010, 159,700 in 20104 for declines of 21,900 from 2008 to 2010, 5,100 from 2010 to 2014 and 27,000 from 2008 to 2014. Durable Goods manufacturing had 143,500 jobs in 2008, 127,300 in 2010 and 124,300 in 2014 for declines of 16,200from 2008 to 2010, 3,000 from 2010 to 2014 and 19,200 from 2008 to 2014. Fabricated Metal manufacturing had 33,100 jobs in 2008, 28,100 in 2010, and 29,800 in 2014 for a 5,000 decline from 2008 to 2010, a rise of 1,700 from 2010 to 2014 but a decline of 3,300 from 2008 to 2014. Machinery manufacturing had 17,700 jobs in 2008, 15,000 in 2010 and 13,900 in 2014 for declines of 2,700 from 2008 to 2010, 1,100 from 2010 to 2014 and 3,800 from 2008 to 2014. Computer and Electronic Product manufacturing had 14,200 jobs in 2008, 13,300 in 2010, and 12,500 in 20104 for declines of 900 from 2008 to 2010, 800 from 2010 to 2014 and 1,700 from 2008 to 2014. Transportation Equipment manufacturing had 44,300 jobs in 2008, 42,200 in 2010 and 40,100 in 2014 for declines of 2,100 from 2008 to 2010, 2,100 from 2010 to 2014 and 4,200 from 208 to 2014. Aerospace Product and Parts manufacturing had 32,400 jobs in 2008, 30,500 in 2010 and 27,700 in 2014 for declines of 1,900 from 2008 to 2010, 2,800 from 2010 to 2014 and 4,700 from 2008 to 2014. Non-Durable Goods manufacturing had 43,200 jobs in 20108, 37,500 in 2010, and 35,400 in 2014 for declines of 5,700from 2008 to 2010, 2,100 from 2010 to 2014 and 7,800 from 2008 to 2014. Chemical manufacturing had 13,800 jobs in 2008, 11,800 in 2010, and 10,200 in 2014 for declines of 2,000 from 2008 to 2010, 1,600 from 2010 to 2014 and 3,600 from 2008 to 2014. Service providing industries had 1,446,300 jobs in 2008, 1,392,600 in 2010 and 1,450,300 in 2014 for a decline of 53,700 from 2008 to 2010, an increase of 57,700 from 2010 to 2014 for an increase of 4,000 from 2008 to 2014. Trade, transportation, and utilities had 309,900 jobs 2008, 289,800 in 2010 and 301,300 in 2014 for a decline of 20,100 from 2008 to 2010, an increase of 11,500 for a decline of 8,600 from 2008 to 2014. Wholesale Trade had 69,200 jobs in 2008, 62,700 in 2010 and 63,000 in 2014 for a decline of 6,500 from 2008 to 2010, an increase of 300 from 2010 to 2014 for a decline of 6,200 from 2008 to 2014. Retail Trade had employment of 188,100 in 2008, 178,200 in 2010 and 185,600in 2014 for declines of 9,900 from 2008 to 2010, an increase of 7,400 from 2010 to 2014 for a decline of 2,500 from 2008 to 2014. Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers had employment of 21,200 in 2008, 19,200 in 2010, and 20,900 in 2014 for a decline of 2,000 from 2008 to 2010, a gain of 1,700 from 2010 to 2014 for a loss of -300 from 2008 to 2014. Building Material stores had a employment of 15,600 in 2008 falling to 14,100 in 2010 and rising to 15,300 in 2014 for a drop of -1,500 from 2008 to 2010, a rise of 1,200 from 2010 to 2014 for a loss of -300 from 2008 to 2014. Food and Beverage Stores had employment of 41,700 in 2008 which rose to 42,100 in 2010 and 44,700 in 2014 for a gain of 400 from 2008 to 2010, 2,600 from 2010 to 2014 and 3,000 from 2008 to 2014. General Merchandise Stores had employment of 27,100 in 2008, 27,500 in 2010 and 28,600 in 2014 for gains of 400 from 2008 to 2010, 1,100 from 2010 to 2014 and 1,500 from 2010 to 2014. Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities had employment of 52,700 in 2008, 48,900 in 2010 and 52,600 in 2014 for a loss of -3,800 from 2008 to 2010, a gain of 3,700 from 2010 to 2014 and a loss of -100 from 2008 to 2014. Utilities averaged 8,700 jobs in 2008, 7,900 in 2010 and 7,400 in 2014 for declines of 800 from 2008 to 2010, 500 from 2010 to 2014 and 1,300 from 2008 to 2014. Transportation and Warehousing had 44,000 jobs in 2008, 41,000in 2010 and 45,300 in 2014 for a decline of 3,000 from 2008 to 2010 and rises of 4,300 from 2010 to 2014 and 1,300

from 2008 to 2014. The Information sector had 37,800 jobs in 2008, 31,700 in 2010 and 31,800 in 2014 for a decline of 6,100 from 2008 to 2010, a rise of 100 from 2010 to 2014 and a decline of 6,000 from 2008 to 2014. Telecommunications had 13,000 jobs in 2008, 10,200 in 2010 and 9,100in 2014 for declines of 2,800 from 2008 to 2010, 1,100 from 2010 to 2014 and 3,900 from 2008 to 2014. Financial Activities had 143,400 in 2008, 135,200 in 2010 and 128,600 in 2014 for declines of 8,200 from 2008 to 2010, 6,600 from 2010 to 2014 and 14,800 from 2008 to 2014. Finance and Insurance had 122,900 jobs in 2008, 116,300 in 2010 and 109,400 in 2014 for declines of 6,600 from 2008 to 2010, 6,900 from 2010 to 2014 and 13,500 from 2008 to 2014. Credit Intermediation had 29,700 jobs in 2008, 27,000 in 2010, and 26,300 in 2014 for declines of 2,700 from 2008 to 2010, 700 from 2010 to 2014 and 3,400 from 2008 to 2014. Securities and Commodity Contracts had 26,500 jobs in 2008, 26,300 in 2010 and 25,400 in 2014 for declines of 200 from 2008 to 2010, 900 from 2010 to 2014 and 1,100 from 2008 to 2014. Insurance Carriers & Related Activities had 65,500 jobs in 2008, 61,700 in 2010 and 57,700in 2014 for declines of 3,800 from 2008 to 2010, 4,000 from 2010 to 2014 and 7,800 from 2008 to 2014. Real Estate and Rental and Leasing had 20,500 jobs in 2008, 18,900 in 2010, and 19,300 in 2014 for a drop of 1,600 from 2008 to 2010, a gain of 400 from 2010 to 2014 and a drop of 1,200 from 2008 to 2014. PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES had employment of 205,500 in 2008, 190,700 in 2010 and 211,800 in 2014 for a decline of 14,800 from 2008 to 2010 and gains of 21,100 from 2010 to 2014 and 6,300 from 2008 to 2014. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services had 93,200 jobs in 2008, 86,700 in 2010, and 95,400 in 2014 for a drop of 6,500 from 2008 to 2010 and gains of 8,700 from 2010 to 2014 and 2,200 from 2008 to 2014. Legal Services had 14,000 jobs in 2008, 13,100 in 2010 and 13,000 in 2014 for loss of -900 from 2008 to 2010, 100 from 2010 to 2014 and 1,000 from 2008 to 2014. Computer Systems Design had 22,000 jobs in 2008, 21,100 in 2010 and 25,600 in 2014 for a loss of 900 from 2008 to 2010, and gains of 4,500 from 2010 to 2014 and 3,600 from 2008 to 2014. Management of Companies had 26,700 jobs in 2008, 26,300 in 2010 and 30,600 in 2014 for a decline of 400 from 2008 to 2010, and gains of 4,300 from 2010 to 2014 and 3,900 from 2008 to 2014. Administrative and Support Services had 85,600 jobs in 2008, 77,700 in 2010 and 85,800 in 2014 for a decline of 7,900 from 2008 to 2010 and gains of 8,100 from 2010 to 2014 and 200 from 2008 to 2014. Employment Services had 28,800 jobs in 2008, 24,700 in 2010 and 28,100 in 2014 for a decline of 4,100 from 2008 to 2010, a gain of 3,400 from 2010 to 2014 and a drop of 700 from 2008 to 2014. Education and Health Services had 296,800 jobs in 2008, 306,900 in 2010 and 325,000 in 2014 for gains of 10,100 from 2008 to 2010, 18,100 from 2010 to 2014 and 28,200 from 2008 to 2014. Educational Services had 57,200 jobs in 2008, 59,200 in 2010 and 63,500 in 2014 for gains of 2,000 from 2008 to 2010, 4,300 from 2010 to 2014 and 6,300 from 2008 to 2014. Health Care and Social Assistance had 239,600 jobs in 2008, 247,700 in 2010 and 261,500 in 2014 for gains of 8,100 from 2008 to 2010, 13,800 from 2010 to 2014 and 21,900 from 2008 to 2014. Hospitals had 60,000 jobs in 2008, 61,000 in 2010, and 59,300 in 2014 for a gain of 1,000 from 2008 to 2010, a drop of 1,700 from 2010 to 2014 and a drop of 700 from 2008 to 2014. Nursing & Residential Care Facilities had 60,000 jobs in 2008, 61,300 in 2010 and 62,700 in 2014 for gains of 1,300 from 2008 to 2010, 1,400 from 2010 to 2014 and 2,700 from 2008 to 2014. Social Assistance had 43,000 jobs in 2008, 45,600 in 2010 and 52,800 in 2014 for gains of 2,600 from 2008 to 2010, 7,200 from 2010 to 2014 and 9,800 from 2008 to 2014. Leisure and Hospitality had 137,400 jobs in 2008, 133,600 in 2010 and 151,000 in 2014 for a drop of 3,800 from 2008 to 2010 and gains of 17,400 from 2010 to 2014 and 13,600 from 2008 to 2014. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation had 24,200 jobs in 2008, 23,600 in 2010 and 26,600 in 2014 for a drop of 600

from 2008 to 2010 and gains of 3,000 from 2010 to 2014 and 2,400 from 2008 to 2014. Accommodation and Food Services had 113,200 jobs in 2008, 110,000 in 2010 and 124,400 in 2014 for a drop of 3,200 from 2008 to 2014 and gains of 14,400 from 2010 to 2014 and 11,200. Food Service, Restaurants, and Drinking Places had 100,900 job 2008, 99,200 in 2010 and 112,700 in 2014 for a drop of 1,700 from 2008 to 2010 and gains of 13,500 from 2010 to 2014 and 11,800 from 2008 to 2014. Other Services had 63,100 jobs in 2008, 60,500 in 2010, and 63,000 in 2014 for a drop of 2,600 from 2008 to 2010, a gain of 2,500 from 2010 to 2014 and drop of 100 from 2008 to 2014. Government had 252,500 jobs in 2008, 244,200 in 2010 and 237,900 in 2014 for declines of 8,300 from 2008 to 2010, 6,300 from 2010 to 2014, and 14,600 from 2008 to 2014. Federal Government jobs were at 19,500 in 2008, 19,700 in 2010, and 17,400 in 2014 for an increase of 200 from 2008 to 2010, and declines of 2,300 from 2010 to 2014 and 2,100 from 2008 to 2014. State Government jobs were 70,200 in 2008, 67,400 in 2010 and 67,000 in 2014 for declines of 2,800 from 2008 to 2010, 400 from 2010 to 2014 and 3,200 from 2008 to 2014. Local Government jobs were 162,800 in 2008, 157,100 in 2010 and 153,400in 2014 for declines of 5,700 from 2008 to 2010, 3,700 from 2010 to 2014, and 9,400 from 2008 to 2014. Local government includes Native American tribal government employment. In terms of employment share, Goods Producing industries were 14.9% of employment in 2008, 13.4% in 2010 and 13.0% in 2014 so the share fell 1.5% points from 2008 to 2010, 0.4% points from 2010 to 2014 and 1.9% points from 2008 to 2014. Trade, Transportation, and Utilities was 18.2% of total employment in 2008, 18.0% in 2010 and 18.1% in 2014 so the share fell 0.2% points from 2008 to 2010, rose 0.1% points from 2010 to 2014 but fell 0.2% points from 2008 to 2014. Information was 2.2% of total employment in 2008, 2.0% in 2010 and 1.9% in 2014 so the share fell 0.2% points from 2008 to 2010, 0.1% points from 2010 to 2014, and 0.3% points from 2008 to 2014. Financial Activities was 8.4% of total employment in 2008, 8.4% in 2010 and 7.7% in 2014, so the share was unchanged from 2008 to 2010 and fell 0.7% points from 2010 to 2014 and from 2008 to 2014. Professional and Business Services was 12.1% of total employment in 2008, 11.9% in 2010 and 12.7% in 2014 so the share fell 0.2% points from 2008 to 2010, rose 0.8% points from 2010 to 2014 and rose 0.6% points from 2008 to 2014. Education and Health Services employment was 17.5% of total employment in 2008, 19.1% in2010 and 19.5% in 2014 rising 1.6% points from 2008 to 2010, 0.4% points from 2010 to 2014 and 2.0% points from 2008 to 2014. Leisure and Hospitality was 8.1% of total employment in 2008, 8.3% in 2010 and 9.1% in 2014 rising 0.2% points from 2008 to 2010, 0.8% points from 2010 to 2014 and 1.0% points from 2008 to 2014. Other Services jobs were 3.7% of total jobs in 2008, 3.8% in 2010 and 3.8% in 2014, increasing 0.1% points from 2008 to 2010, 0.0% points from 2010 to 2014, and 0.1% points from 2008 to 2014. Government jobs were 14.9% of total jobs in 2008, 15.2% in 2010 and 14.3% in 2014, increasing 0.3% points from 2008 to 2010, and decreasing 0.9% points from 2010 to 2014 and 0.6% points from 2008 to 2014.

(ii) Labor Market Trends- Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations. As detailed below, the labor market has shifted throughout the past recession and recovery. Starting with the industries that lost the most jobs from 2008 to 2010 and ending with the industries that gained the most jobs during that period, Manufacturing lost 24,310 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and lost 7,263 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 159,353. Construction lost 19,335 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 6,036 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 62,451. Retail Trade lost 15,093 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 5,501 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 190,430. Admin & Support Services lost 14,018

jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 7,832 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 89,658. Prof. & Tech. Services lost 9,023 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 9,023 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 96,434. Wholesale lost 7,531 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and lost 59 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 63,278. Finance & Insurance lost 7,448 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and lost 7,563 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 107,774. Information lost 6,235 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 421 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 35,175. Accommodation & Food lost 5,931 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 12,212 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 124,529. Transportation lost 4,855 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 3,515 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 53,282. Other Services lost 2,902 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 3,426 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 60,845. Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation lost 2,846 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and lost 983 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 43,744. Government excluding education, hospitals, and casinos lost 2,536 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 846 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 59,015. Real Estate lost 2,060 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 184 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 19,961. Utilities lost 280 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and lost 606 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 8,015. Management of Companies lost 209 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 3,864 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 31,554. Agriculture lost 164 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 817 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 4,994. Mining lost 161 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and lost 3 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 578. Public and Private Educational Services gained 115 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 289 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 181,057. Social Assistance gained 2,149 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 7,501 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 59,406. Health Care gained 4,246 jobs from 2008 to 2010 and gained 5,905 from 2010 to 2014 leaving employment at 223,809. Detailed next are the employment growth throughout the current recovery and the industry's average annual wage. Starting with the industries that lost the most jobs from 2010 to 2014 and ending with those that added the most jobs during that period, Finance & Insurance lost 7,563 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $155,999 and average employment of 107,774. Manufacturing lost 7,263 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $87,667 and average employment of 159,353. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation lost 983 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $33,720 and average employment of 43,744. Utilities lost 606 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $106,493 and average employment of 8,015. Wholesale Trade lost 59 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $92,905 and average employment of 63,278. Mining lost 3 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $82,772 and average employment of 578. Real Estate gained 184 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $67,559 and average employment of 19,961. Public and Private Educational Services gained 289 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $57,664 and average employment of 181,057. Information gained 421 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $94,705 and average employment of 35,175. Agriculture gained 817 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $32,119 and average employment of 4,994. Government gained 846 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $72,013 and average employment of 59,015. Other Services gained 3,426 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $34,022 and average employment of 60,845. Transportation gained 3,515 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $50,275 and average employment of 53,282. Management of Companies gained 3,864 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $155,677 and average employment of 31,554. Retail Trade gained 5,501 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average

annual wages of $33,083 and average employment of 190,430. Health Care gained 5,905 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $57,063 and average employment of 223,809. Construction gained 6,036 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $68,292 and average employment of 62,451. Social Assistance gained 7,501 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $29,659 and average employment of 59,406. Admin & Support Services gained 7,832 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $47,318 and average employment of 89,658. Professional and Technical Services gained 9,023 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $104,524 and average employment of 96,434. Accommodation and Food Services gained 12,212 jobs from 2010 to 2014 and has average annual wages of $20,624 and average employment of 124,529.

The Shift in Employment Share The steady growth of the education and health services sector has shifted its position in the state economy to the top-employing sector. It now accounts for 19.5% of the state's employment. That top spot had recently belonged to the trade, transportation, and utilities sector in 2008. The largest drop in job share came in the goods producing sector, dropping from a 14.9% share in 2008 to a 13.0% share in 2014. Detailed below is how the levels of nonfarm employment by major sector have changed since the annual average levels of 2008 and give us a better sense of how the recession affected the state's economy. Next we detail the current structure of employment in Connecticut. Even after the declines described above, manufacturing is the fourth largest sector (after health care, retail, and education). Education and Health Services added 28,200 jobs from 2008 to 2014. During the same period Leisure and Hospitality added 13,600, and Professional and Business Services added 6,300. On the other hand, Other Services fell by 100, Information by 6,000, Transportation, Trade and Utilities by 8,600, Government by 14,600, Financial Activities by 14,800 and Goods Producing by 36,900. During the 2008 to 2014 period, the share of nonfarm jobs that were in the education and health services sector increased by 2.0% points, the Leisure and Hospitality share increased by 1.0% point, Professional and Business Services increased by 0.6% point and Other Services increased its share by 0.1% point. On the other hand Trade, Transportation and Utilities share shrank by 0.2% point, Information by 0.3% point, Government by 0.6% point and Financial Activities by 0.7% point. The share of employment in the goods producing sector fell by 1.9% points. For the year ending 2015 quarter 1 the structure of the Connecticut economy is as follows, starting with the sector with the most jobs and ending with the sector with the fewest jobs. Health Care had 222,684 jobs. Retail Trade had 184,959 jobs. Public and Private Educational Services had 172,416 jobs. Manufacturing had 159,214 jobs. Accommodation & Food Services had 124,136 jobs. Finance & Insurance had 107,772 jobs. Professional, Scientific & Technical Services had 95,667 jobs. Administrative & Support Services had 86,436 jobs. Government excluding Education, Hospitals and Casinos had 78,381 jobs. Wholesale Trade had 63,066 jobs. Other Services had 60,827 jobs. Social Assistance had 59,130 jobs. Construction had 56,554 jobs. Transportation & Warehousing had 50,368 jobs. Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation had 40,063 jobs. Information had 32,083 jobs. Management of Companies had 32,041 jobs. Real Estate had 19,405 jobs. Utilities had 5,935 jobs. Agriculture & Forestry had 5,211 jobs. Mining & Quarrying had 552 jobs. (iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce- Provide an analysis of the educational and skill level of the workforce. Connecticut's Workforce Connecticut has an educated workforce. Thirty-eight percent of the population age 25 years of age and older has a college degree compared to just 30% for the nation as a whole. 90% have at least a high school diploma or a GED compared to 87% for the nation. However, there is an

achievement gap between population groups. As shown in Exhibit 16, educational attainment is significantly lower for the African-American and Hispanic population than for the white non-Hispanic population. This gap is of particular concern giving the changing nature of Connecticut's workforce. As shown in Exhibit 17, approximately 16% of the Connecticut's labor force aged 45 and over is Black or Hispanic compared to more than 30% of the labor force aged 25 to 34. According to the American Community Survey 2014 one-year sample, Connecticut's educational attainment for its population aged 25 and over is detailed as follows. Those with less than a high school diploma comprise 10% of the total population 6% of the White Non-Hispanic population 14% of the Black or African/American Population, and 28% of the Hispanic or Latino population. Those with a high school diploma or GED comprise 27% of the total population 27% of the White Non-Hispanic population 33% of the Black or African/American Population, and 33% of the Hispanic or Latino population. Those with some college but less than a Bachelor's degree comprise 25% of the total population 25% of the White Non-Hispanic population 31% of the Black or African/American Population, and 22% of the Hispanic or Latino population. Those with a Bachelor's degree or more comprise 38% of the total population 42% of the White Non-Hispanic population 21% of the Black or African/American Population, and 17% of the Hispanic or Latino population. According to the American Community Survey 2013, IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org, the Connecticut Labor Force is comprised of the following groups. 63% of the labor force less than age 25 is white not Hispanic 62% of the labor force age 25 to 34 is white not Hispanic 64% of the labor force aged 35 to 44 is white not Hispanic 76% of the labor force aged 45 5o 54 is white not Hispanic 83% of the labor force aged 55 and above is white not Hispanic, and 71% of the total labor force is white not Hispanic. 12% of the labor force less than age 25 is Black or African American 12% of the labor force age 25 to 34 is Black or African American 64% of the labor force aged 35 to 44 is Black or African American 76% of the labor force aged 45 5o 54 is Black or African American 83% of the labor force aged 55 and above is Black or African American, and 71% of the total labor force is Black or African American. 20% of the labor force less than age 25 is Hispanic or Latino 19% of the labor force age 25 to 34 is Hispanic or Latino 64% of the labor force aged 35 to 44 is Hispanic or Latino 76% of the labor force aged 45 5o 54 is Hispanic or Latino 83% of the labor force aged 55 and above is Hispanic or Latino, and 71% of the total labor force is Hispanic or Latino. 6% of the labor force less than age 25 is other 7% of the labor force age 25 to 34 is other 64% of the labor force aged 35 to 44 is other 76% of the labor force aged 45 5o 54 is other 83% of the labor force aged 55 and above is other, and 71% of the total labor force is other. Critical Workforce Segments College Students: Connecticut's state colleges and universities (CSCU) system provides a high quality post-secondary education to over 92,000 students at its 17 campuses and annually graduates 15,000 who enter the job market to fill critical openings in the state's workforce. These individuals, who are critical to the talent pipeline, are engaged in college programs related to the state's high demand and emerging industries and occupations and often have the opportunity to pair this educational experience with internships in their chosen fields. Incumbent Workers: Connecticut's incumbent workers - individuals presently employed - are an important resource for business success. Employers value highly the asset represented by their current employees. As they contemplate ways to increase productivity, assure profitability and grow their businesses, many Connecticut employers look to build the capacity of their current workers. Incumbent worker training is the most effective way to ensure that currently employed workers have the fast-changing skills they need to increase productivity and advance their careers. Dislocated Workers: Workers at-risk in rapidly changing industries, many of whom are

aging and/or have not kept up with increasing skills demands in new workplace technologies and processes valued by employers and essential to remaining productive and competitive. While the number of newly certified dislocated workers in Connecticut is comparably small (2180 in the second quarter of 2012), they are a significant pool of valuable talent - ideal for targeted training in the middle-skill occupations projecting large numbers of openings. Veterans: Connecticut's recently returned military veterans are a pool of under-utilized talent whose skills and experience should contribute to state economic growth. The state's workforce/talent system has struggled to access these veterans, to assess their transferable skills and get them onto pathways that match them efficiently with viable job opportunities in Connecticut's labor market. Additional coordination among veteran-serving organizations will help to tap this talent pool. A state-level cross-agency plan is currently under development. Undereducated Adults: Although Connecticut ranks high nationally on educational attainment, it still faces a significant challenge in meeting the needs of undereducated adults. According to the 2014 American Community Survey, Connecticut has a population of 3,596,677 with 2,821,801 adults over the age of eighteen. More than 288,478 individuals, or 9.9% of the adult population, do not have a high school diploma; 103,816 individuals have less than a ninth grade education; and 184,662 have some high school education, but no diploma. At a time when economic and labor trends all point to the importance of education and training for self-sufficiency, the number of undereducated adults in Connecticut approximates its entire K-12 population. According to the Connecticut State Department of Education's Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS), in 2014 adult education programs served 24,751 students (10,773 males and 13,978 females), or 11.9% of the total population 18 or older without a high school diploma and 4.4% of the population 18 or older who do not speak English very well. While performance indicators are positive for individuals who attend adult education programs, very few undereducated adults have enrolled in these programs. This disparity, mirrored on the national level, indicates that adult education is critically underutilized by undereducated adults. According to Reach Higher, America: Overcoming Crisis in the U.S. Workforce (Report of the National Commission on Adult Literacy, June 2008), 70% of Connecticut jobs will require postsecondary education and training by the year 2020. The report states that to fill this gap, Connecticut will need 10,875 more people to receive postsecondary education and training. There are not enough high school graduates to fill that void - Connecticut must rely on getting older adults back into the classroom. Adults need to improve their literacy skills and earn degrees and/or certificates to be able to make family-sustaining wages, but the fact remains that a limited number of the most undereducated people in Connecticut are enrolling in programs geared to help them improve their skills, get a high school equivalency, and enroll in postsecondary education and training. In the 2007 State New Economy Index, Atkinson and Nager stated that in today's New Economy, knowledge-based jobs are driving prosperity - jobs held by individuals with at least two years of college. Although the 2014 report shows that the average educational attainment grade level for people in Connecticut is 14.6, that is not enough to fill the anticipated skills gap (Information Technology and Innovation Foundation). Limited English Proficient: Approximately 50% of the two million immigrants who come to the U.S. each year have low literacy levels and lack high school education and English language skills, severely limiting their access to jobs and job training, college, and citizenship (Reach Higher, America: Overcoming Crisis in the U.S. Workforce). Immigrants represent one-third of America's low-skilled adults, more than in comparison countries that have fewer immigrants overall (PIAAC). Of 3,407,815 residents of Connecticut (aged 5 or older), 8.1% or 276,033 state they speak English less than "very well" and 21.8% or 742,903 speak a language other than

English at home (2014 American Community Survey). The number of adults who are limited English proficient (LEP) is more prevalent in the larger metropolitan areas. The number of LEP adults in New Haven is 51,204 or 9% of the population; in Hartford, 61,152 or 7.6%; in Bridgeport- Stamford-Norwalk, 86,549 or 14.3%. Adult education programs in Connecticut served 120,195 adults, or 4.4% of the population 18 and older who do not speak English well, during the 2013- 2014 program year. Those lacking a high school diploma who speak English very well earn more than those with a high school diploma or some college who don't speak English well or at all. Working-age LEP adults earn 25%-40% less than their English-proficient counterparts and are more concentrated in low-paying jobs and different industries than other workers ("Investing in English Skills: The Limited English Proficient Workforce in U.S. Metropolitan Areas," Brookings Institute, September 24, 2014). Individuals with Disabilities: According to the 2014 Census, 191,185 of Connecticut adults between the ages of 18-64 have a disability. The American Community Survey (ACS) of the U.S. Census analysis of employment and disability status reports 76,791 persons with a disability employed in Connecticut in 2014, and 13,116 unemployed. (Numbers not strictly comparable to the unemployment rates other tables as they come from a different survey with a different methodology.) Median earnings for people with disabilities in 2014 were $21,756, while people without disabilities earned $40,249. U.S. adults with a diagnosed learning disability are about twice as likely to have low skills as those without such disabilities (PIAAC). Employment status by type of disability is as follows. 25% of the 19,308 individuals with a hearing difficulty are employed. 18% of the 12,854 individuals with a vision difficulty are employed. 36% of the 27,611 individuals with a cognitive difficulty are employed. 32% of the 24,431 individuals with a ambulatory difficulty are employed. 8% of the 5,858 individuals with a self-care difficulty are employed. 19% of the 14,691 individuals with a independent living difficulty are employed. The Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), has projected their general and Blind VR programs will collectively assist 10,151 consumers with disabilities in FFY 2018. Low-Skilled/Low-Income Individuals: A significant portion of Connecticut's current labor force - more than 500,000 adults - lacks the essential skills needed to secure rewarding employment and/or pursue postsecondary education/training. As seen in Exhibit 19 55% of adults 25-34 years old have no more than a high school diploma, not enough to prepare them adequately for the middle skill jobs that are available. Given effective opportunities for education, training and other supports, many of these individuals can be more productive workers, a talent asset helping employers to meet their workforce needs. The educational attainment of Connecticut's 25 to 34 year olds is compared to the attainment of the same group for the U.S. as follows. 11% of Connecticut 25 to 34 year olds are not a high school graduate compared to 13% for the U.S. 44% of Connecticut 25 to 34 year olds have a high school diploma or GED compared to 48% for the U.S. 6% of Connecticut 25 to 34 year olds have an Associate's degree compared to 8% for the U.S. 25% of Connecticut 25 to 34 year olds have a Bachelor's degree compared to 22% for the U.S. 14% of Connecticut 25 to 34 year olds have a graduate degree compared to 9% for the U.S. In the U.S., the odds of being low-skilled are ten times higher for low-educated adults born to low-educated parents than for higher-educated adults born to higher-educated parents, according to the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). According to the National Institute for Literacy, improving a mother's literacy skills is the best way to ensure that children have higher skills (Improving Mothers' Literacy Skills May Be Best Way to Boost Children's Achievement, 2010). Connecticut's 2016 overall poverty rate was 9.8% but was 10.6% for women and 12.9% for children under age 18. The poverty rate for those aged 25 years and over

was 8.3% but 23.6% for those 25 and over who lacked a high school diploma, 10.9% for those with a diploma or equivalency, 7.5% for those with some college or an Associate's degree, and 3.4% for those with a Bachelor's degree or more. In households with a female householder and no husband present, 22.8% of households have income less than 100% of the poverty level. The relationship between low skills and low wages is strong in the United States, pointing to a critical need to provide adult education and family literacy services to undereducated parents and their children, especially in urban areas, to address immediate health, education and economic challenges. Accessing affordable efficient transportation to/from work is an obstacle to sustained, productive employability for many Connecticut workers. Public transportation services are inadequate for many workers - particularly low-wage workers from urban communities - pursuing job opportunities outside of their local community, in the wider surrounding region. For many families, childcare also presents a significant barrier to employment. For example, according to the United Way's ALICE Report, the average cost of attending a full-time, accredited childcare center in Connecticut is $1,893 per month ($1,038 per month for an infant and $855 per month for a four year old). Childcare for two children is by far the greatest expense and accounts for 28% of United Way's Household Survival Budget. While alternatives in Connecticut such as family daycare centers and state subsidized pre-school programs offer less expensive and more accessible childcare options, high occupancy rates limit their availability. Funding and resources available to provide basic skills instruction and technical training is limited in the face of the legitimate level of need for those services. Most of the available resources come with individual eligibility requirements - such as public assistance participation or high school dropout - that limit access to services for many prospective participants. Non-credit community college courses, offering opportunity for short-term technical training leading to more immediate employment, are ineligible for federal or state financial aid, forcing (limited-income) students to pay the cost of those courses directly themselves. Duplicated annual Non-Credit Registrations for the community colleges were as follows: AY 2014-2015; 57, 756 total seats; 7,852 were workforce development certificates; and 29,904 personal development. Out-of-School Youth: Connecticut has one of the best high school graduation rates of all states for non-low-income students. The overall graduation rate has risen from 81.8% in 2010 to 87% in 2015. However, the dropout rate of Connecticut's low-income youth is of critical concern. Connecticut has been one of the lowest states for graduation rates of low-income students, but is closing the gap. The 2011 gap between low-income students and their more affluent peers was 27 percentage points, but lessened to 21 percentage points in 2013 (Connecticut's Graduation Gap is Big, But Shrinking, CT Mirror, May 2015). According to PIAAC, 15-year-old Americans have "mediocre" basic skills. Focusing on the challenge of educating and training to improve the skills of out-of-school youth is critical. Of Connecticut public high school students who graduated in 2010 and entered a CSCU institution within the first 16 months after graduation, a little under half (48.8%) were not ready for either college level math or English. More specifically, 54.3% of community college enrollees and 19.3% of state university enrollees from this cohort enrolled in at least one remedial course. In FY 2013-2014, Connecticut adult education programs served 6,041 students under age twenty-two. Adult education programs currently target and reach some youth from Connecticut's urban centers, but the majority of recent high school dropouts are not enrolling in education programs. These young adults face serious barriers to employment attempting to compete in a labor market demanding viable interpersonal, problem-solving and technical skills, even at the entry-level. Ex-Offenders: One in every 100 U.S. adults 16 and older is incarcerated. Of 2.3 million individuals behind bars in state and federal prisons and local jails

in 2005, about 43% of 18-60 year-olds lack a high school diploma or its equivalent. Further, the 2005 NAAL survey reported that 56% of inmates function at the two lowest levels of prose literacy (National Adult Literacy Survey, 2005), documenting the need for adult education programs for the incarcerated. In Connecticut, 16,025 men and women were incarcerated in correctional facilities during 2015 - 14,941 male, 1,084 female. The Unified School District 1 - the Connecticut Department of Correction (DOC) - reported serving 2,669 students in ABE, GED, ESL, and Vocational Education instruction. Performance reports indicate that student scores improved by an average of 2 years/3 months in reading; 2 years/1 month in math; and 2 years/7 months in language arts on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Five hundred and seventy-seven students earned the General Educational Development diploma (GED), 6 earned the External Diploma and 15 students were awarded the Credit Diploma Program (CDP) diploma. Despite this demonstrable success, these programs served only 17% of the total number of inmates. TANF/TFA Recipients: The Connecticut Department of Social Services (CTDSS) operates the Temporary Family Assistance Program (TFA), a program of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant. CTDSS provides temporary assistance to families in need of and eligible for cash assistance. During state fiscal year 2015, the department's TFA average monthly caseload was 14,475 households. CTDSS partners with the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) to administer the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) program, which has been successful in helping thousands of parents move into the workforce and off welfare rolls. TFA is a time-limited program that emphasizes case management intervention and participation in the labor market. TFA establishes a time limit of 21 months for families that contain an adult who is able to work. Extensions beyond 21 months may be available if the adult cannot find a job that makes the family financially independent. Able-bodied adults are referred to CTDOL's JFES program, administered by the Department of Labor and regional Workforce Development Boards, for help in finding work. During the 21 months, and during extensions, adults must cooperate with the JFES program and make a good-faith effort to find a job and keep working. SNAP Recipients: As of January 4th, 2016 there were 232,937 households receiving nutrition assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. These low income households include approximately 71,680 individuals who are not exempt from SNAP general work requirements. The Connecticut SNAP population is a diverse group with varying degrees of work readiness. HUSKY Recipients: Connecticut's nation-leading implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) continued in SFY 2015, with CTDSS partnering with Access Health CT in a shared/integrated eligibility system encompassing HUSKY Health (Medicaid/Children's Health Insurance Program) and private qualified health plans offered through the exchange. As SFY 2015 ended, total enrollment was 747,735 of which approximately 460,000 are low- income adults. Non-Custodial Parents: Non-custodial parents are individuals who do not have custody of their children, yet still have an obligation to provide necessary supports. Non-custodial parents are identified by the CTDSS Child Support division in partnership with the Judicial Support Enforcement Services Division. Together, both units will assist parents in securing financial and medical support for their children by providing quality services and information in a courteous, efficient, and effective manner. Non-custodial parents, in order to achieve economic stability, need education, employment services and various supports like affordable housing, transportation, nutritional assistance and child care to insure the well-being of their children. Annually, approximately 60,000 cases with court-ordered support are monitored. The two units are responsible for court enforcement and assist both parents with court modification process and collect about $300 million in child support. Child support

represents 45% of their family income. In addition, 188,000 children live in such families with 60% of parents receiving TANF or were former TANF recipients. In addition, 29% live below the federal poverty level. Older Workers: Connecticut has one of the country's oldest populations. It also has the third highest life expectancy in the U.S. resulting in a growing population of those ages 85 and older (Connecticut State Plan on Aging October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2017). In 2014, 24% of the labor force was 55 years old or older. This represents a 5 percentage point gain since 2005 when older workers comprised 19% of the labor force. The CT State Department on Aging in its 2017-2020 plan on aging has identified significant strategies to align this population with services available through the American Job Centers and more broadly the state's workforce development system.

Connecticut's Unemployed Connecticut's unemployment rate has been falling since the recession ended and as of August 2015 was 5.3%, only slightly higher than the national average. The average unemployment rate for 2014 was 6.6%. The unemployment rate was higher for men than for women, and higher for Black and Hispanic workers than for whites, and was lower the higher the level of educational attainment. In 2014 the unemployment rate was 6.6% for the entire labor force, 7.0% for men and 6.1% for women. For white men the unemployment rate was 6.2%, for while women 5.8% and for all whites it averaged 6.0% For Black/African-American men the unemployment rate was 14.9%, for Black/African-American women was 10.2% for an average of 12.5% for all African-American workers. For Asian men, the unemployment rate was 4.3%, for Asian women 2.0% for an average of 3.3% for all Asian workers. For Hispanic or Latino men, the unemployment rate was 12.0%, for Hispanic or Latino women 9.7% for an average of 10.9% for all Hispanic or Latino workers. The unemployment rate for those with less than a high school diploma was 10.8%, for those who graduated high school but had no college was 8.7%, for those with some college or an Associate's degree it was 6.1%, and for those with a Bachelor's degree or higher was 3.1%. The American Community Survey (ACS) of the U.S. Census reports employment status and disability status and reports that there were 76,791 persons with a disability employed in Connecticut in 2014 and 13,116 unemployed for an unemployment rate of 14.6%. These numbers are not strictly comparable to the unemployment rates in the tables because they come from a different survey with a different methodology. (iv) Skill Gaps: Describe apparent 'skill gaps'. Skills gaps / workforce alignment in targeted industry sectors There are no acceptable, direct objective measures of "skill gaps" currently available to LMI analysts. While there are a variety of resources that attempt to describe the knowledge, skills and abilities associated with various occupations there are no reliable ways to measure either the necessary quantity of these skills or the deficit if them in any particular occupation or industry. The best proxy we can apply is using any apparent imbalances in the supply and demand for workers in occupation as a result of growth in the associated industry or the need for replacements to fill vacancies. The Office of research in CTDOL maintains the TEPS system (Training and Education Planning system) which attempts match the annual openings as determined by our long term occupational projections against education program completer data relevant to that occupation. Within its limitations, the TEPS program will lend good insight into the supply and demand for entry level positions. However there is some anecdotal evidence that the nature of any skills gap may not be at the entry level. Conversations with some business leaders, particularly in manufacturing indicate that for them the skill gap is caused by the lack of sufficient mid-level workers to replace highly experienced senior workers at or near retirement. A fact of the recession is that if you did not h ire a new

employee five years ago you don't have an employee with mid-level experience now. If we are to address this problem in workforce training, it suggests the need for longer term OJT subsidized training programs such as internships and apprentices.

Supply and Demand for Occupations in Targeted Sectors Detailed below are the targeted industry sectors the "supply" of new entrants completing education and training programs relative to the estimated long-term "demand" for openings in these occupations. Each occupation is designated in a workforce alignment category of "in balance" (BAL) if completers and estimated annual openings are within 20% of each other, "undersupplied" (UND) in the number of program completers is far less than the apparent need or "oversupplied" (OVR) of completers far exceed the apparent annual openings. A "?" is included in cases where out of state markets may be able to absorb trained candidates. Note that for a skills gap to exist at this level, a workforce alignment designation of UND is indicated. Estimated annual openings are from the Connecticut Department of Labor's Long Term Occupational Projections 2012 to 2022.

Manufacturing sector: Occupations for which there have traditionally been no training programs available are not listed. For SOC Codes 51-4041, 51-4011 and 51-4012, Machinists and CNC Operators, the estimated hourly wage is 21.08 - 22.70, the minimum education is a high school diploma, and the estimated annual openings are 446. There are 486 program completers so the occupations are considered BAL. For SOC Code 51-9061, Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers, the estimated hourly wage is 20.54 the minimum education is high school, and the estimated annual openings are 243 . There are 3 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 51-2011, Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers, the estimated hourly wage is 30.31 the minimum education is high school, and the estimated annual openings are 65 . There are 31 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 51-4121, Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers, the estimated hourly wage is 19.51 the minimum education is high school, and the estimated annual openings are 62 . There are 158 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 51-8031, Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant and System Operators, the estimated hourly wage is 27.47 the minimum education is high school, and the estimated annual openings are 46 . There are 18 program completers so the occupation is considered UND.

Health Care Sector Diagnostic and Treatment Professional occupations (e.g. MD's, Pharmacists, Dentists, etc.) are not included as the supply and demand for these occupations is national/international. Diagnosing and Treating Occupations: For SOC Code 29-2061, Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses, the estimated hourly wage is 26.64 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 374. There are 789 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2021, Dental Hygienists, the estimated hourly wage is 40.14 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 157. There are 231 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2034, Radiologic Technologists, the estimated hourly wage is 30.61 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 78. There are 125 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2011, Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists, the estimated hourly wage is 34.12 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 76. There are 20 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 29-2012, Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 23.44 the minimum

education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 73. There are 26 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 29-2071, Medical Records and Health Information Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 19.77 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 62. There are 314 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2055, Surgical Technologists, the estimated hourly wage is 26.27 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 41. There are 77 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2032, Diagnostic Medical Sonographers, the estimated hourly wage is 37.91 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 52. There are 60 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 29-2053, Psychiatric Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 23.28 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 17. There are 246 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2033, Nuclear Medicine Technologists, the estimated hourly wage is 40.89 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 11. There are 7 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 29-2051, Dietetic Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 15.61 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 5. There are 194 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2091, Orthotists and Prosthetists, the estimated hourly wage is 41.79 the minimum education is Master's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 4. There are 19 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR?. For SOC Code 29-2054, Respiratory Therapy Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 31.66 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 2. There are 89 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. Health Technology Occupations: For SOC Code 29-2061, Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses, the estimated hourly wage is 26.64 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 374. There are 789 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2021, Dental Hygienists, the estimated hourly wage is 40.14 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 157. There are 231 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2034, Radiologic Technologists, the estimated hourly wage is 30.61 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 78. There are 125 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2011, Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists, the estimated hourly wage is 34.12 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 76. There are 20 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 29-2012, Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 23.44 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 73. There are 26 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 29-2071, Medical Records and Health Information Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 19.77 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 62. There are 314 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2055, Surgical Technologists, the estimated hourly wage is 26.27 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 41. There are 77 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2032, Diagnostic Medical Sonographers, the estimated hourly wage is 37.91 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 52. There are 60 program completers

so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 29-2053, Psychiatric Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 23.28 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 17. There are 246 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2033, Nuclear Medicine Technologists, the estimated hourly wage is 40.89 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 11. There are 7 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 29-2051, Dietetic Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 15.61 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 5. There are 194 progrprogram completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 29-2091, Orthotists and Prosthetists, the estimated hourly wage is 41.79 the minimum education is Master's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 4. There are 19 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR?. For SOC Code 29-2054, Respiratory Therapy Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 31.66 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 2. There are 89 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. Healthcare Support Occupations: For SOC Code 31-1013, Psychiatric Aides, the estimated hourly wage is 16.02 the minimum education is High school diploma or equivalent, and the estimated annual openings are 28. There are 246 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 31-1014, Nursing Assistants, the estimated hourly wage is 15.03 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 547. There are 294 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 31-2011, Occupational Therapy Assistants, the estimated hourly wage is 28.47 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 29. There are 81 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 31-2021, Physical Therapist Assistants, the estimated hourly wage is 26.59 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 32. There are 42 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 31-9091, Dental Assistants, the estimated hourly wage is 19.79 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 122. There are 406 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 31-9092, Medical Assistants, the estimated hourly wage is 16.09 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 340. There are 1980 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 31-9097, Phlebotomists, the estimated hourly wage is 17.4 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 53. There are 53 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL.

Other Sectors Construction Sector: For SOC Code 47-1011, First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers, the estimated hourly wage is 33.1 the minimum education is High school diploma or equivalent, and the estimated annual openings are 153. There are 751 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR?. For SOC Code 47-2021, Brickmasons and Blockmasons, the estimated hourly wage is 28.35 the minimum education is High school diploma or equivalent, and the estimated annual openings are 22. There are 10 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 47-2022, Stonemasons, the estimated hourly wage is 24.12 the minimum education is High school diploma or equivalent, and the estimated annual openings are 6. There are 10 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 47-2031, Carpenters, the estimated hourly wage is 23.6 the minimum education is High school diploma or equivalent, and the estimated annual

openings are 268. There are 81 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 47-2044, Tile and Marble Setters, the estimated hourly wage is 25.09 the minimum education is Less than high school, and the estimated annual openings are 3. There are 10 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 47-2111, Electricians, the estimated hourly wage is 27.2 the minimum education is High school diploma or equivalent, and the estimated annual openings are 241. There are 545 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 47-2152, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters, the estimated hourly wage is 28.39 the minimum education is High school diploma or equivalent, and the estimated annual openings are 150. There are 115 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 11-9021, Construction Managers, the estimated hourly wage is 49.16 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 146. There are 60 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 11-9041, Architectural and Engineering Managers, the estimated hourly wage is 59.48 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 117. There are 116 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 17-3011, Architectural and Civil Drafters, the estimated hourly wage is 27.68 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 10. There are 114 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 17-3022, Civil Engineering Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 30.01 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 9. There are 6 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 17-3024, Electro-Mechanical Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 24.4 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 4. There are 12 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 17-3025, Environmental Engineering Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 27.39 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 5. There are 25 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 17-3026, Industrial Engineering Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 30.45 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 19. There are 66 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 17-3027, Mechanical Engineering Technicians, the estimated hourly wage is 26.73 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 27. There are 44 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. Finance and Insurance Sector: For SOC Code 13-2011, Accountants and Auditors, the estimated hourly wage is 37.55 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 663. There are 1,015 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR ?. For SOC Code 12-2021, Appraisers and Assessors of Real Estate, the estimated hourly wage is 40.81 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 7. There are 8 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 13-2031, Budget Analysts, the estimated hourly wage is 38.28 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 48. There are 1,514 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 13-1031, Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators, the estimated hourly wage is 35.31 the minimum education is High school diploma or equivalent, and the estimated annual openings are 108. There are 14 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 13-1051, Cost Estimators, the estimated hourly wage is 36.36 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 110. There are 4,135 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 13-2041, Credit Analysts, the estimated hourly wage is 46.46 the minimum education is Bachelor's

degree, and the estimated annual openings are 42. There are 1,514 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 13-2071, Credit Counselors, the estimated hourly wage is 23.88 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 3. There are 13 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 13-2051, Financial Analysts, the estimated hourly wage is 48.64 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 267. There are 552 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 13-2061, Financial Examiners, the estimated hourly wage is 42.50 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 10. There are 1,015 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 13-2099, Financial Specialists, All Other, the estimated hourly wage is 32.53 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 20. There are 552 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 13-1032, Insurance Appraisers, Auto Damage, the estimated hourly wage is 30.49 the minimum education is Postsecondary non-degree award, and the estimated annual openings are 4. There are 108 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 13-2053, Insurance Underwriters, the estimated hourly wage is 44.24 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 114. There are 66 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 13-2072, Loan Officers, the estimated hourly wage is 37.78 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 40. There are 509 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 13-1081, Logisticians, the estimated hourly wage is 35.52 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 36. There are 32 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 13-2052, Personal Financial Advisors, the estimated hourly wage is 65.60 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 212. There are 521 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 13-2081, Tax Examiners and Collectors, and Revenue Agents, the estimated hourly wage is 38.03 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 32. There are 1,015 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 13-2082, Tax Preparers, the estimated hourly wage is 24.50 the minimum education is High school diploma or equivalent, and the estimated annual openings are 27. There are 321 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR.

Information Technology Sector: For SOC Code 15-2011, Actuaries, the estimated hourly wage is 56.49 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 65. There are 177 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR ?. For SOC Code 15-1111, Computer and Information Research Scientists, the estimated hourly wage is 55.98 the minimum education is PhD, and the estimated annual openings are 7. There are 563 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR ?. For SOC Code 11-3021, Computer and Information Systems Managers, the estimated hourly wage is 67.10 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 214. There are 791 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 15-1143, Computer Network Architects, the estimated hourly wage is 51.71 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 24. There are 510 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 15-1152, Computer Network Support Specialists, the estimated hourly wage is 38.55 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 27. There are 254 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For

SOC Code 15-1131, Computer Programmers, the estimated hourly wage is 42.15 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 131. There are 377 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 15-1121, Computer Systems Analysts, the estimated hourly wage is 45.82 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 337. There are 384 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 15-1151, Computer User Support Specialists, the estimated hourly wage is 28.24 the minimum education is Some College, and the estimated annual openings are 283. There are 8 program completers so the occupation is considered UND. For SOC Code 15-1141, Database Administrators, the estimated hourly wage is 42.99 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 44. There are 275 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 15-1122, Information Security Analysts, the estimated hourly wage is 44.81 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 26. There are 284 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 15-1142, Network and Computer Systems Administrators, the estimated hourly wage is 42.04 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 91. There are 277 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 152031, Operations Research Analysts, the estimated hourly wage is 46.36 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 44. There are 87 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 15-1132, Software Developers, Applications, the estimated hourly wage is 46.98 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 255. There are 361 program completers so the occupation is considered BAL. For SOC Code 15-1132, Software Developers, Systems Software, the estimated hourly wage is 46.39 the minimum education is Bachelor's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 159. There are 441 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 15-2041, Statisticians, the estimated hourly wage is NA the minimum education is Master's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 26. There are 476 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR. For SOC Code 15-1134, Web Developers, the estimated hourly wage is 33.49 the minimum education is Associate's degree, and the estimated annual openings are 62. There are 222 program completers so the occupation is considered OVR.

The Connecticut Department of Labor's Office of Research proactively shares its labor market data with Connecticut high schools and Community Colleges. Our Connecticut Career Resource Network produces a regular newsletter and "Connecticut Career Paths". Approximately 150,000 copies of "Connecticut Career Paths" are printed and distributed to high school guidance counselors and college career counselors throughout the state. Our annual conference "Connecticut Learns and Works" is attended by hundreds of educators from Connecticut high schools and community colleges. Economists from the Office of Research have made presentations regarding labor market information to guidance and career counselors at forums sponsored by the Connecticut State Department of Education and professional development days sponsored by local school districts. The Office of Research is in continual contact with the Board of Regents as well as the individual Community Colleges, which use labor market information for strategic planning as well as sharing it with students for career planning purposes.

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

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

A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

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

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

The various entities, partners and stakeholders comprising Connecticut's extensive informal workforce development system have planned and implemented a broad array of innovative initiatives addressing Connecticut's workforce development priorities. Following is an illustrative sample of selected recent noteworthy efforts:

(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.

Supporting Business Growth Subsidized Training and Employment Program (Step-Up)

Established in the 2011 Jobs Bill, Step-Up is a joint venture of the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) and the state's five regional WDBs. Originally providing two employer incentives — Wage Subsidy and Small Manufacturing Training Grant — to encourage eligible Connecticut businesses to hire more qualified workers, the focus has been on small businesses and manufacturers and economically threatened unemployed residents of high unemployment communities. Step-Up expanded in 2012 to include the Unemployed Armed Forces Member incentive for employers of any size to hire eligible veterans. Step-Up participants typically are Connecticut residents possessing some of the qualifications needed for work but require additional on-the-job training experience to meet the job-specific needs of participating employers. Wage Subsidy incentives for new hires extend over a six-month period and can amount to a $12,000 employer reimbursement. Small Manufacturing Training Grants provide up to $12,500 per new hire.

Jobs for which Step-Up participants have been hired cover a wide range, including CNC operators, machine operators, CAD designers, engineers, production coordinators, plant operators, graphic designers, sales representatives, warehouse support specialists, marketing support specialists, customer service representatives and office assistants. Through June 2017, a total of 1853 employers participated in the Subsidized Wage and Small Manufacturing initiatives, resulting in the hiring of 4,882 individuals, at an average hourly wage of approximately $15.99. Average employer reimbursement was approximately $10,141 per new employee.

Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) The state of Connecticut and its Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) compete with other states for company retention, expansion and job growth. Connecticut companies are approached regularly by states who are interested in luring businesses to their state. To address this concern, the DECD developed a comprehensive economic strategy focused on the importance of incentives for key business sectors to retain and support company growth and an aggressive, but disciplined approach to recruitment and investment with companies. The DECD continues to address Connecticut's perception as a "difficult place to do business", through the elimination of more than 1,000 pages of regulation and permit processes, and the elimination of cumbersome and/or redundant state government procedures.

The need for skilled talent in critical occupations in key industry sectors has been identified as a strategic priority by the DECD, providing an incentive for continuing close cooperation and coordination of workforce development and economic development efforts going forward. Key elements of the DECD's Economic Development Plan concerning the needs and priorities of Connecticut's in-demand and emerging industries and businesses are:

• Build on the state's strengths (talent, location, quality of life) • Focus on innovation, key business sectors to stimulate biz development, including offshore recruitment • Focus on talent development • Streamline governmental processes/regulation (as mentioned) • Address infrastructure issues (i.e. transportation) • Collaborate with key partners to improve business climate

Connecticut is finally experiencing employment growth from the 2008 Great Recession. Jobs are being created and there continues to be indications of a prosperous recovery. The DECD has identified key industry sectors where Connecticut has a depth of talent and expected to propel the state's economy. They are Insurance/Financial Services, Advanced Manufacturing, Bioscience, Digital Media, Technology (Green, Fintech, Biotech), and Tourism.

The DECD developed a number of incentive programs as part of their effort to grow and sustain manufacturing in the state. A $75 million Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) was created to support this industry. To date, 879 smaller manufacturers were provided financial assistance for innovative and strategic investments with a focus on talent development, supply chain health/growth, innovation and technology, and energy efficiency. Through the MIF, support for incumbent worker training (IWT) is available in the form of up to $50,000 matching funds per employer to train incumbent workers in the appropriate skills to meet current and emerging market needs. Pre-Apprentice and Apprentice support provides competency based learning for apprentices for on-the-job learning and related classroom instruction. The maximum funding is $9,500 per apprentice for year one and $9,250 for year two for the sponsoring company.

Youth talent development is also an important initiative for MIF as evidenced by the commitment to the Young Manufacturers Academy — where students learn what goes into producing products in workshops using lean manufacturing, engineering design, and high-tech industry software. Connecticut's Dream It. Do It. Initiative creates a positive image of today's manufacturing to support the future workforce pipeline.

Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund

In 2014 the General Assembly created a $30 million Connecticut Manufacturing Fund to support innovation and growth in the state's advanced manufacturing sector. The fund assists manufacturers to develop or modernize critical equipment, support technological advancement, encourage research and development, and provide critical workforce training. The objective is to strengthen the supply chain network of small/medium manufacturing companies and ensure a productive, flexible, well-trained advanced manufacturing talent pool with competitive skills. The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) provides administrative oversight, with the counsel and support of an eleven member advisory board, the majority from manufacturing companies. The Fund encourages company/university research efforts; creates a voucher program to support targeted business development and technical needs; provides access to training and educational programs to develop required workforce skills; provides matching funds for federal grants; and helps attract new manufacturers to Connecticut. Funding is also provided to support incumbent worker training and Registered Apprenticeships as specified in the next two pages.

The Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) Incumbent Worker Training Program is administered by the Connecticut Department of Labor and funded through the Department of Economic and Community Development. The program provides financial assistance to Connecticut manufacturers for growing innovative and technology-based manufacturing business in Connecticut. The goals are: • To support advanced manufacturing and innovative companies in their efforts to train incumbent workers in the appropriate skills to meet current and emerging market needs, • To bring technological innovation to the market and help manufacturing companies leap ahead in productivity and efficiency by enhancing the skills of their current workforce and • To maintain sales and grow revenue and profitability. The MIF Incumbent Worker Training program is a matching fund program, designed to help manufacturing companies provide training for their workforce. It offers up to up to $50,000 maximum per employer, per calendar year equal to the approved amount.

Apprenticeship

The Office of Apprenticeship Training (CTDOL) manages all registered apprenticeships in Connecticut. Significant efforts to expand apprenticeship opportunities in targeted industries including healthcare, information technology, and a major emphasis on advanced manufacturing are in place. Since 2014 participants in the community college-based Advanced Manufacturing Centers have been able to earn 576 hours of related instruction toward an Apprenticeship in manufacturing. Outreach efforts by the Office of Apprenticeship Training has drastically increased the number of manufacturers enlisted as employer sponsors and the number of full-time manufacturing apprentices and pre-apprentices.

Pre-apprenticeship Definition and Quality Framework

Quality pre-apprenticeship programs play a valuable role in preparing qualified entry- level workers for Registered Apprenticeship careers while contributing to the development of a diverse and skilled workforce. Through a variety of unique program designs and approaches, pre-apprenticeship programs can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse populations being trained, the various employers and sponsors they serve, and specific opportunities within the local labor market.

Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 13-12 formally announced the definition and quality framework for pre- apprenticeship. The CT DOL/OAT reviews and approves Connecticut's programs that aligns with TEN 13-12.

Pre-apprenticeship is defined as a program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship program and has a documented partnership with at least one, if not more, Registered Apprenticeship program(s). Strategy and program programs are recognized as quality pre-apprentice programs if the following are met:

• Approved Training and Curriculum. Training and curriculum based on industry standards(1) and approved by the documented Registered Apprenticeship partner(s) that will prepare individuals with the skills and competencies needed to enter one or more Registered Apprenticeship program(s);

• Strategies for Long-Term Success. Strategies that increase Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for under-represented (2), disadvantaged or low-skilled individuals, such that, upon completion, they will meet the entry requirements, gain consideration, and are prepared for success in one or more Registered Apprenticeship program(s) including the following:

• Strong recruitment strategies focused on outreach to populations under- represented in local, state, and national Registered Apprenticeship programs;

• Educational and pre-vocational services that prepare individuals to meet the entry requisites of one or more Registered Apprenticeship programs (e.g. specific career and industry awareness workshops, job readiness courses, English for speakers of other languages, Adult Basic Education, financial literacy seminars, math tutoring, etc.); and

• Assists in exposing participants to local, state and national Registered Apprenticeship programs and provides direct assistance to participants applying to those programs;

(1) INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Industry Standards in this context refers to the generally accepted practices of an industry, in terms of the knowledge, skills and aptitudes that are demonstrated by members of the industry. Generally accepted practices are represented by the performance of, or instruction in, specific occupational tasks relevant to that industry by employers, journey worker(s), educators, and other subject matter experts. By using the term Industry Standards in this manner, the intent of the definition is to ensure that training and/or curricula used by the pre-apprenticeship program align with the needs of the Registered Apprenticeship partner(s), while still allowing flexibility in pre-apprenticeship program design.

(2)UNDER-REPRESENTED

In the context of this definition, the term under-represented is intentionally broad. Generally, the term "under-represented" means a population that does not represent the majority, or a proportional share as indicated by appropriate data, of current participants in Registered Apprenticeship. For example, veterans may be an under-represented population in Registered Apprenticeship. Broadly, the intent of this term is to encourage pre-apprenticeship programs to be inclusive of all populations that may benefit from Registered Apprenticeship, including those that do not, proportionally participate in Registered Apprenticeship regardless of the reason.

Apprenticeship ETPL

Fulfilling the requirements of TEGL 41-14, all existing and new Registered Apprenticeship sponsors have an opportunity to reach a broader audience of potential apprentices and access training funds.

As part of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Connecticut Department of Labor and its partners, the local Workforce Development Boards, are compiling a list of training opportunities for jobseekers in the state of Connecticut. Known as the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), this list gives priority to Registered Apprenticeship Programs by placing them on the ETPL without any associated application requirements. However, before a registered apprenticeship sponsor can be included on Connecticut's ETPL, the sponsor needs to indicate willingness to be part of the list. This list provides sponsors with another way to connect with potential apprentices. In addition, being on the ETPL allows eligible potential apprentices access to workforce funds that can pay for some or all of their related instruction.

Administered by the State of Connecticut and available to the general public, the list includes a variety of schools and providers that have been approved to offer training programs. The ETPL is used by eligible individuals and the workforce system to select classroom type training for individuals eligible for WIOA, which directly impacts the related instruction component of a registered apprenticeship program.

As an approved Registered Apprenticeship program, a sponsor is automatically eligible to be listed. The Registered Apprenticeship program would stay on the ETPL for as long as it remains registered, or until the sponsor notifies CTDOL they would like to be removed. Registered apprenticeship programs only need to indicate their willingness to be on the ETPL by replying to any representative of their local workforce development board.

Apprenticeship Workforce Development Assistance

The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) and its Office of Apprenticeship Training was awarded a highly competitive American Apprenticeship Grant of $5 million to fund the Connecticut American Apprenticeship Initiative. A key component of the initiative is introduction of Competency and Competency/Time-Based Hybrid models of apprenticeship. The initiative will enroll and serve 1,000 registered apprentices and 500 pre-apprentices statewide in high- demand Advance Manufacturing, Healthcare and Business Services occupations. Employers ranging from small machine shops to General Dynamics Electric Boat division, the regional WDBs, and the Board of Regents for Higher Education provided significant commitments for apprenticeship placements.

The Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) Apprenticeship Program, funded through the Department of Economic and Community Development, is administered by the Connecticut Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship. The $7.8 million Manufacturing Innovation Fund Apprenticeship Program was launched in July 2015. The program provides financial assistance to Connecticut manufacturers that have a Registered Apprentice Program as well as, approved Apprentice Related Instruction Training Providers. The goals of the MIF Apprenticeship Program are to support manufacturing companies in their efforts to train Registered Apprenticeship workers in the appropriate skills to meet current and emerging market needs and occupational skills; to provide real time demand driven registered apprenticeship program that combines a structured work schedule of on the job training together with related classroom instruction. The MIF Apprenticeship Program assists manufacturing companies to provide training for new apprentices that are registered on or after July 1, 2015.

The MIF Apprenticeship Program has three components:

1. Wage Subsidy Reimbursement: The MIF Registered Apprenticeship funding per apprentice in manufacturing occupations is the "lesser" of the following: Funding of $5 per hour multiplied by the total number of hours worked during the company's program per year by apprentice not to exceed more than 50% of the annual salary., or Funding of $6,000 per qualified apprentice for year one and $7,000 per qualified apprentice for year two.

2. Related Instruction Tuition Reimbursement: Reimbursement of apprentice tuition/training costs or payments on behalf of an apprentice duly registered with a qualified Apprenticeship Sponsor to a Related Instruction Provider chosen by the sponsor company and approved by the Connecticut

Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship Training shall not exceed $2,500 in year one and $1,250 in year two.

3. Competency/Performance Reimbursement: Reimbursement of reasonable and customary costs for Competency/Performance registered apprenticeships that have interim credentials embedded in the work and related instruction schedules shall not exceed $1,000 in year one and year two.

Applicants may seek assistance in the form of a wage subsidy, tuition and credentialing reimbursement. The funds do not need to be repaid by the applicant, provided the applicant meets the deliverables and complies with the terms and conditions of the agreement.

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Programs - Funding from the Connecticut Legislature for the IBEST program was discontinued on June 30, 2015. In January 2017, the DOL Jobs First Unit worked with all 5 Workforce Development Boards, State Department of Education, Adult Education, CREC and DOL WIOA Unit to develop a uniform statewide policy for the administration of the “Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System” (CASAS), to measure clients’ reading and math scores. These CASAS test scores will now be recognized by all of the system partners mentioned above which will eliminate clients having to be retested in almost all cases. In addition, these test scores can now be shared across agencies through the use of a new statewide referral form that was developed as part of this new process. All JFES and WIOA case managers, along with all Career Development Specialists from DOL statewide were trained to administer and interpret these new standardized assessment tools. The standardization of assessment tools, development of the new universal referral form, along with the ability to

share assessment scores makes this new process a monumental step forward for the agencies involved and the shared clients that they serve.

In addition, the DOL Jobs First Unit worked with DSS, the Workforce Development Boards and the 3 Refugee Resettlement Agencies around the state to develop a new streamlined protocol for Refugees who are settling in Connecticut and participating in the JFES program. These new procedures eliminate lots of bureaucracy and will make coordination of services to Refugees and communication across the various agencies that are serving them much easier. The new procedures will be less stressful for the refugee families around the state. Communication and coordination between DSS, DOL, JFES case management staff and the Refugee Resettlement agencies will be more tightly coordinated. This new procedure will be rolled out statewide in the next 1 to 2 months.

In July 2016, DOL and the 5 Workforce Development Boards implemented a pilot using the assessment tool, Do What You Are (DWYA) for 1,500 JFES clients around the state. This tool enabled JFES case managers to determine a client's personality type using this assessment tool that only takes 5 minutes to administer. DWYA also provides a corresponding list of jobs and careers that correspond to people from that personality type. After a successful pilot year, the use of DWYA was expanded to 2,500 licenses beginning July, 2017. The DOL JFES Unit then decided to enhance this product by tying it to LMI generated by the DOL Research Unit making it even more relevant to JFES case managers and clients.

In addition, CTDOL Jobs First Unit staff continued working on building the Jobs First component of the CTHires electronic business system which will enable Jobs First case management staff and administrative staff to more accurately track the activities and successes of Connecticut's Job First participants. CTDOL JFES staff have worked closely with colleagues from the Workforce Development Boards and the Department of Social Services to continue the process of building this new system. The new system is targeted for implementation during the first quarter of 2018.

In July 2017, the DOL JFES Unit worked closely with the Department of Social Services and the 5 Workforce Development Boards to implement a new and improved program that revamped the old "Safety Net" service program. In July 2017, the DOL JFES unit and Department of Social Services awarded a new contract to the Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies and the unveiled a new Barrier Intervention Referral (BIR) process that replaced the old Employment Success Program (ESP).

In August, 2017, the DOL JFES Unit and the 5 Workforce Development Boards, the Department of Social Services and the Department of Rehabilitation Services implemented a new client referral process for JFES clients that may potentially have a disability. This new process streamlines the referral process, improves communication between the JFES case managers and the DORS representatives and enables some of the employment related activities that a client performs as part of the DORS employment plan to count towards the mandatory 35 hours per week of job search activities the client must perform as required by their participation in the JFES program.

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Programs - Adult Education Programs Since 2010 the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has invested in Program

Improvement Project (PIP) grants to implement the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program model across Connecticut to accelerate basic skills learning and career enhancement for adult education learners. Initial grants provided two years of incentive funding. PIP grants are underwritten with Workforce Investment Act Title II funds, to expand and improve educational services for adults lacking the basic skills and literacy skills for effective parenting, citizenship and employment. Eligible participants are students enrolled in mandated adult education classes (e.g., at least 17-years-old and officially withdrawn from high school). Objectives are to help adult secondary-level students and English-as-a-second-language learners improve reading, writing, math, English language acquisition and/or obtain a high school diploma while earning an industry-recognized credential in fields offering good wages and opportunities for career advancement. CSDE selected seven adult education providers to operate the I-BEST projects: New London Adult Education, EASTCONN, Enfield Adult Education, Capitol Region Education Council, Women and Families Education Center, Education Connection, Waterbury Adult Education. Providers collaborate with a training partner to offer funding for the technical aspects of instruction. In FY 2012-13 and FY 2014-15 a total of $210,000 in PIP funding was awarded to support educational (not technical) dimensions of the training, serving a total of 192 participants. The projects offer certifications in manufacturing, auto technician, culinary arts, emergency medical technician, pharmacy technician, certified nursing assistant, and software, serving individuals in English as a Second Language, adult basic education and high school completion programs.

March 2018 CSDE Modification:

CSDE has continued to support I-BEST projects using Title II, WIOA funds. CSDE conducted a new competition in April 2017 in which six adult education providers applied for and were awarded funding to offer training programs which aligned with their local workforce development boards' identified industry sectors. Certification programs include manufacturing, customer service, health occupations and auto technicians.

These projects entitled Program Enhancement Projects (PEP) are being conducted through three Regional Education Service Centers (CREC, EdAdvance, Eastconn), New London Adult Education, Norwich Adult Education and the Women and Families Center in Meriden. Total funding is $180,000 with the promise to support a minimum of 94 participants.

Through the Accelerating Connections to Employment (ACE) Grant, which was a randomized study, Gateway Community College students had the opportunity to attend career preparation programs at Gateway and move quickly into employment. ACE was funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and Annie E. Casey Foundation. The college offered no cost training programs for Community Health Worker, Culinary In-Front of the House, IT Help Desk, Patient Care Technician and Small Engine Repair through the (ACE) Grant. All of these Gateway students improved their basic skills while participating in lecture and work experience. Each student was assigned an internship experience and completed mock interviews before being placed in a job. Gateway had 190 students, 74% of the enrollees completed the program and 63% are employed. Jobs Funnel

The Jobs Funnel was launched as a pilot in Hartford to provide qualified workers opportunities to pursue careers in the construction trades. Jobs Funnels programs now operate in two local workforce areas — north central and northwest — under the aegis of the respective regional

WDBs. State-level coordination is provided through the Office of Workforce Competitiveness. State general fund dollars help support Jobs Funnel efforts.

Jobs Funnel services typically include: outreach/recruitment, assessment, case management, pre-employment training, job placement, and retention support services. Since their inception, the various regional funnel initiatives have helped to place more than 4,429 individuals in a variety of construction-related jobs, in both union and non-union settings, and in apprenticeships. The average hourly starting wage for participants who have completed the Jobs Funnel training is approximately $15-19. The Jobs Funnels are an example of innovative public-private partnerships involving employers, labor, community-based organizations, state and local agencies, non-profits and local funders to address shared objectives.

Go Back to Get Ahead

By 2020, approximately 70% of Connecticut jobs will require post-secondary education. To help address this challenge the Board of Regents for Higher Education in June 2014 launched the Go Back to Get Ahead initiative. The initiative targets individuals who had taken college courses before December 2012 but left school prior to completing their degree, or had achieved an associate's degree but not a bachelor's degree — approximately 65,000 individuals in Connecticut. The initiative provides up to nine (9) free credits towards degree completion, via courses offered in a classroom setting or online, at the seventeen (17) institutions of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities system. As of January 2018, a total of 1,423 individuals have enrolled in Go Back to Get Ahead with 733 at the community colleges, 309 at the state universities and 381 at Charter Oak State College.

Platform to Employment The Platform to Employment program - P2E - was launched by The WorkPlace, the regional WDB of southwest Connecticut, to assist the long-term unemployed return to work, while addressing employers' needs to recruit skilled workers. P2E is a public-private partnership providing businesses a risk-free opportunity to evaluate and consider hiring qualified participants in a work experience program. P2E is geared to individuals who have exhausted their unemployment benefits. Participants engage in a structured preparatory program including skills assessment, career readiness workshops, employee assistance services, coaching and other supports. Upon completion participants are helped to find open positions at local companies. Placements occur on a provisional basis, partially subsidized over an eight-week trial period. The expectation is that a company satisfied with a candidate's performance will offer a full-time job. The General Assembly allocated $3.6 million to implement P2E statewide in 2014-15, intended to serve 500 Connecticut residents. The first statewide P2E class of 100 participants began in September 2014. P2E operates as a partnership of the Connecticut Department of Labor, the Department of Rehabilitation Services and the five regional WDBs, managed statewide by The Workplace, Inc.

Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) supports projects that promote workforce investment system reforms and innovations to facilitate cooperation across programs to improve employment outcomes, cost effectiveness, and delivery of customer-centered services to job seekers and employers. The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL), in partnership with the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board (EWIB), is one of six states that successfully applied for a Round 3 Workforce Innovation Fund grant. In October 2015 CTDOL was awarded $6 million in WIF

grant funds from USDOL to implement the four-year Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative. The project seeks to address a massive need for skilled trade workers at Electric Boat (EB) and other business members of the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (EAMA) by providing short-term training to unemployed and underemployed workers unable to attend longer-term training. EB expects to hire 350 participants who complete the program, with EAMA members hiring most of the additional 75 completers. The Pipeline Initiative enhances strategic collaboration and alignment of workforce development and partner programs and strengthens the quality of American Job Center services, representing a cornerstone of Connecticut's federally designated Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership strategy. The project will be operated locally by EWIB, partnering with CTDOL, EB, EAMA employers, CT Department of Rehabilitation Services, CT Board of Regents for Higher Education, Quinebaug Valley Community College, CT Department of Economic and Community Development, Three Rivers Community College, CT Technical High Schools, EASTCONN, and Employment & Training Institute. The Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative aligns with the intent of the Workforce Innovation Fund to: 1) enhance strategic collaboration and alignment of workforce development and partner programs by targeting the identified needs of regional employers through customized training, aligning training and employment services with available jobs, and expanding employer commitments to hire program completers; and 2) strengthen the quality of American Job Center services by increasing use of high-quality skills assessment tools and case management methods, and working directly with employers to identify training needs in growing industry sectors, aligning with WIOA priorities.

As of December 2017 the program has met the following program enrollments exceeding the established goals:

- 5152 Portal registrants (exceeding the goal of 1350) since the portals launch on January 7, 2016

- More than 1000 of these portal registrants have earned high scores on the skills assessments developed by EB & other manufacturers (exceeding the goal of 564)

- 50 Information sessions have been delivered to over 800 individuals mostly at AJC's with a few at community colleges

- 553 individuals enrolled in the program by completing the one-on-one appointment with a case manager developing personal service plans and making connections to supportive services & stipends

- 30 training cohorts have started and/or completed with an additional 12 training cohorts scheduled through May 2018

- Over 744 individuals have been employed

- Continued planning meetings between EWIB, Electric boat (the main pipeline project employer), community colleges (the customized training providers), technical high schools (which host some of the customized trainings) and others to review employer hiring needs are being met

Advanced Manufacturing Centers and Connecticut Advanced Manufacturing Initiative (CAMI)

As a result of the 2011 Jobs Bill, State bond funds were committed to establish three new community college-based Advanced Manufacturing Centers, modeled on the successful Manufacturing Machine Technology Program at Asnuntuck Community College (Enfield). The new centers opened in August 2012 at Housatonic Community College (Bridgeport), Naugatuck Valley Community College (Waterbury) and Quinebaug Valley Community College (Danielson). Their mission is to offer a variety of credit and non-credit advanced manufacturing courses for incumbent workers, displaced workers, returning veterans, current community college students, adult education students and high school students from both technical and comprehensive high schools. Overall program coordination is provided through the Board of Regents for Higher Education. Students earn a one-year/two-semester Advanced Manufacturing Certificate, plus 576 hours of related instruction toward an Apprenticeship in manufacturing, as well as the OSHA 10 certificate. Manufacturers/employers are intensively involved in all phases of program planning, design and implementation, through advisory boards at each Center and through a Statewide Advanced Manufacturing Advisory Committee (SAMAC). Graduates can acquire a minimum of 4 National Institute of Metal Skills (NIMS) credentials, towards the 11-credential Machine Level I NIMS certificate. Recent enrollment data shows 323 students had enrolled across the four Centers in Fall 2013; 213 had graduated by June 2014; 86 students participated in internships; 192 students were employed in Summer 2014; and 331 students enrolled in Fall 2014. Manufacturing companies employing the most program graduates represent tool and die, aerospace, stamping, automotive, medical device, plating, molding, construction, commercial lighting, and general manufacturing. As of June 2014, graduates of the four Centers had a 90% job placement rate.

In September 2014, the US Department of Labor awarded a $15 million grant to implement the Connecticut Advanced Manufacturing Initiative (CAMI) across the 12 community colleges and Charter Oak State College. CAMI builds on the foundation of the nationally recognized Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centers, and expands post-secondary manufacturing education to every community college in Connecticut. Grant funds pay for capital equipment to construct labs, purchase equipment, develop curricula, provide hands-on training, hire new teachers and educational assistants, and the development of new registered apprenticeships for high-demand manufacturing jobs. Manchester Community College serves as lead college of the multi-college CAMI consortium.

CAMI has been successful primarily because it increased enrollment, job placement and completions. The program also significantly improved employer relationships, developed timely curriculum and were able to come together as a system to market and brand who we are statewide.

Enrollment and Completion:

• 2,071 students enrolled in a CAMI Consortium program

• 662 students completed (does not include those that are still enrolled or who came to take a single course)

• 525 students were incumbent workers

• 570 received a job offer before or immediately following completion (does not include students who enrolled Fall 2017)

• 304 students received a job offer at the time they completed

• 172 students who were incumbent workers in a non-MFG field, switched

• 86% completion rate

• 53% began internships

Industry-Recognized Credentials:

• Students earned 1,030 industry-recognized NIMS or AWS credentials

Curriculum and Professional Development:

• 11 regionally-specific short-term certificates were developed

• Launched a successful CSCU Advanced Manufacturing Training Series online

• CAD/CAM and CMM training made available to instructors

Employer Partnership Growth:

• We have 208 employers participating on advisory boards statewide (53% increase)

• We have established 571 formal employer relationships (e.g. scholarships, internship, donations, etc.)

• Collaborated with all of Connecticut's workforce investment boards

• Hired 63 additional teachers, educational assistants, lab assistants, and recruiting personnel

Marketing Success:

• Launched an impactful statewide "Make It. Here." campaign, resulting, in part, in waitlists across the System

• Developed a cohesive brand that is shared across CSCU — unifying all advanced manufacturing centers

Equipment and Construction:

• $929,254 spent on renovations

• $916,993 spent on capital equipment

Energy Management

Tunxis Community College's (TxCC) Energy Management program is a unique, career-oriented two-year Associate of Applied Science degree that trains students to evaluate energy use patterns; develop, implement, market and maintain conservation programs; perform public outreach; recommend energy efficiency techniques; integrate alternative energy sources; and perform systems analysis to solve problems. Students learn to apply basic physics and analytical techniques to measure and define energy use of today's building systems with the goal of evaluating and recommending alternative energy solutions that will result in greater energy efficiency and lower energy costs. The program prepares undergraduate students and working age adults for energy analysis jobs in the commercial and industrial (C&I) energy sector.

Students need no prior experience to succeed in the program. The program will help meet the need for well-trained commercial energy conservation workers in CT and in the Northeast US. TxCC's commercial energy program is modeled after Lane Community College's Energy Management Program, in Eugene, OR. Lane's program is internationally known, attracts undergraduate students and adult students from across the US, and has been running since 1980. Lane's Director of Energy and Water Programs provided program development assistance for the TxCC program.

Next Generation Connecticut

The Next Generation Connecticut initiative is intended to significantly expand educational opportunities, research and innovation in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines at the University of Connecticut. The broad objective is to leverage UConn's strengths and resources to help build Connecticut's future workforce, create jobs and invigorate the state economy. The cornerstone of the effort is a major increase in student enrollment, faculty expansion, development of facilities for enhanced STEM research and teaching, and expansion of critical programs at UConn's Hartford and Stamford campuses. Next Generation Connecticut aims to transform UConn into an elite public research institution, fueling Connecticut's economy with new technologies, training highly skilled graduates, creating new companies, patents, licenses and high-wage jobs. Components include: hiring research and teaching faculty in STEM disciplines; building research facilities for materials science, physics, biology, engineering, cognitive science, genomics and related disciplines; constructing teaching laboratories; creating a STEM Honors program to attract high achieving undergraduate students; upgrading aging infrastructure; expanding Stamford degree programs; providing student housing in Stamford; and relocating the Greater Hartford campus to downtown Hartford. This aggressive investment hopes to dramatically increase UConn STEM research and graduates, producing innovations and inventions contributing directly to sustainable economic growth in Connecticut, with high-wage jobs for a STEM-skilled and educated workforce.

Connecticut Health and Life Sciences Career Initiative

In Connecticut, the health and life sciences represent an area of significant strategic growth supported by both public and private investment. The Connecticut Health and Life Sciences Career Initiative (HL-SCI) is designed to prepare workers to take on these new jobs with a particular focus in recruitment on veterans, TAA-eligible workers (those displaced by foreign trade), dislocated, unemployed and under-employed workers. Through a consortium of five community colleges (Norwalk, Capital, Gateway, Manchester and Middlesex), nineteen (19) new Certificate and Associate Degree programs have been established and forty-four (44) existing programs have been revised with industry support to ensure that students have the skills needed to succeed and that jobs will be waiting for graduates. Sixty (60) new online/hybrid courses have been created to increase flexibility and access for students and speed acceleration to graduation. Partnerships with employers for student internships and placement services provide a competitive edge for HL-SCI graduates who complete programs with hands-on experience and an understanding of workplace expectations.

The initiative also includes a commitment to stacked and latticed credentials to maximize options for students. Eastern Connecticut State University is part of the consortium to ensure that graduates of HL-SCI programs have pathways to 4-year institutions - both public and private -

and to create new articulation agreements between consortium community colleges and Eastern Connecticut State University.

The USDOL-funded Connecticut Health and Life Sciences Career Initiative (HL-SCI) was successfully completed in December 2016. According to the Third Party Evaluation report submitted by The CNA Corporation, HL-SCI met or exceeded all of its implementation targets. Twenty (20) new certificate and degree programs were created (target: 150, and forty-eight (48) existing certificate degree programs were revised (target: 34) to ensure that curricula reflected the most up-to-date industry needs. More than 4,500 students (target: 2,700) enrolled in these new and revised programs. In addition, more than 4,200 of those students received job placement services (more than twice the grant target) and more than 2,400 participated in internships (more than 3 times the grant target). HL-SCI programs have been sustained after the grant period, a reflection of their relevance to Connecticut's workforce needs.

Developing Future Talent

Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative

CWP serves as the convener of the Hartford Opportunity Youth Collaborative (HOYC) which brings together leaders and stakeholders from key systems — education, youth development and workforce development — to improve outcomes for WIOA Opportunity Youth, defined as 16-24 year olds lacking a high school diploma, or who have a diploma but are not in school or working. There are an estimated 6,000 opportunity youth in Hartford. This effort implements CWP's WIOA youth systems building efforts to build a collaborative model for WIOA funded youth programs. A collective impact approach is used to demonstrate best practices to improve outcomes and scale up effective practices across systems. The resulting comprehensive plan is expected to decrease the number of youth disconnected from education and employment. Success indicators are post-secondary credentials and/or two- and four-year degrees obtained, and securing employment in targeted sectors/career field. Capital Region Education Council offers contextualized learning to prepare justice-involved high school dropouts for the GED, offering industry credentials and internships. Blue Hills Civic Association partners with Capital Community College to offer an enhanced certificate and associate degree program for allied health careers, with Success Coaches creating individual service plans and offering financial aid counseling. Our Piece of the Pie partners with Asnuntuck Community College to deliver contextual learning including occupational skills instruction in manufacturing, welding and electronics, leading to certificates relevant to manufacturing careers.

Early College Programs

The label "early college" program encompasses various models focusing on the transition of high school students to college and into the workforce. The premise of the early college strategy is that all high school students should pursue some form of post-secondary education, recognizing that multiple pathways lead to success. The mix of strategies under the early college umbrella ranges from individual high school students taking college courses in a college setting or at their home high school, to high schools where all students graduate with an industry-validated certificate or associate's degree, with multi-year curriculum pathways, supports and experiences. Some early college programs focus exclusively on academics and college readiness, while others emphasize career pathways and exposure to career options. Successful early college programs

rely on collaborations and partnerships among school districts, high schools, community colleges, universities and businesses and employers.

Early college initiatives have proliferated in Connecticut, reflecting these strong partnerships. Examples of innovative efforts with continued potential for replication include: Connecticut Early College Opportunities (CT-ECO) programs including at the Norwalk Early College Academy; Danbury Early College Academy; Windham Early College Opportunities; New London Early College Opportunities program; Asnuntuck Community College Fifth Year Program with East Granby School System; Waterbury Career Academy partnership with Naugatuck Valley Community College; Fundamentals of Early Childhood Education program of the Meriden School District and Middlesex Community College; and, Manchester Community College's College Career Pathways program. It is anticipated that these and similar early college efforts will expand going forward.

CT- ECO Programs

In February 2014 in the State of the State address, Governor Malloy highlighted the IBM P-TECH model by name as an example of effective career education and a promising new model of high school and postsecondary education. In April 2014, Governor Malloy announced collaboration with IBM to launch the state's first P-TECH model school in Norwalk, Connecticut. This partnership includes Norwalk High School, Norwalk Community College and IBM who developed a new 9-14 school that would provide students with an enriched curriculum to complete both a high school diploma and a cost-free AAS degree, aligned with actual employment opportunities at IBM. Students would have professional mentors, substantive workplace experiences and internships. Graduates would be first in line for job openings at IBM. In May 2018, Norwalk PTECH will have 17 students graduate with both their associates degree and high school diploma.

Three additional CT-ECO programs opened their doors in the Fall of 2015: Danbury ECO is a partnership between Danbury Public Schools, Naugatuck Valley Community College, and NewOak and Pitney Bows and the Eastern CT-ECO Programs. The Eastern CT-ECO programs are part of a region effort in the eastern portion of the state aimed at creating a pipeline of talented workers for the many manufacturers in the region. As such, both programs share the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (EAMA) with General Dynamics Electric Boat serving as the lead as an industry partner. The Eastern CT-ECO programs were a key component in the decision to award a Federal Pipeline Grant awarded to the Eastern Workforce Investment Board to promote manufacturing career pathways with General Dynamics Electric Boat and its supply chain. The two Eastern Connecticut programs are: New London ECO which is a partnership with New London Public Schools and Three Rivers Community College; and Windham ECO which is a partnership with Windham Public Schools and Quinebaug Valley Community College.

CT-ECO offers participating students an integrated high school and college program that aims for each student to graduate with an AAS or AS degree at no-cost to them. CT-ECO programs further prepare students with the skills and knowledge necessary to step seamlessly into well paying, high potential jobs in STEM fields.

College Readiness and Completion - Implementation of Public Act 12-40

In 2012, the General Assembly enacted Public Act 12-40: An Act Concerning College Readiness and Completion. The law addresses the challenge of having many recent high school graduates unable to qualify for college credit courses upon registering at the state's community colleges, and the limitations of remedial instruction strategies. PA 12-40 was intended to match developmental education with the capabilities of incoming community college students, and requires alignment of high school curricula with Common Core Standards. Community colleges were allowed significant latitude in creating courses to meet the new law's requirements. The legislation outlined a three-tiered structure colleges could use to provide developmental instruction:

• Embedded: College-level instruction, with embedded developmental support designed for entering students with 12th grade skills (or close), who are approaching college readiness but require modest remediation.

• Intensive: One semester of developmental education instruction or an intensive readiness experience for entering students with skills below the 12th grade level.

• Transitional: For students who test below the intensive level of readiness.

The system-wide implementation of PA 12-40 has yielded substantial benefits in the area of college readiness. Students that were not initially college ready now pass college-level Math and English at a rate sixty percent higher than under the previous developmental education regime.

CSCU Student Success Center

Founded in fall 2014, the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) Student Success Center (SSC) aims to foster a collaborative process in which faculty, staff, students, and administrators work together to develop a culture of academic and personal success for CSCU students. The CSCU SSC is one of fifteen such centers nationwide. The centers in this network, each led by an executive director, are designed to be collaborative at two levels: Across the country the centers work together and with national experts to consider ideas that can improve student persistence and completion. Within each state each center works with its colleges to create a coherent, statewide strategy that helps institutions integrate their varied student success efforts, learn from one another, and maximize resources.

The Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR), as the governing body of the CSCU, received a competitive $500,000 grant from the Kresge Foundation to initiate the SSC. In addition to this relationship with the Kresge Foundation, the SSC engages with a variety of national student success efforts, with a primary partnership in place with Jobs for the Future (JFF), the oversight entity for all of the nationwide student success centers.

In 2017 and 2018, the goal of the CSCU SSC is the furthering of a guided pathways initiative in the CSCU. This work is a central part of the CSCU Students First initiative. Based on college trends and student success initiatives across the nation, and rooted in the CSCU SSC partnership with JFF, this multi-year, highly collaborative guided pathways initiative seeks to unify and extend student success efforts in the CSCU under the guided pathways framework as we move towards the formation of a single Connecticut community college.

Waterbury Career Academy

Following several years of planning by community leaders, educators, workforce system representatives and local businesses, construction began in 2011 on the $65 million state-of-the-art facility for the new Waterbury Career Academy, a public high school with a curriculum intended to address the workforce priorities of industry in Waterbury and surrounding municipalities for talented, educated, skilled future employees. The Academy operates within the Waterbury Public Schools system. Responding to demands of local businesses and employers, four educational strands focus academic/classroom instruction and career readiness preparation: Computer Information Technologies, Engineering/Manufacturing Technologies, Human Services, and Health Services. Industry partners helped to establish and serve on Advisory Panels to assist with curriculum development, student selection criteria, and ongoing technical assistance and support. The Academy opened in September 2013, welcoming an initial class of 9th grade students. Grade 9 students explore each of the four strands before choosing an area of focus. Each strand offers three career pathway options: employment following high school graduation with one of several certifications; two-year community college degree track with college credits; four-year college degree track with college credits. Honors and Advanced Placement courses are offered to qualifying students. World language courses are offered. The Academy has an articulation agreement offering eight (8) dual credit courses with Naugatuck Valley Community College. All 10th grade students have the opportunity to earn at least 3 college credits in their chosen strand.

Summer Youth Employment Program

Connecticut's five regional WDBs strive to offer youth aged 14-21 meaningful employment experiences. Various national studies document the positive impact of structured work experience on academic performance and earnings. Since 2007 between 4,300 — 7,400 young people annually have been able to participate in the state's Summer Youth Employment program, coordinated statewide by the WDBs. In FY 2017, the Summer Youth Employment program was supported by $5.5 million in State funding, $437,500 from the Department of Children and Families, and a variety of leveraged private funds totaling nearly $1.9 million. Unfortunately no Federal funding has been available to support the summer jobs program since 2010. In summer 2016 and into a year round program, a total of 3,278 youth participated. For many it was a first job.

Tomorrow's Framework Strategic Action Plan - CT Technical High School System The Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) statewide system of 16 diploma-granting technical high schools and one technical education center serves approximately 10,800 full-time high school students annually, offering education and training in 36 occupational areas. CTHSS also serves approximately 5,500 part-time adult students annually in apprenticeship and other programs. In recent years CTHSS has received considerable attention as a valued asset in addressing the state's workforce priorities in critical occupational areas of need.

Connecticut's 2012 education reform legislation established a new CTHSS Board, including representatives of businesses and partnering state agencies, to promote and guide CTHSS strategic development. In 2014 Dr. Nivea Torres was appointed Superintendent. Under the leadership of the Board and Superintendent, CTHSS collaborated with numerous partners to develop the Tomorrow's Framework Strategic Action Plan 2014-2017 addressing the CTHSS mission of providing a world class career technical and academic education to prepare students

for careers in business and industry. Tomorrow's Framework's goals are to: partner with business and industry in developing career technical education providing students the skills and work habits to succeed in a dynamic 21st century work environment; align K-12, post-secondary and adult programs in a continuum of educational services resulting in career and college readiness; transform CTHSS via programs responsive to Connecticut's workforce needs, positioning the system as a leading force in career technical education; and, invest in developing faculty and staff to support the core CTHSS mission. Those goals build on fourteen foundational imperatives, establishing a strategic direction, addressing expectations of students, emphasizing program quality, and focusing on STEM skills, employer responsiveness, structured career exposure for students, strength of faculty and staff, visibility and collaboration.

In 2017 CTHSS was renamed to the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) to better reflect its mission which is focused on education and workforce development.

The CTECS Central Office leadership, beginning with newly-appointed Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Wihbey, CTHSS schools principals and CTHSS faculty are actively engaged in a wide range of partnerships and collaboration with employers, post-secondary institutions, K-12 schools, workforce agencies and others, to meet the aggressive goals set out in the action plan. Much has already been accomplished. Going forward these efforts and partnerships will become increasingly important elements of the state's broad workforce development strategy, particularly in occupations in critical industries demanding specific technical skills.

Connecticut Center for Arts & Technology (ConnCAT) The Connecticut Center for Arts and Technology (ConnCAT), is modeled after Pittsburgh's highly successful Manchester Bidwell Corporation - an internationally recognized arts and education center founded by the renowned innovator and MacArthur Fellow, Bill Strickland. The mission of ConnCAT is to inspire, motivate, and prepare youth and adults for educational and career advancement, through after-school arts, and job training programming. Training opportunities are available to all people, without regard for race, religion, ancestry or national origin. ConnCAT provides job training programs designed to give unemployed and under-employed adults the skills needed to secure meaningful, well-paying jobs in health sciences and culinary professions, and the academic support required for success in those programs. ConnCAT career preparation links adult learners with local corporate partners in healthcare and hospitality services who assist in curriculum design and encourage entry level employment for adult learners upon program completion.

Jobs Corps

Job Corps is a national, federally funded educational and vocational training program administered by USDOL, that helps low income youth (ages16-24) gain workplace skills, train for high-demand occupations, and become independent and self-sufficient. With centers in Hartford and New Haven, more than 400 students enroll each year to earn a high school diploma or GED, learn a trade, obtain third party certifications and receive assistance finding a job. CTDOL has an assigned staff member who provides on-site support to the Hartford and New Haven Job Corp Centers.

Transforming System Capacity

Disability Employment Initiative

(CT DEI Youth)

In October 2016 Connecticut received a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor's Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). CTDOL's Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) administers the three-year, six month $2,500,000 award funded jointly by USDOL' s Employment and Training Administration and Office of Disability Employment Policy. Broad objectives are to increase education, training and employment opportunities for youth with disabilities ages 14-24, and to expand the workforce system's capacity to serve eligible beneficiaries in the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program. The initiative features strong partnerships and collaboration among key agencies; service coordination through an Integrated Resource Team approach; integrated services and resources including blended, braided and leveraged funding and resources; and innovative asset development strategies. Services are offered in four of Connecticut's workforce regions. Participating WDBs employ Disability Resource Coordinators to implement project activities and coordinate services. Integrated Resource Teams address individual needs and provide increased support for youth with disabilities. Partners include the Departments of Rehabilitation Services, Labor, Education, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Social Services, and various other public and private sector representatives.

CT DEI Youth efforts focus on:

- Increasing the number of and improving the outcomes for youth with disabilities participating in career pathways programs;

- building partnerships; working with chambers of commerce from each region to provide opportunities through their memberships for paid work experiences and employment;

- utilizing available programs and supports such as technology, tutorials, sign language interpreters and other curricula modifications to accommodate learners with disabilities;

- utilizing DEI funds to provide paid work experiences and internships;

- aligning systems at the state level through the CETC Service Design and Delivery Committee; and

- increasing credential attainment in, but not limited to, Information Technology, Healthcare and Advanced Manufacturing industry sectors.

Senior Community Service Employment Program A Senior Community Service Employment Program funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act through the U.S. Department of Labor enables us to provide job skills training to low-income Individuals, age 55 and older in Connecticut. Ready to Work participants are placed in temporary training assignments where they gain valuable on-the-job work experience and training needed to gain meaningful employment. Participants will work 20 hours a week at the training sites for which they will be paid minimum wage. Goals • To assist participants in acquiring marketable jobs skills and • To help participants secure meaningful unsubsidized employment Program Objectives • Participate in community service assignments to learn new skills in on the job training • Assistance in resume development • Assistance in developing job search skills • Increase opportunities to obtain jobs in the private sector • Referrals to supportive services as needed • Change stereotypes about older workers through public education and demonstrated success Workforce 18.9 percent

of the civilian workforce in Connecticut consists of residents, age 65 and older (US Bureau of Labor Statistics: 2010). The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) assists workers age 55 years and older prepare for today's job market and re-enter the workforce through on-the-job training at local non-profit agencies and classroom training, including, but not limited to, Dress for Success, assistive technology and transportation.

P20 WIN Data Sharing System

Connecticut's Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network — P20 WIN — represents a groundbreaking approach to education and workforce training-related data sharing in Connecticut. P20 WIN provides a secure data vehicle for producing critical information to understand patterns over time and inform policy and strategy decisions to improve outcomes of education and training programs for Connecticut students. With P20 WIN, Connecticut can evaluate how well public education and training programs prepare students for additional education and careers in Connecticut. The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC), the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU), the University of Connecticut (UCONN), the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC) and Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) are the State entities actively participating in P20 WIN. An inter-agency data governance structure and data sharing agreements support collaborative decision-making about data access and use. P20 WIN provides a systematic, secure and repeatable process to gather and analyze critical data to understand the impact of investments in education and workforce training programs, leading to better outcomes. http://www.ct.edu/p20win

Workforce Development Boards' Initiatives The following link provides examples of Connecticut's Workforce Development Boards leadership in attracting funds to support Connecticut's workforce development efforts across the education and training continuum and the willingness of the WDBs to play a critical intermediary role in the efforts led by higher education and workforce system partners.
http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/OWC/WIOA%20USP%20WDB%20Initiatives.docx

The following bullets highlight just a few of the projects that have achieved national recognition and/or replication and involved a high level of collaboration among multiple Connecticut WDBs. • The $2 million CT STEM Jobs grant project, one of only five USDOL "STEM Opportunities in the Workforce System" pilot grants nationally, was the first federal grant project that involved all five Connecticut WDBs, along with higher education, economic development, and industry partners. CT STEM Jobs earned national recognition for innovative approaches that placed 758 unemployed workers into jobs despite occurring during a period in which Connecticut lost close to 60,000 jobs. • The five Connecticut WDBs led the on-the-ground implementation of the $5.8 million USDOL Connecticut Green Jobs Funnel Initiative (CGJFI) received by the CTDOL Office of Workforce Competitiveness. The CGJFI involved the replication of Capital Workforce Partners' nationally-recognized Jobs Funnel model to all five Connecticut workforce areas. The CGJFI trained 1,390 people (154% of goal) and placed 887 people in employment (154% of goal). • The WorkPlace Inc.'s Platform to Employment (P2E) program began in Southwest Connecticut in 2011 with private funding as an innovative solution to help the long-term unemployed get bet back to work. Based on the success of P2E in Southwest Connecticut, the Connecticut General Assembly appropriated $3.6 million in 2014 to create the first statewide

P2E program in the nation. Nearly 80% of Connecticut participants who complete the preparatory program take the next step into a work experience at a local company. Of this population, nearly 90% have moved to employer payrolls. Based on this success, P2E has expanded to several national markets. • The Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative utilizes a $6 million USDOL Workforce Innovation Fund award to implement and bring to scale a demand-driven, customized training program recognized by U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez as an innovative model ripe for national replication. The recently-launched Pipeline Initiative will help to address a massive need for skilled tradesworkers at Electric Boat and other members of the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance by providing a short-term training option to unemployed and underemployed workers unable to attend longer-term training. Workforce Alliance is working with the Eastern CT Workforce Board to expand this initiative to meet growing, unmet needs of manufacturing employers.

• The WorkPlace, Inc. received a grant to implement a state-wide Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) which is funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act through the U.S. Department of Labor. SCSEP is the only federal job training program focused exclusively on helping older Americans return to the workforce. The WorkPlace branded our SCSEP program as MaturityWorks and serves over 200 Connecticut residents annually. The grant was awarded on November 4, 2016 with a duration of four years.

MaturityWorks provides job skills training to low-income Individuals who are age 55 and older. Participants are matched with training assignments that fit their unique skill set, schedule, and training needs and gain valuable on-the-job work experience needed to gain meaningful employment. Participants work 20 hours a week at the training sites for which they are paid minimum wage.

While MaturityWorks assists participants in acquiring marketable job skills they also receive assistance in resume development, obtain referrals to supportive services and help change stereotypes about older workers through public education and demonstrated success.

• Workforce Alliance received federal DOL funding in 2015 to establish an AJC in the Whalley Avenue Correctional Facility. It was a demonstration project that operated for two years, and not renewable at the federal level. Workforce Alliance is using WIOA Governor's Reserve funding and WIOA funding to keep the program operating, and is in discussion with several entities to sustain and grow this project.

• In the summer of 2018, Workforce Alliance and University of New Haven will launch its Hospitality Training Pipeline Project, designed to address the ongoing needs of the hotel, food and beverage, event planning and tourism industry. At least eight hotels are planned or are being built in the region and are expected to begin in early 2018 and to take occupancy in early to mid-2019. These properties will add at least 700 new sleeping rooms in the area and potentially 500 new hotel management, "front of the house" as well as "back of the house" support employment roles.

• Capital Workforce Partners (CWP), together with Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford convenes the Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (MACH), an employer-led partnership whose purpose is to identify and respond to workforce development and policy issues for entry-level and middle-skill positions in the healthcare industry. MACH convenes

working committees to address issues such as identifying the needs for entry-level and middle-skilled workers in various segments of the healthcare industry. Working committees are chaired by an employer partner, and staffed by CWP and CWEALF. MACH hosts workforce events such as an informational career fair, a job fair, and a symposium where workforce development issues affecting the industry are explored, and employers and employees who participate in and advance workplace learning are recognized in an awards ceremony.

• Capital Workforce Partners (CWP), together with the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology convenes the Advanced Manufacturing Employer Partnership (AMEP), an employer-led partnership of manufacturers in the North Central region. AMEP is dedicated to coordinating the rebuilding of the manufacturing talent pipeline by assisting employers with strategies for recruitment, retention and incumbent worker training, that will help grow their business, provide solid jobs, and improve regional economies.

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 preceding discussion of Connecticut's workforce development activities addresses an inventory of selected noteworthy initiatives, programs, and services responsive to the goals that serve as the focus for this Unified State Plan: Supporting Business Growth; Strengthening the Current Workforce; Developing Future Talent; and Transforming System Capacity.

The process of developing Connecticut's Unified State Plan included review of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats: Aerospace and Marine Shipbuilding in Connecticut's Advanced Manufacturing Communities Region prepared by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, as well as several other information sources summarized below.

In 2014 OWC engaged members of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) Career Advancement and Youth Employment committees to review statewide efforts to develop the coordinated career pathways system collectively envisioned by USDOL, the US Department of Education and HHS. Committee members participated in a joint working session to share insights. An information session was held with officials coordinating workforce initiatives in the state's public college and university system. A survey was disseminated to key stakeholders on the challenges and opportunities associated with career pathway strategies and similar efforts. Collectively, the knowledgeable individuals engaged in this information review process represented employers, Workforce Development Boards, key state agencies, community colleges, adult education providers, Regional Education Service Centers, community—based service providers and philanthropy. The assessment they produced informed this Unified State Plan, as it examines workforce activities relevant to the objective of building a career pathways system as a key feature of State workforce strategy under WIOA.

Additional information on perceived strengths and weaknesses was derived from the "State Plan Addressing Contextualized Learning, Early College and Career Certificate Programs" produced by CETC in 2015. In addition to the information generated by these CETC—sanctioned analyses, OWC staff reviewed the output produced by the various WIOA Transition Work

Groups during the recent state planning process to extract insights concerning workforce development activities.

The following summary addresses perceived strengths and opportunities for improvement:

Strengths

Given the knowledge, experience and expertise of its key partners and stakeholders, Connecticut's workforce system is well positioned to implement innovative workforce and talent development strategies.

Connecticut's workforce development efforts are supported and encouraged by the strong relationships among executive leadership in key State agencies and key administrative and program staff in each organization.

State, regional and local partners have a demonstrable track record of successful collaboration on applying for and winning significant national competitive grant awards that address strategic priorities, developing innovative partnerships responsive to employer priorities, and effective sharing of information and best practices, i.e. the Disability Employment Initiative and The American Apprenticeship Initiative.

The role of the local workforce Development Boards (WDBs) — collaborating with CTDOL, other key State agencies and numerous local partners and stakeholders — is a key asset in Connecticut's ability to develop innovative strategies, programs and services responsive to the needs of jobseekers, workers and employers. The WDBs and their partners have developed numerous effective programs, shared successful efforts and adjusted strategies as results dictate.

Connecticut has been generating increasingly useful labor market information and program outcome data emerging from the Preschool Through Twenty and Workforce Information Network (P20WIN) system and associated working groups and partnerships among key state agencies.

Connecticut's workforce system enjoys a range of positive experiences in working closely with employers — large and small — as partners and customers in key industries/sectors at both the State and local level.

The business community and employers play a strong role in providing leadership to the local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC).

Connecticut is blessed with a diverse array of public and private postsecondary/higher education institutions that serve as a foundation for numerous workforce/career development initiatives responsive to the needs and priorities of Connecticut businesses and employers.

Connecticut has an extensive network of committed, mission—driven, effective community—based organizations and non—profit service providers delivering effective on workforce programs and services accessible to key target populations.

Connecticut has an active philanthropic sector that is increasingly engaged in supporting workforce development—related initiatives, including local community foundations, local United Ways and corporate foundations.

Our ability to provide effective innovative workforce development services depends on continuing effective communication among State and local partners and stakeholders, including those who will serve together as members of the CETC Committees going forward.

Continuing effective communication between CETC and the local Workforce Development Boards will be essential to ensure a process is in place to refine and adjust strategy towards continuous improvement and enhanced system performance.

Across Connecticut are numerous examples of workforce programs that strive to address the essential components of a comprehensive approach to career pathways responsive to employer needs and focused on good career opportunities: alignment across program and "sub—system" silos; rigorous, sequential coursework integrating education and work—based training; flexible entry/exit; comprehensive support services; financial support; engagement with targeted businesses and industry sectors; credit for prior learning and opportunity for accelerated advancement; flexible scheduling; innovative use of technology; attainment of industry—recognized credentials; industry sector focus and advancement opportunities; and, creative collaboration among stakeholders to achieve results.

A number of key weaknesses were identified during the WIOA USP planning process, and in recent planning efforts that produced formal public reports/papers (CETC Response to Career Pathways RFI; Plan to Provide Education, Training and Job Placement in Emerging Industries), Presently, consistent with and based upon the informal analysis conducted to date, the State identifies the following weaknesses requiring attention and action going forward:

• Over reliance on individual leaders among key partner agencies and stakeholder organizations at all levels of Connecticut's workforce system

• Lack of sufficient financial resources and focused time to be able to build deep partnership relationships across stakeholder organizations

• Multiplicity of funding mechanisms, with differing (often conflicting) program eligibility requirements, outcome measures, and reporting requirements.

• Inflexibility of program-specific categorical strings that limit opportunities for innovation and responsiveness in designing effective strategies

• High unit cost of innovative strategies and consequent limitations of numbers of customers who can be served

• Lack of work-readiness "soft skills" of many prospective candidates for participation in available workforce programs

• Volume of prospective candidates for participation in workforce programs who have criminal records

• Inadequacy of assessment tools used to match participants with effective workforce strategies

• Lack of consistent system-wide program quality standards to inform investment decisions to fund effective programs

• Fragmented, inconsistent staffing at many nonprofit service providers due to unpredictable program funding, lack of continuity and low wages

• Inconsistency among businesses and employers to participate effectively as partners in work-force development initiatives

• Limited capacity of many workforce service providers to deal effectively with the complexities of braiding funds

C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

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

Connecticut's capacity to implement proposed workforce development activities and provide coordinated, aligned, integrated, comprehensive workforce development programs and services to jobseekers, workers and employers is strong, and improving.

Over the past seven years Governor Malloy has supported a series of initiatives and investments to address Connecticut's workforce challenges, ranging from early childhood development, to strengthened career and technical education, to industry—specific enhancements in higher education, to focused training for targeted workers. Likewise, the General Assembly has raised the broad workforce development, education and training agenda to a new level of attention and support through an array of investments in innovative programs. Many of these workforce development activities are described in the preceding section. Connecticut businesses and employers have increased their active support for and participation in numerous practical partnerships to help build the skills of the workers they need for their companies to prosper.

The capacity of Connecticut's workforce system to meet the challenges ahead is manifest in numerous examples. At both State and regional/local levels, an array of sector—specific workforce partnerships are in place to prepare targeted jobseekers and incumbent workers to meet employers' needs. The statewide network of comprehensive One—Stop Centers and satellite offices provides accessible facilities and presence in key communities. The P20WIN longitudinal data system provides increasingly useful information to guide system investment strategies.

Connecticut's workforce system has the capacity to implement the various strategies described in the next section of this Unified State Plan across the four goals of supporting business growth, strengthening Connecticut's current workforce, building the future workforce, and transforming system capacity. Strategies to be pursued specifically to improve system capacity include: • Re—imagining delivery of customer services • Cross—entity/cross—program functional partnerships • Regional collaboration between regional workforce boards and community colleges • Transparent performance system • Emphasis on system continuous improvement • State—of—the—art technology to improve cost—effective service delivery

Recent State investments in a portfolio of education, workforce development, job training, adult literacy and youth development strategies to build critical system capacity include: • Advanced Manufacturing Technology Centers $17.8 million • CT Manufacturing Innovation Fund $70 million • Incumbent Worker Training $7.6 million • Apprenticeship $7 million • Platform to Employment $3.6 million • STEP—UP $5 million • I—BEST Adult Education Programs $1.5 million • CT's Youth Employment Program $18.5 million

Anticipated challenges that lie ahead and are likely to test system capacity, reinforcing the importance of continuous system improvement, include: • Ongoing State budget pressures and likely reductions in funding to support programs, services and system infrastructure, including a physical presence in key communities. • Service needs of a significant number of young adults entering the workforce lacking the education and skills to compete in the workforce. • The significant number of low—skill/low—wage adults struggling to meet employers' needs and expectations to be able to compete successfully in the workforce. • Efficient coordination of effective employer outreach and engagement strategies.

Connecticut has the key components of an effective workforce system in place — among State agencies, regional/local partners, businesses and employers and system infrastructure — to do the important work that lies ahead. We have longstanding experience with creative partnerships to achieve shared outcomes. We have a culture of innovation and shared expectations to constantly be doing better — a collective continuous improvement mindset. And now, we have a Unified State Plan serving as a blueprint for collective effort to increase the capacity of our collaborative system to achieve our common vision.

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

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

1. VISION

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

Upon taking office in January 2011, Governor Dannell Malloy asserted as a policy priority the VISION that, building on its proud heritage, Connecticut will create and sustain the global economy's best—educated, most—skilled, highest—productive workforce, capable of pursuing rewarding careers, such that every Connecticut business has access to a qualified, skilled, job—ready workforce. In the ensuing five years the Governor and Connecticut General Assembly have partnered effectively to embrace the critical importance of skilled talent as the essential resource in efforts to grow Connecticut's economy, create and retain rewarding jobs, and increase opportunities for financial success through productive employment. Over the past seven years the fundamental importance of this workforce agenda and vision has gained attention and support across a broad spectrum of state business leaders and policymakers.

From the outset of his administration, Governor Malloy rolled—out a series of wide—ranging initiatives and investments focusing on various aspects of the state's broad workforce challenges, encompassing early childhood development, strengthened career and technical education, industry—driven enhancements in higher education, innovative apprenticeships, and specialized training for targeted workers. Likewise, the General Assembly has raised the broad workforce development, education and training agenda to a new level of attention and support through an array of investments in innovative programs. With the Governor's encouragement, the General Assembly adopted several major, innovative, structural policy initiatives that, taken together, create a strong foundation from which to pursue the Governor's vision. Connecticut businesses

have increased their active support and participation in numerous partnerships and initiatives to build the skills of the workers they need for their companies to prosper.

Connecticut's challenge — and the opportunity WIOA offers — is to ensure that a comprehensive, aligned, integrated workforce development system is in place and sustained into the future to achieve this vision of developing and maintaining the best—educated, most—skilled, highest—productive workforce in the increasingly competitive global

2. GOALS

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

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.

To bring focus to the Governor's broad vision, the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission — CETC, the State Workforce Board — has adopted four overarching and complementary goals, as a policy and strategic framework for the numerous business sector, government, labor, community—based and non—profit partners and stakeholders engaged in Connecticut's innovative workforce efforts: • Support Business Growth: Connecticut businesses — particularly those in key industry sectors that drive economic growth — will have access to the skilled, talented employees they need to compete effectively, prosper and create new and rewarding jobs and career opportunities for Connecticut workers. • Strengthen Current Workforce: Connecticut workers will possess the critical skills and credentials needed to prosper and advance in careers that pay well and allow them to support their families. • Develop Future Talent: Connecticut's young people will be equipped and ready for career and postsecondary success as productive contributors to a vibrant and competitive state economy and in their communities. • Transform System Capacity: Connecticut's multi—faceted workforce/talent—

development system will integrate and align goals, strategies, policies, investments, services, infrastructure and technology for effective, accountable performance.

To accomplish the Governor's vision and meet these goals, CETC endorsed a set of guiding principles for Connecticut's workforce system, calling on all stakeholders to embrace these principles in the work they do: • Connecticut's efforts must be business—driven and customer—focused. • Collaboration among partners and stakeholders is essential. • Innovation is crucial, including use of technology and new approaches. • Data and evidence must be used to shape strategy. • Continuous improvement must be a way of life.

The CETC committee that will be responsible for system performance will develop a corresponding set of objectives and measures for ongoing review to support effective system performance and continuous improvement.

DORS Vocational Rehabilitation Services In addition to the overarching goals for Connecticut's workforce system (outlined above) and the implementation of WIOA—specific goals, the vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs will focus on the goals listed below collectively. These goals have been developed with the full participation and guidance of the State Rehabilitation Councils for both VR programs. Details on these goals are available in the BESB and BRS state plans for vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services included in this Unified State Plan. Goal A: Increase employment opportunities for eligible individuals of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program Goal B: Provide coordinated services to students with disabilities to prepare for careers and postsecondary education after exit from high school. Goal C: Utilize Innovation and Expansion authority to identify services that can benefit groups of individuals with disabilities to increase access to career information, adaptive technology, and credential attainment. Board of Regents for Higher Education The vision for the Connecticut State Colleges and University System is that a continually increasing share of Connecticut's population will have a high quality post—secondary education that enables them to achieve their life and career goals and makes Connecticut a place of engaged, globally competitive communities. This vision and the goals stated below align well with the CETC goals including:

Goal 1: A Successful First Year: Increase the number of students who successfully complete a first year of college. Goal 2: Student Success: Graduate more students with the knowledge and skills to achieve their life and career goal. Goal 3: Affordability and Sustainability: Maximize access to higher education by making attendance affordable and our institutions financially sustainable. Goal 4: Innovation and Economic Growth: Create educational environments that cultivate innovation and prepare students for successful careers in a fast changing world. Goal 5: Equity: Eliminate achievement disparities among different ethnic/racial, economic and gender groups.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) In addition to the overarching goals for Connecticut's workforce system, the following goals are specific to the TANF and the JFES program:

TANF Goals Goal 1: Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or the homes of relatives. Goal 2: End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage. Goal 3: Prevent and reduce the incidence of out—of—wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies. Goal 4: Encourage the formation and maintenance of two—parent families.

JFES Goals Goal 1: Enable participants, through employment, to become independent from cash assistance by the end of the 21—month time limit established by state law; Goal 2: Enable participants who become independent from cash assistance to remain employed and independent of cash assistance; and Goal 3: Ensure that federally established TANF Work Participation rates are met through employment of participants and engagement of participants in other allowable TANF work activities based on the regional and individual assessments of participants' needs.

SNAP E & T In addition to the overarching goals for Connecticut's workforce system, the SNAP E&T program's primary goal is to assist SNAP E&T participants with work—related activities that will lead to paid employment. SNAP E&T is a voluntary, skills based program with a focus on vocational training. Successful students gain skills needed to find employment or improve employment in the current job market. The resulting outcome is increased self—sufficiency and decreased dependence on public assistance.

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.)

WIOA Titles I and III Final Performance Goals Summary Program Year (PY) 2018 and PY 2019 Connecticut Performance Measures Final Goals PY 2018 Final Goals PY 2019 WIOA Title I Adults Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) 71.0% 71.5% Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) 69.0% 69.5% Median Earnings $4,850.00 $ 4,900.00 Credential Attainment Rate 70.0% 70.5% Measurable Skill Gains Baseline Baseline Effectiveness in Serving Employers Baseline Baseline WIOA Title I Dislocated Workers Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) 76.0% 76.5% Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) 76.5% 77.0% Median Earnings $7,250.00 $ 7,300.00 Credential Attainment Rate 70.0% 70.5% Measurable Skill Gains Baseline Baseline Effectiveness in Serving Employers Baseline Baseline WIOA Title I Youth Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) 76.5% 76.5% Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) 72.5% 73.0% Median Earnings Baseline Baseline Credential Attainment Rate 72.0% 72.5% Measurable Skill Gains Baseline Baseline Effectiveness in Serving Employers Baseline Baseline WIOA Title III Labor Exchange (LEX)* Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) 61.0% 62.0% Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) 58.0% 59.0% Median Earnings $5,800.00 $ 5,900.00 Effectiveness in Serving Employers Baseline Baseline

4. ASSESSMENT

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

The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) Performance and Accountability Unit and WIOA Administration Unit, in collaboration with colleagues in comparable functions at DORS and CSDE, will develop and maintain a dashboard tool to capture and summarize selected data concerning program effectiveness and the aggregate impact of Connecticut's workforce system in addressing the vision, goals, and principles described above.

The dashboard will be reviewed quarterly by the CETC committee responsible for performance evaluation. This committee will identify opportunities for improvement and convene system partners and stakeholders to share information and develop strategies to rectify identified challenges. Broad measures to be reviewed regularly will include: 1. Business engagement and delivering value to business/employer customers. 2. Measurable skills development in terms of educational attainment and workforce credentials that matter to Connecticut businesses. 3. Securing jobs in demand occupations showing promise for long—term growth in industry sectors valuable to Connecticut's economic expansion. 4. Earned wages that help jobseekers and workers attain financial security and demonstrate career advancement. 5. Workforce system investments that generate a quality return.

The CETC in coordination with the State WIOA Administration will provide on-going evaluation of core programs through the evaluation of activities in order to promote continuous improvement in the following ways: 1. Establish a policy for continuous improvement of core programs which includes: a. Surveys b. CTHires integration c. Analytical and Statistical methods. d. Other methods as deemed appropriate 2. The mechanism for providing this review will be established and maintained by the CETC in conjunction with the state programs responsible for core programs and the local boards. 3. The tool selected to be used for evaluations will include customer feed-back and outcome and process measures and employ rigorous analytical and statistical methods. 4. The state will prepare reports regarding the evaluations and make them available to core partners, boards and the public on a yearly basis. Designated staff from units at CTDOL, DORS and CSDE responsible for the collection, review, analysis and reporting about WIOA-related program performance data — joined by designated staff from the CTDOL Office of Research — will form a System Assessment Work Group as a subcommittee of the CETC Planning and Performance Accountability Committee (PPAC). The Work Group will meet regularly to review required (mandatory) cross-program performance results data — and other relevant measures/information, as feasible, as determined by the PPAC — to extract and summarize key findings in a dashboard format for committee review and action. Relevant data on program activities will be obtained by the responsible lead State agency, respectively, and shared among agencies (need to describe how?) for purposes of developing the dashboard tool. The methodology ultimately will be worked out between the System Assessment Work Group and PPAC, once convened, operational and focused on its charge.

C. STATE STRATEGY

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

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

Economic development is most effective when approached with a clear vision, an eye for long—term stability and growth, and a strong plan of execution. While the state needs to continue to manage its finances responsibly and to streamline government, it must also make the required investments to move our economy forward and innovate in ways that will benefit all Connecticut residents.

The Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC — the State Workforce Board), the State agencies responsible for administration of the core WIOA programs encompassed by this Unified State Plan (Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL), Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), and Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)), the Connecticut Department of Social Services (CTDSS) and the five Workforce Development Boards — propose and will support a set of broadly—conceived strategies intended to achieve the vision and goals outlined above. These strategies will serve as a framework for Connecticut's implementation efforts, with corresponding detailed State and local implementing actions to be developed. (1) Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in—demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). "Career pathway" is defined at WIOA section 3(7). "In— demand industry sector or occupation" is defined at WIOA section 3(23).

Support Business Growth: • Promote implementation of business/employer—led industry partnerships at both State and regional/local levels, focusing on targeted sectors. Consistent with principles and criteria developed by the WIOA Transition Business Engagement Work Group. Focus of these partnerships will be on high—priority, high—value, high—demand sectors and occupations.

• Promote effective implementation of regional/local sector—based initiatives in targeted sectors, consistent with principles and criteria developed by the WIOA Transition Business Engagement Work Group, intended to address employers' priority needs, building on the achievements of existing successful regional sector initiatives. Strategically connect qualified jobseekers produced by the workforce system to job opportunities with businesses/employers benefitting from public investments, to strengthen the link between workforce development and economic development strategy.

• Implement a coordinated business/employer services model through the American Job Center One—Stop system, engaging coordinated participation by a broad array of partners and stakeholders, to address business/employer customers' workforce needs, consistent with the "single point of contact" model principles and criteria developed by the WIOA Transition Business Engagement Work Group.

• Promote implementation of a robust labor market information system to buttress effective workforce system planning at State and regional/local levels, engaging the analytic capabilities of workforce system partners, including insight and intelligence from businesses and employers, to promote data—informed and data—driven decisions about program strategy and related investments. Build on and maximize the capabilities of CTDOL's Training and Education Planning System (TEPS) tool to improve capabilities to analyze labor demand and supply, to help focus workforce development strategy. Develop and utilize a dashboard tool to capture, distill and analyze data on critical indicators to inform workforce planning and strategy. Strengthen the capabilities of the P20—WIN longitudinal data system.

• Support local sector partnerships through ongoing funding, technical assistance, program initiatives, and the development of statewide policies related to sector partnerships. WIOA requires sector partnerships as a local workforce activity, and requires states to use of a portion of statewide discretionary funds to support local areas in the development, convening, and implementation of industry/sector partnerships.

• Provide high—quality labor market information and planning tools through the CTDOL Office of Research. The WDBs will continue to rely on the CTDOL Office of Research to provide updated data (e.g., occupational projections) to help inform demand—driven workforce development activities that train people for jobs that exist (as opposed to the old "train and pray" approach). The Office of Research should build upon its annual "Information for Workforce Investment Planning" document for each workforce development region, which proves invaluable to WDB planning and fund development efforts. The Office of Research should expand this document to reflect a more regional approach, particularly with respect to sectors. CTDOL should also explore the possibility of collaborating with DECD to utilize DECD supplementary demand data to enable the document to better inform demand—driven workforce development approaches.

• Share promising practices across regions to promote the replication of effective employer engagement strategies statewide. While the CWDC provides a mechanism for cross—regional information sharing among the WDBs, CTDOL and the CETC represent platforms for the development of statewide workforce development policies and practices.

• Support Workforce Development Board efforts as incubators of innovative, effective sector partnerships. For example:

• Capital Workforce Partners (CWP), together with Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF), convenes the Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (MACH), an employer—led network whose purpose is to identify and respond to workforce development and policy issues for entry—level and middle—skill positions in

the healthcare industry. MACH convenes working committees to address issues such as identifying the needs for entry—level and middle—skilled workers in various segments of the healthcare industry. Working committees are chaired by an employer partner, and staffed by CWP and CWEALF. MACH hosts workforce events such as an informational career fair, a job fair, and a symposium where workforce development issues affecting the industry are explored, and employers and employees who participate in and advance workplace learning are recognized in an awards ceremony. • The Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) convenes the Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative, a sector partnership lauded by U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez as a national model for industry—driven partnerships among employers, education/training, and workforce development partners. This partnership has developed over seven years to ensure that education and training activities respond to the needs of manufacturers and other employers dependent on workers with STEM competencies. In response to a projected spike in employer hiring and a gap in the regional training infrastructure, EWIB formally re—convened the partnership in January 2015. This planning effort involving employers, community colleges, technical high schools, and other workforce development stakeholders resulted in a $6 million USDOL Workforce Innovation Fund award to implement and bring to scale a demand—driven, customized training program. • Over the past five years, the WorkPlace, Inc. has utilized HHS and USDOL funding to implement the Southwestern Connecticut Health CareeRx Academy, a regional partnership of hospitals, colleges, businesses, business groups, labor and CBO's. The Academy addresses two major needs of the region: providing low—income populations with core skills and supports to obtain employment, and helping ameliorate healthcare industry workforce shortages. The Academy provides no—cost training and support to help participants get a career in the growing healthcare field. Strengthen Current Workforce: • Promote expanded implementation of effective incumbent worker training programs and services, focusing on targeted industry sectors, maximizing opportunities for business/employer participation, consistent with administrative criteria and principles established by the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL).

• Promote expanded implementation of effective integrated employment and training/contextualized learning strategies to improve skills acquisition and employment outcomes for targeted low—skill jobseekers, including adult education students and participants in time—limited public assistance. Expand proven best practices as feasible to include additional prospective participants, working closely with businesses/employers in key sectors seeking qualified skilled workers. Maintain fidelity to rigorous program standards. Use the recommendations of CETC's 2015 State Plan Addressing Contextualized Learning, Early College and Career Certificate Programs as a framework.

• Promote development and implementation of aligned career pathways strategies as an integral feature of industry partnerships and sector—based initiatives, with multiple on—off ramps for participants of varying skills and abilities, leading to employer—valued/validated credentials and certifications, consistent with principles and criteria developed by the WIOA Transition Business Engagement Work Group. Career pathways are equally valuable for adult jobseekers and young people, including students and out—of—school youth.

• Maximize opportunities for success for all individual jobseekers and workers in Connecticut's talent pool, promoting innovation, effective coordination, resource alignment and integrated service delivery to advance the employability and career prospects for the broadest possible range of customers, including (but not limited to) veterans, the long—term unemployed, public assistance participants, individuals with disabilities, ex—offenders, homeless individuals, out—of—school youth, low—skilled adults, limited English proficient, etc.

• Promote and maximize opportunities to fulfill WIOA statutory language that adults receiving public assistance benefits receive priority access to services.

Develop Future Talent: • Build Connecticut's K—16 talent pipeline, engaging a broad spectrum of education, higher education, workforce system and business partners and stakeholders, to prepare Connecticut youth with work and career readiness skills. Focus on regional/local sector—based initiatives, emphasizing career pathways approaches. Integrate a strengthened and expanded Summer Youth Employment Program into a comprehensive youth career pathways strategy. Expand early college programs, consistent with recommendations of CETC's 2015 State Plan Addressing Contextualized Learning, Early College and Career Certificate Programs.

• Promote implementation of effective developmental/transitional instruction and learning strategies to ensure that recent Connecticut high school graduates are qualified for credit—bearing courses level upon college matriculation, or can quickly get up to speed.

• Develop pathways for academically low—performing at—risk students and out—of—school youth leading to certifications and credentials that enhance their viability in the job market. Build on and expand the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program model to prepare academically at—risk high school students for college success. Build on and expand the opportunity youth coordinated career pathways model to help targeted out—of—school youth acquire valuable post—secondary credentials and get a job.

• Promote the strengthening of articulation agreements between vocational technical high schools and community college credit and non—credit certificate programs, especially in expanding employment sectors.

Transform System Capacity: • Re—imagine delivery of customer services to individual jobseekers and workers in the American Job Center One—Stop system. Develop and implement streamlined service flow with efficiently aligned and integrated processes implemented by coordinated service teams representing the full range of contributions from system partners and stakeholders, consistent with principles and criteria developed by the WIOA Transition Service Design and Delivery Work Group. Build on lessons learned from implementation of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) and Secure Jobs pilots as models for innovative and effective multi—partner service coordination.

• Develop and implement strong, effective cross—entity/cross—program functional partnerships to enhance efficient delivery of effective customer services. Develop shared governance structure with clear policies and procedures. Develop consensus on unified consistent messaging and communications to key audiences/market segments. Pursue critical resources collaboratively. Braid and leverage available resources strategically.

Implement consistent cross—agency/cross—program staff training on shared/common functions and responsibilities.

• Strengthen regional collaboration between WDBs and Community Colleges to focus strategy and align program design responsive to business/employer demand to develop students/customers qualified for good jobs in the local labor market.

• Implement a transparent performance system for all WIOA core programs, expandable as feasible over time to include informative performance—related data from relevant programs not specifically included in this Unified State Plan. This strategy will build on the successful foundation of the CETC Legislative Report Card produced annually by the CTDOL Office of Research, to review labor market data and outcomes for recent graduates of the public higher education system and participants in key job training programs and services. Utilize and analyze cross—program performance measures. Use the performance accountability process to regularly review, monitor, assess and report on the impact of workforce system programs and related investments. Align technology systems and data platforms across agencies and programs as feasible to maximize efficiency and cost—effectiveness. • Conduct ongoing research and analysis to identify opportunities for system continuous improvement and maximize system capacity, making strategic use of data to focus training efforts and align resources. Develop, maintain, analyze and report on an updated statewide inventory of workforce—related programs, to inform strategy and as a source of information to help the American Job Center One—Stop system apprise customers of opportunities. Focus training investments and advocacy on clearly identified best practices for each targeted sector and each customer segment.

• Invest in state—of—the—art technology to improve cost—effective service delivery, including technology—based instruction and e—learning, efficient access to employment opportunities, integrated across agencies to enhance general accessibility to programs and services for all customers irrespective of barriers and/or disabilities, etc.

• Strengthen regional collaboration among the employment and training system planning and operational entities and the social/health service systems in order to insure public assistance recipients receive priority access to WIOA resources/services.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services at the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)
In addition to the broad system—wide goals discussed above, DORS has adopted a complementary set of strategies reflecting a commitment to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through the provision of vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services. Adopted strategies focus on: methods to expand and improve services; how a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided at each stage of the rehabilitation process; outreach procedures to identify and serve Individuals with Disabilities from un—served and underserved populations; methods to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities; strategies to improve performance accountability measures; strategies to assist other components of the statewide workforce development system; and how these strategies will be used to achieve goals and priorities consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment and support innovation and expansion activity. Details

are available in the distinct plans for each of the Department's Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment programs included in this Unified State Plan.

The Malloy administration has targeted a core group of industry sectors expected to drive economic growth in Connecticut over the next decade: aerospace and advanced manufacturing; bio-science/life-sciences; insurance/financial services; and several emerging industries, including bio-medical research, digital media and entertainment, green/sustainable technology, medical device production and high-tech manufacturing. These sectors typically include high value-added businesses that require ready access to a deep and continuous pool of highly-skilled, well-educated, extremely productive talent as their lifeblood of success. It is anticipated that the State will support workforce strategies intended to promote the growth of these sectors as a strategic economic development/workforce development priority. In addition, Connecticut's local Workforce Development Boards have identified industry sectors of strategic importance at the regional level, varying by region, where industry partnerships and sector-focused initiatives have been developed to focus on critical workforce supply/demand priorities. These have involved advanced manufacturing, Healthcare, Construction/Energy/Green Technology, Information Technology, Engineering/STEM, Financial Services, Transportation/Distribution/Logistics, and Service/Retail/Hospitality. Various innovative industry partnerships are underway across Connecticut in these key sectors, where employers are actively collaborating with workforce system stakeholders to develop career pathways opportunities to prepare skilled workers for critical, in-demand occupations. WI-OA emphasizes employer-led industry partnerships/sector strategies, featuring career pathways leading to industry-validated credentials. Workplace-based learning strategies — including apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and customized incumbent worker training — are encouraged. CETC will encourage and support existing employer-led industry partnerships and promote new opportunities for the workforce system to partner with employers in key sectors to develop pathways leading to credential attainment and productive career opportunities. The newly created CETC Business Engagement Committee (BEC) will play a key role in providing direction, guidance and oversight to Connecticut's multiple industry-led sector workforce partnerships. Comprising CETC members representing business, invited employers representing key industry sectors, and selected workforce system stakeholders, BEC will pick up on the work conducted in 2015 by the WIOA Transition Business Engagement Work Group. BEC's work will focus on: developing strategies to promote effective business-led industry partnerships; sector strategies focusing on key in-demand and emerging sectors driving economic growth in Connecticut; career pathways initiatives reflecting best practices; and, other partnership opportunities to enhance the responsiveness of Connecticut's workforce system to meet the talent and skills needs of Connecticut employers. It will serve as an umbrella for regional sector-specific work groups, addressing the workforce priorities of designated priority industry sectors. BEC will work with existing industry-led sector partnerships — at the State and local levels — as an overarching vehicle to promote and support their efforts, sharing information on a regular basis about priorities, challenges, opportunities, proposed strategies, relevant initiatives, etc. It will reach out through CETC business membership to identify/solicit input from prominent industry sector work groups. State strategy concerning sector partnerships

envisions BEC playing a convening role to pro-mote the efforts and support the success of regional, employer-led sector workforce partnerships that have developed organically, at the local/regional level, involving engaged employers and workforce stakeholders who have come together to collaborate on their own terms, to address workforce-related challenges that they have defined, opportunities to collaborate and partnership strategies that they themselves have developed at the local/regional level, without the need for State direction. It is envisioned that in its convening role (described in response to item III.a.1, below) BEPC will invite participation by representatives from a number of existing (and new ones, as they are developed) employer-led sector partnerships, to take practical steps to provide support and promote expansion and success. At the outset of its work it is anticipated that BEC will pursue direct engagement with a number of ongoing sector initiatives, including (but not limited to): Connecticut Manufacturing Innovation Fund/Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership; Connecticut Energy Workforce Development Consortium; Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative; Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Healthcare; Southwestern Connecticut Health CareeRx Academy; North Central Connecticut Jobs Funnel; and, Transportation, Distribution and Distribution (TDL) Partnership (Metro Hartford). Other sector partnership initiatives will be engaged as BPEC's work gets underway.
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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).

Representatives of State agencies responsible for administering core WIOA programs (CTDOL, DORS and CSDE) and CTDSS joined by representatives of other critical workforce system collaborators and stakeholders, will participate in ongoing integrated State and local—level monitoring and oversight to identify gaps to be addressed and opportunities for effective program and resource alignment.

Lead responsibility to review and assure alignment of programs and resources falls to the CETC Executive Committee, which includes senior representatives of the core WIOA agencies and leaders of CETC committees and work groups. Regular input from the committee overseeing performance will inform the Executive Committee's focus on program alignment. This Committee will be supported by the CTDOL Performance and Accountability Unit and Office of Research and will be charged to: review system performance to ensure value and productivity of investments; analyze labor market information to identify gaps, needs and opportunities for innovation and improvement; and provide insight and guidance to the Executive Committee and CETC on appropriate actions.

Lead responsibility for providing oversight and guidance to efforts to map out the specifics of state strategy to ensure operational alignment of core programs will be assigned to the newly created CETC Service Design and Delivery Committee (SDDC). The statewide network of American Job Centers (AJC) is where the practical partnering efforts will occur among key partnering organizations, including CTDOL, the workforce development boards and their various contractual AJC operators, DORS and CSDE. Designated senior representatives of those partner entities will be convened as an ad hoc, time-limited working group under the aegis of SDDC, charged to map out the practical operational details of cross-program partnering, service integration, coordination of referrals, etc. Achieving consensus on effective strategies to improve alignment of core programs and strengthen workforce development activities is at the core of the work SDDC (and its working groups/subcommittees) will perform in the months ahead as WIOA implementation proceeds. This cooperative effort is in its early stages, very much a work in progress. The CETC (with OWC support) will provide oversight to these efforts going forward to ensure that alignment occurs in an effective manner.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

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—

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include—

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

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

The Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) serves as Connecticut's State Workforce Development Board. Originally established under the former Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), CETC was authorized in 1998 as the State Board under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), and in July 2015 Governor Malloy designated CETC to serve as the State Workforce Development Board consistent with "alternative entity" provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) subsequently approved that designation. Governor Malloy designated the Connecticut Department of Labor Office of Workforce Competitiveness to coordinate WIOA implementation efforts in Connecticut in its capacity as a workforce development policy advisor to the Governor and staff to CETC. With CETC's endorsement, OWC established four Work Groups in spring 2015 to prepare for the implementation of WIOA: • Service Design and Delivery Work Group — Focusing on the effective and efficient operations of Connecticut's American Jobs Centers One—Stop career system. • Technology, Data, Outcomes Work Group —

Addressing the collection and reporting of data across core WIOA programs to support transparent performance accountability. • Business Engagement Work Group — Proposing actions to promote strong employer—led industry partnerships, sector strategies and career pathways initiatives. • Administration/Governance Work Group — Responsible for ensuring that requisite administrative policies, agreements, procedures and structures are in place to support and sustain an aligned and integrated statewide workforce system.

The CETC now has three standing Committees to be able to address the priorities identified in this Unified State Plan and to satisfy its functional responsibilities as the State Board under WIOA - Service Design and Delivery, Business Engagement, and Planning and Performance.

System partners, WDBs and workforce development stakeholders participate in the new committee structure.

The CETC and/or its Executive Committee will carry out the State Board functions under Section 101(d) of the WIOA for the present time.

Within available resources, CTDOL's Office of Workforce Competitiveness will coordinate professional staff support and technical assistance for CETC's efforts to meet its obligations as the State Workforce Development Board.

The new CETC standing committees have been created to ensure that CETC fulfills its State Board obligations consistent with WIOA Section 101(d). These are the CETC Services Design and Delivery Committee (SDDC), Planning and Performance Accountability Committee (PPAC), and Business Engagement Committee (BEC). Key assigned responsibilities for each committee, consistent with their respective draft proposed charges, are as follows: Service Design and Delivery Committee (SDDC): • Advise on development/oversee implementation of an integrated, customer-centric (jobseekers and employers) One-Stop service delivery system. • Integrated State-level and local-level oversight and monitoring of One-Stop system to identify/address gaps and opportunities for effective program and resource alignment. • Review/oversee statewide policies and practices to align workforce development programs. • Advise on policies/practices to ensure effective system alignment. • Advise on development/oversee implementation of Connecticut's One-Stop career services delivery system, covering full range of relevant services and (WIOA) program requirements, with clear roles and responsibilities for all One-Stop core partners and other stakeholders: key elements of effective One-Stop delivery system; structuring One-Stops to best serve jobseeker and employer customers; effective service coordination among State, core partners and WDBs; Business Services delivery to employer customers, etc. • Advise on development/oversee implementation of full range of employment-related products and services available to jobseeker and employer customers, and how they will be accessed/provided. ? Advise on development/oversee implementation of common intake/enrollment procedures. ? Advise on development/oversee implementation of uniform/consistent assessment tools and referral/follow-up process to ensure that customers (including persons with disabilities) are referred efficiently to appropriate services. ? Advise on development/oversee implementation of best work-based training

practices, including apprenticeship, internship, work experience, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, etc. • Propose statewide policies to continuously improve One-Stop system services, including criteria and procedures to assess One-Stop effectiveness, guidance on allocation of One-Stop infrastructure funds, roles and contributions of One-Stop partners, etc. ? Advise on development/oversee implementation of procedures to ensure that relevant performance measures are used to inform service delivery practice. ? Develop strategies for One-Stop system technological improvements to enhance customers' digital literacy skills, accelerate acquisition of skills and credentials, strengthen staff professional development, and ensure technology accessibility. ? Propose development of staff training across partner entities. • Identify/promote dissemination of best practices information on effective One-Stop centers, training programs responsive to real-time labor market analysis, and effective local work-force boards. Planning and Performance Accountability Committee (PPAC): • Advise on/oversee performance of One-Stop system delivering an array of workforce-related services across multiple partner and stakeholders entities. • Develop/update/propose workforce system objectives and performance metrics (for ongoing review) to support effective system performance and continuous improvement. Collaborate with CTDOL Performance and Accountability Unit and other State agency partners and stakeholders to develop and update comprehensive State workforce system performance accountability measures. • Prepare/review/endorse annual performance reports. Collaborate with CTDOL Performance and Accountability Unit and State agency partners and stakeholders to help prepare, review and endorse annual performance reports. • Monitor/report (to CETC) on status of services/resources coordination and alignment across Connecticut's workforce system to support effective implementation. • Receive/review regular performance status reports (including quarterly dashboard) and pro-pose actions to address identified improvement opportunities. • Collaborate with CTDOL Performance and Accountability Unit and other State agency partners and stakeholders to develop and monitor implementation of strategies to align technology and data systems across One-Stop partner programs. • Collaborate with CTDOL Office of Research and other State agency partners and stakeholders to help develop and monitor a statewide workforce and labor market information system. Business Engagement Committee (BEC): • Collaborate with employers to promote strong employer-led industry partnerships, sector strategies and career pathways initiatives in targeted industry sectors. • Develop effective strategies to reach out to, engage with and meet the needs of Connecticut businesses and employers as valued customers of the state's workforce system. • Serve as an umbrella/framework for sector-specific partnerships and work groups, addressing workforce priorities of designated high-priority industry sectors, at both State- and regional/local-levels. • Support effective career pathways initiatives closely linked to sector strategies. • Propose strategies to increase value, access to and acquisition of industry-validated, portable, stackable workforce skills related credentials. • Identify existing industry partnerships/sector strategies career pathways initiatives in Connecticut. • Identify best/promising practices (in Connecticut and elsewhere) to support effective industry partnership/sector strategies and career pathways initiatives. • Develop/propose common definitions for high quality industry partnerships, sector strategies and career pathways that align with WIOA definitions. • Identify/propose relevant industry-recognized credentials, for targeted occupations in key sectors, and

propose strategies to: increase number of individuals with industry-valued cre-dentials; increase value of credentials to employers; integrate apprenticeships into workforce services valued by employers; clarify appropriate role of adult education in helping to obtain industry-valued credentials. • Propose actions to support effective industry partnerships/sector strategies/career pathways efforts: strengthening current industry partnerships/sector strategies/career pathways efforts; helping Connecticut industry partnerships/sector strategies/career pathway initiatives learn from each other; addressing practical actions workforce system partners can take (i.e., re-sources, technical assistance, etc.) to support these initiatives; administrative/legislative pol-icies to be changed/created; policies, procedures, investments needed to support development of career pathways efforts, etc. • Develop proposals addressing how workforce system partners can coordinate efforts to de-liver effective services efficiently to employer customers. Lead responsibility for each of the specific State Board functions under WIOA Section 101(d) is specifically assigned to one of the three committees — with oversight provided by CETC and technical assistance/guidance from OWC — as follows: 1. Develop, implement and modify State Plan — PPAC 2. Review statewide policies, programs, and recommended actions to support comprehensive streamlined workforce system — SDDC 3. Develop and continuously improve workforce system: A. Identify barriers to coordination and alignment (avoid duplication) — SDDC B. Develop career pathways strategies — BEC C. Develop outreach and access strategies for individuals and employers — SDDC D. Develop and expand industry/sector partnership strategies — BEC E. Identify regions and designate local areas — PPAC F. Develop continuous improvement strategy for One-Stop system — SDDC G. Develop staff training strategies — SDDC 4. Develop and update comprehensive State performance accountability measures — PPAC 5. Identify and disseminate information on best practices for: A. Effective operation of One-Stop centers — SDDC B. Development of effective local boards — SDDC C. Effective training programs responsive to real-time labor market analysis — BEC 6. Develop and review statewide policies to coordinate services through One-Stop system: A. Criteria/procedures for WDBs to assess effectiveness/continuous improvement — PPAC B. Guidance to allocate One-Stop center infrastructure funds — SDDC C. Policies on roles and contributions of One-Stop partners — SDDC 7. Develop strategies for technological improvements to One-Stop system to: A. Enhance digital literacy skills — SDDC B. Accelerate acquisition of skills and credentials — SDDC C. Strengthen staff professional development — SDDC D. Ensure accessibility of technology — SDDC 8. Develop strategies to align technology and data systems across One-Stop partner programs — SDDC 9. Develop location formulas to distribute funds to local areas for adult and youth programs — PPAC 10. Prepare annual performance reports — PPAC 11. Develop statewide workforce and labor market information system — PPAC 12. Develop other policies to promote statewide objectives and enhance system performance. — CETC as a body Each CETC committee will be provided with requisite technical assistance and staff support to ensure that it is capable of fulfilling its functional obligations, coordinated by the Office of Workforce Competitiveness, within available resources, including engagement by expert staff from each of the core program partner agencies, within available resources.

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2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

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.

Core WIOA program activities in Connecticut will be aligned as partners build upon existing inter—agency relationships and program collaborations.

American Job Centers (AJC) Customer Flow: • Walk-in customers at comprehensive American Job Centers (with the exception of Hamden/New Haven) will be greeted at the main reception desk by a team of CTDOL and WDB partner staff, as front desk coverage will be a shared responsibility between the two partners.

• CTDOL will provide Unemployment Insurance staff experts at affiliate and comprehensive offices to answer Reemployment and Unemployment Insurance-related inquiries from customers.

• The Career Centers in each comprehensive American Job Center are staffed jointly by CTDOL and WDB staff (with the exception of Hamden/New Haven), with each partner committed to assigning a minimum of one staff member on a full time basis.

• When a job seeker enters an American Job Center seeking services, the AJC staff will first determine whether or not the customer is registered in the CTHires system, which is used to track the services provided to each job seeker. If the customer is not registered, he or she will be guided to a computer and asked to complete the CTHires customer registration. If the customer needs assistance in completing the registration process, staff assistance will be provided.

• American Job Center customers are provided with some form of orientation to the employment services that are available to them through all the various partners. Job Center staff discuss the customer's job search plans, provide customers with the opportunity to sign up for employment readiness workshops, such as Successful Job Search Strategies, Interviewing Strategies and Techniques, and Fundamentals of Resume Writing. If the customer needs one-on-one job search assistance, career counseling, or a resume critique, every effort will be made to provide that service. If the customer is interested in self-service activities, s/he can utilize CTHires to conduct job searches, post a resume, or access online courses, and visit the AJC Career Centers for access to computers, fax machines, copiers, resume paper, and free postage for mailing applications and resumes. Customers will also be informed about the various services available under WIOA.

• Customers who self-identify as veterans or eligible spouses will be assessed for significant barriers to employment and other characteristics that qualify for one-on-one job search assistance from a CTDOL Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. Jobseekers with a self-disclosed disability may be referred to either a Disability Program Navigator or Disability Employment Initiative representative (depending on region). Jobseekers with disabilities may also be referred to DORS for service. All customers have the option of accessing the universal services available to everyone in the center.

• Staff are assigned to each of the career centers in the comprehensive American Job Centers to support and assist jobseekers in whatever way needed. Jobseekers needing to improve computer skills will be referred to a computer skills workshop or drop-in computer skills classroom to work on developing or enhancing their computer skills.

• Customers interested in WIOA services will be connected to the appropriate WIOA representative or WIOA information session.

• All American Job Center (AJC) customers will be asked if they are receiving public assistance benefits (i.e. TANF, SNAP, HUSKY, Care 4 Kids) and referred to the appropriate WIOA service entity to assist with any special needs beyond those offered by the AJC. Such referrals will be documented and outcomes noted.

Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) services and WDB Title I services will be co—located wherever/whenever possible with Title II/Adult Education and Title IV/Vocational Rehabilitation Services. It is understood that space availability and cost may be barriers to achieving the objective of co—location with Adult Education and DORS, but that remains the objective. If/where co—location is not feasible, all staff in each of the comprehensive American Job Centers will be trained to become familiar with services provided by Adult Education and DORS and be able to make an intelligent, informed decision about when to refer a customer to one of these agencies. In turn, all staff at Adult Education and DORS will be trained to become familiar with the services available at the American Job Centers across Connecticut, capable of making referrals to those Job Centers for any customer.

The American Job Centers will be hubs from which jobseekers can be referred to sector—focused programs in targeted sectors such as Manufacturing, Health Care or Construction. Job Developers from organizations like DORS may choose to join the Regional Business Service teams in each region. American Job Center staff will be familiar with these targeted sector grants and programs in each region and capable of making informed referrals to them. In some situations, targeted sector programs may be co—located at an American Job Center. Accessible printed information will be available to jobseekers concerning these programs.

The regional WDBs deliver Adult and Dislocated Worker program activities through the American Job Center system via comprehensive and affiliate centers. Career services are provided to a wide range of jobseekers, with specialty programs directed to returning veterans and individuals with disabilities. Services include career coaching, guidance on job search techniques, skill and interest assessments, advice and support through peer

groups, individual employment planning, and job development and placement. Occupational training is provided through access to Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Business Services Teams engage employers and provide recruitment and hiring assistance, as well as access to an array of training resources for incumbent workers and new hires. Priority of Service Section 134(c)(3)(E) of WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities. Under this section, one—stop center staff responsible for these funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low—income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services and training services. Under WIA, priority was required to be given to public assistance recipients and low—income individuals when States and local areas determined that allocated funds were limited. Under WIOA, priority must be provided regardless of the level of funds. WIOA also expanded the priority to include individuals who are basic skills deficient as defined in WIOA section 3(5).

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL—funded training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority described above, priority must be provided in the following order:

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

Local areas established written policies and procedures to ensure priority for the populations described above for participants served in the WIOA Adult program.

CTDOL—Administered Services WIOA Title 1 and Wagner—Peyser services are available through Connecticut's comprehensive American Job Centers. CTDOL will provide the following services:

Wagner—Peyser Labor Exchange: Under the Wagner—Peyser Act, CTDOL Employment Services (ES) receives federal funding to provide universal access to an integrated array of employment—related labor exchange services, including job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for jobseekers, reemployment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services to businesses with posted job openings. During the last full program year a total of 20,151 Wagner—Peyser customers benefited from employment services, including: assistance with career choices and job searches; workshops on résumé writing, interviewing, and career exploration; information about specific companies and labor market trends; and, one—on—one career counseling. An additional 4,123 individuals received résumé services at CTDOL—

sponsored events and in the AJC centers. Staff with board—certified credentials from the Professional Association of Résumé Writers provided resume preparation services.

Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA): CTDOL meets the reemployment needs of many UI claimants through the Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA) program, which serves claimants who are either profiled as most likely to exhaust benefits or receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-service members (UCX). Selected claimants report for services in the Bridgeport, Hamden, Hartford, Montville and Waterbury American Job Centers. DOL's RESEA program design includes an increased UI presence in the AJCs and the extensive involvement of UI staff. Ongoing staff training includes an emphasis on enhancing the skills needed to assist claimants with their reemployment efforts; RESEA program representatives have been trained to effectively access labor market information specific to a claimant's job skills and employment prospects, develop a reemployment plan to meet the claimant's needs and determine appropriate referrals to reemployment services or training. CTDOL completed more than 9,000 initial RESEAs during the 12-month period ending December 31, 2017, and expects to complete a significantly higher number during the subsequent 12 months.

Required RESEA Services. Each RESEA must include the following minimum components to serve the needs of the claimant.

• UI eligibility assessment and referral to adjudication, as appropriate, if an issue or potential issue(s) is identified;

• Requirement for the claimant to report to an AJC;

• Orientation to AJC services;

• The provision of labor market and career information that addresses the claimant's specific needs;

• Registration with the state's job bank;

• Enrollment in Wagner-Peyser funded Employment Services;

• Development or revision of an individual reemployment plan that includes work search activities, accessing services provided through an AJC or using self-service tools, and/or approved training to which the claimant acknowledges agreement; and

• Provision of at least one additional career services, such as:

    o Referrals and coordination with other workforce activities, including the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program;

    o Labor Exchange, including information about in-demand industries and occupations and/or job search assistance;

    o Information about the availability of supportive services;

o Information and assistance with financial aid resources outside of those provided by WIOA;

o Financial literacy services; and

o Career readiness activities, including assistance with resume writing and/or interviewing.

Pathway to Reemployment: To augment outreach efforts to UI claimants beyond RESEA, CTDOL provides a reemployment service program to introduce other UI customers to the workforce programs available through the AJC network. Pathway to Reemployment is delivered at affiliate AJC locations throughout Connecticut, in coordination with AJC partners, and primarily targets first-time filers who may be particularly unaware of the services available. As with RESEA, a facilitated orientation provides details about UI work search requirements and advice about how to access labor market information and use web-based tools ? such as mySkills myFuture, MyNextMove, O*Net Online, and CTDOL's Job & Career ConneCTion ? to assist with reemployment efforts. Pathway to Reemployment participants are provided with materials that include a My Reemployment Plan (MPR) handout and information about CTHires, with an emphasis on the system functionality that enables job seekers to post resumes, conduct an online job search, and establish a Virtual Recruiter to receive notifications about job postings that match their personally selected criteria. The AJC workshop calendar is also distributed to further promote AJC services. Like RESEA, Pathway to Reemployment is mandatory for those selected, and UI claimants who fail to report without notice and good cause receive a one-week disqualification. Begun as a pilot in March 2017, the program served 377 claimants through the five-month period ending July 31, 2017. CTDOL implemented an enhanced and permanent Pathway to Reemployment program in October 2017, which provided participants with expanded guidance about resume writing, job search and networking tips, and strategies for successful interviewing.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA): Trade Adjustment Assistance helps individuals belonging to worker groups certified by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) whose jobs have been affected by increased imports or production shift to a foreign country. To assist eligible workers return to suitable employment as quickly as possible, benefits include training; job search, relocation and readjustment allowances; health coverage tax credit; and wage subsidies for individuals 50 and older who return to lower-paying work. TAA activity during the 2016-2017 program year included:

Worker group certifications: Petitions filed on behalf of workers from 19 companies were approved this past program year, with the workers determined by USDOL to be adversely affected by foreign trade and certified as eligible to apply for TAA.

Individual applications: 511 individuals applied for TAA benefits in the program year, with 438 becoming active participants.

Training: There were 498 participants active in training. Training payments totaled $1,392,589.

Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA): A total of $3,894,403 was paid for 7,763 weekly TRA claims, representing 4,013 weeks of basic TRA, 3,578 weeks of additional TRA ,0 weeks of remedial TRA and 172 weeks of completion TRA. Individuals who satisfy applicable program requirements may receive one or more types of TRA income support: up to 26 weeks of basic TRA; up to 52, 65, or 78 weeks of additional TRA, depending on the Trade Act petition number; and up to 26 weeks of remedial/completion TRA.

Reemployment/Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (R/ATAA): A total of $77,265 in payments was issued to eligible workers.

Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC): HCTC tax credit, administered by the IRS, covers 72.5% of qualified health insurance premiums for eligible TAA participants and their families.

Customer Co-Enrollment - TAA and WIOA: In June 2015, CTDOL implemented a policy in coordination with the five WDBs to ensure that all TAA-eligible customers are referred to the WIOA provider in each region for co-enrollment into WIOA, thereby enabling TAA participants to take maximum advantage of benefits available through both programs.

Customer Co—Enrollment into TAA and WIOA: In June 2015, CTDOL implemented a policy in coordination with the five WDBs to ensure that all TAA—eligible customers are referred to the WIOA provider in each region for co—enrollment into WIOA, thereby enabling TAA participants to take maximum advantage of benefits available through both programs.

Veterans Services: Connecticut's estimated 188,759 veterans represent 97% of the state's population. The CTDOL Office for Veterans Workforce Development advocates for and assists Connecticut veterans and covered persons with their employment and training needs through job search assistance, referral to supportive services, intensive career services that include case management and the provision of information about other state and federal programs. CTDOL ensures priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses and encourages their use of American Job Center resources. One-on-one job search assistance is available to these individuals in the American Job Centers either on a walk-in basis or by appointment. Veterans qualifying for one-on-one services include military members who have separated within the past 36 months; service connected disabled veterans; Campaign Badge veterans; veterans with non-service disabilities; veterans with 180 consecutive days active duty, not serving in support of any conflict; National Guard/Reserves members (Title 10); homeless veterans; and other covered persons. Several outstations also provide veterans services including the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs/Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Office; Connecticut State Colleges and Universities; VA Medical Centers; US Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Centers; and local homeless shelters. During the most recently completed program year, PY 2016, 1,092 veterans received services in the American Job Centers, in the form of basic careers services, individualized career services, training services, or some combination; 718 of these veterans were served by CTDOL staff funded by the federal Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program.

TANF/JFES: Connecticut's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) program is co—administered by the CTDSS and CTDOL. TANF/JFES provides assistance to needy families and pregnant women meeting eligibility criteria in all political subdivisions of the state. Assistance for basic needs is provided to needy families through the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) component administered by CTDSS and the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) program is administered by CTDOL in partnership with the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). The ultimate goal of Connecticut's TANF/JFES program is to provide assistance to needy families to enable them to move out of poverty and into self—sufficiency. The TANF/JFES program is a time limited assistance program based on the assumption that welfare should be a temporary program of assistance and it is better to work than to be on welfare. Recipients are encouraged to assume personal responsibility for their economic self—sufficiency. Unless they meet exemption criteria, adults are required to seek and retain employment if it is available. Recipients unable to secure employment without intervention from the state will receive services, including education and training that will assist them in becoming employed. Applicants must attend the initial employment services assessment intake session for further employment assessment/plan development before TFA benefits are granted. The TFA program attempts to direct participants to employment sufficient to move them off assistance within twenty—one months. The program contains many features that support this objective. The asset limit is $3,000 so families may set aside money for emergencies. Families are allowed to own a reliable car to seek employment, to travel to and from work, or to transport a handicapped family member. To be excluded, the family's equity in the vehicle must not exceed $9,500 or the vehicle must be used to transport a handicapped family member. Earned income of recipients is totally excluded up to the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Once earnings reach the FPL, the family becomes ineligible for assistance. Up to $50 per month of current child support is passed through to the family each month and excluded as income. Childcare and transportation benefits are provided in order to enable individuals to prepare for, obtain and retain employment. If a family member refuses to participate in Employment Services activities, the family is penalized through grant reduction. If the family has made a good faith effort to comply with the employment activities but still has income below the payment standard at the end of twenty—one months of assistance, a six—month extension of benefits may be given. Extensions may also be given to families who have encountered circumstances beyond their control such as domestic violence. To qualify for an extension the family's income cannot exceed the payment standard corresponding to the size of the family. Following are the array of available Work Related Activities for TANF recipients: 1. Unsubsidized Employment 2. Subsidized Private Sector Employment 3. Subsidized Public Sector Employment 4. On—the—Job Training 5. Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance 6. Work Experience 7. Community Service Programs 8. Vocational Educational Training Not to Exceed 12 Months 9. Child Care for an Individual Participating in a Community Service Program 10. Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment 11. Education Directly Related to Employment 12. Satisfactory Attendance at Secondary School or in a GED program

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) administers core programs and services listed in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIOA Title II). Each local and regional board of education must establish and maintain a program of adult classes or provide for the participation in a program of adult classes for its adult residents (Connecticut General Statutes Section 10—69). CSDE—Administered Activities • To support shared governance structure, CSDE will participate in shared governance with regard to WIOA Unified Plan programs through the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC), the State Workforce Investment Board. • To strengthen interagency partnerships, CSDE will: ? Share system infrastructure costs. ? Provide services through the One—Stop system. ? Make funding available to each of Connecticut's five designated local workforce areas. ? Review and evaluate proposals with a team including representatives of the WDBs and One—Stop system partners. ? Assess local workforce areas' needs and WDBs' goals in conjunction with each WDB. ? Refer students to One—Stop Centers, monitor, act on referrals from One—Stop Centers. ? Provide appropriate training for One—Stop partners. • To strengthen coordination and collaboration with key educational sectors and employers, CSDE will: ? Align Integrated Basic Education and Training (I—BEST) training curriculum with employer/labor market needs. (I—BEST is Connecticut's contextualized integrated education and training program strategy.) ? Partner with community colleges to assist adults' transition to postsecondary education and training. ? Work with the One—Stop system to address the needs of local customers and employers and link adult education strategically to other employment and training services.

• Work with the State's longitudinal data system and use a common intake form to provide consistently defined and applied data from adult education programs. • To continue to invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of WIOA and other Federal initiatives, CSDE will work to interface the Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS) with the State's common intake and reporting system. • To support engagement in continuous research and analysis to realize the potential of state's workforce programs and delivery systems, CSDE will continue to offer the I—BEST program and ensure that it is aligned with labor market needs. • To assist the entire WIOA partnership deliver a unified message, CSDE will participate in coordinated system—wide efforts to increase awareness of the Connecticut workforce system.

DORS Administered Activities The department's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) programs will assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in or regain employment.

Connecticut Department of Social Services Administered Activities SNAP E&T: SNAP Employment and Training is administered by the CT Department of Social Services (CTDSS). The primary goal is to assist SNAP E&T participants with work—related activities that will lead to paid employment. Short—term vocational programs are job focused and employer driven. The SNAP E&T Program is currently in transition. As a way to better serve low—income SNAP recipients, all future partnerships will operate under a 50% reimbursement model. This allows CTDSS to use federal funds to leverage nonfederal funds already being invested in employment activities.

The components of Connecticut's SNAP E&T program are currently delivered through six nonprofit organizations, four community colleges, and one private college. Expansion efforts are underway. FNS approval will be sought before the department adds additional SNAP E&T 50% reimbursement partners. Our current 50% partners are Capital Community College (CCC) located in Hartford, Gateway Community College (GCC) located in New Haven, Asnuntuck Community College (ACC) located in Enfield, Goodwin College located in East Hartford, Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) located in New London, and Northwestern Connecticut Community College (NCCC) in Winsted. Our 100% contractors are Community Renewal Team (CRT) located in Hartford, The Kennedy Center located in Waterbury, Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board in Franklin, Career Resources in Bridgeport, and Workforce Alliance in New Haven.

Case management activities include conducting assessments; developing employment plans; making referrals as appropriate to education, vocational training and community service; conducting or making referrals to structured job search training; and career placement. Case management services can also include referrals for support services such as child care, transportation and other services required to enable the participant to remain engaged in his or her activity. Our current contractors provide case management services that are unique to their SNAP participants and above and beyond what they provide to their other non—SNAP clients. A key piece of their case management is ensuring that the SNAP recipients comply with all SNAP requirements, such as completing the recertification process by reminding them that they will not be eligible to participate in SNAP E&T if they fail to meet all of the SNAP requirements. For participants who already have skills that are marketable in the current economy, the first component will be structured job search training. For participants without marketable skills, the first component will be vocational/occupational skills training, educational programs, or self—initiated workfare.

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG): CTDSS administers the CSBG federal block grant (approx. $8M annually) with assistance from the CT community action agency network. The purpose of CSBG is the reduction of poverty, revitalization of low—income communities, and empowerment of low—income families and individuals to become fully self—sufficient.

CSBG can provide an array of services — employment work supports, child and family development, community empowerment, independent living. CSBG has identified the following national performance indicators for states to follow: persons employed; maintain job for at least 90 days; achieve a "living" wage; receive employment supports such as skills/competencies; and completion of ABE/GED.

Child Support CTDSS administers the statewide child support program. The goals of the child support programs are to assist families in reaching independence through increased financial and medical support, establish paternity for children born out of wedlock, and connect non—custodial parents with the Fatherhood Initiative.

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.

Activities conducted for and services provided to jobseekers, workers and employers through the core WIOA programs covered by this Unified State Plan represent a significant portion of Connecticut's larger informal workforce development system. Other vital entities and stakeholders in the broadly conceived workforce system include the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Board of Regents for Higher Education/Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (BoR/CSCU); Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) K—12 comprehensive schools system, Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS), Office of Early Childhood (OEC), an extensive network of private colleges and universities represented by the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), proprietary schools, regional/local Chambers of Commerce, sector—focused business associations, organized labor, community—based organizations (CBOs) and non—profit service providers.

Collectively this spectrum of stakeholders represents more workforce development—related resources and programs, serving more participants, than do the core WIOA programs covered by this Unified State Plan. The stakeholders in Connecticut's broad and informal workforce system identified above have an impressive history and track record of collaboration in developing effective strategies and minimizing duplication.

CSDE: Alignment with Activities Outside of the Plan CSDE will work in conjunction with Unified State Plan partners through ongoing participation in the efforts of CETC (the State Workforce Investment Board) to align activities with other agencies that operate outside scope of this Unified State Plan.

DORS: Alignment with Activities Outside of the Plan The Department of Rehabilitation (DORS) will collaborate and cooperate in a coordinated manner through a set of specific agreements with a wide array of organizations, entities and programs among workforce—related partners and stakeholders not specifically covered by this Unified State Plan, to pursue and achieve their respective objectives. Details are available in the state plan for vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services incorporated in this Unified State Plan.

OEC: Alignment with Activities Outside of the Plan The OEC will be an engaged partner with respective entities that prepare and provide training for individuals seeking and currently working with young children in families across any setting. The OEC will partner with workforce entities to ensure individuals entering and re—entering the workforce have access to high—quality and stable child care through our School Readiness program, Child Day Care Centers, Smart Start, Preschool Development Grant program, and Care4Kids child care subsidy program.

The child care subsidy program is an integral partner within Connecticut's workforce system. Funded by the federal Child Care Development Block Grant Act, Care4Kids provide a child care subsidy to parents who are either enrolled in TFA, enrolled in an approved education and training program, or who are employed. The childcare subsidy is intended to make child care more affordable, therefore, allowing parents to enter the workforce and stay employed. The child care subsidy can be used for all types of early childhood settings, including licensed centers and family child care homes, and unlicensed family, friend and neighbor. The CCDBG reauthorization of 2014 is requiring states to implement significant policy shifts that address continuity of care and quality of care for the child. The focus on continuity provides more child care stability for working parents.

The OEC will be available to provide information to the Workforce Investment Boards and other workforce partners about the importance of high—quality childcare and early childhood resources. Specifically, the OEC can provide information and training on our Child Care Resource and Referral service and Child Care 211 Infoline. The OEC can also make OEC and 211 Child Care materials available at WIB offices.

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.

Key State agency and local WDB partners have all been directly engaged in the statewide process of planning for WIOA implementation at State and local levels, emphasizing coordination of services and resources to provide high quality customer services and requisite support services. The Commissioners of CTDOL, DORS, CSDE, and CTDSS serve as members of the CETC, the entity responsible for review, endorsement and modification of the Unified State Plan to ensure coordination objectives are met. Senior staff members from each agency are active participants in the CETC Committees established to develop cross—program/cross—agency strategies to coordinate service delivery efficiently for individual workforce system customers and jobseekers.

Staff from these agencies played major roles in developing proposals reached by these Work Groups (addressing: data collection and reporting for performance accountability, effective engagement with businesses partners, and service design and delivery through the One—Stop system) that form the core of this Unified State Plan, much of which describes the commitment to planned coordination. Commitments to service and resource coordination among these State agencies are captured in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) executed by the respective State agency Commissioners.

Similarly, at the regional/local level, representatives of these State agencies participated in the planning efforts of each of Connecticut's five WDBs to develop local WIOA plans,

emphasizing cross—agency/cross—program coordination consistent with provisions described in the endorsed Unified State Plan.

Connecticut will establish a coordinated State/local process that enables the key State agencies responsible for core and required WIOA programs — Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL), Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, and Connecticut Department of Social Services — and other relevant and appropriate partners and stakeholders to make informed, collaborative decisions concerning how the workforce system responds to the needs of the jobseekers and employers.

At the State—level, it is anticipated that the WIOA Transition Work Groups (which will include CETC members) will be operational through 2016. Their term beyond 2016 will be determined based on need. The Office of Workforce Competitiveness will provide support and technical assistance.

At the local level, Regional Partner Transition Teams will be convened and organized as necessary in each of Connecticut's five local workforce areas by the local WDBs. The WDBs and regional CTDOL staff will collaborate to ensure that each team receives requisite support — convening and facilitating meetings communicating among participants, etc., necessary to function effectively. Each Regional Partner Transition Team will consist of well—informed and empowered regional representatives of the core WIOA State agencies (as feasible) and selected regional partners and stakeholders, including representatives from private philanthropy and older workers. The WDBs and CTDOL will identify and reach out to prospective participating entities, which will select their own representatives to participate. The objective is to be inclusive while maintaining a group of manageable size.

Regional Partner Transition Teams will meet on a bi—monthly basis to review and discuss the status of service delivery efforts for individuals and jobseekers served by the integrated regional workforce system, identify service delivery gaps, and consider improvement opportunities for coordinated service delivery. Each team will serve as a forum where regional partners can raise concerns to the attention of the others, clarify the resources at their disposal to help address shared challenges, strategize as a team and problem—solve collectively. This approach is similar to the Consortium model currently operating in the North Central local workforce area, where partner organizations meet on a regular basis to provide oversight and guidance to the regional One—Stop system. Regional Partner Transition Teams will include stakeholders from organizations representing individuals with disabilities, ex—offenders, homeless people, low—literate individuals, older individuals, TANF participants, etc., to ensure that needs are met.

The Administration WIOA Transition Work—Group staffed by OWC, will receive regular updates and information from the Regional Partner Transition Teams on how WIOA implementation efforts are progressing within each of Connecticut's five workforce areas, and will be responsible for providing guidance and direction to the five Regional Partner Transition Teams. The work group will be both receiver and disseminator of information to ensure that there is a consistent approach and realistic

transition strategy throughout Connecticut that all key partners understand and support. It is anticipated that CETC will develop and embrace performance benchmarks focusing on effective cross—agency/cross—program partnership and coordination in delivering effective services that achieve results for individuals and jobseeker customers of the workforce system.

CETC adopted One—Stop certification criteria emphasizing resource and service coordination. CETC will adopt benchmarks that measure the effectiveness of service and resource coordination. The CETC committee overseeing performance will monitor and report regularly on the status of this priority objective.

Prior to the certification of comprehensive one-stop centers, a sub-group of members from the Service Design and Delivery Committee comprised of state agency administrators was charged to visit five comprehensive American Job Centers (AJCs). The Sub-group or Core Part Team broad objective of these meetings/site visits was to provide State-level WIOA partners an opportunity to share information with and hear from key local partners responsible for AJC oversight, operation and services. They also explored opportunities for greater coordination and collaboration to ensure customer-focused efficient delivery of services to customers. System members included staff from the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL), Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), State Adult Education (SDE), Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) and a staff from OWC.

Overall, fifty-seven workforce development professionals shared their perspective of available services, including local Workforce Development Board administrators and managers, DOL Directors, DORS representatives, One-Stop operators, an adult education provider, state and local representatives and a community action agency.

As a result, the One-Stop certification policy required WDBs to establish One-Stop certification teams of system partners and others that represented targeted populations.

Connecticut's American Job Center (AJC) One—Stop system is the vehicle through which service delivery and targeting, leveraging and braiding of available resources is coordinated. Connecticut has a history and tradition of innovative collaboration among multiple partners and stakeholders to coordinate services and resources at the local level through its One—Stop system. To establish an overarching framework for consistent service and resource coordination going forward, CETC adopted a vision and guiding principles for Connecticut's AJC One—Stop system, based on proposals developed by the Service Design and Delivery Work Group, comprising experienced staff from key workforce system partners.

Vision: Comprehensive American Job Centers in Connecticut will provide excellent customer service to jobseekers, workers and businesses, in Centers that reflect innovative and effective service design, operated with integrated management systems and high—quality staffing, to achieve desired outcomes.

Guiding Principles: Connecticut's AJC One—Stop system will operate in a manner consistent with the following guiding principles.

Customer Service: • Comprehensive Centers provide a welcoming environment to all customer groups served, by courteous, polite, responsive and helpful staff. • The One—Stop system strives to improve the skills of jobseekers and worker customers, using labor market information to focus training efforts on genuine career opportunities, offering access to training that develops skills leading to industry—validated credentials, and placing customers into productive employment. • The One—Stop system pursues opportunities for individual jobseekers and workers at all levels of experience. • One—Stop system offers career services that motivate, support and empower customers. • The One—Stop system emphasizes the importance of demonstrable skill development, through effective assessment and training services. • Comprehensive Centers develop, offer and deliver quality services to business customers. Business Services staff members understand their customers' needs and priorities, identify and develop effective strategies, and align available services among partners.

Service Design: • Comprehensive Centers utilize an integrated intake process, coordinated by effective, expert front line staff for all customers. • The One—Stop system connects business customers to practices and strategies that actively engage industry partnerships, making effective use of timely economic and labor market information, linked to sector strategies and career pathways efforts. • The One—Stop system strikes a balance between its traditional labor exchange role and the need for strategic talent development targeting employers' priorities, emphasizing the importance of regional approaches. • One—Stop system facilities, programs and services are physically and programmatically accessible to all customers. • The One—Stop system includes both Center—based service delivery and through virtual alternative sites, including public libraries, community—based organizations, etc.) • The One—Stop system incorporates and values innovative evidence—based service and effective delivery strategies.

Management and Staffing: • Regular operations of comprehensive Centers reflect robust partnerships, with integrated staff offering seamless services. • One—Stop system staff are all properly trained and equipped to do their job. Staff members are also cross—trained by function. • One—Stop system services are organized and integrated by function, rather than by program, relying on effective, cross—agency/cross—program functional teams. • The One—Stop system employs an efficient, integrated case management strategy. • Comprehensive Centers are staffed with experienced, effective, trained career counselors. • One—Stop system activities are guided by explicit set of operational policies/procedures. • The One—Stop system uses common performance measures.

Services for Jobseekers: One—Stop system services generally available to jobseekers (including military veterans, individuals with disabilities, mature/older workers, etc.) in comprehensive AJC Centers include: common intake (CTHires); access to labor market information; skills assessments; Dislocated Worker certification; Workshops; resume development/interviewing assistance (group/individual); access to support services (e.g., transportation assistance, child care, etc.); job postings; access to copier/fax/phones; computer access; job search assistance; access to Trade Adjustment Act services; career counseling; job placement services; Unemployment Insurance access assistance; case

management; referrals to occupational skills training; access to adult education services (ABE/GED); linkage to SNAP E&T; Jobs First Employment Services (JFES); and benefits counseling; linkage to CTDSS regional offices to insure public assistance is confirmed for mutual applicants; linkages to TANF/ JFES case management entities; linkages to SNAP E&T programs; linkages to judicial system to support needs of non—custodial parents.

CSDE: Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals Through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, CSDE will solicit eligible agencies to provide services to eligible individuals who are 17 years old or older, are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under Connecticut law, are basic skills deficient, do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or are English language learners. Adult education programs will serve as the major Unified Plan Partner entry point for individuals who lack basic skills. Once a participant has enrolled, adult education provider staff will refer participants to a One—Stop Center or Youth Provider to conduct a workforce assessment and develop an educational/career plan. Once participants meet adult education exit criteria, they will be sent back to a One—Stop Center for re—evaluation. A unified referral management system will help local programs track participants as they move from agency—to—agency. This system will allow programs to give timely assistance to participants if they get stuck or seem to be dropping out. Information will be shared with adult education partners about adult education eligibility requirements, as well as dates, times, and locations of sites where adult education is offered.

DORS: Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals The Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs offer a wide range of services to eligible individuals, including guidance and counseling, mobility training, rehabilitation technology, adaptive equipment, rehabilitation teaching, job coaching, on—the—job training, low vision services, as well as a variety of skills assessments, are among the services provided.

DORS/BESB provides services on a statewide itinerant basis through its office location in Windsor.

DORS/BRS provides services in 14 offices across Connecticut where consumers may apply for assistance. In one of these locations, BRS is co—located with at least one core partner program. In several other locations, offices are in close physical proximity to partners. As long—term lease obligations and other logistical issues prevent movement toward increasing the number of co—locations, it is believed that formalizing referral processes and creating a service delivery structure that encourages partner collaborations will lead to improved coordination in services. BRS intends to assign staff specifically to each American Job Center (AJC) to act as a dedicated liaison. In addition, he/she will be expected to serve on all relevant committees and work groups at the AJC. This will allow partner agencies to easily direct AJC customers who have disabilities to BRS, and BRS staff to connect consumers to appropriate AJC partners directly. BRS will continue these relationships in the places where they exist and create them in all other AJCs.

DORS/BESB provides services on a statewide itinerant basis through its office location in Windsor.

State Department on Aging: Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals

The 2016-2020 draft State Workforce Plan for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) addresses the need to further coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives through the following strategies:

Strategy: SCSEP will develop and implement marketing strategies aimed at increasing awareness of SCSEP services within labor market and job training initiatives.

During the last SCSEP Workplan, strides were taken to improve the partnership between SCSEP and the one-stop system. The CT State Department on Aging (SDA) met with one-stop administrators to provide information about older workers and about SCSEP. Each of the state's SCSEP offices has a working relationship with the local one-stop. In some areas that relationship is very strong as sub-grantee staff is co-located in the office.

Staff provides information about SCSEP to potential enrollees. In other regions where co-location is not available, SCSEP continues to refer participants for workshops and job development services.

The one-stops continue to be valuable resources for SCSEP participants across the state and the state will endeavor to continue cultivating these partnerships.

Strategy: SCSEP grantees will endeavor to revitalize the partnerships with each one-stop in their service area by providing information about SCSEP and seeking out ways to help support their efforts.

Strategy: SDA will develop a comprehensive webpage listing job skills training and job development services available to older workers throughout the state.

MOU Status: The majority of WDB/partner MOUs are executed. Each of the state's five workforce boards has additional partner MOUs to be completed. Additionally, the CETC PPAC will draft a policy and guidance regarding infrastructure costs to assist with the alignment of workforce development programs and operations.

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.

Connecticut's One—Stop workforce system has a strong tradition of cooperation among partners and coordination of effort across agencies in providing services to business customers. Each comprehensive American Job Center features a distinct Business Services Team comprising designated professional staff from the CTDOL, the regional

WDB in that local workforce area, and/or the entity contracting with the WDB to provide business services, and other stakeholders and partners, the mix varying by region and local circumstances. Going forward, central to the efforts to serve employer customers framed in this Unified State Plan, Connecticut has adopted a set of criteria to serve as a framework guiding the efforts of partners in providing comprehensive high—quality services to address business' workforce priorities. The Business Engagement Work Group, comprised of expert staff, experienced and knowledgeable about working directly with business customers, developed these criteria based on lessons learned from effective practice in Connecticut.

Each comprehensive American Job Center will organize Business Services functions to serve business customers in a single, unified, coordinated Regional Business Services Team structure. Participants will include: CTDOL regional staff, the local WDB, and contractual operators of the business services function in the Center, representatives of the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD); Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) Vocational Rehabilitation programs, Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Bureau of Adult Education (and/or designated local adult education providers), regional community colleges, representatives of the TANF/JFES case management entities and CTDSS partner entities as appropriate and other stakeholders that may be invited to participate, including representatives of the Technical High Schools, etc. The Business Services Teams will be encouraged to reach out proactively to engage and communicate with regional/local economic development officials to share intelligence, identify job—matching opportunities, etc. As feasible, these economic development professionals will be encouraged to participate on the regional teams.

Each Regional Business Services Team will strive to operate as a "single point of contact" in dealing with business customers to ensure efficiency in delivering effective services that meet their needs. Each Business Services Team will attempt to manage and limit the number and frequency of contacts with individual businesses, assuming responsibility to collaborate in coordinating services from among a broad range of options available across programs and across agencies, to provide each business customer a set of services options and strategies, and to communicate consistently and easily. What happens among workforce system partners "behind the curtain" of the system is and should be irrelevant to business customers and the quality of service they receive.

The guiding principles that frame this unified, coordinated Business Services Team structure are adopted from standards developed and used successfully in the North Central workforce area: • It's not about us — It's all about the Business! • We are committed to providing service to Business customers that is seamless. • Business customers in the CTHires databank must post all job openings for which recruitment support is provided. • All posted job openings will be communicated/accessible to the full network of prospective jobseekers. • All job openings and recruitment efforts will be communicated to all Business Services Team members within 24 hours of becoming known.

Regional Business Services Team members will promote the use of CTHires. The Regional Business Services Team will schedule regular working meetings among all participating partners to share information and coordinate strategy. Participants on the Regional Business Service Teams will be cross- trained on an ongoing basis to ensure consistency of effective practice in serving employer business customers. Recruitment efforts with business customers will be scheduled collectively among partners, to maximize impact. Businesses seeking services and support from the Regional Business Services Team will be vetted to ensure their eligibility and appropriateness. While it is understood that job opportunities identified and developed by the publicly funded workforce system are accessible to all prospective jobseekers, the Regional Business Services Team will conduct a responsible level of pre-screening of candidates to promote an opportunity for satisfactory job matches. It is anticipated that efforts to match qualified jobseekers with vetted job openings will be a key feature of customized regional sector strategy initiatives.

Information developed to describe the programs, services and incentives available to business customers including the Employer Resource Guide and Employer Resource Card will be consistent, addressing the full range of options available statewide. Efforts to promote available business services will be marketed extensively, consistent with a focused business outreach strategy in each region. Effective use of social media as well as CTHires will be promoted as a priority tool to drive employer traffic into both CTHires and the American Job Centers.

CSDE: Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers CSDE promotes workforce preparation skills including literacy instruction, employability skills, career exploration and development, and links to employment, employment services and other options to respond to the evolving workforce needs of Connecticut's business community and promote individual self—sufficiency. Providers develop partnerships with local businesses for on—site workforce education classes to assist employees perform specific job tasks and increase productivity.

DORS: Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers A "Team CT" model of cross—agency collaboration in serving businesses/employers will be established, providing a full range of available services through coordinated points of contact. What happens among system partners should be seamless for business/employer customers. One "Team" in each region should include (at minimum) knowledgeable, empowered representatives of: CTDOL, WDBs, One—Stop operator/contractor, DORS, Adult Education (mix of CSDE staff and/or rotating local adult education entities), Community Colleges (rotating among regional colleges), local economic development officials…plus any other relevant entities, to be determined/customized to meet regional/local realities (e.g., DECD, Technical High School, independent colleges, etc.)

Business participants need some "training" from system reps about what system has to offer, to help business partners become more effective in that role.

Co—location of Business Team partner staff is an aspirational ideal. Space availability, staffing limitations, etc. may limit feasibility, but still to strive for if/as/when feasible.

From the perspective of the DORS VR programs, the primary goal of coordinated activities with employers is to establish long—term partnerships that foster a mutually beneficial relationship for both the employer and VR consumers. A key component of the Department's strategy is working with employers to develop long—standing relationships built on genuine interest in the work of each employer, their needs and their priorities. This could mean that an actual job opening for a particular client may not come along for some time, but the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor is nonetheless a resource employers can turn to for information, referrals to other service providers, and to learn about job site accommodations and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

With these relationships, even when employers may not be immediately hiring, they can offer other valuable services such as informational interviews, job shadowing opportunities and work assessment site hosting. Company tours can further be arranged for consumers to learn about a wide variety of careers, particularly important to transition—age youth clients who may otherwise have very limited exposure to actual job sites.

DORS is enthusiastic about participating actively in a strong and collaborative strategy with the other workforce partners who engage in employer outreach, with a focus on offering employers a seamless and coordinated team approach to job order placing and matching candidates from participating programs to the needs of the employers.

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).

Connecticut education leaders and their key staff participate in decision—making processes defining and driving workforce system policy and strategy at both State and local levels.

At the State level, Connecticut's Commissioner of Education (executive leader of Connecticut's K—12 public schools system), and the President of the Board of Regents for Higher Education/Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (executive leader of a system of public 4—year universities and 2—year community colleges) sit as voting members of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC), the State Workforce Board, and are thereby directly engaged in all phases of workforce development planning, strategy design, oversight and coordination. In addition, the Director of the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) participates as an ex—officio CETC member, ensuring that the contributions of CTHSS are included, critical information is shared, and opportunities for coordination of programs and services are pursued, addressing the shared goal of ensuring that youths and adults (students) are ready for productive work in Connecticut's key industry sectors.

Representatives of the Connecticut State Department (CSDE) Bureau of Adult Education are active participants in the Work Groups charged to develop Connecticut's WIOA transition strategy, and will continue to participate on these partnership teams as the focus

turns to the realities of coordinated implementation in the months ahead. It is also anticipated that key representatives of the K—12 system, CTHSS and the CSCU / community colleges will participate on relevant CETC committees and ad hoc work teams going forward with the WIOA implementation process in the weeks and months ahead.

As senior managers in the Executive Branch, the Commissioner of Education meets on a regular basis with the Commissioner of Labor, Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, and the Academic Dean of the University of Connecticut as an executive working group, reporting to Governor Malloy, to share information and coordinate strategy on integration of workforce development, educational strategy and economic development efforts to promote Connecticut's broad talent development efforts.

At the local level, selected leaders and representatives of local school districts in the K—12 system, CTHSS and community colleges, respectively, have served — and will continue to engage — both as members of Connecticut's five local WDBs and as active participants on the respective WDBs' various standing committees and work groups, thereby assuring that educational leaders are directly connected to critical workforce development planning and strategy design with other key system representatives close to where most program—level decisions get made.

Connecticut's Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network — P20 WIN — is a groundbreaking approach to education and workforce training—related data sharing in Connecticut. P20 WIN provides a secure data vehicle producing critical information needed to understand patterns over time and inform policy and strategy decisions to improve education, training and employment outcomes for Connecticut students. This new system allows Connecticut to evaluate how well our public education and training programs prepare students for additional education and careers in Connecticut. Executive leadership and senior research staff from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR), the University of Connecticut (UCONN), the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC) and Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) actively participate in P20 WIN. An inter—agency data governance structure and data—sharing agreements support collaborative decision—making. Going forward, P20 WIN provides a systematic, secure and repeatable process to gather and analyze critical data to understand the impact of investments in education and workforce training programs, supporting coordination, alignment and integration consistent with WIOA principles, leading to better outcomes. Connecticut's P20 WIN longitudinal data analysis capability will allow for improved understanding of how Connecticut's various education and training providers and programs — including K—12, CTHSS, Community colleges — perform in helping students complete programs of study and perform in the workforce.

CSDE: Partner Alignment with Educational Institutions CSDE will promote partnerships among local adult education providers and institutions of higher education, especially community colleges, to promote the successful transition of participants to postsecondary education and training. CSDE will rely on information from the workforce development

system to track the progress of participants who have exited from their programs and have entered postsecondary education and training.

DORS: Partner Alignment with Educational Institutions Both Vocational Rehabilitation Programs at DORS are actively involved in a variety of transition school—to—work initiatives, with extensive collaboration and coordination at the administrative and service delivery levels of the organization. Through a cooperative agreement with the State Department of Education, the roles and responsibilities of the VR programs and the public educational system are clearly defined, including financial responsibilities and coordination of services and staff training. Representatives from both VR programs serve on an interagency transition task force and appointed representatives from the Connecticut State Department of Education serves on the State Rehabilitation Council to BESB and to BRS. VR program information is presented at in—service training programs for public school teachers and guidance counselors on issues affecting students who have disabilities.

Regarding higher education, the Council of Regents has a cooperative agreement addressing services available in the university setting for students with disabilities. This agreement is with both VR programs and describes responsibilities to ensure that students with disabilities achieve equal access to classroom instruction, internships, and school—sponsored activities.

VR Program staff members participate and present information at BESB—organized in—service training programs for public school teachers and guidance counselors on issues affecting students who are blind or visually impaired. BESB Children's Services Program provides a comprehensive training series every year for school district staff about low vision aids and adaptive technology, braille instruction, expanded core curriculum activities and resources that are available to facilitate the education and transition of students served by BESB.

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.

Collectively, the twenty (20) strategies outlined above, addressing the Unified State Plan's four (4) broad goals, are intended to build Connecticut's statewide job—driven education and training system. It is essential that all effective Connecticut education and training providers, including entities on the State's Eligible Training Providers List, have the opportunity to engage productively in supporting implementation of those strategies. The Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) and Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) will systematically communicate with and reach out to key partners, stakeholders and education and training providers beyond the State agencies responsible for core WIOA programs and the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) — including the Board of Regents for Higher Education, Departments of Social Services, Economic and Community Development, Corrections, etc., and to their respective networks of contractual program operators and service providers — to communicate about opportunities for participation in workforce development planning,

strategy design and implementation, through participation on various CETC committees and work groups, and similar opportunities at the local level in comparable activities coordinated by the various Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). CETC and OWC will monitor, report on and — as necessary — encourage and adjust that participation activity. To the extent feasible CETC, OWC and the WDBs will encourage and promote opportunities for the broadest possible range of education and training providers to participate in the design and submission of relevant workforce development—related competitive grant proposals at both state— and local—levels.

DORS has liaison counselors who work closely with the American Job Centers, which enables staff to make referrals for services within each agency's programs. When appropriate, DORS consumers may be eligible for training offered on DOL's eligible training provider list. Consumers take an active role in the process of pursuing these trainings, and VR Counselors are available to provide assistance. If there is a barrier to the DORS consumer accessing the trainings as a similar benefit to what DORS offers, the DORS counselor can approve payment to fund the DOL training. When DORS consumers access these DOL services, their names are automatically entered into the CTHires database.

The CSDE will work with other core programs and One—Stop partners to ensure that adult education and literacy activities are in alignment and to develop career pathways which provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities. The CSDE will collaborate with the DOL to assist local providers in partnering with One—Stop Centers to develop career pathways and provide access to employment and training services. Professional development will be provided to local programs, including orientation to adult education programs and services for One—Stop partners and other agencies. Local adult education providers will refer adult learners to the Workforce Development Boards' Eligible Training Providers Lists for information about training opportunities in their region.

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).

In 2013 the OWC produced a comprehensive inventory and analysis of funding and investments that support Connecticut's workforce development system. This was one effort in OWC's continued work to advance the workforce system, to ensure it is responsive to jobseekers and businesses, and positions the state for economic growth. The inventory identified resources, sources of funds, targeted populations and services reported through an online survey. In gathering data OWC confirmed the complexity of the programs, number of relevant State agencies, identified hundreds of agencies involved in providing relevant services. Data was derived from reports and information from State agencies receiving and/or providing workforce—related funding, including the Departments of Labor, Education, Economic and Community Development Social Services, Developmental Services, and Children and Families. An online survey of one hundred agencies and providers across Connecticut yielded a 73% response rate.

Information concerning relevant funding and resources was reviewed and updated during the process of developing Connecticut's Unified State Plan. It is anticipated that in 2016 OWC will refresh this information, again working directly with designated staff in key State agencies and from the local WDBs (and their regional networks of local stakeholders). The inventory will be updated regularly and shared with key partners and stakeholders to identify opportunities to leverage resources to achieve maximum impact. Information will be shared with and reviewed by CETC.

In recent months, key Connecticut workforce development stakeholders have been notably successful in winning grant awards. This provides opportunities for innovative leveraging of resources across institutions and programs to improve access to training and education opportunities to build the skills and capabilities needed for employment success. Recent examples include the Health Opportunity Grants awarded to Connecticut Workforce Development Boards; American Apprenticeship Grant awarded to CTDOL, CTDOL's Second Chance grant, CTDOL's 2 Generation grant, and CTDOL's Manufacturing Innovation Fund Apprenticeship program.

CETC and OWC will work particularly closely with executive leadership of CTDOL, DECD, BOR/CSCU, CSDE, DORS, DSS, CWDC and Connecticut Council on Philanthropy to identify relevant investments, identify prospective grants/funding opportunities and grant awards, share that information among these parties and convene/facilitate discussions to explore and pursue leveraging opportunities with a shared/common goal of increasing opportunities to increase access to education and training programs and services for more individuals.

CSDE: Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access CSDE provides funding to local workforce areas for literacy programs, using a competitive RFP process to distribute funding provided by the United States Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. Grantees will be required to align with system—wide goals and the labor market needs of local workforce areas.

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.

Connecticut recognizes the value and importance of postsecondary credentials and certificates to workers and businesses, and that they vary significantly by industry sector and specific occupation. As described earlier in this Unified State Plan, Connecticut has identified six sectors that are likely to be the focus of workforce development efforts at both State and local levels: Manufacturing, Healthcare, Construction/Energy/Green Technology, Insurance/Financial Services, Information Technology, and Tourism. A variety of sector—specific initiatives will be supported and implemented within each of Connecticut's five designated local workforce areas, most in conjunction with the appropriate local WDB.

It is anticipated that the CTDOL Office of Research will analyze labor market information to help identify relevant credentials and licenses that are legally required and/or desirable for key in— demand occupations by targeted sectors in each region. WDBs and their business partners (including business associations such as the New Haven Manufacturers Association, Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Association, Aerospace Components Manufacturers, Connecticut Tooling and Machining Association, Connecticut Construction Industries Association, Connecticut Hospital Association, Connecticut Insurance and Financial Services Cluster, and regional Chambers of Commerce, etc.) will reach out to employers through existing business—led sector initiatives to identify and verify the credentials employers value and that actually contribute to hiring, productivity and opportunity for career advancement.

The sector initiatives will identify programs where relevant credentials and certifications can be acquired and will develop specific strategies and pathways to improve access and acquisition, customized to the requirements of each target sector and occupations. To the extent feasible these efforts will build on and expand proven effective models, including the State's Incumbent Worker Training program, STEP—UP, the community colleges' Advanced Manufacturing Centers and new manufacturing programs, Integrated Basic Education Skills Training programs (I—BEST), Job Funnels, Connecticut Technical High Schools focused education and training, etc.

Efforts will be pursued to expand apprenticeship opportunities in key sectors. In July CTDOL's Office of Apprenticeship Training was awarded $7.8 million state funds from the DECD's Manufacturing Innovation Fund to significantly expand the number of registered apprentices pursuing careers in Connecticut's advanced manufacturing sector. In addition, CTDOL and the Office of Apprenticeship Training received a highly competitive American Apprenticeship Grant of $5 million from USDOL to fund the Connecticut American Apprenticeship Initiative (CT—AAI). A key component of this five—year initiative is the introduction of Competency and Competency/Time—Based Hybrid apprenticeship models. CT—AAI will enroll and serve 1,000 registered apprentices and 500 pre—apprentices statewide in high—demand Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare and Business Services occupations. Employers ranging from small machine shops to General Dynamics Electric Boat, the various regional WDBs, and the Board of Regents for Higher Education provided significant commitments for apprenticeship placement.

CSDE: Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials CSDE offers the three programs leading to a high school equivalency diploma: Adult High School Credit Diploma (AHSCD), General Educational Development (GED), and the National External Diploma Program (NEDP). Local adult education programs also provide basic skills and workforce education through its highly successful contextualized integrated education and training program, I—BEST. All participants in adult education, including those in Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language, will learn about career pathways and will be taught the skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education and training. Participants who earn the high school equivalency diploma will be referred to community colleges and other institutions of higher education to transition to postsecondary education and training. Prior Learning Assessments One of the key

strategies of the CT Health and Life Sciences Career Initiative (HL—SCI) centers on increasing awareness of prior learning and developing standardized tools for use in assessing such learning to accelerate, wherever possible, a student's path to completion. Toward that end, Charter Oak State College developed a number of tools for use by colleges in advising students to explore all possible avenues of prior learning. A reference guide and questionnaire are among those tools. Charter Oak also produced a series of short informational videos on the various types of prior learning that can lead to credit (those videos can be accessed at www.charteroak.edu). As administrator of the Connecticut Credit Assessment Program (CCAP), Charter Oak has also reviewed fifty—seven (57) non—credit courses at community colleges and work place training programs. That review has resulted in resulted in seven hundred nineteen (719) credits recognized. These credits can be accessed by students who completed the program up to five (5) years prior to the review and five (5) years from the date of the review. Not only do these credits assist students in completing their programs more rapidly, but they serve as an incentive for students who take non—credit programs at community colleges to apply those credits to further education in a for—credit program.

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.

Connecticut recognizes the critical value and importance of coordinating workforce development and economic development strategy, investments, programs and services at the State and local levels. The Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is a voting member of the CETC. In that role she participates in the review and oversight of Connecticut's integrated workforce development system, helping to identify and promote integration and alignment of workforce development and economic development efforts statewide. The need for skilled talent in critical occupations in key industry sectors has been identified as a critical strategic priority by DECD, providing an incentive for continuing close cooperation and coordination of workforce development and economic development efforts going forward. Key elements of DECD's Economic Development Plan concerning the needs and priorities of Connecticut's in—demand and emerging industries and businesses have been integrated into strategies described in this Unified State Plan.

As senior managers in the Executive Branch, the Commissioners of Economic and Community Development, Labor, and Education, respectively meet on a regular basis, along with the Academic Dean of the University of Connecticut as an executive working group, reporting to Governor Malloy, to share information and coordinate integration of workforce development, economic development and educational strategy and promote Connecticut's broad talent development efforts. These Commissioners will continue to have input and participation in the review of Connecticut's Unified State Plan to ensure that opportunities for coordination are identified and developed.

In addition, leaders of the state's largest business membership organization — the Connecticut Business and Industry Association — and several prominent regional/local Chambers of Commerce — Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, Business Council

of Fairfield County, Bridgeport Regional Growth Council, Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce — serve as active members of CETC, collectively representing the interests of thousands of Connecticut businesses, large and small, providing insight and guidance on industry's views on the convergence of economic development and workforce development policy and strategy.

DECD representatives will continue to play a valuable role at the State level as participants in the CETC committees and work groups that will promote coordination of workforce and economic development efforts statewide going forward. It is anticipated that State and local economic development experts will play a key role in the efforts of the CETC committee overseeing business partnerships and engagement.

At the local level, representatives of DECD, regional/municipal economic development agencies, regional/local Chambers of Commerce and various business associations serve as members of Connecticut's WDBs and participate on key local WDB committees and work groups to ensure workforce development and economic development strategic coordination customized to local conditions, priorities and opportunities. These strong existing working relationships will be fostered as WIOA implementation proceeds.

The Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) Executive Director and staff will continue to work closely with designated senior staff colleagues from DECD to develop future opportunities for collaboration and coordination. Recent examples of OWC/CTDOL/DECD coordination include: Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) Registered Apprenticeship Program and MIF Incumbent Worker Training Program, Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) Designation, etc.

Connecticut's recently earned designation as a Manufacturing Community under the federal Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) program provides an opportunity and a vehicle to increase the level of coordination between workforce development and economic development activities. Connecticut's IMCP plan, led by DECD, supports Connecticut's manufacturing sector, with a strong focus on shipbuilding and aerospace. Connecticut has cultivated all the components of a strong manufacturing ecosystem. IMCP efforts will connect disparate components to create a cohesive and powerful tool to promote economic growth and synergies. Connecticut's workforce development, education, and training systems work together to respond to employers' education and training needs related to new technologies, materials and processes such as Pratt and Whitney's development of the F—135 aircraft engine and Electric Boat's Virginia Class submarine program. Connecticut's IMCP workforce strategies build on a regional track record of successful cross—systems collaboration to accelerate the development of the human capital needed to support integrated industry clusters in aerospace and shipbuilding. The ongoing development of a regional workforce that meets industry demands will support the continued growth of these and other large companies, contributing to the attraction and expansion of small— and medium—sized enterprises and increasing Connecticut's economic vitality and stability. Connecticut has a built a robust platform on which to continue the development of its skilled labor pool, and has developed aggressive plans to stimulate growth in the region. The IMCP effort will help Connecticut's workforce match industry demand, leading to economic power, stability

and quality of life. These efforts exemplify the kinds of workforce development/economic development collaboration that will be pursued as Connecticut transitions to active implementation of WIOA.

CSDE: Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies CSDE will participate in and support efforts of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC — State Workforce Board) to assist Connecticut business employers by continuing to develop and implement contextualized integrated education and training I—BEST programs that address the workforce needs of those businesses.

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

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

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

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

As administrative entity for WIOA implementation in Connecticut, CTDOL has lead responsibility to ensure that appropriate operating systems are in place and used effectively by all WIOA and workforce system partners, with appropriate oversight by CETC. CTDOL is currently working to refine the details of these necessary operational systems, including the state-level labor market information system, communication system, case- management system, job bank, and data/reporting systems. This process will continue in the weeks and months ahead, with key roles to be played by the various WIOA transitional work groups described earlier. A description of Data Collection and Reporting elements is included below.

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

Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) Data collection and reporting for the six core WIOA programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner—Peyser, Adult Education and Literacy Activities, and Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) will occur within separate case management systems located at each of three State agencies including the Connecticut Departments of Labor (CTDOL), Education (CSDE), and Rehabilitation Services (DORS).

CTDOL has contracted with Geographic Solutions to implement a web-based case management system, CTHires, to provide virtual services to individual jobseekers and employers, and to collect data required by WIOA for reporting on self-services and staff-assisted services for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Foreign Labor Certification programs. The CTHires

system is planned for expansion in 2018 to incorporate the TANF/Jobs First Employment Services Program and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Program.

Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) All adult education providers funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, collect and report through the Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS). The data entered in CARS are used by CSDE to meet reporting requirements at the Federal and State levels. CARS data are the basis for completing the Federal reporting requirements of the National Reporting System (NRS).

CARS is a longitudinal database containing student information. The Student ID created for each new student in CARS is unique to that student across adult education providers and fiscal years. Students returning to adult education in a future fiscal year maintain the same CARS Student ID. Students who transfer from one adult education provider to another, or prepare in adult education and then register for the GED test are also able to utilize the same CARS student ID.

Connecticut Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) DORS has a contract with a software provider to maintain a case management system for the vocational rehabilitation programs. This system runs locally on servers housed within DORS and contains case information relevant to individual consumers and reportable data. The vendor has maintained an active relationship with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) who governs data collection for public vocational rehabilitation programs. Changes are currently underway with a new vendor to manage data collection required by WIOA. RSA data elements will be adjusted to be compatible with the WIOA—Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) document.

WIOA Annual State and Local Area Reporting Reporting processes for the WIOA Annual State Performance Report will involve CTDOL obtaining electronic files for each report period from the three Connecticut State agencies for each of the six WIOA core programs. The WIOA Annual Local Area Performance Report is a subset of the WIOA Annual State Performance Report, covering only the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. Individual records in each of these electronic program files will be matched against the CTDOL database that stores the WIOA unique identifiers to determine if such identifier already exists. If it exists, the unique identifier will be appended to the record. If it does not exist, CTDOL will assign a unique identifier for each participant and will append it to the participant record. This process will ensure a common unique identifier across the six WIOA core programs, and will ensure that this unique identifier will be the same for every period of participation.

These same electronic files will be matched to each of the electronic files for each of the six WIOA core programs to determine if an individual was co—enrolled in one or more of those programs. If the participant was co—enrolled in another core program, the specific code value identified in the WIOA Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) that applies to those services will be appended to the participant record.

These same electronic files will be used to obtain employment information for each program participant who has a social security number and an exit date from one or more

of the six WIOA core programs. CTDOL currently is responsible for reporting wages, entered employment rates, and employment retention rates for individuals who exit the Wagner—Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs.

Each program's electronic file containing the assigned WIOA unique identifier, co—enrollment data, wages, and employment information will be returned to each of the three State agencies for use in their Federal report submissions.

Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Performance Report

CTDOL will use theCTHires case management system to collect data and generate the Eligible Training Provider Performance Report on all students in programs, and on WIOA participants, as required under WIOA.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers Report

CTDOL will assume the role as lead agency in the Effectiveness in Serving Employers Report. Connecticut will be reporting on the Employer Penetration Rate and Employee Retention.

* 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.

As lead administrative entity for WIOA implementation in Connecticut, CTDOL has responsibility to ensure that an appropriate and comprehensive set of state workforce system policies is established and are in place to guide effective WIOA implementation. CTDOL has demonstrable experience and expertise in this role, having been responsible for administrative oversight and direction of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) implementation in Connecticut for the past 16 years. Building on a foundation of administrative policy developed during that time, CTDOL Administration is systematically drafting and developing the necessary inventory of WIOA-related workforce system policies. This is a work-in- progress that will continue through the weeks and months ahead. The CTDOL WIOA Policy Manual can be found at http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/wioa.htm. The policies generated by this process may be generated and/or reviewed by a transitional steering committee or CETC as appropriate. Key workforce strategies will include industry partnerships, sector-focused initiatives and career pathways projects.

Data Collection and Reporting

Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) maintains and operates an automated Workforce Development Business System to support the operational and management needs of the State of Connecticut's One-Stop employment service delivery system under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). To address these operational,

management, and reporting needs, CTDOL requires that state and contractor staff funded under the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser and National Emergency grant programs enter data into the new CTHires system. Staff delivering services under the Trade Adjustment Assistance program also record data for this federal program into the new CTHires system. Current plans are to incorporate the Jobs First Employment Services program into the CTHires system in 2018. JFES-funded staff currently record data in the CTDOL CTWBS legacy system.

CTDOL also requires authorized representatives of contractor agencies funded under WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs to sign a Data Access Agreement, to ensure the protection of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in their possession. United States Department of Labor (USDOL), Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 39.11 is appended to the Data Access Agreement. In addition, staff members of these agencies that will access the new CTHires system are required to sign a form entitled Acknowledgment of Receipt of Confidential Information to advise them of responsibilities with respect to confidential information.

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

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

Department of Rehabilitation Services The Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) provides a wide range of services to individuals with disabilities, children and families who need assistance in maintaining or achieving their full potential for self-direction, self-reliance and independent living. The primary customers of the agency are individuals with disabilities. In the employment-based programs, business/employers are a dual customer. The DORS mission is to maximize opportunities for people in Connecticut with disabilities to live learn and work independently.

DORS is divided into four major bureaus: 1. The Bureau of Disability Determination; 2. The Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind; 3. The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services; and 4. The Bureau of Organizational Support.

DORS is the designated state agency for the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) and the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS).

Consumers with disabilities who need help finding employment may apply for assistance at the applicable DORS offices. They may seek help with their job search when their disability poses a barrier and when they need VR services to help them prepare for, enter into or maintain gainful employment in a competitive setting. Services may include vocational counseling, benefits counseling, job search assistance, skill training and career education, school-to-work transition services, on-the-job training in business and industry, assistive technology services for mobility, communication and work activities, vehicle and home modifications, supported employment services, restoration services for a physical or mental condition and assistance accessing transportation options. Once

eligibility has been determined, consumers work with a VR counselor to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to identify the target employment goal and the services that DORS can provide to assist them in reaching that goal. The IPE also identifies the consumer's responsibilities to help reach the desired job goal.

CT Department of Education The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to quality adult education programs which are accessible to all Connecticut adults and lead to mastery of the essential proficiencies needed to function as productive citizens in work, family and community environments.

Connecticut's adult education programs are governed by Connecticut General Statutes, which require local school districts to offer education pro¬grams necessary to acquire basic literacy skills, elementary education, English language proficiency, second¬ary school completion and/or preparation for equivalency or proficiency examinations. Local school districts and other eligible agencies providing mandated adult education programs are reimbursed by the Connecticut State Department of Education on a cost-sharing, sliding scale based on the relative wealth of a district. By supplementing Connecticut's commitment of state and local adult education dollars with WIA Title II dollars, Connecticut expands its provider network while enhancing and supporting programs and services that are more comprehensive, cost-effective and responsive to community needs. In addition to the local school districts, volunteer programs, community based organizations and other agencies provide adult education services in Connecticut by recruiting and retaining educationally and economically disadvantaged adults. By focusing on the needs of learners, families, communities and employers, adult education programs succeed in improving the skills of Connecticut's learners, enabling thousands of residents to attain a secondary school diploma, helping to close the skills gap in the workplace, assisting non-English speakers to learn English, easing the transition to post-secondary education, preparing residents to attain U.S. citizenship and helping families to break the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy.

CT Department of Labor The Connecticut Department of Labor is committed to protecting and promoting the interests of Connecticut workers. In order to accomplish this in an ever-changing environment, we assist workers and employers to become competitive in the global economy. We take a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of workers and employers, and the other agencies that serve them. We ensure the supply of high-quality integrated services that serve the needs of our customers. The CT Department of Labor's Employment and Training Division is comprised of three units including' WIOA Administration, Welfare-to-Work, and Performance and Accountability. Administrative responsibilities for the programs that reside in this division include but are not limited to policy and procedure development, monitoring, development of grants and contracts, reporting, and management information system support. This division administers three of the six core programs including:, and the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. This division also administers the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, WIOA National Emergency Grants (NEGs), Foreign Labor Certification/Migrant Seasonal Farmworker, program, the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) program, and various other state and federally funded employment and training programs.

CT Department of Labor (CTDOL) Employment and Training Division central office also directly delivers employment and training services under several of these programs including but not limited to: Foreign Labor Certification/Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Worker programs.

CTDOL local office staff members deliver direct services within American Job Centers under the Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and Veterans programs. Examples of services provided under these programs include: assessment of skills, vocational counseling, provision of labor market and other information, provision of referrals to employment and to supportive services for individuals, recruitment services for employers, unemployment insurance, and rapid response assistance for employers and their employees. These services are designed to assist individuals to obtain employment to ultimately achieve self-sufficiency, and to assist employers to secure qualified employees to assist them to become competitive.

CTDOL's Unemployment Insurance (UI) Operations, UI Tax, and ES Board of Review are separate divisions within CTDOL. These divisions work closely with the Employment and Training Division and the local American Job Centers to provide seamless customer services.

CT Department of Social Services CTDSS provides a wide range of services to children, families, older adults, persons with disabilities, and other individuals who need assistance in maintaining or achieving their full potential for self-direction, self-reliance and independent living. CTDSS delivers a wide variety of services to children, families, adults, people with disabilities and the elderly, including health care coverage, food and nutrition assistance, child support services, independent living services, energy assistance, and program grants. CTDSS administers Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, among others. With a staff of about 1,900, the department provides services to more than 1 million Connecticut residents of all ages.

Please refer to the following for State Agency Organization: http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/OWC/WIOA%20USP%20CT%20Workforce%20Development%20System%20Organization.pdf Please refer to the following for State Agency Organizational Charts: http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/OWC/WIOA%20USP%20DORS%20Org%20Chart.docx http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/OWC/WIOA%20USP%20SDE%20Org%20Chart.pdf The CT DOL organizational chart is in the process of being updated.

B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board, including—

(i) Membership Roster and Affiliations The voting members of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC), the State Workforce Board under WIOA, and their professional affiliations, include: Bremby Roderick Department of Social Services Bruhl Christopher The Business Council of Fairfield County Comer Andrea Connecticut Business & Industry Association DiPentima Chris Pegasus Mfg. Ginsburg Elliot CT Center for Advanced Technology Highsmith Carlton CLH Holdings,

Inc. Jackson Scott Department of Labor McHugh Larry Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce Monahan Deborah TVCCA Ojakian Mark CT State Colleges and Universities Ortega Norma Travelers Companies, Inc. Pelletier Lori CT AFL-CIO Porter Amy Department of Rehabilitation Services Rosenberg Stuart Johnson Memorial Medical Center Ryan JoAnn NW CT Chamber of Commerce/ CETC Chair Smith Catherine Department of Economic and Community Development Smith Jeffrey Pratt & Whitney Wentzell Dianna State Department of Education Wray Lyle CRCOG Wyman Nancy Lt. Governor ExOfficios Ieronimo Jim United Way of Meriden-Wallingford Marioni Kathleen Office of Workforce Competitiveness Kremens Zdzislaw Central CT State University

(ii) Board Activities The organizational structure of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) — the State Workforce Board is described above. Leadership of CETC in conducting its business as the State Board is provided by Chairman JoAnn Ryan, President and CEO of the Northwest Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Ryan was appointed by Governor Malloy on October 5, 2018. Chairman Ryan is well respected in Connecticut's business community for her leadership and extensive knowledge of the workforce system. Prior to her appointment, Ms. Ryan served on the CETC as an active member representing the business sector. Ms. Ryan's extensive knowledge of business and industry and tenure with CETC will be a great benefit to this committee capable of working effectively with members from business, labor and government to achieve consensus in meeting CETC's statutory, strategic and operational responsibilities.

CETC's organizational structure described above is intended to be flexible, adjustable as necessary to meet changing circumstances. The CETC's committee structure will ensure that CETC is prepared to meet its State Board functions and accountabilities. Committees are constructed to engage individual CETC members in working on topics and in areas to which they bring relevant professional experience and expertise, to contribute productively in meeting each committee's responsibilities and deliverables. To supplement the work of CETC's committees, Chairman Ryan may appoint additional, time limited, CETC work teams on an as-needed basis.

The Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) provides professional staff expertise and technical assistance to support the Governor and CETC's efforts in meeting its Federal and State statutory responsibilities. OWC is housed in the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) and has ready access to their workforce, research and legal experts.

OWC and CETC act as workforce development policy advisors to the Governor. OWC collaborates with multiple partners and workforce system stakeholders to help align resources, coordinate strategy, promote policy and synchronize employment, education and training programs and services to address industry's job growth needs and achieve the vision and goals discussed previously in this Unified State Plan. OWC's Executive Director works closely with the CETC Chair to ensure that State Workforce Board functions are implemented consistently, effectively and efficiently. CTDOL is committed to support the efforts of OWC and CETC by offering additional professional expertise

and support from other units as appropriate and as necessary. Staff expertise from other State agency partners is also solicited when necessary.

I. MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

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

The voting members of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC), the State Workforce Board under WIOA, and their professional affiliations, include: Bremby Roderick Department of Social Services Bruhl Christopher The Business Council of Fairfield County Comer Andrea Connecticut Business & Industry Association DiPentima Chris Pegasus Mfg. Ginsburg Elliot CT Center for Advanced Technology Highsmith Carlton CLH Holdings, Inc. Jackson Scott Department of Labor McHugh Larry Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce Monahan Deborah TVCCA Ojakian Mark CT State Colleges and Universities Ortega Norma Travelers Companies, Inc. Pelletier Lori CT AFL-CIO Porter Amy Department of Rehabilitation Services Rosenberg Stuart Johnson Memorial Medical Center Ryan JoAnn NW CT Chamber of Commerce/ CETC Chair Smith Catherine Department of Economic and Community Development Smith Jeffrey Pratt & Whitney Wentzell Dianna State Department of Education Wray Lyle CRCOG Wyman Nancy Lt. Governor ExOfficios Ieronimo Jim United Way of Meriden-Wallingford Marioni Kathleen Office of Workforce Competitiveness Kremens Zdzislaw Central CT State University

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 organizational structure of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) — the State Workforce Board is described above. Leadership of CETC in conducting its business as the State Board is provided by Chairman JoAnn Ryan, President and CEO of the Northwest Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Ryan was appointed by Governor Malloy on October 5, 2018. Chairman Ryan is well respected in Connecticut's business community for her leadership and extensive knowledge of the workforce system. Prior to her appointment, Ms. Ryan served on the CETC as an active member representing the business sector. Ms. Ryan's extensive knowledge of business and industry and tenure with CETC will be a great benefit to this committee capable of working effectively with members from business, labor and government to achieve consensus in meeting CETC's statutory, strategic and operational responsibilities.

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

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE PROGRAMS

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

The Connecticut Departments of Labor (CTDOL), Education (CSDE), and Rehabilitation Services (DORS), will use the primary indicators of performance specified in section 116(b) of WIOA and contained in State Performance Reports to assess the performance of the six core programs. Each program's actual performance will be assessed in relation to the State adjusted levels of performance and revised State adjusted levels of performance. Connecticut does not have any additional indicators of performance referenced in section 116(b)(2)(B) as part of this Unified State Plan.

This State assessment will utilize quarterly wage records to determine program quality and effectiveness with respect to outcomes including employment rates and median earnings for participants with a social security number that exited from one or more of the six core programs. Also, the average cost of those participants who received career and training services, respectively, during the most recent program year and the 3 preceding program years will be assessed, while considering relevant economic conditions e.g., unemployment rates and characteristics of participants.

Additionally, CTDOL will use the Local Area Performance Report broken down by local area for the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs to determine each local area's performance on the primary indicators with respect to local performance targets

The CETC in coordination with the State WIOA Administration will provide on-going evaluation of core programs through the evaluation of activities in order to promote continuous improvement in the following ways:

1. Establish a policy for continuous improvement of core programs which includes:

a. Surveys

b. CTHires integration

c. Analytical and Statistical methods.

d. Other methods as deemed appropriate

2. The mechanism for providing this review will be established and maintained by the CETC in conjunction with the state programs responsible for core programs and the local boards.

3. The tool selected to be used for evaluations will include customer feed-back and outcome and process measures and employ rigorous analytical and statistical methods.

4. The state will prepare reports regarding the evaluations and make them available to core partners, boards and the public on a yearly basis.

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.

Connecticut's Unified State Plan outlines a four—year strategy for the six core programs: • The Adult Program (Title 1 of WIOA) • The Dislocated Worker Program (Title 1) • The Youth Program (Title 1) • The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (Title II), • The Vocational Rehabilitation Program — BESB (Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV,) and • The Vocational Rehabilitation Program — BRS (Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV.) Assessment of these core programs will be done by the respective administrative State agency. Other One—Stop delivery system partner program services included in the Workforce Performance Accountability, Information, and Reporting System that are reportable to USDOL will be assessed annually using outcome measures on the Program Performance Scorecard e.g., employment rate, and median earnings.

CTDOL will explore assessment for performance accountability

with CTDSS to determine application and feasibility between WIOA, TANF and SNAP E&T.

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.

Connecticut recently completed its one stop certification process for the state's five comprehensive one stop centers. Information collected from this process will serve as a baseline and be utilized for assessment of the workforce system and WIOA core programs.

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.

The State intends to examine potential subject areas to conduct evaluations or research. Any projects will be conducted in collaboration with WIOA partners, including the local workforce development boards. Consideration will be given to past evaluations to ensure that future ones are valuable use of State and local resources. The nature and type of these projects will unfold throughout WIOA implementation and will at a minimum focus on factors effecting program outcomes. Evaluations provided by Federal agencies will also guide the direction of State efforts.

The CETC currently develops an annual report card on employment and training programs considering an array of programs that are related to one or more of the following four results: • CT adults who are financially self—sufficient • CT students ready for work and post—secondary education following high school graduation • A competitive 21st century CT economy • A highly skilled, competitive 21st century CT workforce

The production of this report card informs the workforce system so that workforce—related policies, investments, strategies and programs contribute measurably to one or more of the above results.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

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

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

CTDOL has created a policy concerning methods/factors to distribute funds to local areas for Youth activities, Adult and training activities, Dislocated Worker employment and training activities. The policy can be found on pages 64-65 of the CTDOL WIOA Policy Manual .Proposed methods and factors will be reviewed with and approved by for CETC.

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

Detail and policy regarding the methods and factors the State will use in distributing title I Youth, Dislocated Worker and Adult funds to local areas can be found in the State WIOA draft manual as follows:

Minimum Provision- Hold Harmless- No local area shall receive an allocation in any program which is less than 90% of the average allocation for the previous two years.

Connecticut has five local Workforce Development Areas. WIOA funding is allocated to Adult and Youth by area based on the following formula:

• 1/3 unemployed in the Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASU — a contiguous area with an average unemployment rate of 6.5% or greater); • 1/3 excess unemployed greater than 4.5 percent. • 1/3 total number of individuals in Connecticut who are economically disadvantaged • Economically Disadvantaged Youth are youth who are between the ages of 16-21.

For Certified Dislocated Workers CTDOL uses the CTDOL Department of Research labor market information to determine formulas and award allocations.

• Total Insured Unemployed 5% • Declining Industries 5% • Long Term Unemployed 25% • Plant Closings/Mass Layoffs 30% • Total Unemployment Concentration 35% • Farmers/Rancher economic hardship data thru the most current year 0%

o According to the 2014 US Census Bureau American Community Survey Connecticut's % of population (16+) working in the Agriculture and mining sector is five times smaller than the US average 0.4% (CT) vs 2% (US).

o According to USDA 2012 Agricultural Census, the total value of Connecticut's agricultural product sales is one-tenth of one percent of the US total. $550 million vs. $394 Billion.

o The agricultural economy is insignificant in Connecticut as compared to other states in the US. Basing our WIOA allocations in any way on agricultural labor markets would distort this allocation relative to the actual composition of Connecticut's labor markets.

Each data element is weighted as indicated in the above percentages. Percentages remain set unless changed by the CETC.

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

Detail and policy regarding the methods and factors the State will use in distributing title I Youth, Dislocated Worker and Adult funds to local areas can be found in the State WIOA draft manual as follows:

Minimum Provision- Hold Harmless- No local area shall receive an allocation in any program which is less than 90% of the average allocation for the previous two years.

Connecticut has five local Workforce Development Areas. WIOA funding is allocated to Adult and Youth by area based on the following formula:

• 1/3 unemployed in the Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASU — a contiguous area with an average unemployment rate of 6.5% or greater); • 1/3 excess unemployed greater than 4.5 percent. • 1/3 total number of individuals in Connecticut who are economically disadvantaged • Economically Disadvantaged Youth are youth who are between the ages of 16-21.

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o The agricultural economy is insignificant in Connecticut as compared to other states in the US. Basing our WIOA allocations in any way on agricultural labor markets would distort this allocation relative to the actual composition of Connecticut's labor markets. Each data element is weighted as indicated in the above percentages. Percentages remain set unless changed by the CETC.

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.

Through CSDE, the State of Connecticut will award multi-year grants to eligible providers through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to enable providers to develop, implement and improve adult education and literacy activities. Grantees will have the opportunity to continue for a second year depending upon satisfactory performance and funding from Congress.

Agencies who have demonstrated effectiveness are eligible for funding through the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) may include: a. A local educational agency; b. A community—based organization or faith—based organization; c. A volunteer literacy organization; d. An institution of higher education; e. A public or private nonprofit agency; f. A library; g. A public housing authority; h. Other nonprofit institutions that have the ability to provide adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals; i. A consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; j. A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

CSDE will make funding available in each of Connecticut's five designated local workforce areas. In conjunction with each WDB, CSDE will help to assess local area needs and WIB goals. In each local area, funds will be divided among defined priorities on a percentage basis. Eligible providers will select the appropriate priority area when drafting and submitting the proposal to CSDE.

CSDE will use the 13 WIOA considerations for funding to award grants, including the following consideration: "past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State—adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance", described in WIOA section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy. Past effectiveness will be evidenced by meeting or exceeding performance measures based on documentation from the Connecticut Adult Reporting System database and annual reviews of previously funded providers, and evidenced by comparable objective performance measures demonstrating successful student outcomes for new eligible providers.

Information regarding the selection of Service Providers and Provider Agreements can be found in the draft WIOA Policy manual under:

SERVICE PROVIDER SELECTION PROCESS AND PROVIDER AGREEMENTS

Specifically as follows:

This Section is designed to provide information on the service provider selection process and the provider agreements entered into with the selected providers.

I. Service Provider Selection

Service providers should be selected through a competitive request for proposal process. The Request for Proposal (RFP) process assures that operators and programs are responsive to workforce development needs in each area.

The RFP process is managed by each WDB. The RFP process is generally conducted every year but the period of time between the RFP process may be extended. Agreements/contracts with the selected providers will be renewed annually during that agreement/contract period based on available funding and successful program performance.

Following the distribution of funds by CTDOL the WDB's will select providers and funding for Youth, Adult and Dislocated Workers.

II. Provider Agreements

The RFP process will allow for provider agreements with single providers or multiple co-contracting providers. In the case of multiple co-contracting providers, the division of awarded funds is determined by the co-contracting providers through a negotiation process. The negotiation process should take into account the scope of service and proposed program operating plan; including the planned activities, planned enrollments and estimated costs of career and training services to be delivered.

Co-contracting service providers may choose to negotiate a different split of funds with each contract renewal to reflect changes in service delivery; or maintain the same split as the previous contract.

All potential providers may complete an application made available within the CTHires system.

Demonstrated effectiveness of programs can be found in the attached draft of the WIOA Policy

Manual under Eligibility Factors which indicate:

Eligibility Factors

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) includes certain criteria that must be met in order ensure that a provider of programs offers the highest quality training services and is responsive to in-demand and emerging industries by providing training services for those industries (WIOA §122(b)(4)(A)). The entity shall provide verifiable program-specific performance information based on criteria established by the state (WIOA §122(b)(4)(C)) to support the entity's ability to serve program participants. Pursuant to WIOA §122(b)(4)(D)(i-iv), an entity seeking initial eligibility as a provider of training services must meet the following criteria:

• A factor related to indicators of performance as described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A)(i)(I-IV) as set by Connecticut Department of Labor ETPL policy.

For an entity's initial eligibility under WIOA (first year), the entity must document that it meets at least one of the following by submitting performance data:

• Median Earnings (Quarterly basis) - $3,459.00

• Average Wage at Placement - $9,344.00

• Attainment of a Post-Secondary Credential - 60%

• Completion Rate - 60%

• Employment Rate - 65%

• Training-related Employment Rate - 65%

For each program to be offered on the ETPL, documentation must include the program name and the most recent annual data that is available (for example, 7/1/14 - 6/30/15 or 7/1/15 - 6/30/16) for ALL individuals enrolled in the program for at least one of the factors above. The timeframe that the data is from must be stated on the documentation. If the program is new to the entity and historical data is not available, data must be tracked upon ETP approval and submitted in accordance with the requirements described at "Performance and Reporting."

• A factor concerning whether the provider is in a partnership with business. Consideration for satisfying this factor will include active involvement (not just membership) in: a local Chamber of Commerce, the Connecticut Business and Industry

Association (CBIA) or other local business association, Connecticut Workforce Development Board, Advisory Boards (colleges/universities), clinical partnership agreements, internships/externships with businesses, and affiliations with business associations. Submit a list of partnerships and describe the nature of the partnership.

• Other factors that indicate high-quality training services. If the applying entity is required by Connecticut statute to be approved by the Connecticut Office of Higher Education, State Department of Education, or Department of Public Health to offer training, this Eligibility Factor will be deemed as met. All other entities must comply with federal and state ETP credential policies in order for this (high-quality) Eligibility Factor to be deemed as met. In regard to a program's credential outcome, ALL applying entities' program offerings must result in credential attainment that complies with federal and state ETP credential policies in order for the program to be considered for approval.

• A factor concerning alignment of the training services with in-demand industry sectors and occupations. To satisfy this factor, review the in-demand occupations listed on CTDOL's website, http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/projections.asp, and provide documentation from the site to verify the training service is specifically related to an in-demand industry sector or occupation. Otherwise, provide information and documentation to show the extent to which the training service(s) aligns with the in-demand industry sectors and occupations displayed on this CTDOL website. In-demand occupations may vary at the local level; applying providers may consult with the lead WDB.

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.

To ensure direct and equitable access for all eligible providers, the Connecticut State Department of Education will publish a Notice of Availability in all major newspapers throughout Connecticut and post the notice on the CSDE's web page as well as the web page of the core partners, Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Department of Labor.The RFP will be mailed to all local education agencies and higher education institutions; to a master list of current and past providers including community—based organizations, regional education service centers, housing authorities, volunteer organizations, Department of Correction, other correctional facilities and institutions; and to all current providers and WDBs. A Bidder's Conference will be publicly advertised with the Notice of Availability and held at a central location to provide answers to questions regarding appropriateness of proposed projects and application procedures.

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.

Under the Rehabilitation Act, the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) provides vocational services to individuals seeking employment through the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and the Bureau of Education and Services to the Blind (BESB).

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

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

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.

Connecticut has a plan under consideration to ultimately make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable. CTDOL's new web-based CTHires system has four of the six core programs resident within it, including: WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth, Wagner-Peyser, Jobs First Employment Services and Foreign Labor Certification programs. This system also currently has resident within it the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. This central database is contracted to expand in 2018 to include the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program. CTHires also has the capability to add programs through a generic programs module.

Currently the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) collects data and reports through the Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS) for the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program. Also, the Connecticut Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) has a case management system for the Vocational Rehabilitation programs within DORS. Long—term plans under consideration by the three State agencies include development of an interface among these separate systems to exchange common data elements efficiently. In the interim, batch processes are used across the six core programs to enable each agency and program to generate required federal reports.

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.

Connecticut has a plan under consideration to ultimately make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable. CTDOL's new web—based CTHires system has four of the six core programs resident within it, including: WIOA

Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth, and Wagner—Peyser programs. This system also currently has resident within it the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. This central database is contracted to expand in 2016 to include the Jobs First Employment Services welfare—to—work program, Foreign Labor Certification program, and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program. CTHires also has the capability to add programs through a generic programs module.

Currently the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) collects data and reports through the Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS) for the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program. Also, the Connecticut Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) has a case management system for the Vocational Rehabilitation programs within DORS. Long—term plans under consideration by the three State agencies include development of an interface among these separate systems to exchange common data elements efficiently. In the interim, batch processes are planned across the six core programs to enable each agency and program to generate required federal reports.

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.

Connecticut is hopeful of funding to enable alignment of technology and data systems across mandatory One—Stop partner programs. This future system would provide for a common intake and data collection across multiple agencies and programs. This alignment would improve service delivery to individuals by enabling data to be collected once and shared by service providers within the system, resulting in efficiencies. This common system would also foster communication and collaboration among service providers to ensure optimum service delivery using a variety of funding and resources while minimizing duplication of services. The Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) will assist the Governor align technology and data systems to improve service delivery by participating on interagency work groups to identify financial and other resources necessary to accomplish this work.

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

Connecticut has formed a WIOA transition interagency work group on Technology, Data and Outcomes. The work group and its technology subcommittee met several times to develop various options to enable reporting for the six (6) core programs across three state agencies — the Connecticut Departments of Labor (CTDOL), Education (CSDE), and Rehabilitation Services (DORS). Data collection for the six core programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner—Peyser, Adult Education and Literacy Activities, and Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) occur within separate case management systems located at each of three State agencies. CTDOL will explore assessment for performance reporting with CTDSS to determine application and feasibility between WIOA, TANF and SNAP E&T.

Reporting processes for the WIOA Annual State Performance Report will involve CTDOL obtaining electronic files for each report period from the three State agencies for each of the six core programs. Individual records in each of these electronic program files will be matched against the CTDOL database that stores the WIOA unique identifiers to determine if such identifier already exists. If it does exist, the unique identifier will be appended to the record. If it does not exist, CTDOL will assign a unique identifier for each participant and will append it to the participant record. This process will ensure a common unique identifier across the six core programs, and that this identifier will be the same for every period of participation.

These same electronic files will be matched to each of the electronic files for each of the six core programs to determine if an individual was co—enrolled in one or more of the six core programs. If the participant was co—enrolled in another core program, the specific code value identified in the WIOA Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) that applies to those services will be appended to the participant record.

Also, these same electronic files will be used to obtain employment information for each program participant who has a social security number and an exit date from one or more of the six core programs. CTDOL currently is responsible for reporting wages, entered employment rates, and employment retention rates for individuals who exit in the Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs.

Each program's electronic file containing the assigned WIOA unique identifier, co—enrollment data, wages, and employment information will be returned to each of the three State agencies to use in their federal report submissions.

Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Performance Report CTDOL will use the new CTHires case management system to collect data and generate the Eligible Training Provider Performance Report on all students in programs, and on WIOA participants as required under WIOA.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers Report

CT DOL will assume the role as lead agency in the Effective in Serving Employers Report

Planning Note: States should be aware that Section 116(i)(1) requires the core programs, local boards, and chief elected officials to establish and operate a fiscal and management accountability information system based on guidelines established by the Secretaries of Labor and Education. 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.

CT Department of Labor (CTDOL) will use the program performance scorecard and the WIOA Annual Statewide Performance Report Template to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner—Peyser programs in entering or remaining in employment. The state assessment will use quarterly wage records to determine entered employment rates in the second and fourth quarters after exit for program individuals who exit with social security numbers to determine their success in entering or remaining in employment. Median earnings will also be considered to determine progress towards self—sufficiency. Local Workforce Development Boards will be responsible for following up with participants exiting from the WIOA Youth program to assess enrollment in, persistence in, and completion of postsecondary education.

Connecticut has not set any additional indicators of performance.

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.)

The electronic files containing records for the six core programs will be used to obtain employment information using Unemployment Insurance Wage Record data for each program participant that has a social security number and an exit date from one or more of the six core programs. CTDOL is currently responsible for reporting wages, entered employment rates, and employment retention rates for individuals who exit in the Wagner—Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs. CTDOL will continue this work and expand its responsibilities to include individuals who exit from all six core programs. Therefore, CTDOL will append wages and employment information to each exiter's record.

Each program's electronic file containing the assigned WIOA unique identifier, co—enrollment data, and wages, will be returned to each of the three State agencies for use in their federal report submissions.

Also, CTDOL will use the new CTHires case management system to collect data and generate the Eligible Training Provider Performance Report on all students in program and on WIOA participants, as required under WIOA. CTDOL will use Unemployment Insurance Wage data for employment rates, median earnings, and credential rates for all students in a program on the Eligible Training Provider Performance Report.

Unemployment Insurance Wage Record data will also be used to comply with federal evaluation requirements, and to inform workforce and labor market information available to customers.

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.

Connecticut Department of Labor • Information on individuals referenced for purposes of the WIOA Core Programs in the Connecticut Department of Labor's automated One—Stop Career—Center system (CTHIRES) is considered confidential Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and may not be released or used for any purpose other than one directly connected with the administration of the programs. Information may also be released when the participant authorizes disclosure.

• Access to the system is provided upon an entity's entrance into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Connecticut Department of Labor, which acknowledges the confidentiality and security requirements associated with the system. Moreover, every individual accessing the system must first sign an Acknowledgment of Confidential Information form, to ensure each individual is aware of such requirements.

• Finally, access to network components comprising the System is limited to authorized administrators, to ensure no unauthorized disclosure of PII. The system itself is configured to comply with Federal and State of Connecticut laws and regulations regarding the protection of confidential and PII, including but not limited to all sections of NIST SP 800—53 and IRS Publication 1075.

CT State Department of Education CSDE will ensure that program providers are compliant with all applicable laws and RFP guidelines including ADA 504 and Section 427 GEPA.

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.

American Job Center staff are regularly trained on the protocols for implementing priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses, and visible signage alerts AJC customers about priority of service provisions. Individuals who fully register in CTHires are identified as veterans or eligible spouses based on their responses to required system intake prompts, and they receive a priority of service advisory upon completing the registration process. AJC staff also utilize a triage form to identify customers who may have not yet registered, which helps assess whether an individual possesses significant barriers to employment (SBE) or other characteristics that would qualify for one-on-one job search assistance from a CTDOL Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists. In such cases, the individual is promptly referred and scheduled for an appointment.

Ongoing monitoring in the AJCs by JVSG and Wagner-Peyser funded staff will ensure that signage remains visibly posted and new staff training is provided on priority of service, SBE identification, and the DVOP referral process. Program operators will be monitored for evidence that first consideration for participation was given to those veterans and eligible spouses who met the eligibility criteria for that program and, in cases where resources were limited, that no such covered persons were turned away in favor of a non-covered person. Such monitoring will include a demographic analysis of program participants.

Veteran customers receive reemployment services from trained staff at AJCs throughout the state, which include the five comprehensive centers and several smaller, affiliate locations.

DVOPs provide intensive services and facilitate placements to meet the employment needs of veterans and eligible spouses who have significant barriers to employment or have otherwise been designated by the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) as qualifying for DVOP services. These barriers and designations include the following:

• A special disabled or disabled veteran, as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C. §4211(1) and (3); special disabled and disabled veterans are those who: o 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, o were discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability; • A homeless person, as defined in Sections 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302(a) and (b)), as amended; • A recently-separated service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(6), who has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks in the previous 12 months; • An offender, as defined by WIOA Section 3 (38), who is currently incarcerated or who has been released from incarceration; • A veteran lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate; • A low-income individual (as defined by WIOA Section 3 (36)); • Veterans ages 18-24; • Transitioning Service Members in need of intensive services (specifically, TSMs who have been assessed as not meeting Career Readiness Standards; are ages 18-24, regardless of whether they meet Career Readiness Standards; or are active duty service members being involuntarily separated through a Service reduction-in-force); and • Wounded, ill, or injured service members receiving treatment at Military Treatment Facilities or Warrior Transition Units (MTFs — WTUs) and the spouses and family caregivers of such wounded, ill, or injured service members.

Intensive services include: comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs; development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals; group counseling; individual counseling and career planning; and short-term prevocational services that may include development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized

employment or training. Veterans and eligible spouses who do not qualify to receive intensive services from a DVOP may receive these services from other AJC staff.

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) conduct outreach to area employers to assist veterans in gaining employment, and they facilitate the employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in the state's AJCs. LVERs are available to • Plan and participate in job and career fairs; • Conduct job searches and workshops, and establish job search groups, in conjunction with employers; • Coordinate with unions, apprenticeship programs and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans; • Inform Federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans; • Promote credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans; and • Coordinate and participate with other business outreach efforts.

The DVOP will further assess the level of intensive services needed, determine whether case management is necessary, and make appropriate referrals to other supportive services available through the CTDOL or other workforce partners. Veterans and eligible spouses with SBEs will be classified as job-ready or not job-ready; veterans deemed not job- ready will receive intensive services from the DVOP, CTDOL Career Development Specialist, VA staff professionals, and other WIOA partners, as well as supportive services to assist them with addressing barriers and resolving issues that hinder gainful employment. Services will include job search planning or the development of an employment plan, career planning, resume-writing assistance, career counseling, and other supportive services needed to assist the veteran attain job-ready status.

Once the veteran is determined to be job-ready, the DVOP will work with the LVER to make employment connections while continuing to provide case management and other intensive services as appropriate.

Homeless Veterans The existing networks of LVER and DVOP Specialists and homeless shelters within the workforce development areas will continue to be optimized to make services available to homeless veterans. Services to homeless veterans will be coordinated with the Homeless Veteran's Reintegration Project (HVRP), Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF), and the Homeless Veterans' Employment Program (HVEP) through grants from the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the State of Connecticut.

VA Vocational Rehabilitation Participants CTDOL has a long history of collaborating with state and federal agencies to provide services to veterans who may benefit from vocational rehabilitation. CTDOL continues to maintain those relationships and explore new approaches to improve effectiveness. An updated addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been established between CTDOL, and the Hartford Regional Office of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services (VR&E) of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), and the Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS). This MOU defined the partnership between those named, to assist veterans being served under the auspices of Title 38, Chapter 31 of the United States Code.

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

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

Connecticut's One—Stop system currently provides and will continue to ensure physical and programmatic access to facilities, programs, services technology and materials for individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways. With respect to physical accessibility, all five of Connecticut's comprehensive One—Stop American Job Centers, along with the Danielson American Job Center, are designated ADA—compliant. All five comprehensive American Job Centers provide adequate public parking for individuals seeking to use the facilities and have been determined to provide adequate accessible parking options for jobseekers with disabilities. Each of the comprehensive American Job Centers is located on a public bus route. Four of the five comprehensive American Job Centers feature power—assisted front doors. The CTDOL Facilities Unit is committed to pursue installation of power—assisted doors for the fifth office, in New London, when its current lease expires. A planned move of the New London AJC in April 2018 to a new comprehensive AJC in Montville will address any issues with accessibility.

Assistive technology is available to assist jobseekers with disabilities in each of the comprehensive American Job Centers. These technologies include electric adjustable workstations, large screen visual magnifiers, TTY lines for deaf or hard of hearing customers, and large—font computer keyboards in the Career Center. Individuals seeking unemployment—related information or services will be assisted by a full—time CTDOL Unemployment Insurance staff expert located at and providing service from the front desk in each of the five comprehensive American Job Centers. These staff unemployment experts will be able to process paper unemployment claims directly, in—person, for jobseekers with disabilities who may have difficulty filing applications over the phone or via the Internet.

In October 2013, Connecticut was one of eight states to receive a grant under USDOL's Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). Awarded to OWC, the three—year $3,058,706 grant promotes strategic approaches to enhance employment services for individuals with disabilities served by the public workforce investment system.

As a critical innovative feature of this grant, Disability Resource Coordinators establish key partnerships across multiple workforce and disability service systems, coordinate services, and leverage funding to meet the needs of jobseekers with disabilities in the American Job Centers, assess and recommend solutions to physical, programmatic or communications accessibility workplace barriers. Working with DEI Case Managers, jobseekers with disabilities gain access to a wide range of employment assistance,

including assessments, career readiness skills, training and education services. As required by DEI, two local WDBs — Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board and Capital Workforce Partners (North Central area) — became active Employment Networks (ENs) in the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program, thereby expanding the Connecticut workforce system's capacity to serve eligible beneficiaries. DEI also requires the State's participation in an evaluation process to measure the project's impact on outcomes for jobseekers with disabilities.

The DEI grant provides for extensive staff training to build the capacity of Connecticut's One—Stop system to serve jobseekers with disabilities. In PY 2014, American Job Center staff received training on disability awareness and etiquette, universal design, cognitive limitations, mental health, American Sign Language, deafness and deaf culture. This common, cross—agency staff training will be continued as a key feature of Connecticut's coordinated workforce system efforts going forward. Up—to—date assistive technology has been purchased and installed for the American Job Centers. Through DEI, CTDOL has collaborated successfully with several State agencies and community organizations to plan four regional Diverse Ability Career Fairs across Connecticut. The first was held in Rocky Hill in April 2015. Forty—eight employers participated, seeking to fill entry—level to advanced positions in a variety of industries including manufacturing, finance, healthcare, transportation, distribution, and education. More than 600 job seekers attended the event. The second Diverse Ability Career Fair took place in Waterbury in October 2015. Two remaining career fairs are planned for 2016.

The DEI experience in Connecticut is consistent with the long—established commitment of the state's One—Stop system to recognize and meet the rights and needs of individuals with disabilities to access the facilities, programs and services of the workforce system. CTDOL, the Department of Rehabilitation Services (Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, and Bureau of Education and Services to the Blind) and the local WDBs have partnered together effectively for years to address the challenges confronting these valued customers. Lessons learned from these agency—to—agency, staff—to—staff shared experiences, and from the formal evaluation of the DEI experience, will be used to inform effective collaboration among key partners going forward in each local area to meet the objective of accessibility for all individuals and jobseekers.

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.

As one component of the process of establishing certification criteria for One—Stop centers statewide, the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC), supported by the Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC), will require the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to document that each One—Stop center in their respective regions meets the service needs of English language learners. It is

anticipated that overall certification criteria will be developed and proposed by the CETC committee overseeing service coordination for use by the WDBs, including an analysis of state—of—the—art best practices to ensure that LEP customer service needs are met. In reviewing the prospective certification of One—Stop centers, WDBs (in collaboration with the CTDOL WIOA Performance Administration Unit) will be expected to conduct an assessment of each One—Stop center's capacity to address customers' needs, assess and identify relevant assets in each center and the surrounding region, and map out a strategy identifying how the requisite staff, processes, technology, materials, resources and cross—program/cross—agency training will be provided to meet this service priority, for review and monitoring by the CETC committee overseeing service coordination.

The principle of ensuring accessibility will be a priority focus in CETC's oversight of the statewide workforce system. CETC will establish specific accessibility criteria as a key feature of formal State administrative policy concerning the certification of One—Stop Centers in Connecticut.

The state has included the requirement providing that in order for One-Stops to be certified they must have staff which are available to aide customers who have limited English skills. This is contained in the draft WIOA Policy manual and will be subject to monitoring.

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

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

The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) has lead responsibility for coordinating production of Connecticut's WIOA Unified State Plan, including support and facilitation of the various WIOA Transition Work Groups (described on page 45) assigned to address specific required elements of the Plan and to assure alignment and integration of strategies and resulting workforce development activities across the various WIOA titles into a coherent document.

Key senior staff from State agencies responsible for all four WIOA core programs participated the WIOA Transition Work Groups — Service Design and Delivery; Business Engagement; Technology, Data and Outcomes; and Administration/Governance. Senior administrators from CTDOL (Title I and Title III lead administrative agency) were co—leaders of each Work Group. Work Groups included representatives from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, and the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB), who participated and contributed content developed by each group, to address actions to enhance coordination of services across programs throughout the State's workforce development system. In addition, senior CTDOL administrators/managers from Unemployment Insurance Program Operations and the Employment and Training Division responsible for oversight and administration of Wagner—Peyser program employment services, participated on the Work Groups.

While OWC is responsible for overall coordination in developing a single, coherent, comprehensive Unified State Plan, State agencies responsible for each core WIOA program had lead responsibility for managing a planning development process to address specific plan requirements for their assigned WIOA programs.

CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education has lead responsibility for developing the Title II Adult Education Program plan content of Connecticut's Unified State Plan. OWC staff worked directly with designated CSDE staff to assess the Unified State Plan production schedule, clarify content requirements and map out steps to align and integrate planning efforts. Designated CSDE staff participated as active members of the several WIOA Transition Work Groups. At CSDE's invitation, OWC's Executive Director reached out and participated at the September 2015 statewide Adult Education Policy Forum of local directors of adult education to review WIOA requirements, the planning process and opportunities for innovative collaboration of adult education and workforce development efforts at State and local levels.

CSDE engaged the services of an expert consultant to help produce the Title II/Adult Education and Literacy program content. CSDE conducted a needs assessment survey with local adult education program directors to develop key findings and identify trends, needs and priorities. This information was incorporated into the Unified State Plan. CSDE and OWC staff met and conferred on several occasions to coordinate and align the Unified State Plan drafting and Title II planning processes. The Title II program portion of the Unified State Plan was received and reviewed by OWC in early December. A joint effort was conducted to integrate the Title II content into the Unified State Plan draft, including intended coordination of implementation among WIOA partners and across core programs, specifically addressing service coordination for individuals and employers, engagement with the broader education system, and coordination with economic development.

CSDE will participate in ongoing efforts to coordinate program efforts covered by the Unified State Plan (including Title II) going forward. Education Commissioner Wentzell sits as a member of the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC), the State Workforce Board, to promote coordination among programs at the state level. Designated CSDE staff will continue to serve on various CETC Committees and Work Groups — partnering with colleagues from other State agencies with administrative responsibility for core WIOA programs (CTDOL and DORS) to promote coordination in implementation at system and program levels.

CTDOL's Employment and Training Division has lead responsibility for developing the Title III Wagner—Peyser Program content of Connecticut's Unified State Plan. Staff participated actively on the WIOA Transition Work Groups to inform development of plan content, to ensure coordination of planning for implementation of WIOA and related employment services, to make certain that Wagner—Peyser program services "fit" into the larger services coordination strategy contained in the Unified State Plan. Employment and Training Division staff developed the Title III plan content that was integrated into the Unified State Plan. Designated staff will continue to serve on and provide support to the various CETC committees and work groups — partnering with colleagues from

CSDE, DORS and other State agencies to promote effective service coordination across programs.

The Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and Bureau of Education and Services to the Blind (BESB) have lead responsibility for developing the Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Program content for Connecticut's Unified State Plan. Designated BRS and BESB staff served on each of the WIOA Transition Work Groups, charged to collaborate with partners from other agencies in developing strategies to promote effective coordination of programs and services. OWC staff met and conferred with BRS and BESB staff on several occasions to review the status of Unified State Plan drafting and Title IV planning, to ensure alignment of focus and content during the drafting and production process. At the invitation of DORS Commissioner Porter, OWC staff attended the 2016 DORS/BRS Annual Meeting in October to provide information about WIOA, the Unified State Plan and planning process, local planning, opportunities for innovation and coordination, etc.

DORS posted a draft of its Title IV plans for public comment. The State Rehabilitation Councils and Advisory Board and Advisory Board approved those sections of the plan, which was then received and reviewed by OWC. A joint effort between OWC and DORS staff integrated the Title IV content into the Unified State Plan draft, including intended coordination of implementation efforts going forward. As with the Title II program, the Unified State Plan specifically addresses coordination of Vocational Rehabilitation Program services for individuals and employers, and coordinated engagement with the education system and economic development efforts.

Key administrators and staff from BRS and BESB will continue to participate in ongoing efforts to coordinate program efforts covered by the Unified State Plan going forward. DORS Commissioner Porter sits as a CETC member to promote coordination among programs at the state level. Designated DORS staff will continue to serve on and support the various CETC Committees and Work Groups — partnering with colleagues from CTDOL, CSDE and other key State agencies and stakeholders to promote/ensure coordination in implementing at the program level.

Details concerning coordination among the agencies and partners responsible for administration of core WIOA programs are provided in the appropriate sections of this Unified State Plan, including specific descriptions where required in the Adult Education and Literacy Act Program, Wagner—Peyser Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program sections, respectively.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that—

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

2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information

regarding activities of State boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes; Yes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

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

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

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

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

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

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

Please refer to the following link for a map of CT's workforce regions:

http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/OWC/WIOA%20WDB%20Areas.docx

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.

In May, 2015, the Office of Workforce Competitiveness issued policy and procedures to chief elected officials for the initial designation of local workforce development areas, including the requirements of "performed successfully" and "sustained fiscal integrity" as defined in WIOA.

Requests for designation were required to be submitted by the existing local areas' chief elected official on behalf of the area's local elected officials. CT DOL staff subsequently reviewed requests and chief elected officials were notified of designation by OWC, on behalf of Governor Malloy.

As a starting point in the process of identifying workforce regions and planning regions, the Of-fice of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) took the lead role (on behalf of CETC and the Governor) to review relevant labor market information analysis provided by the CTDOL Office of Research to determine the viability of Connecticut's existing five local workforce areas. Subsequent discussions were held with leaders of the local workforce

development boards, including business leaders actively engaged in and knowledgeable about workforce development efforts in each of the existing workforce areas, leaders of regional business associations/chambers of commerce serving on CETC, regional planning councils and other workforce system stakeholders, to address pragmatic considerations of regional configurations.

Consistent with practical guidance received through these discussions with regional workforce development leaders, and on the merits of the LMI data analysis indicating no compelling reasons to change existing regional workforce boundaries, OWC (on behalf of CETC and Governor Malloy) then reached out to local designated chief local elected officials in each of the five existing workforce areas to propose designation of each as a local workforce area under WIOA. With the concurrence of the chief elected officials, OWC proposed designation of the five local workforce regions, which policy was subsequently endorsed by CETC and approved by Governor Malloy. Four of the five local areas received initial two-year designation as of July 1, 2016 with the fifth area initialing receiving a one-year initial designation. In June, 2016 this area was granted the second year designation through June 30, 2017.

Identification of Planning Regions

• In January 2016, the CT Labor Commissioner, Executive Director of the Office of Workforce Competiveness, CETC Chairman, and representatives from Governor Malloy's office had a meeting to discuss regional planning. Current regional planning relationships were discussed as well as the desire to continue with statewide efforts in workforce development.

• The State of CT has engaged in grant-related regional planning activities with the WDBs. Examples of Multi-Regional Initiatives include:

1. In October, 2015, The Workplace was awarded a$14M, five-year grant will support the Southwestern Connecticut Health CareeRx Academy (Academy) to provide career training and opportunities in health professions for low-income individuals. The Academy will serve Fairfield County and a portion of New Haven County.

2. The Northwest WIB is applying for is applying for two grants requiring regional planning - there is one called tech hires that will utilize Waterbury as the hub. The other is an Economic Development Administration grant for telecommunications infrastructure that will allow us to leverage it with the tech hires application. A team will discuss what the region will look like and it may very well expand beyond the Northwest to Stamford or to Hartford.

3. CWP and the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County MA participate on New England's Knowledge Corridor Steering Committee. The New England Knowledge Corridor is an interstate partnership of regional economic development, planning, business, tourism and educational institutions that work together to advance the region's economic progress and comprises the Hartford, Springfield and New Haven metro areas. Its goal is to preserve, create and maintain a sustainable, economically competitive, and equitable bi-state Knowledge Corridor Region.

4. EWIB and Workforce Alliance collaborated in planning and were awarded a $5.5M Ready to Work grant from US DOL. The CT Ready to Work Initiative will provide training, supports, and job placement services to 567 long-term unemployed workers in the fields of Information Technology, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing.

• The CETC Chair and OWC Director will further address the identification of regions and regional planning at the Fall, 2016 meeting of the CT Workforce Development Council

• The CETC Planning and Performance Accountability Committee will be the entity that continues to steer and address these efforts.

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

The CETC Planning and Performance Accountability Committee (PPAC) has been assigned lead responsibility for developing proposed State policy addressing subsequent designation of local workforce areas, as an element of its proposed scope of work. This work is being addressed and a policy will be drafted accordingly.

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

The appeals process will be developed once the policy to determine shared infrastructure costs is developed.

The CETC Service Design and Delivery Committee (SDDC) has been assigned lead responsibility for developing proposed State policy addressing appeals of determinations related to infrastructure funding, as an element of its proposed scope of work.

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.

The CT Employment and Training Commission as well as WIOA Administration issue state policies on workforce development and statewide workforce development through Administrative Policy memos. They can be accessed via the CTDOL WIOA Policy Manual.

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

Governor's Set Aside Funding: USDOL Training and Employment Guidance Letters issue allocations for WIOA funding each year including the percentages and mandatory activities under the Governor's Reserve. The current set—aside is 15% of Connecticut's funding, while for Rapid Response activities, it is 25% of the total allocation. WIOA

Administration uses these funds to support Central Office staff that administer, manage and oversee the program, contracts, performance management and finances for Connecticut's WIOA program. Once the PY allocations are determined, the CT Employment and Training Commission approves the plan. CT DOL grants flexibility and funding, using the Governor's set aside, to the Workforce Development Boards to conduct experimental pilot programs that meet the regional needs of employers and the workforce. For example, such funds have been used to provide additional services to ex—offenders; for transportation subsidies in the Eastern WDB; and Emergency NEG—like services.

Rapid Response: For companies and their workers, the effects of a plant closing or layoff can be devastating. In Connecticut, neither companies nor workers and their unions are alone in facing these changes. Connecticut's Rapid Response Team, headed by the State Department of Labor, (CT DOL) exists to ease the impact of layoffs and to assure that workers are offered a full range of benefits and services. The Team is made up of representatives from the CT DOL and the local Workforce Development Boards. Support is also available from the Department of Economic & Community Development and the Department of Social Services.

The Rapid Response Team is available to conduct, prior to layoffs, "Early Intervention" sessions where employees can learn about unemployment benefits, job search assistance, and training opportunities. Information is also made available on health insurance options, community services, and local agencies that provide help, advocacy, and support to dislocated workers and their families. All services provided by the team are free.

Layoff Aversion: the state of Connecticut has established the Shared Work program to enable employers to keep skilled employees working during slow—downs. In these instances, CT DOL pays partial unemployment benefits for reduced hours. This limits the impact of layoffs on employer unemployment taxes. Employee hours and wages cannot be reduced by less than 10 percent or more than 60 percent.

C. IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES.

In cases involving natural disasters, rapid response activities are coordinated with CT's Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the local Workforce Development Boards and other state and community 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.

In Connecticut, many TAA petitions are filed by Rapid Response staff members. In such cases, Rapid Response staffers have contacted the company regarding all reemployment and supportive services, including TAA. In most cases, Rapid Response staff members provide Early Intervention services at the employment site prior to layoff. Early intervention services include an overview of unemployment, job search assistance, health insurance options and possible training and employment services through both WIOA and TAA. If worker orientations are provided prior to a TAA certification, workers are given an overview of the possible benefits that may become available should the company and/or unit of the company become certified. Workers are advised as to how workers would be notified of their eligibility under TAA if the company becomes TAA certified.

In cases where an employer does not allow Rapid Response on—site to provide information on re—employment and possible TAA services prior to layoff, or where a TAA petition has been filed without prior Rapid Response knowledge, Rapid Response staff contact the employer officials listed on the TAA petition to explain Rapid Response services and to request a list of potential TAA—impacted workers' names and addresses. Rapid Response staff members send a TAA—outreach letter to potentially impacted workers. The outreach letter advises the individual that a TAA petition has been filed, provides the US DOL TAA website where additional information on the program can be found, and describes the re—employment services that are available through our American Job Centers. Additionally, the outreach letter provides workers who would like to hear additional information to participate in a webinar on available resources. Rapid Response staff members conduct weekly webinars on available transition services, and a description of the TAA program is discussed during the presentation.

Information about TAA is available on CT DOL's website, is disseminated by Rapid Response Teams and a detailed fact sheet on TAA benefits and terms for workers is available at: http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/TradeAct/

In cases where Early Intervention services cannot be provided at the employer's work site, the Rapid Response Team will mail impacted workers information packets with details on the array of services that are available to assist them. The materials will include an invitation to attend either an in-person Early Intervention session at an American Job Center, Community College, town hall or other venue or attend an interactive webinar with Rapid Response Team members.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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.

Training grants are available to help companies grow and maintain competitiveness by investing in training of their existing workforce. CT DOL Business Services Consultants work directly with companies to design, develop, and provide funding for projects and can help businesses locate appropriate training providers Incumbent Worker Training grants are structured to be flexible to meet the business's training objectives. Customized training is also available as administered by the Workforce Development Boards.

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 state's workforce system challenge is to identify effective workforce solutions and collaborative approaches that benefit both job seeker and employer customers. The Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship Training works collaboratively with business and industry, economic development, education, training providers, and other partners on talent development strategies and workforce solutions to provide workers with the skills businesses need. Registered apprenticeship is a workforce solution that contributes to the development of industry—defined competencies needed by employers in the state, and serves as a proven industry—driven workforce education and preparation strategy for workers.

The Office of Apprenticeship Training invested in an aggressive training and outreach initiative to integrate registered apprenticeship into the career guidance and career exploration services offered through the American Job Center system, both virtually and as part of staff—assisted services. Through the Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant, the Office of Apprenticeship Training provides apprenticeship awareness workshops to the adult and dislocated worker customers of the American Job Centers. This is an effort to ensure that apprenticeship is included as part of the full complement of education and training services the workforce system provides to its job seeker and employer customers. Department of Labor Business Services Consultants and American Job Center partners promote the integration of apprenticeship into business engagement strategies by encouraging the development of apprenticeship programs as a solution to meet business customer needs.

While most registered apprenticeship programs are funded by program sponsors, the Office of Apprenticeship Training workforce system is strategically leveraging state and federal funds to offset training costs for employers and to develop and advance worker pipelines for both emerging and established employers and regional industry sectors. As part of the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative, the Office of Apprenticeship Training and the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) are working together to implement registered apprenticeship as a pipeline for customized training programs in manufacturing at General Dynamics/Electric Boat and members of the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (EAMA). The American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) enables the Office of Apprenticeship Training to expand apprenticeship programs in new and growing industries as diverse as healthcare, Information Technology, and advanced manufacturing. While similar in purpose, the Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF),

which is a partnership with the state's Department of Economic and Community Development to support manufacturing companies in their efforts to implement real time, demand—driven registered apprenticeships. Lastly, Connecticut's Apprenticeship Subsidized Training and Employment Program assists small businesses and manufacturers by offering wage subsidies for high school and college students interested in becoming an apprentice.

The strategic partnerships in Connecticut's workforce system ensure a clearer path for participants to succeed with the job—driven opportunities that registered apprenticeship programs offer. Apprenticeship provides a flexible training delivery option and when used in the context of economic development strategies, creates a seamless pipeline of skilled workers and flexible career pathways to meet current and

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).

CT DOL conducts the ETPL application process on a rolling basis. An original ETPL Pre-Application

must be completed and submitted to the Lead WDB and a copy to the appropriate Secondary

WDB(s)…After receiving and reviewing the Pre-Application, the Lead WDB will direct the provider

to complete Application A or B and submit it for review. After this point, we anticipate the WIOA

process will remain largely the same as it has been under WIA. That is, once the provider

completes and submits either App. A or B, the board reviews the application and decides whether

to approve the application or not. If it is approved by the board(s), the provider information will be

submitted by the lead board to CT DOL for various employer checks (OSHA, Tax, Wage). If

approved, CT DOL informs the board that the provider may be added to CTHires. If it cannot be

approved, the provider will have the opportunity to resolve the OSHA, Tax, or Wage issues and the

board may request another review for approval. Additional procedures for ETPL eligibility can be

found at http://www/wia/wioa-trngproviderapps.htm The WIOA process is further described in

the CTDOL WIOA Policy Manual on pages 154 - 168.

Post secondary and educational institutions carrying out programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965 and entities carrying out Apprenticeship programs under the National Apprenticeship Act are automatically granted initial eligibility upon receipt of a completed application.

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.

All WIOA related policy memos have been combined into a unified policy manual which is continuously updated for accuracy and content. The updated manual can be found at: http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/wioa.htm.

Several methods are used to comprehensively implement and monitor priority of service including data validation, program compliance monitoring, file case review and electronic case management systems. CT DOL uses the new CT HIRES automated case management services. This database includes fields to designate basic skills deficiency, public assistance receipt, and low-income status.

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

In the past, our AP 01 04 Change 1: allowed a board to transfer not more than 30% of allocated funds between Adult employment and training and Dislocated Worker employment and training, if approved by the Governor.

Under WIOA 100% of funds for a fiscal year may be transferred, if approved by the Governor between adult employment and training activities and dislocated worker employment and training activities. CT's policy and criteria for transferring funds can be found in the current WIOA manual at: http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/wioa.htm on page 66

C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS 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)

Out of School Youth ages 16 to 24 and In School Youth 14-21 that meet specific eligibility requirements, may qualify for the following Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act services. • Tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including • dropout prevention strategies; • Alternative secondary school offerings; • Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component • of the work experience: ? Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout • the school year; ? Pre-apprenticeship programs; ? Internships as defined in § 680.170 of the regulations and job shadowing; and ? On-the-job training opportunities; • Occupational skill training with priority consideration for training programs that lead to • recognized post-secondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations; • Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities • and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster; • Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities • encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors; • Supportive services; • Adult mentoring for the duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after • program participation; • Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation; • Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as • referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth; • Financial literacy education; • Entrepreneurial skills training; • Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors • or occupations available in the local area*, such as career awareness, career counseling, and careerexploration services; and • Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

CT DOL has issued a policy which incorporates US DOL's guidance regarding administrative procurement procedures and the extent to which providers of youth services, such as the program design framework component, the ten program elements, and youth services delivered in a One-Stop setting, must be selected. The State of Connecticut adopted all such guidance and directed each area comply with these policies. See TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER NO. 9-00 http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/tegl.pdf The youth policies of the five workforce boards were reviewed in Summer 2015.

The five workforce development boards understand Job Corps to be a viable option and include it on the roster of service providers to whom they refer young people. In addition, nearby American Job Centers provide workshops for Job Corps student employees, introducing them to a variety of job search resources and other services. In addition, state monitoring, file review and data validation evaluate local area youth policy comprehensively. Following program monitoring, best practices and areas for corrective action are identified. CT DOL will also offer technical assistance to the WDBs to assist them in meeting youth performance measures. Related youth policies can be found at: CTDOL WIOA Policy Manual pages 123-129.

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

In a previous comment, we discussed Connecticut's plan to resolve issues between WIOA policy and our state Department of Education policy on school attendance. (See also proposed AP on Youth Policy)

We propose to develop and emphasize career pathways by emphasizing the connection to career ladders as part of an Out of School Youth's individual service strategy —— an educational path along with occupational training for high—demand jobs, as defined by LMI and the LWDB.

For Out of School Youth, engagement, financial literacy, adult mentoring will be critical pieces. In addition, CT DOL will encourage the WDBs and subrecipients to develop plans which pay special attention to services which engage and attract:

• English language learners (working closely with Adult ED/ESL partners and contextualized learning opportunities including IBEST models) • Youth involved with the justice system (working closely with Court Support Services Division and community partners to support reduced recidivism and improved outcomes for such youth) • Homeless, pregnant or parenting or youth (linking youth with housing and child care as available in the community, to stabilize pathways to self—sufficiency) • Youth with disabilities (working closely with Vocational Rehabilitation partners to serve these youth in more seamless ways)

In the fall of 2017 CTDOL conducted a Youth Summit to explore ways of outreaching disconnected

youth with barriers. Attendance included a wide range of state agencies, local workforce development

boards and their providers, private non-profit agencies, philanthropic organizations and youth.

Presentations regarding each of the WIOA identified barriers were explored and a blueprint for

moving forward was developed. The blueprint seeks to provide the necessary support to leverage

support and assistance in aligning core programs around youth programs.

Performance Indicators for OSY effective July, 2016:

1. Placement in Employment/Education 2nd Qtr. after exit 2. Placement in Employment/Education 4th Qtr. after exit 3. Median Earnings 2nd Qtr. after exit 4. Credential Attainment (up to 1 year after exit) 5. Measurable Skills Gains 6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Connecticut seeks to define measurable skill gains in terms of gains on standardized tests for reading, math and ELL assessments; completing part or all of a GED course; earning GED credential; completion of one or more developmental education courses, passing a

credit bearing; completing a designated number of higher education credits; objective demonstration of competencies related to work—based training. Again these indicators will be designed to emphasize career pathways.

Connecticut will leverage and align core programs through the CETC and WIOA implementation work groups. WIOA, Adult Education, Wagner Peyser and Vocational Rehab have been working with CETC work groups to create stronger linkages among partners.

A high—quality, comprehensive career pathway system will be developed and implemented that includes multiple entry and exit points that meets learners where they are, provides education, training and support services needed for career advancement, and ensures a skilled workforce that meets Connecticut's talent needs.

USDOL and other federal administrative entities are expected to provide additional guidance to the states regarding this issue in early 2016. Actions and methods supporting the state's implementation efforts include: • Unified State Plan • Statewide MOU • WIOA Administrative policy • Ongoing program reviews by the implementation team • New performance oriented data system CT HIRES

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)

CT DOL ensures that youth services for both out of school and in-school youth are effectively implemented through contract management and oversight, administrative policy, data validation, monitoring and technical assistance Youth related policies contained in CTDOL's WIOA policy manual prioritize out of school youth; drop out recovery and post-secondary credentials. Yearly monitoring includes a complete review of local youth services and providers to ensure federal law, policy and regulations are implemented. Monitoring includes interviews with staff and participants to ensure quality youth programming is provided.

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.

CT DOL has a draft policy. An excerpt includes: For youth who require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment, additional assistance may be defined to include youth who are/have: • Emancipated • Aged out of foster care • Previous dropouts or have been suspended five or more times or

have been expelled • Court/agency referrals mandating school attendance • At risk of dropping out of school by a school official • Never held a job • Been fired from a job within the twelve months prior to application (applies to out of school youth); and • Never held a full—time job for more than thirteen consecutive weeks (applies to out of school youth). • Migrant Youth • Incarcerated Parent/Guardian • Behavior Problems at School • Serious emotional, medical or psychological problems; • Chronic Health Conditions including addictions • Family Literacy Problems • Domestic, Sexual Violence or other Trauma Survivor or reside in abusive environment • One or more grade levels below appropriate for age • Repeated at least one secondary grade level • Core grade point average of less than 1.5; • For each year of secondary education, are at least two semester credits behind the rate required to graduate from high school; • Cultural barriers that may be a hindrance to employment • American Indian, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian • Refugee • Homeless • Eligible to receive free or reduced price lunch; • A foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made • Locally defined "additional assistance"

Under WIOA, local areas may define additional criterion for a youth who "requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment" however under WIOA local areas may no longer define local barriers.

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.

Connecticut's policies on youth are complicated by discrepancies between the state education statutes and WIOA. Connecticut General Statutes, Sec. 10—184 says if a student has withdrawn from high school, he/she is considered an "out of school youth."

"Not attending school" language has not been defined by our state Department of Education, which challenges our coordination with our adult education partner. What defines "out of school" is whether the youth/family has officially withdrawn in writing or not. Further, Connecticut youth must be 17 or older to withdraw and it requires parent or guardian's permission. (At the time of written withdrawal, parents/guardians/students MUST be apprised of adult education and other option for child.)

SDE provides transition and supportive services for students with special needs up to age 21. At 18 a student doesn't need to officially withdraw in writing, but it is the policy of our Education Dept. to require 18 year olds to get a written withdrawal form. (This is because it forces the system to apprise the family that if they have an IEP and withdraw, they lose all entitlements to IEP services. 17 year olds can return to school, and reinstate IEP within 90 days. Those who withdraw from school in writing are only eligible for services under ADA, not other special education services. There are exceptions to this policy for certain students.)

Until our draft policy is adopted and there is a clarification, CT DOL is using these definitions used for purposes of unemployment benefits: "School" means an established

institution of vocational, academic or technical instruction or education, other than a college or university. "Regularly enrolled student" means an individual who has completed all forms and processes required to attend a school, college or university and who will attend prescribed classes at the times they are offered.

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.

Basic Skills Deficiency per WIOA Policy Manual page 102

Youth

As used in § 681.210(c)(3), a youth is ''basic skills deficient'' if he or she:

(1) Has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or

(2) Are 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.

Adults - § 688.120 An adult, who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. In using only National Reporting System approved Connecticut Competency System (CCS) test tools and based on the CASAS NRS Educational Functioning Level, CT has determined that a score of 236 and below on any test is considered to meet the criteria of basic skills deficiency.

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

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

Connecticut is not a single—area state.

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:

A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;
B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;
C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;
D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND
E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESSES USED TO:

A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;
B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;
C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;
D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.
E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE'S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT

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;

Under the Secretary of Labor's waiver authority outlined in Section 189(i)(3)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act(WIOA) and 20 CFR and 679.600, the Secretary may waive certain provisions of WIOA Title I Subtitle A, B, and E and provisions found in Sections 8-10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act. WIOA Section 189(i)(3)(B) and 20 CFR 679.620 identify elements that must be included in a waiver request. A State may request a waiver in its overall Unified or Combined State Plan submission or modification. Or, if submitting separate from the State Plan submission, States may use this template to request a waiver. States may also request a waiver using their own format or form, as long as elements required by WIOA are addressed in the request. After reviewing a state's initial request, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) may request additional information if necessary to complete its review.

To submit a waiver request, e-mail this completed form (or state-developed form) along with a cover letter to WIOA.Plan@dol.gov and the appropriate ETA regional office. ETA will also accept hard copy submissions.

Date: 3/1/2018

State: Connecticut

Agency: Department of Labor

Provide narrative for the following elements:

Statutory and/or regulatory requirements to be waived Indicate which part of the WIOA or the regulations the state would like to waive.

The State of CT is seeking a waiver from the following Section(s): 20 CFR 677.150 (c)(1)(i) as it pertains to Title I Youth.

Background

Title I of WIOA outlines a broad youth vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework through which states and local areas can leverage other Federal, state, local, and philanthropic resources to support in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY). Title I of WIOA affirms the Department of Labor's (DOL) commitment to providing high-quality services for youth, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for

skills training, such as pre-apprenticeships or internships, for in-demand industries and occupations, and culminating with employment, enrollment in postsecondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship.

Per TEGL 21-16 and 20 CFR 677.150 exit for Youth participants cannot be determined until at least 90 days have elapsed since the participant last received services; services do not include self-service, information-only services or activities, or follow-up services. This also requires that there are no plans to provide the participant with future services. 20 CFR 681.410 requires that a state and local area expend at least 75 percent of youth funds to provide services to out-of-school youth. As indicated this represents the spirit of the laws focus on helping youth ages 16-21 who are not enrolled in school reconnect with the resources they require to gain self-sufficient employment. It is no coincidence that law and regulations at 20 CFR 681.210 further establishes a series of specific requirements for Out of School participation including: Not attending any school, not younger than 16 or older than 24 at the time of enrollment and with at least one of the following barriers: • A school dropout; • A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter. School year calendar quarter is based on how a local school district defines its school year quarters. In cases where schools do not use quarters, local programs must use calendar year quarters; • A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner; • An offender; • A homeless individual aged 16 to 24 who meets the criteria defined in sec. 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2(6)), a homeless child or youth aged 16 to 24 who meets the criteria defined in sec. 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)) or a runaway; • An individual in foster care or who has aged out of the foster care system or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement; • An individual who is pregnant or parenting; • An individual with a disability; or • A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

While the law, regulations and TEGL's fail to identify Out of School youth participants as disconnected, the similarities cannot be ignored. According to youth.gov Disconnected youth1 are often defined as young people ages 14-24 who are homeless, in foster care, involved in the justice system, or are neither employed nor enrolled in an educational institution. Across the U.S., there are approximately 6.7 million youth that exhibit one or more of the above risk factors and touch multiple systems.2 In Connecticut this equates to 45,000 youth who meet this definition. (Dalio Foundation entitled "Untapped Potential") While it is clear the spirit of the legislation strives to assist these individuals, the program exit design fails to take into consideration the issues that disconnected youth face in meeting a 90 day without activity exit. Youth who are disconnected often face barriers that preclude them from meeting this threshold. In many cases disconnected youth are struggling with the most basic issues of well-being including food, shelter, safety, physical and mental health and clothing and as such are unable to successfully complete WIOA programming while they fulfill these basic needs. In October of 2017 Connecticut

conducted a Youth Summit to discuss issues in identifying and supporting Out of School Youth with barriers. Included in the conference were workforce development boards, youth providers, state agencies, philanthropic organizations and youth themselves. During this conference attendee's drafted a roadmap forward for better serving disconnected youth including WIOA Out of School participants. It was agreed by all in attendance that having a 90 day exit for youth was not only unrealistic but unintentionally exited participants from programming when they may have needed our support the most.

Actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers Describe the actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers.

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. State of Connecticut regulations and policy align with current federal law.

Goals and expected programmatic outcomes of waiver Describe and specify how the waiver will help the state achieve an identified strategic goal or set of goals that it has outlined in its State Plan. If possible and appropriate the type of waiver requested, provide quantifiable projections for programmatic outcomes that will result from the waiver.

Waiving the 90 day exit for youth will help to ensure Connecticut provides services to youth participants who are most in need including those who are unable to enter or complete post-secondary education due to the significant barriers they must overcome. As stated in the CT Unified State Plan, in FY 2013-2014 Connecticut Adult Education Programs serves 6,041 students under age 22. Adult Education programs currently target and reach some youth from Connecticut's urban centers, both the majority of recent drop outs are not enrolling in education programs. These young adults face serious barriers to employment when attempting to compete in a labor market demanding viable interpersonal, problem solving and technical skills even at the entry level. Connecticut believes that in waiving the 90 day exit policy for youth it will provide workforce development boards and their providers greater flexibility in recruiting and retaining an up to now unreachable population with significant barriers. Connecticut believes that this fulfils the intent of WIOA law.

Individuals impacted by the waiver Describe which populations the waiver will benefit, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment.

In School and Out of School Youth who are eligible for WIOA title I services will be impacted including those who have significant barriers as identified in the law.

Process for monitoring progress in implementation Describes the processes used to monitor the progress in implementing the waiver.

Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of the impact the waivers have on programmatic goals and outcomes.

Additionally, the CTDOL WIOA Administration unit will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized.

Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices. State staff involved with the administration of WIOA and performance reporting will periodically examine the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this waiver. This strategy ensures that the goals described above, as well as those outlined in the State's Unified Plan, are consistent with established objectives of the WIOA and federal and state regulations.

Notice to affected local boards Address how local boards affected by the waiver were notified of the request.

Local Boards via Board members and/or Board staff as well as WIOA partners and other interested stakeholders participate in policy development. Additionally, WDB's receive the opportunity to participate in a public comment period. . Monthly meetings are conducted to provide input, guidance and technical assistance to Connecticut's Workforce Development Boards.

Public Comment Provide a description of the proactive solicitation of public comments. At a minimum, post the proposed waiver request to the state's official website for comment. Ideally, develop a targeted outreach strategy to collect input and comment from all affected stakeholders. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state's review of the public comments received.

In accordance with the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.135, Connecticut is submitting a modification to its Unified State Plan, which is subject to the requirements outlined in the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.130(d) for public review and comment. As such, waiver request posted on our website for comment and review by required parties and the public.

Waiver Impact

Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report. The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

The Connecticut Department of Labor WIOA administration unit will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices. Outcomes of the waiver will be reported in the WIOA Annual Report.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient; Yes

2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist; Yes

3. The state established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members. Yes

4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2). Yes

5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership. Yes

6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions. Yes

7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7). Yes

8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan. Yes

9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I. Yes

10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report. Yes

11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3); Yes

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

All program-specific requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS.

As funding allows, the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) will continue to promote the professional development of its staff, leveraging state, agency, and, as applicable, federal grant funds to enhance the skills of its workforce. CTDOL will continue to pursue professional résumé writer certification for all appropriate American Job Center staff utilizing agency staff for training and test preparation. Employment Service staff, including Business Services staff, will continue to have the opportunity to attend annual workforce development conferences such as the CT Learns and Works Conference and the Conference on Serving Adults with Disabilities. To build capacity, CTDOL will train American Job Center staff to facilitate a variety of job readiness workshops. In addition, in—service training courses offered each fall and spring by the Department of Administrative Services may be made available to Employment Service staff to enhance computer, communication, writing, public speaking, presentation and supervisory skills.

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.

The agency will continue to provide UI training to consistent with Connecticut's coordinated workforce system efforts to ensure AJC customers are properly referred to appropriate services.

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) experts are available at the affiliate and comprehensive Job American Job Centers to assist customers with unemployment-related inquiries. This assistance may include processing continued claims; releasing payments when appropriate; processing address changes; assisting claimants with filing appeals; providing identity verifications, printouts or status letters; and supplying information on the Shared Work program and Rapid Response services. The UI experts will also provide handouts or desk aids to customers with questions that can be answered via the web (www.filectui.com) and inform claimants of other services provided by the American Job Centers. These UI experts can also grant requests for a reasonable accommodation by taking initial and/or additional unemployment claims for claimants that experience physical and/or cognitive limitations that make it difficult to file their claims over the telephone or on the internet. UI experts in the American Job Centers will also have access to Language Line services to accommodate customers with limited English proficiency.

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

Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA): CTDOL meets the reemployment needs of many UI claimants through the Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA) program, which serves claimants who are either profiled as most likely to exhaust benefits or receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-service members (UCX). Selected claimants report for services in the Bridgeport, Hamden, Hartford, Montville and Waterbury American Job Centers. DOL's RESEA program design includes an increased UI presence in the AJCs and the extensive involvement of UI staff. Ongoing staff training includes an emphasis on enhancing the skills needed to assist claimants with their reemployment efforts; RESEA program representatives have been trained to effectively access labor market information specific to a claimant's job skills and employment prospects, develop a reemployment plan to meet the claimant's needs and determine appropriate referrals to reemployment services or training. CTDOL completed more than 9,000 initial RESEAs during the 12-month period ending December 31, 2017, and expects to complete a significantly higher number during the subsequent 12 months.

Required RESEA Services. Each RESEA must include the following minimum components to serve the needs of the claimant. • UI eligibility assessment and referral to adjudication, as appropriate, if an issue or potential issue(s) is identified; • Requirement for the claimant to report to an AJC; • Orientation to AJC services; • The provision of labor market and career information that addresses the claimant's specific needs; • Registration with the state's job bank; • Enrollment in Wagner-Peyser funded Employment Services; • Development or revision of an individual reemployment plan that includes work search activities, accessing services provided through an AJC or using self-service tools, and/or approved training to which the claimant acknowledges agreement; and • Provision of at least one additional career services, such as: o Referrals and coordination with other workforce activities, including the WIOA Dislocated Worker Program; o Labor Exchange, including information about in-demand industries and occupations and/or job search assistance; o Information about the availability of supportive services; o Information and assistance with financial aid resources outside of those provided by WIOA; o Financial literacy services; and o Career readiness activities, including assistance with resume writing and/or interviewing. Pathway to Reemployment: To augment outreach efforts to UI claimants beyond RESEA, CTDOL provides a reemployment service program to introduce other UI customers to the workforce programs available through the AJC network. Pathway to Reemployment is delivered at affiliate AJC locations throughout Connecticut, in coordination with AJC partners, and primarily targets first-time filers who may be particularly unaware of the services available. As with RESEA, a facilitated orientation provides details about UI work search requirements and advice about how to access labor market information and use web-based tools ? such as mySkills myFuture, MyNextMove, O*Net Online, and CTDOL's Job & Career ConneCTion ? to assist with reemployment efforts. Pathway to Reemployment participants are provided with materials that include a My Reemployment Plan (MPR) handout and information about CTHires, with an emphasis on the system functionality that enables job seekers to post resumes, conduct an online job search, and establish a Virtual Recruiter to receive notifications about job postings that match their

personally selected criteria. The AJC workshop calendar is also distributed to further promote AJC services. Like RESEA, Pathway to Reemployment is mandatory for those selected, and UI claimants who fail to report without notice and good cause receive a one-week disqualification. Begun as a pilot in March 2017, the program served 377 claimants through the five-month period ending July 31, 2017. CTDOL implemented an enhanced and permanent Pathway to Reemployment program in October 2017, which provided participants with expanded guidance about resume writing, job search and networking tips, and strategies for successful interviewing.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

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

1) Coordination and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner- Peyser Act; (2) Registration of UI claimants with State's employment service; (3) Administration of the work test for State unemployment compensation system, including eligibility assessments and job-finding and placement services for UI claimants; and (4) Provision of referrals-to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

CTDOL provides a Claimant's Guide to Unemployment Benefits to all initial unemployment claim filers. This guide contains all necessary information related to a person's eligibility for unemployment benefits as well as a listing of the American Job Centers throughout Connecticut and information about the employment services they provide to job seekers. As a result of filing for Unemployment Insurance, UI claimants are registered with the State's employment service in the form of a registration in CTHires, the state's web-based workforce development system that provides case management and labor exchange services and the state job bank. Claimants will receive a welcome email from CTHires after filing which explains the services available and encourages them to utilize the system for their job search.

CTDOL administers the work test for UI claimants through the UI RESEA program. All claimants selected to participate will report to an American Job Center for a review of their UI eligibility and efforts to find work. Any claimant determined to have an eligibility issue or insufficient work search efforts will have a stop entered on his or her unemployment claim and the eligibility issue is addressed by the Adjudicator in the American Job Center. All claimants who attend the initial one-on-one RESEA appointment will receive a customized reemployment plan, jointly developed with the RESEA representative, and be required to participate in at least one additional mandatory employment service activity. Services include referrals to employment readiness workshops, résumé critiques, career counseling, WIOA orientation sessions, or any other service available in the American Job Center.

State agency merit-based public employees will continue to provide Wagner-Peyser Act funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. These services include job readiness workshops on topics such as Job Search Strategies,

Résumé Preparation and Interviewing Techniques; one-on-one career counseling, résumé critiques; employer recruitments; job readiness assessments; and Career Center services. In the Career Centers located in the American Job Centers, jobseekers will be able to work on their résumés and cover letters, complete online job applications, research companies, review job postings and conduct any other business related to their job search. They will have access to copy machines, fax machines, free postage for mailing résumés and applications to employers and, most importantly, in-person support from CTDOL and Workforce Development Board contractor staff who will provide whatever guidance and support might be needed. Career Center customers with disabilities will have access to accessible technology, such as large screen computer monitors and visual magnifiers, TTY machines, and computer keyboards with enhanced lettering and any other reasonable accommodation the customer might need. Labor exchange services detailed above will be available to all jobseekers at any time regardless of the order in which they are seeking services.

All American Job Centers will have a process in-place that allows staff to refer customers to education and training programs as well as other resources and supportive services. Some referrals will be made "in-house" to other partner agencies under the roof of the American Job Center while others may be to organizations that are located in separate venues. Trade Act clients will be co-enrolled into WIOA as a standard operating procedure.

CTDOL will continue to deploy a team of Business Services Specialists across Connecticut whose sole focus is working with employers. Business Services Specialists identify employers interested in scheduling recruitment events in the American Job Centers and coordinate those events around the state. They ask employers to post job openings into the CTHires system to generate employment opportunities for UI claimants. Business Services Specialists also write Manufacturing Innovation Funds (MIF) Incumbent Worker Training contracts with employers, provide business consultations to identify the company's needs, promote tax credit and wage reimbursement programs such as WOTC and STEP-UP, and provide customized labor market and UI information. UI claimants typically benefit from these initiatives.

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

CTDOL mails a Claimant's Guide to Unemployment Benefits to all initial unemployment claim filers. This booklet contains all necessary information related to a person's eligibility for unemployment benefits as well as a listing of the American Job Centers throughout Connecticut and information about the employment services they provide to job seekers. As a result of filing for Unemployment Insurance, UI claimants are registered with the State's employment service in the form of a registration in CTHires, the state's web—based workforce development system that provides case management and labor exchange services and the state job bank. Claimants will receive a welcome email from CTHires after filing which explains the services available and encourages them to utilize the system for their job search. CTDOL administers the work test for UI claimants through the UI REA program and RESEA programs. All claimants selected to

participate will report to an American Job Center for a review of their UI eligibility and efforts to find work. Any claimant determined to have an eligibility issue or insufficient work search efforts will have a stop entered on his or her unemployment claim and be referred to the CTDOL Adjudications unit for action. The process for referring claimants to Adjudications is already in place, as is the feedback loop, which includes advising Employment Service staff about the outcome of the referral and the need for rescheduling. All claimants who attend the initial one—on—one REA appointment will receive a customized reemployment plan, jointly developed with the REA/RESEA representative, and be required to participate in at least one additional mandatory employment service activity. Services include referrals to employment readiness workshops, résumé critiques, career counseling, WIOA orientation sessions, or any other service available in the American Job Center.

State agency merit—based public employees will continue to provide Wagner—Peyser Act funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations at the American Job Centers in Hartford, Bridgeport, Hamden, Waterbury, New London and Danielson. These services include job readiness workshops on topics such as Job Search Strategies, Résumé Preparation and Interviewing Techniques; one—on—one career counseling, résumé critiques; employer recruitments; job readiness assessments; and Career Center services. In the Career Centers located in the American Job Centers, jobseekers will be able to work on their résumés and cover letters, complete online job applications, research companies, review job postings and conduct any other business related to their job search. They will have access to copy machines, fax machines, free postage for mailing résumés and applications to employers and, most importantly, in—person support from CTDOL and Workforce Development Board contractor staff who will provide whatever guidance and support might be needed. Career Center customers with disabilities will have access to accessible technology, such as large screen computer monitors and visual magnifiers, TTY machines, and computer keyboards with enhanced lettering and any other reasonable accommodation the customer might need. Labor exchange services detailed above will be available to all jobseekers at any time regardless of the order in which they are seeking services. All American Job Centers will have a process in—place that allows staff to refer customers to education and training programs as well as other resources and supportive services. Some referrals will be made "in—house" to other partner agencies under the roof of the American Job Center while others may be to organizations that are located in separate venues. Trade Act clients will be co—enrolled into WIOA as a standard operating procedure.

CTDOL will continue to deploy a team of Business Services Specialists across Connecticut whose sole focus is working with employers. Business Services Specialists identify employers interested in scheduling recruitment events in the American Job Centers and coordinate those events around the state. They ask employers to post job openings into the new CTHires system to generate employment opportunities for UI claimants. Business Services Specialists also write Incumbent Worker Training contracts with employers, provide business consultations to identify the company's needs, promote tax credit and wage reimbursement programs such as WOTC and STEP—UP, and provide customized labor market and UI information. UI claimants typically benefit from these initiatives.

CTDOL mails a Claimant's Guide to Unemployment Benefits to all initial unemployment claim filers. This booklet contains all necessary information related to a person's eligibility for unemployment benefits as well as a listing of the American Job Centers throughout Connecticut and information about the employment services they provide to job seekers. As a result of filing for Unemployment Insurance, UI claimants are registered with the State's employment service in the form of a registration in CTHires, the state's web—based workforce development system that provides case management and labor exchange services and the state job bank. Claimants will receive a welcome email from CTHires after filing which explains the services available and encourages them to utilize the system for their job search. CTDOL administers the work test for UI claimants through the UI REA program and RESEA programs. All claimants selected to participate will report to an American Job Center for a review of their UI eligibility and efforts to find work. Any claimant determined to have an eligibility issue or insufficient work search efforts will have a stop entered on his or her unemployment claim and be referred to the CTDOL Adjudications unit for action. The process for referring claimants to Adjudications is already in place, as is the feedback loop, which includes advising Employment Service staff about the outcome of the referral and the need for rescheduling. All claimants who attend the initial one—on—one REA appointment will receive a customized reemployment plan, jointly developed with the REA/RESEA representative, and be required to participate in at least one additional mandatory employment service activity. Services include referrals to employment readiness workshops, résumé critiques, career counseling, WIOA orientation sessions, or any other service available in the American Job Center.

State agency merit—based public employees will continue to provide Wagner—Peyser Act funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations at the American Job Centers in Hartford, Bridgeport, Hamden, Waterbury, New London and Danielson. These services include job readiness workshops on topics such as Job Search Strategies, Résumé Preparation and Interviewing Techniques; one—on—one career counseling, résumé critiques; employer recruitments; job readiness assessments; and Career Center services. In the Career Centers located in the American Job Centers, jobseekers will be able to work on their résumés and cover letters, complete online job applications, research companies, review job postings and conduct any other business related to their job search. They will have access to copy machines, fax machines, free postage for mailing résumés and applications to employers and, most importantly, in—person support from CTDOL and Workforce Development Board contractor staff who will provide whatever guidance and support might be needed. Career Center customers with disabilities will have access to accessible technology, such as large screen computer monitors and visual magnifiers, TTY machines, and computer keyboards with enhanced lettering and any other reasonable accommodation the customer might need. Labor exchange services detailed above will be available to all jobseekers at any time regardless of the order in which they are seeking services. All American Job Centers will have a process in—place that allows staff to refer customers to education and training programs

as well as other resources and supportive services. Some referrals will be made "in—house" to other partner agencies under the roof of the American Job Center while others may be to organizations that are located in separate venues. Trade Act clients will be co—enrolled into WIOA as a standard operating procedure.

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

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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.

The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) continues to ensure that the employment and training services provided to the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) population are qualitatively equivalent, and quantitatively proportional, to the employment and training services provided to other jobseekers.

According to the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) latest Census data (2012), Connecticut agriculture is a $550 million revenue industry.1 Approximately 6,000 farms

are in operation, covering some 440,000 acres.1 The farms are spread throughout the state, although the Connecticut River Valley, which runs all the way through the center of the state from beyond the Massachusetts border to the Long Island Sound, has long been known to provide fertile soil and a temperate climate. In its heyday, many of the highest quality cigars, regardless of the country of manufacture, sourced the most important component of the cigar, its wrapper, from tobacco farms that thrived in the Connecticut River Valley. Today's Connecticut tobacco industry has been affected by more than social factors though, as cigar wrappers of lower, but similar quality, are now available to the manufacturers at a much lower cost due to lower production expenses in Central America. Despite this shift in the tobacco industry and a steady decline in the number of farms between 2002 and 2012, there has been a 43 percent increase per USDA data, with one possible cause being an increased consumer appetite for locally sourced food, drawing some younger people to start up small farms.2

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.

The following chart reflects the top five labor intensive crops in Connecticut with higher numbers of migrant and seasonal farm workers, based on values of sales:

Crop / Commodity Groups Period of Heavy Activity Primary Region Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod February—August Statewide Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes March—October Statewide Broadleaf and Shade Tobacco May—October Connecticut River Valley Fruit, tree nuts, and berries June—October Statewide Christmas trees and short rotation woody crops April—December Statewide

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.

The aforementioned increase in number of farm operations in Connecticut does not necessarily equate to a proportionate increase in labor though. Connecticut Labor Market Information Occupational Projections for Farming, Fishing, and Forestry only estimates a 1.5% overall increase (from 4,006 jobs to 4,064 jobs) for the entire occupational group

between 2014 and 2024, with a 1.7% increase (from 3,735 jobs to 3,800 jobs) when excluding Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers and Forest, Conservation, and Logging Workers.3 CTDOL's Foreign Labor Certification Unit, which deals with H-2A related temporary agricultural labor job orders, has seen a steady decrease of participating employers and number of workers requested over the last two decades. For PY 2016 only 33 agricultural employers participated in the H-2A program, placing a total of 60 job orders and requesting a total of 398 workers. No employer in the state utilizes the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) exclusively. In CTDOL's outreach experience, other employers that are large enough to hire farm laborers, but are not seeking the department's services, have utilized labor contractors, or word-of-mouth, to fill their labor needs. Most of the farm operations that CTDOL staff has encountered have expressed the increasing difficulty of finding local employees.

The term "local" can be misleading though, and it is imperative to note that, according to the US Department of Labor's National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS), "the share of hired crop farmworkers who were not legally authorized to work in the US grew from roughly 15 percent in 1989-91 to almost 55 percent in 1999-2001. Since then it has fluctuated around 50 percent."4 The same survey indicates that "almost three-quarters of all hired crop farmworkers (nationally) are not migrants, but are considered settled, meaning they work at a single location within 75 miles of their home. This number is up from 42 percent in 1996-1998."4 Of the roughly 25 percent that are migrant, "the largest group are "shuttlers," who work at a single farm location more than 75 miles from home, and may cross an international border to get here. They made up about 12 percent of hired crop farmworkers in 2007-2009, down from about 24 percent in 1996-1998."4 "The once more common migrant farm worker that moved from state to state working on different crops as the seasons advance, is now a relative rarity. These workers make up just five percent of those surveyed by NAWS in 2007-2009."4

3 http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/projections2014.aspfarming 4 https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-labor/background.aspx

This change in demographics and migration/settling patterns reflected by NAWS at a national level would partly explain the difficulty Connecticut agricultural employers are experiencing in finding employees. The current political climate and immigration policies are also factors that could further impact the present and future labor supply in agriculture. For this reason we may see a future increase of foreign temporary labor through the H-2A program in Connecticut, as well as the rest of the nation.

The majority of Connecticut's local and migrant agricultural labor force has origins in Mexico, Central America, Jamaica, Haiti, and Puerto Rico. Employers that utilize the H-2A program request workers from Mexico, Central America, Jamaica, and South Africa. The predominant language is Spanish for the majority that originated or travel from Spanish speaking countries. (Although it cannot be assumed that someone from a "Spanish-speaking" country speaks Spanish due to the existence of other native languages in these countries) Agricultural workers contacted through CTDOL's outreach efforts continue to experience vulnerabilities and barriers due to language, literacy,

education, immigration status, and access to healthcare. Those without legal status are even more susceptible to exploitation and retaliation.

2. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

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

Outreach Activities. The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for: (A) Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices. (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. (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. (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. (E) Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

All outreach efforts to MSFWs were performed solely by the SMA up until May 5th 2017, when an outreach representative was hired to comply with the requirements set forth at 20 CFR 653.107. The Outreach Representative will carry out his responsibilities, throughout the state, in a full-time capacity during periods of the highest MSFW activity, between March and November, and in part-time capacity the remainder of the time. The Outreach Representative has a prior background in the MSFW program and has been brought up to speed on recent regulation changes.

Connecticut’s SMA attends all required conferences and/or trainings, and strives to involve the outreach representative in as many activities as possible. Resource material, technical assistance, and best practices attained at these events are passed down to the outreach representative, as well as all AJC staff. Said staff is put through periodic MSFW Program and Job Service Complaint System training to refresh their MSFW and Job Service Complaint System knowledge.

The SMA and Outreach Representative will continue to coordinate outreach visits to farms with CTDOL’s NFJP grantee, the New England Farm Workers’ Council

(NEFWC), the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program (CRVFHP) and UConn's Migrant Farm Worker Clinics, and the US DOL Wage and Hour Division.

(3) Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for: (A) Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes: i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers; ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services. (B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups. (C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

Agricultural workers, job seekers, and employers have access to the same employment services available in each of Connecticut's American Job Centers (AJCs) that are available to non-agricultural workers, job seekers, and employers. The network consists of 5 comprehensive centers and an additional 13 partner staffed centers. (With partial SWA staffing) CTDOL outreach staff encourages workers and job seekers to visit the AJCs to take advantage of the below services: • Computer labs with internet access, including access to CTDOL's newly implemented self-service operating system/database for job seekers, employers, and partner agencies—CTHires • Reemployment workshops and services • Career planning and counseling • Access to labor market information • Recruitment assistance • Veteran employment and training services • Adult, Dislocated, and Youth Worker activities under WIOA • Adult Education under Connecticut State Department of Education • Apprenticeship Training information • Vocational Rehabilitation Training under DORS (Department of Rehabilitation Services) and BESB (Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind) • Unemployment Insurance assistance • Jobs First Employment Services • Referrals to supportive services • Complaint handling Staff in the American Job Centers is put through periodic MSFW Program and Job Service Complaint System training to refresh their MSFW and Job Service Complaint System knowledge. The SMA will continue on-site monitoring of the AJCs to ensure compliance with the Job Service regulations, offering technical assistance as needed. Although employer services and the utilization of the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) are typically promoted during outreach visits, CTDOL has begun involving and collaborating with its Business Services Representatives to better serve the needs of these agricultural employers. Other services available to agricultural employers include: • Assistance with the placement of job orders • Assistance with the recruitment of qualified workers • Mediation and interpretation assistance • Complaint assistance • Technical assistance on compliance with employment related Federal and State regulations Outreach efforts often involve collaboration with partner agencies/advocacy groups, and serve to inform said agencies/groups, as well as the farm workers themselves, on the Job Service Complaint System. (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). (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. i. 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. (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. (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. (E) State Monitor Advocate. The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

Connecticut's SMA has established relationships with various entities across the state and region, including the NEFWC, CTDOL's NFJP grantee. A Memorandum of Understanding was updated between the two agencies in March of 2016, hoping to maximize the number of resources available to MSFWs. The SMA has also established collaboration between the NEFWC and the Hartford AJC, affording staff from both agencies to familiarize themselves with each other's services, and establishing points of contact in each agency to ease coordination of services and referrals between both offices. CTDOL intends to establish similar relationships between NEFWC and its other AJCs going forward. The SMA has also established relationships with the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program and UConn's Migrant Farmworker Clinics, area Community Health Centers, Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut, and Massachusetts Migrant Educational Program. The SMA, along with the Outreach Representative, will look to maintain and/or expand these relationships over the foreseeable future.

Analysis of Connecticut's performance data may show that certain indicators were not met at all times during this past four year period. However, CTDOL does not feel the data is commensurate with its efforts to meet the performance goals. Agricultural workers are continuously encouraged to seek better opportunities through employment and training programs at the AJCs, but certain factors, such as legal status, may be preventing part of

the population from taking advantage of these services. This leaves us with a much smaller pool of measurable MSFWs, of which some may actually take advantage of the offered services, but not all, in which case the state ends up failing certain indicators. Some of the failed indicators can also be attributed to the transition period to a new database over the past two years, which affected some of the data. CTDOL will continue to provide the state's MSFWs with quantitatively proportionate, and qualitatively equivalent, services as compared to non-MSFWs. It will also continue to encourage agricultural workers to seek better opportunities through employment services and training.

The WIOA Section 167 NFJP Grantee, the New England Farm Worker's Council, has been afforded the opportunity to review and comment on CTDOL's Agricultural Outreach Plan. No comments or additional recommendations were received. Connecticut's SMA has reviewed and approved CTDOL's Agricultural Outreach Plan.

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.

Connecticut is currently not classified as a significant MSFW state and has its SMA conduct all outreach activities and efforts. The SMA had attended various training conferences to stay up to date on best practices and to disseminate information on services available through the One—Stop Career Centers, the Job Services Complaint System, and information on the entities serving MSFWs in Connecticut. The SMA also provides information on farmworker rights.

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.

Since the SMA handles all the outreach activities, he has established a relationship with both the CTDOL UI division as well as the USDOL Wage and Hour unit. This collaboration with USDOL Wage and Hour staff and participation in the Winter Connecticut Nursery & Landscaping Association field day, introduces him to agricultural employers and helps establish a pathway for future farm visits. These farm visits assist agricultural employers as well as farmworkers in understanding unemployment eligibility and other labor laws.

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.

Only the SMA provides outreach, training and other materials on farmworkers and agricultural employers for those staff members that are in the local offices or work with assisting farmworkers with UI eligibility. These materials can be found on the CTDOL internal network site for all CTDOL staff to access.

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

In addition to collaborating and working closely with our NFJP grantee, the SMA also has established relationships with various entities across the region such as:

? Partnerships with community based organizations such as University of Connecticut School of Medicine, Connecticut River Valley Farmworker's Health Program (CRVFHP), Statewide Legal Services of CT, and Community Health Service providers; ? Distribution of informational brochures and posters on Pesticide Safety and Heat Stroke Prevention to all growers participating in the H—2A program; ? Partnering with the NEFWC to provide other support services to local farm workers in need; ? Presentation to students at the University of Connecticut on a field trip for a class titled "Migrant Workers In Connecticut"; ? Participation in the University of Connecticut Migrant Farm Worker Clinic Symposium by presenting information about MSFWs to medical students who visit farms and conduct free medical screenings for farm workers; and ? Presenting information on MSPA and H—2A regulations to agricultural employers.

3. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM.

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

A. PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

I. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS;
II. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES.

American Job Centers (AJCs) offer integrated and universally accessible employment services that effectively and efficiently meet the needs of all customers, including MSFWs. Through existing partnerships in the AJCs, MSFWs and agricultural employers have access to the following services through a single delivery system which include: Wagner—Peyser labor exchange services such as recruitment assistance, career counseling, vocational testing, veterans employment and training services, resume writing, job search assistance, reemployment work—shops, and job referrals. Other American Job Center Network programs, agencies and services include Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth activities under WIOA, Adult Education, Apprenticeship Training, Vocational Rehabilitation Training under DORS (Department of Rehabilitation Services)

and BESB (Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind), Unemployment Insurance, Jobs First Employment Services, and referrals to supportive services. This universal access to career services guarantees barrier—free admission to all seekers of employment and training services, including individuals with disabilities. Many of CTDOL's partners working under the American Job Center Network are co—located in our AJCs, which allows for a seamless delivery of services to job seekers. Once registered into CTDOL's database, all information and referrals are maintained electronically.

Training programs available through the American Job Centers are comprehensive and flexible in meeting the diverse needs of Connecticut's population. This allows job seekers with varying levels of education and experience the opportunity to upgrade their skills in order to meet the competitive needs of employers.

Staff encourages non—English speaking customers to take advantage of the cost—free ESL classes offered through Adult Education or CTDOL's WIOA Section 167 Grantee. This is a critical component of promoting life—long learning as well as developing the basic skills needed to secure employment and pursue career growth.

Staff in the American Job Centers have been trained in the proper identification and coding of MSFWs and are well educated on the multiple barriers of employment this population may encounter. The SMA will continue on—site monitoring of the AJCs to ensure compliance with the Job Service regulations, and will offer technical assistance to staff as needed.

ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.

The SMA maintains frequent contact with growers in the H—2A program in an effort to respond quickly to their labor needs.

The SMA will continue to reinforce positive relationships with farm workers, agricultural employers, and other non—profit organizations while conducting outreach activities. During the next year CTDOL plans to continue outreach to local workers as a means of informing them of the full range of services offered in the American Job Centers Network.

The SMA maintains frequent contact with growers in the H—2A program in an effort to respond quickly to their labor needs.

In PY 2015, CTDOL will continue to offer the following services to agricultural employers and MSFWs: ? Assistance with the placement of local and interstate job orders ? Assistance in the recruitment of qualified workers ? Dissemination of information on, and referral to organizations that assist MSFWs including New England Farm Workers' Council, CT Migrant Health Network, CT River Valley Farm workers Health Program, ConnectiCOSH, University of Connecticut Medical School, Statewide Legal Services of CT, and Board of Education Migratory Program ? Mediation and Interpretation services ? Complaint assistance ? Technical assistance to ensure that housing requirements meet Federal standards ? As needed, assist in making appointments for individual MSFWs or

members of their family with appropriate agencies ? Technical assistance on compliance with employment services regulations and all other Federal and State laws

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

CTDOL will continue to rely on its SMA to distribute employment service complaint system material and information to farmworkers and advocacy groups through his farm visits and networking activities.

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

The CTDOL will continue to promote recruitment assistance, available through the Department of Labor in outreach contacts, to agricultural employers throughout the state. CTDOL's Alien Labor Certification staff, in collaboration with the State Monitor Advocate (SMA), continues a screening process for job seekers interested in agricultural job openings. This screening process not only ensures that qualified applicants are referred but also allows the prospective applicant to gain a thorough understanding of the terms and conditions of each job opening. Carefully matching job seekers with prospective employers proves to be instrumental in establishing credibility with our agricultural employers.

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).

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.

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.

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.

E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

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

The SMA has been afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the State Agricultural Outreach Plan.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); Yes

2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers; Yes

3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and Yes

4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. Yes

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

The 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

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)).

With adoption of the Common Core State Standards in Connecticut, the new GED test and the new web-based National External Diploma Program, CSDE recognized the need to support a set of standards relevant to adult learners. Connecticut adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education released by the United States Department of Education Office of Career and Technical and Adult Education. These content standards align closely with the Common Core State Standards in Connecticut. Connecticut applied to OCTAE and was selected in December 2014 for participation in the College and Career Readiness Standards-in-Action project. Trainers participated in two workshops in Washington, DC, to be trained in the statewide implementation of standards. CT has a policy that all adult education providers have their ABE/GED and some ESL teachers trained in using the CCRS in their curriculum. Full implementation will begin no later than July 1, 2017. Beginning in the fall of 2015 state educators have received intensive Advanced Level College and Career Readiness for Adult Education standards implementation training. This training and technical assistance will enable the state to continue implementation of CCR standards and prepare for total alignment by July 1, 2017 by reaching all programs, adult education staff and students.

Connecticut has committed to use of the College and Career Readiness Standards in all adult education classes. Full implementation of the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) began July 1, 2017. Since the submission of the State Plan in 2016, Over 600 teachers have completed the ELA series and over 100 teachers completed the Math series. We continue to make training available for newly hired teachers and to provide training for lead teachers in alignment of resources to the CCRS. Technical assistance is ongoing for this effort. Additionally, training in the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) is being rolled out for EL teachers.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the State will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide 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—

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
Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

The State of Connecticut will award multi-year grants to eligible providers through an RFP process to enable providers to develop, implement and improve adult education and literacy activities. To ensure direct and equitable access for all eligible providers, the CSDE will publish a Notice of Availability in all major newspapers throughout the state and post the notice on the web page of the State Department of Education as well as the web page of our core partners, Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Department of Labor . The RFP will be e-mailed to all LEA, higher education institutions, to a master list of current and past providers which includes: community-based organizations, regional educational service centers (RESC), housing authorities, volunteer organizations, DOC, other correctional facilities and institutions; and to all providers and WDBs. A bidder's conference will be publicly advertised with the Notice of Availability and will be held at a central location to provide answers to questions regarding appropriateness of proposed projects and application procedures.

Agencies that are eligible for funding through the CSDE provided they have demonstrated effectiveness may include: • local educational agencies; • community-based organizations or faith-based organizations; • volunteer literacy organizations; • institutions of higher education; • public or private nonprofit agencies; • libraries; • public housing authorities; • other nonprofit institutions that have the ability to provide adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals; • a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; and • a partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

Grants will be awarded to agencies that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities to individuals who: • have attained 17 years of age; • are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under Connecticut state law; and • are basic skills deficient; • do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or • are English language learners (ELL).

Local grants will be distributed based on the ability to meet the requirements of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) purposes outlined in WIOA and have demonstrated effectiveness: (1) Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency; (2) Assist adults who are parents or family members become a full partner in the education development of their children; (3) Assist adults in completing high school; (4) Promote transitions from adult education to postsecondary education and training through career pathways; (5) Assist immigrants and English language learners to improve reading, writing, math, speaking, and comprehending the English language and acquire understanding of American government, individual freedom and responsibilities of citizenship.

The CSDE will make funding available to each of the five Service Delivery Areas (SDA) in Connecticut. The department, in conjunction with each WDB, will assess SDA needs and WDB goals. Eligible providers will select the appropriate priority area when drafting and submitting the RFP to the CSDE. The RFP will be published for at least six-weeks to allow sufficient time between RFP distribution and proposal submission to the CSDE. RFPs will be evaluated by a review team comprised of interagency staff and experts in each priority area. Interagency participants will include representatives of the CSDE, the WDB and One Stop and Vocational Rehab partners. The review team will evaluate each proposal using a standardized evaluation form based on required federal, state and regional criteria published in the RFP (including the considerations listed in WIOA, Title II, Section 232). An internal edit check will be conducted by CSDE staff to ensure compliance with the requirements of Title II of WIOA, all applicable laws and RFP criteria. The CSDE will use the following process to distribute funds to approved applicants: • not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds shall be used to award grants and contacts under Section 231 and to carry out Section 225 (Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals); not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carry out Section 225; • not more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds shall be used to carry out State Leadership activities under Section 223; and • not more than 5 percent of the grant funds, or $85,000, whichever is greater, shall be used for administrative expenses of the eligible agency. Using the evaluation criteria published in the RFP, proposal reviews will involve a standardized evaluation process which includes the following items: the eligible provider's response to RFP requirements; the accuracy of the itemized budget in meeting line item limits and definitions; and the considerations listed in WIOA, Title II, Section 232. The weight of each consideration in the evaluation process will be defined in the RFP. Evidence required to support each consideration listed below has been defined and is printed in Italics with the corresponding consideration.

All allowable costs for the federally funded Adult Basic Education program are defined in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87. This document will be used to determine reasonableness, allowability and allocability of costs. All costs must be supported by source documentation.

Using the evaluation criteria published in the RFP, proposal reviews will involve a standardized evaluation process which includes the following items: the eligible provider's response to RFP requirements; the accuracy of the itemized budget in meeting line item limits and definitions; the provision of adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster; and the considerations listed in WIOA, Title II, Section 231 (e) of WIOA (LISTED BELOW). The weight of each consideration in the evaluation process will be defined in the RFP. Evidence required to support each consideration listed below has been defined and is printed within parentheses with the corresponding consideration. 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 WIOA. The review process and scoring rubric will consider the following 13 considerations: Considerations: 1. The degree to which the eligible provider

would be responsive to: A. regional needs as identified in the local plan under WIOA, Title II, Section 108 (as evidenced by a description of regional needs and how the applicant will be responsive to those needs); and B. serving individuals in the community who were identified as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals with low literacy skills or who are English language learners (as evidenced by an objective statement of need accompanied by a recruitment and retention plan which targets these individuals). 2. The ability of the eligible provider to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities (as evidenced by an objective statement of need accompanied by a recruitment and retention plan which targets these individuals). 3. Past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals to meet state-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in WIOA, Title II, Section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals with low literacy (as evidenced by meeting or exceeding performance measures based on documentation from CARS and annual reviews for previously funded providers and as evidenced by comparable objective performance measures which demonstrate successful student outcomes for new eligible providers). 4. The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under WIOA, Title II, Section 108, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners (as evidenced by description of proposed activities and strategies and goals and how the provider plans to align them). 5. Whether the eligible provider's program is of sufficient intensity and quality; based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction (as evidenced by a program design suitable to achieve applicable performance measures - appropriateness of program design may be demonstrated by past performance of successful outcomes or documentation of a similar program design and associated outcomes). 6. Whether the eligible provider's activities, including whether reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction delivered by the eligible provider, are based on best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice (as evidenced by program design and /or curriculum). 7. Whether the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and system lead to improved performance (as evidenced by program design and/or curriculum and the accessibility of hardware and software applications as appropriate). 8. 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 (as evidenced by program design and/or curriculum which focus on skills needed for postsecondary education and training, the workplace, and citizenship). 9. Whether the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the State, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means (as evidenced by

appropriate degrees, certifications, and trainings). 10. Whether the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local WDBs, One-Stop Centers, job training programs, social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways (as evidenced by formal collaborations and the commitment of the provider to assess and address the literacy and non-literacy support services of participants). 11. Whether the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with federal, state, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs (as evidenced by program schedules and documentation of support services available). 12. Whether the eligible provider maintains a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with WIOA, Title II, Section 116) and to monitor program performance (as evidenced by prior participation in or a commitment to participate in the eligible agency's Connecticut Competency System and Connecticut Adult Reporting System and to submit comprehensive, timely, and accurate data). 13. Whether the local areas in which the eligible provider is located have a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs (as evidenced by area demographic data). Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA) The CSDE will require eligible providers receiving grant funding to carry out corrections education or education for other institutionalized individuals and use the grant funds to operate the following adult education programs/activities: Adult Basic Education (ABE) ABE instruction is designed for adults seeking a high school diploma who are functioning below the secondary school level and lack the basic reading, writing and numeracy skills necessary to function effectively as workers, parents and citizens. Instruction can be individualized or offered in a classroom or a learning lab. Persons completing ABE are prepared to benefit from secondary level instruction. ABE educational functioning levels are as follows: a. Beginning ABE Literacy (Grade Levels 0-1.9); b. Beginning Basic Education (Grade Levels 2.0-3.9); c. Low Intermediate Basic Education (Grade Levels 4.0-5.9); and d. High Intermediate Basic Education (Grade Levels 6.0-8.9). Adult Secondary Education (ASE) Connecticut Adult Education offers three distinct pathways for adults to attain a high school diploma. (1) Adult High School Credit Diploma (AHSCD): The Adult High School Credit Diploma program is a prescribed plan, process and structure for earning a required number of academic and elective credits. The provider must be a LEA or RESC. Credits toward a local diploma must be obtained through a prescribed plan. Each provider/town can enhance the basic AHSCD program but must adhere to the minimum state requirements: 1) use certified teachers and counselors; 2) adhere to CSDE requirements regarding assessment, enrollment, accountability and reporting; 3) meet required credit standards; and 4) ensure that a one credit course offers a minimum of 48 instructional hours. An adult who successfully completes the required credits of the AHSCD program is awarded a high school diploma by the providing LEA or RESC. (2) General Educational Development (GED): Adults who have not completed high school

must demonstrate, through an examination, the attainment of academic skills and concepts normally acquired through completion of a high school program. Applicants for this examination must be at least 17 years of age and officially withdrawn from school for at least six months. Individuals who pass the GED Tests are awarded a Connecticut State High School Diploma. GED instructional programs, provided throughout the state in local school districts and a variety of other instructional sites, help individuals to prepare for this rigorous examination. (3) National External Diploma Program (NEDP): This program provides a secondary school credential designed for adults who have gained skills through life experiences and demonstrated competence in a particular job, talent or academic area. The NEDP is an online portfolio assessment program that offers no classroom instruction. An adult who successfully completes the portfolio assessment, as required, is awarded a high school diploma by the providing LEA or RESC. Adult Secondary Education (ASE) programs must integrate functional life and employability skills into the curriculum, incorporate technology into the instructional process, and provide comprehensive counseling, transition and support services in collaboration with other community or human services organizations. ASE educational functioning levels are as follows: a. Low Adult Secondary Education (Grade Levels 9.0-10.9); and b. High Adult Secondary Education (Grade Levels 11.0-12.9) Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities (1) Workforce Education Services Programs will provide workforce preparation skills including literacy instruction, employability skills, career exploration and development, and links to employment, employment services and other options in order to respond to the evolving needs of the business community and promote individual self-sufficiency. Workforce readiness programs offer instruction to support transition to work, entry-level employment and reentry into the workforce for unemployed individuals. Family Literacy Activities Family literacy activities are services that make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and better enable parents or family members to support their children's learning needs. Activities include the following: parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement and economic self-sufficiency; interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children; training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children; parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency; and age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences. Family Literacy Services are to benefit the child, the parent and the community. Program services will focus on enabling parents to become full partners in the education of their children and provide workforce preparation. Services will be of sufficient intensity and duration to make sustainable changes in the family. English Language Acquisition Activities English language acquisition activities include programs of instruction that are designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that lead to (1) the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and (2) transition to postsecondary education and training or employment. (1) Americanization/Citizenship Americanization/Citizenship programs include instruction designed for foreign-born adults who wish to become United States citizens. Persons completing this program are prepared to pursue citizenship through the prescribed process of the United States

Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2) English as a Second Language (ESL) English as a Second Language instruction is designed for adults who have limited proficiency in the English language or whose native language is not English. ESL programs assist individuals to improve their English skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing in order to find or maintain employment, attain citizenship, become more involved with their children's schooling and make greater use of community resources. Instruction is provided in English as a unifying means of serving the broad ethnic diversity of limited-English-speaking adults. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education The term "integrated English literacy and civics education: means education services 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. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (EL/Civics) programs must contain the following: • contextualized instruction in literacy and English language acquisition, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation and U.S. history and government; • program design and goals that focus on preparing adults for employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; • curriculum focus on skills that will provide information and support in the skills necessary for the workplace; • coordination with the local workforce system, and activities provided in combination with integrated education/training (IET) activities; • improvement of literacy skills including speaking, reading, writing and numeracy in order to provide learners with the skills to apply English and mathematics accurately and appropriately in a variety of home, community, workplace and academic settings; • opportunities for experiential learning in which participants are actively engaged in community pursuits are included in the program design; • utilization of research-based instructional models that have proven effective in teaching individuals to read, write and speak English effectively; • collaboration with community agencies that offer services to limited English proficient populations; and • embedding technology literacy into the core curriculum. Additional program activities directly related to the use of these funds include: • participation in career pathways exploration and distance learning activities that impact competence in the workplace; • integration of various hand-held technologies into classroom work including tablets and smart phones; • creation of video oral histories; • exposure to basic math vocabulary and interpretation of charts, tables and graphs; • knowledge of the American education system with special focus on addressing the needs of families new to the U.S. school system; and • cross-cultural perspectives, civic responsibility, democracy topics and independent projects. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education also 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. Workforce Preparation Activities or Integrated Education and Training The CSDE will continue to assist the DOL with expanding the development and implementation of the I-BEST delivery model offering industry-recognized credentials. Adult Education programs will work with WDB areas to provide

I-BEST training to Jobs First Employment Service (JFES) clients who receive Temporary Family Assistance (TFA). Programs must demonstrate a commitment to provide appropriate support services to students enrolled in the integrated pathway program. These services may include, but are not limited to tutoring or other academic supports, college navigation support, career planning, transportation assistance, and/or childcare.

Having done a new competition in 2017 and using the considerations specified in section 231 (e) of WIOA , CSDE will extend current grants for FY 2018-19 and again in 2019-20. Mid-year and year-end evaluative reports will require that program providers submit a current program profile, which will ensure that all projects have met the standards established by the eligible entity (CSDE) and that all goals have been achieved. Projects not meeting the established standards will be identified for the CSDE's intervention, which may include on-site technical assistance, a decrease in funding or the elimination of funding.

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 CSDE will reserve no more than 20 percent of its federal grant received under WIOA to provide programs for corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals as described in Section 225 of the Act. Funding under Section 225 will include the following correctional institutionalized settings: prisons, jail reformatories, detention centers, halfway houses, community based rehabilitation centers or other similar institutions designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders. The CSDE shall also require that each eligible provider using grant funds under Section 225 to carry out a program for criminal offenders in a correctional institution shall give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

The CSDE shall require that each eligible provider use the grant funds to operate education programs as follows: 1. Adult Basic Education (ABE). 2. English Literacy Acquisition (ELA). 3. Secondary school completion (Adult High School Diploma).

Corrections Education and other Institutionalized Individuals or Special Populations

The Department of Corrections did not apply for any Title II grants but CSDE did award five grants in this priority area to LEAs. They include programs for individuals with mental illness and referrals from the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, non-traditional populations impacted by incarceration, disabilities, and homelessness. These grants will be continued for the next two years. Projects not meeting the established standards will be identified for the CSDE's intervention, which may include on-site technical assistance, a decrease in funding or the elimination of funding.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ESTABLISH AND OPERATE INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 243 OF WIOA, FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WHO ARE ADULTS, INCLUDING PROFESSIONALS WITH DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS IN THEIR NATIVE COUNTRIES.

CSDE will establish and operate English Literacy and Civics Education programs as a part of its adult education program. The term "integrated English literacy and civics education" means education services 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. Since the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires an intentional connection to the workplace, to careers and to the workforce system (employers, Workforce Development Boards (WDB), Chambers of Commerce, etc.) for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs, CSDE will work with the Connecticut Department of Labor to expand its Integrated education and training delivery model (I-BEST) offering industry-recognized credentials to Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs. Adult Education programs will work with WDBs in local workforce areas to provide

assistance to local programs. CSDE will hold meetings with grantees regarding the requirements of the program and provide mandatory professional development sessions for EL/Civics instructors and staff on integrating career awareness, workforce skills, and career pathways. Eligible providers will design programs that deliver the activities under WIOA including the integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers. Eligible providers must demonstrate their ability to prepare English language learners for unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency, and how they will integrate the program with the local workforce development system to carry out the activities of the program.

In the fall of 217, CSDE joined the "Building Opportunities Collaborative" sponsored by OCTAE.

The Building Opportunities project is designed to:

- Provide technical assistance (TA) to support state and local implementation of the new requirements, under section 243 of WIOA, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program (IELCE)
- Support state and local efforts to flexibly develop IELCE programming that meets the needs of learners within particular local or regional settings; reflects best practices in program design; and Is compliant with statute and regulations
- Build a Collaborative of state and local-level IELCE implementers
- Identify and disseminate information about promising IELCE approaches and programs that integrate English language literacy, civics education, and workforce training.

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.

CSDE will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education. The RFP requires the following for funded programs: program design and goals that focus on preparing adults for employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; curriculum focus on skills that will provide information and support in the skills necessary for the workplace; coordination with the local workforce system; and activities provided in combination with integrated education/training (IET) activities. Funds will be specifically allocated for teacher professional development. Funds will be used for instructional costs (instructional pay, curriculum materials, and software that connects to career pathways) for ESL teachers. Funds will be used to serve those individuals who are most in need of the program. Funds will be distributed on an as-needed basis for programs that request an ESL program. To ensure direct and equitable access for all eligible providers, CSDE will publish a Notice of Availability in all major Connecticut newspapers and post the notice on the CSDE's web page. The RFP will be mailed to: all local education agencies and higher education institutions; a master list of current and past providers including community-based

organizations, regional education service centers, housing authorities, volunteer organizations, the Connecticut Department of Correction (DOC), other correctional facilities and institutions; and to all current providers and WDBs. A Bidders' Conference will be publicly advertised with the Notice of Availability and will be held at a central location to provide answers to questions regarding appropriateness of proposed projects and application procedures. Local grants will be distributed based on the ability to meet the requirements of AEFLA Purposes outlined in WIOA Section 243. CSDE will make funding available to each of Connecticut's five designated local workforce areas. In conjunction with each WDB, CSDE will help to assess local area needs and WIB goals. The RFP will establish a minimum six-week turnaround time between RFP distribution and proposal submission to CSDE. A review team comprised of inter-agency staff and experts in each priority area will evaluate proposals responding to the RFP. Interagency participants will include representatives of CSDE, the WDB and One-Stop partners. The review team will evaluate each proposal using a standardized evaluation form based on required Federal, State and regional criteria published in the RFP (including the considerations listed in Section 231 (e). Eligible providers must demonstrate in their application for funds the manner in which the program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities. These activities can be provided directly or through collaboration with WIOA or other community partners.

Upon completion of the RFP in April 2017, CSDE awarded 19 grants that total more than $771,000. CSDE will extend current grants for FY 2018-19 and again in 2019-20. Mid-year and year-end evaluative reports will require that program providers submit a current program profile, which will ensure that all projects have met the standards established by the eligible entity (CSDE) and that all goals have been achieved. Projects not meeting the established standards will be identified for the CSDE's intervention, which may include on-site technical assistance, a decrease in funding or the elimination of funding.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

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

The CSDE sent a survey via Survey Monkey to all local program directors as well as all WIA funded providers on October 22, 2015, to obtain their input on the state plan. The survey listed 17 WIOA requirements for funding local programs and state leadership activities. Description of Required Activities: (1) The CSDE will work with other core programs and One-Stop partners to ensure that adult education and literacy activities are in alignment and to develop career pathways which provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities. The CSDE will collaborate with the DOL to assist local providers in partnering with One-Stop Centers to develop career pathways and provide access to employment and training services. Professional development will be provided to local programs, including orientation to adult education programs and services for One-Stop partners and other agencies.

Since the greatest need identified from the survey of local programs was meeting regional needs and demonstrating alignment between proposed activities and services with core

partners, the CSDE will ensure that training and technical assistance will address these two issues. It will also assist local programs in becoming familiar with the regional/state plan to determine how it affects their programs. The CSDE will also work with local programs to establish stronger linkages with partners such as local schools, WDBs, One Stop centers, and job training programs. (2) Connecticut has instituted high quality professional development programs to improve instruction. Training will be provided related to the specific needs of adult learners and information about models and promising practices will be disseminated. To enhance program quality and assure continued progress in meeting the Core and Additional Indicators of Performance, the CSDE shall award grants to eligible providers to deliver State Leadership activities, primarily professional development activities, with funds made available under this subtitle. In order to meet the various needs of our state, the CSDE may enter into partnerships with other states and/or the federal government in order to collaboratively fund projects that will meet individual needs and accomplish common goals. The CSDE shall not use more than 12.5% of the funds awarded under this subtitle for State Leadership activities. The CSDE will deliver a majority of its State Leadership and professional development services through the Adult Training and Development Network (ATDN). The CSDE's professional development model supports the implementation of the goals of Connecticut's Adult Education State Plan and consists of professional development basics and activities related to the implementation of career pathways. (3) The CSDE will provide technical assistance to local grantees in: • the development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on scientifically valid research available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, distance education, staff training and content standards; • the role of eligible providers as a one-stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services; and • assistance in the use of technology, including for staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies. Although serving students with low literacy skills or who are English language learners or individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities was not rated by most local programs as being one of their strongest needs, providers did express that they need assistance with curriculum materials and teaching strategies/best practices for students who are non-literate in their native language and with developing a scope and sequence curriculum for low level literacy skills and individuals with disabilities. Another area identified on the survey as a need is technical assistance in helping local programs identify instructional practices which will enable students to pass the new GED tests. Most programs felt confident in teaching reading, writing, speaking and English language acquisition, but one program stated staff needs help in ways to improve the depth of math instruction. The CSDE will also provide technical assistance in serving adults with special learning needs and disabilities including disability awareness sessions, resource and instructional materials, accommodation and instruction planning workshops, train-the-trainer sessions, referral information and telephone consultation concerning program issues. (4) The CSDE will conduct program monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance with federal and state funding requirements and to determine the effectiveness of programs in meeting the needs of the adult population and will disseminate information about models and proven or promising practices within the State. The CSDE has in place a data reporting system for each local provider, the Connecticut

Adult Reporting System (CARS). The CARS system can measure performance outcomes. The CSDE has developed a formalized follow-up and reporting process to report on the core indicators of obtaining or retaining employment and entering post-secondary education according to National Reporting System requirements. The follow-up and reporting process includes data sharing with other state agencies, including the Department of Labor wage information system. The CSDE will participate in the statewide data system which will assist the CSDE in working seamlessly with other partners while protecting the privacy rights of individuals. To provide the core service of performance and cost information for WIOA, Title II, Section 231 providers to the One-Stop system, the eligible agency will develop a report which includes each program's success in meeting the state adjusted levels of performance. This data will assist potential clients in identifying an appropriate adult education or literacy program in the local area.

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

Description of Permissible Activities (1) The CSDE will provide training and technical assistance to local programs in technology applications, translation technology and distance education, including professional development to support the use of instructional technology. Training and technology assistance to local programs in technology applications, especially in the area of web-based communication (social media, phone apps, etc.) will be provided as well as assistance in finding access to computers. (2) The CSDE will develop and disseminate curricula including literacy curricula which uses instructional practices such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and reading comprehension that research has proven effective for adults. (3) The CSDE will develop content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways. Connecticut Competency System (CCS) training sessions will be offered by both adult education and the workforce development community. The CCS is an integral part of the CSDE's career pathways, standards-based framework utilizing the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) to connect curriculum, assessment, and instruction that is able to capture progress made by adult education learners. (4) The CSDE will provide assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of this title including meeting the state adjusted levels of performance. The CSDE will provide technical assistance in implementing the CCS for appraisal, instruction and assessment in a life-skills and an employability context, including new teacher training, CCS Facilitator training, One Stop partner staff training as well as the ordering and dissemination of CASAS curricula materials used in conjunction with the Connecticut Competency System. The CARS system will collect student demographic, attendance, assessment and outcome information for each student in the adult education program. The CARS system generates statewide and local demographic and performance assessment reports used for program planning, management and accountability. Data from the system allows the State to assess the effectiveness of local programs by measuring performance outcomes. (5) The CSDE will continue to partner with community colleges and other institutions of higher learning to assist adults to transition to postsecondary education and training. Training and technical assistance will be provided on effective methods of transitioning students. The CSDE will

ensure that training and technical assistance will be provided, especially in areas such as employer engagement, the institution of career counselor position, and/or enhanced job responsibilities for current staff emphasizing transitions. The CSDE will also provide assistance in the implementation of training programs that assist adults in obtaining economic self-sufficiency. (6) The CSDE will work with the DOL to expand its I-BEST delivery model offering industry-recognized credentials to Integrated EL/Civics programs. Training and technical assistance will be provided to local grantees for the integration of literacy and English language instruction. CSDE will provide activities for the integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers. The CSDE will assist local programs by sharing effective models, assisting local programs in engaging employers, and how to partner successfully with other agencies to place students in employment.

(7) The CSDE will provide technical assistance and training to promote workplace adult education and literacy activities by identifying curriculum frameworks and aligning rigorous content standards that specify what adult learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition; and taking into consideration the following: 1. State adopted academic standards. 2. The current adult skills and literacy assessments used in the State or outlying area. 3. The primary indicators of performance described in WIOA, Title II, Section 116. 4. Standards and academic requirements for enrollment in non-remedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education supported by the State.

Connecticut training staff will continue to work closely with the pilot programs and will provide overview sessions throughout the State to increase awareness and knowledge. Also, CCRSs have been incorporated into all workshops in math, reading, and writing. Working with ELA students in the area of workplace training was identified on the survey as a need; therefore, the CSDE will work with local programs to identify a variety of curricula for workplace training.

(8) The CSDE will develop and pilot strategies for improving teacher quality and retention. Training staff will provide sessions on learning styles and needs, facilitating adult learning, planning for instruction, and monitoring student progress.

(9) The CSDE will assist in the development and implementation of programs and services to meet the needs of adult learners with learning disabilities or English language learners.

To enhance program quality and ensure continued progress in meeting the indicators of performance and to assist in implementation of WIOA and its requirements, Connecticut will continue to award contracts in ollaboration with the Alliance of Regional Education Service Centers to deliver state leadership activities, focusing primarily on professional development activities for adult education providers. Connecticut will provide enhanced training in the required CCRS and Teacher Evaluation.

In addition, Connecticut is participating in the two year Building Opportunities Collaborative for Integrated English Language and Civics Education (IELCE). The New

London Adult Education staff are partnering with CSDE in the collaborative to enhance professional development activities for all IELCE grantees.

Connecticut will continue to be a member of the New England Literacy Resource Center, part of World Education. The membership provides Professional Development for teachers and administrators on evidence-based practices; on college and career readiness, Engllishfor Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instruction, learner persistence, using curriculum standards, integrating technology in instruction and program design and management.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA.

Performance Accountability: Performance Accountability assesses the effectiveness of grantees in achieving continuous improvement of adult education and literacy activities. 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 obtain either a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year of exit from program; 5. 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 towards such a credential or employment; and 6. The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers established pursuant to clause (iv). Setting Targets: Each fiscal year CSDE negotiates proposed target percentages for each of the core indicators of performance with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE). Each local eligible program is responsible for meeting or exceeding the negotiated performance targets. Each program shall analyze progress towards meeting the targets on an ongoing basis. Each program must utilize the approved standardized assessments that provide the framework needed to measure program effectiveness. Central to the evaluation process is an assessment of Performance Measures established by CSDE to focus on continual progress, successful completion of the program area, and successful transition to a next step of employment, postsecondary education, or occupational training. For example, CSDE's performance measures for secondary completion programs focus on interim student progress by requiring providers to report on the number of students who pass one or more subsections of the GED practice test or earn one or more credits toward an adult high school diploma, and requiring them to report on number of students who earn a diploma or its recognized equivalent. Incorporating this performance measure into the evaluation process will ensure that the eligible agency and local provider assess each student's progress toward program completion and analyze significant changes indicated by this interim progress

indicator. CSDE has also developed four Additional Indicators of Program Performance that require providers to address all aspects of program operation: recruitment, curriculum and instruction, support services and professional development. These additional indicators assure that programs will focus on long-term planning for program development and community responsiveness rather than focusing solely on current year issues and achievements. These indicators also assure that adult education providers develop learner and community-responsive programs and curricula so they can become an integral part of the local education system as it works toward lifelong learning and self-sufficiency for all community members, especially those most in need of literacy services. Core and additional Indicators of Performance will become a focal point for annual and on-site monitoring reviews and the basis for formative evaluation. Monitoring and Evaluation : To improve the quality and effectiveness of adult education programs, CSDE will conduct two evaluation processes: an annual desk-audit for all providers, and an on-site monitoring evaluation for selected providers. On-Site Monitoring: An on-site monitoring evaluation will be conducted for a minimum of 25% of federally funded adult education programs each year to determine the effectiveness of adult education and literacy programs and activities. All newly funded programs will be monitored, as will all programs that had non-compliance or RFP Requirement issues during previous year's monitoring. These evaluations shall, at a minimum, consist of assessing the following areas: a)Compliance with all applicable laws and RFP guidelines, including ADA 504 and Section 427 GEPA; b)Program management and operations including scheduling and locations as well as staff credentials; c) Outreach, recruitment and retention practices including individuals with multiple barriers to education; d) Curriculum and instruction and use of technology; e) Support services including counseling and transition services; f) Professional development opportunities; g) Student intake, assessment and documentation procedures; h) Documentation of the program's ability to assist adults in gaining employment, achieving self-sufficiency, and/or developing family literacy practices; i) Documentation of the program's progress in meeting the Performance Measures set for each applicable Core Indicator of Performance; j) Documentation of the program's ability to meet the Additional Indicators of Program Quality. Written reports of the on-site monitoring will be given to programs monitored. Local programs will have to submit a corrective action plan for any deficiencies noted during the visit. CSDE will observe classes and talk with teachers and program staff to determine if ideas from professional development are being implemented. Desk Monitoring: For the annual desk audit review, each provider will submit an assessment of Performance Measures and individual program goals as well as an annual expenditure report including all relevant fiscal records to facilitate an effective audit. Each program will also be required to submit data containing all program and student information stored in its Connecticut Adult Reporting System, including demographic, assessment and outcome data for each student enrolled. If a local program does not meet its outcome measures, it must complete a corrective action plan outlining how to make necessary improvements. Professional Development : CSDE will provide professional development to local programs to improve program quality. Instruction will be designed to (1) improve instruction in the essential components of reading instruction, (2) instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, (3) instruction provided by volunteers or paid personnel, and (4) dissemination of information about models and promising practices. Participants will be

asked to evaluate the training sessions to determine if the sessions fit their needs. Changes are made to future workshops based on those evaluations. CSDE will include in its on-site monitoring an evaluation of local instructional practices to determine if its professional development is being implemented.

CSDE will provide performance outcome targets and meet the expected levels of performance demonstrated by Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) for adult education and literacy activities authorized under Title II for the period of July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2020. CSDE will meet he U.S. Department of Education proposed target percentages for each given year to reflect programs' progress toward continuous improvement in performance.

CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that

1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan. Yes

2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program. Yes

3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan. Yes

4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law. Yes

5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan. Yes

6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan. Yes

7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan. Yes

8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program. Yes

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a

Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that: If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Connecticut State Department of Education**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner of 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

ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions). Yes

2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA. Yes

3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals

who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA. Yes

4. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities; Yes

5. The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program; and Yes

6. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program. Yes

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

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

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.

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is committed to quality adult education programs which are accessible to all Connecticut adults and lead to mastery of the essential proficiencies needed to function as productive citizens in work, family and community environments. Connecticut's adult education programs are governed by Connecticut General Statutes, which require local school districts to offer education programs necessary to acquire basic literacy skills, elementary education, English language proficiency, secondary school completion and/or preparation for equivalency or proficiency examinations.

Funds (state and federal) are awarded only to eligible providers whose activities offer flexible schedules and which have coordination with federal, state, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs (as evidenced by program schedules and documentation of support services available). All providers are required to have a Disability Contact Person who must attend an annual training. CSDE requires equal

opportunity statements in all documents such as marketing materials, student and staff handboooks and web sites These materials are reviewed annually.

CSDE conducts two evaluation processess; an annual desk audit for all providers and and on-site monitoring evaluation for selected providers. On site monitoring includes evaluation of the following: compliance with all applicable law and RFP guidelines, including ADA 504 and Section 427 GEPA ; program management and operations including scheduling and locations accessible to all learners; outeach, recruitment and retention practices including individuals with multiple bariers to education; support services including counseling and transition services and professional development opportunities.

State Leadership funds are awarded to the agency who can deliver the required leadership activities to those programs who have met the previous requirements of GEPA.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (GENERAL)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

_____

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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

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

The mission of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is to provide assessment, advice and recommendations to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS or the Bureau) and others regarding coordination and effectiveness of programs and strategies that promote community-based competitive employment for persons with disabilities. The SRC maintains an ongoing collaboration with BRS. The SRC is comprised of volunteers, many of whom are current or former vocational rehabilitation (VR) consumers or family members of VR consumers. They are appointed by the Governor to review and assess the effectiveness and delivery of vocational rehabilitation services provided for individuals with disabilities who are seeking employment.

The SRC has participated in the following endeavors in FY 2017 and 2018:

1) Development of the BRS 2018 State Plan updates;

2) 2017 Statewide Annual VR program Meeting;
3) National Council of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) Teleconferences;
4) SRC Meetings (six per year);
5) Review of the 722 Report regarding Administrative Hearing Outcomes;
6) Development of the 2017 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment

WIOA

In July, 2014, Congress passed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to unify the state programs that provide employment services. This bill established some significant changes to the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. BRS Director David Doukas has informed the SRC of program changes and implementation of various requirements of the WIOA regulations. The SRC has worked to better understand WIOA requirements, and has offered feedback related to changes being proposed and implemented upon employment services for people with disabilities. The SRC also began to contribute to the development of new policies, both as they relate to new WIOA requirements, and changes in the delivery of certain services.

Agency Update

BRS Director David Doukas has consistently attended SRC meetings and provided members with information and updates about the VR program. On July 1, 2017 Kerri Fradette assumed responsibilities as BRS liaison to the SRC. The SRC looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with, and strengthening their positive relationship with both Mr. Doukas and Ms. Fradette to continue to improve the quality of services for people in the program.

BRS Public Meetings

BRS and the SRC hosted public meetings in January 2016 to review the VR portion of the 2016 Unified State Plan. In February 2018, the latest public meeting was held to review proposed 2019 State Plan updates and the BRS decision to implement an Order of Selection. Consumers, their families, and others interested in the VR program were invited to review the draft of the 2019 Unified State Plan updates that feature VR program specific information, and employment information and goals among the state partners. Their feedback informed the final version of the Unified State Plan.

SRC Recommendations to BRS

Outlined below is the designated state unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations. Several of these recommendations appeared last year, but the SRC believes they are ongoing issues that warrant continued attention this year.

Recommendation 1: We support BRS as it seeks new locations to better serve VR consumers. We applaud efforts to ensure better visibility of BRS offices. We continue to recommend that signage to enable optimum visibility be a priority of all offices. The SRC is requesting that updates on signage and access to all buildings continue to be provided at SRC meetings.

Recommendation 2: The accessible parking in the Waterbury office is on a grade that makes it difficult for consumers who use wheelchairs to transfer out of and into vehicles. The SRC recommends that when the parking lines are repainted, the accessible spaces be moved further right where the grade is not difficult to maneuver.

Recommendation 3: Some consumers are still confused upon arrival at offices shared with Department of Social Services (DSS). It would be beneficial to consumers and families if BRS expands the website to include pictures of offices and perhaps a virtual tour of each office so consumers will know where to park and what to expect when entering the building.

Recommendation 4: The SRC recommends BRS strengthen communication between counselors and consumers, especially when consumer cases are being transferred to another counselor. We would like to know what BRS expects of staff regarding response time to consumer telephone calls and emails. We would also like to have reports on how staff are meeting that expectation. Also, what is the procedure to ensure consumer contact is not lost when cases are transferred to new counselors?

Recommendation 5: The SRC has a continued interest in all of the state agency collaborative projects including the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS)/BRS agency collaborative regarding services and employment options for consumers with psychiatric issues, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS)/BRS agency collaborative, and the Bureau of Education Services for the Blind (BESB)/ BRS agency collaborative. Please provide updates at the SRC meetings about any achievements that have been attained, the strategies that have been developed to improve outcomes, the training that is available to staff, and any activity that will occur as a result of BRS' attendance at the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) conference.

Recommendation 6: The Business Committee will continue efforts to make presentations about BRS to businesses and Chambers of Commerce to help publicize the VR program. The Committee would like to work closely with BRS to develop a brochure to distribute on these occasions. The SRC requests regular updates regarding new projects and initiatives that will benefit the business community.

Recommendation 7: The SRC recommends that BRS increase engagement with businesses to increase hiring of VR consumers.

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

BRS Response 1: The Bureau continues to be very active in its endeavor to improve the physical locations of our offices. We have completed two critical re-location projects in the first quarter of FFY 2016 and are planning additional moves within this year. We agree that both exterior and interior signage at our offices could be improved, and have been systematically working toward addressing this. In many locations, municipal building codes, landlord issues and physical space itself limits our signage options, but efforts to maximize our visibility are to be made wherever possible.

Update: With the implementation of WIOA, the Bureau has focused on establishing presence of the VR program within American Job Centers. To this end, the Bureau has collaborated with Regional Workforce Boards and under Infrastructure Cost Agreements will establish, by the onset of FFY 2019, full-time presence in three locations and part-time presence in seven locations.

BRS Response 2: The Bureau has been and will continue to work closely with the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and the lessor of our Waterbury office related to the re-grading and expansion of the parking lot. We will continue to pursue improvement at this location, ensure no issues are present at newly established locations, and also address any additional issues that are identified at other existing office locations.

Update: The Bureau continues to pursue improvements at this location, but must do so under the terms of a new lease. BRS continues to work closely with DAS in this endeavor.

BRS Response 3: BRS continually updates website content, including information related to BRS offices. We will look into providing pictures of the locations. We will also update the directions to include parking and building entrance instructions. The State of Connecticut is implementing a new website portal that we hope will be functional in 2016. Once this website is implemented, we plan to provide user friendly and accessible information for the general public, which will include BRS office information in detail. In addition, we will continue to utilize social media to provide outreach to consumers and the public to increase awareness of office locations and services.

Update: The Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is scheduled to have its website redesigned on the new CT website portal in FFY 2019. We will work to ensure the new site is designed in a user-friendly manner, with full 508 compliance and accessibility to individuals with disabilities. We will work to include information and directions to all BRS offices accordingly.

BRS Response 4: The VR Supervisors oversee case transfers and will continue working on a resolution to this concern. Going forward, consumers can expect that within two weeks of requesting a transfer to another counselor and/or office they will be contacted by the new counselor, (or his/her designee) to schedule an appointment. In the instance of case transfers happening due to a caseload vacancy, consumers receive a letter as soon as the vacancy occurs, with contact information to be used until the position is filled. Mechanisms for formally tracking transfer cases and yielding metrics related to response times will be investigated and, to the extent possible, developed.

Update: BRS continues to adhere to the principles listed in our original response.

BRS Response 5: BRS continues to maintain Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement (MOU/A) and active, robust partnerships with various state agencies. We are committed to routinely sharing information about these collaborations and will continue to do so.

Update: The Bureau has executed all necessary MOU/A's with partner agencies as required under WIOA.

BRS Response 6: BRS supports the SRC in their reaching out to businesses and Chambers of Commerce to market our services. We have a variety of materials developed that are geared toward highlighting the benefits of employers working with the VR program. We would be interested in presenting these materials to the SRC and developing any additional brochures that are determined necessary. The Bureau will also offer regular updates regarding initiatives and projects with the employment community at SRC meetings.

Update: BRS has continued to support the SRC's effort to develop and print the requested materials. Funding was provided during 2018 for this endeavor and the materials have been produced.

BRS Response 7: BRS remains very committed to engaging with businesses. This is evident in BRS housing a Business Services Unit, and Connect-Ability Staffing, which are responsible for business outreach and development throughout Connecticut. BRS plans on expanding Connect-Ability Staffing's capacity for outreach in order to facilitate more connections with businesses and, ultimately, more employment opportunities for VR consumers.

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

The Designated State unit did not reject any of the Council's input or recommendations.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services is not requesting a Waiver of Statewideness.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

Not applicable.

3. ALL STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the 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;

BRS has Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the following entities:

A. Social Security Administration: Information Exchange Agreement to receive data regarding consumers' work history.

B. The Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs MOU enables collaboration of services for veterans.

C. The Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium MOA enables BRS to create and host the Connect-Ability Distance Learning Initiative (DLI) which provides over 50 free online e-learning modules for job seekers with disabilities, employers, Community Rehabilitation Providers CRP), vocational rehabilitation staff and others. Modules are accessible and some are available in Spanish or American Sign Language. BRS also uses the DLI as a training registration platform for staff trainings. This year we added a new module in order to provide Career Counseling for sub-minimum wage employees in Connecticut.

D. The Department of Social Services (DSS) MOA enables DORS/BRS to receive select administrative supports and access to information systems, applications and networks from DSS. It also formalizes the transfer of funding to conduct Learning Disability evaluation services related to the collaboration in serving potentially eligible consumers receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Update: The Bureau has executed a new agreement related to DSS information system access, which is discussed in (i) below. The VR TANF agreement sunsetted effective 7/1/2017.

A. The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation (MPTN) MOU enables collaboration and coordination of vocational rehabilitation services with the 121 program.

B. Through the Secure Jobs Connecticut Pilot, a Letter of Agreement enables BRS and the Departments of Education (SDE), Housing (DOH), Labor (DOL), and Social Services (DSS) to collaborate with the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund, Fairfield County's Community Foundation, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, the Liberty Bank Foundation, the Melville Charitable Trust, the Office of Early Childhood, the Partnership for Strong Communities, the United Way of Greater New Haven, and the United Way of CT to end homelessness by 2015 for Veterans, 2016 for those experiencing chronic homelessness, and by 2022 for families with children and youth.

C. BRS also has agreements with Central Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University and Springfield College to train student interns.

D. BRS has a newly executed MOU with DOL which enables the exchange of client information for the purposes of federal reporting and performance accountability under WIOA Legislation. BRS client records are matched to DOL's Unemployment Compensation Database enabling BRS to report on consumers employed during the 2nd and 4th quarters post exit, as well as the median earnings in the 2nd quarter post exit. In addition, this MOU enables the exchange of information related to program involvement among all participating WIOA partners, and a centralized location for the development of WIOA Unique ID's.

E. BRS has executed a 3-way MOU with DSS and DOL for the exchange of client records necessary for BRS to process cost reimbursement cases with the Social Security Administration (SSA). Under this agreement, BRS is able to run a batch file process with DSS. A resultant file is generated by DSS using DOL Unemployment Compensation data to assist BRS with identifying cases that qualify for cost reimbursement through the SSA.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

The Connecticut Assistive Technology (AT) Act Program is housed within DORS along with BRS, therefore an MOA is not needed. The Program Director for the AT Act program serves in the role of AT Consultant to the VR program and a strong relationship has been established. The AT Act program operates an AT device lending service specifically for VR consumers. The Program Director provides AT demonstrations when needed, and assists VR consumers in participating in reuse activities. Additionally, VR consumers are able to utilize the alternate financing program operated by the AT Act program to assist in paying for needed devices that the VR program may not be able to provide, such as vehicles, which can then be modified by the VR program.

The following are formal agreements that have been established to provide activities under Section 4 of the AT Act:

1. The State Education Resource Center (SERC) MOU enables SERC to provide Assistive Technology device demonstrations and loans primarily to educators, other school personnel, family members and students.
2. The Southern Connecticut State University MOA enables laptops and iPads with specific software to be loaned to CT K-12 schools for up to four months to allow students to try devices before they are purchased.
3. The Department of Labor MOA allowed us to establish Assistive Technology device demonstration centers at two American Job Centers (AJC) in CT, allowing AJC customers to borrow the devices while they participate in AJC services, as well as allow employers to borrow the devices for their employees with disabilities.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

None.

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

None.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

1. The Office of the Attorney General MOA enables review and approval of Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) contracts and legal representation at Administrative Hearings for consumers.
2. The Office of the State Comptroller MOU provides approval and processing of expenses for consumers and staff.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. DSU'S PLANS

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

With the passage of WIOA, the BRS Transition Committee has collaborated with the State Department of Education (SDE) and a number of entities to implement pre-employment transition services including the Connecticut Transition Community of Practice, the North East Transition Group, Regional Transition Committee, Transition Task Force, Collaboration Across the Life Span, Education Transition Liaisons, Southern Connecticut State University Career Advisory Committee, CT-AHEAD/Higher Education Schools, the Department of Labor (DOL), and the WDBs.

Prior to initiation of pre-employment transition efforts, BRS had liaison counselors assigned to each high school to work directly with students and collaborate with education administrators to sign a referral protocol yearly. With implementation of WIOA, 10 VR counselors have been assigned to work exclusively with students with disabilities.

SDE and BRS have staff that serve on each other’s advisory committees (Transition Task Force and BRS Transition Committee). Program staff attends common training regarding the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), secondary transition services and WIOA. SDE and BRS collaborated to develop a statewide CT Transition Community of Practice (COP) with a broad stakeholder base as a single portal for transition resource development, professional development, and interagency collaboration. SDE and BRS initiated statewide strategic planning with agencies, school districts, families and other stakeholders.

Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State Department of Education (SDE) includes the following:

With the passage of WIOA, BRS has expanded focus to include both Level Up Committee and Transition Committee to focus on service delivery for students enrolled in high school and also collaborated with the State Department of Education (SDE) and a number of entities to implement pre-employment transition services including the Connecticut Transition Community of Practice, the CT Transition Alliance, Regional Transition Networks, Transition Task Force, Charting the Life Course: Life Course Planning, Education Transition Liaisons, CT-AHEAD/Higher Education Schools, the Department of Labor, and the WDBs.

BRS has liaison counselors assigned to each high school to work directly with students and collaborate with education professionals to sign a referral protocol yearly. With implementation of WIOA, 10 VR counselors have been assigned to work exclusively with students with disabilities.

SDE and BRS have staff that serve on each other's advisory committees (Transition Task Force and BRS Transition Committee and Level Up Committee). Program staff attends common training regarding the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), secondary transition services and WIOA. SDE and BRS collaborated to develop a statewide CT Transition Community of Practice (COP) with a broad stakeholder base as a single portal for transition resource development, professional development, and interagency collaboration. SDE and BRS initiated statewide strategic planning with agencies, school districts, families and other stakeholders.

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;

1. The responsibilities of BRS under the formal interagency agreement are as follows:
2. Collaborate with the SDE in coordinating, providing, and documenting the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities;
3. Provide vocational rehabilitation services to students and youth who meet the eligibility criteria of BRS;
4. Work with the Local Education Authority (LEA) to make the best effort to develop an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) for each student eligible for adult VR services before the student leaves the school setting;
5. Provide consultation and technical assistance to aid LEA in planning for the transition of eligible students;
6. Coordinate with the SDE for training and technical assistance regarding transitioning youth with disabilities and interagency service linkages, including but not limited to, presenting at statewide events and supporting

the statewide transition website of the Connecticut Transition Community of Practice (COP);

7. Satisfy the documentation requirements of section 511 of WIOA and 34 C.F.R. 397 for students with disabilities who seek subminimum wage from employers who hold special wage certificates under the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. 214 (c), including the provision of documentation of notice that pre-employment transition services were available to that individual under 34 C.F.R. 361.48, documentation of an application for vocational rehabilitation services and the result thereof, and, if the individual was found eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, documentation that the individual had an IPE, was unable to achieve the employment outcome specified in the IPE, and had a closed case record meeting the requirements of 34 C.F.R. 361.47;
8. Collaborate with the SDE to provide trainings to schools about Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) careers and Customized Employment for youth with disabilities;
9. Collaborate with the SDE to coordinate training and technical assistance regarding assistive technology;
10. Provide a VR staff member to participate on and support or co-chair the SDE Transition Taskforce, BRS Transition Committee and the Connecticut Transition COP; and
11. Satisfy the career counseling and information and referral requirements of WIOA, including its documentation requirements, for each youth with a disability who seeks, or obtains, subminimum wage employment.
12. The responsibilities of SDE under the formal interagency agreement are as follows:
13. Provide general supervision of the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA's) requirements for special education and related services to ensure a free appropriate public education for children and youth with disabilities;
14. Collaborate with BRS to coordinate, provide, and document the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities;
15. Facilitate partnerships between BRS and LEA, including the identification of a contact person in each organization, as mutually identified by the parties, to facilitate communication;
16. Collaborate with BRS and LEA to develop new pre-employment transition services;
17. Assist BRS with training schools about STEM careers and customized employment for youth with disabilities;

18. Assure that IEPs developed by LEA for youth with disabilities aged 16 or over include plans for the provision of educationally-related "transition services" as defined in 34 C.F.R. 361.22(b)(4) and 34 CF.R. 300.43. Educationally-related transition services shall also include such activities identified by the LEA as are based on the child's needs, consider the child's preferences, and are designed to facilitate movement from school to post-secondary activities, including employment;
19. For each student with a disability with an IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan that the LEA has reason to believe may pursue subminimum wage employment following their exit from the school system, SDE shall assure that LEA document the provision of transition services in accordance with the documentation requirements of 34 C.F.R. 397.30(b)(1), including, at a minimum, the child's name, a description of the service or activity completed, the dated signature of the responsible educational official documenting the completion of the required service or activity, and the dated signature of the responsible educational official who transmits the documentation of the provision of transition services to BRS upon the request of BRS;
20. For each student with a disability that the LEA has reason to believe may pursue subminimum wage employment following their exit from the school system, SDE shall assure that LEA transmit documentation of the provision of educationally-related transition services to BRS by June 15 of the year in which the youth exits the school system. Such transmission of documentation to BRS shall include a cover sheet identifying the transmitted documentation that has been provided and shall be made in a manner that ensures confidentiality in accordance with the requirements of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
21. Collaborate with BRS to disseminate information about and train school personnel on how to coordinate services for students with disabilities as they transition to life after high school, including those students interested in supported, subminimum wage, or other employment in compliance with WIOA;
22. Coordinate with BRS to distribute information for LEA to provide to students referred to BRS beginning at age 16;
23. Provide information about BRS and related services on the SDE Secondary Transition and other relevant website pages;
24. Facilitate the provision of transition services through LEA, based on funding responsibilities identified in IDEA and WIOA;
25. Collaborate with BRS to coordinate training and technical assistance regarding assistive technology;

26. Provide an SDE staff member to actively participate on and support or co-chair the BRS Transition Committee, SDE Transition Taskforce and the Connecticut Transition COP; and

27. Assure that neither the SDE nor the LEA will enter into a contract with an entity for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

1. The responsibilities of BRS under the formal interagency agreement are as follows:

Assist the LEA in providing transition planning for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and implementation of their individual educational programs (IEPs) under section 614(d) of the IDEA;

2. The responsibilities of SDE under the formal interagency agreement are as follows:

Coordinate with BRS to provide training and technical assistance regarding the IDEA, transition and IEP requirements for special educators and vocational rehabilitation counselors, including but not limited to presenting at statewide events and supporting the statewide transition website of the Connecticut Transition COP.

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 responsibilities of BRS and SDE for financial responsibility and dispute resolution under the formal interagency agreement are as follows:

1. BRS and the SDE agree to maintain independent financial responsibility for the services they are mandated to provide under applicable federal and state laws and regulations;

2. SDE shall ensure that the LEA meet their obligations under the IDEA to provide or pay for transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to children with disabilities. BRS will fund pre-employment transition services under WIOA; and

3. In the event BRS or an LEA provide or pay for transition services to a youth or students with disabilities and such Party believes that the services should have been provided or paid for by the other Party, that Party shall seek reimbursement from the other Party in writing along with evidence that the services in question were in fact provided, and the legal basis for such claim. In the event the other Party disputes the claim for reimbursement and the Parties cannot resolve the dispute themselves, the agency representatives shall

consult with the Office of the Attorney General for a legal opinion or interpretation, if necessary.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

1. The responsibilities of BRS under the formal interagency agreement are as follows:

Assist LEAs in providing outreach and identification of students with disabilities who are in need of transition services to be provided by the LEA and pre-employment transition services to be provided by BRS;

2. The responsibilities of SDE under the formal interagency agreement are as follows:

Coordinate with BRS in disseminating information to LEA regarding effective, results-based practices for preparing students with disabilities for postsecondary education, vocational training, competitive employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

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.

BRS has partnership agreements with several Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP); we procure CRP services through Purchase of Service (POS) contracts.

Through a POS contract with the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS), consumers who are 18 or older and are eligible for Social Security Benefits receive Individualized Financial Capability Coaching to improve their knowledge of finances.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The Bureau provides supported employment and extended services to consumers with significant disabilities, as appropriate. Vocational Rehabilitation counselors work with each individual consumer to identify necessary services. In the process of developing an Individual Plan for Employment (IEP), the counselor and consumer make decisions about the need for supported employment or extended services. When the services are deemed necessary, the counselor and consumer identify a source of long-term funding and meet

with a representative case manager, if appropriate. Once long-term supports are obtained, the plan can be executed. Supported employment and extended services are provided in partnership with our statewide network of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP's). These arrangements are based on fee-for-service contracts. We use a series of strategies to accomplish the goals of supported or extended employment, including the following:

- The statewide Ongoing Employment Supports Committee is a resource for identifying supported employment funding opportunities on a case by case basis;
- Cooperative agreements with CRPs, American Job Centers and Independent Living Centers (ILCs) allow for additional employment supports through the Ticket to Work program; and
- The Interagency Employment Practice Improvement Collaborative for staff in BRS, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and CRPs is designed to increase successful employment outcomes to an underserved target population.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

BRS employs a Business Services Unit, Connect-Ability (CA) Staffing Employment Consultants, which are responsible for employer outreach efforts across Connecticut. The CA Staffing Employment Consultants build relationships with employers to identify their workforce development needs. Through these mutually beneficial relationships, CA Staffing offers business services such as disability awareness trainings, candidate pre-screening, working interviews, on-the-job trainings and industry specific training and placement programs. In turn, the CA Staffing Employment Consultants obtain real-time labor market information that is shared with VR Counselors and participants of the vocational rehabilitation program as part of their career path exploration and decision making process. This dual-customer approach allows BRS to prepare VR consumers for long-term, sustained employment in a constantly evolving labor market.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

BRS will procure transition services for students with disabilities that include placement with employers to participate in work-based learning experiences and work place readiness training, as defined in WIOA. The scope of services will include social skill development, independent living and instruction in self-advocacy, peer mentoring, and assistive technology. Upon graduation, youth will benefit from transition services to prepare for, seek and maintain employment and secure supports needed to be successful.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

The State Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act is a program operated by the Department of Social Services (DSS). For over 20 years until 2014, BRS functioned as a Designated State Unit with DSS serving as its Designated State Agency. As a result of this long-term relationship, BRS has a close working relationship with DSS programs such as TANF, the Medicaid Buy-In, and Money Follows the Person. We offer technical assistance through our Vocational Rehabilitation and Benefits Counseling programs. BRS intends to work with DSS to develop an agreement that formalizes these referral and service processes.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) MOU enables coordinated vocational employment services for people with intellectual disabilities to minimize overlap of resources.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) MOA enables BRS to partially fund a shared position to improve service delivery and collaboration for consumers of both programs.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

BRS maintains a computerized record system for personnel needs, resources, and training. In addition to this information, the Bureau annually uses a caseload management program and results of ongoing needs assessments to analyze personnel needs.

BRS assisted 8,330 consumers in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2017. With 61 VR counselors, the ratio of VR counselors to all consumers is 1:113; the ratio of VR supervisors to consumers is 1:1,388. The ratio of all staff to consumers is 1:76. Of the 8,330 total annual consumers, 2,554 developed an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Based on the same number of VR counselors, the ratio of staff to all consumers with an IPE is 1:42; VR supervisors to consumers with an IPE is 1:42; and all staff to consumers with an IPE is 1:23.

Personnel Category Total Positions:

Support (Administrative Assistant, Fiscal, Secretary) 26

Central Office Consultants 8.5

District Directors 3

Managers 2

VR Supervisors 7

VR Counselors 61

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

Personnel Category Current Vacancies:

Support (Administrative Assistant, Fiscal, Secretary) 0

Central Office Consultants 0

District Directors 0

Managers 0

VR Supervisors 1

VR Counselors 0

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Personnel Category Projected Vacancies Over the Next 5 Years

Support (Administrative Assistant, Fiscal, Secretary) 4

Central Office Consultants 0

District Directors 0

Managers 0

VR Supervisors 2

VR Counselors 15

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;

We analyze the graduate information from the regional Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) - accredited universities to find schools that offer required courses or graduate degrees in rehabilitation counseling. We also check with local CORE schools for the availability of distance learning opportunities for the required CSPD courses. In the state of Connecticut, there is one CORE-accredited institution of higher education that is preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals: Central Connecticut State University (CCSU). All rehabilitation counseling graduates from this college will be eligible to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) exam.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

Currently, there are 88 students enrolled in the CCSU Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

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.

Last year, there were nine (9) graduates from the CCSU program. This year, the total number of expected graduates is 16.

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.

BRS sends announcements for Counselor positions to all regional CORE-accredited institutions of higher education that train VR Counselors. We have initiated contacts with these universities so that we can continue to find well-qualified staff for the vacancies we anticipate in the future. In addition to the Connecticut-based CORE institution listed above, we are in close contact with the regional institutions from which we have traditionally found Counselor applicants (Assumption and Springfield College in MA, and Salve Regina in RI); we have staff that serve on advisory boards or teach at these institutions.

The Bureau has recruited qualified staff representative of the population of Connecticut: the 37% diversity of our staff exceeds the 19% diversity of our state. We have recruited

11% of our staff from individuals that have disabilities. Our primary challenge has been finding Master's level counselors who are proficient with Spanish or American Sign Language (ASL). We will continue the following steps to ensure there is a sufficient pool of qualified counselors for future openings:

- Increase our on-campus college recruitments;
- Increase recruitment, and continue online recruitment.
- Increase undergraduate internships.

In Connecticut, there are several factors that ensure retention of staff. The majority of staff leave because of retirement. BRS attributes the reasons for retention success as follows:

- BRS recruits staff committed to the importance of VR work;
- In-service training is available to staff at all levels;
- Staff may give input into decisions that affect the way they work; and
- Staff can participate in ongoing committees related to: Staff Training, Regional Training, Community Rehabilitation Providers, Transition, Autism Spectrum, and the BRS Annual Meeting.

The committees ensure that staff have input into the work of the Bureau. The committees also give staff opportunities for leadership experiences that will help them prepare for other positions in BRS.

BRS offers staff an opportunity to create Individual Staff Development Plans (ISDP) to identify areas of an employee's current job that need further development, areas that could be developed to prepare for a future job in the agency, and training needed for either. ISDPs encourage staff to pursue areas of their strength and interest. This activity helps to identify staff training needs and prepares staff for growth needed to meet future succession challenges.

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 current requirements for CSPD are based on the national standards for Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC). The National Standard is determined by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC). BRS hires counselors that meet the following:

1. Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling from a CORE-accredited institution; or
2. Master's and current Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification; or
3. Master's in Counseling with one integrated or two separate graduate level courses with the primary focus on the Theories and Techniques of Counseling course(s) as part of the required curriculum; or
4. Master's, Specialist, or Doctoral degree in one of 13 qualifying majors (as specified by CRCC) granted from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting body at the time the degree was conferred.

Even though BRS bases its educational standards for VR Counselors on the national standards for Certified Rehabilitation Counselors (CRC), it does not require counselors to have CRC certification. However, applicants with a CORE-accredited rehabilitation Master's degree should be able to sit for the CRC exam.

BRS employees interested in CRC Certification are encouraged to contact the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification at the following website: http://www.crccertification.com/ for more specific information on their credentials and experience. BRS does not guarantee that the above criteria will entitle a counselor to sit for the CRC exam. The Bureau provides training at no cost, and offers Continuing Education Units (CEU's), which will count toward the ongoing training requirements by CRC.

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.

BRS will pay for and require the following graduate courses for new counselors in permanent positions with a Master's in Counseling as described in (a) above. The number of additional required courses will depend on the previous education of the new employee as well as total months of vocational rehabilitation counseling experience. The Bureau's definition of education, course curriculum, and experience is based on current standards for the national Certified Rehabilitation Counselor certification:

- 60 months of vocational counseling experience accepted by the Credentialing Committee - no additional courses are required. CSPD requirements are met.
- Individuals with less than 60 months of vocational counseling experience will be required to take up to nine additional courses, based on a review of the graduate transcript. These specific required courses are determined by CRCC as Theories of Counseling, Techniques of Counseling, Foundations of Rehabilitation Counseling, Assessment, Occupational Information or Job Placement, Medical Aspects of Disability, Psychosocial Aspects of Disability, Multicultural Issues, and Case Management and Rehabilitation Services.

In addition to education requirements, BRS encourages staff to pursue certification in their field. The Bureau embraces the CSPD process to ensure a 21st century

understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities; continuous organizational development, and, continuous improvement of the competencies of all staff.

BRS also seeks continuous improvements in service delivery, the continuation of a professional level VR staff that can consistently achieve quality employment outcomes as specified in the Rehabilitation Act and promised in the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, we continually seek ways to meet the needs of our consumers and deliver a complete array of services based on the goals of employment, community participation, and informed consumer choice. The Bureau has hired a qualified, diverse, flexible and progressive rehabilitation staff to serve our current and future consumers. BRS strives toward the continuous development of desired consumer outcomes: sustained jobs, jobs with future growth, and jobs with sufficient earnings.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

BRS systematically provides adequate and ongoing training to staff. In-service training addresses assessment, vocational counseling, and job placement. All staff development activities support the Bureau's mission to increase the quality of services and the number and quality of employment outcomes for people with disabilities. In-service training is available to all staff. The Bureau bases its plan for staff development on a multi-faceted comprehensive needs survey. BRS uses all available information for ongoing analysis of training needs including the following:

- Public Meetings
- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment results;
- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) 107 Review;
- Key training personnel collaboration with New England Training Directors
- Management reports; and
- Manager, District Director, Consultant, and Supervisor feedback.

In addition to ensuring that staff meets CSPD requirements, BRS provides Foundations of CT VR, a year-long series of in-service training that is mandatory for new staff and available for staff that need refresher training. This includes a broad array of topics

pertaining to VR such as: core BRS policies and practices, trainings on the specific populations, independent living, transition, and community rehabilitation services. A variety of training methods are utilized to assure that training activities are diverse enough to address individual learning styles.

Training is provided on assistive technology. BRS helped create and is a member of the NEAT (New England Assistive Technology) Center at Oak Hill. The Center is the largest assistive technology (AT) center in Connecticut where one can try AT devices for personal use, observe AT device demonstrations, donate or buy used equipment that is refurbished and recycled, obtain loans of AT devices and receive training on the latest adaptive equipment.

The Connecticut Tech Act Project Director provides training and consultation for BRS staff. Other in-service trainings on specific disability populations contain information on technological solutions for consumers.

The biannual statewide Assistive Technology Conference, hosted by the Connecticut Tech Act Project (entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998) specifically offers content and training sessions for vocational rehabilitation counselors and several BRS staff participate in this conference.

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.

BRS continually analyzes all consumer data to identify areas where it needs to increase training or vary approaches. Acquired updated information and research is disseminated to all BRS staff by Central Office staff.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

BRS addresses individual communication needs of applicants for, and recipients of, vocational rehabilitation through the services of others able to communicate in alternate languages, appropriate modes, or in native languages. Approximately 10% of the current staff is bilingual in English and Spanish. The Bureau employs staff who speak other languages as well as staff who use both American Sign Language (ASL) and English. The Bureau is organized into three regions that geographically divide the state. The list below indicates the languages spoken by current staff and the regions in which they work:

- American Sign Language (ASL) - Northern, Southern, Western
- French - Northern
- French Italian - Southern

- Polish - Northern
- Portuguese - Northern
- Spanish - Northern, Southern, Western.

BRS can also hire interpreters in most languages and can access interpreter services over the phone for all languages.

Each district has Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (RCD) on staff to work with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. These Counselors are equipped with videophones. BRS also contracts interpreter services as necessary.

The Bureau does not serve many consumers who use Braille since there is a public Vocational Rehabilitation program through the Connecticut Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) that serves the majority of consumers who have visual disabilities. When needed, BRS can provide Braille materials for consumers or staff. The Bureau's goal is to provide any communication support necessary for staff or consumers with disabilities.

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.

BRS co-funds an Education Consultant position with the Connecticut State Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education who has been active in the Department of Education's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Council. The Bureau routinely plans training with input from the Consultant in the co-funded position. This Consultant provides annual training for all Bureau professional staff on transition and other provisions of the IDEA. The Consultant also meets with the management team of BRS semi-annually to review current collaborative training and other provisions of the IDEA. This collaboration allows for coordination of the Bureau's human resource plan and personnel development under the IDEA.

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

In FFY 2017, BRS, under the advisement of the State Rehabilitation Council, commissioned San Diego State University (SDSU) to conduct a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) to examine the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities including their need for supported employment andto assist the

Bureau with establishing goals and priorities. Relevant excerpts from the CSNA report as issued by SDSU appear below.

The CSNA identified the following Barriers to Employment, Barriers to Services and Agency Performance:

Barriers to employment

I. Key informants agreed that barriers to employment are heightened for individuals with most significant disabilities because they have greater needs and often multiple diagnoses, requiring more support in the community, service network and workplace. In particular, their employment is likely to require long-term workplace supports which are costly or scarce.

II. Forty-four per cent of all BRS applicants receive Social Security benefits, providing a measure of the segment of this population who may settle for working below their full potential because they fear that full time work will jeopardize their benefits.

III. Over 3,500 individuals in Connecticut are earning less than minimum wage. This was attributed to the state's historically high utilization of "group employment" (sheltered workshops) for many individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who receive services from the Department of Developmental Services. Key informants identified this as a barrier to competitive, integrated employment, but acknowledged that measures are under way to begin to limit this option, pursuant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Barriers to services

I. Both the quantitative and qualitative data show that the delivery system's capacity to serve individuals with most significant disabilities is extremely limited. This is especially true where Supported Employment is concerned, and even more so for Customized Employment which is virtually non-existent in Connecticut. There was agreement that the causes include insufficient funding, inconsistent policy and programming across state agencies and limited staff proficiency.

II. These same factors play into BRS' own challenges in serving individuals with most significant disabilities. Dedicated BRS funding for Supported Employment is in fact limited, as are system resources for long-term supports. A financial literacy pilot program for SI/SSDI recipients ended in December 2016. BRS has yet to expand customized employment training, but is working actively with system partners to improve services for this population going forward, consistent with the WIOA requirements.

Agency Performance

I. The disability types likely to be classified as most significantly disabled and require long- term supports (communications, Intellectual Disabilities/Developmental Disabilities and mental health impairments) represented 80% of BRS consumers in 2016. The disability type comprising the

largest proportion served by BRS was mental health impairment, and yet the agency's rehabilitation rate for individuals with mental health impairments was by far lowest of all disability categories.

II. Individuals with most significant disabilities represented 56% of BRS consumers in 2016, a slight decline from 60% in the two previous years. Transition-age youth made up 70% of BRS consumers with most significant disabilities.

III. Eighty-one individuals with most significant disabilities received Supported Employment services from BRS in 2016, down 39% since 2014. It was unclear from data and key informant feedback what types of services were provided to the balance (1,783) of consumers with most significant disabilities. The rehabilitation rate for individuals receiving Supported Employment services declined slightly from 51% to 47%. VR Supported Employment Foundations Training was expanded to two days to increase staff capacity to deliver this service.

IV. To comply with WIOA requirements pertaining to individuals earning subminimum wage, BRS and partners are holding regional information fairs. It was too early to measure the outcomes of this strategy but most observers gave it mixed reviews.

Performance data available for this report are not current enough to reflect BRS' recent efforts to address the new WIOA requirements pertaining to Supported or Customized Employment and employment outcomes for individuals with most significant disabilities.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

The 2017 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment identified the following Barriers and Agency Performance relative to minorities:

Barriers

Key informants were in general agreement that the barriers to both employment and services for individuals who are ethnic and racial minorities are of the same nature as for the general population of individuals with disabilities but are even more challenging, due in part to language and cultural issues. Next most frequently identified as barriers were BRS operational and programmatic issues (slow service delivery, not meeting with consumers in the community, difficulties with or inadequate services) as well as geographic access.

Agency Performance

I. Race/Ethnicity- While close to two-thirds of White and Asian cases were closed rehabilitated in 2016, Black and Hispanic cases were lower by 21 and 14 percentage points respectively, which could be an indicator of cultural and language barriers to services for these populations.

II. Overall assessment- Most key informants indicated that the list has not changed significantly in the last ten years, and that despite the state's efforts to serve these populations, their employment outcomes continue to lag behind those of other

target groups. They considered BRS' strategies with these populations to be a good effort given the resources at their disposal and the new regulations under WIOA but encouraged the agency to continue to seek creative and collaborative solutions.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

The 2017 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment identified the following Barriers and Agency Performance relative to unserved or underserved individuals with disabilities:

Barriers

Key informants were in general agreement that the barriers to both employment and services for individuals who are from unserved and underserved populations, are of the same nature as for the general population of individuals with disabilities but are even more challenging, due in part to the lack of specialization in the service provider community to address their employment-related needs. Next most frequently identified as barriers were BRS operational and programmatic issues (slow service delivery, not meeting with consumers in the community, difficulties with or inadequate services) as well as geographic access.

Agency Performance

I. Individuals most frequently identified as unserved or underserved by BRS include individuals with psychiatric and developmental/ intellectual disabilities, those with autism spectrum disorder and those transitioning from school to post-secondary education or work. (These groups of individuals are in addition to individuals from minority backgrounds, whom BRS identifies as an underserved population, that are discussed in Section 1. B. above.)

II. Overall assessment- Most key informants indicated that the list has not changed significantly in the last ten years, and that despite the state's efforts to serve these populations, their employment outcomes continue to lag behind those of other target groups. They considered BRS' strategies with these populations to be a good effort given the resources at their disposal and the new regulations under WIOA but encouraged the agency to continue to seek creative and collaborative solutions.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

The 2017 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment identified the following Barriers and Agency Performance relative to the needs of individuals who are served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system:

Barriers

While there is generally little quantitative data on individuals with disabilities served by American Job Centers (AJCs), it is widely acknowledged that AJC utilization and

successful results are limited unless staffs are co-located or programs are jointly sponsored with VR. This tends to be due to inconsistent policy and programming across state agencies, inadequate staff training and accessibility issues. Quantitative and qualitative data analyzed in this study suggest that Connecticut is no exception. Key informants indicated that where there is co-location, there is better integration and greater likelihood of successful outcomes; otherwise they do not typically find AJCs to be user-friendly for individuals with disabilities who they said feel overwhelmed with paperwork and processes.

Agency Performance

BRS staff participating in interviews indicated that they do make referrals to CT Works, but the agency recorded a total of only 37 referrals from AJCs over the entire three-year period under review, 17 of those occurring in 2016. Twenty-two per cent of consumers surveyed indicated that they had tried to access CT Works services. At the systems level, BRS is collaborating in statewide efforts to fulfill the WIOA mandate for an integrated workforce system. In addition to participating in state level planning and implementation, this includes regional and local partnerships, involvement on the state and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and multiple examples of staff co-location.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

The 2017 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment identified the following Barriers to Employment, Barriers to Services and Agency Performance relative to the needs of youth with disabilities and students with disabilities:

Barriers to employment

Survey participants ranked lack of job preparedness as the top barrier to employment for youth in transition, followed by challenges with basic needs, including geographic access to jobs. Staff added that lack of family supports is a third factor. These barriers are even more of a challenge for youth than in the general population because so many have never ventured outside the home and school safety net, most have never worked and schools typically do not expose them to realistic work and life experiences.

Barriers to services

- Staff and partner survey respondents had shared perceptions of the primary barriers to services for youth, ranking difficulty with or inadequacy of BRS programs, and BRS operational issues, as the top two, followed by lack of family supports and low expectations.
- Key informants identified lack of continuity among the 169 school districts, coupled with the changes in design and implementation of BRS' Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program, Level Up, as barriers to service delivery. Observers did find that the strategy had given greater visibility to the need for strong, reality-based transition programming. Respondents all agreed that the

dramatic reduction in work-based experiences was the most regrettable casualty of the reversal.

Agency Performance

- Increased efficiencies- BRS significantly increased the number of transition Plans developed (+87%) over the three-year period. This corresponded to a 47% decrease in the average number of days from eligibility to Plan (compared to a 38% decrease agency-wide) and a simultaneous increase in the proportion of agency Plans accounted for by youth cases, from 18% to 25%.
- Outcomes and Expenditures- The increased efficiencies did not translate to improved outcomes or expenditures over this same period. BRS' rehabilitation rate for transition cases decreased from 50% to 42%, with a 32% increase in cost per case. Likewise, the cost for transition cases closed unsuccessfully increased by 35%, in contrast to a 7% agency-wide decrease in that same time.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

The CSNA assessed the need to improve Community Rehabilitation Programs within the state. To complete the CSNA, Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), BRS counselors, consumers and key informants were surveyed. The results indicated that only about 2/3 of respondents felt CRPs meet the employment needs of individuals with disabilities. In 2017 BRS issued a new procurement process, based on recommendations from the previous CSNA, aimed at improving the quality of services through CRPs while decreasing the cost to the Bureau. These new contracts and services will begin in 2018, so the results cannot be assessed yet.

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 .

In response to WIOA requirements and input from stakeholders including youth with disabilities, BRS developed and implemented the Level Up program (pre-employment transition services). This includes designated BRS counselors in the high schools, an application the youth can access on their phones, and pre-employment transition services developed and provided by both CRPs and BRS staff.

BRS maintains a Memorandum of Agreement that enables joint funding for a SDE/BRS Consultant position to coordinate transition services as outlined under IDEA.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

According to the most recent US Census Bureau American Community Survey, Connecticut had 3,535,139 residents who were non-institutionalized in 2016. There were

2,229,098 persons between 18-64 years of age. 8.3% or 185,907 of these individuals had a disability (+/- 0.3 margin of error). Census data from 2016 also shows that Connecticut had 373,802 non-institutionalized persons with disabilities ages 16 and over, and of that number 24.3% were employed. The remaining 75.7% were unemployed.

These statistics reveal that a considerable number of persons with disabilities in the State of Connecticut are not working. A measurable number of these individuals may be transition-aged youth. In addition, a portion of the 24.3% of persons with disabilities who are employed may be underemployed. Some of the individuals may also require services to attain or retain employment consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

These statistics make it difficult, if not impossible, to accurately estimate the number of potentially eligible consumers of VR services. That number is many times more than BRS has historically served or has the resources to serve.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2018, the BRS projects that it will serve 5,473 eligible consumers in Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs) under Part B of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act. This represents a 7% decrease from FFY 2017, when 5,891consumers received services in IPEs under Part B of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.

BRS had a spike in consumers being served in IPEs in FFY 2016. This coincides with BRS' implementation of WIOA requirements surrounding Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and the establishment of Pre-ETS Counselor positions to exclusively serve this population of students. These Counselors became connected directly to school systems throughout our state and began working to identify and serve potentially eligible students in our communities during that year. Such efforts created an influx of youth who both entered and advanced within our system. BRS also tightened policies and procedures in FFY 2016 around IPE development within 90 days, further contributing to the increase in consumers being served. In FFY 2017, BRS' production trended back closer to recent norms, and thus realized a decline in IPE development of 3.1% as compared to FFY 2016. A contributing factor associated with this decline was a decrease in new applicants by 3.1%.

For many years prior to FFY 2013, BRS was operating under an Order of Selection (OOS) and serving eligible individuals determined to be Priority 1 (Most Significant Disability) and Priority 2 (Significant Disability). At the onset of FFY 2013 (10/1/12) the Bureau opened the OOS and also began serving eligible individuals determined Priority 3 (Non-Significant Disability). The Bureau's decision to open the OOS and serve all Priority levels was in accordance with regulations and with respect to the principle that at that time the program had both sufficient fiscal and personnel resources to attempt to serve the total population of eligible individuals seeking vocational rehabilitation services. The Bureau has functioned outside of an OOS since this time as indicated by approximately 8% of the consumers assisted in FFY 2017 having non-significant

disabilities. Utilizing time tested budget projection methods the Bureau has analyzed the program's ability to continue at the current service levels and determined that this is not sustainable. Examination of resources and revenue versus projected expenditures yields an untenable result of the Bureau having an approximate $2 million funding shortfall if it were to maintain the current service levels throughout FFY 2019. It should be noted that this potential shortfall had been anticipated during previous budget cycles and various cost containment measures such as staffing pattern reductions, purchase of service controls and local field office closures have already been and continue to be implemented. Unfortunately, these measures have not been adequate in comparison to reductions in state funding appropriations, escalations in employee fringe costs and sharp declines in federal reallottment awards over the past two years.

The Bureau is currently making preparations to move back into an OOS effective 10/1/18. Based on available funding and staff capacity the Bureau intends to serve Priority 1 individuals, with a waiting list being established for those of a lower priority. The Bureau intends to analyze funding and capacity on a quarterly basis and offer services to individuals on this waiting list as resources permit. In addition, as permitted under WIOA, the Bureau has elected to continue to serve individuals with disabilities that require vocational rehabilitation services to maintain competitive employment regardless of priority designation.

Based upon historical data, current trends and expected changes to OOS, the Bureau expects to serve approximately 5,263 eligible consumers in Individual Employment Plans (IPEs) under Part B of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act in FFY 2019; a decrease of 4% from 2018 projections. On the surface, this number does not demonstrate a large scale reduction in the number served and it may be construed that the OOS implementation will not be impactful. However, the Bureau believes that the modest reduction for FFY 2019 represents just the beginning of what will be a longer term trend in reduced aggregate caseload size. Due to the large number of consumers of all priority levels expected to be served at the onset of FFY 2019 (3,316) the impact of the OOS implementation is not expected to be felt as an abrupt moment in time reduction, but rather a slower downsizing in client base as individuals of lower priority exit the program.

In addition to Title I services to be provided to individuals under IPE's during FFY 2019, the Bureau forecasts providing PRE-ETS to 1,027 individuals that are either eligible or potentially eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

During FFY 2017, BRS purchased services for 94 consumers eligible for Supported Employment funding under Title VI-B of the Rehabilitation Act, utilizing $156,275. This expenditure represents 33% decrease as compared to FFY 2016. This spending decrease is related to the new WIOA requirement that 50% of Supported Employment funding must be expended exclusively in providing on the job support services to youth ages 24 and younger. Only $15,194 of the total grant expenditure was allocated to this population during this FFY.

Thus far in 2018, BRS has purchased services for 17 individuals, expending $13,969 in Title VI-B funds. This is a 53% reduction as compared to the same point (quarter 1) in FFY 2017, but is representative of the fact that the Bureau has fully expended the unrestricted adult services portion of its FFY 2017 Supported Employment grant award. The Bureau does continue to have a significant amount of the Youth Supported Employment portion of the grant available, but only projects a minimal ability to expend these funds by the end of the carry forward year. In total, BRS projects that 25 consumers will be served with 2017 Title VI-B funds during 2018 at a projected cost of $20,000. In combination with the 5,473 individuals who the Bureau projects will receive services under Title I, the total number of individuals to be served by BRS in 2018 will be 5,498.

For FFY 2019, the Bureau projects that 95 individuals will potentially receive services funded under Title VI-B. this number is comprised of 70 adult individuals and 25 individuals who will be served under the youth portion of the grant. In combination with the 5,263 individuals projected to receive services under Title I, the total number of individuals who could be served in IPE's during FFY 2019 is 5,358.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

For FFY 2019, the Bureau anticipates the following service levels by Priority Category:

OOS Category 1: 3,579

OOS Category 2: 1,369

OOS Category 3: 315

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

In 2018 no individuals fall into this category as BRS is not currently under an OOS.

As a result of the implementation of an OOS, the Bureau anticipates that approximately 600 eligible individuals will not receive services and will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list.

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.

Total Title I purchase of services (POS) costs for all eligible consumers in FFY 2017 was $13.4M. This figure represents a $2.0M decrease as compared to FFY 2016 expenditures. As the Bureau examined fiscal projections that revealed challenges related to available funding in future years, internal controls were put in place to influence overall costs of POS by encouraging staff to increase the provision of assessment and job readiness services internally, thus reducing the extent of reliance on Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP) for these services. As a result of these controls, the Bureau realized a $1.4M decrease in spending related to services purchased from CRPs in FFY 2017 as compared to FFY 2016.

Thus far in 2018, the Bureau has expended $2.4M through the first quarter of FFY 2018. Based upon clients presently being served and expenditure patterns, the Bureau projects a POS expenditure of $10.8M in general VR services, with an additional expenditure of $2M in Pre-Employment Transition POS for a total cost of services of $12.8M.

The Bureau projects a POS expenditure of $10.4M in general VR services, with an additional expenditure of $2M in Pre-Employment Transition POS for a total cost of services of $12.4M. This continued reduction in POS costs is considered possible through the reduction in clients served as a result of implementation of OOS, a recent competitive procurement of CRP services that will result in lower per-service unit costs across a myriad of community-based rehabilitation services, collaboration with and leveraging of American Job Center services, and the continued effort to develop and refine in-house services as a mechanism to supplant outsourced vendor services wherever cost effective to do so.

It must be noted that based on budget projections, the Bureau does not consider a $12.4M POS pattern to be sustainable in the future, and our year projections must contain lower POS costs for the VR program not to resort to spending freezes. It must also be noted that reduction in POS is not the only strategy being implemented to mitigate the Bureau's dire financial outlook. The Bureau has implemented a variety of administrative cost containment strategies such as field office closures, reductions in sponsorships, and elimination of duplicative information technology items with ongoing recurring expense. Most notably, beginning in FFY 2017, the Bureau commenced an effort to reduce its overall staffing pattern through attrition, by only refilling vacancies regarded to be absolutely critical to the program mission. This action is evidenced by a staff labor hour reduction of 14% or 20 Full-Time Employees (FTE) when comparing FFY 2016 versus FFY 2017. This reduction is expected to continue throughout 2018 and is expected to result in an overall staff contraction of 35 FTE's (or 25%) by the close of FFY 2019.

Based upon the number of consumers projected to receive services during FFY 2019, the Bureau forecasts an expenditure of $12.4M in Title I funds, with $2M allocated to Pre-Employment Transition Services. In addition, the Bureau also forecasts an expenditure of $171,000 in serving 95 individuals utilizing Title IV Supported Employment funding.

Category/ Title 1 or VI/ Estimated Funds/ Estimated Served / Average Cost

OOS Priority 1 / Title I / $7,074,500 / 3,579/ $1,976

OOS Priority 2 / Title I / $2,704,000 / 1,369/ $1,976

OOS Priority 3 / Title I / $624,000 / 315/ $1,976

PRE-ETS/ Title I/ $2,000,000 / 1,027/ $1,947

OOS Priority 1/ Title VI/ $171,000/ 95/ $1,800

Totals: $12,573,500 / 6,385 / $1,969

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The Bureau, in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducted a comprehensive statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of people with disabilities and identified four major goal areas. The goals and priorities listed in section L.2. below are derived from this assessment and will be used to carry out the Supported Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation programs. The SRC jointly agrees with BRS on these goals and priorities for the coming year.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

The Bureau, in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), identified five major goal areas. These goals and priorities will be used to carry out the Supported Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

Each of the goal areas contain a set of priority areas that the Bureau could address in the coming year. We cannot address every issue identified as a need, but attempted to build goals broad enough to address the major themes. Four priority areas were chosen based on their frequency of occurrence in the assessment. One additional goal was developed to address implementation of WIOA.

Goal 1: To implement the provisions of WIOA specific to the VR program.

Priority areas:

- Pre-employment transition services
- Employer services
- Service delivery
- Performance accountability measures
- Subminimum wage

Goal 2: To improve the quality of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities.

Priority areas:

- Customer service and provision of information
- Ongoing skill development
- Use of social media
- Provision of information on resources, labor market information and training/education programs

Goal 3: To increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, particularly those individuals from unserved or underserved populations.

Priority areas:

- Individuals from minority backgrounds
- Young adults with disabilities
- Individuals with psychiatric disabilities
- Individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD)

Goal 4: To increase access to services for all individuals with disabilities.

Priority areas:

- Services for individuals who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Services for individuals whose primary language is Spanish
- Cultural competencies for staff

Goal 5: To create effective partnerships designed to advance employment for Connecticut citizens with disabilities.

Priority areas:

- Businesses
- Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs)
- State Agencies with a specific emphasis on core WIOA partners

These broad goals are intended to be five-year goals, with the priority areas being flexible enough to change from year to year if necessary.

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

The bureau, in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducted a comprehensive assessment of the rehabilitation needs of people with disabilities and identified four major goal areas.

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

The Bureau, in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducted a comprehensive statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of people with disabilities and identified four major goal areas. The goals and priorities listed in section L.2. above are derived from the, five goals that are listed and will be used to carry out the Supported Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation programs. The SRC jointly agrees with BRS on these goals and priorities for the coming year.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

We will establish baseline measures based on 2017 data along with Core Partners.

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.

BRS is currently focusing on improving its ability to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for transition students within the 90-day deadline set by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES.

If services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals who apply, the Director of BRS will implement an Order of Selection (OOS) as set forth in this Section. After determining eligibility, counselors must assign a priority category and follow the Order of Selection set forth below for the provision of services. Individuals determined eligible, and with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) prior to the date of implementation of the Order of Selection, will continue to receive services. The Bureau will notify all eligible individuals of the priority categories in the Order of Selection. Eligible individuals in priority categories not currently being served will be notified in writing of their assignment to a particular category and advised of their right to appeal their category assignment.

Whether in an Order of Selection or not, the Bureau has assigned all applicants to an OOS category as a means of determining the distribution of the programs' collective caseload across priority categories of disabilities. The priority categories assigned have been, and will continue to be, based on their level of significance of disability. "Level of significance of disability" means one of the following: Priority Category 1, "Most Significant Disability"; Priority Category 2, "Significant Disability"; or Priority Category 3, "disabled" as set forth below. Individuals with disabilities shall be served first, based on significance of disability and second, by date of eligibility in the following priority order:

I. **Priority Category 1:** "Most Significant Disability" means an eligible individual who meets the following criteria:

- Meets criteria for "Significant Disability" as defined below; and
- A severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits four or more functional capacity areas in terms of an employment outcome. Functional

capacity areas are: mobility, work tolerance, communication, self-care, interpersonal skills, self-direction, or work skills;

II. **Priority Category 2:** "Significant Disability" means an eligible individual who meets the following criteria:

- A severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or more functional capacity areas in terms of an employment outcome. Functional capacity areas are: mobility, work tolerance, communication, self-care, interpersonal skills, self-direction, or work skills;
- Vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services;
- Vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require services over an extended period of time; and
- Who has one or more physical or mental disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility, and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause substantial functional limitation.

III. **Priority Category 3:** "individual with a disability" means an eligible individual.

Eligible individuals, who do not meet the Order of Selection category currently being served, will have access to services through information and referral. Individuals will be appropriately referred to other programs, including those of other core WIOA partners.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

For many years BRS has successfully employed a four year budget projection model. Over recent years, this model displayed increasing costs that were outpacing annual funding levels. The reason for this discrepancy in annual aggregate federal grant, state appropriation and program income revenue versus expenditures, was multi-faceted and did not occur as a result of large scale program expansion. Rather, the imbalance can be attributed to marked increases in employee fringe rates set by the CT Office of the State Comptroller, decreases in state appropriation to the VR program, and escalations in POS costs. Over recent years this structural funding deficit was masked by historically large federal re-allotment awards. At the conclusion of FFY 2016, BRS received a much smaller percentage in re-allotment funding relative to what was requested than it had in the preceding six years. This smaller than requested re-allotment award, coupled with the impact of the WIOA required 15% Title I set-aside for Pre-Employment Transition Services, exacerbated BRS concerns over the potential shortfall in funding. A budget mitigation plan was immediately implemented to, as gradually as possible, drive program operating costs downward to a more sustainable level. To mitigate the challenges related to unavailability of funding in future years, internal controls were put in place to influence the largest category of POS costs. By increasing oversight on purchasing, and encouraging staff to increase the internal provision of assessment and job readiness services to the extent possible, the amount of expenditures to contracted Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) for these services was reduced. As a result of this tactic, the Bureau realized a $1.4M decrease in spending related to services purchased from

CRPs in FFY 2017 as compared to FFY 2016. In FFY 2019 the Bureau intends to continue to pursue reductions in POS costs through a number of approaches. It is anticipated that resultant contracts from a recent competitive procurement of CRP services will result in lower per-service unit costs across a myriad of community-based rehabilitation services. Collaboration with and leveraging of American Job Center services, along with the continued effort to develop and refine in-house services as a mechanism to supplant outsourced vendor services, wherever cost effective to do so, should also continue to lower overall POS costs.

The cost containment and reduction efforts detailed above are not expected to result in sufficient funding being returned to the program budget to remain outside of an Order of Selection. Absent the implementation of an Order of Selection, the Bureau projects the untenable scenario of ending FFY 2019 with an approximate $1.9M shortfall.

The State Rehabilitation Council has been consistently advised of this issue, and recognizing little alternative, this council has offered feedback and support for the implementation of an Order of Selection. Additionally, multiple phone calls were held with RSA to apprise them of the situation.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

CT anticipates implementing an Order of Selection as of October 1, 2018. After that date, BRS plans to initiate new IPE's and serve all eligible clients in Category 1, as well as eligible consumers requiring specific services to maintain employment. This will be in addition to all clients being served under IPE's on 9/30/18. The projected overall numbers of clients to be served under an IPE in FFY 2019 is 5,263. The proposed case service budget is $12,402,500. The expected services provision by priority category is as follows:

OOS Category 1: 68% or $7,074,500

OOS Category 2: 26% or $2,704,000

OOS Category 3: 6% or $624,000

Based on successful employment closures in FFY 2017, CT BRS projects employment closures as follows:

OOS Category 1: 68% or 816

OOS Category 2: 26% or 312

OOS Category 3: 6% or 72

Total Projected Successful Outcomes: 1,200

The distribution of service and outcome levels across OOS categories is expected to trend toward a higher percentage of Category 1 clients in 2020. This is based on the expectation that beginning in October of 2018 the majority of new service plans being initiated will be for individuals determined to be Priority Category 1.

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

Priority 1: BRS will assist as many individuals determined to be Priority 1 as possible to achieve service and outcome goals.

Priority 2: This priority category will be closed upon implementation of the Order of Selection, with only those individuals with an approved IPE at that time receiving services. An exception will be made for individuals determined to be of this priority needing specific services or equipment to maintain employment. Review of the Bureau's capacity to serve these individuals will be reviewed quarterly with the category being re-opened for the number of individuals that resources are projected to reasonably allow.

Priority 3: This priority category will be closed upon implementation of the Order of Selection, with only those individuals with an approved IPE at that time receiving services. An exception will be made for individuals determined to be of this priority needing specific services or equipment to maintain employment. Review of the Bureau's capacity to serve these individuals will be reviewed quarterly with the category being re-opened for the number of individuals that resources are projected to reasonably allow.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

While in the Order of Selection, only eligible individuals who have most significant disabilities will be offered the opportunity to develop an IPE and receive vocational rehabilitation services (see VR Portion, Section M. 1 A). BRS will assess its financial and personnel resource capacity quarterly and will open the order to serve numbers of individuals with Significant Disabilities and individuals with disabilities for which sufficient funds are projected to be available.

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

Yes, the Bureau has elected to serve individuals regardless of any established Order of Selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

BRS will continue to use supported employment Title VI, Part B funds to allow maximum options in providing services to meet individual consumer needs. The bureau will target service to those persons who are presently not served or are underserved, and who: • Are individuals with the most significant disabilities and who have previously been unable to maintain competitive employment due to the severity of their disabilities; • Are in need of ongoing support for the duration of their employment; and • Will have extended support services available beyond BRS time—limited services.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

A. THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

BRS maintains that given the proper supports, the majority of persons with disabilities, including those individuals with the most significant disabilities, are capable of maintaining competitive employment. Supported employment services are available to individuals with the most significant disabilities who have been unable to maintain competitive employment because of the severity of their disabilities. The goal is to assist these individuals to achieve employment in the most integrated setting possible. Services will be provided on an individual case basis with emphasis on methods that provide maximum integration and consumer—informed choice. Therefore, BRS will continue to focus on placing consumers in individual placements with maximum integration. The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 Supported Employment definition emphasizes "competitive work in an integrated employment setting for persons with the most severe disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability and who, because of the severity of the disability, need intensive support services or extended services in order to perform such work, inclusive of transitional employment for persons with the most severe disabilities due to mental illness." The new WIOA changes the way Supported Employment and Extended services will be delivered: Supported Employment • Extension of SE services timeframe from 18 to 24 months • The 50% of SE funds applies to all Youth, which includes Pre—employment Training Services (PETS). For Supported Employment services, BRS will provide statewide training for all staff to support and empower counselors in making a shift towards more efficient plan development; in particular moving students with disabilities to plan (VR) while still exploring the potential need for Ongoing Supports. As the need for SE is established and funding identified for ongoing support, VR plans can be amended to Supported Employment Plans. Utilization of short term plans as a means towards assuring better opportunities for transitioning youth who are expected to be in our system for longer periods of time

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.

Extended Services

a. Services can be provided for a period up to, but not to exceed four years to youth with the most significant disabilities expending Title I funds.

b. Prior to WIOA, these services were not previously permitted for youth with disabilities under VR program or Supported Employment program.

Transition to Extended Services

All Bureau services are authorized and provided based on the individual needs of the consumer. BRS will work with relevant state agencies, private non-profit organizations

and our other partners to transition consumers from Title I funding to the identified provider of the extended services funding as soon as the funding is available and transition is appropriate.

Coordination and Collaboration

BRS oversees one of the three state-funded extended services programs. The Bureau is engaged in facilitating systemic changes in how supported employment services are delivered in the community. The Bureau works with relevant state agencies, private non-profit organizations and other partners to transition consumers from the Title I funding to an appropriate extended services program. These efforts have led to internal and external improvements in our state system and have built a foundation for a strong Supported Employment service program in this state.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

BRS will use the following objectives to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities:

a. Work with WIOA core partners to ensure that individuals with disabilities are effectively supported in the newly designed state employment system.

b. Implement its strategic plan for delivering Pre-Employment Transition Services.

c. Focus on timely progress through each step of the case management process.

d. Maintain a dedicated staff resource to manage the BRS training program, and maintain a separate line item within the Bureau's budget to offer necessary training.

e. Continue to use social media to connect job seekers with opportunities to pursue jobs with employers.

f. Develop materials on resources, labor market information and training/education programs to post on the BRS and Connect-Ability websites to provide consumers consistent access to information.

g. Continue to dedicate a specific unit of VR staff to support employers as dual customers to create more business partnerships and more employment opportunities through direct job placement, the use of On-the-Job (OJT) Trainings and Industry Specific Training and Placement Programs (ISTPPs).

h. Participate in cross agency trainings through the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) to strengthen state agency partnerships.

i. Continue to develop and disseminate Distance Learning Modules for staff and consumer use.

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.

BRS makes Assistive Technology (AT) available to individuals with disabilities through collaboration with the Connecticut Tech Act Project (Connecticut's statewide assistive technology program) throughout the rehabilitation process across the state in the following ways:

a. VR counselors may solicit the Bureau's Assistive Technology Consultant for guidance and assistance to ensure that AT devices and services are considered throughout the consumer's vocational rehabilitation process as appropriate.

b. The AT consultant can conduct comprehensive AT evaluations with consumers and can provide training in the use of newly-acquired AT, as needed.

c. Through the Assistive Technology Device Loan Program at BRS, VR consumers may borrow and try out devices to help them make informed decisions about whether the AT device is appropriate and if it will remove or reduce barriers, as expected. The inventory for this program includes a wide range of devices across the AT continuum from low to high tech, across disability categories (i.e.: hearing, vision, mobility, computer access, cognitive, communication, etc.), and across potential work environments.

d. VR Counselors and the AT Consultant collaborate with other entities such as school systems, colleges/universities, employers, independent living centers, state Medicaid waiver programs, and insurance plans to facilitate the provision of AT devices and services.

e. The AT consultant distributes an electronic newsletter and maintains a website to provide information about AT trends for anyone interested in AT.

f. The Connecticut Tech Act Project hosts a bi-annual full day Assistive Technology Conference with a focus on AT for employment, community living and education. There are generally 12 to 15 sessions, up to 30 exhibitors and approximately 200 plus participants.

3. THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM.

BRS has targeted a number of ways to better serve minority and unserved/underserved consumers:

a. Work with the Bureau's Latino Committee to develop new approaches to working with consumers who are Latino. Members of the Latino Committee and Employment Consultants will attend each other's meetings for ongoing updates and dialogue.

b. Produce all new publications in Spanish and pursue options to add required forms on the BRS Intranet for staff use.

c. Implement pre-employment transition services.

d. Translate distance learning modules into Spanish and American Sign Language.

e. Continue to partner with Local Mental Health Authorities and the state Mental Health Department to increase the number of employment outcomes and amount of earnings for individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

f. Hold three meetings of the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Committee to develop more responsive services for individuals with autism spectrum disorders. Provide joint staff training for BRS and Department of Developmental Services (DDS) staff on Autism Services.

g. Conduct targeted outreach to employers to increase employment outcomes for individuals who are deaf. BRS will continue to disseminate an Interview Preparedness Tip Sheet on Deaf Culture issues to stakeholders as needed.

h. Provide opportunities to strengthen cultural competencies for staff.

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).

BRS will use the following methods to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities:

a. Align existing VR services with Pre-Employment Transition Services as defined in WIOA 2014.

b. Serve students with disabilities ages 16-21 enrolled in high school by providing pre-employment transition services from existing community rehabilitation providers, companies, community agencies, education entities, colleges and universities statewide.

c. Assign 10 vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors to school systems statewide to serve students enrolled in high school. Allocate 100% of their time and funding for serving students enrolled in high school.

d. Improve partnerships with school systems by providing transition services to students.

e. Strengthen partnerships with the State Department of Education, local school systems, community providers, higher education entities, other state agencies, and employers.

f. Create and disseminate effective marketing and messaging to target school systems, students and their families, to educate and inform them about the BRS shift in service delivery to students as outlined in WIOA regulations.

g. Continue to strengthen and broaden collaboration resources with employers, two and four year colleges and universities, WDBs/American Job Centers and DOL grant training programs for students, youth, and young adults with disabilities.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

BRS will develop the capacity of Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to meet the needs of VR consumers in the following ways:

a. Continue to conduct annual performance reviews on all CRPs to ensure quality service delivery.

b. Develop and implement service models designed to provide flexibility to CRP's in developing job sites and in providing services specific to client needs.

c. Meet quarterly with CRPs in each district.

d. Provide opportunities for CRPs to meet statewide, both in targeted committee meetings and at an annual forum.

e. Participate in the Job Development Leadership Network.

f. Continue to disseminate Distance Learning Modules focused on service delivery and fiscal process for CRPs to interact with BRS.

g. Implement minimum training requirements for frontline CRP staff.

h. Increase the number of providers who will serve underserved populations, including Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Monolingual Spanish.

i. Explore procurement opportunities for specialized services.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

BRS will work with the larger workforce investment system to set thresholds for the new WIOA performance accountability measures.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

BRS is actively engaged in the implementation of WIOA in Connecticut with representatives on all planning committees. BRS assigned staff to participate on the four

distinct planning committees to fully understand the changes WIOA would make and how VR services would be integrated:

a. Administration/Governance - development and maintenance of the MOU among state partner agencies and a regional MOU template.

b. Technology, Data, Outcomes - development of a strategy to use existing IT systems to obtain aggregate data on common customers and program outcomes.

c. Service Design and Delivery - development of strategies and models for the coordinated delivery of effective workforce system services.

d. Employer Engagement - development of a strategic plan to promote employer engagement in effective industry partnerships.

BRS will review the adequacy of existing Memoranda of Understandings with workforce boards and partners, and continue to attend workforce board meetings. BRS will also continue to seek a representative from the workforce board to serve as a member of the State Rehabilitation Council.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

The strategies mentioned above align with the Bureau's goals and will be employed to address barriers to employment and services, as well as to improve general Bureau performance relative to equitable access to VR services.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

BRS anticipates using innovation and expansion (I&E) funds in FFY 2019 to support the activities of the State Rehabilitation Council. Other proposals will be assessed upon submission and considered based on the alignment with the State's goals and priorities.

C. OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

The strategies mentioned above align with the Bureau's goals and barriers identified in the CSNA surrounding barriers to equitable access to VR services. Equal access to services will remain a consideration in the employment of all strategies contained within the plan.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

Goal 1: To improve the quality of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities.

Priority areas:

i. Customer Service and Provision of Information

a. Both the BRS and Connect-Ability websites provide information related to VR services that are updated, as needed. Staff responsible for maintaining these websites anticipate the State of Connecticut will implement a new portal platform scheduled for FFY 2019.

b. Response to Consumer Requests - During FFY 2017, BRS responded to over 300 inquiries for information through the BRS e-mail submissions.

ii Ongoing Skill Development

a. Goal I: To improve the skills of all BRS staff by providing training and development in vocational rehabilitation service provision, responsiveness to consumers, Bureau mission and programs, awareness of state and community resources.

b. Goal II: To improve recruitment and retention of BRS staff by providing career development and succession planning activities to assist counselors in defining appropriate career paths and to assist the Bureau to maximize its resources, while continuing to meet CSPD requirements.

BRS provides Foundations of CT VR, a year-long series of in-service training mandatory for new staff and available to staff for refresher training. This includes a broad array of topics pertaining to VR such as: Foundations of CT VR Training, trainings on specific populations, independent living, transition, and community rehabilitation services. A variety of training methods are utilized to assure that training activities are diverse enough to address individual learning styles.

The Bureau developed an integrated program of training, education, and development activities for staff to gain the necessary skills, knowledge, and experiences to improve the quality of services and the number and quality of employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

BRS also maintains a dedicated staff resource to manage the Bureau's training program and will maintain a separate training line within the Bureau's budget that equals the level of funds available under WIOA.

iii. Social Media -

Job seekers, employers, advocates and providers use social media to communicate and network. In order to keep pace with technological advancements, BRS added the use of social media as a form of communication to help consumers gain access and become familiar with online job information. BRS formed a Social Media Committee that continues to meet regularly to oversee the Bureau's social media activities. The committee developed Social Media Policy and Guidance that was the basis for staff training. BRS has a presence on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Staff are encouraged to

have a presence on these platforms for work-related activity only. Staff may assist consumers in developing a presence on these platforms to access information from BRS and employment information and opportunities. Consumers may be referred to the Department of Labor for LinkedIn training as well.

For Federal Fiscal Year 2016, BRS social media activity reports the following:

- Facebook Analytics reports we have 57 followers.
- LinkedIn Analytics reports we have 314 "Connections."
- Twitter Analytics reports that we have 272 followers that have enabled BRS to reach over 32,800 Twitter users via tweets about the VR program and services, job openings and disability related information.

Goal 2: To increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, particularly those individuals from unserved or underserved populations.

Priority areas:

i. Individuals from minority backgrounds

BRS initiated a Request for Applications from qualified Community Rehabilitation Providers to procure Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) services in an effort to give youth in high school and young adults out of school an opportunity to have summer work experiences. Particular emphasis in the procurement application was placed on serving young adults who are in the priority areas of underserved populations, including Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Monolingual Spanish speaking, Individuals with Autism and young adults with psychiatric disabilities. The procurements were awarded to agencies that would be able to serve specific geographical areas and took into account the underserved populations in those areas. The results of the procurement produced a small set of CRPs who were able to serve the capacity.

The SYEP provided work experiences to a significant number of young adults, both in school and out of school. These young adults were given the opportunity to be better prepared to gain employment, giving them work related experiences for resume building.

Training: BRS provided the following training to improve employment outcomes for unserved or underserved populations:

- Deaf Culture - different communication methods of persons who are deaf;
- Ethics and Multicultural Counseling Competency - cultural issues in counseling; and
- Using the Myers-Briggs and Strong Inventories in VR - using these inventories in career counseling; and
- BRS also offered World of Work Inventory (WOWI) that provides tools for staff to use to accommodate consumers who have different levels of English, consumers with hearing loss, consumers with visual impairments and Spanish-speaking consumers.

As a result of these efforts, BRS assisted 403 Individuals from minority backgrounds achieve successful employment outcomes in FFY 2017.

ii. Young Adults with Disabilities

BRS has met quarterly with SDE and representatives from the Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) to continue providing current transition information. This group now includes the Department of Developmental Services Education Liaisons and Transition Consultants.

BRS has met quarterly with SDE and representatives from the Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs), Department of Developmental Services Education Liaisons and Transition Consultants, now called, CT Transition Alliance, to continue providing current transition information. BRS, SDE and the CT Community of Practice (CT COP) maintain partnership with the IDEA National Transition Community of Practice. This partnership led to the creation of a state stakeholder run website called CTTransition.Org. The CT COP represents a core team of stakeholders and initial practice groups that include the BRS Transition & Level Up committees and the Transition Task Force. The CT COP continues to uphold the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability (NCWD) Guideposts for Success as a framework for secondary transition activities and information. This is the same framework BRS has used for Transition since 2010.

As a result of these efforts, BRS assisted 280 Young Adults with Disabilities achieve successful employment outcomes in FFY 2017.

iii. Individuals with Psychiatric Disability

BRS continues to partner with Local Mental Health Authorities and the State Mental Health agency to increase the number of employment outcomes and amount of earnings for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. As a result of these efforts, BRS assisted 454 Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities achieve successful employment outcomes in FFY 2017.

iv. Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders

BRS held 10 meetings of the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Committee in order to develop more responsive services for individuals with autism spectrum disorders. As a result of these efforts, BRS assisted 135 Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders achieve successful employment outcomes in FFY 2017.

Goal 3: To increase access to services for all individuals with disabilities.

Priority areas:

i. Services for Individuals who are Deaf

BRS employs three full-time and one part-time Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf. Additional services, including Hearing Assistive Technology Services (HATS) and HATS Evaluation services, for individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing are also made available. HATS products may be approved for purchase when required for a consumer to maintain employment, comparable devices of lesser cost have been

explored, and the products are not available as a reasonable accommodation through their employer. Examples include T Coil Loops and Silhouettes, FM Systems, Amplified or Bluetooth Stethoscopes, Pocket Remotes, Bluetooth accessory adapters, and HATS products produced by hearing aid manufacturers that only work with one's personal hearing aids. BRS has translated five of 14 distance-learning modules into American Sign Language (ASL), the remaining nine are scheduled for translation over the next two years.

A. Services for individuals whose primary language is Spanish

BRS has translated five of 14 distance learning modules into Spanish.

B. Cultural Competencies for Staff

BRS is committed to assisting individuals with the most significant disabilities to achieve competitive employment outcomes. Efforts have been initiated and specialized training has been offered on how to work with underserved target groups (mental health disorder, substance abuse, learning disabilities, Deafness, Autism Spectrum) has been provided, or is scheduled to be provided. Trainings are comprised of both in-person and online modules.

Goal 4: To create effective partnerships designed to advance employment for Connecticut citizens with disabilities.

Priority areas:

ii. Businesses

In FFY 2016, BRS negotiated 117 On-the-Job Training (OJTs) opportunities. BRS also contracted with the following Industry-Specific Training and Placement Programs (ISTPPs):

- Southeastern Employment Services/Lowes Distribution Center
- Community Enterprises/Mohegan Sun
- Community Enterprises/Walgreens Retail Stores
- Ability Beyond/Walgreens Retail Stores
- Ability Beyond/Crowne Plaza
- Community Enterprises/Mystic Aquarium
- Community Enterprises/Home Goods Distribution Center
- Kennedy Center/CVS Retail.

From these ISTPP partnerships, 108 individuals participated in training; 65 individuals were hired permanently upon successful completion of the training.

A. Community Rehabilitation Providers

BRS completed the CRP Distance Learning Modules created for staff in CRP agencies to understand the core services that BRS contracts with providers. The first module is a CRP overview, which is also available to the public in the Connect-Ability Website. The following modules are only available to CRP agencies: Assessment Services, Job Placement Services, On-the-Job Training, Job Coaching Services, Interview Preparedness Services and Fiscal Services. These modules are effective ways to increase knowledge about BRS services for the CRPs who traditionally have high staff turnover and lack the capacity to train new employees in a timely manner. BRS has the capability of monitoring Bureau participation of staff that enrolls in the training. These tools were developed in conjunction with the CRP agencies through the BRS CRP Committee.

As part of the Annual Review Process, each CRP agency reports to BRS on the staff that have taken the Distance Learning Modules as well as staff who have participated in one of three BRS CRP trainings that are offered throughout the year. Four new CRPs were developed during this fiscal year.

0. State Agencies With the implementation of WIOA

BRS has collaborated with the core partners to unify the job services available for consumers seeking employment opportunities.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

The Bureau did not identify factors that impeded achievement of 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.

i. VR Supported Employment Foundations Training is provided to new VR Counselors. Senior VR counselors are also invited to the training to get a refresher on the current SE environment as well as provide technical assistance to the training.

ii. In addition, a BRS and DMHAS protocol document remains in place for both agencies to provide technical assistance on Supported Employment Policy and Procedures for both agencies. Both agencies participated in a combined training for VR staff, mental health staff, and CRP staff on an ongoing basis.

iii. Collaborative meetings are held quarterly with partners.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

Impeding Factors for Achieving Goals and Priorities

i. Consistent policies and practices in and between agencies administering Supported Employment programs continue to be a challenge for all stakeholders, including providers.

ii. Staff turnover is frequent and coordinating collaborative trainings and providing technical assistance is difficult. While this has been a challenging effort, training is still a priority for VR and partner agencies and providers.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

BRS anticipates becoming able to assess performance on accountability indicators in Performance Year 2019.

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

I&E funds were used in the following three areas:

a. Individualized Financial Capability Coaching is available to BRS consumers at age 18 who receive Social Security Benefits. Participants receive Benefits Counseling to understand the impact of earnings on benefits and an opportunity to plan for the future using the following topics and tools:

i. One-on-one Financial Coaching;

ii. Personal Financial Education Sessions;

iii. Work vs Benefits Discussion;

iv. Goal-Setting Support;

v. Help to Create a Working Budget;

vi. Debt Reduction Tools; and

vii. How to Make Tax Credits Work.

BRS initially intended to fund a pilot specifically tailored to meet the needs of individuals receiving Social Security benefits through an award to the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS), a private non-profit agency. Although BRS was not able to fund this pilot, significant technical assistance was provided. CAHS was able to develop internal capacity and is now equipped to provide financial literacy services free of charge to individuals with disabilities in CT state wide which include the following: financial literacy and instruction to budget a household, create realistic goals, understand credit scores (and demonstrate actions to maintain or improve them), increase self-sufficiency, obtain employment/increase wages, and go off of SSDI and/or SSI benefits with an emphasis on acquiring new checking, savings or equivalent accounts.

b. State Independent Living Council During fiscal year 2017

The State Independent Living Council (SILC) received $51,500 in Innovation and Expansion (I&E) funds to support the general operation of the Council. This included salaries for two full-time staff, office rent, supplies, phone and computer services, and SILC meeting expenses such as transportation, interpreter services, CART, and other accessibility costs. In addition to the administration and operation of the federally

mandated SILC, staff is responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). The I & E funds also supported the development of the Standards of Performance for the CILs and the development of SPIL Goal 2 to expand the capacity and build sustainability for the five CILs.

As detailed in the 2017-2019 SPIL, BRS will not provide I & E funding for SILC operations in FFY 2019.

c. The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) received funding to support efforts to assist BRS in assessing programs and services provided to vocational rehabilitation consumers. The SRC incurs travel expenses to in-state meetings and sign-language interpreters, when needed. When desired by the Council, I & E funds are utilized to send an SRC delegate to attend out-of-state conferences for the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) and the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR). The SRC is an organizational member of the NEAT Marketplace, a Connecticut facility that provides training and support with assistive technology devices. BRS has supported the SRC's effort to develop and print informational materials concerning the VR program for distribution to employers and other stakeholders. Funding was provided during 2018 for this endeavor and the materials have been produced.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

Program Status

WIOA changes the way Supported Employment and Extended services will be delivered.

Supported Employment services

- Extension of SE services timeframe from 18 to 24 months; and

Extended Services:

A. Services can be provided for a period up to, but not to exceed 4 years to youth with the most significant disabilities expending supported employment Title VI funds; and

B. Prior to WIOA, these services not previously permitted for youth with disabilities under VR program or Supported Employment program.

C. As the need for SE is established and funding identified for extended services, VR plans can be amended to Supported Employment Plans.

D. Utilization of short term plans as a means towards assuring better opportunities for transitioning youth who are expected to be in our system for longer periods of time.

For Transition to Extended Services, BRS will work with relevant state agencies, private non-profit organizations and our other partners to transition consumers from Title I funding to the identified provider of the extended services funding as soon as the funding is available and transition is appropriate. Use of Title I funds will vary, based on the needs of the individual consumer, but will generally not exceed 24 months in length.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

Coordination and Collaboration

BRS is engaged in facilitating systemic changes in how Supported Employment services are delivered in the community. The Bureau works with relevant state agencies, private non-profit organizations and other partners to transition consumers from the Title I funding to an appropriate extended services program. The Bureau oversees one of the three state-funded extended services programs and spent approximately $450,000 in serving VR consumers after VR services were completed. These efforts have led to internal and external improvements in our state system and have built a foundation for a strong Supported Employment service program in this state.

CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate **Bureau of Rehabilitation Services**

Name of designated State agency **Department of Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **David F. Doukas**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title 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

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Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part

200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE CERTIFICATIONS FROM THE STATE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this

commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Bureau of Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **David F. Doukas**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to

influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization **Bureau of Rehabilitation Services**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **David F. Doukas**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Director**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:**The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. SUBMISSION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EITHER A STATE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OR STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(21) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

C. CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(16)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

D. THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION BY THE STATE, OR IF THE STATE SO ELECTS, BY THE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, TO PROVIDE THE AMOUNT OF THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF THE COST OF CARRYING OUT THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(3).

E. THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds **No**

F. THE SHARED FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF JOINT PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **No**

G. STATEWIDENESS AND WAIVERS OF STATEWIDENESS REQUIREMENTS, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **No**

H. THE DESCRIPTIONS FOR COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(11) AND (24)(B); AND 606(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. ALL REQUIRED METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(6) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

J. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(7) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

K. THE COMPILATION AND SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSIONER OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS, ESTIMATES, STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, AND PROGRESS REPORTS, AS APPROPRIATE, AND AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(15), 105(C)(2), AND 606(B)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

L. THE RESERVATION AND USE OF A PORTION OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TO THE STATE UNDER SECTION 110 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, PARTICULARLY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

M. THE SUBMISSION OF REPORTS AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

A. COMPLY WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 101(A)(5)(D) AND (20) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. IMPOSE NO DURATION OF RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT AS PART OF DETERMINING AN INDIVIDUAL'S ELIGIBILITY FOR VR SERVICES OR THAT EXCLUDES FROM SERVICES UNDER THE PLAN ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PRESENT IN THE STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(12) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

C. PROVIDE THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES LISTED IN SECTION 103(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AS APPROPRIATE, TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above **No**

D. DETERMINE WHETHER COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

E. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

F. COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PROVISIONS OF INFORMED CHOICE FOR ALL APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

G. PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO AMERICAN INDIANS WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING IN THE STATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(13) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

H. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SEMIANNUAL OR ANNUAL REVIEWS, AS APPROPRIATE, FOR INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED EITHER IN AN EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT SETTING IN A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 14(C) OF THE FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT OF 1938, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(14)OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTIONS 101(A)(17) AND 103(B)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT IF THE STATE ELECTS TO CONSTRUCT, UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

J. WITH RESPECT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THE STATE,

I. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT,

1. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENTS; AND
2. 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

We will not be able to provide all services to all individuals as we are implementing an order of selection.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

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* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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

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

BESB VR Update: Input of the State Rehabilitation Council: The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program at the Bureau of Education and

Services for the Blind (BESB VR) continues to be a valuable and active contributing partner to the BESB VR Program and the organization as a whole. Over the course of the past fiscal year, the SRC members have participated in many activities on behalf of BESB VR, as well as continuing their existing responsibilities as identified in the WIOA. The following information summarizes the recommendations and initiatives of the SRC and incorporates BESB VR's response to each item.

SRC Recommendation 1: Have the Consumer Satisfaction Survey conducted by an entity experienced in performing consumer-based surveys and statistically analyzing outcome data.

BESB VR Response: BESB VR agreed with this recommendation. The SRC commissioned the Center for Public Policy and Social Research (CPPSR) at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) to conduct a consumer satisfaction survey of VR service recipients for fiscal year 2017. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the services that clients received from BESB VR. Results of the survey found that 96 percent of the 49 survey respondents would recommend BESB VR Services to a friend, representing the second-highest rating for this category in the history of the survey. Reported satisfaction with BESB VR services increased in all of the areas surveyed in 2017 in comparison to 2016. The most significant improvement was seen in the extent to which clients felt that their expectations were met (8.54, up 0.97 in rating), an all-time high. Overall satisfaction with BESB VR services also increased substantially over the past year, setting a new record high (8.78, up 0.43 in mean rating). This replaces the previous record of 8.6 set in 2010. The completed report was posted on the BESB VR section of the DORS website (www.ct.gov/besb).

SRC Recommendation 2: Based on the results of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, implement strategies for improving on the delivery of services for clients of the Program.

BESB VR Response: BESB VR agreed with this recommendation. Based upon the results of the FY 2016 Consumer Satisfaction Survey, the SRC utilized these results to carry forward priorities for FY2017. Two major focus areas were transportation options and developing a clearer approach toward assisting clients in the development of business plans.

It was recognized that satisfaction levels associated with transportation services are reliant upon clients having transportation options. Two relatively new options are Lyft and Uber. The members of the SRC requested more information on these services. Toward that end, the Vice-Chair of the SRC coordinated for Uber representatives to present at the March, 2017 meeting. The representatives discussed approaches that could be used to increase access to their services. The SRC learned about services available through Lyft at their December, 2017 meeting.

The SRC also recognized the difficulty that creating a business plan has been for clients and the resulting dissatisfaction with the process. The SRC membership recommended that BESB VR develop a guide for clients to follow, along with a business plan template. An initial draft was presented to the SRC members at the September, 2017 meeting for

review and comment and it was approved for use at the SRC's December, 2017 meeting. It is now posted on the DORS website in the BESB VR section for clients to utilize.

SRC Recommendation 3: Include a Vocational Rehabilitation Client Success Story into each meeting of the Council.

BESB VR Response: BESB VR agreed with this recommendation. During FY 2017, the SRC continued its initiative for BESB VR whereby a standing agenda item for SRC meetings consists of a "VR Success Story", in the form of a presentation by a BESB VR client who has achieved an employment outcome. Typically explaining the type of work they are involved in and how BESB VR supports helped them with that work, BESB VR and SRC members continue to respond positively to this initiative, as it provides the SRC with an opportunity to hear value-added and diverse perspectives on BESB VR's ability to support clients and employers in the workplace.

SRC Recommendation 4: Support initiatives that develop leadership qualities in transition-age youth who are blind.

BESB VR Response: BESB VR supported this important recommendation. The SRC continued its support and sponsorship of the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), an annual week-long leadership training program for transition-age youth with disabilities to learn team-building, self-advocacy and task management skills. The SRC is an ongoing co-sponsor of this program and considers its co-sponsorship to be very important and worthwhile.

SRC Recommendation 5: Identify strategies to address the fiscal constraints of BESB VR.

BESB VR Response: BESB VR agreed with this recommendation. Recognizing the fiscal challenges experienced in the state, as well as the relatively small amount of funds received through reallotment in FY 2017, the SRC formed a workgroup, to join with designated members from the DORS-BESB Advisory Board in order to begin discussions on the process that would be required for the implementation of an Order of Selection, if it were to become necessary. The workgroup was further charged with making recommendations to the membership of the SRC and the Advisory Board on strategies that could be utilized in an effort to stay out of an Order of Selection. The work of this group generated recommendations for modifications in policy in areas where costs of purchased services have been increasing to levels that cannot be sustained within available funding. These proposed policy revisions will be presented to the full membership of the SRC and the Advisory Board for discussion, refinement and a subsequent opportunity for public comment during 2018.

SRC Recommendation 6: Update BESB VR policies to align with changes in state and federal regulations.

BESB VR Response: BESB VR agreed with this recommendation. The SRC, in collaboration with the Advisory Board dedicated significant time during the year in finalizing the policies that govern the administration of BESB's VR and Children's Services Programs. For the BESB VR policies, the primary focus was to update the

language to reflect the changes that occurred at the federal level through the passage of WIOA and its accompanying regulations. Several new policies were required, included Pre-Employment Transition Services and Customized Employment. The BESB Children's Services policies required updating to reflect recent changes in state statutes as well as updating of policies related to services for Transition-age youth. Both policy manuals underwent a public comment period with public hearings. The SRC held a special meeting to review and deliberate on the public comments received and to finalize the policies that became effective on July 1, 2017 for both Programs. The finalized policies may be viewed at www.ct.gov/besb.

SRC Recommendation 7: Participate in the development of the BESB VR section of the Unified State Plan, reviewing public comments and approving the final draft for submission to Rehabilitation Services Administration and the United States Department of Labor.

BESB VR Response: One individual attended the public hearing held on February 15, 2018 and one individual submitted written comment. The comments received recommended that BESB VR strengthen its participation in the development of training opportunities offered by BESB's Children's Services Program and to expand these training opportunities to include school district teachers, paraprofessionals, community rehabilitation providers, parents and caregivers. The commenter further recommended that BESB VR continue to focus on engaging younger children in career exploration, peer-to-peer mentoring and self-resourcefulness training. These public comments have been reviewed by the SRC and the Advisory Board. Their respective memberships concur with these recommendations. BESB VR agrees with these recommendations as well and commits to strengthening the collaboration with BESB's Children's Services Program in the planning and delivery of training opportunities offered to young clients and the individuals who interact in their lives. The SRC has further deliberated on the contents of BESB VR section of the Unified State Plan and voted approval for it to be submitted.

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

BESB VR Response: BESB VR agreed with all of the recommendations made by the SRC as detailed in the above section.

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

BESB VR Response: BESB VR did not reject any of the SRC's recommendations.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

The Bureau provides the full range of services across the entire state and does not utilize a Waiver of Statewideness.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

Not applicable.

3. ALL STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY

requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Not applicable.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the 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 Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) is the designated state Vocational Rehabilitation unit for individuals who are blind within the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), which is the designated state agency. The Commissioner on behalf of, and for the benefit of, the Bureau executes cooperative agreements at the designated state agency level.

The Bureau is in a cooperative agreement with the Social Security Administration (SSA) that makes it possible to seek and receive reimbursement for certain costs associated with clients of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program that have achieved earnings at or above substantial gainful levels and have therefore transitioned off of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The process to seek reimbursement requires a combination of cooperative agreements at the state level. Client benefit status verification is obtained through an agreement with the Department of Social Services (DSS). A cooperative agreement with the Connecticut Department of Labor (DOL) makes it possible to review wage records of individuals who are participating in BESB's Vocational Rehabilitation Program to determine if their earnings are above substantial gainful activity (SGA) levels and would therefore qualify the Bureau to request cost reimbursement from SSA. Cost reimbursement would be for the cost of BESB purchased services as well as fees for administrative and tracking costs associated with a client's case. In federal fiscal year 2014 BESB received $122,689 from SSA under this program.

The Bureau also is in a cooperative agreement with the Native American Vocational Rehabilitation Program in Connecticut. This agreement has been developed to help with both program's efforts to coordinate and provide services to individuals who are mutually served by the programs or who could benefit from these services if they were to apply and meet eligibility criteria. To maximize collaboration, a representative of the Native

American Vocational Rehabilitation Program serves as an appointed member of the BESB State Rehabilitation Council, and a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor from BESB represents the Bureau on the Native American Vocational Rehabilitation Council.

The Bureau also has a cooperative agreement with the other Vocational Rehabilitation State Units within the New England Region that allows for the provision of services, such as mobility training for clients of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program who are attending training programs in those states.

For individuals who are deaf and blind, BESB works closely with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) for the coordination of services. Through a cooperative agreement, individuals who are deaf and blind can receive coordinated services from both public vocational rehabilitation programs. Through case conferencing, a determination is made as to which program will assume lead case management responsibilities, with the other program providing support services as needed. For clients who are receiving case management services through BRS, BESB offers vocational consultations, orientation and mobility services, and rehabilitation teaching assistance.

For clients who are blind and have developmental disabilities, the Bureau coordinates services with the State Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to bring about successful job placements with long—term supports. Each Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor works closely with DDS to establish a strong working relationship and a close collaboration of services with the DDS case manager.

BESB's Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors also coordinate services with the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) for individuals who are blind and have a mental health diagnosis and/or addiction.

The Bureau also is in a cooperative agreement with the state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) that implements a state law requiring the department to report on a quarterly basis to DMV the names of individuals age 16 and older who have been declared legally blind in each preceding fiscal quarter. The DMV uses this information to notify such individuals that their driver's license is no longer valid.

2. STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

Through the Assistive Technology Act, BESB works closely with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services to provide outreach and referrals of clients who are deaf and blind so that clients who meet the eligibility requirements of the Deafblind Technology Grant can apply for and received specialized adaptive equipment to increase their access to communication.

3. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

Being a part of the Statewide Workforce Development System, the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind has access to the full range of programs carried out through the Department of Agriculture.

4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

The Bureau has entered into service agreements with Almada Lodge Times Farm Camp for the provision of transition programs for in—school and out—of— school youth. Programs include mentoring, leadership development, independent living skills trainings, and work experiences as camp counselors.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

At the Department level, the agency participates with the Office of the State Comptroller for a Purchase Card program that permits for expedited purchasing of goods and services needed by clients to participate in the rehabilitation progress. The Department also has established a fee for service contract model with community rehabilitation providers across the state that enables BESB to purchase services at consistent pricing levels, making budget forecasting a more consistent and reliable process.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Describe:

1. DSU'S PLANS

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program at the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind is actively involved in a variety of transition school—to—work initiatives, with extensive collaboration and coordination at the administrative and service delivery levels of the organization.

At the direct service level, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors participate in Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings of clients who are in middle school or high school and assist in the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEP's) for students. The services that are detailed in the IEP of each student are factored into the development of each client's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), which must be developed within ninety (90) days of the determination of eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services, or by the time the client exits high school, whichever comes sooner. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor involvement begins as early as age 14, with referrals to the Program initiated by the Education Consultants of the Bureau's Children's Services Program and Teachers of the Visually Impaired that work directly for school districts. The client is assigned to one of the two Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors that are exclusively dedicated to serving pre—employment transition services eligible clients. Assignments are based on geographic location of the client.

Within the higher education area, the agency has successfully negotiated with the State University System to establish a cooperative agreement that addresses the services available in the university setting for students with disabilities. This cooperative

agreement includes the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and describes the responsibilities of the universities as well as the responsibilities of public vocational rehabilitation to ensure that students with disabilities achieve equal access to classroom instruction, internships, and school—sponsored activities.

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;

Vocational Rehabilitation Program staff continue to participate and present information at in—service training programs organized by the Bureau for public school teachers and guidance counselors on issues affecting students who are blind or visually impaired. The Children's Services Program of the Bureau further provides a comprehensive training series every year for school district staff to learn about low vision aids and adaptive technology, braille instruction, expanded core curriculum activities and resources that are available to facilitate the education and transition of students served by BESB.

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

In addition to serving on the statewide transition taskforce, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program's Educational Projects Coordinator is also an active member of the Board of Directors of the Youth Leadership Project that oversees the Youth Leadership Forum. The forum is a yearly event that teaches students with disabilities leadership and self—advocacy skills.

BESB continues to conduct career exposure camps for high school students who are visually impaired or legally blind. These programs include opportunities to interact with former recipients of vocational rehabilitation services who are successfully employed in a variety of careers. Some of these programs are held on college campuses, where the students gain a firsthand perspective of residential campus life in addition to gaining insight into a variety of careers that former clients are now engaged in.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

Through a cooperative agreement with the State Department of Education, the roles and responsibilities of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the public educational system are clearly defined. This includes financial responsibilities as well as coordination of services and staff training. To facilitate this coordination, the Transition School to Work Coordinator from BESB serves on an interagency transition task force and there is an appointed representative from the State Department of Education serving on the State Rehabilitation Council to BESB.

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

Since BESB maintains a registry of all students who are legally blind or visually impaired within Connecticut, the process for identifying and referring clients from Children's Services to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program is streamlined and efficient. The electronic case management system for the Bureau has a built in tracking system for identifying clients by age range to further facilitate the referral of clients who desire to participate in vocational rehabilitation services. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors work with the students, educators, parents or legal guardians and the Program's Education Projects Coordinator to identify careers of interest, develop career exploration opportunities, work and job shadowing experiences, mentoring activities and leadership development programs.

Through these comprehensive activities, BESB has and will continue to take an active approach to transition school—to—work activities to prepare students for the world of work.

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 Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) uses a wide range of contractual agreements with accompanying fee schedules that have been established by the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), the designated state agency for BESB as well as the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS). This provides for a statewide comprehensive set of program options and services to choose from. More than 50 non—profit community based rehabilitation programs are available through these contractual agreements for clients to select from. The services that are offered through the community rehabilitation programs in the state include job development, job coaching, and work assessments, among a variety of other training and evaluative services to enable clients to prepare for and enter into employment.

Additional fee agreements have been established with private non—profit service providers in other states where it is identified that these programs offer specific vocational and independent living services for persons who are blind. These agreements include non—profit rehabilitation providers in Louisiana, Colorado, Maryland, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, which provide work training programs as well as adjustment to blindness training.

In a contractual agreement with the National Federation of the Blind, the NFB Newsline is available for clients to access news, career information and current events. This collaboration includes the National Federation for the Blind of Connecticut, which provides funding to cover a portion of the cost for this service.

When new community rehabilitation providers become known to the Bureau, staff outreach to the provider to learn of the services that are available, and often to follow up

with onsite meetings to assess the relevance of the provider's services to the clients served by BESB. Where the new provider has program offerings that could be beneficial, Bureau staff notify the centralized contracting unit for DORS about the program so that contractual arrangements can be further explored. Upon contractual approval, the Bureau is provided with the agreed—upon fee schedule and Bureau staff are notified of the availability of the new program and the available services. BESB staff members arrange to conduct training of staff at the provider's facility on blindness related topics such as orientation and mobility and the use of adaptive technology to ensure that programs and services are safe and accessible.

F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) has been actively involved in cooperative working relationships with other public and private agencies for many years with regard to supported employment and extended services. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors identify individuals who have a significant disability along with legal blindness who can potentially benefit from long—term supports through supported employment. This process begins as early as middle school and high school for transition—age youth through the Counselor's involvement in the Planning and Placement Team meetings and discussions, but it can also often occur during the adult years of clients in situations where supported employment services may be appropriate and beneficial.

The Bureau utilizes contractual agreements and fee schedules established by the Designated State Agency, the Department of Rehabilitation Services in working with community providers to purchase supported employment services prior to the transition to the provider of extended services. Typically, job coaching is the most frequently purchased service, but work assessments to establish the level of support that may be needed on the job after placement occurs are also utilized.

This Bureau continues to have an active working arrangement with the State of Connecticut, Department of Developmental Services (DDS). This cooperative agreement assists in the coordination and identification of training providers that have specific expertise when a client with a developmental disability and legal blindness could benefit from supported employment services. This working relationship also involves the utilization of the Department of Developmental Services as a long—term third party provider of funding.

In addition to the collaborative relationship with DDS, BESB has developed a working relationship with the State of Connecticut, Department of Mental Health and Addiction

Services (DMHAS). Through this arrangement, individuals who have a mental health diagnosis, acquired brain injury, or an addiction diagnosis along with legal blindness can access supported employment opportunities, with DMHAS providing the third party funding.

Beyond the collaborative arrangements for third party funding with other state agencies, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program continues to identify and work with a growing number of private Community Rehabilitation Providers throughout the state. Working relationships have been established with providers such as Goodwill Industries of Hartford/Springfield, Mindscape Industries, the Kennedy Center, Marrakech, and C.W. Resources to provide extended services to ensure the long—term stability of job placements within supported employment settings.

Staff from the Bureau participates in meetings and training seminars organized by the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE). This organization links community providers, employers, state agency representatives and other resources together to exchange information on job placement strategies, funding sources and employer job leads. Bureau staff have presented at meetings of this organization on blindness related topics such as adaptive technology so that other providers in attendance would be aware of the options that exist for bringing about a successful job placement when accepting a referral from BESB for a client who is seeking a job placement with supported employment services.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR SERVICES; AND

The primary goal of coordinated activities with employers is to bring about long—term partnerships that foster a mutually beneficial relationship for both the employer and the clients served by the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind. All staff with job placement responsibilities underwent training in job development, case management strategies and relationship development strategies through the consulting firm of Employment Management Professionals. Initially launched as a collaborative effort with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, the Bureau underwent further training in June, 2014 with this company. Additionally, the vocational rehabilitation counseling staff received training in motivational interview techniques to strengthen client engagement in the rehabilitation and job search process.

Under the statewide coordinated efforts of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Coordinator, the vocational rehabilitation counseling staff utilizes the techniques learned in these training programs to connect employers with job seeking clients. However, a key component of the Employment Management Professionals strategy is to work with employers to develop longer standing relationships that are built on a genuine interest in the work of each employer, their needs and their priorities. This could mean that an actual job opening for a particular client may not come along for some time, but the Vocational

Rehabilitation Counselor is nonetheless a resource the employer can turn to for information, referrals to other service providers, and also to learn about job site accommodations and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Bureau staff strives to act as an employer's placement agency, where the employer will contact the Counselor before placing job advertisements for open recruitment. If there are no clients with the skill set to meet the particular job requirements, Bureau staff can connect the employer with other agencies or share this information at Job Developer Leadership Network (JDLN) meetings.

BESB also coordinates placement services through the National Employment Team (NET). This is a business approach of all 80 publically funded vocational rehabilitation programs working together to nationally coordinate placement services to employers that have a major presence in multiple states. The NET is a valuable resource to develop relationships with the national companies, where access to Human Resources staff at the state level is less readily available. The NET coordinator puts the businesses local human resources representative in contact with Vocational Rehabilitation agency's point of contact. In turn, the local Vocational Rehabilitation agency point of contact and the human resources staff of the company can meet to discuss specific services or recruitment needs at the local branch level. The needed services can vary from providing job candidates for local job openings, or providing in—service training to front line supervisors on disability topics, to offering job retention assistance for workers with disabilities who have requested work site accommodations.

Within the NET, there is an employer database, referred to as the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP), where only job seekers who are receiving services from a public Vocational Rehabilitation agency can access the portal. Employers can search for qualified candidates through this portal as well. This helps the employer recruit pre—screened qualified candidates who have a disability.

Within the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Bureau has been involved in new initiatives with the other partner programs to engage employers in the process of identifying how the system can best respond to their hiring, training and retention needs. A Business Engagement Partnership Forum was held in May for the purpose of hearing from employers, and to begin to develop a strategy to address their business needs. Working groups were formed to continue this effort with the ongoing involvement of staff across the partner programs.

The Bureau is looking forward to a strong and collaborative approach with the other workforce partners who engage in employer outreach, with a focus on offering employers a seamless and coordinated team approach to job order placing and matching candidates from the partner programs to the needs of the employers.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

With the development of employer relationships, even when employers may not be immediately hiring, they can offer other valuable services such as informational interviews, job shadowing opportunities and work assessment site hosting. Company

tours can further be arranged for clients of the Bureau to learn about a wide variety of careers. This is particularly important to the transition—age youth clients served by the Bureau, who may otherwise have very limited exposure to actual job sites during their junior high and high school years. Employer sites where current or former clients of the Bureau are employed have proven to be particularly beneficial in these situations. The opportunity for mentoring these young clients helps them to learn directly from another individual who is legally blind about careers in many of the occupations that provide solid earnings and long—term stability.

One such example is evident in an initiative launched by the Chair of the Bureau's State Rehabilitation Council. As an employee of a leading employer in the aerospace industry, she successfully coordinated a mentoring event for transition—age students to spend a day at the company, touring the facility, shadowing employees and gaining inspiration by learning how the Council Chair successfully navigated and problem—solved questions regarding work site accommodations, transportation and career development.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

The Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) has been actively involved in cooperative working relationships with other public agencies for many years with regard to supported employment services, benefits counseling and access to public health care information for clients served by the Bureau.

Benefits Counselors from the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services are available to assist clients of this Bureau with understanding how employment earnings and public assistance benefits interact so that clients can make informed decisions regarding employment. The Benefits Counselors also explore with clients the many options that are available within the state and federal government programs including how to apply for Medicaid and Medicare, as well as health insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

One additional provision that Connecticut participates in is Money Follows the Person, a Medicaid demonstration grant that assists with the transition from institutionalized living to community living for individuals who are receiving Title XIX. A staff person from BESB has been designated to work with this program that is housed in the Department of Social Services.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

This Bureau has an active working arrangement with the State of Connecticut, Department of Developmental Services (DDS). This cooperative agreement assists in the coordination and identification of training providers that have specific expertise when a client with a developmental disability and legal blindness could benefit from supported

employment services. This working relationship also involves the utilization of the Department of Developmental Services as a long—term third party provider of funding.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

In addition to the collaborative relationship with DDS, BESB has developed a working relationship with the State of Connecticut, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Through this arrangement, individuals who have a mental health diagnosis, acquired brain injury, or an addiction diagnosis along with legal blindness can access supported employment opportunities, with DMHAS providing the third party funding.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

BESB VR Update: The current composition of BESB VR includes one State Director, one Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor, one Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Coordinator, one Quality Control Reviewer, one Education Project Coordinator, seven full-time Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, two Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant Counselors, three Rehabilitation Teachers (two of these staff members are Rehabilitation Technologists), one Administrative Assistant, and one Secretary.

With this staffing level, the staff to client ratio breaks down as follows: Administrative Assistant 1/835; Education Projects Coordinator 1/835; State Director 1/835; Secretary 1/835; Quality Control Reviewer 1/835; Rehabilitation Teachers 1/278; VR Counselor/Assistant Counselor 1/92; VR Counselor Coordinator 1/835; and VR Supervisor 1/835.

In terms of years of service, the breakdown for staff is as follows: 1 - 4 years of service 3/19 or 16%; 5 - 9 years of service 2/19 or 10%; 10 - 14 years of service 5/19 or 26%; 15 - 19 years of service 3/19 or 16%; 20 - 29 years of service 3/19 or 16%, over 30 years of service 3/19 or 16%.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

BESB VR Update: The service delivery to the clients is divided into five regions throughout the state. At least one Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor is assigned to each of the five regions. The state is divided in half (East and West) for rehabilitation technology services, with one technologist covering each region. The Rehabilitation Technologists each conduct assessments for clients who are in need of adaptive technology to participate in VR services. There is also one Rehabilitation Teacher who serves the entire state, providing independent living skills training and adaptive technology training with screen readers.

There is one Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Coordinator that covers the entire state and works with the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors on case management strategies. This position also provides coordination of job development activities and employer engagement across the state.

The service delivery model also includes one Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor who works primarily with college students. This Counselor has established close working relationships with the offices of Disability Services at public and private institutions of Higher Education that clients from BESB VR are attending. Through this approach, consistent coordination of support services can be achieved. The assignment of a specific Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to the college students also ensures consistency and timeliness with the financial aid application process.

The Education Project Coordinator serves as the Program's Transition School-to-Work coordinator, overseeing the statewide provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) in collaboration with two Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors whose primary responsibility is to serve a caseload that is comprised of students with disabilities. The Education Project Coordinator also is responsible for the development and implementation of programs that provide students with opportunities to work through summer employment and internships, as well as providing career exposure experiences through job shadowing, employer tours, and mentor activities.

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.

BESB VR Update: Over the next 5 years, the Bureau anticipates there will be vacancies due to retirement in the category of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. The demographic of this need is illustrated by the following description, listing the job title, current number of positions within that job title, the current number of vacancies in the job category and the projected need over the next five years.

Job Title--Total positions--Current vacancies--Projected vacancies over next 5 years:

Administrative Assistant: 1 -- 0 -- 0

Education Projects Coordinator: 1 -- 0 -- 0

State Director: 1 -- 0 -- 0

Secretary: 1 -- 0 -- 0

Quality Control Reviewer: 1 -- 0 -- 0

Rehabilitation Teachers: 3 -- 0 -- 0

VR Counselor/Assistant Counselor: 9 --1-- 2

VR Counselor Coordinator: 1 -- 0 -- 0

VR Supervisor: 1 --0 -- 0

It is projected that within the next five years, there will be two Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors retiring. Due to funding constraints however, the Program is anticipating filling only one of these two projected vacancies. Based on the present Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor- to- client ratio of 1 Counselor to 92 clients, and factoring in the plan for the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Coordinator to assume much of the college student caseload, thus offsetting the reduction of one Counselor position, it is projected that staffing levels will be sufficient to serve the current client population and the anticipated number of new referrals over the next five years. This conclusion is based on a trend analysis of the past 8 years that found an average of 174 new referrals per year and an average of 158 program participants exiting per year.

With the relatively high starting salary for Master's level Rehabilitation Counselors compared to the private rehabilitation sector within the state, it is anticipated that recruitment efforts would again result in a sufficient applicant pool of qualified individuals when a Counselor vacancy occurs. BESB VR recruits for individuals who meet the highest standard in the state (CRC eligibility) first. The competitive salary offered by the State of Connecticut for this job classification has resulted in the ability to hire individuals who possess this level of credentialing in most situations. If there are no qualified candidates from those recruitments, then recruitment will be made for a Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant Counselor level**.**

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;

BESB VR Update: Central Connecticut State University, Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

BESB VR Update: BESB VR monitors the number of students enrolled in the Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling program at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Connecticut. This program has 88 students enrolled with 16 expected to graduate this year. The number of Masters of Rehabilitation Counseling degree candidates is sufficient to address the projected recruitment needs over the next fiscal year.

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.

BESB VR Update: Central Connecticut State University graduated 9 students with Master's Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling in 2017.

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.**

BESB VR Update: BESB VR remains in contact with the institution of higher education in this state that offers a Master's Degree program in Rehabilitation Counseling to ensure that an adequate flow of graduates is anticipated for projected vacancies. When positions are available, recruitment efforts are conducted through job announcements that are placed on the Department of Administrative Services web site, news publications of minority-based organizations, and colleges in the area. BESB VR also distributes the job vacancy announcements to organizations of and for individuals who are blind within the state, as well as advertising nationally through Rehab Net, which is a list-serve that connects all 79 state public vocational rehabilitation agencies across the country and the island territories. The list-serve for the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) is also utilized to distribute job announcements to ensure the widest possible distribution.

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

BESB VR Update: All staff members working as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and the Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor at the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development requirements. These staff members meet these requirements by having a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a closely related field, as specified by the criteria for certification as a rehabilitation counselor by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor

Certification (CRCC). In addition, the State Director for BESB VR also meets the CRCC standard and holds the credential of Certified Rehabilitation Counselor.

There are two staff members that do not meet the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development requirements of a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation or a closely related field. As specified in BESB VR policy, the Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor, who meets this standard, approves all eligibility decisions, Individualized Plans for Employment, and case closures for these two staff who are both in the job title of Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant Counselor.

There is no requirement in the job specification of the Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant Counselor series to advance into the Counselor level. Staff hired into the job title of Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant Counselor may seek continuing education to meet the qualifications of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor level, within available funding.

Working with the Department of Labor, the One-Stop Centers and their regional partners, BESB VR staff participated in training seminars on the needs of employers within the state. This has included training in the use of occupational outlook data. Staff has also received training in the use of Career Index Plus through collaboration with the Job Driven Technical Assistance Center.

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.

BESB VR Update: With the passage of WIOA, new opportunities for collaborative training with other partners of the workforce system have emerged within the state. BESB VR has worked in partnership with the State Department of Labor for training in occupational outlook and labor market projections. Additionally, BESB VR is now working closely with the One-Stop partners, participating in regional team meetings with the business consultants from the partner agencies to identify employment opportunities for clients.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

BESB VR Update: BESB VR makes available a full range of training programs offered through public and private entities such as the Technical Assistance Centers,

Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Council for State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB). Program staff members are encouraged to identify training areas of particular interest for their individualized professional development in addition to BESB VR identifying programmatic training categories for staff to participate in to remain current in the field of rehabilitation.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors work directly with their supervisor to identify areas for professional growth and development each year. Each employee of BESB VR receives at least one written evaluation per year, which is consistent with collective bargaining agreements. The Supervisor of BESB VR meets with staff members regularly to assist with any areas of their job performance that could benefit from further development and to provide feedback on best practices that have proven to be effective in service delivery. Technical assistance on policies and procedures is also provided during individualized meetings and during staff meetings. If an employee is found to need additional assistance and training in order to meet the job requirements, then a plan for improvement is developed. This may include the use of weekly reviews, additional written performance evaluations, and increasing the opportunity for the employee to participate in formalized training programs to increase skills and competencies.

Assistive Technology continues to be among the highest training priorities for staff in BESB VR, particularly since adaptive equipment is so often a component of success on the job for clients served by BESB VR. One of the Rehabilitation Technologists attended and presented at a national conference on technology at California State University at Northridge (CSUN) in 2017. Additionally, staff have attended trainings in the use of the Braille Note Touch, Zoomtext, Microsoft Office with JAWS, Google Docs and Windows 10 with JAWS, along with online training on using JAWS for Windows with Career Index Plus.

Additional areas of staff training in the past year have included a required seminar on the new ethics standards issued by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification that all BESB VR staff participated in, a Supported Employment resources conference attended by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, the Supervisor and Director, Business Engagement training sessions attended by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Apprenticeship opportunities, and Life Care Planning attended by individual staff.

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.

BESB VR Update: Information on best practices in other state vocational rehabilitation programs as well as evidenced based research and practices is disseminated to staff of BESB VR to help them remain current with trends and strategies. All of the BESB VR counseling staff as well as their Supervisor and the Director participated in a technical assistance project with the Job Driven Technical Assistance Center, with a primary focus of utilizing labor market information to a greater extent in the career exploration process with clients. This technical assistance was very productive and has resulted in the rollout

of Career Index Plus as a tool for both Counselors and clients to utilize. One of the Rehabilitation Teachers has been assigned to train clients in the use of the tool.

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.

BESB VR Update: There are two Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant Counselors who are bicultural, one of whom is fluent in Spanish, and who serves Spanish-speaking clients throughout the State. Part of their duties includes outreach to community-based organizations to distribute information about services offered through BESB VR. BESB VR also provides information to clients in large-print, Braille, electronic, and audio formats to ensure that materials are accessible. BESB VR staff can also utilize contracted translation services to communicate with clients in other languages. Interpreter services for individuals who are deaf are available on a fee for service basis, including tactile interpreters for clients who are deaf and blind and whose preferred mode of communication is through sign language.

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.

BESB VR Update: Collaboration through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) occurs on a continual basis through joint training programs and initiatives. Staff members from BESB VR participate in transition work groups including the Transition Taskforce that is facilitated by staff from the State Department of Education. There is also a Community of Practice group that focuses on best practices and emerging trends in transition services to youth with disabilities. This multi-agency initiative includes representatives from BESB VR as well as the State Department of Education, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Department of Developmental Services and the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS).

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.11(a)).

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:

A. WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

BESB VR Update: The SRC to BESB VR commissioned the Center for Public Policy and Social Research (CPPSR) at Central Connecticut State University to conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment in fiscal year 2017 to assist the SRC and

BESB VR with establishing goals and priorities. The full report as issued by CPPSR appears immediately below. The Council will be utilizing the findings and recommendations within this document to assist with the development of goals, objectives, strategies and measures in the coming year.

CPPSR Report in its Entirety:

I. Assessment Overview

In accord with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) is required to conduct a needs assessment of individuals with disabilities living within the state. This needs assessment complies with the evaluative objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) Guide dated November 30, 2009. As noted in the Guide, this analysis is valid for three years. In conducting this analysis, Central Connecticut State University's (CCSU) Center for Public Policy and Social Research (CPPSR) gathered information from consumers, the State Rehabilitation Counsel (SRC), the Internet, and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) staff.

II. Methodology

In conducting the assessment, the Center for Public Policy and Social Research examined and/or conducted:

- An analysis of population statistics for Connecticut that describe disability and minority status;
- A description of VR participation rates of minority individuals in comparison to individuals in the overall population in Connecticut and to national VR statistics;
- An analysis of VR services to individuals with the most significant disabilities,
- An analysis of Bureau improvements since the previous VR assessment;
- The results of an in-person focus group held with the State Rehabilitation Council (conducted June 2017);
- The results of the consumer satisfaction survey for individuals served during Fiscal Year (FY) 2017;
- Comparative longitudinal data analysis based off of the consumer satisfaction survey from FY 2014-2017;
- The results of in-depth interviews with select BESB VR counselors and VR support staff members (conducted December 2017)

III. Clientele Summary

A. Overview

BESB's registry has shown a steady increase over recent fiscal years. Data for FY 2013 showed a registry of 11,034, an increase of 2.7% from FY 2012. The registry in FY 2014 comprised of 11,367 individuals with visual impairment, an increase of 2.9% from the prior year. In FY 2015, 11,854 individuals were listed in the registry, the highest number observed for this assessment. Fiscal Year 2015 represented a 4.3% client increase from the prior year. No reliable state blind population statistics are available at this time. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain whether this recent registry increase indicates growth

within the visually impaired community or success on BESB's behalf at identifying more of its potential clientele.

B. Minorities

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 estimate data, predictions based on 2010 Census findings, Connecticut's minority population is slightly less representative than that of the national population. Approximately two-fifths of all Americans (38.4%) self-identified their ethnicity in a minority group. Of those individuals who associated with one ethnicity, 17.6% were Hispanic or Latino, 13.3% were African American, 5.6% were Asian, 1.2% were Native American, and 0.2% were Pacific Islander. Deviating slightly from national statistics, approximately one-third (31.8%) of Connecticut residents identified themselves as a minority. In order of frequency, ethnic groups within Connecticut are accounted for as follows: 15.4% Hispanic/Latino, 11.6% African American, 4.6% Asian, 0.5% Native American, and 0.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander.

Comparing BESB, state, and national statistics, we find that the Bureau's Vocational Rehabilitation program appears to be successful at engaging Connecticut's visually impaired minority community. Overall, Bureau clientele enrolled in the VR program who self-identify their ethnicity reasonably reflect both the state and national minority population at approximately 33.5%. Sub-groups are similarly represented. For FY 2013, BESB reported the following program enrollment: 17.1% African American, 13.1% Hispanic/Latino, 2.3% Asian, and less than 1% Native American/Pacific Islander. Currently, there is no reliable data that measures the incidence of blindness in minority communities within Connecticut. For this reason, the needs assessment approximates information based on general minority population statistics.

Since the last VR assessment was issued, BESB has continued to take numerous steps to improve its outreach to the minority community. BESB employs three VR counselors that are bicultural, two of whom are fluent in Spanish. The Bureau also employs two African American counselors, one of whom serves a caseload in traditionally underserved communities. BESB pays for interpreters on an "as needed" basis, continuing outreach to specific minority groups through local meetings and events. Such outreach efforts include attending the Hispanic Alliance of Greater Stamford (HAGS) committee meetings and attending career fairs that cater to Spanish speakers. As another example of a successful outreach effort, a VR counselor was interviewed on the program "Analeh," a Spanish-speaking program that aired on cable access channel 18 and was subsequently posted on YouTube. The interview focused on services available through BESB and various conditions associated with visual impairment. CPPSR concludes that BESB has made successful efforts in reaching out to underserved populations.

C. Youth

Reporting practices vary, so it is difficult to compare BESB's success at reaching minority and child populations with other states. For example, many agency/bureau websites do not divulge statistics for race, ethnicity, or age. Despite the lack of comparative data, it is possible to assess how BESB is doing within its own state. CPPSR concludes that BESB is actively engaging blind youth in the State of Connecticut. In FY

2014, the BESB client registry was 11,367, with children accounting for 1,092 of these individuals. In FY 2015, 1,088 of the 11,854 individuals registered were children, representing a drop of less than half of one percent (.36%). Once in the registry, BESB has an extremely efficient process for identifying clients from Children's Services and referring them to the VR program.

IV. Vocational Rehabilitation Program Challenges

Three key environmental challenges impacting BESB's VR program have emerged since the last needs assessment. This section outlines these three challenges: (1) the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), (2) agency consolidation within Connecticut, and (3) the deteriorating economic climate. The purpose of identifying these challenges is to more fully contextualize the climate in which BESB is currently operating. With this understanding serving as a foundation, more realistic suggestions can be made concerning ways to improve the VR program.

A. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The following is an overview of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, as described by the United States Department of Labor:

President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Congress passed the Act by a wide bipartisan majority; it is the first legislative reform in 15 years of the public workforce system.[1]

The highlights of WIOA, as identified by the United States Department of Labor, include:

1. Requiring states to strategically align workforce development programs.
2. Promoting accountability and transparency.
3. Fostering regional collaboration.
4. Improving the American Job Center System.
5. Improving services to employers and promoting work-based training.
6. Providing access to high quality training.
7. Enhancing workforce services for the unemployed and other job seekers.
8. Enhancing the Job Corps Program
9. Streamlining and strengthening the strategic roles of workforce development boards.

Notable to BESB, WIOA:

Improves Services to Individuals with Disabilities: WIOA increases individuals with disabilities' access to high quality workforce services and prepares them for competitive integrated employment.

- AJCs will provide physical and programmatic accessibility to employment and training services for individuals with disabilities.
- Youth with disabilities will receive extensive pre-employment transition services so they can successfully obtain competitive integrated employment.

- State vocational rehabilitation agencies will set aside at least 15 percent of their funding to provide transition services to youth with disabilities.
- A committee will advise the Secretary of Labor on strategies to increase competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities.
- VR state grant programs will engage employers to improve participant employment outcomes.

Ramifications: Critical to BESB is the fact that the Bureau is being asked to provide pre-employment transition services without additional funding, drawing upon critical funds from the overall budget to meet this requirement. BESB has had to reallocate valuable resources to meet this requirement, including dedicating two VR counselors who previously served adults to the pre-employment transition population. A further impediment to BESB is limitations on what is currently classified as "pre-employment" expenditures. Key budgetary areas, such as transportation and higher education expenditures such as tuition and fees, are not included in the 15% of funds that must be spent on pre-employment transition.

B. Agency Consolidation

In 2011, the Connecticut Legislature passed a law that consolidated BESB into a newly created state agency along with other agencies and programs that serve individuals with disabilities.

Ramifications: By being a part of a larger structure, BESB no longer has its own unique budget, as well as the autonomy that comes with being a separate state entity. With that said, the merger did bring about valuable cost efficiencies. Centralized human resources, contracting, and business services (such as asset management) are key examples. Beyond cost savings, this also creates a positive experience for those interacting with DORS. For example, where contracts may have been different across state agencies prior to the merger, vendors now experience consistency in such documents.

C. The Deteriorating Economic Climate

The declining economic climate, on both the federal and state levels, poses the most significant challenge to BESB. This is because the demands on BESB services remain high, yet the Bureau's financial resources are significantly reduced. BESB relies heavily on federal reallotment dollars, money that has dwindled since the last assessment. In Fiscal Year 2016, $2.5 million was requested in reallotment, while $982,485 was received. In Fiscal Year 2017, $2.5 million was requested, while $238,433 was received. In his 2016 Reallotment Results Notice sent to VR State Directors, RSA Fiscal Unit Chief David Steele writes:

"Thirty-three (33) VR agencies requested a total of $166,780,457 in additional VR funds through reallotment. This leaves a shortage in additional funds available for reallotment of $31,170,276, when comparing the total amount of additional funds requested to the total amount of funds available for reallotment under the VR program. This is the first time since FFY 2008 that more VR funds were requested than relinquished by States" (e-mail dated August 30, 2016).

The final sentence aptly contextualizes the fiscal challenge posed to VR programs around the country. The demand for financial assistance now outpaces supply, forcing bureaus like BESB to make extremely difficult cuts to services.

On a more local level, Connecticut's economic climate is also in decline. In a memo dated November 20, 2017, the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management provided an update on the state's General Fund for Fiscal Year 2018. The memo revealed a projected deficit of $202.8 million, which represents "slightly more than one percent of net General Fund appropriations." In accord with CGS 4-85, the state is now mandated to pursue a deficit mitigation plan. The memo details sources of the state's financial decline:

These changes result in General Fund revenues being revised downward by $227.0 million compared to the recently adopted budget for FY 2018. The largest decline was in federal grants, down $142.1 million due largely to final reconciliation of federal funds received to those earned for medical services during the second half of FY 2017 as well as a $48.6 million technical update to reflect the revenue impact of net (rather than gross) appropriations for Medicaid rate increases in SB 1503. The Income Tax has been revised downward by $89.4 million, but $55.3 million of that change is due simply to a reallocation of some of the tax changes in Public Act 17-2, June Spec. Sess., to the Refunds of Taxes line item. Therefore, the actual reduction in the Income Tax forecast was $34.1 million. The Sales Tax has been revised downward $69.6 million as its growth has remained below target. The largest positive change is in the Inheritance and Estate Tax, up $30.0 million. All other changes net to a negative $11.2 million.

Ramifications: The significant decline in reallotment dollars poses a difficult challenge to BESB - how to do more with less, all while continuing to offer the quality services that the Bureau is accustomed to delivering. BESB has taken a very proactive approach to keep out of an order of selection, such as identifying strategies to reduce purchase service and administrative costs. The State Rehab Council has worked closely with the Bureau to help keep BESB out of an order of selection thus far, an effort that is commended by CPPSR.

V. Vocational Rehabilitation Program Client Satisfaction Measurements

In Fiscal Year 2017, the BESB Vocational Rehabilitation Division had 114 clients who achieved employment outcomes, an uptick of 23 individuals from FY 2016. VR program satisfaction amongst these clients, as measured by Central Connecticut State University via a quantitative survey, remains high. Started in 2003, this survey provides valuable longitudinal data on client satisfaction regarding both VR services and counselors. The most recent survey was conducted in the summer of 2017, with CCSU's Center for Public Policy and Social Research completing telephone interviews with 49 VR clients who achieved employment outcomes that fiscal year.

BESB continues to receive high marks for their Vocational Rehabilitation services and counselors. Similar to 2016, almost all of the clients surveyed (96%, down 2 percentage points) reported that they would recommend BESB VR services to a friend. This figure ties the second-highest rating for this question in the history of the survey, bettered only by the all-time high (98%) set last fiscal year. Reported satisfaction regarding overall

experiences with BESB services, as rated on a scale from 1 to 10-point scale, remains strong.

Reported satisfaction with BESB services increased in all of the areas surveyed in 2017. The most significant improvement was seen in the extent to which clients felt that their expectations were met (8.54, up 0.97 in rating), an all-time high. Overall satisfaction with BESB services also increased substantially over the past year, setting a new record high (8.78, up 0.43 in mean rating). This replaces the previous record of 8.6 set in 2010.

Ratings of counselors rebounded from the dips in satisfaction observed last year, with average ratings improving in all but one area. The remaining area remained unchanged from last year. In 2016, two dimensions of counselors improved, while the remaining seven dimensions declined in mean ratings. Two dimensions of counselors that saw particularly large increases in 2017 were identifying career goals (setting an all-time high of 8.96, up 1.51 in mean rating) and understanding the process for complaint resolution (7.92, up 1.21 in mean rating). Counselors' ability to provide information in a format that clients can use remained unchanged from last year (8.51 in mean rating).

Since survey reporting began in 2003, Low Vision and Rehabilitation and Adaptive Equipment have been the most widely-used BESB services, with each respectively averaging over a three-in-four utilization rate. For the second year in a row, Low Vision takes the top spot as the most highly utilized service (84%, no percentage point change), maintaining its third-best utilization percentage in the history of this survey. On the other end of the usage spectrum, use of Reader Services was cut in half from last year (10%, down 10 percentage points). This represents the second-lowest utilization rate in the history of the survey, second only to the all-time low set in 2012 (8%) by 2 percentage points. Overall, of the eight services offered to VR clients, four of them experienced an increase in use, three reported declines in utilization rates, and one remained at the same level of use this fiscal year.

Of those services that saw an uptick in use, Transportation experienced the largest increase. One-quarter of all VR clients (25%, up 9 percentage points) reported using this service, notching the second-highest utilization rate in the history of the survey. Personal Care Attendant Services also enjoyed an uptick in use (8%, up 6 percentage points), matching the third-highest utilization rate. Small Business Services climbed (14%, up 3 percentage points), also matching its third-highest utilization rate. Finally, Skills Training Services experienced a modest increase (45%, up 1 percentage point), recording the third-highest utilization rate in the history of the survey.

The remaining three services all experienced a decline in use this year, with Higher Education Training being the most notable. This service plummeted to its lowest utilization rate in the history of the survey (4%, down 23 percentage points). Prior to this fiscal year, the lowest recorded use was 11%, a percentage found in both the 2004 and 2012 surveys. Also notable was the drop in the percentage of clients utilizing Rehabilitation Equipment Services (71%, down 12 percentage points). While rates still remain high, with Rehabilitation Equipment representing the second most widely-used service, the 2017 survey recorded the lowest rate since 2009 (67%).

Section IV of this document details three environmental challenges facing BESB - all of which were in play when this survey was conducted. When placed in context with the new demands of WIOA, agency consolidation, and the deteriorating economic climate (and rapidly diminishing reallotment dollars), findings from this survey become even more remarkable. It is CPPSR's conclusion that BESB is extremely-forward thinking, anticipating and addressing future complexities with careful consideration before they become urgent. It is this type of consistently-applied operational paradigm that contributes to high client satisfaction rates in a difficult economic climate.

VI. Focus Group Summary

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the Center for Public Policy and Social Research conducted a focus group with members of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). This focus group was conducted within the context of an SRC business meeting held in June of 2017. The purpose of this focus group was to understand how SRC members felt about BESB services, needs that should be addressed in the near future, and how BESB could increase outreach efforts to the unserved and underserved. Given that BESB's Director was present at the meeting, Council members seeking greater confidentiality were encouraged to call the Principal Investigator at a later point in time. It is worth noting that these qualitative findings cannot be generalized beyond those individuals attending the June business meeting. Still, these findings provide valuable insight into how a group of select Bureau affiliates view BESB's operations.

Similar to the 2014 needs assessment, access to technology emerged as a focal point of the focus group. Questions were raised by numerous SRC members regarding the extent to which BESB is addressing VR clients' technological needs, particularly as they relate to training. With continually-advancing technology, it is a perpetual challenge to keep clients on the cutting-edge. Fortunately, with the advancement of technology comes more sophisticated accessibility features. The SRC was pleased with the extent to which accessibility features are now built right into the products themselves. To the fullest extent possible, BESB should make sure that clients have access to upgraded units with these built-in specs, such as special readers.

On the issue of training, BESB currently employs two rehabilitation technologists and one trainer. A concern is that there is still a wide range of clients coming into the VR program with no computer experience. This underscores both the importance of - and challenges associated with - providing such training. The point was raised that, with limited trainers, BESB should identify new and creative ways to deliver training, such as via Skype. It was concluded that BESB has already considered this, implementing Tandem, remote, and Skype-based training. Perhaps most critically, embracing new training mediums allows for BESB staff to be more efficient in their outreach efforts, as travel time around the state is significantly reduced. SRC members commended BESB for evolving its training programs.

A final point that emerged from the SRC focus group was regarding programming for individuals with multiple disabilities, such as having both visual and mobile impairment. The group concluded that BESB collaborates with other disability-centered agencies; additionally, the VR program does allow for modifications to be made on a case-by-case

basis. Collaborative IPEs with VR plans represent a new area of engagement for BESB. These collaborative efforts are commendable and, to the fullest extent possible, should be expanded. Investigating new sources of collaboration would be a worthwhile endeavor.

VII. Targeted Actions Suggested by CPPSR

Informed by both the quantitative and qualitative data collected for this needs assessment, CPPSR makes the following recommendations:

1. Increased promotion of client self-resourcefulness to leverage staff time and improve service

VR clients should be encouraged to be their own best resource, an opportunity to save BESB both time and money. Strong evidence exists that this encouragement is underway; however, more can be done in this regard. Career Index Plus is a job search platform that is accessible to the visually-impaired. BESB sent a letter to VR clients encouraging them to search for jobs on this platform, with the Bureau providing technical training on how to use the Index. We suggest designing a positive incentive program to further encourage clients to be their own best advocate. In a positive incentive program, clients can earn a reward by reaching certain milestones and/or completing pre-determined tasks. Another option, albeit less desirable, is to create a negative reinforcement program where clients relinquish or delay something of value if they do not reach certain milestones or complete pre-determined tasks. To maintain a positive relationship with clients, the former suggestion is strongly preferred by CPPSR.

2. Re-examine volunteer and college intern opportunities to leverage staff time

The 2014 needs assessment found "great merit" in what, at the time, was a newly-minted college mentorship program. This program has struggled in its effectiveness for a number of reasons, including the extensive training that is required to complete most tasks and the "time to productivity" being too long for short-term workers. CPPSR encourages BESB to revisit the utility of volunteers and college interns. Have all possible angles for these workers to contribute been exhausted? We suggest a brainstorming session where VR employees think outside of the box, reflecting upon tasks that could possibly be done with minimal training. For example, given the growing importance of things like Career Index Plus, business engagement activities, and WIOA compliance, might there be new opportunities for interns or volunteers to assist in these areas? BESB is encouraged to consider if college interns or volunteers can be used in new ways, which in turn could help paid VR staff to become more efficient.

3. Clearly vocalize Bureau initiatives to employees to spread knowledge and boost morale

While conducting in-depth interviews with VR staff, CPPSR observed inconsistency regarding knowledge of the Bureau's key initiatives. These initiatives should be shared widely across all facets of the VR program. As an example, not all employees were aware of the critical inroads that BESB has made with the American Job Centers (AJC). It should be widely communicated that the Bureau has had great success in furthering its relationship with the AJC, including having BESB representatives periodically stationed

at these centers and educating AJC employees on topics related to visual impairment. CPPSR suggests designing an internal "success story," similar to those that currently focus on VR clients. This internal "success story" can focus on new community partnerships that were developed or significantly expanded upon, boosting morale in the Bureau and helping to disseminate knowledge among VR staff.

4. Increase the use of recorded materials to leverage staff time and improve service

Availability of pre-recorded Internet-based materials (i.e. ScreenCasts) covering high-demand topics, such as how to use Career Index Plus, can potentially help cut down on the number of training sessions that need to be conducted. Recordings could be revisited by clients on an as-needed basis. CPPSR is sensitive to the fact that many clients have individual questions regarding the use of these programs; however, pre-recorded files can help address commonly-asked questions and/or introduce clients to a program for the first time.

5. Increase recruitment of client and community constituencies as Bureau advocates

Building on the reserves of goodwill, the Bureau should strategically enlist advocates and systematically build an inventory of positive profiles and stories for use in explaining the nature and impact of Bureau activities. The VR "Success Story" is one great example of such an inventory item. BESB should consider working with both clients and community partners to help shed light on what the Bureau does. CPPSR suggests the use of personal narrative, which can be quite compelling in underscoring the importance of BESB. Increasing the community awareness of what BESB does may help in a multitude of ways, including capturing the attention of employers, new collaborative partners, and more. To that end, sharing positive profiles via social media may be valuable in increasing community awareness of BESB.

6. Undertake a systematic review of undeveloped synergies with other state/community entities, both within and outside of DORS

The Bureau has already achieved significant cost savings through collaborations with other entities; however, there are likely to be additional opportunities for such efficiencies, especially if a broader range of constituencies are included. Speaking with directors of relevant graduate programs is one example. BESB may discover that graduate programs are hungry for collaborative opportunities, as many of these programs require cornerstone projects or service hours as a graduation requirement.

7. Strengthen the institutional memory of the Bureau by designing an employee-authored manual

BESB has an impressive number of long-serving employees. The knowledge and experience of these employees should be systematically captured. CPPSR suggests developing a manual where current employees can detail items such as insider tips on job effectiveness, things they wish they knew on their first day, valuable assets that took a while to discover, and other related items. BESB has a strong culture of collaboration between employees, but if not systematically captured, some valuable institutional memory may inadvertently be lost over time."

End of CPPSR Comprehensive Needs Assessment Report

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

BESB VR Update: Individuals from underserved populations are tracked in BESB VR to ensure that they are engaged in services and fully understand the scope of available services that can be provided. Before any individual from a traditionally underserved population is inactivated from BESB VR with an unsuccessful outcome, a supervisory review process is required. The Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor confirms that the individual was provided with information in his or her preferred language and accessible format. Additionally, the Supervisor reviews the case record of services to confirm documentation is present, substantiating that the individual was afforded the opportunity to make informed decisions in regards to participation in BESB VR.

BESB VR employs two Counselors that are bicultural, one of whom is fluent in Spanish. BESB VR also employs two Counselors who are African-American. These four staff are available to provide outreach to community based organizations that can offer linkages to traditionally underserved communities. Examples of outreach activities include attending meetings of the Hispanic Alliance of Greater Stamford and career fairs for individuals who are Spanish speaking. Another example of a successful outreach effort was through a local cable access television network for individuals who are fluent in Spanish that was subsequently posted on YouTube. The interview focused on services available through BESB VR. Sign language interpreter services to communicate effectively with individuals who utilize sign language, including tactile signing can be purchased to effectively communicate about services that are available to individuals who are deaf and blind. Due to the statutory reporting requirement for eye doctors in Connecticut to refer to DORS all individuals under their care whom are declared to be legally blind, BESB VR has a strong outreach connection through this mandatory reporting requirement. Individuals from a wide range of ethic and minority backgrounds learn of services available through BESB as a result of these eye doctor referrals. Residential care facilities also serve as a common referral source for individuals with legal blindness who come under their care. These referral sources help to facilitate a broad scope of individuals from many diverse backgrounds that are referred for BESB services.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

BESB VR Update: Approximately one-third of Connecticut residents identify themselves as have a minority background. This is further reflected statistically as 15.4% Hispanic/Latino, 11.6% African American, 4.6% Asian, 0.5% Native American, and 0.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Clients presently participating in BESB VR favorably reflect the state's demographic, with 24% of clients self-identifying as African American, 18% as Hispanic/Latino, 3% as Asian, and 1% as Native American/Pacific Islander.

D. WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

BESB VR Update: BESB VR has been actively involved in referring clients to other programs and services available through the statewide workforce development system.

The level of commitment to facilitate client engagement in other components of the system is evident in the data that reflects 94 clients who have engaged in Adult Employment and Training Programs, 38 clients engaged in Adult Education programs, 7 clients engaged in Dislocated Worker Programs, 5 clients engaged in Job Corps, 35 clients enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and 23 clients enrolled in the Youth **initiatives. BESB** VR finds great value in these partnerships, particularly given the lean fiscal situation. Maximizing the resources and services available through other components of the statewide workforce development system is crucial for maximizing the limited funding available in BESB VR.

E. WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

BESB VR Update: In addition to a Transition Coordinator, BESB VR has dedicated two Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to work exclusively with Pre-Employment Transition-Age students. There are currently 94 clients who are recipients of Pre-Employment Transition Services. The Counselors participate in planning and placement team meetings to address the full range of services that are available. Real work experiences are coordinated in both after-school and summer jobs. Career exploration and job shadowing opportunities are further provided to many of these students as well. With the existence of a Children's Services Program at BESB, VR staff has a strong linkage for identifying referrals of new clients who are potentially eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services. Education Consultants from the Children's Services Program often coordinate with the Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Coordinator to develop expanded core curriculum activities that feature mentoring, career exposure and independent living skills training for clients served in that program as well as clients that are mutually served by both programs simultaneously.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

BESB Update: BESB VR has identified two areas for improvement (1) providing training to staff of community rehabilitation programs on blindness related technology; and (2) adaptations for accessing training and employment. No additional needs to establish, develop or improve upon these programs have been identified.

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 .

BESB VR Update: In recognition of the extensive need for transition-age youth to acquire knowledge of careers in demand, and to learn of the successes of adults who are legally blind, BESB VR organizes and conducts career exposure programs, mentoring programs, college days and skills acquisition events, seeking out role models who are legally blind and employed or enrolled in higher education to participate in these events and programs. The BESB VR Transition Coordinator and the Pre-Employment Transition

Counselors work directly with school district staff to incorporate these activities into the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or service plan of the students to emphasize the inclusion of these career development strategies as a critical component of the overall education process. BESB VR also utilizes job shadowing to expose transition-age youth to actual employment situations. Real work experiences for students with disabilities are crucial for the development of positive worker traits as well as developing self-confidence and money management skills. In the past fiscal year, 45 students participated in paid work experiences. Through a collaboration with United Technologies facilitated by the Chair of the SRC, 9 students participating in National Mentoring Day, gaining insight and exposure to careers in the aerospace industry.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Describe:

1. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;

BESB VR Update: In Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, there were 914 eligible individuals in BESB VR. For the first six months of FY 2018, there were 52 new applicants for services, 682 individuals with implemented Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE), plus 13 eligible individuals awaiting IPE development or implementation. An additional 71 individuals are presently in referral status, plus 65 potentially eligible students with disabilities. It is anticipated that by the conclusion of FY 2018, the number of eligible individuals will be approximately 825. For FY 2019, it is projected that the number of eligible individuals will be 865, an increase of approximately 5 percent in comparison to the FY 2018 projection.

2. THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:

A. THE VR PROGRAM;

BESB VR Update: At the onset of FY 2017 there were 748 eligible individuals receiving services through an implemented IPE. An additional 150 new IPEs were implemented during FY 2017, bringing the total to 898 eligible individuals who had implemented IPEs in FY 2017. At the onset of FY 2018 there were 657 eligible individuals with implemented IPEs. For the first half of FY 2018, 59 new IPEs were implemented. It is anticipated that the number of new IPEs implemented in the second half of FY 2018 will increase at a greater pace than the first six months, due in part to the addition of two new VR Counselors. The projected number of new IPEs for FY 2018 is therefore approximately 135. Added to the 657 eligible individuals with implemented IPEs at the onset of FY 2018, this would represent approximately 792 eligible individuals receiving services under an IPE in FY 2018. In FY 2019, it is projected that the number of eligible individuals receiving services under an IPE will increase to approximately 815.

B. THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

BESB VR Update: In FY 2017, 3 new individuals were found eligible for supported employment services, bringing the total number of eligible individuals to 31 for that fiscal year. Of that total, 13 individuals were youth with disabilities. In FY 2017 there

were 7 individuals who exited BESB VR, 2 of whom achieved employment outcomes. For the first half of FY 2018, 3 new individuals were found eligible for supported employment services. One of these individuals is a youth with a disability. During the first half of FY 2018, 4 individuals exited BESB VR, 1 of whom achieved an employment outcome. At the mid-year point in FY 2018 there were 23 individuals eligible for supported employment services, 10 of whom were youth with disabilities. It is projected that 2 more individuals will become eligible for supported employment services in FY 2018, bringing the total to 25 eligible individuals. It is further anticipated that 2 more individuals will exit BESB VR in FY 2018, resulting in 23 eligible individuals at the onset of FY 2019. In FY 2019, it is projected that 5 new individuals will be found eligible for supported employment services, 3 of whom are likely to be in the category of youth with a disability. This would bring the total number of eligible individuals in FY 2019 to 28.

C. EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

BESB VR Update: Not applicable.

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

BESB VR Update: Not applicable.

4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

BESB VR Update: In FY 2017, BESB VR expended approximately $1.98 million on purchased services for 775 individuals. Additionally, $115,000 was expended for the improvement and maintenance of Business Enterprise locations. Total Program costs, including all purchased services, staffing, and administrative operations were approximately $5.67 million for the year. For FY 2018, budget projections indicate that approximately $5.19 million will be expended on combined Program costs, including an estimated $1.97 million to provide purchased services to approximately 700 individuals, and $3.22 million in administrative and operational costs. This estimate includes inflationary adjustments, inclusion of indirect cost charges of 10.9 percent to BESB VR, as well as projected costs to serve Transition-age students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services. For FY 2019, budget projections indicate that approximately $4.84 million will be expended on combined Program costs, including an estimated $1.9 million to provide purchased services to approximately 735 individuals, and $2.94 million in administrative and operational costs. This estimate includes inflationary adjustments, inclusion of indirect cost charges of 14.93 percent to BESB VR, as well as projected costs to serve Transition-age students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services.

With the availability of $3.07 million in Title I carry over funds from FY 2017 in addition to the federal Title I allotment of $3.15 million (representing 15 percent of the total Title I allotment received by Connecticut) and state matching funds of approximately $775,000,

BESB VR does not anticipate the need to enter into an Order of Selection in FY 2018 or FY 2019.

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The designated State unit must:

1. IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The following goals, objectives, strategies and measures of performance were developed in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council. These goals reflect the vision of Governor Dannel P. Malloy and the accompanying priorities and strategies of the statewide workforce system and the regional partners to contribute towards the achievement of the Governor's vision. Additionally, this document details the strategies that will be utilized by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program to contribute towards the achievement of these shared goals through the provision of services to individuals with significant visual impairments and to employers across the state.

Governor Dannel P. Malloy's Vision: Connecticut will create and sustain the global economy's best-educated, most-skilled, most-productive workforce.

Overarching Goals:

Promote Business Growth: Connecticut businesses in key sectors (economic drivers) must have the skilled, talented employees needed to compete effectively, prosper and create jobs for CT workers.

Strengthen Current Workforce: Workers must have the skills and credentials needed to prosper and advance in careers that support their families.

Develop Future Talent: Connecticut youth must be prepared and ready for career and post-secondary success as productive contributors to a competitive state economy.

System Transformation: Connecticut's multi-faceted workforce system must align and integrate goals, strategies, policies, investments, services, infrastructure and accountability.

Objective 1. Analyze economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Strategy: Identify employment needs of employers - knowledge, skills, abilities in key industries and occupations.

Measure: Documentation of coordination with CTDOL, Office of Research to obtain data and information.

Strategy: Analysis of current workforce unemployment data, labor market trends, workforce's educational and skill levels (including individuals with barriers/disabilities).

Measure: Documentation of coordination with CTDOL, Office of Research to obtain data and information.

Strategy: Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, capacity) of CT's workforce development activities (including education and training), to address identified education/skill needs and employment needs of employers.

Measure: Coordination with CTDOL, Office of Research to obtain data and information.

Objective 2. Implement strategies for workforce partners to prepare educated/skilled workforce.

Strategy: Establish performance accountability measures and align strategies across the workforce programs to support economic growth and self-sufficiency, and how Connecticut will assess workforce system effectiveness.

Measure: Performance measures established with each partner program's anticipated contribution to the measures noted.

Objective 3. Operationalize the Service Delivery System

Strategy: Review statewide policies, programs, and recommended actions to support comprehensive streamlined workforce system.

Measure: Vocational Rehabilitation provides policies to workforce partners for review.

Strategy: Develop/continuously improve workforce system: identify coordination/alignment barriers (avoid duplication); develop career pathways strategies; develop outreach/access strategies for individuals and employers; develop/expand industry/sector partnership strategies; identify regions/designate local areas; develop One-Stop system continuous improvement strategy; develop staff training strategies.

Measure: Vocational Rehabilitation staff participate in regional and statewide workforce meetings that focus on implementation of coordinated One-Stop service delivery system.

Strategy: Develop and update comprehensive State performance accountability measures.

Measure: Vocational Rehabilitation provides data on performance in identified accountability categories.

Strategy: Identify/disseminate info on best practices for: effective operation of One-Stop centers; development of effective local boards; effective training programs responsive to real-time labor market analysis.

Measure: Vocational Rehabilitation provides to the state and regional workforce system evidence based practice on successful job placement and retention strategies for individuals with significant disabilities.

Strategy: Develop and review statewide policies to coordinate services through One-Stop system: criteria and procedures for WIBs to assess effectiveness and continuous improvement; guidance to allocate One-Stop center infrastructure funds; policies on roles/contributions of One-Stop partners.

Measure: Documentation of Vocational Rehabilitation staff participation in the review and development of coordination of services to people with significant disabilities with One-Stop center staff and partners.

Strategy: Develop strategies for technological improvements to One-Stop system to: enhance digital literacy skills; accelerate acquisition of skills and credentials; strengthen staff professional development; ensure accessibility of technology.

Measure: Documentation of Vocational Rehabilitation adaptive technology consultations and recommendations for equipment to make the One-Stop centers accessible to individuals with significant disabilities.

Strategy: Develop strategies to align technology and data systems across One-Stop partner programs.

Measure: Documentation of Vocational Rehabilitation staff participation in statewide meeting regarding the development of a common-front end data collection system.

Strategy: Develop allocation formulas to distribute funds to local areas for adult and youth programs.

Measure: Documentation of Vocational Rehabilitation staff participation in cost allocation formula reviews that follow prescribed federal requirements.

Strategy: Prepare annual performance reports.

Measure: Vocational Rehabilitation report on performance measures distributed.

Strategy: Develop statewide workforce and labor market information system.

Measure: Vocational Rehabilitation staff provide data on job placements for clients served by the program.

Strategy: Develop other policies to promote statewide objectives and enhance system performance.

Measure: Documentation of BESB participation in the development of state policies and objectives.

Strategy: Alignment of funded activities.

Measure: Vocational Rehabilitation clients gain access to core services offered by the One-Stop centers with information provided in accessible formats by the centers.

Strategy: Alignment with activities not covered by Plan, to assure coordination, avoid duplication.

Measure: Independent Living services are offered and provided to eligible individuals with disabilities who are being served by the One-Stop centers.

Strategy: Coordination of activities, comprehensive services, including support services.

Measure: Vocational Rehabilitation staff members participate in regional and statewide planning and implementation meetings to coordinate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to eligible clients served by the One-Stop delivery system.

Strategy: Engagement with community colleges, career/technical schools, to leverage resources.

Measure: Vocational Rehabilitation staff become participating members in regional teams that develop certificate and training programs at community colleges and career/technical schools to ensure curriculum accessibility for individuals with significant disabilities.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

In addition to the participation of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program in contributing to the aforementioned, comprehensive statewide goals for the Workforce system, the following, goals, objectives, strategies and measures specific to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program have been developed with the full participation and guidance of the State Rehabilitation Council. These goals, objectives and accompanying strategies reflect on the priority to provide comprehensive, timely and quality services to clients of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, including those clients who are receiving supported employment services. Based on a review of the findings and recommendations in the Statewide Assessment and the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, as well as a review of the most recent Section 107 report and the performance achieved on established program measures in existence at the time of this plan's development, these priorities have taken into account this information to shape the efforts of the Council in establishing focus areas for the coming year.

Goal A: Increase employment opportunities for eligible individuals of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Objective: BESB will collaborate with BRS and at least one major employer with a statewide presence to implement a Disability Resource Team to assist the employer with job recruitment and retention services.

Strategy: BESB Job Developer will coordinate with BRS Job Development Team to identify and work with employer(s) to implement a Resource Team.

Measure: Team is developed and implements resource meetings with employer(s).

Objective: BESB Counselors join job development teams implemented through the regional workforce boards to gain access to employers within the regions who are seeking job candidates.

Strategy: Counselors contact the Job Developers of the regional One Stop Center to become part of their employer outreach teams.

Measure: Each counselor serves as part of a regional job development team.

Objective: Vocational Rehabilitation clients obtain proficiency to utilize web-based job search websites.

Strategy: Rehabilitation teachers and/or fee for service vendors teach no less than ten job seeking clients how to navigate and utilize at least one job search website on the internet.

Measure: Documentation of utilization by each client.

Objective: Each BESB Counselor with job development responsibilities shall engage clients on their caseloads in job fair attendance.

Strategy: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors will share information on job fairs within their regions with job seeking clients on their individual caseloads and facilitate the attendance of clients at job fairs.

Measure: Documentation of no less than 5 clients per Counselor caseload attending a job fair.

Goal B: Provide coordinated services to students with disabilities to prepare for careers and post-secondary education after exit from high school.

Objective: The Vocational Rehabilitation Program shall designate two full-time Counselors to exclusively serve clients that are in the Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) category.

Strategy: Junior high and high school clients will be assigned to one of the counselor caseloads to receive specific, qualifying PETS services with dedicated PETS funding.

Measure: Documentation of caseload assignments.

Objective: PETS eligible students and their parents/guardians shall receive a resource guide that explains all of the BESB services that can be provided to prepare for careers and post-secondary education.

Strategy: The Vocational Rehabilitation Program shall develop a transition resource guide to post on the Bureau's webpage of the DORS website and to distribute to PETS eligible clients and their parents/guardians in their preferred format.

Measure: Case record documentation that the resource guide has been mailed or delivered to each PETS eligible client and their parents/guardians.

Objective: PETS eligible clients are provided timely notice of opportunities from the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and/or the Transition Coordinator to participate in work exposure programs, paid employment, internships, college preparatory programs, technology training programs, life skills programs and related career development camps, seminars and initiatives, both in state and out of state.

Strategy: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and the Transition Coordinator working with the PETS clients provide timely information on available services and programs so that clients and their guardians can make informed decisions on attendance at programs, activities and related transition experiences of interest.

Measure: Case record documentation of the services being authorized.

Objective: The Vocational Rehabilitation Program develops and implements outreach and public education programs for potentially PETS eligible clients and their parents/guardians.

Strategy: Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Coordinator designs and delivers outreach and public education programs to populations where PETS eligible clients are likely to be found, such as, but not limited to school districts.

Measure: Documentation of the programs being provided.

Objective: The Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the State Rehabilitation Council co-sponsor leadership development activities and camps for groups of PETS eligible clients. Strategy: The State Rehabilitation Council and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program provide co-sponsorship funding for the Youth Leadership Forum, and similar programs if available.

Measure: Documentation of the funds committed.

Goal C: Utilize Innovation and Expansion authority to engage in continuous improvement initiatives, to increase access to services and activities that can benefit groups of individuals with visual impairment or legal blindness, to increase access to career information, adaptive technology, self-advocacy, and public awareness of the employment potential of individuals served by BESB.

Objective: The Vocational Rehabilitation Program shall provide funding for electronic access to career and news information.

Strategy: Funding provided to have NFB Newsline available to Vocational Rehabilitation clients.

Measure: Documentation of purchase order for NFB Newsline.

Objective: Provide access to the latest adaptive technology devices for clients to try out for assessment purposes. Strategy: Purchase new adaptive technology devices for the BESB Technology Lab and the Technology Lab at the Southeastern Connecticut Community Center of the Blind.

Measure: Documentation of purchase order for technology devices.

Objective: The State Rehabilitation Council utilizes an entity experienced in administering consumer satisfaction surveys to conduct the fiscal year 2016 Consumer Satisfaction Survey and the results are used to develop continuous improvement initiatives.

Strategy: The State Rehabilitation Council selects a vendor, reviews the results of the survey, and works with Program staff to implement strategies that address the results and trends identified in the survey.

Measure: Documentation of purchase of survey, Consumer Satisfaction Report received and reviewed with Program staff.

Objective: State Rehabilitation Council representatives participate in state, regional and national conferences and programs that provide opportunities to increase public awareness of the employment capabilities of BESB clients, increase the Council members knowledge and understanding of the public Vocational Rehabilitation Program, and create opportunities for learning best practices that can develop into new goals and strategies for the BESB Vocational Rehabilitation Program to explore and implement, if applicable.

Strategy: State Rehabilitation Council Chair is provided with information about upcoming conferences, seminars and activities from the Bureau Director and designates a Council member or members to participate and share information with the full membership.

Measure: State Rehabilitation Council members attend CSAVR, NCSAB and other national, regional or statewide conferences or seminars that address the components stated in the objective.

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;

The comprehensive needs assessment and the consumer satisfaction survey results were utilized in considering and developing these goals.

B. THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

The bureau has factored in our role in achieving statewide WIOA performance measures in establishing the goals for the VR program.

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.

The State Rehabilitation Council has reviewed the comprehensive needs assessment, the consumer satisfaction survey results and trends in outcomes and services provided in addressing the goals that were developed.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

Describe:

1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:

A. THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES.

BESB VR Update: BESB VR is not operating under an order of selection and provides services to all eligible individuals.

B. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

BESB VR Update: Not applicable.

C. THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

BESB VR Update: Not applicable.

D. THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

BESB VR Update: Not applicable.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

BESB VR Update: Not applicable.

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.

BESB VR Update: Not applicable.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE'S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

It is the primary goal and priority of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program to consider supported employment as an option in all circumstances where the provision of these services will increase the likelihood of placement success for people with significant, multiple barriers to employment.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program for individuals who are blind received $45,000 in Title VI, Part B funds for fiscal year 2014. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, there were 3 clients who achieved employment outcomes in supported employment settings. The funding source for long-term support for 2 of these situations was the Department of Developmental Services, with the client's family being the provider of long-term support in the third situation since the client works at a family-run business. Community rehabilitation providers were utilized for onsite training in all three situations. Fourteen (14) new clients were found eligible for supported employment services during the fiscal year, bringing the total number of clients that have been found eligible for supported employment services to 30. Of the 30 clients that were eligible for supported employment services during the fiscal year, 3 clients achieved employment outcomes, 1 individual was in plan status, 1 individual was placed in employment status, 1 individual was moved to services interrupted status due to medical issues and 24 individuals were in a service

status. Of this total number of eligible individuals, Title VI, Part B funds have been utilized for 8 individuals during the fiscal year.

Community rehabilitation providers continue to be utilized most frequently as the providers of extended services for the employment programs coordinated. In the current and upcoming year, this approach will continue to be utilized. This is based on the history of job placement outcomes from preceding fiscal years that has continually demonstrated the proven ability of community rehabilitation providers to employ job coaches and vocational instructors necessary for the provision of long-term employment supports, combined with their willingness to periodically assume the cost of providing extended services when other public funding options are not available. This arrangement is especially important, given the limited availability of third party funding from other public agency providers.

In addition to the option of utilizing community rehabilitation providers for the provision of extended services, the successful utilization of natural supports through a client's family and the use of a volunteer organization in placement situations in prior years have shown promise as a practice to replicate to expand options for the provision of support services. It is a high priority goal to identify all possible providers of long-term funding to cover the cost of providing the supports over an extended period of time. In addition to seeking out community rehabilitation providers who can financially assume the role of becoming the provider of extended services, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program will continue to explore the option of utilizing volunteer groups, employers, and families where feasible to offer natural supports as an option. The Program will also continue to contract with community rehabilitation providers who can access public and private funds in order to secure supported employment placements.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program will continue to distribute funds to providers and employers who can offer the long-term assurances that supports will be in place to enable people with the most significant disabilities to participate in integrated employment with competitive wages and benefits. Vocational Rehabilitation Program staff will continue to participate in Planning and Placement Team meetings early in the transition process to identify the need for supported employment services, and to identify providers, both private and public, that may offer services while a student is preparing to transition from public or private education into employment. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors will also utilize supplemental evaluations through community rehabilitation providers to identify the need for supported employment services prior to the development of Individualized Plans for Employment in situations where it is uncertain if long-term supports will be necessary to ensure a successful placement outcome.

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

In order to facilitate the identification of supported employment options for transitioning high school students, the two Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors assigned to work with this specific client population participate in Planning and

Placement Team meetings (PPTs) and work in cooperation with the Children's Services Program at BESB. The number of students who are legally blind or visually impaired who are age fourteen and older continue to be tracked by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program to ensure that services are offered and made available. There are approximately 140 students of transition age who are presently being served in the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. With the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), there are new provisions pertaining to serving youth with disabilities, and in particular, for youth with significant disabilities who require supported employment services, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program can fund the cost of extended services for up to 4 years in situations where no other funding options are available. Provisions within WIOA require that 50 percent of Title VI B funds are reserved to exclusively serve youth with significant disabilities to assist with meeting this priority.

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.

The Bureau works collaboratively with the Department of Developmental Services, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, employers and community providers to identify and secure alternative sources of long-term funding and support, where available.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

BESB VR Update: The following strategies support the goals and objectives that have been identified with the participation of the SRC, and reflect the commitment of BESB VR to increase employment opportunities for people who are legally blind or visually impaired through the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Services.

Methods To Be Used to Expand and Improve Services:

Utilizing the results and recommendations from the previous Comprehensive Needs Assessment, as well as the Section 107 Review conducted by Rehabilitation Services Administration, BESB VR identified areas that needed further expansion and revision to better serve clients. Shortening the timeframe for the development of the Individualized Plan for Employment was recommended in the Section 107 Review. This recommendation was implemented in BESB VR policy subsequent to a public hearing process and prior to the passage of the WIOA. The Act prescribes a time frame of 90

days for plan development to occur. BESB VR is utilizing this requirement to ensure the timely movement of case services subsequent to determinations of eligibility.

To augment the capacity of maintaining adequate levels of contact with clients, BESB VR implemented the recommendation of the Center for Public Policy and Social Research to contact graduate level programs that offer Master's Degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling and closely related fields to seek internship and practicum students who can assist the Program in contacting clients, following up on service requests and maintaining higher levels of contact than what is possible with the existing staffing levels. This approach was initially successful, with students from Springfield College and Central Connecticut State University coming to BESB VR for their graduate field work in Vocational Rehabilitation. However, as staffing within BESB VR has contracted in response to budgetary constraints, the time required to oversee internships has diminished considerably. The level of training required to familiarize interns with the requirements of BESB VR policy and procedures in order for the interns to perform even the most basic of activities proved to be beyond the time capacity of the staff. While BESB VR acknowledges the importance and value of providing internship opportunities, these options will be implemented in the future only when staffing resources are available to provide adequate training and supervision.

BESB VR further addressed case management activities through the reestablishment of the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Coordinator position, which had been vacant for several years. A major focus of this position was to assist the Counselors with case management strategies. Utilizing the newly developed case management computerized dashboard, the Coordinator, Supervisor and the Counselors are able to track the timely movement of client services and timeframes for case status changes. The dashboard is capable of analyzing trends by caseload to further assist in identifying where additional activity is required. Over time however, it has been found that utilizing the Counselor Coordinator for case management reviews has created an overlap of duties with the Supervisor's position. Diminishing staff resources in BESB VR has necessitated a reexamination of the best use of this role. With the impending retirement of two counseling staff, BESB VR intends to shift some of the Coordinator's responsibilities to align with the priorities of BESB VR, with a primary focus on statewide employer engagement strategies, and a secondary role of managing a reduced caseload of clients while they are attending institutions of higher education in order to maintain a single point of contact with Disability Coordinators at these facilities.

The results of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment also found that while BESB's section of the DORS website contained a considerable amount of important and useful information, it was organized in a way that made it difficult to search for information by topic. An extensive review of the website was subsequently conducted and substantial revisions were implemented. BESB's section of the DORS website is now organized by type of service, with subcategories under each major service heading. Policy manuals are grouped by program type as well so visitors to the website can locate and search the applicable policies more conveniently than in the past. BESB is also participating in the statewide initiative to develop a new format for state agency website presentation that will result in greater ease for visitors to the DORS website to search by topics of interest,

rather than having to perform individual program specific searches. This new layout will enable a visitor to more efficiently find all DORS-wide resources and services that may be applicable to their situation.

The Comprehensive Needs Assessment also recommended that BESB develop a presence in social media, possibly uploading information on services to YouTube. This recommendation has been explored and has been conservatively implemented. To date, there have been 5 BESB mentor videos uploaded to YouTube for public viewing, but plans for greater expansion in the use of social media have become part of the larger discussion at the agency level. It is anticipated that the agency and BESB will expand further into social media in future years.

Results of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey illustrated how a lack of transportation options impacted on levels of satisfaction in that service category. The members of the SRC requested more information on services offered through Lyft and Uber. Toward that end, the Vice-Chair of the SRC coordinated for Uber representatives to present at the March, 2017 meeting. The representatives discussed approaches that could be used to increase access to their services. The SRC learned about services available through Lyft at their December, 2017 meeting. BESB VR plans to pursue purchasing arrangements with these services in situations where short-term transportation solutions are needed as an interim step while clients and staff seek more long-term solutions that cannot be funded through BESB VR.

BESB VR and the SRC further recognized the difficulty that creating a business plan has been for clients and the resulting dissatisfaction for the process. The SRC recommended that BESB VR develop a guide for clients to follow, along with a business plan template. This has been completed and is now posted on the agency website for clients to utilize. Notification of the availability of this document has been widely distributed to organizations of and for individuals who are blind in Connecticut and the counseling staff have been provided with the guide and template as well to facilitate its use by clients that are seeking a goal of self-employment.

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.

BESB VR Update: BESB VR employs two full time Rehabilitation Teachers in the role of Technologists who are available to provide individualized assessments on adaptive technology options and solutions so that clients can make informed decisions as to the best option for their particular vocational training and employment situations. The Technologists are able to provide these assessments at the employer site, training facility or home of the client by utilizing a portable array of technology devices that are maintained by BESB VR. The Technologists are further available to offer short-term training in the use of adaptive technology that is needed for participation in vocational training or employment. A third Rehabilitation Teacher is available to provide training to clients in the use of Career Index Plus with adaptive technology so that clients can be more fully engaged in the career exploration and job seeking process.

Additionally, BESB VR maintains a fully equipped adaptive technology laboratory in Windsor that is available for both assessments and training sessions. These training sessions can be done in person or remotely with the use of tandem training through the internet. In collaboration with the Southeastern Connecticut Community Center of the Blind, an additional technology laboratory is located at their facility in New London.

BESB VR further utilizes fee for service vendors for training in the use of adaptive technology devices in circumstances where training is required over multiple sessions that stretch beyond the capacity of the on-staff Rehabilitation Teachers. Through the Assistive Technology Act, BESB works closely with the BRS to provide outreach and referrals of clients who are deaf and blind so that clients who meet the eligibility requirements of the Deafblind Technology Grant can apply for and receive specialized adaptive equipment to increase their access to communication.

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.

BESB VR Update: BESB VR will continue with the successful approach of utilizing specifically assigned staff to provide outreach to community based organizations that have linkages to individuals from underserved populations. As noted in subsection J (Statewide Assessment) of this section of the Unified State Plan, the percentage of individuals who self-identify a minority background reflects a demographic that is consistent with or greater than the demographic for the overall state. The individualized relationships the Counselors have established with the community based organizations has strengthened the outreach activities into the local communities. Statutory reporting requirements by eye doctors further ensure that individuals under their care who are legally blind will also be referred to BESB for 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).

BESB VR Update: The two Pre-Employment Transition Counselors participate in Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meetings of students with disabilities and assist in the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEP's) for these students. The services that are detailed in the IEP of each student are factored into the development of each client's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), which must be developed within ninety (90) days of the determination of eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services, or by the time the client exits high school, whichever comes sooner. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor involvement can begin as early as age 14, with Pre-Employment Transition Services commencing at age 16. Referrals to BESB VR are most commonly initiated by the Education Consultants of BESB's Children's Services

Program and Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments that work directly for school districts.

Since BESB maintains a registry of all students who are legally blind or visually impaired within Connecticut, the process for identifying and referring clients from Children's Services to BESB VR is streamlined and efficient. The electronic case management system for BESB has a built in tracking system for identifying clients by age range to further facilitate the referral of clients who desire to participate in vocational rehabilitation services. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors work with the students, educators, parents or legal guardians and the Program's Transition Coordinator to identify careers of interest, develop career exploration opportunities, work and job shadowing experiences, mentoring activities and leadership development programs.

In addition to serving on the statewide transition taskforce, BESB VR's Transition Coordinator is also an active member of the Board of Directors of the Youth Leadership Project that oversees the Youth Leadership Forum. The forum is a yearly event that teaches students with disabilities leadership and self-advocacy skills.

BESB VR continues to conduct career exposure camps for high school students who are visually impaired or legally blind. These programs include opportunities to interact with former recipients of vocational rehabilitation services who are successfully employed in a variety of careers. Some of these programs are held on college campuses, where the students gain a firsthand perspective of residential campus life in addition to gaining insight into a variety of careers that former clients are now engaged in.

BESB VR staff members continue to participate in and present information at in-service training programs organized by BESB for public school teachers and guidance counselors on issues affecting students who are blind or visually impaired. The Children's Services Program of BESB provides a comprehensive training series every year for school district staff to learn about low vision aids, adaptive technology, braille instruction, expanded core curriculum activities and resources that are available to facilitate the education and transition of students served by BESB.

BESB VR has also established a goal of participating in Planning and Placement Team meetings early in the transition process to identify the need for supported employment services, and to identify providers, both private and public, that may offer services while a student is preparing to transition from public or private education into employment.

5. IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

BESB VR Update: Other than providing training to staff of community rehabilitation programs on blindness related technology and adaptations for accessing training and employment, no needs to establish, develop or improve upon these programs have been identified.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

BESB VR Update: WIOA provided new opportunities for collaboration, coordination and participation of partners, with a shared goal and vision of connecting job seekers with relevant training and employment. Through these partnerships, BESB Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are now part of regional business services teams, meeting regularly to discuss current employer needs within their regions, and to identify upcoming employment opportunities and skill requirements to be considered as a qualified candidate for these positions. Through the execution of Memorandums of Understanding and accompanying Infrastructure Agreements, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors have also begun part-time co-location at the America's Job Centers, encouraging clients to register for applicable services available through partner programs. Rehabilitation Technologists offer technical assistance on approaches to increase accessibility of the One-Stop Centers and partner services. While this new system is still in the implementation stages, it is bringing collaboration and coordination to a new level that had not previously existed, with the shared goal of achieving the performance measures for the state.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

BESB VR Update: BESB VR staff's expertise on blindness related topics, including how adaptive technology can be utilized to make core services of the One-Stop Centers and training programs accessible is offered to the partner programs. The Rehabilitation Technologists have been reviewing testing materials, equipment and structural design at the America's Job Centers, offering recommendations on how to make information and training materials accessible to job seekers who are blind. Further discussion is underway in regards to involving BESB VR in assessments on new curriculum materials in the initial planning stages so that decisions can be made with accessibility variables considered prior to the selection of materials in future training programs and workshops.

8. HOW THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:

A. ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

BESB VR Update: Providing clients with the skills and training necessary to qualify for occupations that exist in the economy is essential. With diminishing financial resources, partnering with other components of the workforce system is a key component to achieving this goal. Being a part of regional business services teams ensures that Counselors from BESB VR are at the forefront of discussions with employers who are seeking to fill job vacancies as well as those employers who are considering expansion in this state. Dedicating staff resources to offer training to clients in the use of Career Index Plus is an important strategy employed by BESB VR to encourage clients to take a more immersive role in the career exploration and job seeking process. Career Index Plus is accessible to individuals that utilize adaptive technology. It contains a vocational interest inventory, economic forecasting by career cluster, and it also includes direct links to job openings by region, state and zip code. For BESB VR to be effective in bringing together

qualified job seekers with employers, all of these approaches must be utilized to the greatest extent possible.

BESB VR further recognizes the great potential that customized employment holds for individuals with multiple, significant impediments to employment. BESB VR explored the option of committing time for staff training in this model, but found the time commitment to be beyond the availability of the existing staff. BESB VR is looking forward to utilizing a fee for service model with community rehabilitation providers that can offer this service after staff in their organizations receive the training and credentialing to provide it.

A coordinated approach to expand the ability of partner programs to communicate the availability of their services is an equally important strategy to achieve the overarching goal of employment for clients. Expanding the use of social media to educate the public about services was a recommendation contained in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment and through a coordinated effort across partner programs, this recommendation is likely to experience a greater level of growth than it may have experienced as a separate and distinct goal for BESB.

B. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

BESB VR Update: Offering a robust approach to career information and job openings is a key component of the Innovation and Expansion activities that have been established as priorities for BESB VR. In addition to using Career Index Plus as a tool in this regard, BESB VR provides access to the National Federation of the Blind's (NFB) Newsline service to provide a lower-tech option through touch tone telephones for clients who may not have internet access or current skills in the use of computers. NFB Newsline also offers a web-based option for clients who have access to the internet.

Programs serving youth, including youth from underserved populations, is another priority that has been identified in the Innovation and Expansion initiatives for BESB VR. VR staff assists in the development of independent living, leadership and career exposure camps and initiatives. The SRC and BESB VR offer co-sponsorship to the Youth Leadership Forum, a proven model for developing leadership skills and community involvement for youth with disabilities.

Expansion of the availability of adaptive technology in training programs, core services and apprenticeship programs is another category where there is considerable activity. BESB VR staff brings their knowledge of blindness related technology accommodations into discussions with the partners so that solutions can be identified and implemented in the planning stages of new initiatives, ensuring equal access to services. BESB VR also provides support for the adaptive technology laboratory located at the Southeastern Connecticut Community Center of the Blind, making it possible for clients of BESB located in that region to receive local training in the use of adaptive technology.

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.

BESB VR Update: Perhaps the most significant barrier within the category of training is the materials utilized across a broad spectrum of vendors and service providers. Materials are often created in formats that do not readily lend toward conversion into accessible text to speech formats for those clients who are not able to access print. This is particularly seen in training materials that are distributed electronically, where PDF files are a common format of the documents being distributed. Being at the front end of discussions with partner programs on how to make training materials accessible from the onset is in its initial stages, but showing great promise. BESB VR staff have also begun to explore training opportunities offered through the certificate programs at the state community colleges to better educate clients on these options.

The ability of BESB VR to now provide for up to four years of extended services for youth with disabilities has also opened up new options for clients that may require long-term job supports to be successful. Prior to WIOA, if there was no available provider of long-term support, there were limited options for clients that required supported employment services. With the new provisions for extended services, it is now possible to explore job opportunities for youth who require long-term supports, with the knowledge that BESB VR can initiate the job placement supports directly and then pursue other sources for funding in the long-term.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

Describe:

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

A. IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

BESB VR Update: The following goals, objectives, strategies and measures of performance were developed in collaboration with the SRC. These goals reflect the vision of Governor Dannel P. Malloy and the accompanying priorities and strategies of the statewide workforce system and the regional partners to contribute towards the achievement of the Governor's vision. Additionally, this update details the strategies that have been utilized by the BESB VR to date to contribute towards the achievement of these shared goals through the provision of services to individuals with significant visual impairments and to employers across the state.

Governor Dannel P. Malloy's Vision: Connecticut will create and sustain the global economy's best-educated, most-skilled, most-productive workforce.

Overarching Goals:

Promote Business Growth: Connecticut businesses in key sectors (economic drivers) must have the skilled, talented employees needed to compete effectively, prosper and create jobs for CT workers.

Strengthen Current Workforce: Workers must have the skills and credentials needed to prosper and advance in careers that support their families.

Develop Future Talent: Connecticut youth must be prepared and ready for career and post-secondary success as productive contributors to a competitive state economy.

System Transformation: Connecticut's multi-faceted workforce system must align and integrate goals, strategies, policies, investments, services, infrastructure and accountability.

Objective 1. Analyze economic conditions, including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Strategy: Identify employment needs of employers - knowledge, skills, abilities in key industries and occupations.

Measure: Documentation of coordination with CTDOL, Office of Research to obtain data and information.

BESB VR Update: Through ongoing collaboration with the Department of Labor's Office of Research, a significant amount of economic and occupational outlook data has been identified and is readily available for staff and clients to access at: http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/index.asp. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors have joined with partner agencies as members of the business services teams in their regions to learn of specific growth sectors and employment trends for the region.

Strategy: Analysis of current workforce unemployment data, labor market trends, workforce's educational and skill levels (including individuals with barriers/disabilities).

Measure: Documentation of coordination with CTDOL, Office of Research to obtain data and information.

BESB VR Update: As of December, 2017 Manufacturing had a 2.6 percent increase in growth, followed by financial activities with 1.7 percent growth. Professional and Business Services indicated 1.2 percent growth, with Educational and Health Services at 1.1 percent growth. In terms of actual job growth in specific numbers, the Manufacturing sector gained 4,100 jobs, followed by the Educational and Health Services professions that gained 3,600 jobs.

Strategy: Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, capacity) of CT's workforce development activities (including education and training), to address identified education/skill needs and employment needs of employers.

Measure: Coordination with CTDOL, Office of Research to obtain data and information.

BESB VR Update: BESB VR staff are participating in meetings on both a statewide and regional basis to identify strategies to prepare program participants for the employment opportunities that exist and that will be available into the future. One particular strategy in use at BESB VR is the strong focus on engaging clients to utilize Career Index Plus as a tool for conducting research that is individualized to their unique circumstances and interests.

Objective 2. Implement strategies for workforce partners to prepare educated/skilled workforce.

Strategy: Establish performance accountability measures and align strategies across the workforce programs to support economic growth and self-sufficiency, and how Connecticut will assess workforce system effectiveness.

Measure: Performance measures established with each partner program's anticipated contribution to the measures noted.

BESB VR Update: This strategy is in progress.

Objective 3. Operationalize the Service Delivery System

Strategy: Review statewide policies, programs, and recommended actions to support comprehensive streamlined workforce system.

Measure: BESB VR provides policies to workforce partners for review.

BESB VR Update: This has been achieved. The policies for BESB VR have been updated to reflect changes brought about by WIOA and the policies have been made available to the partner programs. The policies may be viewed at www.ct.gov/besb in the "Employment and Vocational Rehabilitation Section."

Strategy: Develop/continuously improve workforce system: identify coordination/alignment barriers (avoid duplication); develop career pathways strategies; develop outreach/access strategies for individuals and employers; develop/expand industry/sector partnership strategies; identify regions/designate local areas; develop One-Stop system continuous improvement strategy; develop staff training strategies.

Measure: BESB VR staff participates in regional and statewide workforce meetings that focus on implementation of a coordinated One-Stop service delivery system.

BESB VR Update: This strategy is in full operation with BESB VR staff participating in regional business service teams, and designated staff also participating in statewide, interagency coordination team meetings. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors have begun part-time co-location at the primary One-Stop Centers in their assigned territories, arranging for clients to register for services available through partner programs where applicable.

Strategy: Develop and update comprehensive State performance accountability measures.

Measure: BESB VR provides data on performance in identified accountability categories.

BESB VR Update: This strategy is in progress.

Strategy: Identify/disseminate info on best practices for: effective operation of One-Stop centers; development of effective local boards; effective training programs responsive to real-time labor market analysis.

Measure: BESB VR provides to the state and regional workforce system evidence based practice on successful job placement and retention strategies for individuals with significant disabilities.

BESB VR Update: This strategy is in progress. BESB VR has provided assistance and recommendations pertaining to accessibility of One-Stop Centers and training program services, reviewing materials in use as well as the adaptive devices that are available at these locations, with a goal of enabling clients of BESB VR to more fully participate in the services offered through partner programs.

Strategy: Develop and review statewide policies to coordinate services through One-Stop system: criteria and procedures for Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to assess effectiveness and continuous improvement; guidance to allocate One-Stop center infrastructure funds; policies on roles/contributions of One-Stop partners.

Measure: Documentation of BESB VR staff participation in the review and development of coordination of services to people with significant disabilities with One-Stop center staff and partners.

BESB VR Update: BESB VR staff were assigned to assist in the review and certification of the One- Stop Centers and offered recommendations for accessibility enhancements, where applicable.

Strategy: Develop strategies for technological improvements to One-Stop system to: enhance digital literacy skills; accelerate acquisition of skills and credentials; strengthen staff professional development; ensure accessibility of technology.

Measure: Documentation of BESB VR adaptive technology consultations and recommendations for equipment to make the One-Stop Centers accessible to individuals with significant disabilities.

BESB VR Update: Consultations have been provided in regards to accessibility, offering both short-term and low tech solutions as well as recommendations for a future direction that will be a more pro-active approach to assessing training curriculum and materials in the initial stages of development so that accommodations can be identified and in place from the onset.

Strategy: Develop strategies to align technology and data systems across One-Stop partner programs.

Measure: Documentation of BESB VR staff participation in statewide meeting regarding the development of a common-front end data collection system.

BESB VR Update: This strategy is in progress. BESB VR staff have reviewed the CT Hires data collection system and identified strategies that could make certain data fields more accessible for BESB VR staff to use. At this point however, there are no immediate plans to implement a “common-front end” data collection system for the partner agencies to use due to the uniqueness of each of the partner’s current data collection software and the cost that would be incurred across the programs to develop such a universal data collection system.

Strategy: Develop allocation formulas to distribute funds to local areas for adult and youth programs.

Measure: Documentation of BESB VR staff participation in cost allocation formula reviews that follow prescribed federal requirements.

BESB VR Update: This strategy is in development.

Strategy: Prepare annual performance reports.

Measure: BESB VR report on performance measures distributed.

BESB VR Update: BESB VR has provided performance data for inclusion in the Department's report of activities and measures achieved. This document for DORS may be viewed at: http://portal.ct.gov/das/Lists/Publications/Reports/Digest-of-Administrative-Reports.

Strategy: Develop statewide workforce and labor market information system.

Measure: BESB VR staff provides data on job placements for clients served by the program.

BESB VR Update: This data is available for partner programs to utilize.

Strategy: Develop other policies to promote statewide objectives and enhance system performance.

Measure: Documentation of BESB VR participation in the development of state policies and objectives.

BESB VR Update: This strategy is in progress. BESB VR has assigned staff to participate in interagency workgroups and committees to develop policy recommendations and strategies to coordinate activities across the partner programs and services. These groups feed information and recommendations to the Service Design and Delivery Committee that is chaired by two members of the Statewide Workforce Investment Board.

Strategy: Alignment of funded activities.

Measure: BESB VR clients gain access to core services offered by the One-Stop Centers with information provided in accessible formats by the centers.

BESB VR Update: This activity is underway and has increased with the recent development of part-time co-location of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in the One- Stop Centers in each region.

Strategy: Alignment with activities not covered by Plan, to assure coordination, avoid duplication.

Measure: Independent Living services are offered and provided to eligible individuals with disabilities who are being served by the One-Stop centers.

BESB VR Update: The Adult Services Program of BESB provides Orientation and Mobility instruction and Independent Living training to BESB VR clients who's Individualized Plans for Employment identify the need for these services as a component to achieve an employment outcome.

Strategy: Coordination of activities, comprehensive services, including support services.

Measure: BESB VR staff members participate in regional and statewide planning and implementation meetings to coordinate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to eligible clients served by the One-Stop delivery system.

BESB VR Update: This strategy has been initiated but is still in the early stages. Through part-time co-location at the One-Stop Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are learning of individuals with blindness or visual impairment who may have accessed the programs and services offered by other partners without being aware of BESB VR. In these instances, meetings can be offered to these individuals to learn about the services that can be provided and coordinated through BESB VR, and when desired, referrals can be promptly processed to activate the clients in BESB VR.

Strategy: Engagement with community colleges, career/technical schools, to leverage resources.

Measure: BESB VR staff becomes participating members in regional teams that develop certificate and training programs at community colleges and career/technical schools to ensure curriculum accessibility for individuals with significant disabilities.

BESB VR Update: This strategy is underway, with meetings at the statewide level to identify the certificate and training programs that are presently available at the community colleges and to further identify the criteria for entrance into these programs. Accessibility of the programs will also be a component of this review so that BESB VR can begin to refer potential candidates to these programs.

In addition to the participation of BESB VR in contributing to the aforementioned, comprehensive statewide goals for the Workforce system, the following, goals, objectives, strategies and measures specific to BESB VR have been developed with the full participation and guidance of the SRC. These goals, objectives and accompanying strategies reflect on the priority to provide comprehensive, timely and quality services to clients of BESB VR, including those clients who are receiving supported employment services. Based on a review of the findings and recommendations in the Statewide Assessment and the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, as well as a review of the most recent Section 107 report and the performance achieved on established program measures in existence at the time of this plan's development, these priorities have taken into account this information to shape the efforts of the SRC in establishing focus areas for the coming year.

Goal A: Increase employment opportunities for eligible individuals of BESB VR.

Objective: BESB will collaborate with BRS and at least one major employer with a statewide presence to implement a Disability Resource Team to assist the employer with job recruitment and retention services.

Strategy: BESB Job Developer will coordinate with BRS Job Development Team to identify and work with employer(s) to implement a Resource Team.

Measure: Team is developed and implements resource meetings with employer(s).

BESB VR Update: Over the past year, a team comprised of staff from BESB VR and BRS worked together in the capacity of a Disability Resource Team to assist Unilever, Travelers and Prudential with job recruitment, job retention services, disability awareness training and education to adaptive technology devices. For Unilever, BESB VR and BRS presented at a Unilever DiversAbility event held in December, 2016. Unilever staff were provided an overview about blindness and adaptive technology. Unilever subsequently hired a BESB VR referred individual, accessing VR services to facilitate a successful employment outcome. Another resource team that formed consisted of BESB VR and BRS staff partnering with CSAVR as a part of an 8 state pilot program to partner with Prudential to assist them with their recruitment efforts. Regular meetings have been held with Prudential's Human Resources staff and managers to educate them about the capabilities of individuals with disabilities as well as to discuss their recruitment needs. Candidates have been referred to both their Hartford and Shelton locations. Currently, Prudential Human Resources is reviewing the resumes of several clients.

Objective: BESB VR Counselors join job development teams implemented through the regional workforce boards to gain access to employers within the regions who are seeking job candidates.

Strategy: Counselors contact the Job Developers of the regional One-Stop Center to become part of their employer outreach teams.

Measure: Each counselor serves as part of a regional job development team.

BESB VR Update: This strategy is underway. Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors are active members of the regional business services teams.

Objective: BESB VR clients obtain proficiency to utilize web-based job search websites.

Strategy: Rehabilitation teachers and/or fee for service vendors teach no less than ten job seeking clients per year how to navigate and utilize at least one job search website on the internet.

Measure: Documentation of utilization by each client.

BESB VR Update: This strategy is recently underway. BESB VR worked very closely with the Job Driven Technical Assistance Center to test Career Index Plus for accessibility and the applicability of features and upon finding it to be a useful tool for clients to use, the Director of BESB sent written correspondence to all active VR clients to notify them of this tool and how to access it. The letter also indicated that a Rehabilitation Teacher has been assigned to train clients in its use. Career Index Plus provides a searchable listing of job openings by region, state and zip code and can be tailored to individual client's job search preferences.

Objective: Each BESB VR Counselor with job development responsibilities shall engage clients on their caseloads in job fair attendance.

Strategy: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors will share information on job fairs within their regions with job seeking clients on their individual caseloads and facilitate the attendance of clients at job fairs.

Measure: Documentation of no less than five clients per Counselor caseload per year attending a job fair.

BESB VR Update: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors have been identifying job fairs and informing clients of these opportunities to network with employers. With the exception of one Counselor caseload, where four clients attended job fairs in the past year, for the other Counselor caseloads, this measure was achieved.

Goal B: Provide coordinated services to students with disabilities to prepare for careers and post-secondary education after exit from high school.

Objective: BESB VR shall designate two full-time Counselors to exclusively serve clients that are in the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) category.

Strategy: Middle school and high school clients will be assigned to one of the counselor caseloads to receive specific, qualifying Pre-ETS services with dedicated Pre-ETS funding.

Measure: Documentation of caseload assignments.

BESB VR Update: This strategy was achieved with two Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors assigned to serve clients who are students with disabilities, providing Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Objective: Pre-ETS eligible students and their parents/guardians shall receive a resource guide that explains all of the BESB VR services that can be provided to prepare for careers and post-secondary education.

Strategy: BESB VR shall develop a transition resource guide to post on the BESB section of the DORS website and to distribute to Pre-ETS eligible clients and their parents/guardians in their preferred format.

Measure: Case record documentation that the resource guide has been mailed or delivered to each Pre-ETS eligible client and their parents/guardians.

BESB VR Update: This strategy is in progress. The resource guide is in development.

Objective: Pre-ETS eligible clients are provided timely notice of opportunities from the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and/or the Transition Coordinator to participate in work exposure programs, paid employment, internships, college preparatory programs, technology training programs, life skills programs and related career development camps, seminars and initiatives, both in state and out of state.

Strategy: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and the Transition Coordinator working with the Pre-ETS clients provide timely information on available services and programs so that clients and their guardians can make informed decisions on attendance at programs, activities and related transition experiences of interest.

Measure: Case record documentation of the services being authorized.

BESB VR Update: The Transition Coordinator provides information to the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors on programs and initiatives such as the Youth Leadership

Forum, independent living programs and camps, paid internships and employment opportunities. For the summer of 2017, this resulted in over 40 clients experiencing paid work or internship opportunities. A college exploration day, in addition to a mentoring day at United Technologies also occurred. BESB VR offers experiential learning opportunities for older students, whereby students who have participated in these programs previously can become camp counselors or facilitators of these events for the new participants.

Objective: BESB VR develops and implements outreach and public education programs for potentially Pre-ETS eligible clients and their parents/guardians.

Strategy: BESB VR Transition Coordinator designs and delivers outreach and public education programs to populations where Pre-ETS eligible clients are likely to be found, such as, but not limited to school districts.

Measure: Documentation of the programs being provided.

BESB VR Update: BESB VR works with the several transition-related groups, focusing on outreach and public education for families about Pre-ETS opportunities and initiatives. These groups include the Transition Task Force, DORS Level Up, Community of Practice, CTAHEAD, Transition Alliance, the five Regional Education Service Centers, as well as the One-Stop Centers and the workforce boards. These collaborations yield events such as the Transition Symposium, the CT Youth Leadership Forum, multiple Regional Transition Expos, an Adaptive Technology Conference, Disability Mentoring Day opportunities and Job Fairs. Many of these groups work diligently and collaboratively on updating educational materials for families as well as school district staff, specific to Pre-ETS related activities and opportunities for successful transition from school to work or post-secondary education.

Objective: BESB VR and the SRC co-sponsor leadership development activities and camps for groups of Pre-ETS eligible clients.

Strategy: The SRC and BESB VR provide co-sponsorship funding for the Youth Leadership Forum, and similar programs if available.

Measure: Documentation of the funds committed.

BESB VR Update: This has been achieved. The SRC has continued its ongoing co-sponsorship of the Youth Leadership Forum annually.

Goal C: Utilize Innovation and Expansion authority to engage in continuous improvement initiatives, to increase access to services and activities that can benefit groups of individuals with visual impairment or legal blindness, to increase access to career information, adaptive technology, self-advocacy, and public awareness of the employment potential of individuals served by BESB VR.

Objective: BESB VR shall provide funding for electronic access to career and news information.

Strategy: Funding provided to have NFB Newsline available to BESB VR clients.

Measure: Documentation of purchase order for NFB Newsline.

BESB VR Update: This has been achieved. In partnership with the National Federation of the Blind of Connecticut, BESB VR has sponsored NFB's Newsline so that clients can access this important service.

Objective: Provide access to the latest adaptive technology devices for clients to try out for assessment purposes.

Strategy: Purchase new adaptive technology devices for the BESB Technology Lab and the Technology Lab at the Southeastern Connecticut Community Center of the Blind.

Measure: Documentation of purchase order for technology devices.

BESB VR Update: This strategy is in progress. A recent addition to the Adaptive Technology Lab in Windsor is a new, portable electronic magnification device that adds to the examples that are available for assessment purposes.

Objective: The SRC utilizes an entity experienced in administering consumer satisfaction surveys to conduct the fiscal year 2016 Consumer Satisfaction Survey and the results are used to develop continuous improvement initiatives.

Strategy: The SRC selects a vendor, reviews the results of the survey, and works with Program staff to implement strategies that address the results and trends identified in the survey.

Measure: Documentation of purchase of survey, Consumer Satisfaction Report received and reviewed with Program staff.

SRC Update: This was achieved. The Center for Public Policy and Social Research at Central Connecticut State University was selected to conduct the Consumer Satisfaction Survey and to analyze the data in comparison to prior years. Results of the survey were utilized to identify areas that needed attention (i.e. transportation and business plan development). In conjunction with BESB VR, strategies for improvement in both areas have been identified and implemented.

Objective: SRC representatives participate in state, regional and national conferences and programs that provide opportunities to increase public awareness of the employment capabilities of BESB VR clients, increase the SRC members knowledge and understanding of the public VR Program, and create opportunities for learning best practices that can develop into new goals and strategies for BESB VR to explore and implement, if applicable.

Strategy: The SRC Chair is provided with information about upcoming conferences, seminars and activities from the BESB Director and designates an SRC member or members to participate and share information with the full membership.

Measure: SRC members attend CSAVR, NCSAB and other national, regional or statewide conferences or seminars that address the components stated in the objective.

BESB VR Update: This was achieved. The Chair of the SRC attended and presented at a national Business Leadership Network conference and also attended the spring, 2017

conferences of CSAVR and NCSAB. The Vice-Chair attended a national conference on technology at California State University at Northridge (CSUN) in 2017.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

BESB VR Update: Diminishing financial resources have impacted significantly on BESB VR. Reductions in the availability of reallotment funds in combination with reductions in state matching funds has required BESB VR to make difficult staffing decisions in order to align budget projections with anticipated funding levels in future years. The SRC has been working in collaboration with BESB VR to identify strategies for reducing administrative and purchased service costs with a goal of continuing to serve all eligible individuals in future years within available fun**ding.**

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.

BESB VR Update: In addition to seeking out community rehabilitation providers who can financially assume the role of becoming the provider of extended services, BESB VR established the goal to encourage employers to offer natural supports where feasible. BESB VR has also sought to utilize community rehabilitation providers who can access public and private funds for individuals with multiple disabilities in order to secure supported employment placements. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, there were two clients who achieved employment outcomes with supported employment services. The funding source for long-term support for both of these situations was the Department of Developmental Services. Community rehabilitation providers were utilized for onsite training in both situations.

BESB VR has also established a goal of participating in Planning and Placement Team meetings early in the transition process to identify the need for supported employment services, and to identify providers, both private and public, that may offer services while a student is preparing to transition from public or private education into employment. The value of this approach is evident in the data that indicates 12 of the 31 clients who were eligible for supported employment services in fiscal year 2017 were youth with disabilities.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.

BESB VR Update: The challenging economy continues to impact on the scope and variety of job placement options available to clients, making these employment opportunities particularly difficult to secure. The availability of extended services for youth with disabilities with BESB VR funds has so far not opened up new opportunities for employment. However, it is hoped that as community rehabilitation providers become increasingly aware of this new option for up to four years of extended services through BESB VR funds that greater priority will be given to working with individuals who may require a more time-intensive job development and job carving approach to secure

employment. BESB VR has sufficient supported employment funding available for this purpose and has been in discussions with community rehabilitation providers to make them aware of this.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

BESB VR Update: WIOA established new measures of performance for the partner programs to collectively work towards achievement. BESB VR is participating in discussions on the implementation of these new performance measures with the other partners at both the state and the regional level. However, as these are new measures of performance, they will be reported on after baseline measures have been established and each partner program's contribution to those measures has been set. BESB VR assisted 91 individuals to achieve employment outcomes in fiscal year 2017. The average hourly earnings for these individuals were $19.50 per hour.

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

BESB VR Update: During fiscal year 2017, Innovation and Expansion funding was utilized to cover the cost of the NFB Newsline service. Innovation and Expansion funds were also utilized to cover the cost of the SRC's co-sponsorship of the Youth Leadership Forum. BESB VR also was a separate co-sponsor of this leadership development camp for transition-age students. Co-sponsorship of a youth symposium for transition-age students was also coordinated with some funding from this reserve.

Innovation and Expansion funding was also utilized to secure the Center for Public Policy and Social Research to conduct and analyze the 2017 consumer satisfaction survey and to report their findings to the SRC for use in developing Program goals and priorities. Additionally, Innovation and Expansion funds were utilized to secure the Center for Public Policy and Social Research to initiate the Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Funding was also utilized to facilitate the participation of the SRC, through its Chair and Vice-Chair to attend national activities, at the conferences of the NCSAB, CSAVR and a national conference on technology at CSUN. The Chair of the Council also attended and presented at a national conference of the Business Leadership Network.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Include the following:

1. THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

The Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind is committed to providing competitive employment opportunities in integrated settings to all clients of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The Program utilizes Title VI, Part B Funds, federal Vocational Rehabilitation Program funds and State matching funds to cover the costs of

client placement into supported employment, and ensure that participants are provided with the necessary long-term support to succeed in the competitive labor market.

Supported Employment refers to competitive integrated employment, including customized employment, that is individualized and customized consistent with the strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of a client with a most significant disability, and that includes ongoing support services. Supported employment services may be considered for individuals for whom competitive integrated employment has not historically occurred, or for whom competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent, and where there is a need for extended services after the transition from support provided by the Bureau, in order for the client to perform this work. Supported employment may also be provided in the form of transitional employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness, in addition to legal blindness or lessened visual acuity.

Supported Employment Services are ongoing support services, including customized employment, and other appropriate services: (A) Organized and made available, singly or in combination, in such a way as to assist an eligible individual to achieve competitive integrated employment; (B) Based on a determination of the needs of an eligible individual, as specified in an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE); and (C) Provided by the Bureau for a period of not more than 24 months, unless under special circumstances the eligible individual and the rehabilitation counselor jointly agree to extend the time to achieve the employment outcome identified in the IPE; and (D) Following transition to extended services, as post-employment services that are unavailable from an extended services provider, and that are necessary to maintain or regain the job placement or advance in employment.

Prior to determining that an applicant is unable to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program must conduct an exploration of the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in competitive integrated work situations. This is accomplished through the use of trial work experiences, which must be provided in competitive employment settings to the maximum extent possible, consistent with the informed choice and rehabilitation needs of the individual. Trial work experiences include supported employment, on-the-job training, and other experiences using realistic integrated work settings. Trial work experiences must be of sufficient variety and over a sufficient period of time for the Bureau to determine that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the individual cannot benefit from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in terms of a competitive integrated employment outcome. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program will provide appropriate supports, including assistive technology devices and services and personal assistance services to accommodate the rehabilitation needs of the individual during the trial work experiences.

For individuals who have been found eligible for services, an IPE shall be developed as soon as possible, but not later than a deadline of 90 days after the date of the determination of eligibility, unless the Bureau and the eligible individual agree to an extension of that deadline to a specific date by which the IPE shall be completed. If the

Bureau is operating under an order of selection, this timeframe will apply to each eligible individual to whom the Bureau is able to provide services.

The Bureau will conduct an assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs, if appropriate, for each eligible individual or, if the Bureau is operating under an order of selection, for each eligible individual to whom the Bureau is able to provide services. The purpose of the assessment is to determine the employment outcome, and the nature and scope of vocational rehabilitation services, including the need for supported employment services, to be included in the IPE. The IPE will be designed to achieve the specific employment outcome that is selected by the individual consistent with the individual's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, and results in competitive, integrated employment. The IPE will be amended, as necessary, by the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, in collaboration with a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by the Bureau if there are substantive changes in the employment outcome, the vocational rehabilitation services to be provided, or the providers of the vocational rehabilitation services. For a student with a disability, the IPE will consider the student's Individualized Education Program or 504 services.

For a supported employment outcome to be considered, the employment must be within an integrated work setting in the community that is at a location where the employee interacts with other persons who are not individuals with disabilities (not including supervisory personnel or individuals who are providing services to such employee) to the same extent that individuals who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions interact with other persons, and that, as appropriate, presents opportunities for advancement that are similar to those for other employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who have similar positions.

The outcome must also be for paid employment where the client will be compensated at a wage that is not less than the rate specified in Section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)) or the rate specified in the applicable State of Connecticut minimum wage law. The wage should not be less than the customary rate paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by other employees who are not individuals with disabilities, and who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience, and skills. The client will also have access to the same level of employer-offered benefits that are available to similarly situated employees within the company.

For a client for whom an employment outcome in a supported employment setting has been determined to be appropriate, the IPE or subsequent amendment developed to include supported employment must identify: (A) The supported employment services to be provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program; (B) The extended services needed by the eligible individual, which may include natural supports; (C) The source of extended services, or to the extent that the source of the extended services cannot be identified at the time of the development of the IPE, a description of the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that such a source will become available; (D) Periodic monitoring to ensure that the individual is making satisfactory

progress toward meeting the weekly work requirement established in the IPE by the time of transition to extended services; (E) The coordination of services provided under an IPE with services provided under other individualized plans established under other federal or state programs; (F) The extent that job skills training is provided, and identification that the training will be provided at the job site; and (G) Placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of the individual.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

Extended Services in supported employment refer to ongoing support services and other appropriate services that are: (A) Organized or made available, singly or in combination, in such a way as to assist an eligible individual in maintaining supported employment; (B) Based on the needs of an eligible individual as specified in an IPE; (C) Provided by a state agency, a private nonprofit organization, employer, or any other appropriate resource, after an individual has made the transition from support provided by the Bureau, and; (D) Provided to youth with the most significant disabilities by the Bureau for a period of time as established by policies adopted by the Bureau, not to exceed 4 years.

Ongoing Support Services in supported employment are identified based on a determination by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program of the individual's needs as specified in an IPE, and are furnished by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program from the time of job placement until transition to extended services, unless post-employment services are provided following transition, and thereafter by one or more extended service providers throughout the individual's term of employment in a particular job placement or multiple placements if those placements are being provided under a program of transitional employment. These services include an assessment of employment stability and provision of specific services or the coordination of services at or away from the worksite that are needed to maintain stability based on: (A) at a minimum, twice-monthly monitoring at the worksite of each individual in supported employment; or (B) if under special circumstances, especially at the request of the individual, the IPE provides for off-site monitoring, twice monthly meetings with the individual, consisting of:

(1) Any particularized assessment supplementary to the comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs; (2) The provision of skilled job trainers who accompany the individual for intensive job skill training at the work site; (3) Job development and training; (4) Social skills training; (5) Regular observation or supervision of the individual; (6) Follow-up services including regular contact with the employers, the individuals, the parents, family members, guardians, advocates or authorized representatives of the individuals, and other suitable professional and informed advisors, in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement; (7) Facilitation of natural supports at the worksite; (8) Any other service identified in the scope of vocational rehabilitation services in Bureau policy.

CERTIFICATIONS

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate Department of Rehabilitation Services, Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind, Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Name of designated State agency Department of Rehabilitation Services

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Brian S. Sigman

Title of Authorized Representative: Director of Education and Rehabilitation, BESB

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

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 Department of Rehabilitation Services, Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Brian S. Sigman

Title of Authorized Representative: Director of Education and Rehabilitation, Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

STATEMENT FOR LOAN GUARANTEES AND LOAN INSURANCE

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:
If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file

the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization Department of Rehabilitation Services, Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Brian S. Sigman

Title of Authorized Representative: Director of Education and Rehabilitation, Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html).

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The State Plan must provide assurances that:

1. PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. SUBMISSION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF EITHER A STATE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OR STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(21) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

C. CONSULTATIONS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(16)(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

D. THE FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION BY THE STATE, OR IF THE STATE SO ELECTS, BY THE STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES, TO PROVIDE THE AMOUNT OF THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF THE COST OF CARRYING OUT THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(3).

E. THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds No

F. THE SHARED FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION OF JOINT PROGRAMS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(2)(A)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: No

G. STATEWIDENESS AND WAIVERS OF STATEWIDENESS REQUIREMENTS, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. No

H. THE DESCRIPTIONS FOR COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(11) AND (24)(B); AND 606(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. ALL REQUIRED METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(6) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

J. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT, AS SET FORTH IN SECTION 101(A)(7) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

K. THE COMPILATION AND SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSIONER OF STATEWIDE ASSESSMENTS, ESTIMATES, STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, AND PROGRESS REPORTS, AS APPROPRIATE, AND AS REQUIRED BY SECTIONS 101(A)(15), 105(C)(2), AND 606(B)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

L. THE RESERVATION AND USE OF A PORTION OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TO THE STATE UNDER SECTION 110 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, PARTICULARLY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

M. THE SUBMISSION OF REPORTS AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(10) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

4. ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

A. COMPLY WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS REGARDING INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 101(A)(5)(D) AND (20) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

B. IMPOSE NO DURATION OF RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT AS PART OF DETERMINING AN INDIVIDUAL'S ELIGIBILITY FOR VR SERVICES OR THAT EXCLUDES FROM SERVICES UNDER THE PLAN ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO IS PRESENT IN THE STATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(12) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT .

C. PROVIDE THE FULL RANGE OF SERVICES LISTED IN SECTION 103(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AS APPROPRIATE, TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above Yes

D. DETERMINE WHETHER COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS ARE AVAILABLE TO THE INDIVIDUAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(8) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

E. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

F. COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE PROVISIONS OF INFORMED CHOICE FOR ALL APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 102(D) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

G. PROVIDE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES TO AMERICAN INDIANS WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING IN THE STATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(13) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

H. COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONDUCT OF SEMIANNUAL OR ANNUAL REVIEWS, AS APPROPRIATE, FOR INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED EITHER IN AN EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT SETTING IN A COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM OR ANY OTHER EMPLOYMENT UNDER SECTION 14(C) OF THE FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT OF 1938, AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 101(A)(14)OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

I. MEET THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTIONS 101(A)(17) AND 103(B)(2) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT IF THE STATE ELECTS TO CONSTRUCT, UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, FACILITIES FOR COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

J. WITH RESPECT TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THE STATE,

A. HAS DEVELOPED AND WILL IMPLEMENT:

I. STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ASSESSMENTS; AND

II. 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

B. 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:

A. 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
B. AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT THAT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 102(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT , WHICH IS DEVELOPED AND UPDATED WITH TITLE I FUNDS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTIONS 102(B)(3)(F) AND 606(B)(6)(C) AND (E) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ON THE ASSURANCES FROM THE STATE

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program— and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program.* If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" in Sections II and III of that document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program (available on www.regulations.gov for public comment). The requirements that a State must address for any of the partner programs it includes in its Combined State Plan are provided in this separate supplemental document. The Departments are not seeking comments on these program-specific requirements, which exist under separate OMB control numbers and do not

represent requirements under WIOA. For further details on this overall collection, access the Federal eRulemaking Portal at http://www.regulations.gov by selecting Docket ID number ETA-2015-0006.

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

APPENDIX 1. PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

Each State submitting a Unified or Combined Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the 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 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
Adults	70.50	71.00	70.50	71.50
Dislocated Workers	75.60	76.00	75.60	76.50

Youth	76.50	76.50	76.50	76.50
Adult Education	52.00	Baseline	53.00	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	58.00	61.00	58.50	62.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	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
Adults	69.00	69.00	69.00	69.50
Dislocated Workers	76.50	76.50	76.50	77.00
Youth	72.00	72.50	72.00	73.00
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	55.30	58.00	55.30	59.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

TABLE 3. MEDIAN EARNINGS (SECOND QUARTER AFTER EXIT)

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
Adults	4,800.00	4,850.00	4,800.00	4,900.00
Dislocated Workers	7,200.00	7,250.00	7,200.00	7,300.00
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	5,500.00	5,800.00	5,750.00	5,900.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

TABLE 4. CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT RATE

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
Adults	70.00	70.00	70.00	70.50
Dislocated Workers	70.00	70.00	70.00	70.50

Youth	72.00	72.00	72.00	72.50
Adult Education	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

TABLE 5. MEASUREABLE SKILL GAINS

Program	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
Adults	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Dislocated Workers	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Youth	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Adult Education	51.00	43.00	50.00	44.00
Wagner-Peyser	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Vocational Rehabilitation	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

Table 6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Measure	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level
Line 1 (enter the measure information in the comments below)	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Line 2	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Line 3	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Line 4	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Line 5	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Line 6	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

TABLE 7. ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

Measure	PY 2018 Expected Level	PY 2018 Negotiated Level	PY 2019 Expected Level	PY 2019 Negotiated Level